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# RADICAL

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Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, missions work looks vastly different than it did only a year ago for many churches around the world. When global travel came to a halt, local congregations accustomed to multiple short-term trips each year were left with decisions that seemed unthinkable just months before. Devastatingly, many of those congregations chose to cut their global missions budget altogether. But that did not happen at Dawson.

How do we minister to the nations when we cannot get to them in person? That is a question that Christians have been asking long before COVID-19. Did you know that there are nearly 3.2 billion people on the planet who remain unreached with the Gospel? That means that almost half of the earth's population will die with very little chance of ever hearing about having eternal hope in Jesus Christ. The need is an urgent one.

Many times, these unreached peoples deal with immense physical needs. While their ultimate need is Jesus, addressing their physical needs often reveals the love of God in tangible ways that open doors for the Gospel. However, it has become increasingly difficult to minister to them in person. Why is that?

## **TWO MAIN REASONS:**

One, unreached people often suffer behind immense barriers that have impeded the progress of the Gospel for centuries. Some of these barriers include persecution, poverty, war, famine, political turmoil, geographical isolation, lack of education, lack of medical care, and lack of access to clean drinking water. Put simply, these unreached people are difficult to get to, for many reasons.

Two, once those barriers are crossed, for security reasons, it's often difficult to communicate the work being done, the needs of the workers, not to mention how you could even get resources to the workers without exposing the work they're doing and putting that work and the worker in danger. These concerns often prevent Christians from hearing about disciple-making efforts among the unreached.

It is in the face of these barriers that Radical, a ministry devoted to serving churches and to disciple-making, created Urgent. Urgent is an initiative that connects God's faithful followers to the urgent needs around the world. Through Urgent, Radical supports indigenous believers who are making disciples and multiplying healthy churches in some of the world's hardest to reach places, among some of the hardest to reach peoples.

## **A NEW PARTNERSHIP:**

There are many complications of ministering to the already-difficult-to-reach during a global pandemic, yet, as servants of Christ, we cannot let these barriers continue to keep the hope of the Gospel from those who urgently need it. This belief, shared by both Radical and the Missions Team at Dawson, has forged a new partnership through the Urgent initiative. Dawson and Radical are now teaming up to support biblically faithful and practically effective work aimed at delivering the hope of the Gospel on a massive scale to the unreached people of Iran. Some people may wonder, why Iran and why now?

## IRAN'S PHYSICAL NEEDS

The 1979 Islamic Revolution overthrew the monarchy that had ruled for more than 2500 years and converted Iran into a Shi'ite Muslim, cleric-ruled country. A year later, Iraq attacked Iran and an 8-year war followed, helping solidify the rule of the Muslim clerics (Ayatollahs) and worsening the already hurting economy. Currently, Iran's over-dependence on the country's rich oil and natural gas exports, a significant increase in the birth rate in the 80's, and economic reforms that fell short of their targets have resulted in high unemployment and under-employment, double-digit inflation, and almost 20% of the people living in poverty. Furthermore, Iran's questionable nuclear program along with its geographic location and attitude toward Israel has stirred up considerable political concerns for the stability of the region and has resulted in economic sanctions and continued close scrutiny of all Iranian political activities.

## IRAN'S SPIRITUAL CONDITION

In Iran, all ethnic Persians and anyone from a Muslim background (even if they are not practicing) are considered Muslim. If anyone does convert to Christianity, he or she is declared an apostate and could be put to death. The Iranian constitution recognizes several historic minority religions including Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity. However, it does not allow churches to preach or distribute materials in Farsi, and proselytizing is highly forbidden. Yet, astonishingly, the number of Muslim-background believers coming to Christ continues to grow greatly regardless of almost certain persecution or even death.

Believers and non-believers alike recount how God has used dreams and visions, as well as wonders, to point them to Christ and the Gospel. Many are curious about the Bible, but Bibles and Christian printed materials in Farsi are illegal. Smuggled Farsi Bibles and materials are quickly put to use. The internet and broadcasts by radio and satellite TV are providing encouragement, resources, and training for believers as more people come to Christ and more underground house churches are being established.

## ON THE GROUND

### CHURCH PLANTING

Radical is deeply embedded in Iran through robust underground church planting efforts. In spite of international sanctions and political tensions, the Iranian church is growing at an exponential rate.

### RESOURCES

Radical develops biblical resources in multiple languages for pastors and church leaders around the world to use as they share the Gospel and make disciples among the nations.

### TRAINING

Training church leaders is crucial as more people come to Christ and new churches are planted throughout Iran.

### DISCIPLESHIP

Radical is investing in the relational infrastructure of private entrepreneurs attempting to use their businesses as platforms for further discipleship and evangelism.





## MEDIA PROJECT

Because of the risks that come with evangelism and conversion to Christianity in Iran, we must think strategically and creatively about how to effectively share the good news of the Gospel. (In fact, it is because of the great risks involved that Radical cannot be specific about the details connected with this project.)

The media project is part of a broad seed-sowing effort that teaches biblical stories from the Old Testament by using secular media channels. It is built around a strong theological follow-up team that is Iranian-led and is designed to help start churches. The project requires advertising, production, editing, and promotional support. This project is created by Iranians, distributed by Iranians, and Iranians will see the project through to the end as they follow up with all who respond.

Teaching the Old Testament to people in the Muslim world is used as a platform for communicating New Testament truth. This is effective because: 1) The Old Testament is rarely explored in depth in Iran, so the content of the teaching is fresh to the listeners. 2) The Old Testament may meet with less resistance since the people have been taught that the New Testament is corrupted. 3) The Old Testament also points forward to Jesus' coming.

Radical's worker on the ground recently began broadcasting the Bible stories on secular airwaves aimed at a national audience. Extensive research has been conducted to ensure biblical themes are easily understood by Iranians so that the Bible stories aired throughout the country make sense to those who hear them.

Following each broadcasting event, we pray that many will seek out the meaning of the story told and connect with the follow-up team.

Both Radical and Dawson are excited and encouraged by this new partnership and are praying that God will "do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think" and that He would be glorified "in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

## ABOUT RADICAL

Radical exists to serve the church for the cause of Christ—to glorify God by making disciples and multiplying churches among all the nations. When Radical was founded in 2010, our goal was to serve the church in making disciples of all nations. We did this primarily through providing biblical teaching and articles on our website, and through hosting events like Secret Church. Today, Radical serves the church in five primary ways: Resources, Events, Training, Mission Strategies, and Urgent Needs.

While our main goal has not changed, the Lord has continued to open up new avenues for us to carry out our mission. Looking to the future, our prayer is that God would use Radical to serve Christ's church across the globe, as we rely on the sufficiency of God's Word and the power of God's Spirit—all for His glory!

To learn more about Radical, please visit [radical.net](http://radical.net). To learn more about how you can get involved with Urgent through prayer, go to [urgentneeds.org](http://urgentneeds.org).