

Adopt a People Movement

Bringing Back the King of Kings!

*What is God's way of supernaturally bringing about mission breakthrough?
Having people adopt a frontier people group in prayer.*

By **JOHN ROBB**

John Robb is the founder and former Chairman for the International Prayer Council and International Prayer Connect, a network of prayer ministries and networks around the world (ipcprayer.org). He is the Coordinator for the Unreached Peoples Task Force and Chairman of Transformation Prayer Foundation (transformationprayerfoundation.org). John is a former field missionary and leads consultations and seminars in more than 80 countries.

An increasing number of us in mission movement believe we may well be in the run-up to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ! He told us to watch for the signs to know when that will be. Perhaps the most important sign is that the *ethne*, the ethnic people groups, mentioned in Matthew 24:14; 28:19 are now within the possibility of being reached with the gospel. We might even see this happen by 2033, as several world mission leaders now predict. What a time to be alive and serve the returning King of Kings!

In the meantime, we need to greatly multiply and expand both prayer and mission efforts to ignite

movements for Christ among every one of the frontier people groups (FPGs), those most unreached groups with less than one person per thousand who follow Jesus. Of the several thousand unreached people groups (UPGs), there are 293 FPGs, each over 1 million in size, totaling about 1.6 billion people. These FPGs are called “frontier” because they are the least reached of the UPGs. Joshua Project maintains the list of all FPGs. They are the most strategic people groups to reach first because, as they respond to the gospel, movements for Christ developing in them will likely overflow to smaller FPGs around them. The powerful momentum of disciple making, church planting movements will be unleashed.

The prayer and mission movements need your help! We are seeking to get churches, prayer groups, youth, and children's ministries worldwide, through denominations and networks, to systematically adopt each one of these 293 and ultimately all the remaining UPGs. Jesus commanded that we pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest field (Matt 9:37–38). When driving the money changers out of the temple, he also exclaimed “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations (*ethne*)” (Mark 11:17).

Prayer is therefore the first order of business in reaching the unreached. It is God's powerful, supernatural way that carries out his global mission, even in the most resistant and unreached places and peoples! When each of these 293 groups are adopted for ongoing, focused prayer by multiple ministry entities, we expect an explosive, synergistic leap forward in seeing the *ethne* reached in this decade.

Tools and Tips

Here are just a few resources and suggestions to use and share with others.

- A brief video, *Understanding the Remaining Mission Task*, provides a helpful overview of our progress in completing this all-important mission of the Lord.¹
- Prayer cards for each of these largest FPGs are available at Joshua Project.² They can be enlarged to be placed on church walls, prayer group's meeting place, or given as bookmarks to remind people of the people group they've adopted. Joshua Project has many wonderful resources to help them find out more about their people group. Also, adopting entities can always do their own research and seek to network with others who have the same FPG as their focus.
- A new web platform called GetInvolved.com enables the formation of digital prayer communities to connect those with the same FPG in ongoing prayer.

1 “Understanding the Remaining Mission Task.” www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYwcmPoByhg

2 www.joshuaproject.net/frontier/4

- A new phone app is now available to help individuals pray for one of these largest 300 FPGs each day with a picture, profile, maps, etc.³ Try it yourself and share it with others.

We would deeply appreciate your help in mobilizing churches, prayer groups, youth, and children's ministries to meet this challenge to pray.

Through experience, we've found that it is usually best to assign just one FPG to a single ministry or believer. Include a prayer card with your request so that all these 293 FPGs will then be covered in prayer by one or more churches or ministries. Children and youth can also be assigned one to keep in their prayers. As they do, God may even call them to go as missionaries to their people group! Participants are asked to pray for the coming year and then either renew that commitment or shift to another people group.

Please also ask each adopting church or ministry to register their commitments to adopt particular FPGs (or other UPGs) so we can track what is happening.⁴ The AIMS mission agency helps to track adoptions, connect them with field teams, where possible, and communicate how their prayers are answered. They can assist you with adoption, research, prayer, and connecting with field workers seeking to reach FPGs and other UPGs.

Testimony from My Life

I'll close with an amazing testimony about the power of praying for an FPG. At the beginning of the 1990s, I asked two churches in my hometown to adopt a Central Asian people group with only two known Jesus followers. All the rest, as far as we knew, were Muslims.

The Adopt a People Clearinghouse (associated with the U.S. Center for World Mission at that time) had just printed a beautiful prayer card about this almost completely unreached people. Using that card, believers from both churches began to pray, and we began to see God's wonders. Psalm 77:14 says, “You are the God who performs miracles; You display your power among the peoples.” That is exactly what we began to witness!

3 FPG of the Day. Online: play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.frontierpeoplegroups.frontier

4 Register your commitment at aims.org/adoption-registration.html

Shortly after believers began to pray, our hometown and the two Central Asian believers' capital city began a sister-city program that enabled the exchange of musicians, composers, and other cultural programs. The symphony orchestra of that country then decided to do a concert the night before their independence celebration from the Soviet Union. They chose to perform the music of my grandfather, who was our university's Dean of Fine Arts and a well-known local composer. He had recently passed away and my parents could not go, so I attended the concert in that Central Asian nation.

The conductor asked me to say some words about my grandfather, so I told them about his search for God through his composing. We also read Psalm 23, his favorite psalm. The conductor, the musicians, and the audience, including some government officials, were all Muslims. Yet, they loved my grandfather's music and Psalm 23, since they came from a pastoral culture! I also found out that my remarks were included with the concert on national radio! In addition, a non-residential missionary had come with me. Through that experience, he was given an open door and office to bring in university lecturers and agricultural development experts who all followed Jesus. They eventually led hundreds to Christ. Thanks be to the Lord!

The favor God gave in answer to the prayers of ordinary believers was so amazing! After the concert, the conductor asked if I could return the following year for another such concert of my grandfather's

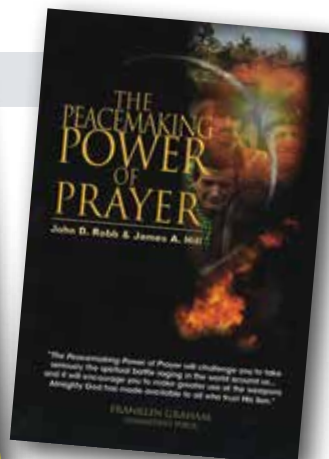
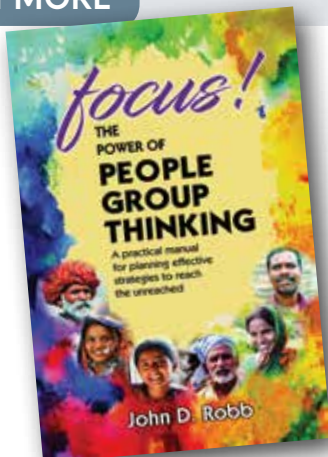
music. I did. As we sat in the audience before the orchestra played, the conductor said, "Now, can we have John Robb come up to the mic and tell us about God?" Talk about always being ready to share at a moment's notice!

I did my best to follow up on what was said the year before. Again, they seemed to be so open and receptive for nominal Muslims. "What is This Glory?", a song performed during that concert, was my granddad's touching Christmas piece about the shepherds welcoming the birth of Jesus. It has been said that you can preach to Muslims, and they might kill you, but you can sing to them, and they will love you! That is what happened, apparently, since I'm still alive and can recount this wonderful God-story to you!

What an illustration of the power of focused prayer to bring about breakthroughs among UPGs! That must be why Jesus stressed that prayer is essential for mission breakthrough in Matthew 9:37–38. God owns the harvest and guides the reaping process. However, what he really wants is our prayer, through which he sends the workers he specially chooses and gifts. Here lies the mystery and potency of prayer for the still plentiful number of people groups who have never heard the gospel. That is why the most strategic thing we can do (as instructed by the master missiologist himself) is to pray and get others to do the same.

In the run-up to his return, let us obey his command to pray so that all FPGs will have breakthrough movements for Christ among them! 🙏

LEARN MORE



John Robb is the author of *Focus: The Power of People Group Thinking*, a practical manual in 20 languages used by missionaries for reaching unreached people groups with the gospel. He also co-authored *The Peacemaking Power of Prayer* about prayer initiatives God used to dramatically change nations. Both books have been digitized and are now available **FREE of charge**. Please contact John at johndrobb3@gmail.com if you would like to receive them.