
Sunday, February 11, 2018
Did You Know?

What is People Group Adoption?

How does missions work in many (perhaps most) churches? An individual or a family (let's say it's a family, the Lee's) senses God's call to missions to country X (let's say Tj). The church rallies around the Lee's in every way they can. They encourage them, pray for them, financially support them, and finally commission them to Tj. The church begins to learn about the peoples of Tj. They begin to send short-term teams to support the Lee's growing ministry. Fundraisers are held at the church to finance the building of a ministry centre there. The Lee's are warmly welcomed home during their home assignment and with full support they are sent back out for another term. While on their second term, it is discovered that the Lee's young son has a serious medical condition that will require long-term care back home, so with great sadness, the Lee's return home. The church tries to continue support for the ministry in Tj, but without a point person there, interest begins to wane and a couple years later, all ministry involvement in Tj ceases.

How is people group adoption different, and better? Consider this imaginary scenario: The leadership team at City on a Hill senses that God is calling the church to become involved in the country of Tj, after discovering that a vast number of unreached peoples live there. We send off an exploratory team to meet with a small group of Christian believers in the capital city. Upon returning, the team senses that God is indeed calling us to this part of the world. The leaders announce this new venture to the congregation and decide to adopt the peoples of Tj as their missions focus. They commit to serve there until the church in Tj can sustain itself, no matter how long it takes. They begin praying for God to send an individual or family to go as a pioneer missionary. A mature single man senses God's strong call and is eventually deployed to Tj. His tenure lasts 8 years, during which the church supported various ministry projects, but because the church has adopted this country, they continue to pray for the peoples there, and they continue to send more workers. Twenty years have gone by since the first missionary was sent. The church has sent dozens of short-term teams, has prayed thousands of hours of prayer, has several long-term missionaries in country, has funded many projects, and has birthed three churches. Interest in Tj has ebbed and flowed over the twenty years, but the resolve and commitment of the church for that country has not changed.

In the first scenario the focus is to support the missionary family for as long as they remain in the country. In the second scenario, the focus is to adopt, serve, and care for a people group long-term. Our church has been doing people/country adoption since 1997 when we adopted the KG. Then, in the mid-2000s we directed our eyes toward Cambodia and now, our sights are set on Bihar, India. Next Sunday, City on a Hill will be adopting Bihar, India as our new missions focus. What a joy! What an honor to be a part of a church that is reaching peoples near and far to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria.
Pastor Peter