



“For the love of
CHRIST
compels us”
2 Corinthians 5:14

Evangelical Presbyterian Church
World Outreach

REPORT 2020



Dear friends,

Thank you for praying for and giving to EPC World Outreach last year. Your prayers were a bulwark during times of great testing.

In 2019, the marriages, children, and health of our missionaries were under attack. Parents saw their children struggle with severe depression, and battled their own debilitating physical pain. Discouraging voices told WO families on the field they had zero chance of raising full support. Government officials told WO families on the field they had zero chance of renewing visas and should start packing their bags. Faithful WO missionaries fought discouragement and the fear that their work was in vain. Urgent prayer requests were posted almost daily on the WO Missionary Prayer Network web page...

And we were astounded to see "impossible" visas granted. "Impossible" financial support came in through small and large gifts. Unexpected sources came to aid missionary children. Some debilitating pains were relieved, in other cases more grace was given to endure.

World Outreach made seven new appointments in 2019 (6 families and one single). Partnerships with wonderful Christian leaders in places like Vietnam, Ethiopia, Russia, and Lebanon grew strong. And we rejoiced in our missionaries' reports of new Bible studies, baptisms, and house church fellowships.

Inside this book, you can read a summary of what EPC World Outreach is all about, a numeric snapshot of progress, and two stories that exemplify our impact on the field and at home. May you be encouraged by what you read.

Thank you for supporting World Outreach with your prayers and finances. Thank you for loving our missionaries and national partners. Thank you for grieving that millions of people live in spiritual darkness without hope. And thank you for sacrificing so one day our Lord Jesus Christ will be worshiped by every tribe on earth.

Grace and peace,

Phil Linton, Director of EPC World Outreach

What We Do: WO Mission

People naturally clump together. We tend to stick to people like us, and resist outsiders. But Jesus was different. He loved outsiders so much that he pushed open their doors to reconcile them to God. He told his followers to keep up the pattern. And down through the centuries missionaries have done the awkward, painful work of pushing into resistant clumps to bring Jesus' answer to life's greatest problem. As the gospel takes root, these communities catch the vision and are equipped to overcome human nature's "clumpy-ness." Then they send out missionaries to push into the next resistant group with good news. That's full-cycle church planting, and it's what World Outreach does.



**Full Cycle Church Planting
Among Those with Least Access**

"For the love of Christ compels us"
2 Corinthians 5:14

Who We Are: WO Values

Love: the Fuel ❤️

The missionary calling seems crazy to some, and it certainly cuts across the grain of human nature. But God the Father's nature is different. He loved a world that rejected him. He so loved the world that he sent his Son to reconcile the world to himself. And just as the Father sent the Son, so he sends his followers. His love changes us. To our amazement we find his love compelling (and sustaining) us to do what seemed unthinkable, even crazy, before.

Evangelism: the Task 🗣️

The world's greatest problems (war, disease, hunger, etc.) are spiritual at their root. Brokering ceasefires, vaccinating children, and distributing food are immensely valuable, but only the gospel has the power to change people's hearts and transform communities from the roots up. That's why evangelism - gospel showing and telling - is the essential core of every world Outreach strategy.

Access: the Need 🗝️

Access to the gospel is dramatically uneven across the globe. Addressing this imbalance is a justice issue - it's not right to keep offering seconds and thirds at one end of the table, before folks at the other end get a chance for first helpings.

Partnership: the Team 🤝

EPC World Outreach is not the answer to the world's problems. We are a small part of God's Church universal, responsible to use the talents he has entrusted to us wherever he sends us. And we always find he has gone before us, calling and gifting his team of various nationalities and church memberships.

Perseverance: the Price ✝️

God promises a harvest to those who sow and don't give up, but he doesn't tell us how long the germination period will be. We harvest what others have sown and others will harvest what we've sown. Our responsibility is persistence in sowing, giving glory (and responsibility) to God for the results.



Church Partnership Story

The Beginning of a Beautiful Friendship

The Islamic Center of Johnson County is located directly across the street from the library I frequent. So for two full years I had prayed for the people there and had felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to pull into the parking lot and talk to someone. And for two full years I didn't. Which is fairly troublesome for a pastor who claims to support and encourage missions.

The Holy Spirit had also convicted me to reach out to Muslims in my area, but I had no idea how to start. I had met dozens of our EPC missionaries who had traveled to faraway places in order to share their faith with people who were indifferent at best, and governments who did not want them there. Yet how many Muslims had moved right into my backyard – people who were much more accessible (in every sense of the word) than those in foreign countries.

Enter Mark. Mark had introduced the concept of reaching Muslims to our presbytery (Great Plains) and moreover, to me, personally. Mark and I had been forming a good friendship over the years because of our mutual desire to see God reach the unreached.

For at least the last year, Mark and I had tried several times to go to ICJC in Overland Park so that I could take that first step and meet some Muslims there. Finally the day had come and we walked in together to a midday prayer time (Salat al-zhur). Mark was his usual calm, yet gregarious self; I was beyond nervous, yet thrilled to finally initiate this first step, and so we began to converse with several men after they had finished their prayer time. They were quite gracious and receptive to our presence and interest.

Although at times it was somewhat awkward - as you might expect - Mark paved the way toward good relations by simply sharing personal

information, asking questions and appreciating their faith in various ways. Mark: "That's a beautiful prayer rug. Did that come from overseas or from here in the US?" Reply: "Yes, this came from Turkey!" Mark: "How many different countries are represented at your mosque?" Reply: "Somewhere between 30-35 countries. Therefore, we have to conduct our services in English." And on it went.

After 20 minutes or so we were actually exchanging phone numbers and email addresses – which, I must admit, freaked me out more than a little! And yet, there again was the Lord's peace, joy and purpose – that feeling of being stretched far out of my comfort zone and right where God wants to take me; and not just for me, but so that I could eventually invite others to this engaging process, this clarion call to honor and obey him. Which I am now beginning to do.

Over the course of time following our initial encounter, I then pursued a relationship with the imam of that mosque. Mr. D and I now meet weekly to continue our friendship and learn from one another about the commonalities and differences of our respective religions. Over the last three years I have learned as much about my own faith as I have about his faith. My favorite encounter was the time that Mr. D told me that our Christian religion is unfair. He explained that, as a Muslim, he will stand alone before God to be judged; but that we believed that Jesus would stand with us to pay for our sins. After I thought for a moment, I replied, "You know, you're right. That's not fair...that's what we call grace."

Mark's example and leadership, including walking with me into the mosque, has stretched me in my faith, and also emboldened me to lead my friends, family and congregation in the same way. Our church – Lighthouse Church in Paola, KS – has now completed our first Bridges Course with a good degree of success. And I believe that the Lord will continue to not only make us more aware of Muslims around us, but He will move us to initiate bridges of friendship with many in order to win some.

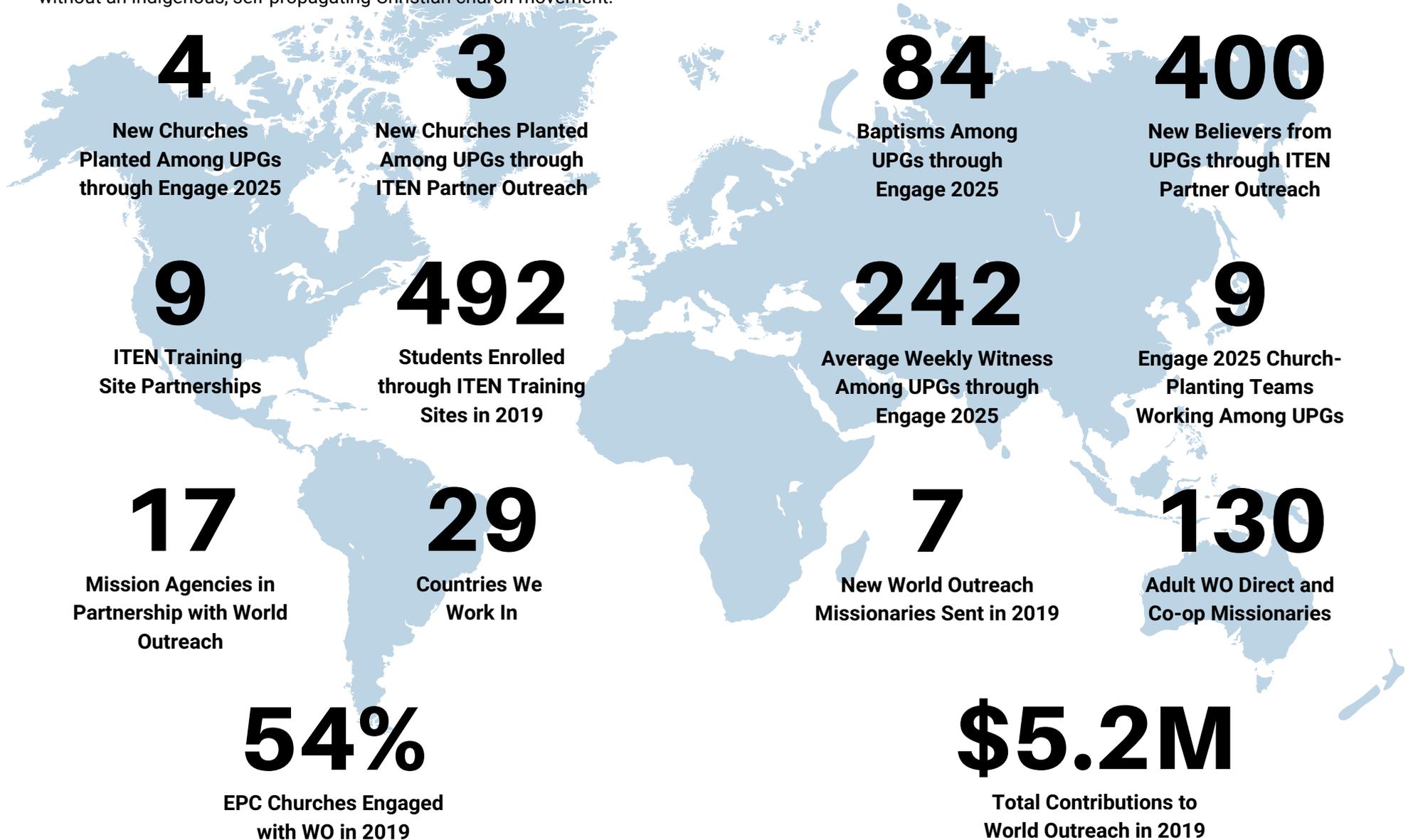
by Brad Buescher, Executive Pastor of Lighthouse Presbyterian Church



WO by the Numbers:

The numbers below represent progress made over the last ten years and specific progress in 2019. An **Unreached People Group** is an ethnic group without an indigenous, self-propagating Christian church movement.

Progress





Story from the Field

Making Disciples of Jesus

Imagine a country with (officially) zero churches and zero Christian citizens. The country's laws permit the employment of foreign Christians, but don't allow those foreign Christians to practice their faith openly. Citizens of the country can hear the gospel via satellite TV and the internet but have no access to what is absolutely essential in most people's conversion - the opportunity to talk over questions with another person. The only way that can happen is if a non-citizen comes, overcomes the obstacles, and starts talking about peace with God through Jesus.

Several years ago, Jim and Shannon* were appointed by World Outreach to go and make disciples of Jesus in such a country. As Jim completed his professional credentials in order to qualify for job openings, he and Shannon began World Outreach's TAG internship in Detroit. There they met people who were immigrants from their target country. They soon became close friends - so close that when Jim accepted a job offer in their country, those neighbors made sure their relatives back home gave them the warmest of welcomes on arrival.

Over the next several years, Shannon developed deep friendships with the women of this extended family. She talked with them about Jesus, and shared stories about him from the Bible. Last Christmas, Shannon told the women that she had a special gift for each of them - the most valuable thing in her possession - and gave a (smuggled) Bible to each woman of the family, so that they could read the stories themselves. As the women read about this Immanuel revealed in the Bible, they sensed God speaking to them. And, within a few weeks, the first of this group took the brave step of putting her faith in Christ. Soon, she was joined by another - two sisters in Christ, captured by His love for them!

**Names changed to protect identity*

Jim and Shannon's neighbors are like millions of others around the world whose only hope to have their deepest questions answered is that a follower of Jesus from outside their community will come to them. That outsider could be a Filipino Christian housekeeper, a Chinese Christian construction worker, or an EPC engineer/businessman/English teacher. It could be you.

Why not devote 2020 to putting yourself in a posture to hear God's answer to the question, "What do you want me to do about people without access to the gospel?" Make 2020 the year you find your part in declaring God's glory among people walking in the darkness!



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Thank you for supporting and praying for your EPC World Outreach Global Workers; these gifts help reach the world for Christ.

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.

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