



James Aberin – SEND International Philippines
Introduction to Digital Missions

Hi. I am James Aberin. I served as the CEO and National Director of the Philippine Sending Council of Send International in Manila, Philippines. I want to share with you today some lessons we have learned related to sending missionaries among Unreached People Groups. I want to qualify that word "sending" because it's actually, quote and quote, they are in italics - "*Sending Digital Missionaries*." That is what I want to share with you. What we have learned in launching digital missionaries.

Digital missionaries are followers of Jesus Christ called to love on unreached people groups. They are called on to help unreached people groups, they are called on to share, proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ among unreached people groups. But because of the times this pandemic and the travel restrictions we cannot send missionaries among the unreached. Due to the travel restrictions and other protocols, it has been hard -last year, these coming months- to send out missionaries among the unreached. So, we need to innovate.

That's the first lesson we have learned: **Innovation**. As we pray to God and look at what we have, we can ask God to multiply and use what we have. We have laptops, computers, gadgets, cell phones. We could use video conferencing apps, group chats to reach out. We just have to be creative and innovate, find ways we could make connections.

And actually, that's the second lesson we have learned: **Connection**. We have found friends here in Asia who are directly engaging unreached people groups, but they're actually special groups of people because we call them international migrants. Some people call them refugees. And they are here in this Asian country. And Because our friends are directly engaging them, their company started an online literacy program for adults.

And o, they charge very minimal, really, it's very minimal fees just to get them interested in Unreached People Groups, interested in the program. But they get followers of Jesus Christ as tutors of this online literacy program. And our friends ask us if we could help as tutors and that's it! Our short-term missionaries that we are mobilizing, we're hoping that they could travel but they cannot because we understand that being able to connect and travel to and interact face-to-face with unreached people groups will hasten, will complete their experience in preparing for missionary work and because that cannot happen through digital missions, they

can be relating to face-to-face with unreached people groups through video conferencing apps. The connections we have made is like this -our friends in this country in Asia who are ministering to unreached people groups through their online literacy program- they are providing English Programs for these adults. And they need tutors to help them with their assignments. So our friends have asked us to provide tutors to adults or unreached people groups to help them with English, to help them with their assignments. And these unreached people groups, these adults are groups into -they have groups and one group will have three to five adults. And they will need one tutor to help them. And so our digital missionaries will be this tutor. And they will help them with their English problems, comprehension; help them with their vocabularies and translations online. In the process, our digital missionaries are able to build relationships with these adults, and even with their families and extended families. And you could just imagine the impact of this twice a week tutorial sessions with these unreached people groups. And it's a face-to-face interaction on a regular basis for 45 to 55 minutes per session. That's a long time to interact, and for sure you'll be able to get to know these unreached people groups. And so we need to prepare our digital missionaries before we launch them. They need for example, some basic understanding of their world views and the religions of these unreached people groups. They could be Muslims, Buddhists, or Hindus or non-religious. It's a basic understanding so that when they are in their group sessions tutoring them, they can relate well. They could even [our digital missionaries] ask questions about what they believe in. And of course, these unreached people groups, these adults, they know that these tutors are followers of Jesus Christ.

And so those are the two lessons we've learned in launching digital missions.

- 1 . Innovation.

- 2 . Connection.

But there's a third one. And the third one is: **Determination**. Because, as you go on with this twice-a-week meetings with them, some of them [your unreached people groups in your group] will miss a session. In fact, some of them will let you know on the day of your session of your scheduled meeting, and they won't be there. Maybe one [person], and then that person will say, "Let's not meet because we are not complete."

What do we need? Perseverance. We just have to go on and let's continue the group you could meet again next time and just be patient and love on these people. Determination is important as well to pursue building deeper relationships among these least-reached peoples. And of course, our friends meanwhile, in that country will follow up face-to-face with these unreached people groups that we are helping. And so there's that partnership between those who are in the country and us here who are serving in digital missions, supplementing, helping in whatever way we can during these times.

Those things we have learned in launching digital missions. Be innovative. Be making those connections. And be determined. Thank you for listening. This is James Aberin saying "Mabuhay!"

God bless you.