

 PIONEERS

# one ambition

*"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known."* ROMANS 15:20

## GRACE OF GOD

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*used by an extraordinary God*

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One Message, One Life, One Ambition



# THE WORLD HAS CHANGED

*but God remains the same*

As we write, we are very aware that everyone world-wide is focused on the novel coronavirus: Covid-19.

We are living in a new, unfamiliar reality. Given the fluid nature of the global pandemic, the situation around the world may be very different by the time this issue reaches you.

**WE ARE DEEPLY COMFORTED THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL, THAT HE ALONE OFFERS THE PEACE WE SEEK.**

In this issue we are highlighting the Sikh people in Punjab, India.

At the time of writing, the whole country of India is experiencing lockdown. Doors are closed and city streets are empty. We have more questions than answers: How will residents of India's crowded slums with little or no sanitation protect themselves from the virus?

Will the ill-equipped healthcare system be able to provide for such a large population?

Did migrant workers who returned to their villages for lock-down carry the virus with them from the cities?

BUT, we know for certain that God was, is, and always will be the same.

- + Pray that God would give political, social and healthcare leaders wisdom
- + Pray that Christ-followers, including the underground church, would care for those in need
- + Pray for confidence in God even in times of despair

Our teams around the world continue to:

- + Deliver food to people in need
- + Connect with Muslim seekers online
- + Make new connections with neighbours in the apartment building as they organize food deliveries and care for one another
- + Consider each encounter with the gravity of life and death
- + Worship together online
- + Speak boldly of Christ

**COVID-19**

KNOW THAT GOD WAS, IS, AND ALWAYS WILL BE THE SAME.



# TRUE TO OUR CALLING

*A special message from our executive director*

*A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.*

Proverbs 25:11

Words matter. Words can clarify. Words can heal. They can challenge and inspire. And, of course, when not used well, words can hurt or damage. When Solomon wrote the words of Proverbs 25:11 he was, in our vernacular, saying *“a word spoken at the right time and in the right way is worth a lot; it is extremely valuable.”*

Knowing that words really count, our leaders at Pioneers Canada have recently prayed, brainstormed, envisioned, and finally settled on three phrases to help describe the mission of God in our generation: **One Message, One Life, One Ambition.**

Let me explain.

## ONE MESSAGE – THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Our message is the Gospel. God sent his Son into the world to serve, love, heal, and to die a criminal’s death on a cross. God knew the only way for us to find eternal hope was if someone outside of ourselves would cover the debt of our sin. He sent Jesus so that we might have life, full and free. Jesus fulfilled the Father’s purpose as He died, came back to life, and then rose to heaven again.

Charles Hodge wrote: *“The Gospel is so simple that small children can understand it, and it is so profound that studies by the wisest theologians will never exhaust its riches.”* As we seek to live and tell this **One Message**, we do so with humility, love, genuine care and

compassion for those we live among, here and “to the uttermost parts of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

## ONE LIFE – INTENTIONALLY CHOOSING JESUS’ WAY AND PURPOSE

This is a unique moment in world history. As citizens of the world, we are corporately wrestling with our own mortality and collectively grieving. Perhaps now, more than ever, we understand that life is short and fragile. Biblical writers are clear: life is only a breath, a shadow, or a mist. (Psalm 39:5-6; James 4:14) Jesus said, *“We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.”* (John 9:4) Prophetic words for a time like this. We give ourselves to the things we value. God has only given us one life and His desire is that we live it with eternal values guiding our choices.

## ONE AMBITION – PROCLAIMING JESUS, IN WORD AND DEED, TO THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW HIM TODAY

The apostle Paul says it best: *“It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation. Rather, as it is written: ‘Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.’”* (Romans 15:20-21)



## JESUS’ WORDS MATTER MOST

Those of us who follow Jesus, at some point, must answer the question of *who or what* will be the guiding voice of our lives. What better time than now? Whose ambition are we seeking? Our own? Our culture’s? Our parents’? Jesus’?

Our high calling in Jesus can perhaps be summarized best in the Great Commandment: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* (Matt. 22:37-40); and the Great Commission: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”* (Matt. 28:19-20)

How are you loving your neighbour today? Are you willing to Go so that all nations will hear of God’s great love?

**One Message**, simple and clear. **One Life**, given to and for Jesus. And **One Ambition** to follow Jesus to serve the least and last.


*It is not fame that I desire,  
Nor stature in my brother’s eye,  
I pray it’s said about my life,  
That I lived more to build Your name than mine.*  
Kari Jobe

Sincerely,

*Donnie*

Donnie Scarce



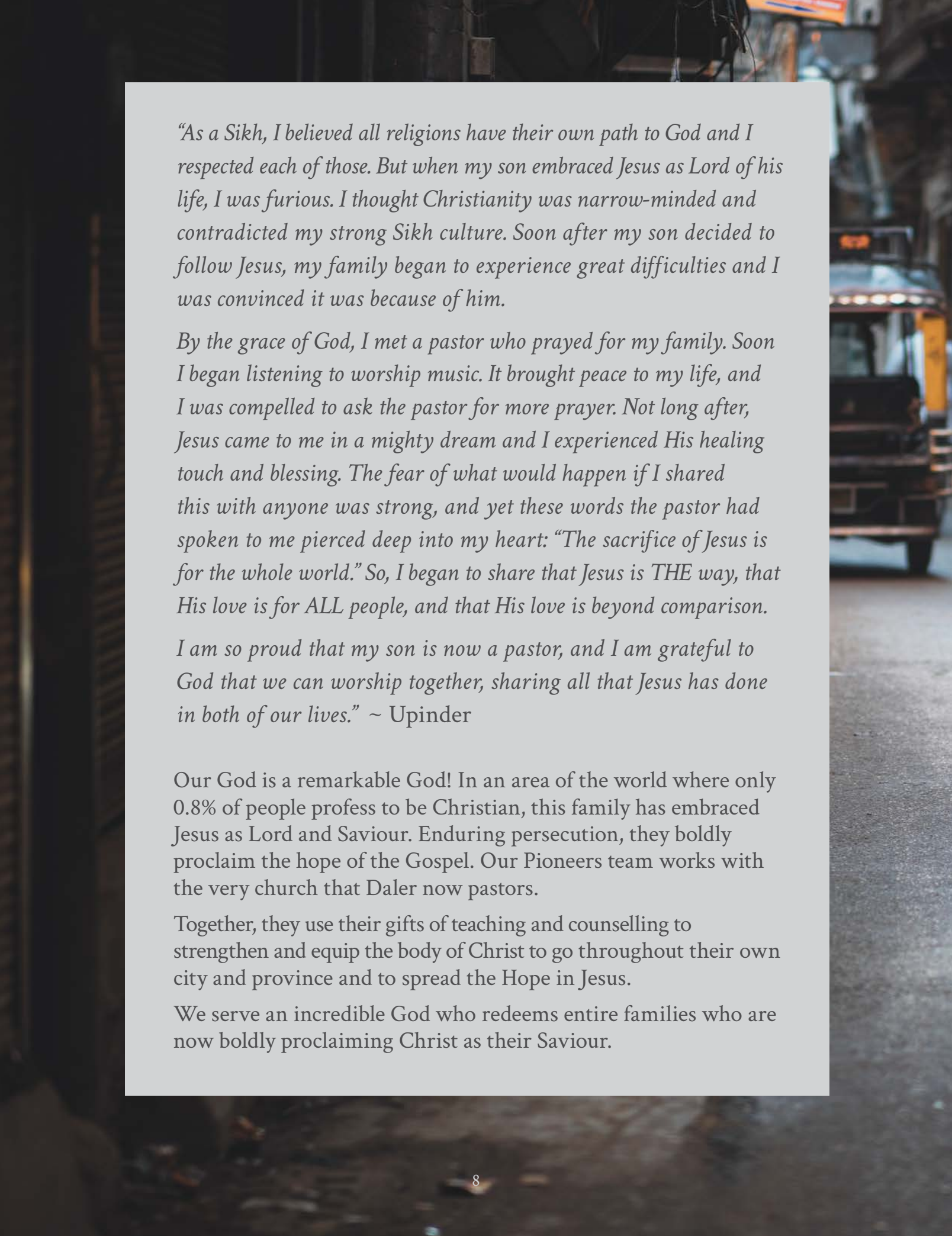


# by the GRACE of God

*"I had a very difficult relationship with my father. As a young man, I inflicted immense shame on him by my lifestyle of partying and selling alcohol. Then I was introduced to Jesus and my life began to change. Yet this change did nothing to improve my relationship with him. He was furious with me and demanded that I stop attending church. But I was so enthralled by Jesus that my father's protests didn't stop me. Jesus is my personal Saviour and Lord. My life has been forever transformed. Hallelujah!" ~ Daler*

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*"As a Sikh, I believed all religions have their own path to God and I respected each of those. But when my son embraced Jesus as Lord of his life, I was furious. I thought Christianity was narrow-minded and contradicted my strong Sikh culture. Soon after my son decided to follow Jesus, my family began to experience great difficulties and I was convinced it was because of him.*


*By the grace of God, I met a pastor who prayed for my family. Soon I began listening to worship music. It brought peace to my life, and I was compelled to ask the pastor for more prayer. Not long after, Jesus came to me in a mighty dream and I experienced His healing touch and blessing. The fear of what would happen if I shared this with anyone was strong, and yet these words the pastor had spoken to me pierced deep into my heart: "The sacrifice of Jesus is for the whole world." So, I began to share that Jesus is THE way, that His love is for ALL people, and that His love is beyond comparison.*

*I am so proud that my son is now a pastor, and I am grateful to God that we can worship together, sharing all that Jesus has done in both of our lives." ~ Upinder*

Our God is a remarkable God! In an area of the world where only 0.8% of people profess to be Christian, this family has embraced Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Enduring persecution, they boldly proclaim the hope of the Gospel. Our Pioneers team works with the very church that Daler now pastors.

Together, they use their gifts of teaching and counselling to strengthen and equip the body of Christ to go throughout their own city and province and to spread the Hope in Jesus.

We serve an incredible God who redeems entire families who are now boldly proclaiming Christ as their Saviour.



*"Let us then approach  
God's throne of grace with  
confidence, so that we may  
receive mercy and find grace  
to help us in our time of need."*

- Hebrews 4:16





*Sikh Stats:*

# THE SIKH COMMUNITY

5 K'S OR KAKKARS ARE THE  
**5 ARTICLES  
OF FAITH**  
WORN BY ALL BAPTIZED SIKHS

**KESH**  
(uncut hair)  
*symbolizes spirituality*

**KANGA**  
(wooden comb)  
*symbolizes the importance  
of hygiene and discipline*

**KARA**  
(steel bangle)  
*symbolizes oneness with God – serves  
as a reminder to think before acting*

**KACHHERA**  
(undergarments)  
*symbolizes self-control and chastity*

**KIRPAN**  
(a small sword)  
*symbolizes their role to protect  
society against injustice*

*Where:*  
**PUNJAB, INDIA**



Population of Sikhs in India

**24 MILLION**

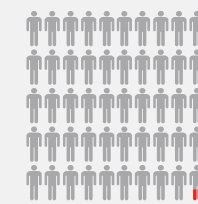
*77% are concentrated in Punjab,  
1.72% of India's population*

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

PUNJABI IS THE  
**WORLD'S 10TH**  
most spoken language



SIKHISM IS THE  
**WORLD'S 5TH**  
largest organized religion



**0.8%** OF THE TOTAL  
PUNJAB POPULATION  
ARE CHRISTIAN.

Sikhism is the majority religion.  
(Joshua Project)

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A SIKH TEMPLE  
is called a *Gurdwara*

THE GOLDEN TEMPLE  
is the most historically and spiritually significant  
gurdwara to the Sikhs

## THE SIKH COMMUNITY IN CANADA



130

Gurdwaras  
in Canada

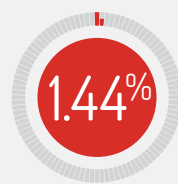
Sikhs first  
came to North  
America in

1897

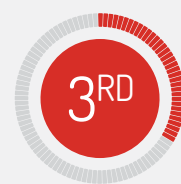
when Sikh soldiers from  
India serving in the British  
Army arrived in Canada.

500,000

Estimated Sikhs in Canada



of Canada's population  
speaks Punjabi



Punjabi is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most spoken  
language in the Canadian  
parliament

PROVINCES WITH  
HIGHEST SIKH  
POPULATION:



1.  
BC



2.  
ONTARIO



3.  
ALBERTA

There are Sikhs  
represented in  
every province.

# THE CANADA-PUNJAB CONNECTION:

*A conversation with Shelley Singh*

Canada is an incredibly culturally diverse nation. Our neighbours, co-workers, classmates and friends may represent a multitude of ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations. What an amazing opportunity for us to share the love of Jesus with those who have yet to hear the Good News right here at home!

Shelley Singh, a Canadian Sikh background believer, graciously agreed to share a small part of her story about how she came to know Jesus and encourage us to share God's hope in our communities.

*Hi Shelley, tell us a little about your background.*

I was born and raised in the suburbs of Toronto, Canada, in a devout Sikh home.

Sikhs are one of the largest ethnic minorities in Canada. Sikhism is the fifth-largest religion in the world, originating 500 years ago in Punjab, India. Despite the presence of strong Sikh identity, I always felt a deep sense of emptiness and lack of purpose.

At age 13, my family faced some difficult trials and due to this, my father decided to move me to India. Transitioning from Canada to India at an impressionable age was a tumultuous journey. I remained in Punjab until I turned eighteen and moved back to Ontario with my family in time to begin university.

I wrestled with identity due to the moves and sharp cultural shifts I experienced in a short period and I continued to seek solace via religion and culture. Empty religion had left me hopeless, with a heart hardened from various trials.

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Shelley Singh, a former Sikh, discovered the heart of the Father through Jesus Christ. Canadian by birth, she has lived in India, U.S. and Canada. Raised in a conservative Sikh family, she experienced the Sikh faith through worship and youth camps. She's interested in shame and honour cultures, prophetic intercession and apologetics. She holds a BHSc in health sciences with honours from Western University in London, Ontario and a clinical doctorate in Audiology from the U.S. She currently lives in the U.S. and often travels to Canada. Her heart is to teach others about the transformation and hope that redemptive grace can bring to any culture. She is moderately fluent in Punjabi and Hindi/Urdu. She blogs at [www.shelleysingh.com](http://www.shelleysingh.com)



### *How did you come to know Jesus?*

When my family moved back to Canada, my mother struggled with familial conflicts and a lack of peace. Eventually, she met a Christian who introduced her to Jesus, and after making the decision to follow Christ she began to witness to my siblings and me. I respected her conversion because her character had always been impeccable.

Around the same time, a friend from university gave me a book about a woman who found Christ. I hesitantly took the book, but quickly read it, enthralled by the message it contained. This book triggered my first dream of many to come and after that, I had no doubt that Christ was real.

Although I learned of the Lord in my mid-twenties, it took quite a few years until I truly started getting into the Word and began to develop a deeper understanding of His character. During those years I made choices that led to deep heartache. I gave into cultural pressure rampant in the honour and shame paradigms of my religious roots and married my boyfriend. Over a few months, the marriage quickly dissolved and eventually ended in divorce. This was followed by exposure to legalistic spiritual control. Eventually I was led upon a path of finding wholeness through the tangible grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Sikh, I often felt distant from God, but through a relationship with Christ, I felt Scriptures come alive, and intimacy with God ushered in a new healthier identity for me. I understood the concept of God's holiness, but only through Christ's revelation and guidance by the Holy Spirit was I able to experience tangible and transformative intimacy with my Saviour.

### *Are there similarities between Sikhism and Christianity?*

Sikhs and Christians both believe in service to a fellow brotherhood. This can be used as a common bridge to illuminate the heart of God using scripture from the New Testament on serving others.

### *Earlier you mentioned finding wholeness through God's grace. What is the Sikh's understanding of grace?*

Grace in Sikhism has more to do with God showing mercy and is a reminder to remain grateful. It is mentioned many times in Sikh scriptures, but because it holds a very different meaning, it is challenging for a Sikh to understand the concept of God's amazing grace.

Grace in Christianity becomes the conduit for receiving the love of God. One aspect of grace that truly captured my heart is the freedom of forgiveness I received as a gift through a relationship with Christ.

### *How would you encourage Canadian believers to share the Gospel with their Sikh co-workers and neighbours?*

I would encourage Christians to form relationships and develop friendships with Sikhs. It is important to show the character of Christ to dismantle any negative stereotypes of Christianity Sikhs may have. It is helpful to stay engaging, friendly, and consistent. Meals are a huge part of collectivist/eastern cultures, so inviting a Sikh for a small meal or tea is a great way to develop rapport. Introducing the word of God will be instrumental in the discovery of truth about Christ and staying in a posture of prayer is essential to seek wisdom and direction to release the redemptive purposes of God.





# Ordinary People EXTRAORDINARY GOD

When my wife and I were first married, we had a strong, united vision to serve God as cross-cultural workers. But as is often the case, the journey to where we are now has been seasoned by more than a decade of waiting, trials, and uncertainty. We have repeatedly been reminded that God uses imperfect people for His purposes.

After finishing our schooling in the early 2000's, we were ready to go to the field, but the doors closed firmly in our face. Our eldest child was experiencing developmental delays and needed a special diet and therapies, forcing us to put aside our desires, join the workforce, and settle into a necessary life. Before we knew it, five years had passed and our passion for the mission field seemed to have been fleeting.

But God's timing is perfect. Doors for short-term service began to open around the world, and then one day we learned our son's therapies would no longer continue. We finally felt released to pursue full-time cross-cultural service and reconnected with Pioneers to explore different long-term opportunities.

In the dead of winter 2012, we landed in a remote village in India's Himalayas where we focused on sharing the Gospel with tribal peoples. While that transition was not easy, God was faithful. He always is.

While there, we built a few relationships with some very helpful, friendly Sikhs. I remember saying to my wife that if we ever left that location, I would love to work with Sikhs in Punjab.

As much as I loved our beautiful Himalayan home, and would have lived there till the end of my days, the Lord had other plans and moved us away from the hills to the modern Punjabi city where we currently reside. This stop on our winding journey feels as if it will be a long one and we are content with that. Our city is home to us now, and it is our hope to stay as long as God keeps the door open.

One of our main focus areas is to train the church in personal evangelism, equipping leaders to enter new communities and households, and plant churches. Although this area is only 0.8% Christian, the existing church is a huge resource for introducing Sikhs in Punjab to Jesus—they simply need to be equipped, encouraged, and empowered to go out themselves and be ambassadors of Christ.

My father passed away a couple of years ago. He resisted Jesus to the very end, and because of my Christian faith he ensured my land inheritance went to neighbours. But last fall as I drove amidst the vast, ripe fields of rural Punjab, my heavenly Father impressed upon my heart—*"Punjab is your inheritance."* The Bible says "Then he said to his disciples, *"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."*

**I am asking God to send more workers to Punjab because the harvest is ripe. Will you, imperfect as you are, join us on this long and winding road?**





# PRAY, GIVE, GO

*... so that the hope of the Gospel is shared with the Sikh people*

## PRAY

Prayer powerfully impacts our work. You can support several Pioneers teams by becoming a prayer partner.

Explore Unreached People Groups: the Nuri\* people, the Shwe\* people, the people of Yemen, the Moroccans of Spain, the Primis\* people, and the Sikh people. These resources can help guide your prayers:

- + [pioneers.ca](http://pioneers.ca)
- + Subscribe to Impact, our bi-monthly prayer guide on our website
- + Follow @pioneerscanada on Instagram or “like” Pioneers Canada on Facebook
- + Follow Pioneers Canada on the PrayerMate App at <http://praynow4.org/pioneerscanada>

PrayerMate App



Specific prayers for the Sikh people:

- + Pray for the Sikh people to seek hope and find it in Jesus Christ
- + Pray for believers to look for God-given opportunities to pray for, love, serve and provide God’s comfort and truth among the fear, loss and

confusion many Sikhs are dealing with due to Covid-19

- + Pray that there will be growing numbers of new Christ-followers in all social groups among the Sikhs
- + Pray that many workers will be raised up to reach Sikhs in Punjab and around the world, building meaningful relationships, living out Christ-like love and sharing the Gospel
- + Pray that Sikh background believers will be strengthened in their faith, become vibrant witnesses, and develop as Christ-like leaders
- + Pray for more Punjabi language Bibles and gospel resources to be accessed by Sikhs worldwide

## SIKH PRAYER RESOURCES:

Prayercast:  
<https://www.prayercast.com/sikhism.html>

Global Sikh Consultation Blog:  
<https://www.lausanneswg.ca/global-sikh-consultation-2019/blog/>

Joshua Project:  
<https://joshuaproject.net>

Open Doors:  
<https://www.opendoorsca.org>



## GIVE

Your gift helps:

- + Engage and prepare new team members to serve among the Sikh and other unreached peoples
- + Care for those already on the field as they face great challenges
- + Inspire and inform Canadians about gospel work among least-reached peoples

## START THE CONVERSATION

Contact us to see how you and your church can get involved with Ask For The Nations through prayer, advocacy, and to join teams around the globe bringing the love of Jesus to those with the least opportunity to hear the Gospel, like the Sikhs.

## GO

God is calling. The Sikh people, and others like them, need Jesus. The answer is to obey the call of God and GO. Whether you go short-term or long-term to the people and ministry He is laying on your heart, **we are here to help you make it, step by step!**



## Psalm 16

*Keep me safe, my God,  
for in you I take refuge.*

*I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;  
apart from you I have no good thing."*

*I say of the holy people who are in the land,  
"They are the noble ones in whom is all  
my delight."*

*Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.  
I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods  
or take up their names on my lips.*

*LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;  
you make my lot secure.*

*The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
surely I have a delightful inheritance.*

*I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;  
even at night my heart instructs me.*

*I keep my eyes always on the LORD.  
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

*Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
my body also will rest secure,*

*because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,  
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.*

*You make known to me the path of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*



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