

Monday 1st March

Helping UK churches become sending churches

A person's last words are usually considered important. Jesus' final words to his disciples were, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth." He was making it clear that people from every tongue, tribe, nation, people and language should be invited to the great feast. This is what we now call missions!



But whose job is it to take the gospel to the ends of the earth? The small group Jesus spoke to couldn't possibly achieve it in their lifetime. Jesus knew it would take centuries so therefore it was also a message for us today. Is it the responsibility of mission agencies to complete the task? Do we wait for some adventurous young person to get a 'call' to go and then support them with some

money and prayer, or is there a role for all of us?

At Frontiers, we believe reaching the nations with the gospel is the glorious task of every church in the UK. When we look at the book of Acts we find that the 1st century church didn't just wait for individuals to get a call. They actively prayed for workers, selected workers and sent them out (e.g. Acts 11:22, 13:2-3, 15:40, 16:3).

Frontiers' Sending Offices exist to serve the church and help them obey Jesus' great commission. We do this by building relationships with church leaders and helping them understand their role in this. When anyone applies to go with us, we meet with their church leaders to ask if they believe God is calling their church to send this person. No one can join Frontiers until their church says, 'Yes'. When churches understand this important spiritual role they play, many want to partner with us in sending more people, and work with us to support their people on the field.

We have some wonderful relationships with some churches and church networks; some of whom are not just sending individuals or families but whole teams to go to unreached Muslim peoples.

Please pray for us:

- That God will continue to give us favour with the church leaders we meet.
- That, like the early church in Antioch, churches will ask the Lord whom they should be sending from their number.
- Pray that they will take up long term residence among the Muslims in places like Baghdad, Chechnya, Eritrea, Libya and Syria.
- And pray for our field workers to maintain spiritually healthy relationships with their sending churches.

Tuesday 2nd March

Using Social Media to mobilise the Church

It has been said that, if it's not on social media, then it didn't happen. Well, we don't think that's quite true, but the saying certainly illustrates the perceived significance of an online presence in today's world. Frontiers is committed to being visible online to help in our mission of inviting all Muslims to follow Jesus. This year we have exciting plans to expand our social media presence, particularly on Instagram (a photo/video-based platform), in order to increasingly connect with a new generation of potential senders/go-ers. This generation of young people are best reached through these platforms.

Our aim is to mobilise and encourage senders/go-ers as we clearly share the needs in the Muslim world and the truth of God's Word; that he has given us a mission. Over the coming year, we'll publish prayer content, soul-stirring quotes, and all kinds of helpful resources at regular times of the week. We will include some possible next steps people can take to further explore their part in the Great Commission, including short term trips.

For us, this will require frequent content creation and careful stewardship. We're expectant as to how God might use all of this in some small way for his renown in the nations. Please join with us in praying that our social media efforts won't be an end in themselves but will faithfully and fruitfully serve God and the mission at hand.

Pray:

- For creativity and wisdom for our relatively small team as we research and pray about relevant and inspiring content.
- That our posts would reach and mobilise a multitude of young people.
- That this initiative would result in God being glorified as the UK Church is mobilised to take the gospel to the nations.

Wednesday 3rd March

Short term trips

Most people who want to be more involved in mission or are beginning to sense a call to the Muslim world are eager to understand more about what life on the field is really like. Short term trips are a great way to do this and are often an important part of the vocational journey. Our trips are all designed with the aim of allowing people to 'test the water' of what God might be calling them to. They can also provide a great way for churches and people with a heart for intercession and raising up prayer for the unreached to engage more actively in reaching the nations.

To meet the different needs, Frontiers trips come in different shapes and sizes:

Group trips: These are 1-2 weeks long, visiting field teams in the Muslim world who are equipped to receive groups. They provide fantastic opportunities for experiencing a Muslim culture and getting a glimpse of what long term ministry looks like. Trips are usually centred around prayer as the main activity: prayer for the region, the unreached people groups living there and the long-term workers witnessing to them.



Placements: These are tailor-made trips designed to give prospective field workers exposure to a region, country or ministry platform (i.e. job or role) that they are interested in. We arrange these on a case-by-case basis with field teams who are willing and able to invest in short term visitors. Placements can be anything from 2 weeks to 2 years in length.

Vision trips: When an applicant to Frontiers is considering a field team to join, they'll take a vision trip to discern if the team is a good fit for them. These are usually 1-2 weeks long and serve to help the applicant and the team leader decide if they can see themselves working together.

- We had planned two short term trips this Spring to North Africa and the Turkic world. Both are now postponed until at least the summer. Pray for wisdom in deciding if and when to run them later this year.
- Pray for churches who may never have considered sending people, to join the short term trips and see their place as sending churches.
- Ask for people with a heart for prayer for the unreached to hear about these trips and want to be involved. Pray this will lead to raising up more prayer for the Muslim world.

Thursday 4th March

Discerning Whether to Go

Three years ago, at a university Christian Union event, I heard a talk – more an impassioned pleading – that started me on a journey. As I listened to the speaker at the front, painting a picture of the tremendous need for missions in the world with compelling stories and statistics, I began to sense the weight of what was being said. One line particularly hit home.

“Only 10% of missionaries are working amongst the three billion people who have least access to the gospel.”

That night, as I heard these things and saw afresh our calling as laid out in Scripture, I became convinced of the necessity of cross-cultural ministry if the Great Commission was going to be obeyed



and every people group reached. Some Christians had to go overseas, that much was settled in my mind. But would I be open to God nudging me in that direction? – that felt harder. Having understood the commands of Jesus and the plight of the unreached, what options did I have?

One preacher's answer was: "Go, send, or disobey," which became my conviction.

And so, for the last few years I have been asking God what role I'm to play in our task of making disciples of all people groups. I could be involved in sending others – for instance, financially and prayerfully supporting missionaries, mobilising potential cross-cultural workers, and simply advocating the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth. Or I could go myself, finding a team working amongst an unreached people group and there patiently sowing seeds of the kingdom.

Well, the perfect next step for me after university was the Frontiers' Ministry Training Scheme (MTS). It promised to serve as useful global ministry training, regardless of where I end up, and through it I've had an invaluable insight into both the sending and going side of missions. Two and a half days a week I've been working with the Frontiers British Office since last Autumn and this has opened my eyes to all the work necessary in facilitating missions to the unreached. I've been particularly excited by the mobilising side of their operations – rallying the UK Church to seriously consider our global mission mandate. And for the other half of the week, I've had the opportunity to join with a partner organisation, operating more on the frontline within a small team reaching out to local Muslims. Learning how to make disciples and overcome classic ministry obstacles has been so useful for any potential future cross-cultural ministry work.

As I reflect after a few months of the MTS, I think I want to go. At least I want to push that door and see if it opens. Jesus is the only hope for mankind and billions are living and dying with no knowledge of the gospel. But I also want to send. As I take the next steps in discerning potential overseas work, I am looking to encourage others, share the needs, and bring friends along with me in all I am learning.

Please pray:

- For my character to be formed into the image of Christ.
- For growing skills in sharing Christ and mobilising others to do the same.
- For open doors and guidance on what to do beyond this Ministry Training Scheme; be it further training or studying or working.

Friday 5th March

The cost of going overseas

People considering going overseas sometimes ask what it will cost them to go to the Muslim world to share the good news. In many of our churches I don't think we discuss the cost of discipleship enough, so as people consider serving Muslims it is important for mobilisers and trainers to highlight the potential cost and help people work through the issues raised.



I find it a very valuable discussion – it reminds me that the cost of being a disciple of Jesus and in the will of God, is incomparable to the blessing of knowing God better. The cost may be great, but the cost of not being in God's will may be greater. I often say that the safest place to be is where God wants you. If God wants you in Afghanistan, then it is spiritually dangerous to be anywhere else! Jonah's experience may be an example of this in practice. From inside the fish, referring to himself, he prayed: "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs ..." (Jonah 2:8).

There are several challenging questions in many minds: What could the cost be? Am I prepared to sacrifice income, health and comfort, and possibly disappoint my family? Am I prepared to suffer for Him? To add to this, is the possibility that those whom we lead to Christ may pay a very great price.

Perhaps Jesus may gently respond, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it" (Matt 16:24-25). Paul considered it great gain to lay down his high position in the Jewish religious community and know deep fellowship with Jesus (Phil 3:9-11). Suffering is normative for Jesus' followers and naturally part of ministry (Jn 15:20, 2 Cor 11:21-30). Remember though - suffering is not a sign of holiness, does not gain credibility with God and is to be avoided whenever possible unless it means acting in disobedience to the Father's will (Matt 26:39).

A final word from a Muslim background pastor. Mehdi Dibaj wrote to his captors before he was murdered: "Life for me is an opportunity to serve Him, and death is a better opportunity to be with Christ. May the shadow of God's kindness and His hand of blessing and healing be and remain upon you forever. Amen." The church in his country continues to grow rapidly.

Today, please pray:

- that those considering overseas mission will obey Jesus rather than take an apparently easier option.
- for mobilisers to be faithful as we teach and disciple.
- that you would not dismiss the possibility of going to work in Jalalabad, Jedda or Jakarta because the idea is uncomfortable. You could be missing out!

Saturday 6th March

Considerations in working abroad to share the gospel

When Paul stayed in towns and cities he often worked as a tentmaker while he shared the gospel and established worshipping communities (Acts 18:3, 20:34ff). His trade has given rise to the term 'tentmakers' to refer to some of the most effective workers extending God's Kingdom in the world today.

I come alongside people who are considering working overseas in Muslim countries. I am often asked what 'tentmaking' role they should prepare for while seeking to establish a viable church amongst unreached Muslim peoples. It is an important question. Here's how I often respond. I highlight two things during a conversation.

The first consideration: is the intended role likely to enable you to minister effectively? Some workers have suffered experiences that could have been avoided with a little forethought and preparation. I remember a Western family in the Middle East who were expecting to share the good news effectively with nationals and after two years had become very frustrated. The husband had a high-powered job, working with other Westerners in English. He knew few nationals and had no language. The little social time the family had together was spent with the expat church. His wife by contrast was able to share something of God's love. She and the children had learnt some Arabic and they spent time in neighbours' houses. They had gone out without the backing of people skilled in guiding tentmakers who could have helped them be more effective.

There can be a tension between job, ministry and learning language and culture. So workers need to develop realistic, Spirit-led ministry goals. Ideally ministry and job should be integrated providing a natural contact with people – one CEO, for example, often introduced himself as 'an integrated entrepreneur who wanted to bring godly values into the business arena' and this often resulted in inquiring questions and fruit has come through the efforts of the CEO and his colleagues.

Secondly, I ask people to consider if they would enjoy their intended role: an unhappy worker does not thrive and is not the most effective witness. I often say, "Don't just plump for teaching English if you hate teaching!" It is great if you love it! An English teacher in North Africa helped the church treble in size.

More extended advice can be found here: <https://www.frontiers.org.uk/latest/blog/posts/2021-02-17-working-abroad-to-share-the-gospel>

- Pray we will be able to encourage people who are considering working overseas to think of effective and creative ways to use their talents.
- Pray we will have God's wisdom and knowledge in how best to support individuals and families as they consider what tentmaking role they should pursue.
- Pray for the work of Frontiers and, in particular, those who face the challenges of mobilising churches and individuals, those who help people discern if overseas mission work is for them and help prepare people to work effectively overseas in Muslim countries.