

# embracing ASAP 101

Training to Embrace South Asian Peoples

*“And there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb,”*

*(Rev 7:9 HCSB)*



Have you ever been discouraged when starting a new task, unsure if you would be successful or not? Wouldn't it be great to know right from the beginning that everything would work out all right in the end?

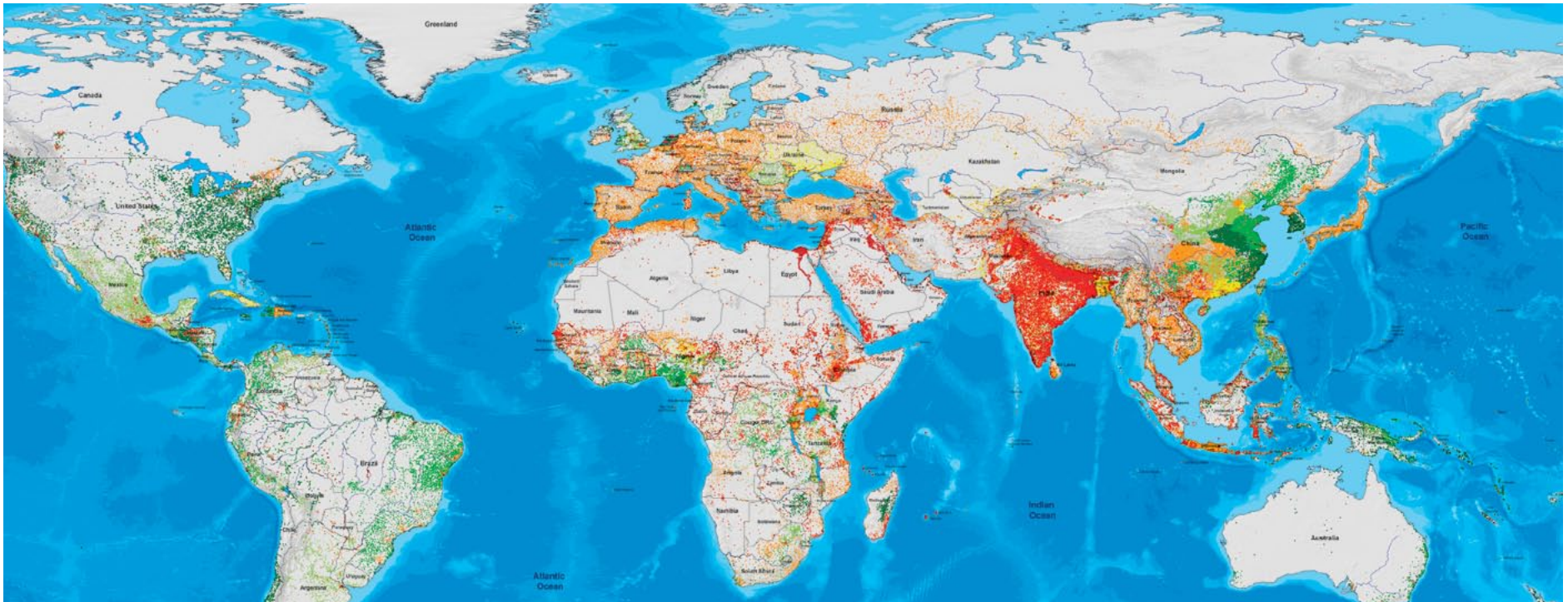
When beginning to “Embrace” the unengaged, unreached peoples of South Asia you may rest assured that eventually they will be reached—this is God’s promise to us in Revelation 7:9. The God who sees the end from the beginning has already guaranteed that they will all be represented around His throne. Our job is not to make it happen, but to join Him as He is already making it happen. Will you join Him in His work?

Even though God guarantees that every group will be represented around the throne that does not mean we can sit on the sidelines and watch. We have an important part to play, to be His Heart, His Hands, and His Voice. The purpose of this booklet is to help us understand what that part is in practical terms. Our prayer for you is that as you work through this booklet God will give you a vision for the people group He would have you embrace and also place in you a step by step plan for seeing them engaged and, ultimately, reached.

As we begin, let’s look at a few terms, just to be sure we are on the same page when we talk about embracing an unengaged, unreached people group (UUPG).

- **People Group** – A “people group” is a group with a common ethnic and language identity. Members of the same people group share history, customs, family and clan identities, as well as marriage rules and practices, and inheritance patterns and rules.
- **Unreached** – An unreached people group is a group where less than 2 percent of the population is evangelical Christian. Many of these people have never even heard the name of Christ, and in most cases no one is trying to reach them with the Gospel.
- **Unengaged** – An unengaged people group is one without evangelical church planting. A people group is not engaged when it has been adopted, is the object of focused prayer, or is part of an advocacy strategy.
- **Embrace** – Embrace is a church’s firm commitment to engage at least one of the world’s remaining 3,800 unengaged, unreached people groups (UUPG). This commitment is a serious pledge to engage that UUPG at whatever cost (time, financial, personnel, etc.).





So, what is the status of unengaged unreached people groups in South Asia?

Look at the map above and write down what you notice. Each red dot represents a UUPG.

Do you notice the bleeding heart that covers South Asia? South Asia has the largest concentration of lostness on the planet. And, there are some reasons for that.

**1 South Asian peoples are hard to get to geographically.**

Many of the peoples of South Asia live on isolated islands, in deserts or in small valleys cut off by tall mountains with no roads or just hundreds of miles from the nearest airport. To reach some of the UUPGs will take days of trekking that begin only after you have flown half-way across the world. And when you get there it could be 120 degrees outside—or below freezing!

**2 South Asian peoples are hard to get to financially.**

Traveling to South Asia is not cheap. But, it is worth the trip — especially when God is calling you to take the step of embracing a UUPG. Once you get there, it is a relatively inexpensive place to stay.

**3 South Asian peoples are hard to get to culturally.**

The enemy has been using competing worldviews to claim the attention of South Asians for thousands of years. These worldviews often hold entire people groups in bondage, blinding the eyes of the people to the truth revealed in Jesus Christ.

**4 South Asian peoples are hard to get to politically.**

South Asians can be found living behind battle lines, in terrorist camps or within borders that have passed “anti-conversion” laws which make it illegal to share the Gospel. Some countries even mandate by law that no citizen can be a Christian. In most South Asian countries, getting a visa can be a challenge.



So, the challenges are great. But, we press on, because as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, “We are pressured in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed.”

In spite of the many obstacles before us, we are excited by what the Father is doing in South Asia. During the past five years we have seen over 7,700 new outreach groups formed and engaged with the gospel, 79,258 baptisms and at least 6,900 new churches planted. So, as we look to those groups that have not yet been reached, we look with confidence. God has promised to reach every one of them and demonstrates His faithfulness to that promise all around us!

IMB is ready and willing to help you in this task. Your missionaries are currently located in strategic areas learning the local languages, sharing their faith, discipling new believers and starting reproducing churches. We, as your missionaries, commit to helping you embrace the people groups living all around us. But we need your help. Currently, South Asia has the least number of IMB missionaries compared to all other Affinities. **There are not enough missionaries to have one person focused on each UUPG.**

## Action Steps

### Selecting a people group

If you have not yet done so, consider attending a one-day Embrace event, either live or by webinar in order to get some guidance on how to select the right UUPG for your church to embrace.

Go to <http://southasianpeoples.imb.org/embrace> and see the list of priority South Asian UUPGS. Prayerfully consider which UUPG the Lord would have you embrace and after your church makes a decision write the name of that people here:

\_\_\_\_\_ *Our people group name*

#### Other helpful information:

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

PEID #: \_\_\_\_\_

*PEID is a numeric code assigned to people groups. It keeps everyone on the same page. You will find this number associated with our people group lists.*

**Note:** *If, after visiting the site you still have questions, contact the person who gave you this book for more information.*

Be sure to follow up with the website so we can know of your decision and help you as you follow the Lord’s direction! We will connect you with the missionaries on the ground in close proximity to your UUPG.

As you begin to research your UUPG, you may want to google its-name and then visit these sites:

- <http://public.IMB.org/globalresearch>
- <http://www.JoshuaProject.net>
- <http://www.peoplegroups.org/faqs.aspx>



So, now that you have selected a UUPG to embrace, what is the next step?

In the Affinity of South Asian Peoples (ASAP) there are four broad guiding principles that help us develop a well-rounded strategy. They are:

- **Abiding** in Christ through Prayer and the Word
- **Seeking** the Lost through Entry and Evangelism
- **Applying** God's Word through Discipleship and Leadership Training
- **Planting** Reproducing Churches through Modeling and Equipping

This booklet will assist you in moving forward as you embrace the UUPG that God has chosen for you. These principles are broad and have been adapted in different ways across South Asia. So don't worry—more training will be made available both in the US and in South Asia (on the job training is the best) as you move forward in the process. And you will be working in partnership with IMB personnel on the ground as they guide you in the use of biblical best practices appropriate for your people.

At the end of this booklet there is a suggested schedule for you to consider as you embrace a UUPG. We have also included some examples of what other churches have done and a reading list for further study. Rest assured—when the time for your first visit to South Asia is approaching, we have information to help you prepare for that, too.

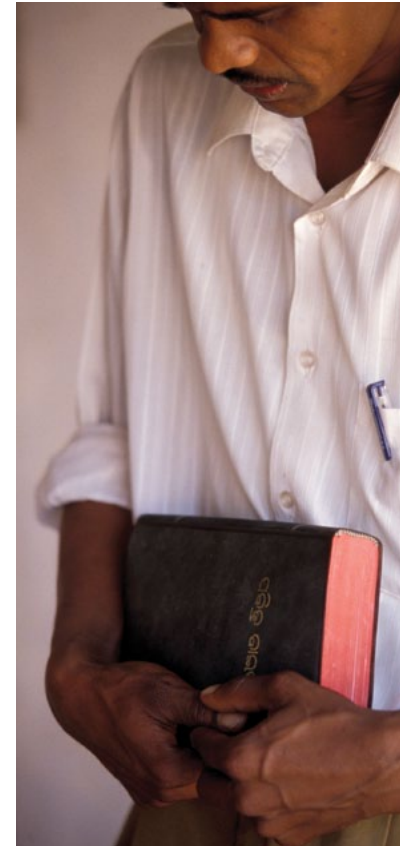
## Abiding

Our first guiding principle is “Abiding in Christ through Prayer and the Word.” To put ourselves in the best position to be used by God in reaching UUPGs we need a deep, growing relationship with Jesus Christ. But what does it mean to “abide in Christ”? Webster's dictionary defines abiding as “to remain in a fixed state” or “to continue in a place.” So to abide in Christ would be to stay constantly aware of Him, doing what would please him and enjoying his presence.

A 17th century Christian monk, Brother Lawrence, called it “practicing the presence of God.” For Lawrence, there was no distinction between time in the kitchen doing chores and time in the chapel saying prayers—he was always in the presence of God.

Rees Howells, a 20th Century cross-cultural worker, scholar and prayer warrior, based his life and ministry on the same principle. He considered abiding to be the doorway to a deep relationship with God, something he called “a daily obedience, a daily abiding, and a daily going through.” For him, abiding was the key to intercession because the only way to know the heart of the Father was to be constantly with Him.

Jesus Christ also considered abiding to be an essential ingredient in prayer and in relationship with the Father. Let's see what he has to say about the matter.



## Action Steps

Read John 15:1-17. Then consider the following questions (if several people in your church are working through this study together, then you could use these questions as a guide for a Bible Study):

- What happens to the branch that does not abide?
- What happens to the branch that does?
- In what ways is Jesus like a vine?
- How are we like branches?
- How do we bring glory to the Father?
- What is the key to bearing much fruit?
- How does one who abides in Christ treat others?
- Under what conditions will the Father answer our prayers?

Close your time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you into a deeper place of abiding.



You may be asking yourself, “What does prayer have to do with getting the job done?” Andrew Murray, in his classic book, [With Christ in the School of Prayer](#), helps us understand the relationship between mission work and the right kind of praying: “I feel sure that as long as we look on prayer chiefly as the means of maintaining our own Christian life, we shall not know fully what it is meant to be. But when we learn to regard it as the highest part of the work entrusted to us, the root and strength of all other work, we shall see that there is nothing that we so need to study and practice as the art of praying aright.”

As you begin to develop a strategy for working with the people God has laid on your heart, it is critical you continue walking in an ever-deepening relationship with God in Christ. Reading scripture, praying regularly, listening for the Father’s voice, meeting regularly with an accountability partner or group and immediately obeying His leading are just a couple of disciplines we can practice to nurture an attitude and heart of abiding.

As we are abiding it is natural for the life we have in Him to flow through us into the lives of those we encounter. As we abide in Him and engage others, His Spirit prompts us to pray for them.

A guide we can use in praying for others is to use the **BLESS** acronym. It can serve as a tool that helps us think of things to pray:

**B** – Body: Are they sick? Do they need daily bread? Are there physical needs to be met?

**L** – Labors: Ask God to assist them with their daily tasks, school or work.

**E** – Emotional Needs: Prayer concerns like security, peace, joy and hope.

**S** – Social Needs: Healthy relationships within communities, families, between friends.

**S** – Spiritual Needs: Ask God to give them a hunger for Himself, the True and Living God.

## Action Steps

Here are several options for using the BLESS method as you begin to develop a strategy for reaching your UUPG:

- Begin using BLESS as a prayer prompt as you go through your day, praying for those God brings across your path.
- Go online and research your people group and develop a prayer guide with specific requests related to each category.
- Distribute that prayer guide widely in order to enlist a growing number of prayer partners for the work.
- Go to a South Asian community near you and use the BLESS method to pray for the people you encounter.
- Plan a trip to South Asia and pray for the people of your UUPG on site. Be sure to visit <http://going.imb.org/volunteers> before planning your trip for a wealth of tips on the practicalities of a short-term mission trip.

## Seeking

Our second guiding principle is “Seeking the Lost through Entry and Evangelism.” Beyond praying **for** the people, praying **among** the people is an excellent way to enter into a new community. In fact, when Jesus sent His disciples into a new community to prepare the way for His arrival, He told them to enter by praying for additional workers in the harvest (Luke 10:2).

As you enter a community in a spirit of prayer, ask the Father to give you opportunities to share with the people that you meet and boldness to seize those opportunities. After you have found someone, what will you share? We have found that a three-part conversation is a great way to introduce people to Jesus:



### 1. Listen to their story

### 2. Share your story

### 3. Share His story

Let’s look at each of those steps a bit more closely. First, we want to **listen to their story**. We do not need to spend years, months, or even hours “earning the right” to share the gospel. But we do need to enter into a *genuine relationship* with someone with whom we want to share. We want to listen prayerfully to their story so we can become aware of bridges to help them understand the gospel.

For example, if in the conversation you hear the idea that the person feels distant from God because of what they have or have not done, you could share the story of the Prodigal Son/Loving Father. Or, if you hear a sense of pride in their works based righteousness, you could share the story of the Pharisee and the Publican.

Next, we want to **share our story**—the testimony of how we came to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. In Acts 22:1-21 we find a great model for how to share our story. Paul shared his testimony around three basic truths: his life before he met Christ, how he met Christ and how his life had been different since he met Christ.

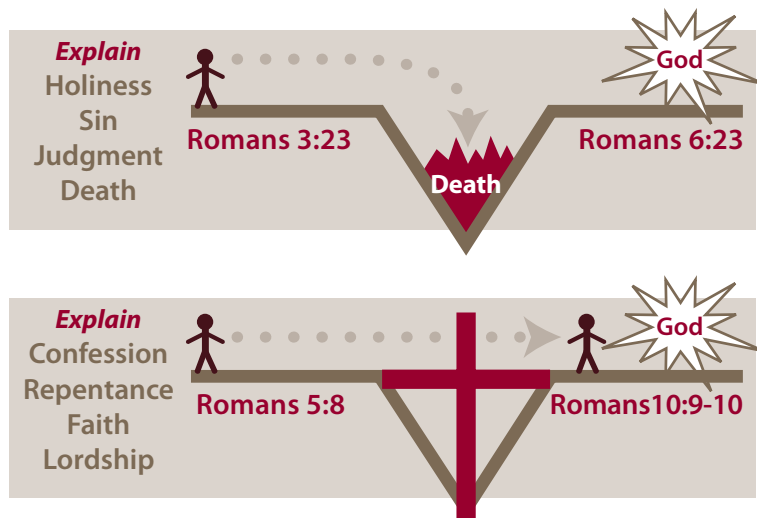
Now read the passage out loud and see how long it takes Paul to tell his story. Less than 3 minutes, right? So that is our target. Can you tell your story, using the three points in Paul’s example, in three minutes?

Finally, we want to **share His story**. Lots of simple gospel presentations have been developed over the years. If you have one that you are already comfortable using, that's great. Just be sure to ask your IMB partners if there are any cultural considerations you may need to know about before sharing.

On the field, we always want to be sure that the gospel we present is biblical and includes the message of the crucifixion, that it was ordained by God and not a surprise to Him, that Jesus was resurrected on the third day and that we have the evidence of eyewitnesses to help us know it is a historical fact (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). We also want to be sure that the people we are sharing with understand that the purpose of the crucifixion was to pay the penalty for their sins and that they need to believe in Christ by faith in order for their sins to be forgiven.

A simple way to share His story is the Romans Road illustration. Initially draw the diagram below showing the gap between human effort and God's glory.

### Romans Road



- Quote **Romans 3:23**, “**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Explain that all humans have done bad things and cannot measure up to God’s perfect standard. Every effort to cross the gap between humanity and God fails.
- **Romans 6:23** tells us that “**the wages of sin is death.**” So, because we fail to meet God’s standards, we will be separated from His presence in eternal death. That is the bad news.
- The good news is found in **Romans 5:8** which says, “**But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!**” At this point add to the diagram a cross that bridges the gap between us and God, and explain that it is Christ’s death on the cross alone that gives us access to God.
- **Romans 10:9** tells us how to respond to what God offers in Christ: “**If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**”

As you go, we want to give you two more pieces of advice. Remember to ask for a decision after sharing the gospel with someone. We have discovered that often people are faithful to share the gospel and explain to a person how to receive Christ, but forget to take the next step and say, “Would you like to do that right now?” Make sure that a person does not feel pressed into a premature decision, but always give them an opportunity accept Christ as Savior and Lord.

And, since you will be working in an area where you probably don’t speak the language—and where the needs are far too great for you to be able to do it alone—look for people whom you can train to share the gospel as described above. The key to reaching an entire UUPG is training up national partners from within the people group who can carry the work forward.



## Action Steps

Ready to get started entering South Asian communities and sharing the gospel? Here are some suggestions:

- Get a partner with whom you can practice sharing your testimony and a simple Gospel presentation. Don't forget to practice asking for a decision, too!
- Role-play with a partner—one of you can be sharing and the other can be a person from the UUPG you have adopted (remember what you have learned about them from your internet research or earlier visits).
- Go to a place near you where South Asians live or work and share the gospel.
- Come to South Asia and prayer walk communities where your UUPG lives. Share the gospel with the people you meet.
- Be sure to get contact info on people you share with so there can be follow-up.

## Applying

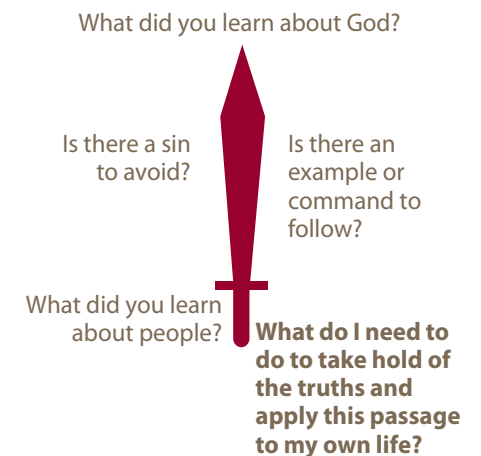
“Applying God’s Word through Discipleship and Leadership Training” is our third principle. Once a person has accepted Christ, he or she needs to be taught how to grow in that relationship.

The “Sword Method” of Bible study is a simple inductive Bible study method that lets people grow in their understanding of God and His word without requiring any additional study materials.

Read Hebrews 4:12. Why do you think the author of Hebrews refers to the Bible as a double-edged sword? One reason could be that a sword cuts on both sides. Often, when working with South Asians, we use a drawing of a sword to remind us of five questions we can ask to help us understand the purpose of any Scripture passage.

- The top of the sword points to God. So, we ask, “What did you learn about God?”
- The bottom of the sword points toward us. So, we ask, “What did you learn about people?”
- The left edge can lead us to ask, “Is there a sin to avoid?”
- The right edge can lead us to ask, “Is there an example or command to follow?”
- Finally, the handle we grab can cause us to ask, “What do I need to do to take hold of the truths I have learned? How will I apply this passage in my own life?”

The sword method is a great way to do a discovery (or inductive) Bible study. It allows the participants to be fully involved in the study, teaches them how to study the Bible on their own or lead someone else in Bible study and can be used with any passage of scripture, a Bible story, a segment of an audio Bible or even a portion of the Jesus film.



A great way to start using this method is with the Seven Commands of Christ. The seven commands are basic activities for all believers and something that a new follower of Jesus should learn as soon as possible. When working with a set of new believers you can meet regularly to read the assigned verses (or tell the appropriate Bible stories if working with oral learners) and then ask the sword questions. Careful attention should be given to letting the new believers answer the

questions instead of the teacher lecturing. By doing this, a pattern of obedience can be set for the new believer to continue to grow in the absence of the teacher.

1. **Repent and Believe** — Luke 19:1-10
2. **Be Baptized** — Acts 8:26-39
3. **Pray** — Matthew 6:5-15
4. **Go... Make Disciples** — John 4:4-42
5. **Love** — Luke 10:25-37
6. **Lord's Supper** — Luke 22:7-20
7. **Give** — Mark 12:41-44

### Action Steps

There are multiple ways you can use the sword method as you prepare to disciple new believers in your UUPG:

- Practice using the sword method as a regular part of your daily Bible reading time to help you to get the most out of the passage you are reading. Consider recording your answers in a journal.
- If you are a part of a group that is working together to embrace a UUPG, meet together and study the Scriptures in a small group using this method.
- Train the new believers you have lead to faith, either in the US or among South Asians to use the sword method in studying the Bible.
- Visit the site <http://www.paul-timothy.net/index.html> and check out the discipleship and leadership training materials available there. Consider if this material would be useful for the UUPG you are working with. Many of our teams are using the Seven Commands ([http://www.paul-timothy.net/html/7\\_commands.html](http://www.paul-timothy.net/html/7_commands.html)) as an introductory study for new believers. Also, many of the materials related to this site have already been translated into South Asian languages (<http://www.paul-timothy.net/pages/indian/>)

Developing leaders is key to reaching an entire UUPG. A wise man once said that new churches don't start until there is a new leader who goes and starts it. Our discipleship should be centered on obedience to Christ. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:20 tells us to teach new believers how to **obey** Jesus' commands, not simply to pass along **only** the commands. Obedience to what the Lord is calling a man to do is essential for Godly leaders.

Once obedient disciples of Christ have been identified, we should strive to pour Jesus into them. Using long-term discipleship materials, we can invest God's Word in them. Casting vision to obedient disciples will often help them go and multiply obedient disciples. Finding and working with key national partners who obey Jesus' commands is a very important part of reaching a UUPG. Ask your IMB missionary how they identify and multiply national partners.

### Planting

What do you hope to see God do among the people you have been led to embrace? Will you be satisfied with a few scattered believers? While no verse in Scripture commands us to go and start new churches, we can plainly see from the book of Acts that everywhere disciples were made, healthy churches sprung up. We should recognize from the outset that our task is not to just make converts, but to gather disciples together in healthy, reproducing churches. Therefore, our fourth guiding principle is "Planting Reproducing Churches through Modeling and Equipping."

Many people think that "church" means a building. According to church historians, it was 350 years before the first church building was built. In reality the word "church" means "people," or, more specifically, a "gathering of called out people."

Let's look at what the New Testament says a church does in Acts 2:38-47.

Based on these verses, how would you define a church? What are the characteristics of a church according to the New Testament?



According to the New Testament, a church is a group of baptized believers in Jesus Christ who are committed to gather together to do the following things:

### **Devote Themselves to the Apostles' Teaching (Discipleship)**

According to this passage, the early disciples gathered regularly to study the teaching of the Apostles. How can we do this today? Using the sword method as described above is a great way to lead people to study the apostles teaching.

### **Fellowship**

"Fellowship" is when followers of Christ gather to strengthen and encourage one another. As a matter of fact, it is the opportunity to do all of the "one anothers" commanded in Scripture—love one another, bear one another's burdens, and so forth. For many American Christians it also means fried chicken! If we are going to get together, we may as well eat, right?

### **Broke Bread Together and Praised God (Worship)**

Why did they break bread? Because they wanted to remember the sacrifice of Jesus on their behalf. Worship is an opportunity for us to gather together with other believers and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in praising our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus. It is an opportunity to be used for God's glory and not to entertain ourselves.

### **Give to anyone who has a need (Ministry to those within and outside the faith community)**

In John 13:34 Jesus commands us to love one another. How can we show that love to others? Through ministry. We can give a cup of cold water in Jesus' name. We can feed the hungry. Faith that is real always demonstrates itself in visible form—our ministry.

### **The Lord added daily those who were being saved (Evangelism)**

I wonder if you believe this can happen among the UUPG you have agreed to embrace? Once, a friend of mine told me that Muslims could not be saved. He thought their faith was too strong. So, I asked him, "Who is stronger, Muhammad or Jesus?"

"Jesus, of course!" he answered.

"Well, if that is true, don't you think Jesus has enough power to save a Muslim?"

The same is true of any people God chooses to reach for His own glory—and remember, He has promised to reach every people!



Here is a simple pattern of worship that you can model for the new believers you have seen come to faith among your UUPG:

1. Pray
2. Share experiences (answered prayer, witnessing, etc.) since the last meeting.
3. Review last week's verse and story/lesson.
4. Worship Him through singing.
5. Share a new story or passage of Scripture.
6. Discuss the story using the five sword questions. Review the story and discuss with whom you will share it this week.
7. Participants pray for one another in the name of Jesus (Isha/ Yeshu).
8. Collect an offering and decide how to use it.
9. Introduce a new Scripture memory verse to help remember the lesson for the week and take time to learn it.
10. Take the Lord's Supper (this is only for people who have already become followers of Christ).
11. Pray, asking the Lord for strength to obey what He revealed from Scripture



#### Action Steps

While this is not an exhaustive look at what a healthy church is, by modeling what we teach new believers about church from His Word, we are on the right path to seeing healthy churches growing and multiplying. Further time with the new church should be given to helping them choose leaders, ground themselves biblically, and to equipping each member for works of service. These things cannot be done without spending a significant amount of time with the church through repetitive visits and/or extended stays.

- Study 2 Peter 3:9. How does this apply to your people? Who does God want to save out of your UUPG?
- Practice simple worship with your team prior to coming to the field
- Continue meeting regularly in this fashion and include any national partners or translators so they can become accustomed to it
- Teach new believers to follow this pattern as they meet together with others.

## A Potential Outline

The process of embracing the UUPGs in ASAP will be as varied as the peoples of South Asia and the churches that embrace them. This booklet is designed to give you some ideas to begin thinking and praying through. If you have not been to any training for reaching a UUPG we would love to have you at a future training, where you will begin to put your plan together. And, as you have the opportunity to encounter your UUPG in the field, IMB personnel will be able to assist you in discovering God's plan for the work.

Here is a simple outline of what that plan could look like:

### Phase 1: Make a Commitment

- The team leaders attend an ASAP training (**Embracing ASAP 101** training) to prepare them for building a strategy and to learn the ins and outs of traveling in South Asia.
- The church has a 30-day prayer and fasting emphasis culminating in a celebration of God and what He will do among the UUPG through the partnership.
- The embrace leadership team continues to learn as much as they can about the UUPG.

### Phase 2: Explore the Land

- Participate in an **Embracing ASAP 201** training in conjunction with IMB personnel on the field in order to learn specific strategies being used in the area.
- A group from the church takes a Discovery trip to the area where your UUPG lives with the goals of growing in an understanding of your UUPG and seeking the lost.

### Phase 3: Plant, Water & God Gives the Increase

- Plan regular, small-team follow up visits in order to do more seeking as well as to provide discipleship that results in churches.
- Maintain regular contact with IMB personnel and any national partners engaged during the first trip.

- Attend **Embracing ASAP 301** training to learn Biblically-based best practices from across South Asia.

### Phase 4: Reproducing Churches

- Continue making regular trips.
- Consider placing a church member or members on the ground for four months to two years to work alongside IMB personnel, supporting a national partner through prayer and the strategic use of funds.
- Along with key national partners attend an **Embracing ASAP 401** training to evaluate and strengthen the emerging Church Planting Movement.

### Phase 5: Commissioning

- After serving alongside you for years, by the grace of God, these national partners will have caught the Lord's vision for their people and be implementing strategies that are reaching their entire people group.
- Assist the network of national partners in developing a missional vision in reaching other UUPGs.
- Following the example laid out in Acts release the work into the hands of God-appointed national partners.

Realistically, we see these phases taking a minimum of three to five years. We are asking you to prayerfully consider focusing your efforts to the ends of the earth by embracing one UUPG. We commit to helping you along every step of the way, rejoicing with you as the first believers come, as the first churches start, and hopefully, as the churches begin to multiply, reaching every village and person who is among the UUPG. We would encourage you not to judge your success or failure based on the number of believers who come to faith or on churches that are started. Judge your success on being faithful to what the Lord is calling you to do. So, the question is: will you join Him in His work of Embracing South Asian peoples?

## The Tale of Two Churches

*How God uses powerful partnerships of US Churches, IMB Connecting personnel and Nationals.*

### From Prayer to Partner

In 1994, a South Carolina Church cast a vision to impact the Nations. Among their target goals were to position themselves to spend 25% of all their collected tithes and offerings on Evangelism and Missions, to equip, assist and send 10% of their congregation on Short-term Mission Trips each year, to implement an annual Missions Conference, to enter into an adoption of an IMB Team in the 10/40 Window for Prayer and finally to ask God to raise up five units from their congregation to go and serve full time in the 10/40 Window within the next 10 years.

The very next year the Pastor and a key layman went on a vision Trip to South Asia and connected with IMB personnel on the field. Excitement began building as the church “embraced” the work overseas. Monthly prayer teams began to form, volunteer trips began to organize, people began giving sacrificially toward the vision, the mission conference (GIC) assisted in educating the congregation and generated enthusiasm toward being a part of reaching the unreached of the world. The first several years the church was slowly developing a passion to impact lostness among South Asia but soon found that the rising passion generated a buzz that was changing the church ethos.

This ethos spilled over into the congregation as they became more evangelistic locally and it was common to see members rethinking their spending priorities as they aligned their vision with where God is at work. By 2001 they had expanded their vision to such a degree that they had exceeded their goals in all the above-mentioned areas. The church itself grew tremendously in spite of the almost 30% of offerings being marked for evangelism and missions. They discovered that God was blessing their desire to be more involved in seeing the nations reached with the Gospel. People from the community crowded the pews to be a part of something that was way bigger

than “circling the wagons” and guarding themselves from the “world”. They assumed responsibility to be change agents in the world. So much that by 2010 this church has now adopted eight teams in South Asia whereby they pray for the personnel serving there weekly, they have sent over 250 people on Volunteer teams to this partnership, they have served the personnel of South Asia at 2 AGMs (Annual General Meeting) and 2 cluster meetings by undertaking the childcare, worship, youth and preaching for our IMB folks for a week of spiritual refreshment.

In addition to this, they have also given special gift funds to annually fund over 75% of eight teams strategy budgets for discipling and pastoral training of nationals and funding for Bibles. These teams have distributed over 20,000 Bibles to South Asians over the last five years. The net results for this 15 years of investment in the adoption is over 4,000 House Churches have been planted, over 18,000 new believers have been baptized, over 70 UUPGs have been engaged and 7 church members are now serving full time with IMB Connecting in the 10/40 window. God has definitely honored the faithful, steady, small steps of this church over a long period of time committed to “embracing” the UUPGs of South Asia.

### From Coaching to Playing

In 1999, a Florida Church sends groups of baseball coaches (mostly laymen with High School playing experience) into South Asia to share baseball technical skills with young men as they attempt to share the Gospel with the camp participants. They come on the invitation of IMB field personnel to help with “seeking” strategies on short-term volunteer trips. These men commit to coming three to four times a year and begin bringing Basketball and Volleyball coaches to do the same. After two years of this kind of faithful service of seed sowing, with limited fruit to show for it, the IMB Team leader and the Church Team leader decide that they should change strategies. They felt led to be doing more discipling of existing believers and church planting training of nationals in order to establish viable indigenous com-

munities of faith that will impact the locals that will in turn reach the UUPGs in their state. They undergo a radical shift in strategy and determine to get the necessary training in CPM (Church Planting Movement) principles and begin applying it, and so they decide to hang up their cleats.

Because of the team's vast short-term experiences over several years engaging the culture they have become very aware of the Indian customs, cultural issues and the worldview barriers to the gospel and they are ready to take the next step to becoming church planting trainers. The church agrees to help partially support this responsibility by shepherding two key national partners and adopting a whole district, which represents about 2 million people and 15 UUPGs. Working closely with the IMB Connecting personnel and the national partners, the church develops a strategy to plant a house church in all of the 1,600 villages within the district. In 2007 the group of church laymen had seen so much fruit from their shift in strategy that several of them quit their jobs, sold their businesses to form a church planting training organization birthed out of the church.

These men are now serving the Lord full-time in training nationals for planting churches among UUPGs all throughout the 10/40 Window. This group now does work in six different countries and have seen dozens of UUPGs engaged, hundreds of churches planted, and hundreds of national pastors equipped and mentored. This story is still being written as we speak but it is important to remember that a few committed people from a church that are walking by faith to be about God's plan of redemption for a lost world can yield a great harvest by His hand and for His Glory.

## Bibliography

An excellent starting point for your continued learning is a series of books called Culture Shock (plus the name of the country where your people group lives). It will introduce you to the customs and culture of the country where you will be going. In addition, the following books have proven to be helpful:

Allen, Roland. Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes that Hinder it. 1927.

Alphonse, Martin. The Gospel for the Hindus. Chennai: Mission Educational Books, 2001.

David, George. Communicating Christ among Hindu Peoples. Chennai: CBMTM Publications, 1998.

Eastman, Dick. The Hour That Changes the World: A Practical Plan for Personal Prayer. Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2002.

Eliff, Tom. A Passion for Prayer: Experiencing Deeper Intimacy with God. Crossway Books, 1998

Garrison, David. Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World. Midlothian, VA: WIG Take Resources, 2004.

Greeson, Kevin. The Camel: How Muslims Are Coming to Faith in Christ! Arkadelphia, AR: WIG Take Resources, 2007.

Hall, Annette. Producing Mature Fruit. Makati City, Philippines: CSM Publishing, 1999.

Maharajaj, Ravi, Death of a Guru. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1984.

Musk, Bill. The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims at Street Level. East Sussex: Monarch Publications, 1989.

Smith, Steve and Ying Kai. T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution. Arkadelphia, AR: WIG Take Resources, 2011.

Storti, Craig. The Art of Crossing Cultures. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1990.

Thirumalai, Madasamy. Sharing Your Faith with a Buddhist. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2003.

Tsering, Marku. Sharing Christ in the Tibetan Buddhist World. Upper Darby, PA: Interserve USA, 1993

———. Sharing Your Faith with a Hindu. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2002.

Van Rheenen, Gailyn. Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1991.

Zacharias, Ravi. The Lotus and the Cross: Jesus Talks with Buddha. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2001.

