

## **Synthesis of Strategy – One Man’s Convictions**

Matt McCollum’s recommended “Best Practices”  
for a Complete, Start to Finish, Unreached People Group Ministry  
Based On Experiences in 4 Distinct People Groups Over Nearly 3 Decades

### **1. Pray and Prepare Yourself**

- a. Develop Spiritually.
  - i. Know Jesus well.
  - ii. Know His Word well.
  - iii. Know yourself well (spiritual gifts, talents, weaknesses and strengths)
- b. Develop academically.
  - i. College/University?
  - ii. Trade?
  - iii. Bible/Ministry education!
  - iv. Learn a foreign language and get your brain accustomed early!
- c. Understand mission work biblically and practically.
  - i. The Perspectives Course or equivalent helps a lot and saves a ton of time trying to research issues yourself. Learn from the best. Much of the course is not even google-able, but carefully copywrited.
  - ii. Read your Bible with an open mind to all the cross-cultural currents. There is way more in play than you can imagine at this point.
  - iii. Read missionary biographies or articles about great missionaries from the past and present.
  - iv. Begin to zero in on one part of the world or religious group (all unreached peoples are already religious even if atheists as they believe in humanism).
- d. Cultivate Prayer for the lost you know and the lost you don’t know (Unreached of the Day app).
- e. Stay physically fit.
- f. Get out and stay out of debt.
- g. Give not only to your local church but to People Group Ministries you have come to trust after making sure they have their “Pauline Principles” (do not give to mission ministries that just play on your emotions or duplicate the work the local church should be doing).
- h. Carefully find a truly likeminded spouse if you do not have “the gift” of singleness (1 Cor. 7:7-9). Consider something like [www.calledtogether.us](http://www.calledtogether.us) if no one seems to be available locally. Ideally your spouse will be someone you are compatible with and attracted to Body/Soul/Spirit.
- i. Become an active servant in a Bible believing, mission minded congregation.

- j. Become comfortable sharing your faith including your personal testimony, select Bible stories, and Roman's Road.
- k. Get a passport.

**2. Pray and Go**

- a. Get out of "Dodge" (Southern Oregon in our case) ASAP!
- b. Go short term but to an E-3 (distant culture) mission field if at all possible. At least go E-2 at this point.
- c. Follow Jesus' model of going two by two. It is wisdom.
- d. Go daily via prayer and the Unreached of the Day app.
- e. Do a multi-month internship with a trusted missionary working among a UPG if at all possible.

**3. Pray and Stay**

- a. When ready, approach your home church and/or a mission agency you believe in for guidance.
- b. Become part of a team to a UPG, even if that team is just your family or a pair of singles.
- c. Prepare as best you can for that specific assignment.
  - i. Prayerfully create a game plan with the wisest mission minded people you know.
  - ii. Apply for a long-term visa to the country where the UPG resides or a multiple entry short term visa for multiple intense short term trips.
  - iii. Work out a budget and get funded (home church proposal or raise support through a mission agency).
- d. Travel to the country where the UPG resides or neighboring country and rent an apartment. Travel as light as possible.
- e. Do not purchase properties or homes. Stay flexible.
- f. Learn the local trade language if necessary.
- g. Make contact with your UPG however you can.
- h. Begin to learn the UPG's language
- i. Establish your viable role.
- j. Get adopted.
- k. Find your "Person of Peace" (Matthew 10 and Luke 10).
- l. Learn from your Person of Peace.
- m. Train your Person of Peace.
- n. Create your Bi-Cultural Bridge.

**4. Pray and Plant Churches**

- a. Think Chinese house churches, not American churches please!
- b. Start home fellowships ASAP within the targeted people group and do not get distracted with easier cultures round about that already have churches.

- c. Visit everyone you can and go at least two by two with locals (think of Paul's teamwork with Barnabas Timothy, Titus, Silas, Luke and others – he was never alone).
- d. Follow Paul's church planting pattern in Acts 14:21-25:
  - i. "Preach the Gospel" – Evangelism and seed sewing everywhere they will hear (within the UPG).
  - ii. "Teach Many" – Discipleship based on key topics and learning whole passages and books of the NT. This is time consuming but a joy! Go for it!
  - iii. "Confirm the Souls" – The encouragement of the believers is where you help them sort out personal and cultural issues as the scriptures and the Holy Spirit bring things to light.
  - iv. "Exhort them to Continue in the Faith" – Prepare them for the inevitable spiritual/psychological/physical persecution. This is a given, not an exception in frontier fields.
  - v. "Ordain Elders in Every Church" – pray, fast, observe, test, and finally affirm those whom God has prepared to be "elders" (generally these are respectable and responsible family men that have been fully converted and are natural leaders within the body).
  - vi. "Commend them to the Lord" – means entrust them to the Lord as you pull out to repeat the process elsewhere. God is bigger than you think.
  - vii. Repeat these Pauline Principles in another unreached region of the same UPG with select leaders from the previous church movement or move on to another UPG.

**5. Pray and Visit Home**

- a. Visit your Home Church occasionally, but not too Frequently (Acts 14:26-28). Keep these trips shorter if you are in the middle of a new UPG church planting effort. They can be much longer if transitioning between UPG's.
- b. You need a deep recharge of your spiritual batteries periodically and your home church(es) needs to hear what God is doing personally from you (Acts 14:27-28).

**6. Pray and Record Digitally Everything**

- a. This is for your Oral Learners within this people group (which is everybody really – Romans 10:17).
- b. Record the evangelistic teachings of your pastor(s)/teacher(s)/elder(s).
- c. Record the discipleship lessons of your pastor(s)/teacher(s)/elder(s).
- d. Record the passage by passage studies your pastor(s)/teacher(s)/elder(s).
- e. Record the indigenous praise songs that bubble from born again souls.
- f. Record as many Bible stories as possible, preferably with some insightful questions at the end for dialog.
- g. Do not worry about getting studio quality recordings. Let almost nothing deter your recording efforts. Most recordings can be done with a common cell phone and remain very intelligible and reproducible!

- h. Recordings can be easily edited with free software like Audacity and converted to any compressed file format like MP3.
- i. Put someone in charge that can record, edit, produce, and initiate distribution immediately after recording (some techie type will almost always want to contribute by doing this job – so don't let your pastor(s)/teacher(s)/elder(s) get distracted with it)

**7. Pray and Distribute Radically All your Digital Media**

- a. Use radio if possible.
- b. Use websites if possible.
- c. Use Facebook/Instagram/WhatsApp and other social media if possible.
- d. Use Bible apps if possible.
- e. Use YouTube if possible.
- f. Use micro SD cards if possible.
- g. Make everything free and make "pirating" easy.
- h. Remember that if it works on a budget cell phone it will work for nearly everyone and on every other more sophisticated device.

**8. Pray and Move On to the Next People Group**

- a. These are difficult decisions with lots of ramifications. Really seek the Lord as to timing. Know too that at times, God decides for you with circumstances beyond your control.
- b. Do not stay indefinitely so as to prevent their maturation while still in your shadow (think parenting at the late teen / early adult phase).
- c. Do not leave too early so as to lose the momentum that will make the growth truly dynamic at some point.

**9. Pray and Continue Coaching Previous People Groups**

- a. Like Paul in his missionary journeys, it is wise to visit periodically and maintain communication (PTL it's easier these days!).
- b. Good coaches learn just how much to encourage and correct as their budding people come into their own.
- c. As "Fathers" our roles will change, but our connection should never be fully severed.

***Remember that Mission Work is the "Toughest Job You Will Ever Love"  
(borrowed from an old Peace Corps commercial)***