

# UNREACH PEOPLE GROUP Arise Asia Workshop



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## OUR VISION

A multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language  
knowing and worshiping our Lord Jesus Christ

Rev. 7:9-10





**Missions is not the  
ultimate goal of the  
church. Worship is. Missions  
exists because worship doesn't.**

*Mocak*

John Piper

Picture Source: <https://rare-gallery.com/656178-john-piper-quote.html>

## What Defines a People Group?

### 1 What did Jesus mean by "make disciples of all the nations"?

The Greek word Jesus used for nation was "ethne" which we get the English word "ethnic" from. Jesus was referring to people groups when He gave this command.

Burkaric Jew in Israel  
Defined by **Ethnicity**  
and **Language**



Yazidi in Iraq  
Defined by **Religion** and **Language**



### 2 What is a "people group"?

The traditional definition is ""For evangelization purposes, a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."

Dariganga in Mongolia  
Defined by **Language**



### 3 Understanding and Acceptance

These are the two main barriers to the spread of the Gospel: understanding (language) and acceptance (ethnicity / religion / culture).



Chukchi in Russia  
Defined by **Language**

### 4 The highest barrier?

When defining a people group the key question is "Which barrier(s) is the highest?"



Hui in China  
Defined by **Religion**

### 10 What kind of list is Joshua Project?

The Joshua Project people group list is not an academic anthropological list. It defines people groups with the focus of facilitating strategic church planting.

Akan in Ghana  
Defined by **Language**



### 9 How people groups are not defined.

People groups are not defined by:

- Occupation: taxi drivers are not a people group.
- Social status: a ruling class in a country is not a people group.
- Economic status: the poor in a country are not considered a people group.



Hausa in Nigeria  
Defined by **Language** and **Religion**

### 8 Ethno-what?

- People groups defined by language are usually called "ethno-linguistic" peoples.
- People groups defined by culture / caste / religion are often called "ethno-cultural" peoples.

### 7 Broad Generalizations

While there are exceptions, outside South Asia the highest barrier to the spread of the Gospel is usually language. In South Asia the highest barriers tend to be culture / caste and religion.



Chhetri in Nepal  
Defined by **Caste / Culture**

### 5 Four factors when defining people groups:

- Language
- Culture
- Religion
- Geography

These can be in any combination. Typically only one or two of these factors define a people group.



Jat (Muslim) in Pakistan  
Defined by **Caste / Culture** and **Religion**

Lodha (Hindu) in India.  
Defined by **Caste / Culture** and **Religion**



Duna in Papua New Guinea  
Defined by **Language**

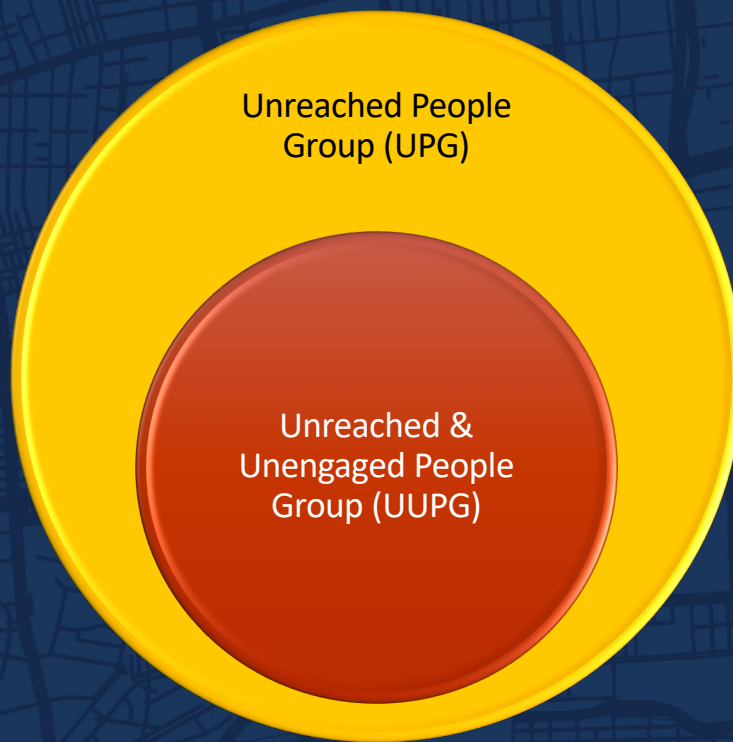
### 6 Geography by country

Traditionally mission researchers have classified people groups by country. The current Joshua Project estimate is about **17,400** distinct people groups by country.

More information at: [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net) May-2023



# UPG & UUPG



UPG  
< 2% Evangelical Christians



UUPG  
No known active church planting



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# Progress toward Engaging Unreached Peoples



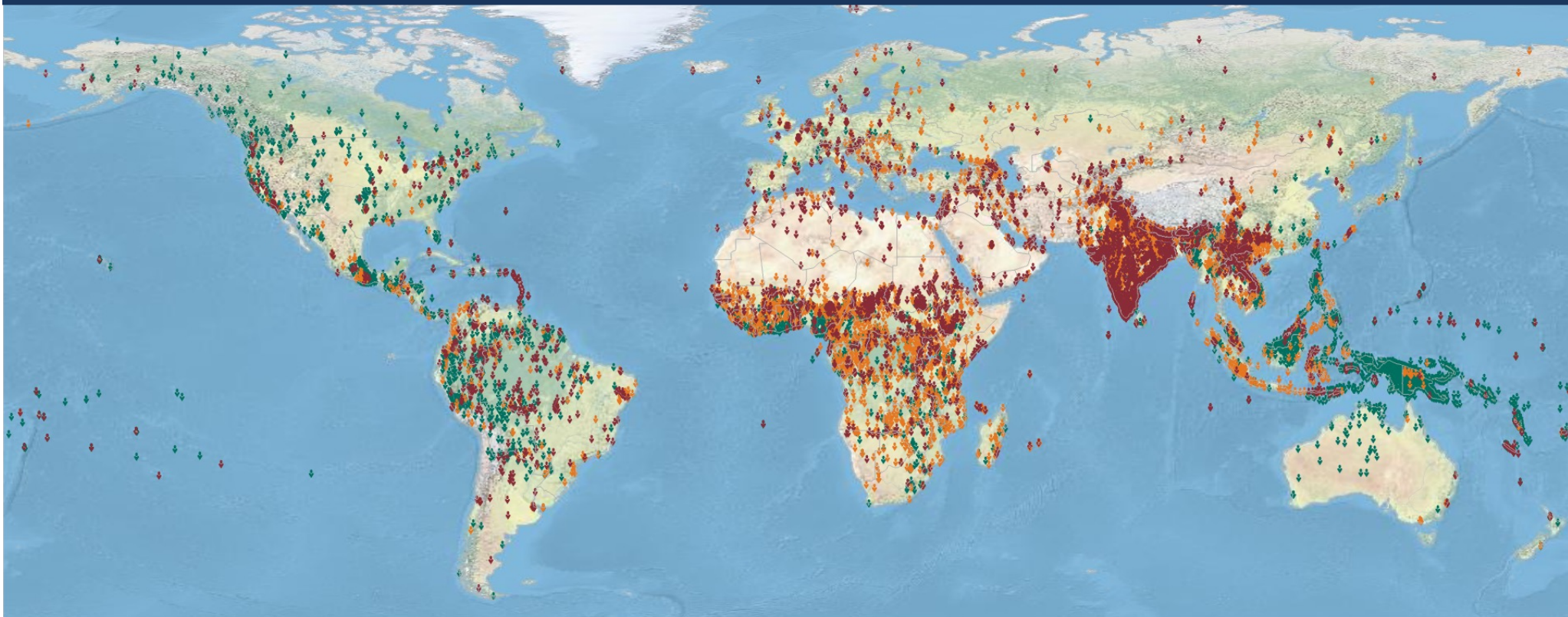
Who will take the gospel to the 3,183 people groups that remain Unengaged and Unreached?



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# Progress toward Engaging Unreached Peoples



12,019 people groups (8 billion people)

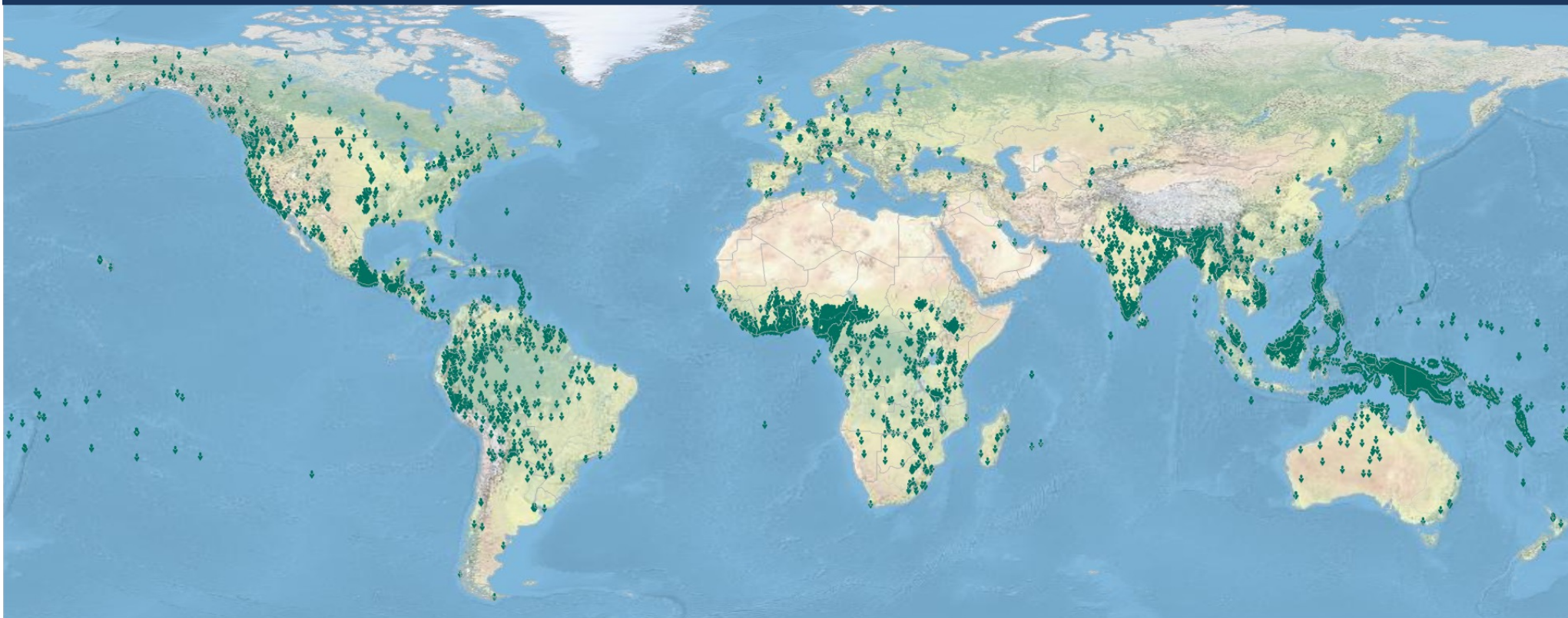


Each symbol represents a people group. Statuses calculated by Global Research, IMB, January 2023. Plate carrée Projection. Physical Basemap by US National Park Service. Geography by ESRI 2022.

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# Progress toward Engaging Unreached Peoples

No Longer Unreached



4,794 people groups (3.3 billion people)



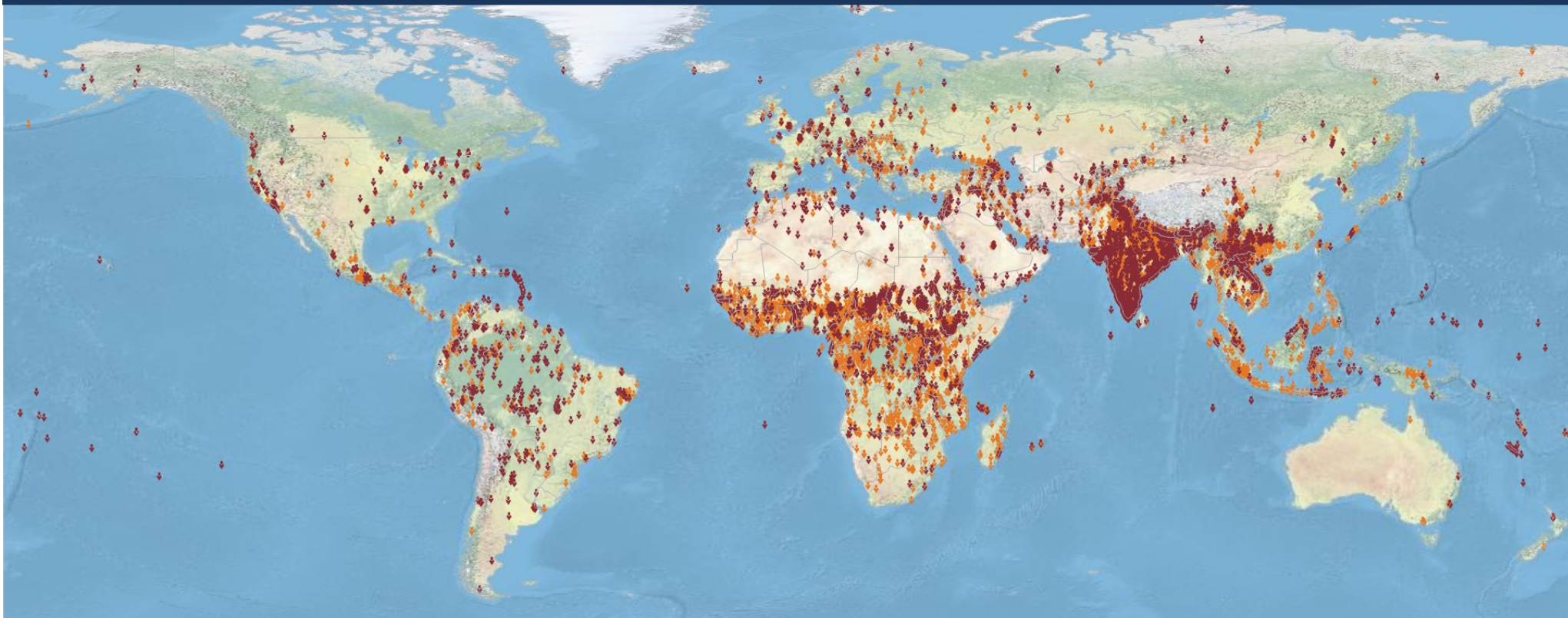
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# Progress toward Engaging Unreached Peoples

Unreached



**7,225 people groups (4.8 billion people)**

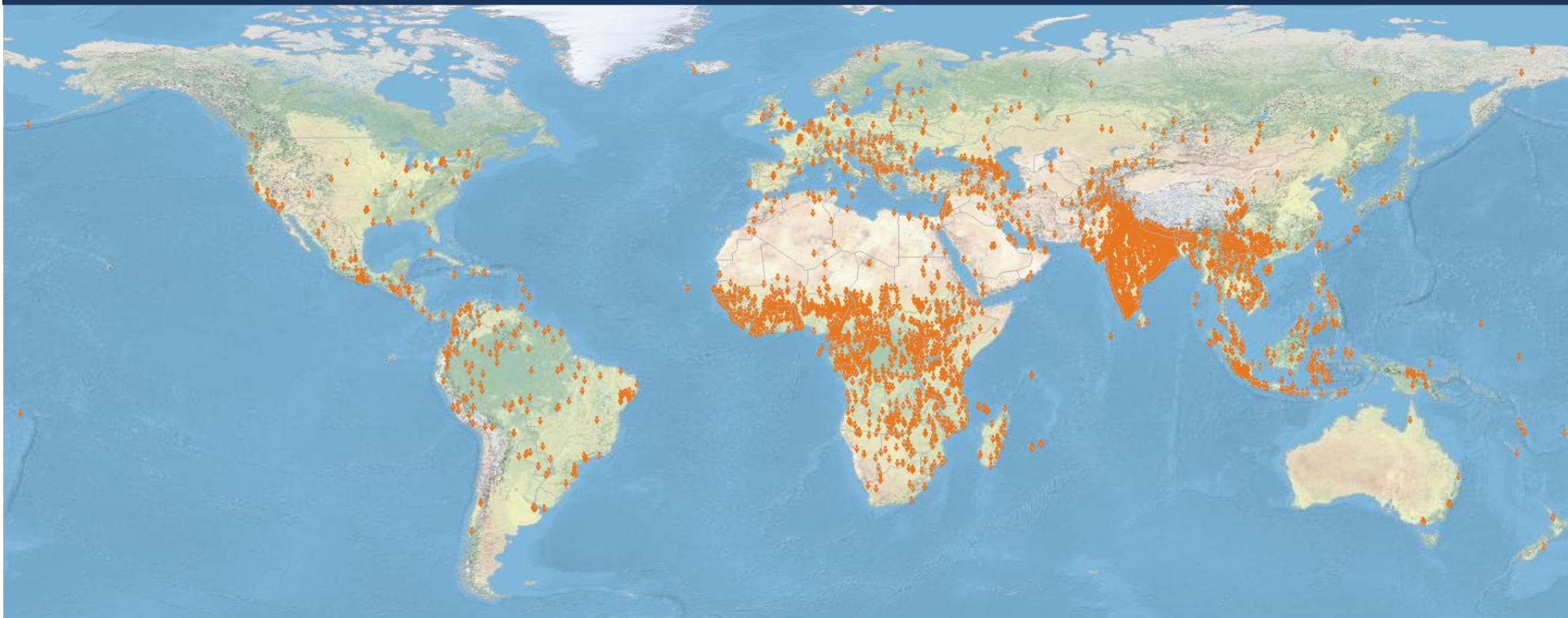


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# Progress toward Engaging Unreached Peoples

Engaged yet Unreached



4,042 people groups (4.5 billion people)



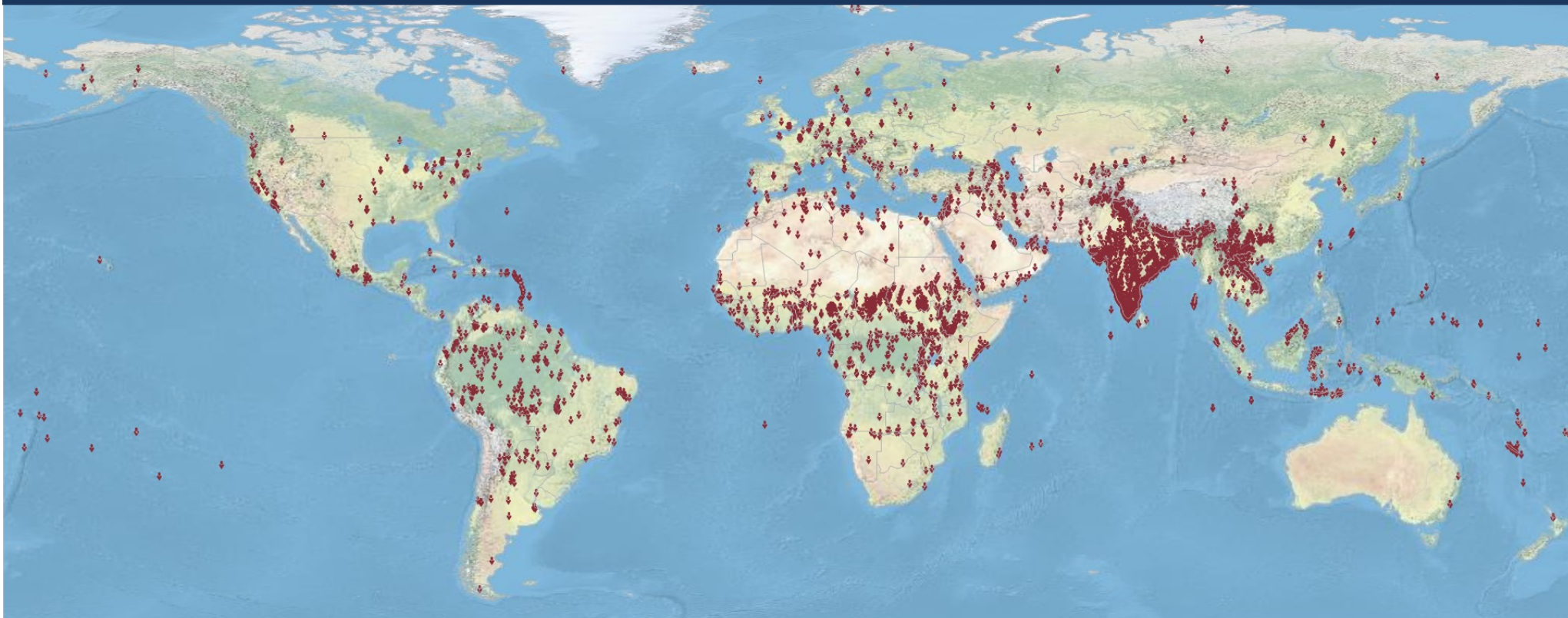
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# Progress toward Engaging Unreached Peoples

Unengaged and Unreached



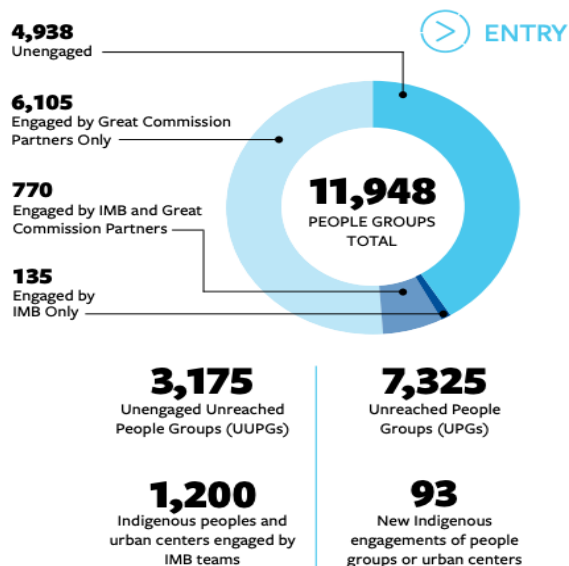
**3,183 people groups (277 million people)**



Each symbol represents a people group. Statuses calculated by Global Research, IMB, January 2023. Plate carrée Projection. Physical Basemap by US National Park Service. Geography by ESRI 2022.

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GLOBAL | SUMMARIES



EVANGELISM

Gospel Witnesses	<b>592,408</b>
Opportunities to Respond	<b>495,550</b>
Seekers	<b>174,242</b>
New Believers	<b>176,795</b>
Baptisms	<b>107,701</b>



DISCIPLESHIP

**217,564**  
Ongoing Bible Study participants

**73,739**  
Being personally mentored



HEALTHY CHURCH FORMATION

New Groups	<b>8,043</b>
Total Groups	<b>32,888</b>
New Churches	<b>22,744</b>
1st Generation	<b>1,231</b>
2nd Generation	<b>1,606</b>
3rd Generation and higher	<b>19,907</b>

Total Churches	<b>94,258</b>
1st Generation	<b>17,119</b>
2nd Generation	<b>7,236</b>
3rd Generation and higher	<b>69,639</b>

Baptized Believers Meeting **679,052**

2022 Report

GLOBAL | SUMMARIES



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

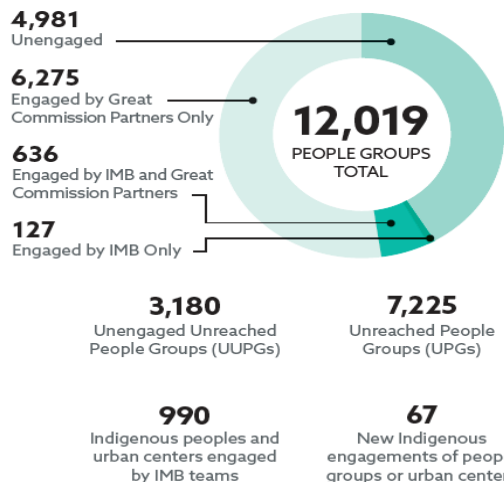
Pastoral Training	<b>29,632</b>
Church Planting Training	<b>85,293</b>
Advanced Training	<b>67,187</b>
Other Training	<b>102,855</b>



EXIT TO PARTNERSHIP

IMB engagement decreases as local ownership of the missionary task increases.

<b>33</b> Total global missionary partners sent from one nation to another to join IMB teams	<b>368</b> Indigenous people groups have self-sustaining ownership in the missionary task
<b>55</b> Indigenous people groups are engaging other people groups inside their own country	<b>28</b> Indigenous people groups are engaging other people groups outside their own country



DISCIPLESHIP

Gospel Witnesses	<b>728,589</b>
Opportunities to Respond	<b>556,035</b>
Seekers	<b>190,897</b>
New Believers	<b>178,177</b>
Baptisms	<b>102,417</b>

**345,692**  
Ongoing Bible Study participants

**132,823**  
Being personally mentored

New Groups	<b>11,068</b>
Total Groups	<b>41,385</b>
New Churches	<b>21,231</b>
1st Generation	<b>1,437</b>
2nd Generation	<b>1,087</b>
3rd Generation & higher	<b>18,707</b>

Total Churches	<b>112,065</b>
1st Generation	<b>17,381</b>
2nd Generation	<b>7,394</b>
3rd Generation & higher	<b>87,124</b>

Baptized Believers Meeting **680,280**

2023 Report



EXIT TO PARTNERSHIP

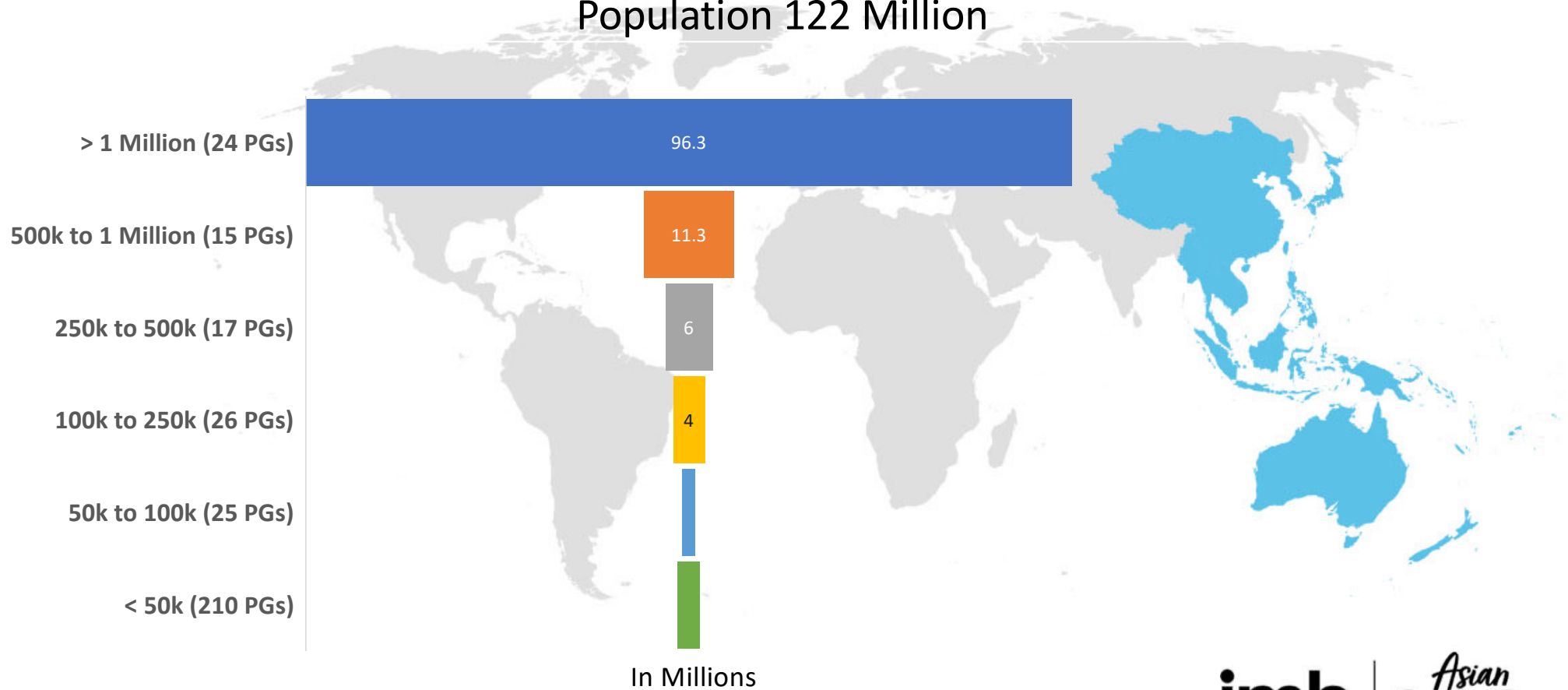
IMB engagement decreases as local ownership of the missionary task increases.

<b>75</b> Total global missionary partners sent from one nation to another to join IMB teams (Total sent from 2020 until December 31, 2022)	<b>541</b> Indigenous people groups have self-sustaining ownership in the missionary task
<b>84</b> Indigenous people groups are engaging other people groups inside their own country	<b>38</b> Indigenous people groups are engaging other people groups outside their own country



# 317 Unreached People Groups in China, Mongolia, Nepal, India, Taiwan

## Population 122 Million



# Six Components of the Missionary Task

*In light of the full testimony of Scripture, we believe the core missionary task has six components.*





# Missiological Challenges

## Understanding that: UPGs ≠ Han

- **UPGs are distinct from Han Chinese linguistically and culturally.**
  - A deep understanding of cross-cultural ministry skills and issues by all ministry partners involved
  - A teachable heart by all involved
- **Example:**
  - Tibetans, Mongols, Muslims, etc.
  - Language, beliefs, behaviors.



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# Missiological Challenges

*All UPGs are distinct from each other, and many of them are vastly different from one another.*

## This Requires:

- A humble heart to recognize that as outsiders none of us fully understand UPG work –the people or cultures involved.
- That we genuinely listen to people who are already engaging the lost in those areas and oftentimes have unique insights concerning the local situation. (Local believers, Westerners, Han, other organizations, etc.)

## Example:

Working with a leader in Bosnia who “knew” what to do to reach all of China.



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# Commitment to Heart Language Strategies

In many situations, the trade language (Mandarin) is not going to be enough if we are seeking to see truly indigenous churches planted that are planting other indigenous churches.

Not only do people need to be hearing the gospel in the heart language, but they need to be hearing it in a mode that they understand

- i.e. well crafted stories rather than literate-based methods of teaching and sharing.



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# Commitment to Heart Language Strategies

## This Requires:

- Workers being able to learn the heart language, oftentimes in a barefoot (local and interactive) setting (i.e. using GPA) in more remote places where they have access to native speakers.
- Consistent access to relevant language trainings and coaching
- More culturally appropriate resources in their languages – paired up with a Scripture Planting (the active combination of language learning, translation work with Church planting) strategy and ethos.

## Example:

- University study VS study and learn the culture in relationship with the people we are trying to reach.



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# Long-Term, Sustained, Targeted Engagement

In general, shortcuts in ministry **are not going to work** if our end goal is to see deeply rooted disciples who are a part of indigenous reproducing churches.

## This Requires:

- Viable and sustainable access to the UPG for the purpose of finding Persons of Peace, engaging in Evangelism, discipleship and church planting:
- Emotionally, spiritually, and physically healthy Christians who are able to maintain long term presence on the field.

## Example:

- What good is being very direct in evangelism or media distribution if after doing so we cannot follow-up because access is now denied.



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# Deep Relationships with Local UPG Partners

UGPs usually have low understanding and access to biblical materials, resources and Godly examples

Many rural UPGs oral learners need a more hands on approach and generally more time is needed to teach them the commands of Christ.

## This Requires:

- The cultural and linguistic abilities
- Longevity of time to foster these relationships
  - Especially true in relational society.

## Think:

- What is one of the most important aspects of partnership, discipleship, business, etc. Relationship – it is all about relationship.



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# Realistic Expectations Concerning UPG Work

UPGs are unreached for a reason

- Often live in hard to get to places
- Speak hard-to-learn languages
- Often require years of proclamation paired up with living out a Christ-centered life in front of them, before the floodgates are opened for many to follow Christ.

This Requires:

- leadership that is deeply committed to supporting and encouraging UPG workers for the long-term
- A recognizing and understanding that UPG work and city ministry are vastly different and that there are very real needs and issues that UPG workers have that city-focused personnel do not.

Example:

- Credible access, lack of community, difficult living conditions, etc.



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# Support and Freedom to Allow for Risk-Taking

UPG work is not for the faint of heart, and with each local situation being unique, Christian workers must be willing and able to try out new ideas and take risks.

## This Requires:

- Leadership structure and philosophy that allows, encourages, supports, and expects UPG missionaries to be strategic risk-takers.
  - If we say that we want people to be risk-takers but then hinder that through our actions or policies, this will likely slow the work down and discourage future risk-taking.
- A high degree of freedom coupled with a high degree of accountability.

## Example:

- Allow a missionary to try a new type of language learning or evangelism method
- Continue supporting missionaries if the former plan failed



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# Intentional Influence

**Influence among targeted UPGs, near-culture partners, and other Christian workers is vital if we were to see these people groups reached.**

## **This Requires:**

- **Mutual respect, trust, deep relationships, and longevity**
  - Locals do notice and gravitate to those Christians who go deeper in their relationship rather than being treated as a stepping stone.

## **Example:**

- **Heart language strategies**
- **Scripture planting**
- **Identify effective EV models**



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BIGGEST HURDLE TO REACH UPGs

# LONGEVITY



<https://media.tenor.com/9LUKGIBsWD8AAAAM/despicable-me-agnes.gif>



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# Without Longevity

**We will NOT be committing to heart language.**

**We will NOT see long-term, sustained, targeted engagement with the UPG.**

**We will NOT be able to foster deep relationships with local UPG partners.**

**We will NOT be making as many strategic risk-taking decisions.**

**We will NOT be able to facilitate an effective and coordinated effort from all fronts to see ALL UUPGs reached.**

**We will NOT have significant influence among our national partners, near-culture partners, and fellow Christian workers.**



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# God's Commission of Isaiah

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven." Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' (Isaiah 1-9)



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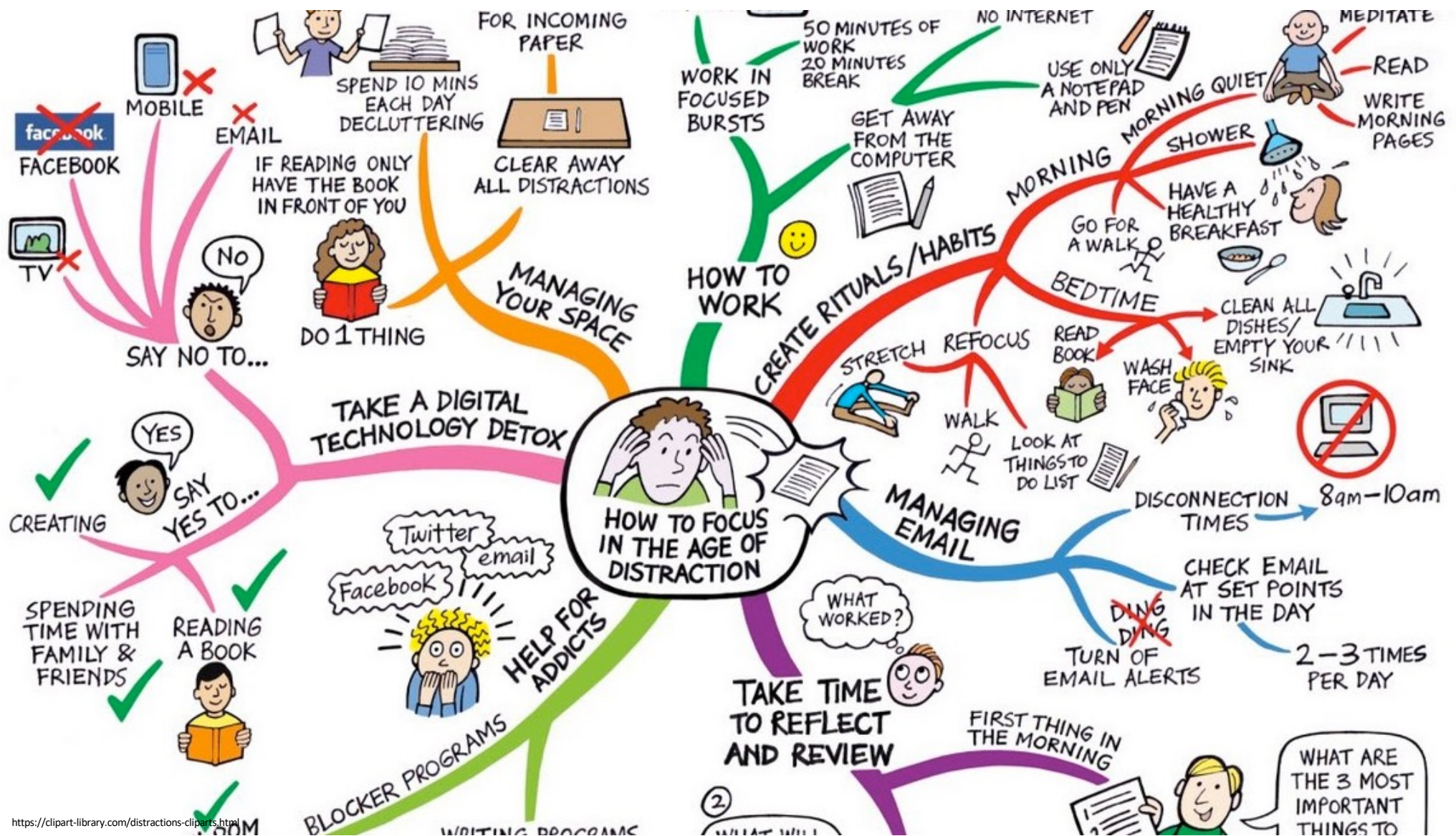
## Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

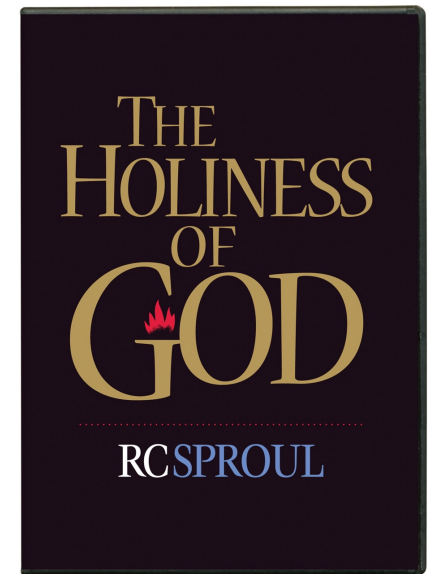
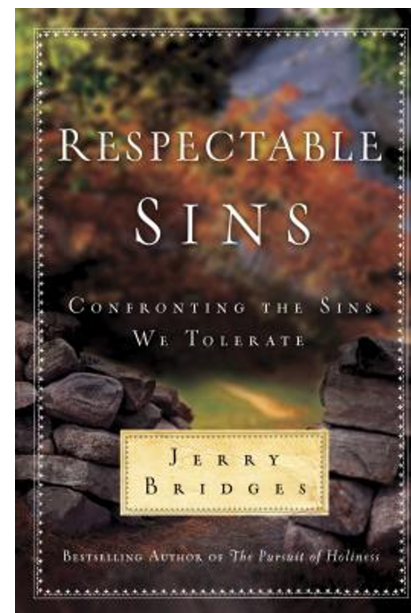
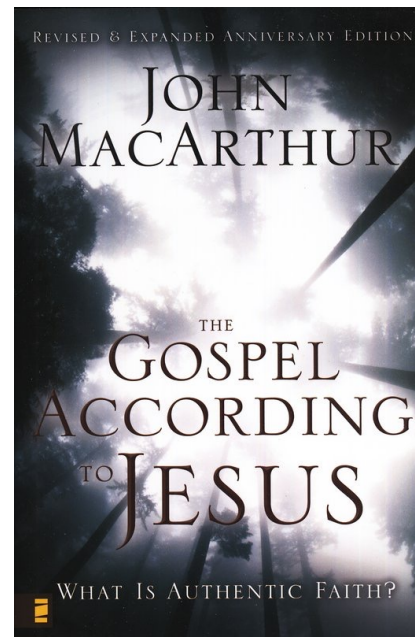
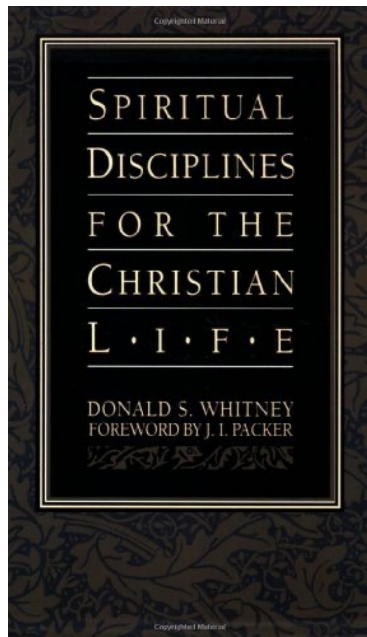


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## Resources On the Christian Walk

## Resources On Habits & EV

