

# WHITEFIELDS

Gospel Operation International English Magazine • Vol. 2 No. 2 • Spring 2021 • John 4:35



## Gospel Entrepreneurship

"Starting a mission business overseas was one of the most difficult things I have ever done. It has also been one of the greatest adventures of my life."

## C. René Padilla

A missiological pioneer calls the church out of triumphalism and colonialism.

## Spotlight: Bolivia

Five Bolivian people groups you can intercede for.

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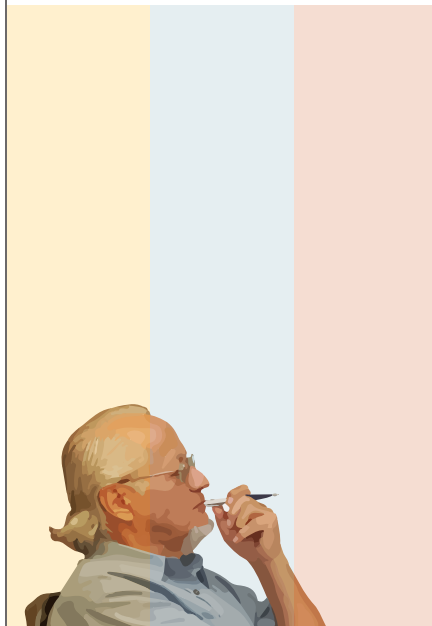
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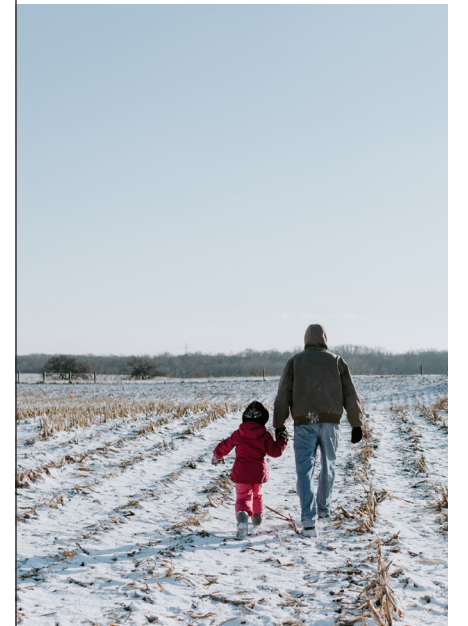
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*You call Me 'Teacher' and 'Lord'; and you are correct, for so I am. So if I, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example, so that you also would do just as I did for you. (John 13:13-15 NASB)*

C. René Padilla, who passed away last month, advocated for a vision of church where every person was valued as God valued them, and where every person could participate regardless of the place or socio-economic circumstances of their birth. He warned the church against visualizing mission as a neo-colonial triumphalist crusade, but implored the body of Christ to be humble and repentant. Padilla's words ring as true today as when they were spoken in 1974.

Chris Chu  
May 2021





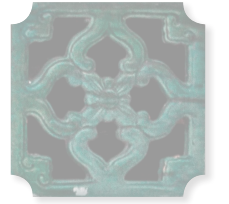


Photo by Yaopey Yong on Unsplash

*Guest contributor N. is an Asian female entrepreneur who has served in full-time ministry for over 12 years. Six of those years have been spent as the leader of a company that gives opportunities to women in one of the most difficult places on earth to be a Christian.*

# Gospel

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Throughout the years, I've seen different ways that the church is innovating the representation of Jesus Christ, and business is at the forefront of many of those innovations. The use of business as a platform to carry out the Great Commission is universally referred to as BAM, an acronym that stands for "Business As Mission." If you told me back in college that I would eventually own a business, I wouldn't have believed you. I was studying at an Ivy League university, surrounded by peers on their path to the top echelons of society, but my passion was to make the name of Jesus known in the Muslim world. I had surrendered my desires for career success, but thanks to a journey that could only be orchestrated by

God, I now find myself running a kingdom business in one of the most closed nations to the gospel on Earth.

### I. BUSINESS IS A NATURAL REASON TO BE A FOREIGNER IN A COUNTRY.

Have you ever been asked, "Why are you here?" while you were on a mission trip? You might have responded that you've come to do religious work if you were in a country that was open to the gospel. However, this doesn't work in many nations that are "closed." The next natural response might be to say that you're a tourist, volunteer, student, etc. (I've seen some missionaries who have been a "tourist" for 20 years, or have been "learning the language" for

15 years!) This kind of response can seem untrue, and may arouse suspicions that the missionary is engaged in unethical or criminal activity (like pedophilia, particularly in Southeast Asia). A legitimate business is an open and ethical platform for a foreigner to be in a country.

I should be clear: BAM does not include setting up fake businesses as a way to get a visa. One time, my friend asked me how he can set up a "ghost company" to allow him to get a visa into a specific nation, but continue to do his church planting work. This has serious ethical issues. If we say we're doing business, we need to mean that we're doing business.





**2. BUSINESS IS A WAY TO DEMONSTRATE KINGDOM LIVING.**

Business is a great way to demonstrate “kingdom living” and be ambassadors of Christ to our coworkers in a life-on-life manner. Forty (or more) hours a week, the length of a typical work week, is a lot of time to get to know someone. You learn about their family background, their friends, their goals, dreams and fears, and much more. Being in close contact with co-workers has also been a true test of my character. It’s easy for me to be nice and polite with people I only see a few times a week, but at work my coworkers see all of my good and bad days.



**3. BUSINESS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCIPLE PEOPLE WITH BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES BEFORE THEY DECIDE TO FOLLOW JESUS.**

My team and I eat lunch at our office with our coworkers. At the lunch table, we’ve had countless conversations on real issues in our community like bribery, ethnic discrimination, women’s oppression, etc.. Even in moments when we aren’t directly sharing the gospel, we have many opportunities to reflect biblical principles. Working together every day with our coworkers has given us the opportunity to share about the values of God’s kingdom, even before many of them have decided they want to be a part of His kingdom. One time, a coworker told us, “Our people are not honest and fair, but you foreigners have pure and honest hearts.” This man came to this conclusion after observing believers practice their biblical principles in a work setting for several years.



**4. LOCALS LOVE JOBS EVEN IF THEY OPPOSE THE MOTIVATION AND MESSAGE OF JESUS.**

In the nation that I live in, the unemployment rate is between 40% and 80%. Many unreached nations in the world suffer from present or past underdevelopment in their economies and communities. My business has employed local people who have been openly resistant to the gospel, but who continue to stay at our company because they are thankful to be able to feed their families. We’ve been privileged to witness how God has often softened the hearts and opened up the worldview of our employees as they choose to work with us. Running a business is a great way to engage with locals, no matter how open or closed they may appear to be, and give them an empowering way to support their families.



**5. BUSINESS GIVES LOCAL BELIEVERS WHO OWN A BUSINESS A VOICE IN THE COMMUNITY.**

In many non-Western nations, believers come from marginalized demographics (i.e. Dalit Christians in India). In many unreached nations, existing believers are often early adopters of Christianity who came to faith in opposition to the religion of their family and friends. BAM gives marginalized local believers a legitimate platform and voice in their communities. Local Christian business people have the opportunity to protect the persecuted church as leaders in society.



**6. SUSTAINABLE WAY TO FUND YOUR MINISTRY.**

I entered full-time ministry after I graduated from college and fundraised financial support for all of my expenses. God provided through the generosity of my community, but I had a thought one day: “It might be cool to fundraise and ask for donations when I’m 22 and single, but how easy will this be when I’m in my 40s with a family and children to support as well?” One of the answers to my question was BAM. Building a company that generates revenue became a sustainable way to fund my ministry.

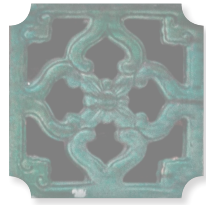
(Left1,2) Photo by Adismara Putri Pradiri on Unsplash.

(Right1) Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

(Right 2) Photo by Abdulaziz Mohammed on Unsplash

(Right 3) Photo by Clement Falize on Unsplash





7. LONG-TERM WAY TO INTRODUCE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

In 2014, I was in Rwanda and we were driving to a restaurant. On the way, we drove through a street that was nicknamed “NGO Road” because there were at least 50 NGO (non-governmental organization) offices on that street. I remember thinking, “The enormous level of charity and aid has crippled this country’s ability to truly develop.” Don’t get me wrong: I really love NGO work and believe it can be powerful to many underdeveloped communities, but I also think that there’s a limit to how much free aid you can give people. We all know the common proverb: “If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.” BAM is a great way to empower people in their communities to bring long-lasting, sustainable development. Giving people jobs is a much more dignifying way to feed their families

than to giving free handouts.

When I was growing up in church, my peers and I were told to study hard so that we could go to the best college possible, and have the best career path possible, in order to glorify God. Many of my friends question the meaning and purpose behind their careers now that we’re older and have reached the goal our churches set before us. If this is you, consider how you can use the skills and experience you’ve cultivated over the years to serve God’s kingdom overseas. Starting a business overseas was, and continues to be, one of the most difficult things I have ever done. It has also been one of the greatest adventures of my life, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. I’m excited to see how the church will continue to innovate and evolve to take the message of God’s kingdom to all nations.



"Running a business is a great way to engage with locals, no matter how open or closed they may appear to be, and give them an empowering way to support their families."

"Being in close contact with co-workers has also been a true test of my character."

"Local Christian business people have the opportunity to protect the persecuted church as leaders in society."



# C. René Padilla

1932-2021



C. René Padilla was an influential Ecuadorian evangelical church planter and theologian who grew up in Colombia. He was a longtime staffer with InterVarsity and the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, and was known for coining the term *misión integral* (integral mission). He eventually settled in Argentina, where he would serve the Lord together with his family. He died on April 27, 2021.

Original photo by Latin Link (<https://www.latinlink.org.uk/blog/words-of-life>)

One of C. René Padilla's most influential speeches was given at the Lausanne Congress of 1974. Here are some key excerpts from Padilla's seminal speech:

“I maintain . . . that the greatest need of the church today is the recovery of the full Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ – the whole Gospel for the whole man for the whole world. . . As Christians we are called to witness to the transcendent, other worldly Christ, through whose work we have received forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God. We believe in man's need of a new birth through a personal encounter with God in Jesus Christ, by the action of the Holy Spirit, through the proclamation of the Word of God. And we maintain that nothing can take the place of spiritual regeneration in the malting of new men. We cannot accept the equation of salvation with the satisfaction of bodily needs, social amelioration, or political liberation. On the other hand, there is no biblical warrant to view the church as an otherworldly community dedicated to the salvation of souls, or to limit its mission to the preaching of man's reconciliation

to God through Jesus Christ. As Elton Trueblood has put it, 'A genuine Gospel will always be concerned with human justice rather than with the mere cultivation of a warm inner glow.'”

“The greatest contribution that the church can make to the world is to be all that she is supposed to be. Among other things:

(a) A community of reconciliation in the midst of a fragmented world; here is a community where all barriers that divide disappear, where men learn to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed them, for the glory of God;

(b) A community of personal authenticity; in the midst of a world in which each man has to fit into the mold imposed on him by his society, here is a community where each one is accepted as he is and encouraged to develop fully as a man made in the image of God;





Photo by WHITEFIELDS

(c) A community of serving and giving; in the midst of a world where man lives to be served and to receive, here is a community where man lives to serve and to give.”

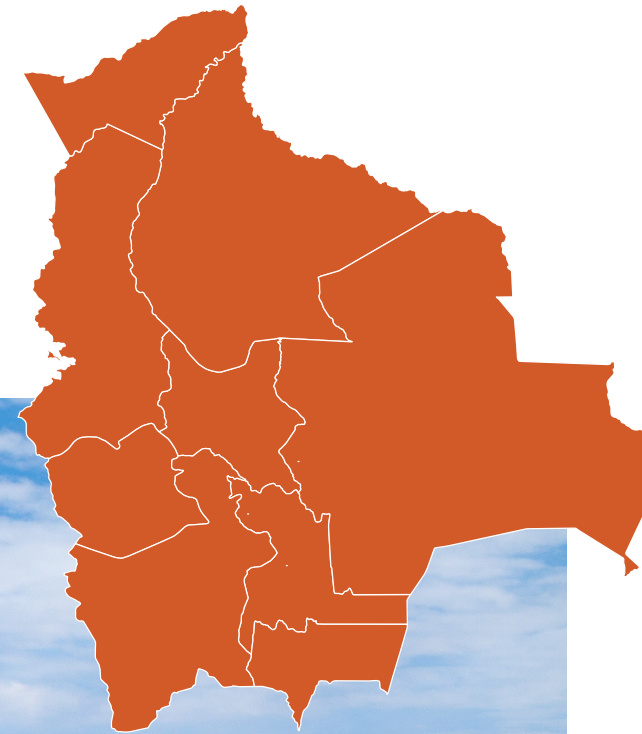
“ Our greatest need is a more biblical Gospel and a more faithful church. My own hope and prayer is that we go . . . with a repentant attitude with regard to our enslavement to the world and our arrogant triumphalism, with a sense of our helplessness to break away from our bonds, and yet also with a great confidence in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who ‘by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.’”

"My own hope and prayer is that we go . . . with a repentant attitude with regard to our enslavement to the world and our arrogant triumphalism."



# Bolivia

SPOTLIGHT



Source: Joshua Project  
<https://joshuaproject.net/countries/BL>

## CHINESE IN BOLIVIA

Population: 7200  
Main Language: Mandarin Chinese  
Largest Religion: Non-Religious  
Percentage Evangelical Christian: 8%  
Bible Availability: Complete Bible

## CHIQUITANO IN BOLIVIA

Population: 49,000  
Main Language: Chiquitano  
Largest Religion: Ethnic Religions  
Percentage Evangelical Christian: 3%  
Bible Availability: New Testament and portions of Old Testament

## MESTIZO IN BOLIVIA

Population: 7,619,000  
Main Language: Spanish  
Largest Religion: Christianity  
Percentage Evangelical Christian: 19%  
Bible Availability: Complete Bible



Salar de Uyuni in Daniel Campos Province, Potosí, Bolivia  
Photo by Diego Aguilar on Unsplash



**SOUTH BOLIVIAN QUECHUA IN BOLIVIA**

Population: 1,766,000

Main Language: South Bolivian Quechua

Largest Religion: Christianity

Percentage Evangelical Christian: 18%

Bible Availability: Complete Bible

**TRINITARIO IN BOLIVIA**

Population: 34,000

Main Language: Trinitario

Largest Religion: Ethnic Religions

Percentage Evangelical Christian: 5%

Bible Availability: New Testament and audio portions of Old Testament

**THEN THE ANGEL SHOWED ME THE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE, AS CLEAR AS CRYSTAL, FLOWING FROM THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE GREAT STREET OF THE CITY. ON EACH SIDE OF THE RIVER STOOD THE TREE OF LIFE, BEARING TWELVE CROPS OF FRUIT, YIELDING ITS FRUIT EVERY MONTH. AND THE LEAVES OF THE TREE ARE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS. (REV.22:1-2)**

Photo by Zenas Fung





# Amazon GRACE

John Loh is the Director of Latin American Ministry for Gospel Operation International.

**T**hirteen months ago, I was motoring down the Amazon river in the heart of Bolivia. With me was a team of five foreigners, all in their 30s and wrestling with their language barriers, and six national teammates. Our leader was Pastor Elmer, a national pastor, and our national teammates consisted of two navigators, a cook, two church leaders from the city of Santa Cruz, and a dentist who served as our team's medical practitioner. We were together in TIPNIS, a protected national park territory situated along the Isiboro and Sécuré rivers, to serve the Chimane and Trinitario peoples who were indigenous to the region. We had no electricity, no cellphone signal, no wifi, no indoor plumbing, and we bathed in the river as we traveled.

Each day, our little sampan-like boat traveled along the river for 8 to 10 hours, stopping at various riverside communities. We would minister at each stop, visiting community members, and leading evangelistic meetings in the evenings. There were highs on our trip—we had the chance to lead four teenagers to Christ, two of our foreign team members shared their testimonies in Spanish for the first time since taking language classes in school many years ago, and a miraculous incident where Pastor Elmer's cell phone was suddenly able to receive a call to notify us that our plane tickets back to Santa Cruz had to be changed immediately before all domestic flights were suspended. (Our boat had to find a way to stay in that exact spot in the river to maintain the cell phone signal



Photo by Zenas Fung



"Amazon indigenous outreach is just one of several core ministries that GOI is developing in Bolivia together with our national partners."



Photos by Zenas Fung

as we all rushed to provide the travel agent with our passport and ticket information!) There were also difficulties we had to struggle through. At one point, we sailed on the river for 32 hours without a break due to the high water level and our inability to dock the boat to camp for the night. We were also stalked by swarms of mosquitoes as we "invaded" the serenity of the Amazon.

Our river trip only lasted ten days, but the Amazon River Boat ministry led by Pastor Elmer continues 365 days a year to serve the river communities in TIPNIS. GOI's national partners minister to Christians in the river communities, sharing the gospel, teaching

and offering pastoral care. There is no paved road access to the river communities, so traveling to the communities by boat is the only way to reach them. The motorized sampan can be used from January to May during the high-water season, but the river communities can only be reached by canoe from June to December.

Amazon indigenous outreach is just one of several core ministries that GOI is developing in Bolivia together with our national partners. Pray that God would send us the right people and financial support to resource each gospel initiative. In particular, we hope to equip new national and international

mission partners in cross-cultural ministries of evangelism and compassion in both rural and urban settings. New mission partners will learn to minister in multiple languages.

Pray for Bolivia, and for GOI's work in this beautiful country. Pray for God's favor as we seek to prepare a new generation of young mission partners. If God is moving you to participate in our work, we can be reached at [info@goimission.org](mailto:info@goimission.org). Above all, pray for the beloved people in the Amazon river communities, and elsewhere in Bolivia, that they might experience the joy and hope that comes through having a relationship with Jesus Christ.





## THE LORD IS HER *Shepherd*

*Guest Contributor Tiffany and her team from YWAM (Youth With A Mission) spent several months ministering in refugee communities in Southern Europe.*

I had been pursuing a life as a young working professional and as a social media influencer, creating content for followers on social media platforms like Instagram. Yet God invited me to lay it all down for half a year to join Him in cross-cultural missions to refugee migrants. One day, I found myself in the thick of brothel-lined streets, befriending a young, bright-eyed girl. We did not share a common language, but we communicated by making silly faces at each other, and through art.

My team and I developed a relationship with this spunky 6 year old girl and her father through a ministry where we offered free meals and preached the gospel. We learned that the man was contemplating a plan to pay people to smuggle his daughter out of the camp where they lived to Germany, where she could reunite with her mom and newborn brother. The trip would be dangerous, and the young girl would have to travel without a trusted guardian. I was deeply concerned for her safety. I thought of her often as I walked by the white lights of the brothels, past broken sidewalks, and through graffitied streets on my way to the ministries.



In prayer, I asked the Lord, "What does gospel hope look like for a 6 year old that does not speak my language?" The answer came as an inspiration to draw. As I worked on a coloring book for her, I prayed that the little girl would come to understand Christ's love for her through each picture. The Good Shepherd of Psalm 23 promised to travel with her no matter where she was—even if she had to journey all the way to Germany on her own. I used Google Translate to give words to the pictures, and finished just in time to give the coloring book to her before our final farewell.

When I returned home after my 6 months in cross-cultural mission, I continued to think of the girl. I wished that she would not be separated from her earthly father, yet my peace was in knowing that her Heavenly Father is watching over her. I've told God that my heart's desire is to meet my "little sister" again, either in this world or the next. Perhaps one day we can speak the same language and share the same love for Christ. It's funny how God can "unplug" someone like me and bring her halfway around the world to draw a coloring book, just to show a little girl from another country that He loved her, because she is known to Him.



(Left 6) Coloring book pages drawn by Tiffany

(Right) Syrian refugee camp in the outskirts of Athens, Greece. Photo by Julie Ricard on Unsplash



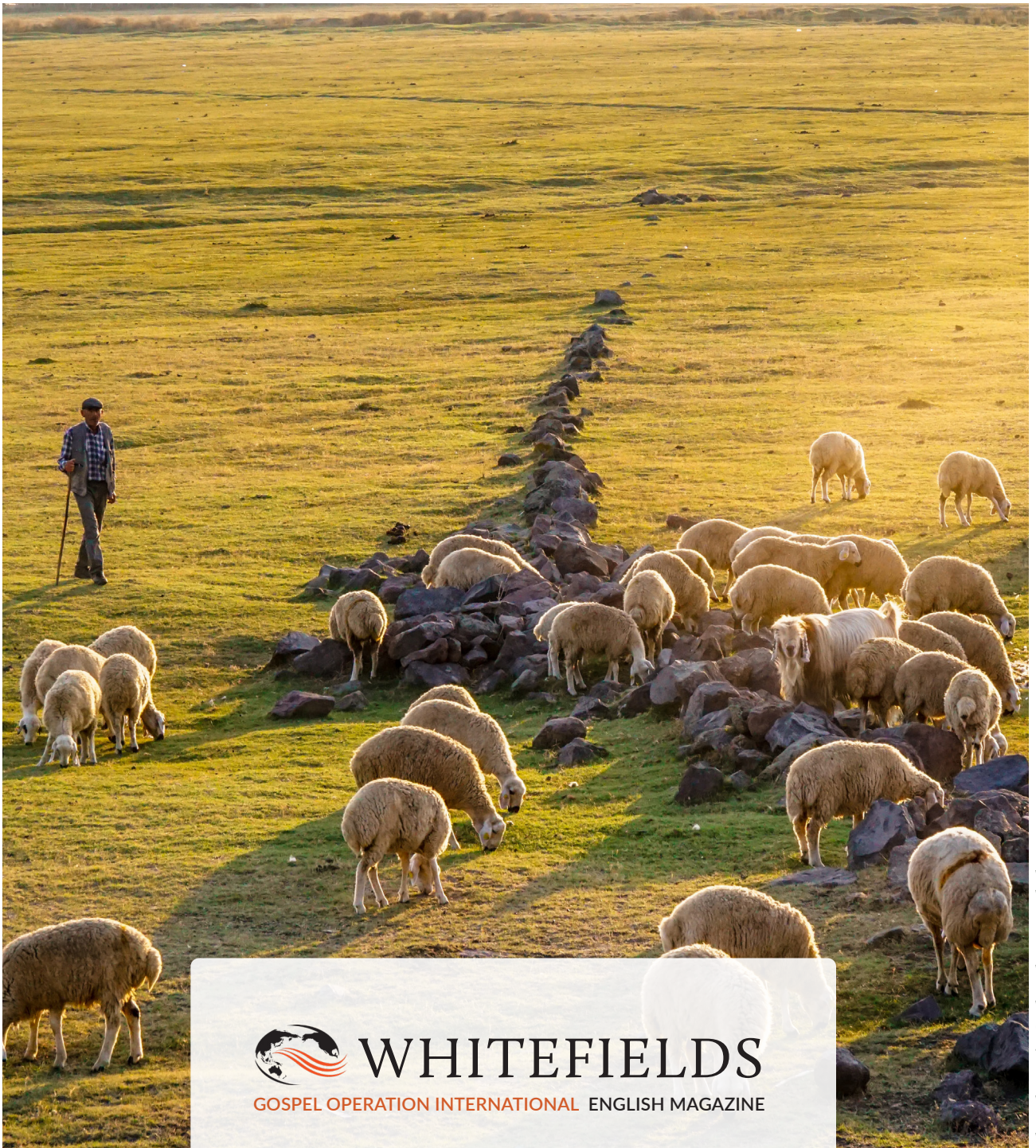


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