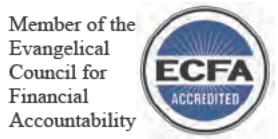




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-  Our weekly staff devotionals www.devosfromthehill.org
-  The HOPE community www.facebook.com/TheHOPEforAll
-  All our videos <https://vimeo.com/marshill-productions>
-  Insightful posts www.linkedin.com/company/mars-hill-productions
-  Timely updates <https://twitter.com/TheHOPEforAll>



Join Us in Helping to Hasten the Return of Christ Is it Biblical? Why would you want to? How would you?

Few would disagree, we live in a world full of brokenness. But according to the adjacent scripture, the day will come when this present earth and all its works will pass away (v10), and Christ's rightful reign over new heavens and a new earth will be wholly re-established (v13). In that day, nothing will be broken.

From verse 12 of this passage we know that God's people should look for and "hasten," or as some translations read, "speed" the coming of that day. Do you look forward to, even long for, that day? If not, you may want to consider what God is saying to you in 2 Timothy 4:8. Do you want to help hasten the coming of that day? If so, then here's how.

What It Means to Hasten the Day, Our Mission

The Bible teaches that God the Father has fixed the times and seasons by His own authority (Acts 1:7), and He alone knows the hour of Christ's return (Mark 13:32). Thus we can know that to hasten that day does not mean we can make it come sooner than it would otherwise come. What it does mean is that we should look forward to that day so much that we actively participate in the hastening of its coming. So how do we do that?

From 2 Peter 3:9, we know why Christ has not yet returned. He is patient, "not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." In other words, Christ is waiting for those who He knows will come to Him to do so. But those people must be reached with the Gospel. And that is how we help to hasten the coming of that day, by reaching the unreached with the Gospel.

The Scope of our Mission - The Breadth and Depth of the Great Commission

In Revelation 5:9, we find the words of a song that will one day be sung in heaven

2 Peter 3:9-13, NASB

v9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
v10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.
v11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, v12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! v13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

to Jesus, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Indeed, He is worthy to be praised. The scope of His salvation is great! **Tongues** - There are about 6,500 languages (tongues) in the world. **Nations** - While there are only about 200 countries in the world today, missiologists tell us there are about 11,000 distinct people groups, or what the Bible calls "nations." **Tribes** - We do not know exactly how many tribes there are, but according to Revelation 5:9, we do know that every one of them will be represented in God's family. Redeemed worshippers from every tongue, tribe and nation, this is the *breadth* of what we call the Great Commission!

To understand the *depth* of the Great

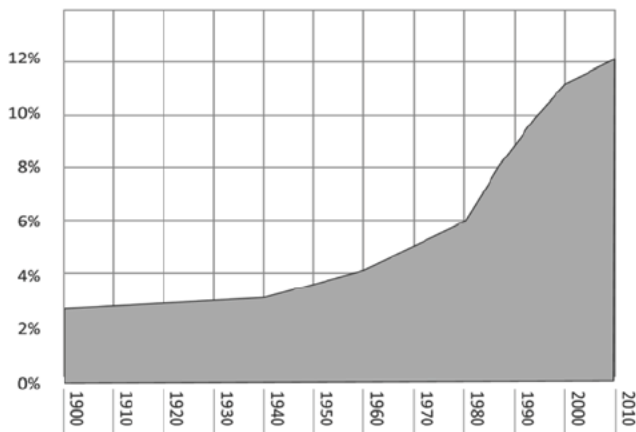
Commission, let's look again at 2 Peter 3:9. "The Lord is ... not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." The "all" here includes every person in every nation who is yet to come to faith in Jesus. God knows who these are who have yet to respond to the Gospel. Our mission is to reach them!

The State of our Mission

Of the 11,000 people groups (nations) in the world today, missiologists also tell us that about 6,500 have yet to be reached with the Gospel. About 3,000 of these have yet to be engaged, meaning there are no Christians working within the people group to reach them. These are big numbers, but we should consider them in light of the following.

It took 18 centuries for practicing Christians to grow from 0% to 2.5% of the world's population. However, from the graph below you can see that in the last 100 years the percentage of Christians in the world has more than tripled. This is Great Commission momentum! But notice also, while the angle of

Practicing Christians as a Percentage of Total World Population since 1900



the graph is the steepest from 1980 to 2000, after 2000, the rate of incline begins to decrease slightly. The Church today, particularly in America, needs fresh passion and commitment to finish the mission of reaching the world for Christ!

Whose Responsibility Is It to Reach the Unreached?

The term "missionary" is usually used to describe a person who leaves his or her home to go somewhere (often to a distant land) in order to reach people for Christ and plant the Church. But the Great Commission was given by Jesus to all His disciples for all time. And the directive of 2 Peter 3:12 to look for and hasten the day of God is for all God's people. In truth, every Christian is called to be a missionary, though we are not all called to the same role within the mission.

In the mission of the Great Commission we need goers (the people we usually call missionaries), but we also need mobilizers, equippers, funders and intercessors. In an army there are usually several noncombatant support soldiers for every soldier on the front lines. These support personnel are vital to the mission of the army, and are soldiers in every sense of the word. In the same way, every Christian is called to a role in the Great Commission, even though he or she may not be called to serve as a goer. Do you know your role?

Completing the Mission in our Generation – Is It Doable?

- There are 700 million evangelical Christians in the world - 225,000 for every unengaged people group.
- There are 4.5 million Christian congregations in the world - 1,451 congregations for every unengaged people group.
- If every evangelical gave 5% of their income to missions, we could easily fund 1 million new missionaries from the U.S., and even more if we supported indigenous missionaries.

God has already provided enough resource for us to complete the mission. And if anything is lacking, surely He will provide that as well. So if resource is not the problem, then what is?

The Problem – Lack of Understanding or Lack of Motivation

There are two main reasons problems go unsolved: 1) a lack of understanding concerning the nature of the problem and its solution, and/or 2) a lack of motivation to implement the solution. I believe these are some reasons the Church is not advancing the Great Commission at a greater rate.

A lack of understanding that . . .

- reaching the unreached people groups (nations) is necessary to the completion of the Great Commission
- the completion of the Great Commission is a precondition for the return of Christ
- every Christian is called to an important role in the mission of the Great Commission . . . if not a goer, then a mobilizer, sender, equipper, funder and/or intercessor
- social justice and humanitarian relief are important parts of the solution, but they are not ends in themselves, and are only a partial solution if not tied to evangelism, discipleship and Church planting.
- our ultimate purpose is not to make this world a better place from which people can go to the place of eternal separation from God, but to populate heaven with people from every tongue, tribe and nation!

A lack of motivation because we may . . .

- be more consumed with the pursuit of personal peace and prosperity than with the completion of the Great Commission and hastening the return of Christ. ". . . this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful." - Matt. 13:22
- have a heart problem. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." - Matt. 6:21
- be only hearers of the Word, and thus deceived into thinking we are doing exactly what we are supposed to be doing. "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." - James 1:22

Please Join the Mars Hill Staff in Praying . . .

Father, please free us from whatever might quench our passion for your glory. Show each of us our unique role in completing the Great Commission, and helping to hasten the day when you make all things new. In Jesus name!

- Until All Have Heard,
Fred Carpenter - President, Mars Hill

(Contact Mars Hill for sources.)

Good News from (and for) Distant Lands

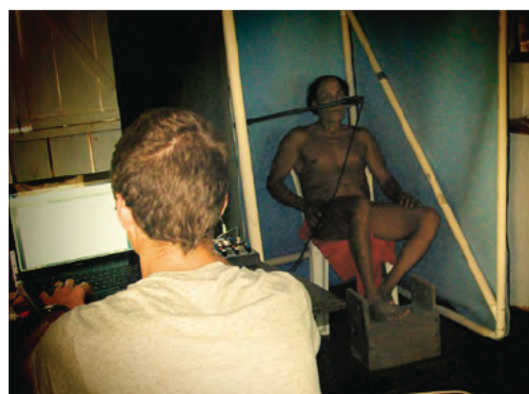
Like cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a distant land - Proverbs 25:25

God is doing so many wonderful things with The HOPE around the world that it is hard to decide what to share and what to leave out. With so much bad news in the world today, we pray that this sampling of good news will be like cold water to your soul!

HOPE in the Himalayas - It was the end of 2015 when we first reported how Reach Himalaya Ministries was using The HOPE in Nepal's remote mountain villages to introduce people to Christ and plant Churches. Many villagers had never heard about Jesus, or even seen a movie before viewing The HOPE. In one village they watched The HOPE over and over until the battery on the projector finally died. RHM's goal for 2016 is to show The HOPE in 60 remote villages, and it appears they are on track to do that. It is so exciting to follow RHM on Instagram. Every day we receive news of their ministry in action. And just a few days ago, one of our board members told us about a ministry he supports in the mountains of Nepal. They also are using The HOPE and seeing a dramatic response to the Gospel. It is such a blessing to be a part of what God is doing in Nepal!



The power of the cross on display in a mountain village



With The Tribal/Animist HOPE, we anticipate many more jungle recordings such as this one with a Waiapi speaker.

The Tribal/Animist HOPE - Animism is the belief that everything in nature (plants, animals, inanimate objects, etc.) has a spirit, and that these spirits are stronger than humans and must be appeased, usually through some form of ritual worship. Most of the thousands of tribal groups in the world are animist. Many have yet to be reached with the Gospel.

Last year, SIL (Wycliffe Bible Translators) hosted a consultation in Guatemala to help Mars Hill create a tribal/animist version of The HOPE. Since then, we've made nearly 50 changes to The HOPE script, and we've added an animist introduction which is now in production. We also added two key partners to the project. Gospel Recordings Network has created media for tribal groups around the world. Operation Snap Dragon (as in "snap the dragon's neck") has created a software solution to translate media for oral cultures without having to create a written script. We are blessed to have these ministries join us to reach the world's tribal/animist groups with the Gospel.

Other HOPE Translations, Completed and in Process - Work continues on our most ambitious project to date, translating The HOPE for the major languages of India. This is a complex project involving hundreds of millions of potential viewers and several dozen ministry partners. We expect production to begin soon on Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi. To better understand why The HOPE for India project is so vital, please visit <http://thehopeforindiainvitation.thehopeproject.com>.

Other significant projects in process include The Bahasa (Indonesian) HOPE, The Lao HOPE, and two versions of The Roma (Gypsy) HOPE.

There are now 67 translations of The HOPE in use around the world. For a list of all projects (completed and in process), visit <http://www.hopepartnering.com/translations-completed-and-in-process>.



The Sindhi HOPE (75 million speakers, Pakistan) was completed in July. The identity of this Sindhi storyteller must remain hidden to guard his safety.

Other Newsworthy Items

- The HOPE continues to be a "go to" video for Bridges Int'l to reach International Students in the U.S. with the Gospel.
- The Farsi HOPE is now being broadcast on a regular basis into Iran and surrounding countries.
- The ESL (English as a Second Language) HOPE continues to be used by missionaries worldwide.
- Several hundred people around the world visit one of our HOPE video websites every day.
- The HOPE Study Guide is now used by people around the world in 11 languages. Download the English version at - <http://www.thehopeproject.com/en/resources>.

The Refugee Crisis - What is God Up To, and How Can We Join Him?

With close to 60 million refugees worldwide, the global refugee crisis has reached epic proportions. As Christians, what are we to make of it? Is this crisis a threat, an opportunity...or both?

Certainly, the relocation and resettlement of large numbers of refugees places a strain on the resources of receiving countries. And of course, there's the potential risk of criminal or even terrorist elements within the refugee population. On the other hand, there are several instances in human history from which we can conclude that God not only used mass movements of people to accomplish His purposes, He also orchestrated such dispersions. The tower of Babel, the sojourn of Abraham and his family to an unknown land, the migration of Joseph's family to Egypt and the scattering of the 1st century Jews (James 1:1, 1 Peter 1:1); these are just a few examples.

God's ultimate purpose is to gather His people. But His modus operandi in this world is often to scatter His people in order to extend His kingdom to every tongue, tribe and nation. Yes, there are difficult economic and security issues to be addressed with the current refugee crisis, but in view of the massive proportion of this movement of people, Christians should be asking, "What is God doing, and how can we join Him?"



UNHCR.ORG-Andrew McConnell

Seeking refuge - a terrifying experience for this little guy

Consider the Syrian situation. In Syria, there were about 20 million Muslims within 18 unreached people groups. 4.8 million of these have become refugees. 6.5 million have become displaced within Syria and are now seeking asylum. Christian missionaries have spent years praying, strategizing, and risking everything to go to these people. After raising thousands of dollars, undergoing extensive training, leaving everything familiar, and going through the long process of learning a foreign language - only then, could a missionary reach these people. God is now bringing these unreached people groups to us!

At Mars Hill, we see the current refugee crisis as one of our greatest opportunities to engage in the Great Commission. Here are some examples of how God has used The HOPE since our last mid-year update.

- In Austria, a missionary named Russ showed The Farsi HOPE and used the Study Guide to share the Gospel with 30-35 refugees. Since that screening there have been so many converts that they started a Farsi Church. In June they baptized 30 new believers and Russ is taking a group through the entire HOPE Study.
- Our ministry partner, the Digital Bible Society, distributed 1,000 Arabic Treasures on Micro SD cards to Syrian refugees in Europe. This order contained some 400,000 Arabic Bibles, books, audio and video resources including The Arabic HOPE.
- In Germany, a Finnish Lutheran missionary named Tarja has seen God use The Farsi HOPE to open the hearts and minds of Afghani and Iranian refugees. Hundreds of these refugees have been added to Tarja's Church in Berlin.
- In Fort Worth, Texas, a ministry called Resurgent is using the Arabic, Nepali and Burmese versions of The HOPE with refugees to introduce them to the Bible and to Jesus.



Each case contains a Micro SD card, packed with resources including The Arabic HOPE.

Not only is The HOPE effective with refugees, the methods of delivery are well suited to the situation in which most refugees find themselves. Though they may not have many earthly possessions, most refugees seem to have mobile phones. They also have a lot of time on their hands to access data and view video on these devices, if they can get it. A distribution of The HOPE video on Micro SD cards can reach thousands of refugees as cards are shared within the community. A Micro WiFi transmitter properly placed in a community can reach hundreds of people with a video stream of The HOPE. And of course, when someone shows up with a video projector in a refugee community, a receptive audience will usually gather quickly.

Not every field is ripe for harvest. But as you lift your eyes to the millions of refugees in our world, you can almost hear the words of Jesus, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers" (Luke 10:2).



The Story of God's
Promise for All People

The HOPE is a project of Mars • Hill, a non-profit ministry dedicated to ministry through media. For more than 35 years, award-winning Mars • Hill films and videos have been used around the world to introduce thousands of people to Jesus Christ.

The Mars Hill website - www.mars-hill.org
Email us at hopeinfo@mars-hill.org

The HOPE Partnering website - <http://www.hopepartnering.com/>
The HOPE Ministry website - www.TheHOPEProject.com

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