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1

SNAPSHOTS



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Made
to shine but we have hidden.
to love but we stay distant.
to give but we mostly keep.
The world waits, groans, dies.
Untouched, seemingly forgotten.
A people made to fill the earth
with light, love, and goodness
Remain.

SNAPSHOT #1

The face of hopelessness

Click! It happened again. The picture was captured. Not on camera but by my brain and eyes (I have a suspicion my heart was involved also) working cleverly together, a picture then filed in a very accessible and often visited folder in my mind. A moment indelibly burned into my memory. An image that will shape who I am and how I view life from this point forward.

SCATTER

The little girl had tightly braided hair woven with masses of colorful beads that bounced around her head as she played on the side of the dusty excuse for a road in a town that hope seemed to have forgotten. The air was heavy with dirt particles thrown up by the slow-moving vehicles and the smell of stale alcohol wafting from the darkly lit bars, which seemed too plentiful in this slum. They called this Main Street, possibly because it was the only place in this “town” where you could buy anything. It was lined with little stalls (and bars) selling mostly tomatoes and manned only by women colorfully clad in traditional African dresses. The men, slumped over railings, chairs, and windowsills, seemed to think that their single role in life was to keep the aforementioned bars open. Loud music belted out from these establishments, only partially drowning out the heated arguments that seemed to be a normal and frequent occurrence on Main Street. The road itself was really only dirt, with lots of deep holes that our driver seemed intent on exploring in their entirety. Fine dust covered everything, robbing it of its original beauty and color.

That is, apart from the kids. Even the African dust could not hide the beauty I saw in that little girl’s face. She was probably eight or nine years old and was wearing a cream dress with multi-colored polka dots and a frilly skirt. No shoes. Her hair, plaited with multicolored beads, caught my eye as we approached, but her eyes made me look again. Or maybe it was the lines that

*Even the African dust could
not hide the beauty I saw in
that little girl’s face.*

ran down from her big brown eyes where tears had cut a track in the caked dust layered on her skin. She had prob-

ably fallen earlier and hurt herself. A smile was cracking as she saw the strange white face looking back at her.

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I had seen similar sights many times in my travels, but it was what happened next that caused my eyes, brain, and heart to do their thing. My host, OM's leader in that part of the world, turned to me and said, "Andrew, do you know that every girl in this village will be raped by someone she knows before she is ten years old?"

Click.

Filed.

SNAPSHOT #2 **The desert city**

It was easily 110 degrees (40°C) as we stood almost a thousand feet (300m) up on top of the tall, ornate tower overlooking the capital city. As far as we could see, sandy-colored buildings stretched into the distance and eventually stopped somewhere in the desert beyond our line of sight. Down below, 6 million people were intently going about living life, providing for their families. Minarets were evenly distributed throughout the landscape, each one letting us know that it was time for prayer through their noisy loudspeakers. In the midst of the cacophony of sound emitting from the traffic-filled streets and the hundreds of mu-ezzins calling to the multitude, we gazed out on the vastness of what our eyes were taking in when one of our leaders from that region said, "Andrew, do you know that we do not know of any followers of Jesus in this entire city?"

Click.

Filed.

On both occasions it was as if time stopped just long enough for something to well up deep inside me. What little girl in this dusty, dirty, forgotten slum is being raped today? How many of these dear Muslim people will die today having never once heard

SCATTER

of Jesus' love for them? No matter what I do next, tomorrow is going to be too late for some. Out of a churning mix of spiritual and emotional angst burst a guttural, primal response: "*This has got to change.*"

These two photos are often pulled out of that "filing cabinet." Each time they appear I am wrecked. In a strange way, I don't mind because they represent reality and I want to live in that place rather than in the place of ignorance or denial.

This is the world we live in. This is happening on our watch—at a time when we enjoy more technology, resources, and ability to travel than ever before and the number of Christ followers in the world has never been bigger.

How can that be?

Something is not right.

My father the pessimist

My father was one of the godliest men I have ever known. I am deeply indebted to him and my mother for how they brought up my siblings and me. He was also a card-carrying, highly committed, practicing pessimist. The pastor of the church we grew up in recounted a story to me that sums my dad up well.

Our church was soon to go on a vacation together to Scotland. The week before, my father, as the church elder, was in the pastor's room with him just before they were to go out to lead the church for the Sunday morning service. Seconds before they were to leave the room he turned to the pastor and said, "Well, if the bus doesn't crash and the boat doesn't sink, this time next week we will be in Scotland." The pastor walked out that day laughing, which was not typical for the church I grew up in.

My father's pessimistic outlook on life is the one thing I did not want to emulate. In fact, I think early on I committed to

SNAPSHOTS

being an optimist. I am not sure if I have the member's card yet, but I do like to think of myself as having a positive outlook on life and always seeking to see the best in people and circumstances. My commitment even affects the movies I choose. I will never, and I mean never, go to see a movie with a sad ending. There are enough horrible things happening and bad endings in the real world, I don't need Hollywood adding to it.

I remember one time when I let my guard down. It was when I was dating my girlfriend (now my wife). I took her to see the movie *My Girl*. I was proud of the fact that I let Sharon choose the movie, even though there would clearly be no car chases, or anything getting blown up. Just perfect for a date night, such was my commitment to my woman. If you are old enough to have seen the movie (no, it was not in black and white) and can remember the plot, you will know that there are two main characters, a young boy and girl who are falling in love. Halfway through the movie the boy gets stung by a swarm of bees and dies. No kidding!

I was seriously gutted. For the rest of the movie I waited and hoped that he would miraculously come back to life. You see, I don't care if the ending is unbelievably far-

***All is not as well
as it seems.***

etched—if you are making a fictional movie you have total freedom to write resurrection into the plot, especially if I am paying you \$10 to come watch your movie. The boy did not come back to life, and I left the theater totally depressed. The fact that it comes to mind at all probably means I am still dealing with the trauma.

Some happier snapshots

So I believe I am an optimist and some have even accused me of being an idealist. (You are probably in agreement right now.) And I am proud to be one. This is fed further when I read quotes

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like the one from Patrick Johnstone that states, “We are living in an age with the greatest ingathering of souls the church has ever seen,” and I get excited. Hallelujah!! And it is true! When those who know tell me that there are fewer unreached people groups (ethnic groups where Christians make up less than 2 percent of the total) today than there were last year, I say, “Praise God!” When I hear that our teams in India are seeing a new church planted every other day my heart races; and when I hear that 26,000 Dalit kids destined for slavery are now in our schools with a bright hope for the future, I just go, *Wow!* Or, that the church in Algeria is exploding with well over one hundred thousand believers and that some towns have more worshipers of Jesus than the number of those attending the mosque . . . incredible!

Another fact: The percentage of those living in extreme poverty (earning less than \$1.25 a day) has dramatically declined in the last three decades.¹ AMAZING! This feeds the optimist in me, and something rises up and celebrates (as much as a slightly introverted Irishman can). I like to feel that all is well and we are doing what Jesus asked of us, so let’s keep doing what we have always done and we will see the Great Commission completed in our lifetime, possibly even by the end of the week.

However.

Back to reality

Maybe I am getting older, or my father’s genes are coming to the fore, but if I am really honest I have to admit that when I take the time to look deeper at how we as followers of Jesus are doing in bringing His hope to those who have never even heard it once, and those who are being forgotten in society, left to be oppressed, abused, abandoned, hungry, enslaved without a voice, I have to fight pessimism. Yes, this optimist struggles with doubt

SNAPSHOTS

and discouragement. You see, all is not as well as it seems. Behind the statistics that make me feel good, there is another story.

So let me share a few more of the pictures that are filed in that often-visited folder in my mind that come out to wreck me on a regular basis and help to paint the reality of the forgotten of our world.

SNAPSHOT #3 **She is forgotten**

It was hot—not Georgia summer hot, North India dry season hot. The triple-digit Fahrenheit heat baked the ground hard and steadily sapped strength from every human being who needed to be in its direct line of fire. I was relatively fine as I was being taken from air-conditioned car to fan-cooled rooms to view our work among the millions of unreached and forgotten Dalits in North India. Three stories up, standing on the balcony of our training center, I saw them. Out in the fields, just beyond the property line, Dalit women crouched over with a small sickle in hand, cutting the ripened wheat. It was slow and arduous. They had been there since early morning and would still be there for a few more hours, working all day in this hellish heat. Their goal was to provide for their family—a goal they would fail miserably at every day of their life. The dollar a day they would receive from the landowner would not stretch far enough to feed their large family, never mind cover basic medical needs. Forget education for their children. Every day a woman would walk wearily home to continue her role as mother and wife, cooking the meager meal that her dollar could buy. They would all go to bed hungry. Tomorrow she would wake up early to do it all over again.

The cycle of extreme poverty will continue for her, her kids,

SCATTER

and tens of millions like her—destined to hopelessness. And as far as she is concerned, forgotten by the world.

Click. Filed. Often reviewed.

Poor and forgotten

This picture is true for 1.2 billion of our world. In fact, over 2 billion live on less than \$2 a day. And don't be fooled into thinking that \$2 is enough to live, in "those poorer countries." Two dollars a day will keep most of these families in extreme deprivation, hungry, and with no ability to access basic medical care, education, and clean water.

It is true that the percentage of extremely poor in our world has declined, but when you probe into that statistic you will find that all is not well. Not well at all. The number of individuals who are extremely poor in a region like Sub-Saharan Africa has actually doubled in the last three decades. A recent survey showed that in India there has been an increase of 105 million extremely poor in the same period.² There is controversy over how China, the biggest contributor to the statistical decline of global poverty, categorizes their poor. In a sense they may have simply shifted the goalposts.³

Enslaved and forgotten

In 2013, we said there were 27 million slaves in our world. In 2014, more robust research stated that we found a few more and there are actually 37 million. At the end of 2014, Kailash Satyarthi, Indian child slavery abolitionist and 2014 Nobel Peace Prize winner (so he probably knows what he's talking about), stated that in India alone there were 60 million children in forced labor, an undeniable form of slavery.⁴ The conditions of bonded labor are completely inhuman. Small children of six, seven years

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and older are forced to work fourteen hours a day, without breaks or a day of rest. If they cry for their parents, they are beaten severely, sometimes hanged upside-down from the trees and even branded or burned with cigarettes. They are often kept half-fed because the employers feel that if they are fed properly, then they will be sleepy and slow in their work. In many cases they are not even permitted to talk to each other or laugh out loud because it makes the work less efficient. It is medieval. It is today. It is not a piece of ancient history; it is real today and the daily reality for tens of millions. I am not okay with this snapshot.

SNAPSHOT #4

A vast crowd . . . ignored

I was sitting in the back of an old OM van in the prime of my idealism as a nineteen-year-old. Our excited team was having multiple conversations as we wove our way through the beautiful eastern European countryside. Village after village came and went, each one filled with local people going about their business. Kids playing on the sidewalks, farmers with unsafe-looking loads stacked high on their rickety trailers, and women carrying heavy piles of produce either bought or for selling. My cheek was pressed against the cold window, my mind racing and wrestling with a statement the pastor made before we set off: “There are no known believers in this region.” Every hard-working mother, every well-meaning industrious father, every carefree kid that we were driving past did not know Jesus. In fact, they had never heard of Him or His love for them. And there was no outpost trying to change that.

***There are more
unreached in the world
today than there were
yesterday.***

SCATTER

Since then I have had the privilege of visiting over seventy countries. I have experienced that sight and that feeling many times. Clicked and filed and reviewed.

The Excel sheet snapshot

Statistics are very one-dimensional and not often inspiring. That is why I have shared my stories and pictures with you. But facts and statistics are necessary, and can help us greatly. With these snapshots in my life it ensures my heart is always alive and alert to the plight of the unreached and forgotten of our world. With statistics I begin to understand the magnitude of the plight. And here, my friends, is why I struggle with pessimism the most. When OM started there were 1.5 billion who had never heard of Jesus once. When I joined our movement at nineteen years old we were challenged by the fact that the unreached in the world had grown in number to 1.6 billion. Today there are 2.8 billion. That is nearly three thousand million people. Or take the population of North America, South America, and Europe, then double it and you are getting close to the number who have never heard about Jesus one time and are living outside the reach of that message getting to them. With most of these people, no one is even trying to bring that message to them. That means for 2.8 billion people there is the distinct possibility that they will live their whole life and die having never heard, not even once, in any form, that Jesus loved them enough to die for them and lives again to give them abundant life and eternal hope. What an injustice! To make matters worse, a recent paper put out by a very reputable mission research group from Gordon-Conwell Seminary shows that by 2050, based on current population growth among the unreached and our efforts to reach them, the percentage of those in our world who will not have heard about Jesus will only

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change by 2 percent. That means in our lifetime the number of unreached will increase by hundreds of millions. Islam alone will grow by over 1 billion primarily due to high birthrates.⁵

Maybe you have seen enough of the snapshots in my photo file. But I do have a few more that I want you to see. I know that they will not change what is real, but they may very well change your perception of reality. I hope they do because the greater our grasp on reality, the higher the likelihood we will engage with it. The clearer our perception of reality, the deeper our involvement will be in it.

SNAPSHOT #5

A boatload of diapers—and the number is rising

Around the world last year about 135 million babies were born. If you can get your mind off the resulting huge pile of dirty diapers, this means that in the last ten years we have seen a net increase to our global population of over 1 billion. Here is why we are seeing poverty and unreached stats grow. This explosion, which has been happening over the last few decades, is happening primarily among the world's poor and those who have *never* heard of Jesus. That means 800 million new unreached and forgotten people in the last decade.⁶

Here is the bigger issue. Among this group in the same time period, there has not been an increase in the number of workers sent out to reach them. So you see the dilemma facing us. Every year, month, week, day when we look back to see how we are doing we see the size of our task growing exponentially, needed resources stagnating—and, more importantly, millions dying without Christ and the absence of the worship of God among hundreds of millions of people.

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SNAPSHOT #6

Hands raised up but not stretched out

The auditorium was jam-packed with students. This college had attracted Christ-followers from all over the world and in its purpose statement declared that it was preparing to send them back to bring global impact and change. The band was smoking it (music, that is), the sound was cranked, and the student body bounced and swayed with hands raised to the heavens. As a young mobilizer I was in the back row, not by choice but because it was the only seat available. This was day three of the “Missions Week.” Every day we had these amazing times of singing. Every day an enthusiastic speaker had called the students to go to the nations. Every day I chatted with tens of students and struggled to find any who had a desire to go help others know of the Jesus they had just worshiped. It seemed that they were only interested in raising their hands up in “praise” to God and not so interested in stretching out their hands in service to those who needed to hear of this same God they were singing to. In that moment my mind snapped another picture. It immediately put a comment on it: “This generation has learned to worship in the church but seems unwilling to worship in the world.”

Here is what God has to say: “Away with your noisy hymns of praise! I will not listen to the music of your harps. Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous living’ (Amos 5:23–24 NLT).

I love great times of worship through singing. I love them and need them, and God loves them too. I particularly enjoy them when they are excellent and extravagant. But what I am saying is that if our acts of worship in the world, sharing the love of Jesus through our lives, were as enthusiastic and extravagant as our

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times of singing, our world would be a different place. In his song “Unbroken Praise,” Matt Redman states, “Let my deeds outrun my words, and let my life outweigh my song.”⁶ In a sense, our worship should be greater outside the walls of the church than inside it.

SNAPSHOT #7

A Chihuahua in a furry costume

I have shared this one briefly with you in the intro but it is important enough to bring it out again—only in full Technicolor. It is a weird one. Picture a Chihuahua. Yes, one of those tiny yappy little dogs you often see being carried around in the handbags of Hollywood housewife types. Now add a Halloween costume—not on you, on the Chihuahua. I know it’s ridiculous but stay with me. In the USA we spend more money on Halloween costumes for our pets than we do on bringing the good news of Jesus to the unreached and forgotten people of our world.⁷ Seriously! Trixie is decked out in leopard skin and horns (and is traumatized as a result), while people died today without knowing of Jesus’ love.

Still thinking we’re changing the world? Let me give you a little more context to this last snapshot and how it relates to the way we use the money we have. Americans give 2 percent of their income to Christian causes (2 seems to be the new 10). Out of that 2 percent, 5 percent goes to ministry outside the USA; and out of that 5 percent only 1 percent goes toward sharing Jesus with those that have not heard of Him. That is 1% of 5% of 2% = 0.001% of what we earn we carefully set aside to ensure those who have never heard the gospel ever get that critical opportunity.⁸

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So for you nonmathematicians, that is a really low number. I am not a betting man but if I were and I did not know the people behind these numbers, then I would bet that they (that would be us) are not very committed to changing the reality of the unreached and forgotten people of the world.

Another way to state this is that for every \$100,000 American Christians earn (for a few of us that will take a while), we give the grand sum of \$1 toward changing the reality of the forgotten. The coffee I just drank while writing this cost me \$3, and I had a small one today.

Compassion without action is merely pity.

Let me say it with the angst that I am sure you would also feel if you had looked into the eyes of that little girl or stood overlooking the desert city. Based on the reality of how we spend our money, American Christians are more interested in how our pets look at Halloween, or what car we drive, or the house we live in, or the size of our retirement fund than the fact that young girls are being raped every day and that their lives have been irreparably impacted, with no hope of it changing in their lifetime. Or that tens of thousands are dying daily without ever hearing, even once, of the love of Jesus. Some may find that offensive. I hope so, but if this is the truth, the facts are reality and they speak loudly.

A good measurement of true compassion is resulting action. Compassion without action is of little merit or use. It is merely pity, a feeling that leads to nothing other than temporary sorrow and we typically medicate or eradicate that by getting on with life in our comfortable world here spending most of the money God has allowed us to steward on ourselves. If this sounds harsh go back and read this chapter again or take a trip to Haiti, rural India, or a slum in Africa.

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SNAPSHOT #8 A tale of two worlds

Two universities were located in very close proximity to each other. One was very small but highly prestigious, accepting students from the wealthiest families in the land. Its 300 students were well looked after and enjoyed many more privileges than those from the much larger neighboring campus. With close to 7,000 students daily walking the halls, most of the larger campus buildings had become tired looking at best and, in a number of outlying areas, were simply dilapidated beyond repair. One such area housed about 3,000 of the poorest students from a particularly rundown part of the land.

With their well-endowed programs, the prestigious university produced some amazing graduates and did well at cherry-picking the best of them to come back as professors and fill other key staff positions. Their teacher-to-student ratio was far superior to any other academic institution in the land. They had no plans to change this; in fact, they regularly spoke of how they needed to increase their effort to ensure every student had more opportunities to learn and grow.

Meanwhile, the large campus was getting by with a handful of professors who worked hard but had to take on multiple large classes each. Hundreds of students went without a professor on a daily basis—a fact the university was very concerned about but simply did not have the resources to change.

One day a fire broke out in the small forest that separated the two universities. Due to the dry windy conditions, the fire quickly spread to both campuses, engulfing the buildings in flames. Thankfully the prestigious university had its own fire department. A wealthy alum had made sure that his pampered descendants

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would always be protected within the hallowed halls as they developed their overprivileged minds. The sirens were screaming and the hoses deployed. It did not take long, as the well-trained fire department responded from the multiple stations dotted around the small campus. They quickly brought the blaze under control and shortly thereafter extinguished it completely.

Meanwhile, the flames from the large university could be seen reaching up into the sky above the scorched tree line. They did not have a fire department. In fact, their university somehow fell between jurisdictions and no one from anywhere seemed to be paying any attention to the raging fire. The prestigious university, aware of the flames, felt pity but also felt that they first had to make sure every solitary ember had been dealt with on their own campus, the paperwork written up, and the fire trucks inspected and cleaned to ensure their ongoing effectiveness. The firemen were showing some signs of heat exhaustion after their twenty-minute exertion. Some even said that they had not sweated so much since the 5K fund-raising fun run last spring!

However, the roar of the neighboring fire and the screams of the frightened students got the better of one of the firemen and he was now making his way over to the other university in one of the small vans his fire station had purchased for hydrant inspection runs. He arrived to find a handful of people using buckets and garden hoses as they tackled the massive blaze, which by now had almost completely destroyed the section where the poorest of poor students were. It was clear that lives would be lost that day. The national news that evening covered the incredible efforts of the fire department that saved their prestigious university but nothing was mentioned of the lives and property lost in the larger campus.

This snapshot, though a parable, seems ridiculous. This would

SNAPSHOTS

never happen. A group of 3,000-students, even in a poorer university would surely have someone looking out for their welfare and protection. One small university would never be so resource-rich compared to its larger neighbor and yet so lacking in generosity. It would also never ignore the obvious and urgent plight of a neighboring institution, especially when it clearly had the resources to help. Of course not.

But go back and read it again, only swap out the prestigious university for the American Church, the large university for the rest of the world, and the 3,000 poorest students for the unreached—and you will find that this parable is actually very true. Shocked? Here are the facts.

The population of the USA is just over 300 million. That means we represent about 4 percent of the world's 7 billion population. Seventy-nine percent of Americans say that they are Christians. Some more critical researchers would say that about one-third of us are intentional followers of Jesus. Regardless, for the rest living in this land, they are almost daily given the opportunity to see, meet, read, or hear the gospel through some form of media or a person. It is hard to avoid it in this country. Meanwhile, close to 3 billion are dying without spiritual and physical hope just across the pond from us. As the American Church we have kept over 90 percent of our full-time American Christian workers here in the USA to work among 4 percent of the world's population. Only 100,000 are sent out of the USA to help bring the hope of the gospel to the rest of the world. But fewer than 6,000 of these missionaries are going to the 2.8 billion who have never once heard of Jesus. That means 0.3 percent of our full-time workers are out there changing the reality of the unreached and forgotten.¹⁰ The majority of the rest are focused on a country where the gospel is on TV daily, the Bible readily

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available, and a solid church within easy driving distance of every citizen. The reality is that the church in America has more people, more money, more technology than we have ever had before and we are using it almost entirely on ourselves. I am not saying that we should do nothing in the USA. It is painfully clear there is much still to be done to see the gospel penetrate our society here, but we must face up to what is an obvious imbalance in how much of our resources we keep here among such a small segment of the world's population, all of whom have access to the gospel. Let's make sure our story no longer reads like the parable.

A good friend who has spent years serving in a very unreached part of the world came to visit the USA recently. After observing what is happening here, the buildings, programs, staff sizes, and amazing productions we have, he turned to me and said, "The church in the USA is obese with resources." Hmmm, it was hard to disagree.

There is something wrong with these pictures.

They are a few of my well-worn ones. They are not the prettiest, but the camera never lies. These events are happening on our watch. Our generation has tolerated the existence of slavery and the oppression of women and children on a greater scale than at any point in history. From our comfortable vantage point in the USA, we have watched a massive increase in those who have never heard the gospel and, based on our use of resources, we seem quite okay with it. At the same time, we have allowed extreme poverty to exponentially increase in India and Sub-Saharan Africa, along with many other countries. We may not like to admit it, but it seems we have forgotten these people exist. At least that is what our actions say—and you know what they say about actions speaking.

SNAPSHOTS

This firestorm continues to burn inside me today, and when I allow it to, it wrecks my heart. And so it should. Far more than it actually does, it *should* wreck me and change how I live my life.

But this is part of the issue. The part that has to change if the reality of the little girl in the slum or the Muslim in the desert city is to change. Am I wrecked enough? Is my personal “wreckedness” proportionate to the pain and lostness of the 2.8 billion and the millions of forgotten? Am I wrecked enough to change how I live my life? How I set my priorities, ambitions, goals, and dreams? One thing is clear: I need to be willing to let go of old ways of thinking, paradigms, and methodologies and find new ways to increase engagement with those who have never heard and those who are oppressed and forgotten. It cannot be business as usual.

*Am I wrecked enough to
change how I live my life?*

In light of this, you and I have a choice to make. We can continue on believing we are doing okay with what Jesus has asked us to do. Yes, much good has been done, millions have been reached, but we are going backwards. If we keep doing what we have done we will continue to go backwards. Or, we can decide to move from pity to compassion. From hands raised to hands outstretched. From fancily dressed pets to transformed lives no longer forgotten. From 1 percent of 5 percent of 2 percent . . . to all in.

Recently someone sent me a text and when I clicked the link it took me to a news article that had a photo as its lead. It was the now famous photo of the small toddler in the red T-shirt lying face down in the shallow tidal waters of a European shore, dead. I let out an audible gasp and immediately closed the link and sat there in stunned silence. Almost immediately a battle raged inside that went something like this—“You cannot look away, this is exactly the problem, everyone is seeing this issue but looking away.” It

SCATTER

took a while but I did click it again and forced myself to sit and look at a snapshot of what pursuing hope yet finding death looks like. The guard who picked him up so carefully and gently represents in a very uncanny way so many who are responding to the hurting world—showing up a little late to share hope.

FILL THE EARTH!

So am I an optimist or a pessimist? At this point you are thinking that I either possess a split personality or am very confused. Worse has been said of me. Can I invite you to journey with me through these pages? I promise you will once again see my optimism. In fact, my optimism is stronger than ever. I believe there is an answer to the issues in all these snapshots, a way to right the wrongs. I believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to change everything. And every society, every sector of society, every community, every life needs to experience this gospel in all its fullness. We simply need to live it out with clarity using what we have already been given and take it to the people who have yet to hear, see, and know its power. And I happen to believe that God is stirring something up in the hearts of millennials who want to live all of their life for Him and seem to be hardwired to scatter to other places. I still believe that in our generation we can see the greatest movement of Jesus followers toward the unreached and forgotten parts of the world, bringing the hope of the gospel. It's just going to look different than before—but every bit as biblical and potentially more effective.