

# Towards Reaching the Unreached People Groups in Africa: A Pentecostal Paradigm



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## ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study focused on understanding Unreached People Groups (UPGs) lived experiences to model a Pentecostal mission strategy. The global discussion and attention on the UPGs ignited at the 1974 Lausanne Congress and it has altered the global understanding of mission. In recent times, people's group thinking represents a predominant pattern in global missions. Nonetheless, few scholarly works have been conducted to carefully examine UPG's questionable theological and socio-cultural underlying assumptions and consequently, Christian institutions and missionaries are less prepared to reach out. This study directed by the Pentecost Centre for the Study of Unreached People Groups (PCUPGs) at the Pentecost University, Ghana critically re-evaluated the concept using biblical and sociocultural analysis to assess the Biblical and Conceptual basis of UPGs. The study from theological and socio-cultural perspectives developed missional strategies towards reaching the unreached people groups in Africa in fulfillment of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ, to disciple all Ethnic Groups and consequently, redefine the term "UPGs" which is a seminal contribution to scholarship. The study contributes to academia by assessing the theological and conceptual basis of the UPGs towards developing pragmatic missional strategies to overcome the contemporary mission challenges, as well as initiate a Pentecostal approach to missions amongst the UPGs in Africa.

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## INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ charged His followers in Matthew 28:19 after his resurrection to make believers from all ethnic groups (*pante ta ethne*) of the world, which occurred in about 30CE, nonetheless, significant sectors of the world are still well-thought-out to be unreached in the light of the commission given by Jesus Christ to Christians. Since religion incites the deepest obligation, emotion, sharp action, strong dialogues and study for practitioners, opponents, and fence sitters, the Christian population is poised

to reach the unreached people groups with the message entrusted to them.<sup>1</sup> For evangelization resolves, a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can grow as a church-planting measure without confronting barricades of understanding or acceptance.<sup>2</sup> Preferably, a people group is generally demarcated to mean individuals in a group who understand each other well with minimal cultural barriers that can impede the transmission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup> A people group is considered unreached when there is no Indigenous community of believing Christians able to engage the people group with church planting. Pratt in his article “Rethinking Unreached Peoples: Why Place Still Matters in Global Missions” asserts that a comprehensive and theologically opinionated definition must not fail to capture the “unreached places” while not discarding “unreached ethnic groups.”

Pratt, as a result, defines the Unreached as peoples and places among whom Christ is mostly unfamiliar and the church is relatively deficient in making Christ recognized in its larger populace without external support,<sup>4</sup> whereas Kwafo in the Home and Urban Missions manual defines an unreached people group as “where there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize the people group without outside assistance.”<sup>5</sup> It is projected that of the 7.83 billion persons alive in the world now, 3.37 billion of them live in unreached people groups with diminutive or no access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> According to Joshua Project data, there are about 17,428 people groups in the world with 7,400+ of them known to be unreached, thus about 42% of the world’s population.<sup>7</sup> The vast majority (85%) of these Unreached people groups exist in the 10/40 window and less than 10% of missionary work is done among these people.<sup>8</sup> The 10/40 Window also known as the resistant belt is a term coined in 1990 by the Christian missionary and Partners International CEO, Luis Bush to denote the world’s most unreached people groups clustered in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia and generally dominated by Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.<sup>9</sup> Agyapong avows that the force of religion is such that, intellectuals, politicians, clerics and several people in varied spheres of influence are often swayed away easily, even if the belief subscribed to contravenes the normal *and that is what may pertain in the 10/40 window: borders are unreceptive to divergent beliefs and thus not safe to nurture or spread the Christian faith* (emphasis mine).<sup>10</sup> The 10/40 Window identifies a sector of the world map from latitude 10 degrees North to 40 degrees North of the equator: In and around this four-sided area lives the world’s tiniest converted and most unreached people groups in terms of Christian missions and the commission of Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup> The countries in the 10/40 window are either legitimately closed or unceremoniously opposed to Christian ministry within their boundaries. The Inhabitants have limited information about the gospel, negligible access to Bibles and Christian resources, and restricted opportunities to respond to and follow the Christian faith.<sup>12</sup>

The Unreached People Groups (UPGs) are interspersed in almost every part of the world and this study seeks to establish the theological basis of UPGs in Africa using biblical and sociocultural

<sup>1</sup> Kwasi Atta Agyapong, “Religion amidst Tares and Weeds: A Pentecostal Perspective on the Hegemony of Non-Religious Movements and Scholarship on Religion in the 21st Century,” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, November 8, 2022, 515–38, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20223121>.

<sup>2</sup> Kwasi Atta Agyapong, “A Pentecostal Reflection on Christianity and Extremism: Christianity and Book Burnings in the Late Antiquity,” *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies*, July 3, 2023, 268–80, <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.2023972>; What is a People Group?, “Joshua Project,” 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Graham Redding, *Prayer and the Priesthood of Christ in the Reformed Tradition* (Edinburgh, NY: T & T Clark, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> David Pratt, “Rethinking Unreached Peoples Why Place Still Matters in Global Missions. Desiring God,” 2019, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/rethinking-unreached-peoples>.

<sup>5</sup> The Church of Pentecost - General Headquarters, *Home and Urban Missions*, vol. 2 (Accra: Pentecost Press Limited, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Global Frontier Missions, “What Is a UPG?,” 2023.

<sup>7</sup> What is a People Group?, “Joshua Project.”

<sup>8</sup> Global Frontier Missions, “What Is a UPG?”

<sup>9</sup> Alyssia Lee, “10/40 Window: The Top Facts You Need to Know,” *Just Disciple*, n.d.

<sup>10</sup> Kwasi Atta Agyapong, “Religion amidst Tares and Weeds: A Pentecostal Perspective on the Hegemony of Non-Religious Movements and Scholarship on Religion in the 21st Century,” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 3, no. 10 (November 8, 2022): 515–38, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20223121>.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Fairchild, “What Is the 10/40 Window?,” *Learn Religions*, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Fairchild, “What Is the 10/40 Window?”

analysis to assess the Biblical and Conceptual root of the UPGs. The study further develops practical missional strategies towards reaching the UPGs in Africa from a Pentecostal perspective.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a phenomenological approach to understand UPGs lived experiences and how they perceive and make sense of specific phenomena. In this context, the phenomenological methodology would also involve exploring the experiences of Pentecostal individuals or leaders engaged in missions to unreached people groups in Africa. In-depth interviews, observing participants, and reflective journaling were utilized to delve into the participants' experiences, motivations, and challenges.

### **Who are the Unreached People Groups in Africa**

The Unreached people groups in Africa refer to people groups that have limited or no access to Christian missionaries, resources, or the message of the Gospel. These groups typically reside in regions or areas where Christianity is not widely practiced or where there are barriers, such as cultural, linguistic, geographical, or political hindrances, preventing the spread of Christianity. They are considered "unreached" because they have not yet been effectively reached with the message of Jesus Christ. There are numerous unreached people groups in Africa which include the following groups.

#### **a. The Tuareg people group**

The Tuareg people are a nomadic group scattered across the Saharan regions of Algeria, Libya, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. They are predominantly Muslim, with very few known Christians among them.<sup>13</sup> They have a population of about 3,606,00 across 16 countries and an estimated annual growth rate of 3.1 percent according to the Joshua Project statistics. The Tuareg Algerian and Tuareg Tahaggart have 0 percent Christian adherents while the Tuareg Asben which has the most Christian adherents amongst the Tuareg have 1.0 percent.<sup>14</sup>

#### **b. San/Bushmen people group**

The San, also known as Bushmen, are Indigenous communities residing in Southern Africa, particularly in Botswana, Namibia, and parts of South Africa. They have historically lived as hunter-gatherers and face ongoing challenges due to land dispossession and cultural marginalization. The San in Botswana have *haiom* as their language with a population of about 44,000 and they have negligible Christian presence (Joshua Project, 2023).

The San live in little family-based units. Life is simple and children have few responsibilities except to play. They spend much of their time telling stories. The San people bring together food and water in ways that would be nearly impossible for outsiders to survive in the environment. They find wet places on the ground to insert hollow tubes out of which they suck water, where possible, they settle near water sources until they dry out. They seem obliged to find food in lands with minimum vegetation. Women gather wild berries, fruit, wild onions, and ostrich eggs while men hunt in groups, and their hunting trips take several days. They use bows and arrows that are tipped with poison taken from beetle larvae. The San Heikum lack enough meat, so they make up the difference with insects such as moths, grasshoppers, caterpillars, butterflies, and termites.<sup>15</sup>

#### **c. The Borana people group**

The Borana are an ethnic group found primarily in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya. They practice a mixture of Islam and traditional African religions, with about 4 percent identifying as Christians.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> What is a People Group?, "Joshua Project."

<sup>14</sup> Joshua Project, "Tuareg People," 2023, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/11423/AG](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11423/AG).

<sup>15</sup> Joshua Project, "Heikum, San in Botswana," 2023, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/14681/BC](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/14681/BC).

<sup>16</sup> Joshua Project, "Borana People," 2023, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/10106/ET](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10106/ET).

#### **d. The Pygmies people group**

Pygmies are a diverse group of forest-dwelling and indigenous hunters who reside in the rainforests of several African countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Gabon, and Central African Republic. They face significant challenges and marginalization in accessing education, healthcare, and information about Christianity due to their isolation and unique culture.<sup>17</sup>

They are generally very short and scattered across 14 countries in Africa, but most of the 984,000 Pygmies live in six Central African countries. Historically, Pygmies have been marginalized by governments and are often mistreated. Pygmies are sometimes not considered citizens, are denied identity cards, get evicted from their land, and do not receive proper health care or education.<sup>18</sup> According to Hadithi Africa, some churches among other people groups in Central Africa have had trouble accepting Pygmies as fully human and they have been largely unreached.

#### **e. The Afar people group**

The Afar people reside in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. They are predominantly Muslim and have limited exposure to Christian missions or access to the Bible in their own language. The Afar in Ethiopia has a population of 2,155,00 with a 0.9 percent Christian presence. The Afar (Danakil) claim to be the descendants of Ham, Noah's son with 99.10 percent Muslims.<sup>19</sup> They prefer to be known as the Afar, since the Arabic word "danakil" is an abusive term to them and they are a proud people, stressing a man's strength and heroism comes from killing one's opponents.

#### **f. The Himba people group**

The Himba are an Indigenous people living in the Kunene region of Namibia and Angola. They maintain their distinctive culture and religious practices, making it difficult for Christianity to penetrate their communities. The Himba are considered an unreached people group because they have less than 2 percent Christian presence.<sup>20</sup>

#### **g. The Fulbe people group**

The Fulani people are spread across several countries in West Africa, including Nigeria, Guinea, Senegal, Mali, and Niger. They are predominantly nomadic herders and have a strong Muslim background.<sup>21</sup>

#### **h. Berber**

The Berber people are Indigenous inhabitants of North Africa, primarily in countries like Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. They have their own distinct language and culture and are predominantly Muslim with a Christian population of about 0.01 percent.<sup>22</sup>

#### **i. Hadza**

The Hadza people are an Indigenous hunter-gatherer group residing in northern Tanzania, near Lake Eyasi. They have a unique language and culture and face threats to their way of life due to encroachment on their land and limited access to resources with about 1.9 percent evangelical Christians.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hadithi Africa, "African Pygmies: The World's Shortest Tribe," 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Cultural Survival, "Pygmies of Southwestern Uganda: Reaching the End of the Road - and the Beginning," 2010, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/ourpublications/csq/article/pygmies>.

<sup>19</sup> Joshua Project, "Afar People," 2023, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/10003/ER](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10003/ER).

<sup>20</sup> Samaritan Purse, "Church Dedicated among Unreached Himba of Namibia," 2019, <https://www.samaritanpurse.ca/article/church-dedicated-among-unreached-himba-of-namibia/#:~:text=An ethnic group of 50%2C000,than 2 percent evangelical Christian>.

<sup>21</sup> Joshua Project, "Fulfulde, Nigerian," 2023, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/11849/NI](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/11849/NI).

<sup>22</sup> Joshua Project, "Filala Berber in Morocco," 2023, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/10802/MO](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/10802/MO).

<sup>23</sup> Minority Rights Group International, "Hadza," accessed September 14, 2021, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/hadza/>; Joshua Project, "Hadzabi in Tanzania," 2023, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/12697/TZ..](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/12697/TZ..)

It is important to note that these groups are labeled as "unreached" from a religious perspective, meaning they have limited or no access to the Christian message or resources in their languages and cultural contexts. These are just a few examples of the many unreached people groups in Africa. It is worth noting that the specific status of a people group can change over time as Christian missionary work and access to information progress.

### **Reinterpreting *panta ta ethne* in Matthew 28:19: All Nations or Ethnic Groups?**

When Jesus charged the church to make followers of all nations in Matthew 28:19 as in the King James Version and New International Version, was he referring to UPGs unreached places (Nations), or both? Whereas some scholars' emphasis on the great commissions slants towards either the UPGs or the unreached places, others contend for both. Evangelical missions met diverse contests from the time when the early stages of the modern Protestant missionary movement began, and missions were hypothesized primarily from the extent of places.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, Johnstone avows that understanding the complexity of cultural barriers allows distinct groupings of people who consider themselves quite distinct from others, even from their near neighbors, and the great commission must target them.<sup>25</sup> That notwithstanding, Lee and Park assert that, making disciples as used in the great commission is not a command to plant churches in unreached people groups, but rather a directive to move yonder prejudiced borders to disciple people into faith communities that reflect the complete extent of God's kingdom: This mandate becomes much more crucial in today's multiethnic, global village, and hybridizing world, in which discipleship may require Christians to be characterized by a readiness and aptitude to love others who have differing social, cultural and religious ideologies.<sup>26</sup> This study explores which of these three standpoints is near to Jesus' assertion in Matthew 28:19 through text analysis from the original Language. observing the text from various versions of the bible is crucial for exegesis as presented below:

#### *Text Analysis of Matthew 28:19*

GRK: πάντα τὰ ἔθνη βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς

Transliteration: *panta ta ethne baptizontes autous*

NAS: of all *the nations*, baptizing

KJV: and teach all *nations*, baptizing them

NIV: of all *nations*, baptizing them.

NCV: of all **people** in the world. Baptize them.

Most translations of the bible have translated *panta ta ethne* as nations apart from a few versions like the New Century Version (NCV), but as to whether the precise or the closest in meaning is "nations" or "ethnic" is what the analysis seeks to uphold. The Greek noun ἔθνη (*ethnē*) is in the accusative neuter plural, which is undoubtedly from *ethos*, a race, i.e. A tribe; especially, a foreign one. The usage of nations for ἔθνη (*ethnē*) though not out of place, nonetheless its closest in meaning to what Jesus Christ said is either a tribe or ethnic other than to use nations with gleanings from *etho* which means a race as in the Greek Lexicon.

The authors reason that it was in this setting that Winter said that the nations to which Jesus referred are ethnic groups and thereby opted for cross-cultural evangelism among unreached people groups, emphasizing that at least four-fifths of the non-Christians in the world will never have any up-front opportunity to become Christians if they are not deliberately targeted, especially considering the socio-cultural and religious orientation of 10/40 window marvel.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> P.E. Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History Through a Missiological Perspective* (Pasadena, California: William Carey International University Press., 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Patrick Johnstone, "Unreached Peoples: How Many Are There?," *International Journal of Frontier Mission* 13, no. 2 (1996).

<sup>26</sup> Peter T Lee and James Sung-Hwan Park, "Beyond People Group Thinking: A Critical Reevaluation of Unreached People Groups," *Missiology* 46, no. 3 (2018): 212–25.

<sup>27</sup> Ralph D Winter, "The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism" (International Congress on World Evangelization, 1974).

The reconceptualization of missions as reaching people groups instead of nations offered evangelicals and Christians in general a new missionary impetus that, the Great Commission was nowhere near accomplishment; thus far more work lingered than had previously been thought and this consequently awakened new drive that militarized Christian mission globally. Some scholars credit the UPGs concept for re-invigorating missionary passion in the global mission front whereas others consider UPGs as the holy grail of evangelical missions.<sup>28</sup> UPGs' immense influence on Christian missions though conspicuous, yet few scholars have carefully surveyed its uncertain and arguable fundamental socio-cultural and doctrinal suppositions which are amongst the spark that ignited the establishment of the Pentecost Center for the Study of Unreached People Groups (PCUPGs) in the Pentecost University.

### **The Theological Soundness of Reaching Out to Unreached People Groups**

The Great Commission, as stated in Matthew 28:19, is a foundational passage in Christian theology which calls upon believers to Go and make disciples of all people groups. The interpretation of this text has led to diverse approaches in Christian missions. The study having established the theological soundness of ministering to the unreached people groups further explicates the importance of the commission by Jesus. Embedded within the theology of reaching out to the UPGs is emphasizing the importance of actively engaging with those who have limited or no access to the message of Jesus Christ. The UPGs have not yet had significant exposure to the teachings of Jesus Christ. These groups may reside in geographically remote areas, have different cultural backgrounds, and lack access to resources that allow for Christian exposure or authentic opportunity to hear the whole message of Jesus Christ. Reaching out to these communities is imperative because firstly, it is a biblical mandate. Secondly, God's love is for all and thirdly, all persons should be provided with Equal access to salvation as outlined below:

Reaching out to the UPGs is non-negotiable because it is a **Biblical Mandate** and the Great Commission provides a divine directive for believers to share the gospel with all people, regardless of their location and background. Specifically targeting unreached people groups is to fulfill this commandment and embody Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19.

Secondly, **God's Love for All** is an indispensable verdict throughout scripture and the Bible repeatedly emphasizes God's love for all humanity. Reaching out to unreached people groups extends this love to those who have not yet had the opportunity to experience it. The message of salvation should not be limited to particular regions or cultures but should be accessible to all who earnestly seek it. The message of the gospel must be preached to all.

Lastly, every people group on the globe should be provided with **Equal Access to Salvation**, because the truth of the gospel surpasses borders, languages, and cultures. Unreached people groups deserve the same opportunity as any other group to hear and respond to the message of Jesus Christ. Reaching out ensures that no one is left without the knowledge of salvation.

Reinterpreting Matthew 28:19 involves understanding the breadth and depth of Christian missions. While some may interpret "all nations" as referring solely to geopolitical nations, there is room to view it through a broader lens. Understanding "all nations" as encompassing people groups, ethnicities, and cultures that are still unreached to expand the understanding of the Great Commission's mandate. The theological soundness of this interpretation lies in recognizing that the intended audience for the gospel message is not confined to specific geographic regions, but rather extends to all who have not yet heard it. This interpretation aligns with the overarching narrative of the Bible, which highlights God's desire to reconcile all people to Himself regardless of their social and cultural milieu. Reinterpreting Matthew 28:19 to emphasize reaching out to unreached people groups enhances the theological soundness of the study's approach to fulfilling the Great Commission. It underscores the biblical mandate to share the message of salvation with all and to extend God's love to those who are

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<sup>28</sup> T.C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: . Zondervan, 2007).

yet to experience it. By actively engaging with unreached people groups embody the biblical values of **equality, accessibility, and God's boundless love** for all humanity. The theological soundness of this interpretation lies in reaching out to all people groups regardless of their socio-cultural norms.

### **Socio-cultural Assumptions and Dimensions of Unreached People Groups: Understanding the Unseen**

There exist numerous groups of people who have remained largely untouched by the influences of Christianity. These UPGs, often living in remote regions and isolated communities, possess distinct socio-cultural assumptions and dimensions that have shaped their ways of life for generations. Understanding and appreciating these unique characteristics is crucial, not only for cultural preservation but also for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation in an interconnected world.<sup>29</sup> Socio-cultural assumptions refer to the underlying beliefs, values, and norms that guide the behavior and interactions of a particular group.<sup>30</sup> When it comes to UPGs, these assumptions are deeply rooted in their social structures, spirituality, and historical experiences. While it is impossible to generalize all UPGs, there are common dimensions that can be observed among many of them.

One crucial dimension is the communal nature of these groups. UPGs tend to have strong community bonds, where individual identity is deeply interconnected with the group. Decision-making processes are often collective, and community well-being takes precedence over individual desires. This sense of communal identity provides a solid foundation for social harmony and collective welfare.

Another dimension is the significance of spirituality in their daily lives. UPGs often have unique belief systems, traditionally tied to their environment and natural resources. Their spiritual practices often involve rituals, ceremonies, and a strong connection to the land.<sup>31</sup> These beliefs function as a source of guidance and provide a framework for understanding the world and the individual's place in it.

Furthermore, UPGs often place a high value on oral traditions and storytelling as a means of passing on knowledge, history, and cultural identity. With limited access to formal education, these traditions are essential in preserving their collective memory and transmitting ancestral wisdom. Language, too, plays a vital role in maintaining cultural continuity, with many UPGs having their distinct languages or dialects.

The socio-cultural dimensions of UPGs are not without challenges. In today's rapidly changing world, UPGs face external pressures that threaten their traditions and way of life. Globalization, climate change, and development projects can disrupt their socio-cultural equilibrium, leading to social disintegration, loss of traditional knowledge, and erosion of cultural diversity.

However, it is crucial to note that acknowledging and respecting the socio-cultural assumptions of UPGs does not imply romanticizing or idealizing their way of life. It is merely an invitation to understand their unique perspectives and challenges, recognizing that no culture is superior or inferior to another. This understanding can pave the way for collaborative efforts, where the strengths of both UPGs and the wider world can be harnessed for sustainable development, cultural preservation, mutual learning, and transmission of the gospel.

### **Developing Missional Strategies to Reach Unreached People Groups in Africa**

Africa as a continent is rich in diverse cultures, languages, and traditions, hosting numerous unreached people groups. These groups have limited access to the Gospel message and are often isolated or marginalized. Therefore, it is vital for Christian missionaries and organizations to develop effective missional strategies to reach these unreached people groups with the love and message of Jesus Christ. This study recognizing the substance of reaching the unreached in Africa, uncovers key missional strategies to reach the unreached people groups in Africa. The study acmes that, to develop key

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<sup>29</sup> Eunice Sahle, *Globalization and Socio-Cultural Processes in Contemporary Africa* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Kofi Osei Akuoko, "Traditional Values, Socio-Cultural Factors and Human Resource Management Practices in Public Sector Organisations in Ghana," *Journal of Science and Technology (Ghana)* 28, no. 3 (2008): 58–69.

<sup>31</sup> David L. Markham, *Missions to Remote Unreached People Groups: Radical Missionaries Needed Now* (Oaxaca: Mexico, 2014).

successful missional strategies to reach the unreached, understanding the context, building relationships, contextualization of the gospel, empowering Indigenous leadership, Collaborating and Partnering, and Using Technology and Media are key and have been discussed below:

### **Understanding the Context: Cultural, Social, and Linguistic contexts.**

To effectively reach unreached people groups in Africa, it is essential to understand their unique cultural, social, and historical contexts. Comprehensive research should be conducted to gain insights into their languages, lifestyles, belief systems, and worldviews. This understanding will enable missionaries to blend the Gospel message with the cultural context, making it more relatable and appealing. Reaching the unreached with the Gospel is a fundamental mission in Christianity. However, to effectively communicate the message of God's love to the UPGs, it is essential to understand their unique contexts. This work emphasizes the importance of understanding the context when sharing the Gospel with the unreached, and how it can lead to more fruitful and transformative outcomes.

#### ***Understanding Cultural Context***

Cultural context plays a pivotal role in grasping the mindset, values, and beliefs of the unreached. Every culture has its own set of norms, practices, and worldviews, which heavily influence the way people perceive and understand religious ideas.<sup>32</sup> By taking the time to learn about their culture, missionaries can ensure that their message aligns with the local customs, allowing for a more relatable and accessible presentation of the Gospel.

For instance, in many Eastern cultures, the concept of community and family ties holds great importance. By emphasizing the relational aspect of Christianity and highlighting the ways in which it can strengthen familial bonds, missionaries can appeal to the unreached in a more significant way. Understanding that some cultures place a strong emphasis on honor and respect, missionaries can employ approaches that uphold these values while sharing the Gospel message, ultimately enhancing the receptivity of those being reached. Additionally, understanding the cultural context enables missionaries to avoid potentially offensive or insensitive gestures that may hinder their efforts.<sup>33</sup> By recognizing and respecting cultural practices, trust can be built with the unreached and it also demonstrates the love and acceptance that Christianity embodies.

#### ***Understanding Social Context***

Social factors, such as socioeconomic status, education level, and political dynamics, also shape an individual's reception of the Gospel. Unreached communities facing poverty may have different concerns and priorities, making it important for missionaries to address these practical needs alongside spiritual ones; nevertheless, there may be other contexts where there is no poverty, but they remain unreached with the gospel. By actively engaging with social issues, missionaries establish their relevance and reinforce the Gospel's ability to bring about holistic transformation.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, political and historical contexts influence the way people perceive religion and religious institutions. Some unreached communities may have experienced conflicts or colonization that have tainted their views of Christianity. Understanding these historical scars allows missionaries to approach these communities with empathy and sensitivity, tailoring their message in a way that can navigate potential barriers and prejudices.

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<sup>32</sup> Harry C Triandis and Eunok M Suh, "Cultural Influences on Personality," *Annual Review of Psychology* 53, no. 1 (2002): 133–60.

<sup>33</sup> William B Gudykunst and Young Yun Kim, *Communicating with Strangers: An Approach to Intercultural Communication*, vol. 19 (McGraw-Hill New York, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> P. B. Smith, M.H. Bond, and C Kagitcibasi, *Understanding Social Psychology Across Cultures: Living and Working in a Changing World* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).



### ***Understanding Linguistic Context***

Language is a powerful tool for effectively conveying complex ideas and concepts. By investing time and effort into learning the local language, missionaries can break down barriers and establish a deeper connection with the unreached. Speaking their language not only demonstrates respect but also enables meaningful conversations and a more profound understanding of their worldview. This linguistic understanding helps missionaries use appropriate terminology and illustrations that resonate with the unreached, making the Gospel message more relatable and easier to embrace.

### ***Building Relationships***

Developing genuine relationships with the local communities and individuals within unreached people groups is crucial.<sup>35</sup> Missionaries must invest time in building trust, establishing mutual respect, and showing love and care for their physical and spiritual well-being. This can be achieved through community development projects, healthcare initiatives, education, and other practical services that meet the specific needs of the people. In the world today, there still exist numerous unexplored territories within communities of diverse cultures and backgrounds that are yet to be reached with the life-transforming message of the Gospel. Reaching these unreached people groups requires more than just proclaiming the message; it necessitates the establishment of meaningful relationships built on trust and understanding.

This paper explores how building relationships is crucial in reaching the unreached people groups with the Gospel and outlines various approaches and strategies to effectively build relationships with these communities as follows: understanding cultural sensitivity, practicing active listening, engaging in service, adapting an incarnational approach, and establishing long term relationships.

### ***Understanding Cultural Sensitivity***

Cultural sensitivity plays a pivotal role in building relationships with unreached people groups. It requires developing an understanding of their customs, beliefs, and practices while acknowledging and respecting their cultural differences. By embracing their uniqueness and avoiding cultural imperialism, the foundation for genuine connections and open doors for sharing the Gospel can be laid.

### ***Practicing Active Listening***

Active listening involves the intentional effort to understand and empathize with others. Building relationships within unreached people groups involves respectfully listening to their stories, struggles, and aspirations without imposing personal worldviews. This approach fosters mutual respect, and trust, and paves the way for fruitful conversations about faith.

### ***Engaging in Service***

One of the most powerful ways to build relationships is through active service within the community. By addressing tangible needs such as healthcare, education, or poverty, Christians can demonstrate the transformative power of the Gospel and show their genuine concern for the welfare of others. This approach creates deeper connections and establishes a platform for sharing the Good News.

### ***Adopting an Incarnational Approach***

An incarnational approach involves immersing oneself within the unreached people groups, living among them, and experiencing their daily lives firsthand. This method allows Christians to encounter the challenges, concerns, and joys of the community, enabling a much deeper understanding of their culture, language, and worldview. In doing so, believers can effectively communicate the relevance of the Gospel in their specific context.

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<sup>35</sup> Smith, Bond, and Kagitcibasi, *Understanding Social Psychology Across Cultures: Living and Working in a Changing World*.

### ***Establishing Long-term Relationships***

Reaching the UPGs demands a long-term commitment to building relationships. Consistency, trustworthiness, and patience are key to developing deep connections that transcend the barriers of language, culture, and tradition. These cultivated relationships gradually shatter the walls of skepticism and pave the way for the Gospel to penetrate hearts and minds.

### **Contextualizing the Gospel**

Presenting the Gospel in a way that resonates with the cultural and linguistic framework of the unreached people groups is essential.<sup>36</sup> It involves using locally appropriate language, customs, and traditions to communicate biblical truths effectively.<sup>37</sup> Culturally relevant worship styles, arts, and storytelling methods can be incorporated to make the message more accessible and meaningful. Despite the remarkable growth of Christianity on the continent of Africa, there are still numerous unreached people groups who have not been adequately exposed to the Gospel message. To effectively engage with these communities, it is crucial to contextualize the Gospel by understanding and appreciating their unique cultural nuances, belief systems, and social structures through understanding their cultural context, Respecting Indigenous Values and Beliefs, Approaching the Gospel as Good News for All, Utilizing Indigenous Languages, *Adapting Methods of Enculturation, and Training Indigenous Leaders*.

### ***Accepting the Cultural Context***

Before introducing the Gospel to unreached people groups, it is imperative to immerse ourselves in their cultural context.<sup>38</sup> Africa boasts a wide array of ethnic groups, each with their distinctive traditions, languages, and customs. By taking the time to relate to the locals, learn their language, and gain an understanding of their daily lives, missionaries can start building relationships based on mutual respect and trust.

### **Respecting Indigenous Values and Beliefs**

To successfully bring the Gospel to unreached people groups, it is essential to honor and respect their Indigenous values and beliefs. Viewing their culture as a potential bridge rather than a hindrance, missionaries can identify commonalities that align with Christian principles, ultimately facilitating a more receptive environment for the Gospel message,<sup>39</sup> nevertheless, there is a need to draw the lines between the gospel and the beliefs that contradict the gospel to avoid syncretism and that is not to avow that syncretism is necessarily malicious.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Utilizing Indigenous Languages***

Language plays a vital role in breaking cultural barriers.<sup>41</sup> Instead of relying solely on foreign languages such as English or French, missionaries must invest in learning the local languages. By embracing Indigenous languages, missionaries can effectively communicate the Gospel, fostering a deeper understanding of its messages and facilitating a sense of ownership within the community.

### **Approaching the Gospel as Good News for All**

The Gospel message should be communicated in a way that resonates with the local community's core concerns and aspirations. Understanding the needs of the people and identifying their struggles, such

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<sup>36</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Orbis Books, 1979).

<sup>37</sup> David J Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (London: Orbis Books, 1991).

<sup>38</sup> Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*.

<sup>39</sup> Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*.

<sup>40</sup> Agyapong, "Religion amidst Tares and Weeds: A Pentecostal Perspective on the Hegemony of Non-Religious Movements and Scholarship on Religion in the 21st Century," November 8, 2022.

<sup>41</sup> Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," in *College Student Development and Academic Life* (Routledge, 2014), 264–93.

as poverty, sickness, and injustice, allows missionaries to present the transformative power of the Gospel to address those challenges. By emphasizing the universal applicability of the Good News, the message becomes more accessible and relevant to the specific context of African unreached people groups.

### **Adapting Methods of Enculturation**

To effectively contextualize the Gospel, missionaries should utilize methods of enculturation, which acknowledge and integrate local traditions and practices into Christian worship. For example, incorporating traditional music, dance, and storytelling into worship services can create a space where the Gospel resonates with the hearts of the people. This form of syncretism not only respects their cultural heritage but also helps them perceive Christianity as an integral part of their identity rather than a foreign imposition.

### **Coaching and Empowering Indigenous Leaders**

To achieve sustainable and enduring transformation, there is a need to empower and train Indigenous leaders within these unreached people groups. By equipping local believers with theological education and leadership development, the Gospel message can be shared through relationships grounded in cultural understanding and trust. Indigenous leaders are better positioned to guide their communities on a transformative spiritual journey, nurturing a vibrant local church that is deeply connected to the specific needs and aspirations of its people.

### **Collaborating and Partnering**

Collaboration and partnership among different Christian organizations, denominations, and churches is essential to effectively reach unreached people groups in Africa. Joint initiatives can pull resources, expertise, and networks to maximize impact and reduce duplication of efforts. This encourages synergy and promotes unity among Christian communities, leading to a more coordinated and holistic approach to fulfilling the Great Commission. Collaborating and partnering with various organizations and individuals is vital to reaching the unreached people groups in Africa. These groups often reside in remote areas or have limited access to resources, making it challenging for them to be reached by traditional means.<sup>42</sup> However, through collaboration and partnerships, strengths and resources can be pooled to effectively engage and impact these communities.

One of the primary reasons why collaboration and partnering are crucial is the diversity of skills, expertise, and resources that different organizations and individuals bring to the table. No single entity possesses all the necessary tools or knowledge to effectively reach these unreached people groups. By collaborating, the church can partner with other institutions thereby promoting a comprehensive approach to ministering amongst the UPGs. For example, a non-profit organization specializing in healthcare might partner with a local church that has strong community connections in a remote area. Together, they can address the physical and spiritual needs of the people. Collaboration and partnering lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness in reaching the unreached. This ensures that every action taken is purposeful and impactful. For instance, an NGO focused on education might collaborate with a technology company to develop innovative ways to deliver educational content to remote areas, thereby increasing the reach and impact of their work.

Furthermore, collaboration and partnerships contribute to sustainability and long-term impact. Rather than working in isolation, by coming together and forming networks the church can build enduring relationships with local communities and empower them to lead their own development. Indigenous individuals and organizations often possess invaluable knowledge about the culture, language, and specific challenges faced by the unreached people groups. By collaborating with them, the church can be sure that their efforts are rooted in the local context and therefore sustainable beyond involvement. Collaborating and partnering provide a platform for learning and growth because diverse

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<sup>42</sup> Triandis and Suh, "Cultural Influences on Personality."

perspectives can challenge personal assumptions and broaden understanding. Engaging with different organizations and individuals allows the exchange of ideas, the development of innovative strategies, and the continuous improvement of approaches to reach unreached people groups. Partnerships facilitate learning experiences, enabling the adaptation and refining of methods based on the unique needs of each community. Through collaboration, the church can leverage diverse skills, expertise, and resources to create a comprehensive and effective approach.

### **Using Technology and Media**

Africa has experienced significant growth in mobile and digital communication infrastructure. Leveraging these mediums can enable missionaries to overcome barriers of distance and provide access to biblical resources, teaching materials, and virtual discipleship (Davis, et al, 2005). Utilizing social media platforms, audio-visual content, and radio broadcasts can help disseminate the Gospel effectively in remote areas. In a world driven by digital connectivity and growing technological advancements, it is imperative to leverage these tools to reach out to unreached people groups around the globe.<sup>43</sup> Unreached people groups are defined as communities or populations that have limited or no access to the Christian message and are considered outside the influence of traditional missionary efforts.

Firstly, the internet has revolutionized communication and information-sharing. It has become a powerful tool for disseminating knowledge and reaching out to individuals who were previously isolated. Therefore, utilizing the internet through website development and social media platforms can reach a wider audience. By creating websites or online platforms tailored to these unreached people groups, organizations can provide educational materials, testimonies, and relevant content to engage them. For instance, videos and audio messages can be translated into different languages, ensuring the message is understood and accessible by these communities.

Secondly, mobile technology has become increasingly prevalent in remote and rural areas. The penetration of smartphones has simplified connectivity, even in areas with limited infrastructure. Organizations can develop mobile applications that provide biblical content, translations, and resources for those who may not have access to physical Bibles or traditional Christian materials. These applications can reach remote communities where Christian literature is scarce, thereby ensuring access to vital spiritual resources.

Thirdly, radio and television continue to play a crucial role in disseminating information, particularly in areas that lack internet connectivity or access to modern technology. Organizations can partner with local radio and television stations to broadcast Christian programs in the local language to reach unreached people groups. These programs can include Bible studies, worship services, testimonies, and culturally relevant content that resonates with the targeted unreached people groups. This approach taps into the power of mass media, enabling individuals who may not have internet access to still hear the message and engage with it.

Furthermore, social media platforms have become integral in connecting people worldwide and transcending geographical boundaries. By leveraging these platforms, organizations can create online communities for UPGs where individuals can exchange ideas, ask questions, and receive spiritual guidance. Through targeted advertisements and content, these platforms can reach people who may have never encountered the Christian message before, providing an opportunity for engagement and transformation.

### **Overcoming the Challenges of Reaching Africa's Unreached People Groups**

Africa's rich cultural diversity and the multitude of languages have led to the existence of numerous UPGs often marginalized and isolated, making it challenging to conduct effective outreach and development programs on the continent. The study's analysis explores the multiple hurdles that hinder

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<sup>43</sup> Levent Uzun, "Utilising Technology for Intercultural Communication in Virtual Environments and the Role of English," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 116 (February 2014): 2407–11, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.583>.

missionary efforts to reach Africa's UPGs comprising linguistic and cultural barriers, inaccessibility due to geography, socio-economic challenges, and historical and political challenges as well as discusses the potential solutions to overcome these challenges.

### ***Linguistic and Cultural Barriers***

One of the primary obstacles to reaching unreached people groups in Africa is the vast array of languages spoken across the continent.<sup>44</sup> There are an estimated 2,000 different languages, making communication a major challenge for any outreach program. Missionaries and aid workers often struggle to bridge the language gap, hindering effective communication and understanding of community needs.

### ***The Solution: Localizing Efforts***

Initiating partnerships with local community leaders, translators, and interpreters is crucial in overcoming linguistic barriers. These local individuals can serve as key intermediaries, aiding in communication while also providing invaluable insights into cultural nuances. Employing anthropological and sociolinguistic expertise can enable outreach programs to tailor their approach and message to the specific needs and values of each people group.

### ***Inaccessibility due to Geography***

Many of Africa's unreached people groups reside in remote and isolated regions. Inaccessibility poses a significant challenge as it hampers the transportation of resources, aid, and educational materials, making it difficult to reach these communities.

### ***Solution: Infrastructure Development***

Investment in infrastructure, such as building roads, bridges, and transportation networks, is crucial to overcoming geographical barriers. The Church's collaboration with local, government and international organizations to develop sustainable logistical solutions can facilitate the provision of aid and resources to unreached people groups. Innovative transport methods in the twenty-first century, such as drones, light aircraft, and ferry boats can also be considered for overcoming challenging terrains.

### ***Socio-economic Challenges***

Unreached people groups in Africa often face high levels of poverty, limited access to education, and lack of basic healthcare services. This creates a cycle of deprivation and vulnerability, making it challenging to improve their quality of life and introduce sustainable development initiatives.

### ***Solution: Holistic Development Approaches***

Implementing comprehensive development projects that focus not only on aid but also on education, healthcare, and skills training can break the cycle of poverty. Prioritizing community empowerment and capacity-building programs can foster self-sustainability, enabling these groups to thrive in the long term.

### ***Historical and Political Factors***

Historical and political factors can impede efforts to reach Africa's unreached people groups. Conflicts, ethnic tensions, and authoritarian regimes often hinder access to these marginalized communities, as well as create an ambiance of distrust towards outsiders.

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<sup>44</sup> Markus and Kitayama, "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation."

### **Solution: Diplomacy and Building Trust**

Engaging in diplomatic efforts to address conflicts, advocating for human rights, and fostering local ownership and participation is vital in overcoming these challenges. Establishing transparent partnerships with local governments, organizations, and community leaders helps build trust and credibility, leading to improved access and acceptance of outreach initiatives.

### **A Redefining of Unreached People Groups**

The study's critical reflections and analysis from a Pentecostal perspective define Unreached people groups as ethnic or cultural communities that have limited or no access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ due to linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, historical, and political barriers. These barriers can be linguistic, meaning that the community speaks a language that lacks Christian resources or translations of the Bible. Cultural barriers refer to the community's customs, practices, and values that inhibit the acceptance or understanding of the Gospel. Socioeconomic challenges imply that the community's circumstances, such as poverty or social marginalization, hinder the dissemination and reception of the Gospel. Historical and political factors encompass the impact of past events, folktales, myths, conflicts, or political systems that obstruct the spread of the Gospel within the community or discourage its acceptance as a norm. Overall, an unreached people group is one in which the Gospel is not known or accepted as normal due to combinations of these linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, historical, and political factors.

### **A Pentecostal Approach to missions amongst the unreached people groups**

Pentecostalism, a Christian movement that emphasizes the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, has experienced exponential growth across Africa.<sup>45</sup> With its emphasis on spiritual gifts, healing, and deliverance, Pentecostalism resonates with many Africans who seek a more experiential and transformative encounter with God.<sup>46</sup> It is this spirit-filled approach that propels Pentecostal churches towards reaching the unreached people groups on the continent.

One of the key elements that distinguishes the Pentecostal approach in reaching the unreached is the focus on prayer. Pentecostal churches prioritize intercession and seeking God's guidance and intervention in their activities. Recognizing the complexity of the task at hand, Pentecostals understand that the Holy Spirit and supernatural manifestations must precede any effective outreach.<sup>47</sup> They believe that by tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer, doors will open, hearts will be softened, and barriers will be broken down.

Furthermore, Pentecostal churches are known for their vibrancy and passion in worship. Music, singing, clapping, and dancing are an integral part of their gatherings.<sup>48</sup> This energetic worship style holds a unique appeal, which can be utilized to foster a sense of community and belonging among the unreached people groups. Pentecostal services create an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity, making it easier for marginalized communities to connect and engage with the church.

Pentecostal churches also prioritize holistic ministry, recognizing that physical and social needs must be addressed alongside spiritual ones. Health clinics, education centers, and community development projects have become common initiatives led by Pentecostal churches.<sup>49</sup> These practical interventions allow the Gospel to be shared alongside tangible acts of love and compassion.<sup>50</sup> By

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<sup>45</sup> Martin Jobe, *The Evolution of a Creationist* (Texas: Biblical Discipleship Publishers, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> Kwasi Atta Agyapong, "Will You Not Revive Us Again? (Psalm 85:6): An Evaluation of Revival In The Context Of Evangelical-Pentecostal Movements.," *Pentecostalism, Charismaticism and Neo-Prophetic Movements Journal*, May 20, 2021, 11–22, <https://doi.org/10.38159/pecanep.2021221>; A. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Stanley M Burgess and Eduard M Van der Maas, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Zondervan, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> Henry Blackaby and Melvin Blackaby, *Experiencing the Spirit: The Power of Pentecost Every Day* (Colorado: Multnomah Publishers, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> B. Smith, *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs, and Social Change in Africa* (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>50</sup> S. Simon, "Spirit-Filled Churches and Sustainable Development: Pentecostalism as a Key Factor in the Economic and Social Transformation of Africa," *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* 24 (2019): 57–72.

meeting the immediate needs of the marginalized, Pentecostal churches gain trust and credibility, paving the way for a more effective proclamation of the Good News.

Another significant aspect of the Pentecostal approach is the belief in the power of miracles, signs, and wonders. Pentecostals firmly adhere to the biblical promise that these manifestations of God's power are available to every believer.<sup>51</sup> They believe that these supernatural experiences have the potential to challenge skepticism, break through cultural barriers, and open hearts to the Gospel message. Healings, deliverance from spiritual bondage, and radical transformations often accompany Pentecostal evangelistic efforts, drawing UPGs towards the faith.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Reaching unreached people groups in Africa by Christians requires a thoughtful and culturally contextual approach. Here are some recommendations to consider:

1. Understand the local culture: Taking the time to thoroughly understand the customs, traditions, and worldviews of the unreached people group should be prioritized. This will help tailor an approach and messaging in a way that resonates with the UPGs.
2. Develop relationships: Building trust and cultivating long-term relationships with community leaders, elders, and individuals within the unreached people groups is crucial. Invest time in getting to know them, their concerns, and their needs. This will demonstrate respect and make it easier to connect with the community.
3. Empower local leaders: Instead of solely relying on outside missionaries, empower the new converts within the community to take ownership of the mission. Train and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out the work effectively. This promotes sustainability and ensures that the message reaches the community from within.
4. Use Indigenous languages: While English or French might be more widely spoken in certain parts of Africa, it is important to utilize local languages to effectively communicate the message. Translate religious texts, create educational materials, and conduct services in the languages that people understand best.
5. Respect cultural diversity: Africa is a continent with diverse ethnicities, languages, and traditions. Embrace this diversity and avoid imposing a one-size-fits-all approach. Respect local customs, integrate Indigenous practices where appropriate, and adapt methods to suit the cultural context.
6. Address physical and social needs: Offer humanitarian assistance and address the physical and social needs of the community. This can include providing medical aid, clean water, education, or vocational training. Meeting these needs shows practical love, builds credibility, and opens doors for sharing the Christian message.
7. Encourage contextualized worship: Encourage the development of a contextualized worship style that incorporates local expressions, music, and traditions. This allows people to connect with their faith in a way that feels authentic and relevant to their cultural context.
8. Adopt a long-term commitment: Reaching unreached people groups requires patience and a long-term commitment. Be prepared to invest time, resources, and personnel over an extended period. Also, be open to learning from the community, fostering a mutual exchange of knowledge, and understanding.
9. Partner with local churches and organizations: Collaborate with established local churches, organizations, and community leaders who already have a presence and understanding within the UPGs. This allows for a more holistic and effective outreach effort.
10. Seek holistic transformation: Beyond sharing the Gospel, strive for holistic transformation that addresses spiritual, physical, social, and economic needs. This approach creates sustainable change and contributes to the overall well-being of the community.

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<sup>51</sup> D. L. Maxwell, *African Gifts of the Spirit: Pentecostalism and the Rise of a Zimbabwean Transnational Religious Movement* (Harare, Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1999).

11. Additionally, invest in scholarly works that will project the social and cultural perspectives of the unreached people groups in Africa. Track the history and roots of the Unreached People Groups. Develop and tailor unique missional strategies that fit precise unreached people groups because not all caps may fit all heads.
12. The key to reaching UPGs in Africa is to approach them with humility, respect, and a genuine desire to understand and connect with their unique contexts and needs.

## CONCLUSION

The study through theological, exegetical, and socio-cultural analysis has established the scriptural basis for reaching out to the UPGs in the African context. The study ascertained that, the Great Commission of Jesus is geared towards reaching ethnic groups rather than focusing on entire nations which have the gross tendency to overlook the marginalized and deficient ethnic groups due to linguistic and cultural barriers, socio-economic challenges, historical and political challenges. The study devises initiatives such as building localizing efforts, infrastructural development, and diplomacy and building trust to curb the challenges opposed to reaching the UPGs. The study redefines the UPGs as ethnic societies that have limited or no access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ because of linguistic, cultural, socio-economic, historical, and political barriers.

In conclusion, a thorough assessment of the scriptural basis for the unreached people groups reveals a clear mandate for believers to make disciples of all ethnic groups. The Great Commission, as outlined in Matthew 28:19-20, urges Christians to reach out to those who have not yet heard the Gospel or have limited access to the Gospel. Additionally, the Bible is filled with examples of God's heart for the salvation of all ethnic groups and His desire to see all ethnic groups saved. Nonetheless, to effectively reach the unreached people groups, it is essential to develop missional strategies that are contextual and sensitive to their unique cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds which the study has carefully developed towards reaching the UPGs in Africa. Some of the missional strategies are Understanding the context, building relationships, contextualizing the Gospel, collaborating and partnering and the use of Technology and media. However, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the challenges that arise in reaching the unreached. These challenges may include persecution, government restrictions, language barriers, and cultural resistance. Nonetheless, through prayer, perseverance, and reliance on the Holy Spirit, the church can navigate these obstacles and find creative solutions by setting up localizing efforts, supporting infrastructural development, and engaging in diplomatic efforts to address conflicts while advocating for human rights to build the trust of the marginalized. Reaching the unreached people groups is both a biblical mandate and an urgent task. By assessing scriptural foundations, developing missional strategies, and addressing the challenges, the good news of Jesus Christ can effectively get to those who are yet to hear or have diminutive access.

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