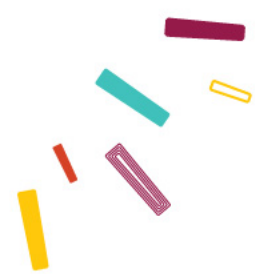


Seeing Rural as a Mission Field







Defining Rural

Rural is a matter of perspective.

- Is Orlando rural (population 1 million)?
- Is Kalispell Montana rural (population 23,000)?
- Is Casper, Wyoming rural (population 55,316)?

Most people have a very subjective definition of rural.



Defining Rural

US Census definition:

- Rural is any place with less than 2,500 people.
- Micropolitan area has a population between 2,500 and 50,000.
- Urban areas have 50,000+

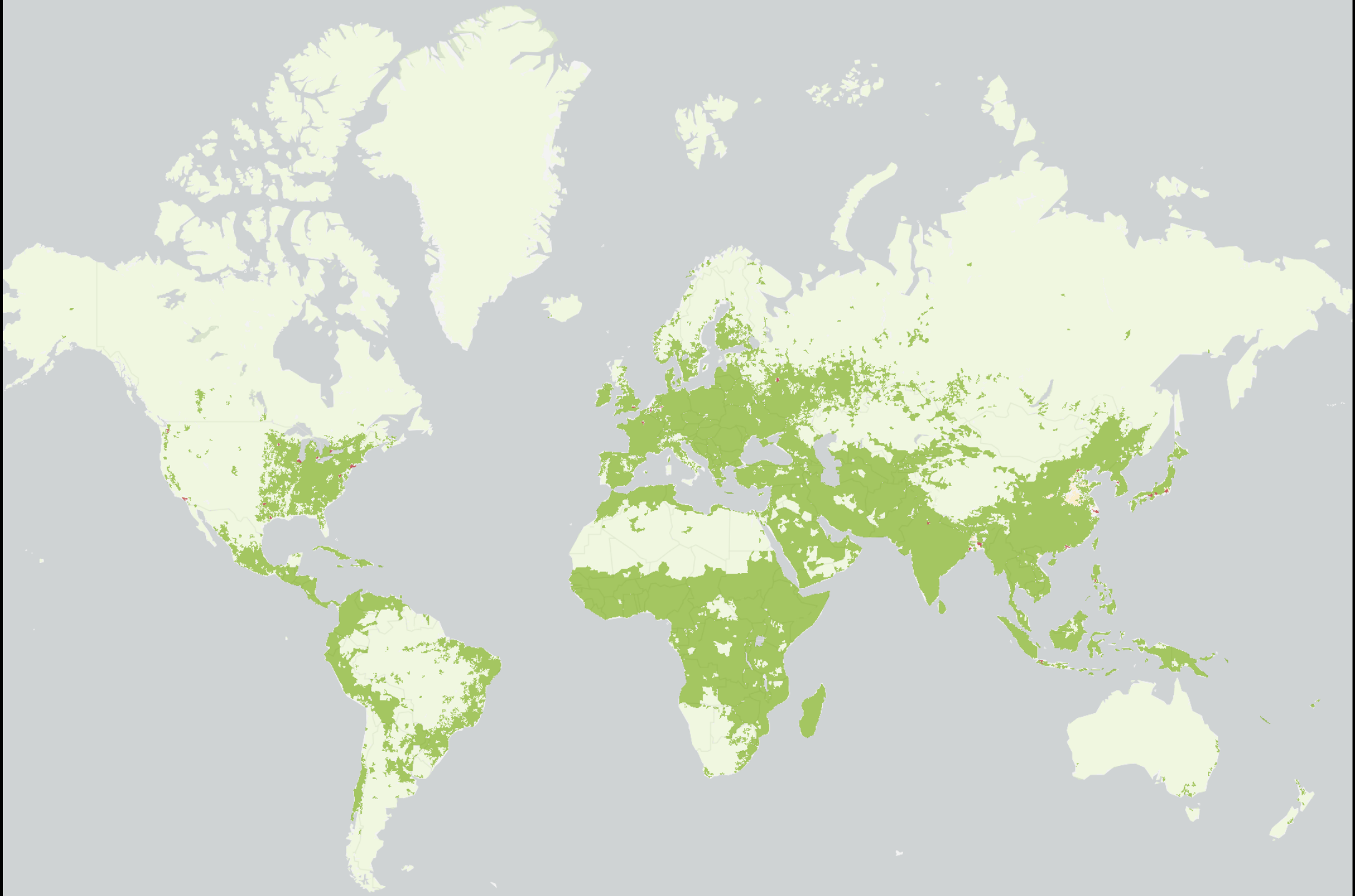


Defining Rural

My working definition:

- Rural is any place
 - With a population of less than 50,000
 - With a population density of less than 1,000 per square kilometer
 - Where the people identify as not urban.







Two Missiological Mandates

1. Focus on the cities

- Rationale:
 - 55% of the world currently lives in urban areas (4.4 billion people).
 - **45% of the world currently lives in rural areas (3.6 billion people).**

Two Missiological Mandates

2. Focus on the UUPGs

- People Group
 - A people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.
- Unreached- less than 2% Christian
- Unengaged- PG has no evangelism strategy being implemented



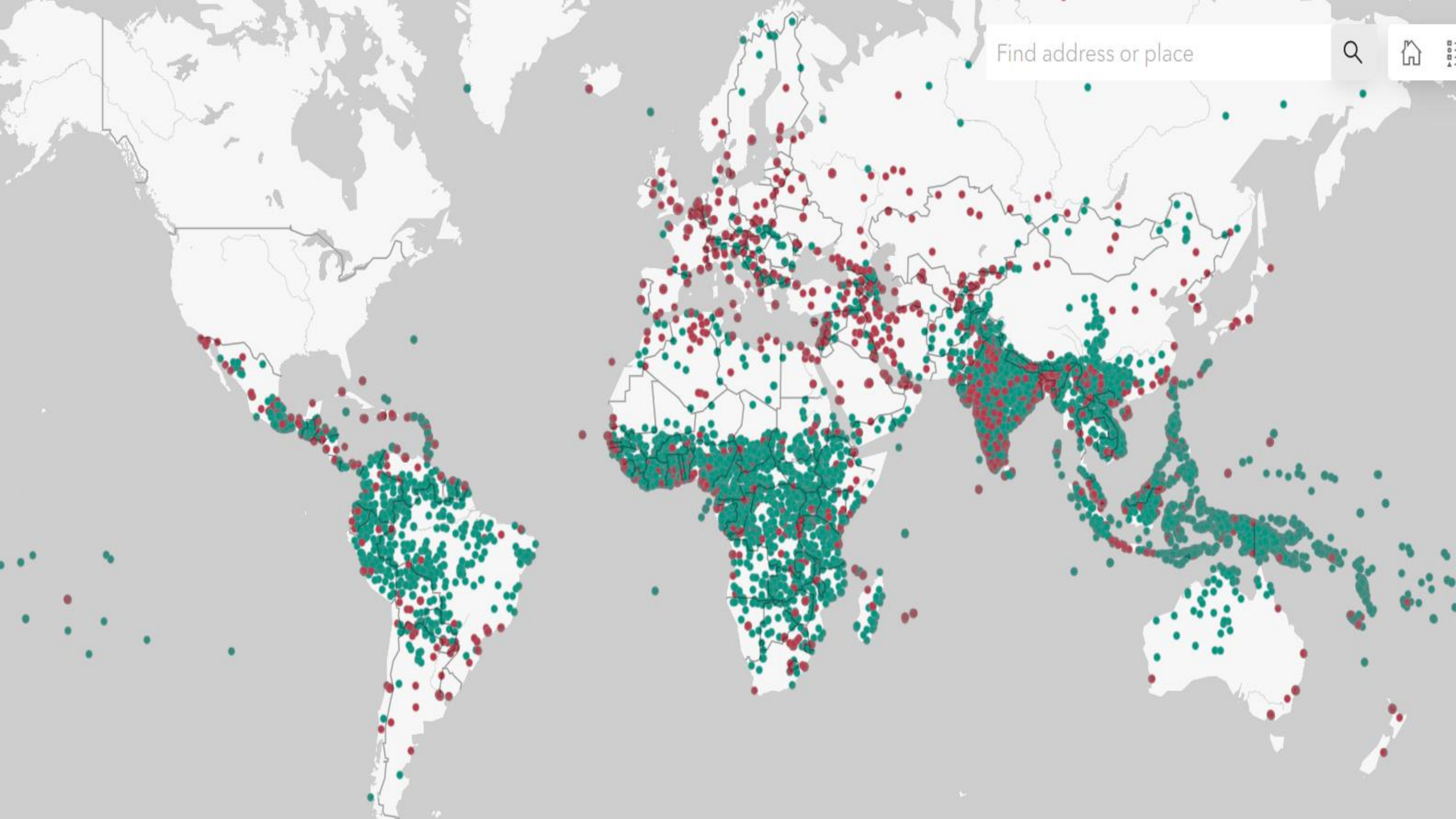
Two Missiological Mandates

2. Focus on the UUPGs

- Current situation
 - Just over 3,000 UUPGs
 - Over 68% are rural



Find address or place



Rural Work is Different

Urban Bias

- When you go to seminary you are trained on how to pastor a church of 500.
 - Only 8% of all churches in the US have more than 250 people attending on a given Sunday.



Rural Work is Different

Urban Bias

- Almost all books you read are written by pastors of churches of 1,000 or more.
 - This is great if you are going to be one of the 8%.
 - However, if you are part of the 92% that will pastor smaller churches, these books have limited value.



Rural Work is Different

Evangelism Example:

- In a city:
 - Mapping a city is very difficult.
 - But evangelism is very simple
- In a village
 - Mapping a village is very simple.
 - But evangelism is very difficult.





Missionary Myths

“You go to where the people are.”

- You go to where God calls you to go.
- Highways *and* hedges

“The New Testament Model is urban missions.”

- Paul went to mostly urban areas.
- Jesus spent His entire ministry in rural areas.

“Train people in the cities to go out to the countryside.”

- Current migration pattern is from rural to urban.

Why Go to Rural Areas?

- **God calls you to serve in rural areas**
 - God's call is seldom strategic.
- **Develop deeper relationships**
 - In a rural area, you get to know everyone.
 - You get to invest deeply into the lives of the people you are called to serve



Why Go to Rural Areas?

- **More relaxed lifestyle**
 - Life in a rural area is slower.
 - Rural people are seldom rushed.
- **Make a greater impact**
 - In a rural area, you can impact an entire village and possibly a network of villages over a lifetime.
 - You get to see children grow up and teach their children about God





Truths About Rural Work

- **Rural work is hard work:**
 - Rural people value hard work.
 - This may mean learning how to do physical labor.
- **Rural work is often messy:**
 - You are required to learn a complex web of relationships in rural work.
 - It may require talking with people in barns, in fields, or walking through a muddy field.

Truths About Rural Work

- **Rural work is rewarding:**
 - You get to see the change in people's lives and in the community.
 - You are respected in the community.
- **Rural work is slow:**
 - To build relationships takes time.
 - People are slow to open up to outsiders.





Where is God Calling You to Serve Him?

- Cities?
- Rural Areas?
- Remote locations?

All are Biblical options!

Seeing Rural as a Mission Field

