

It is our privilege to bring you our most recent reports from the mission field of how God is at work through your IMB missionaries and their close partners. Behind every statistic you read in this report are real people: missionaries and missionary families at work, and those among the nations who once walked in darkness but now walk in the Light. Praise the Lord for these changed lives!

While we celebrate these wins for His kingdom, the most sobering and heartbreaking statistic we report on each year continues to grow. Tragically, today, 174,202 people will die and enter an eternity separated from God.

That's why we are pursuing those who have never heard the gospel — we're going to the cities and to the middle of nowhere. We go to the places where people have given up on religion and even on relationships. We're looking for ways to impact real people still shouldering the world's greatest problem — lostness — by sharing with them God's solution to their problem, which is the gospel.

In the Great Pursuit, we remain steadfast at the IMB in our mission to serve Southern Baptists in carrying out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. Our work is focused every day on doing our part to see the fulfillment of the Revelation 7:9-10 vision and the gathering of the Great Multitude before the throne and before the Lamb.

The nations are waiting. We still have much to do, together.

Paul Chitwood IMB President



FROM THE DIRECTOR OF IMB GLOBAL RESEARCH:

At IMB we believe the core missionary task has six components: entry, evangelism, discipleship, healthy church formation, leadership development, and exit to partnership.¹ In early 2023, IMB deployed new metric tracking software to our field personnel and partners that was specifically designed to allow field teams to work together better and track progress in each of the six components of the missionary task among the peoples and in the places to which they are called. As a result, this year's Annual Statistical Report marks a change in the way we report. There are many additional statistics, and all statistics are grouped by the six components, highlighting the

importance of the missionary task in making disciples, catalyzing the development of healthy, autonomous, baptistic churches, and entrusting Great Commission responsibility to our local partners. Because this year's annual statistics reflect a change in the way our field teams report, comparisons to previous years' annual reports should be avoided, as our teams and local partners are learning this new tracking system. May the Holy Spirit use this report to cause us to reflect, to celebrate, and to spur us all to greater faithfulness for God's glory and His kingdom purposes.

¹ See IMB's Foundations document at https://store.imb.org/imb-foundations-digital-download/

THE SIX COMPONENTS OF THE MISSIONARY TASK

Entry:

Entry is the component of the missionary task that considers how to access people who need to hear the gospel and formulates plans of entry that help facilitate the spread of the gospel and the expansion of His church. Entry plans are often evaluated by their potential to impact the other five components of the missionary task with a view toward Healthy Church Formation and Exiting to Partnership.

Evangelism:

The foundation of disciple-making is evangelism that is clear in its proclamation of the full content of the gospel message. It is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus. Intentionality, planning, and accountability for evangelism are expected of every IMB missionary team.

Discipleship:

The central command of the Great Commission is to make disciples. Because a disciple is more than a person who has mastered a set of information or practices a set of spiritual disciplines, discipleship involves the intentional transformation of the heart, mind, affections, will, relationships, and purpose without pitting the importance of one against another. Essential tools for discipling new believers include the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God.

Healthy Church Formation:

A church is a group of baptized believers in Jesus Christ who are committed to be the body of Christ to one another and who meet regularly to carry out the functions of a biblical church. IMB is committed to planting healthy churches that multiply. Our missionaries' role in church planting is not normally to start a church and then settle in as the long-term pastor of that church. Rather, IMB missionaries work to make disciples and train indigenous pastors/elders/overseers to lead churches that are formed. IMB plants churches that align with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Leadership Development:

Biblical leadership is essential to the well-being of every local church. One of the measures of completion of the missionary task is the development of those who can train other leaders, and even systems for training those trainers, within the churches in each people group or place. This includes everything from basic training for village pastors to high-level theologians and biblical scholars. IMB missionaries work to leave behind a self-sustaining system of theological and pastoral training.

Exit to Partnership:

IMB's goal is to complete the missionary task among each people group or place and then to exit to partnership. Exit to partnership can occur when the local churches from that people or place are actively participating in all six components of the core missionary task and embracing their own stewardship and responsibility for fulfilling the Great Commission. IMB missionaries make decisions concerning when to exit with deep reliance on the leadership of the Holy Spirit, in much prayer, and in close cooperation with local church leaders.

PROGRESS in PROJECT 3000

Sending 300 explorers over 5 years to explore 3,072 unengaged unreached people groups.

In 2023, the IMB initiated Project 3000 to find and explore the remaining 3,072 unengaged unreached people groups (UUPGs). By 2026, we are asking Southern Baptists to send 300 of their young men and women to be Explorers. Their job is to research ten unengaged unreached peoples each — to find them, to try to share the gospel with them, and to bring back actionable data, so that any unengaged groups may be fully engaged with church-planting strategies by 2033.

As of December 31, 2023, 13 explorers have been sent. They are flying, driving, hiking, and sometimes paddling. They are living out of backpacks, sleeping in unknown conditions, and eating whatever is put before them. Through the research completed in 2023, 75 of the 3,072 unengaged unreached people groups have been explored.

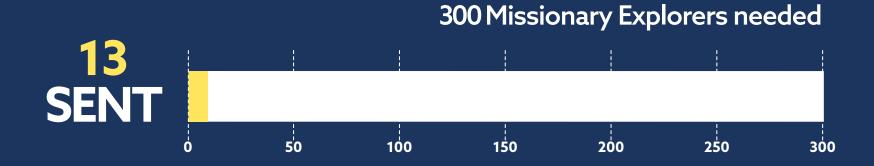
53 were (praise be to God) found to be already engaged with church-planting strategies. 22 were found to be truly in need of engagement and now the first steps toward engagement are underway.

The plan hasn't changed — a world full of people together working, creating, loving, and worshiping God. He first created the world and mandated us to multiply, fill it, and rule it. He called Abraham and directed His people to enter the land, take it and be a light to the nations. Jesus commanded His church to go disciple all the nations (ethne). The plan hasn't changed. God is driving history to a glorious fulfillment, and we are optimistically working with Him on this big job with a big reward — all the nations knowing and worshiping Him.

As of 12/31/2023

75 of those people groups have been explored53 were found to be engaged

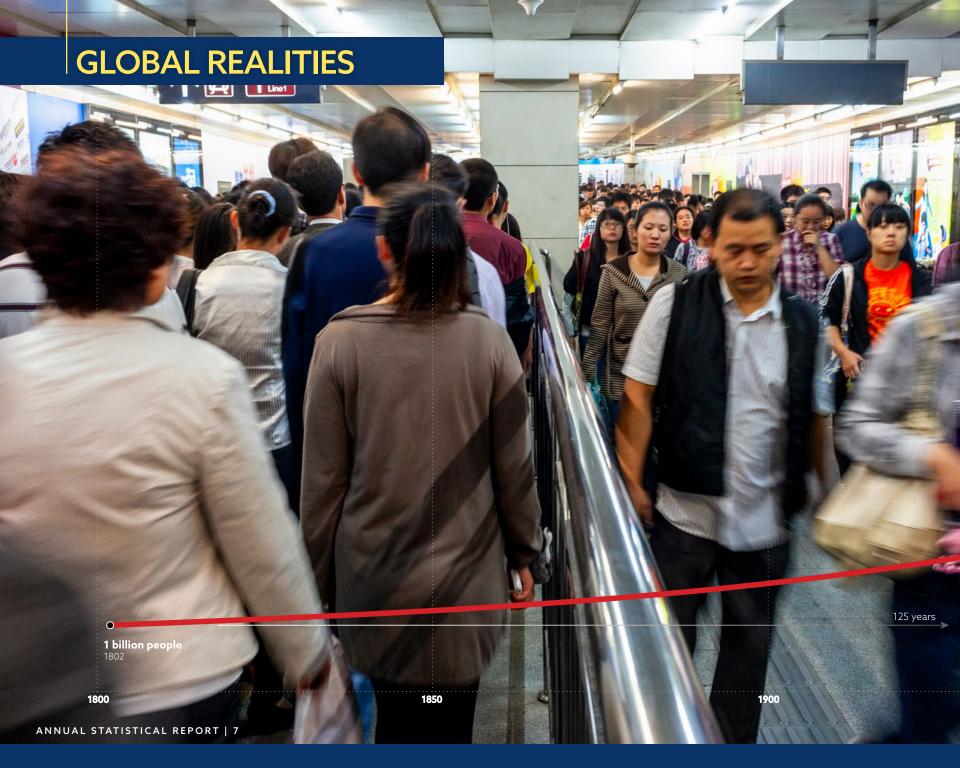
22 were found to still be unengaged, but now the first steps toward engagement are underway



"For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering.

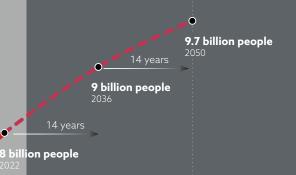
For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts."

(Malachi 1:11 ESV)



We live in an unprecedented time of opportunity! It has taken a little over 200 years for the global population to grow from 1 to 8 billion. Five billion of that population growth has occurred in just the last 63 years, and such growth is showing no signs of slowing over the next century. These statistics, however, are not mere numbers, as each is a soul made in the image of God. The Bible tells us that none of this growth is accidental either, as God, from one man, "has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live." (Acts 17:26 CSB) How then ought we as Christians to live in these times? The apostle Paul goes on to tell us that God has determined the billion people times and boundaries for all these individual souls so that "they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him." (Acts 17:27 CSB) What might seem billion people like chaos of uncountable people is in fact an opportunity given by God for His church to be faithful to proclaim the Good News Are we like never before. In 2024, the world's illion people among those population will grow by who shrink back 75,306,070, each needing in the face of such a an opportunity to hear reality, or will we trust God, billion people and respond to who has determined the times the gospel. and places of each of these individuals? Will we be faithful to pray, give, go, and send? 3 billion people Our best estimate of gospel sharing by Christians worldwide reveals a staggering reality: We are 2 billion people failing to keep up with the global population growth rate! While almost 1.5 million people are added to the global population every week, recent estimates seem to indicate that on average evangelical Christians share the gospel less than a half million times per week. This reality should spur Christians everywhere to share their faith regularly. 1950

Source: National Geographic, April 2023, 8 Billion: The Human Population Explosion, by Craig Welch



8,034,978,061

GLOBAL POPULATION

206,318

GLOBAL DAILY
POPULATION GROWTH

174,202

DYING DAILY APART FROM CHRIST

2050

GLOBAL REALITIES

12,114

Total People Groups (PGs)

7,250

Unreached People Groups (UPGs)

3,161

Unengaged Unreached People Groups (UUPGs)

EUROPEAN PEOPLES

PGs: **691**

UPGs: **526**

UUPGs: 238

NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES

PGs: **813**

UPGs: 751

UUPGs: 476

AMERICAN PEOPLES

PGs: **1,333**

UPGs: 358

UUPGs: 206

From IMB's people group research as of December 31, 2023: https://www.peoplegroups.org

CENTRAL ASIAN PEOPLES

PGs: 394

UPGs: 385

UUPGs: 168

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES

PGs: 2,678

UPGs: 2,324

UUPGs: 987

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLES

PGs: **2,592**

UPGs: 1,588

UUPGs: 463

DEAF PEOPLES

PGs: 234

UPGs: 232

UUPGs: 145

ASIAN PACIFIC RIM PEOPLES

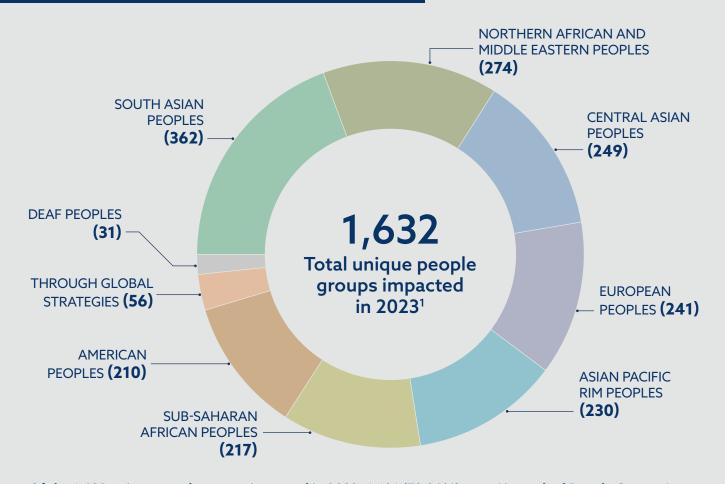
PGs: 3,379

UPGs: 1,086

UUPGs: 478

IMB GLOBAL STATISTICS

People Groups impacted by Affinity



Of the 1,632 unique people groups impacted in 2023, 1,181 (72.36%) were Unreached People Groups.² During 2023, 11 of the people groups impacted moved from unengaged to engaged status.²

¹ IMB's new metric tracking software allows missionaries to report on any people group they encounter, including people groups historically assigned to other affinities. Therefore, the sum of each affinity's impacted people groups in this chart will exceed the total unique people groups impacted. The global total represents the impact among distinct people groups through the IMB and national partners, while each affinity's number represents their impact among various people groups including those assigned to other affinities. Based on the difference between the summation of the people groups impacted in each affinity and the global total, 238 people groups were impacted by multiple affinities during 2023.

² See Definitions on page 28



540,076 Children, youth and students impacted



224,981 Refugees impacted



280,422 Rural people impacted



Elderly people impacted 339,888



Urban people impacted 187,848

ENTRY >

1,038
Human
needs
projects
implemented

401,654
People impacted
by human needs
projects

129,188
Bibles
distributed









5,376
Hours spent prayer walking

885,964
Views of digital gospel content (watched to at least 95% completion)

Global Human Needs projects by Affinity

EUROPEAN PEOPLES

166,394 Individuals cared for through 230 projects

NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES

90,514 Individuals cared for through 348 projects

AMERICAN PEOPLES

91,598 Individuals cared for through 123 projects

CENTRAL ASIAN PEOPLES

12,675 Individuals cared for through 109 projects

ASIAN PACIFIC RIM PEOPLES

5,556 Individuals cared for through **114** projects

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLES

34,781 Individuals cared for through **112** projects



EVANGELISM



879,798

Total people who heard a partial or full gospel presentation

141,206

Total people who decided to follow Jesus Christ 451,038

Total people who heard a full gospel presentation and had an opportunity to respond

116,992

Total people who were baptized

8,049

Total Bible stories told

1,036

Total unique people groups that heard a partial or full gospel presentation

EUROPEAN PEOPLES

90,866 Heard ¹ **60,452** Opportunities to respond ²

1,589 Decided to follow ³ **522** Baptized

NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES

30,363 Heard ¹

11,867 Opportunities to respond ²

1,991 Decided to follow ³

438 Baptized

AMERICAN PEOPLES

123,279 Heard ¹

76,611 Opportunities to respond ²

6,947 Decided to follow ³

257 Baptized

¹ Number of people who heard a partial or full gospel presentation

² Number of people who heard a full gospel presentation and had an opportunity to respond

³ Number of people who decided to follow Jesus Christ

CENTRAL ASIAN PEOPLES

68,447 Heard ¹

17,675 Opportunities to respond ²

1,142 Decided to follow ³

661 Baptized

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES

322,354 Heard ¹

166,383 Opportunities to respond ²

117,098 Decided to follow ³

112,780 Baptized

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLES

134,700 Heard ¹

72,698 Opportunities to respond ²

8,539 Decided to follow ³

1,199 Baptized

DEAF PEOPLES

2,330 Heard 1

1,116 Opportunities to respond ²

107 Decided to follow ³

67 Baptized

ASIAN PACIFIC RIM PEOPLES

106,045 Heard ¹

43,472 Opportunities to respond ²

3,757 Decided to follow³

1,057 Baptized

GLOBAL STRATEGIES

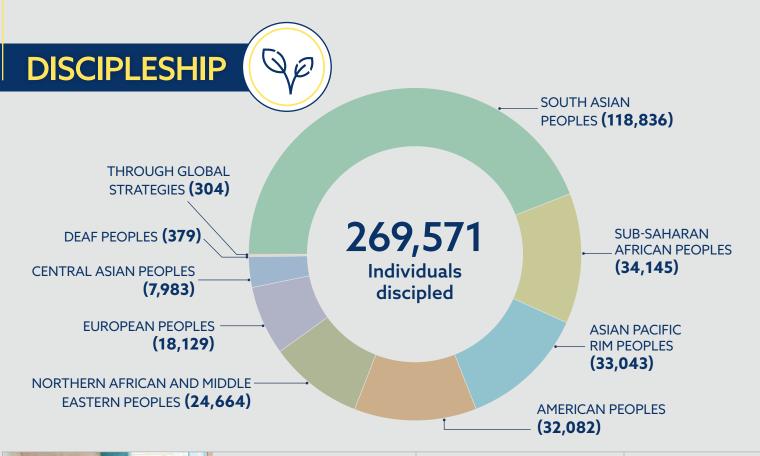
1,414 Heard ¹

764 Opportunities to respond ²

36 Decided to follow ³

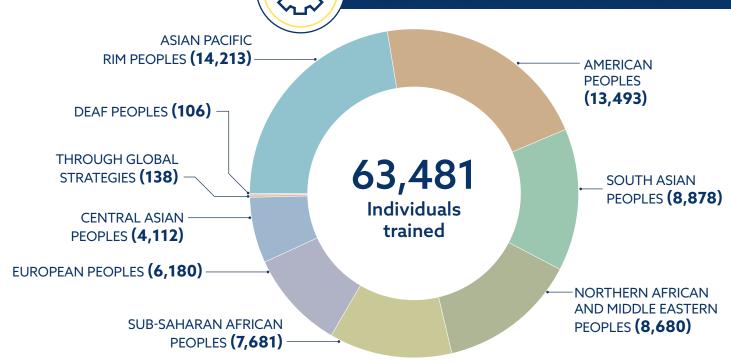
11 Baptized

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	25,578 Given basic discipleship	60,663 Trained in evangelism	40,208 Trained to make disciples
12,618 Trained in church planting	57,402 Trained in Bible storying	42,036 Discipled in theology or doctrine	30,883 Trained in church health

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



21,065

Trained in preaching or teaching

19,149

Trained in church health

14,592

Trained as a pastor or elder

4,969

Trained in biblical counseling

19,373

Trained in church planting

15,905

Trained in theology or doctrine

22,801

Trained in evangelism



CHURCH FORMATION



God-caused growth yields maturing, growing autonomous churches

ue to transitions on how and what is being reported in our new metric tracking system, in this Annual Statistical Report (ASR), instead of reporting the total numbers of groups and churches formed in 2023, we are reporting an amazing and God-honoring story that celebrates Church Formation and a healthy Exit to Partnership.

IMB defines Exit to Partnership as shifting primary responsibility for the missionary

task in each people group or place to local indigenous churches. Exit to Partnership transitions IMB's involvement to a secondary role of cooperative partnership as IMB works alongside local churches in fulfilling the Great Commission. Exit to Partnership is cause

for great rejoicing, as it means autonomous, healthy, and sustainable churches with well-equipped

leadership are taking responsibility for and implementing the missionary task throughout

that area's people groups.

At IMB, we strive to always report in a 2 Corinthians 10:12-18 way. First, this means that any reporting is presented in a way that ultimately "boasts in the Lord" (2 Cor 10:17) and glorifies God. Second, like the Apostle Paul, IMB does not want to report anything outside

of the "sphere" that God has apportioned to us (2 Cor 10:13,15). This means that any

reporting consists of the work done

by our own personnel and the work done through long-term investment in local leaders and churches (the

sphere apportioned by God to us).

Finally, it means that as the work grows, becomes self-sustaining, and moves toward a healthy exit to partnership, any reporting or "boasting in the Lord" must transition away from

IMB as primary initiators and reporters of missionary task activities to self-reporting by

local partners.

*Photos in this report are not related to the work described. Names have been changed for security.

After 18 years of sustained missionary investment, a region of South Asia now contains many healthy, growing churches with well-equipped leaders, who have formed their own large Baptist association. As this South Asia region moves beyond the sphere of IMB reporting, we

expect next year's ASR to see a major change in reported church plants and baptisms as IMB only reports metrics for locations where we have primary responsibility for the missionary task. This, however, is cause for celebration, as a decrease in IMB-reported numbers means there is local ownership of the missionary task leading to sustainable kingdom growth to the glory of God! IMB, following the Apostle Paul's example, can move on to the next unreached peoples and

places. In this year's ASR, it is our privilege to provide a small glimpse into this wonderful work of God in South Asia.

In 2005, Brennan and Veronica Masterson* were sent through the IMB and arrived in South Asia with the mission of engaging the people of a large region in evangelism, disciple making, and church planting. They faithfully labored, sharing the gospel, and working to make disciples for their first seven years. In 2012, the Lord providentially opened a door to disciple 30 believers and train them to disciple others and plant churches. Within that year, over 180 Bible study groups formed. God then helped provide audio recordings in



local languages of the entire Bible and all their training and teaching materials. The distribution of audio micro-SD cards proved transformational as the living Word of God permeated the hearts and minds of new believers and emerging leaders throughout the region, many of whom would listen three or more hours each day to the Bible. As potential elders and leaders were identified in groups and churches, they were trained in both character



and doctrine and passed what they were learning onto the believers in all the groups and churches. In addition, methods of helping groups become churches and qualitatively track their own progress toward health were implemented.

Today, there are tens of thousands of churches with equipped leaders and believers strong in the faith. These churches are now organized under a large locally-led Baptist association that continues to evangelize, disciple, plant churches, and develop leaders for the glory of God.

As it became apparent a mighty work of God was being reported and the potential for Exit to Partnership began to be examined, IMB leadership and trustees called for an assessment of the state of the work in this region. In 2022, IMB's Global Research Department facilitated

an independent assessment of the work that randomly sampled [to a 95% confidence rating] believers, leaders, and churches.

As a result of this assessment, we determined that it was, in fact, time to move toward an exit or entrusting of this work to local leadership, as these churches had clearly become peers and partners.

We are pleased to provide here a few key takeaways from that assessment:

- •From a church-planting perspective, almost all the originally reported churches still exist.
- •The house groups and churches display multiple elements of healthy function, such as fellowship, worship, regular teaching from the Word, ongoing outreach, and prayer.

*Photos in this report are not related to the work described. Names have been changed for security.

•Believers demonstrate high levels of meaningful church involvement and membership, attending larger weekly services and meeting for home worship several times a week.

•Believers show substantial engagement and familiarity with the Word of God, 80% of all believers listen to or read the Scriptures at least four days a week. 71% of believers listen to or read the Scriptures daily, often for three or more hours each day.

•Because of an established and sustained expectation

for equipping and establishing every believer for active ministry, 79% of believers have discipled or are discipling at least one other person.

•Believers and leaders show clear doctrinal understanding of both the gospel and church.

The Mastersons* spent the last 18 years investing deeply in a few faithful and capable others, who did the same with others, who then did the same again with others. This 2 Timothy 2:2 style of sustained

intimate discipling relationships is the path to biblical multiplication. As Brennan* states when asked about the impact of equipping tens of thousands of disciples and implementing accountability, "Many thousands of disciples advancing slowly can sure appear rapid." As

IMB exits to a new stage of partnership in this work, the Mastersons sum up this marvelous working of God. "We are humbled to have had a front seat for the past 18 years as God has poured out His grace on this region, and we count it the greatest privilege of our life to have labored shoulder-to-shoulder with our South Asian brothers and sisters who received the good news with great joy!"

When IMB personnel move toward a healthy Exit to Partnership, IMB continues to maintain strong

> relationships with those partners, assisting and supporting as requested. To the IMB, exiting to partnership does not mean abandonment. Instead, IMB encourages those partners to become senders of missionaries that join with Southern Baptists in entering new places to carry out the missionary task among the least reached peoples and places on the planet. To that end, we pray that the Lord will continue to allow IMB to report the celebratory and

God-honoring cycles of God-caused growth and the subsequent exit to partnership and resulting decrease in reported statistics.

To God alone be the glory!





EXITTO PARTNERSHIP



Cross-cultural sending and receiving of Global Missionary Partners (GMPs)



Total Global Missionary Partners* [GMPs]



131 GMPs sent

EUROPEAN PEOPLES

6 GMPs received **6** GMPs sent

AMERICAN PEOPLES



*See Definitions on pg. 28

CENTRAL ASIAN PEOPLES

> 19 received

11 >

NORTHERN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN PEOPLES

26 GMPs received

O GMPs sent

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLES

> 23 received

4 sent >

ASIAN PACIFIC RIM PEOPLES

> 24 received

66 sent

SOUTH ASIAN PEOPLES

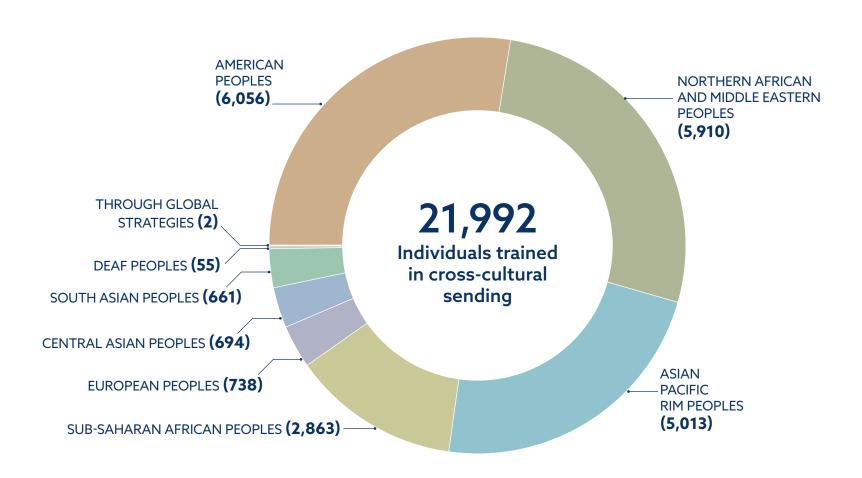
> 17 received

o >

Total sent from 2020 until December 31, 2023

EXITTO PARTNERSHIP









READING THIS REPORT

Readers should be careful not to make assumptions when reading IMB's annual statistical report nor to compare these reports from year-to-year. For security reasons, the total number of personnel and close partners in each part of the world who provide data for this report is not publicly released. This means it will always be unclear how many individuals contributed to an affinity's numbers. In some missionary fields, our teams have many close partners, while other fields have few or no believers, let alone partners, to share in the work. This means that in some places providing opportunity to hear the gospel is the work of one or two individuals, and in other places, it can be thousands.

Also, in each affinity, no reference to the amount of time spent laboring among a particular people group or place is given. Some teams labor faithfully for a decade to see a single person come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Other teams see multiple people decide to follow Christ in their first year. Some teams can stay in countries for years discipling pastors and leaders.

Others are forced to leave after a short time by hostile governments, persecution, or health issues. Some teams see fruit in terms of local churches' ownership in the Great Commission and well-discipled pastors and leaders such that they transition to a peer relationship with local leaders and stop reporting those partners' efforts, shifting their team's focus to new Unreached People Groups that are resistant to the gospel. One year a team may show a multitude of gospel shares and churches and the next year minimal gospel sharing and no churches. All of this means that yearby-year comparisons of "faithfulness" and resulting "fruitfulness," even within the same affinity, should be avoided, as the circumstances behind any changes are varied and complex.

IMB personnel and partners, regardless of the difficulty of the soil, are laboring diligently and with their best efforts, trusting God with the results and striving to provide transparent, accurate, and trustworthy reporting. These field and personnel realities point to the desperate need for prayer.

How is the data collected?

Throughout the year, all IMB missionaries and their close baptistic partners enter activities and any resulting fruit from the Lord in each of the six components of the missionary task into software that tracks and maintains this data. This software identifies and tracks progress among the people groups and places of the world. Our personnel take care in reporting and strive to provide accurate numbers that represent IMB's commitment, like the Apostle Paul, not to report on work done outside of the sphere apportioned to us by the Lord (2 Cor 10:12-18). This means that statistics may change from year to year due to changes in reporting relationships with partners.

Photos and names

Photos in this report are not related to the work described. Names have been changed for security.

DEFINITIONS

Terms used in this report

Affinities are strategic combinations of all the world's people groups, which help facilitate the spread of the gospel based on shared culture, root languages, ethnicities, and other similar factors. IMB has found that having teams focus on these affinity groupings allows for more focused effort on similar peoples regardless of where they live.

"Faithfulness" data is collected about the missionary activities that are the responsibility of our personnel and their partners—sharing the gospel, discipling believers, training pastors and leaders, and identifying and engaging people groups.

"Fruitfulness" data shows what God is doing through "faithfulness" activities. "Fruitfulness" data includes such things as individuals receiving salvation through Jesus Christ and new churches forming. IMB collects this data so we can glorify God by boasting in what the Lord is doing through our personnel and partners.

An **Explorer** is a young man or woman sent out to find, share the gospel with, and bring back actionable data about the remaining 3,072 unengaged unreached people groups, so any truly unengaged unreached people groups may be fully engaged with church planting strategies by 2033.

A Global Missionary Partner (GMP) is a national partner follower of Jesus, who is called by God to be a crosscultural missionary, assessed and sent by their local church and sending entity, affirmed by IMB field personnel, and working in cooperation with an IMB field team.

Unreached Peoples are defined as people groups with less than 2% evangelical populations. The list is designed to highlight priority people groups needing missionary effort.

Unengaged Peoples are defined as people groups with neither missionaries from outside, nor local Christians within, who are implementing a church

planting strategy consistent with evangelical faith and practice.

Engaged Peoples are defined as people groups with cross-, near-, or sameculture Christians implementing an active church planting strategy among them consistent with evangelical faith and practice.

Impacted Peoples are defined as individuals and people groups who had any of the six missionary task activities performed among them by IMB field personnel and partners. Impacted does not necessarily mean engaged with a church planting strategy.

REACHING THE NATIONS, TOGETHER.



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