[FINDING MY TRIBE](http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/finding-my-tribe)

People of a War-time Lifestyle

*by William J. Dubois. Mission Frontiers, January 01, 2018*

I remember the moment, nearly 50 years ago, as if it were this morning.  I was a little boy who dreamed about everything; and, who spent my days playing soldier, cowboy, Indian Chief, and any other role that was big. But on that Sunday morning I was seated in the basement of our small Assemblies of God church waiting for “Children’s Church” to begin. Looking back I now realize that my Children’s Church experience was probably like most any other gathering for children in 1960’s America. We sang songs, memorized Bible verses, and then were given a Bible story from a volunteer teacher. But on that Sunday, as a young boy and Jesus follower, I learned a song that changed my life forever:

            I have decided to follow Jesus (3x)

            No turning back, No turning back

            Though none go with me, still I will follow (3x)

            No turning back, No turning back

            The cross before me, the world behind me (3x)

            No turning back, No turning back.

Though I was too young to understand the ramifications of my decision I made a commitment that day to do just that—to follow Jesus.  It was the beginning point of living for something so big that only God could make it possible. To follow Jesus and nothing else. To go alone if necessary, and to choose the cross and not the culture around me.

By the time I was a teenager I was devouring as many Christian Leaders/Missionary biographies as I could find: Samuel Morris, Hudson Taylor, C.T. Studd, William Carey, and many, many more. I was drawn to the beauty found in complete sacrifice and the contentment these “heroes” discovered in giving up everything for God. I made a life commitment to live sacrificially and to spend myself at every turn for God’s glory.

To my surprise, the life commitment to “lose my life in order to find it” (Matthew 16:24-25) had unexpected consequences.  While in college I learned that my commitment was often viewed by others as odd or extreme. For a while, I struggled with the reality that I didn’t fit in and thought about shifting my focus toward the American dream. Soon after, however, I heard someone quote St. Francis of Xavier’s call to “give up your small ambitions” and decided that I would only ever find complete satisfaction if my life was spent for God.

Almost a decade later,  I opened the book, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement,* and read an article that helped me to understand my “fit.” It was Ralph Winter’s article on living a war-time lifestyle (<https://joshuaproject.net/assets/media/articles/a-wartime-lifestyle.pdf>), in which he called Jesus’ followers to “wartime” lifestyle priorities. Just as a peacetime luxury liner that normally accommodated 3,000 passengers became a WWII troop carrier transporting 15,000 troops, Winter proposed that Great-Commission-minded Christians who remained in their home country adopt an intentional and simple lifestyle similar to that of missionaries, for the focusing of resources toward completing the Great Commission. I devoured the article, read it again, shared it with my wife, began talking about it at seminary and, eventually committed to find and join a “Jesus-tribe” completely given over to doing everything possible to see Jesus worshipped among every tongue, tribe and nation. I knew that the only way to follow Jesus and never turn back was to live a “war-time lifestyle.”

Fast forward almost 30 years; those early choices my wife, and then our children, made to live simple, sacrificial and strategically focused lives have now placed us in an unlikely “tribe” of like-minded Jesus followers. The journey started with easy choices: living below our means; focusing on increasing our standard of giving, rather than growing our standard of living; choosing to be intentional with our generosity; learning to partner with others for a greater good; and, enjoying the rewards of a life filled with kingdom risks. Soon those early choices we made, made us. Now we are compelled by a passion to bring the Good News to those who have never heard…and to do it with a Jesus-tribe of people having the same commitment.

Make no mistake; the choice to live a war-time lifestyle continues to be counter-intuitive among many Great-Commission focused Christians and is often misunderstood by others. Each of us, in our own way, have given up the privilege of what is “rightfully ours” to experience the greater pleasure of God’s presence in serving the Unreached.

Along the way on this war-time lifestyle journey for Jesus we have met all kinds of people who have joined our “tribe:” outcasts, the persecuted, forgotten and the under-qualified. We’ve connected with former terrorists who now live solely for the glory of Jesus’ name; with bankers, businessmen, and entrepreneurs who use their acumen to fuel the kingdom; with cooks, camel herders, dishwashers, and servants who work together to rescue people from slavery. Some of us have lost loved ones to martyrdom; others of us have suffered and been persecuted for our faith. Some have given up well-known careers, or positions of prominence, while others have chosen to live in the shadows and remain completely unknown.  Together we pool our prayers, our resources, and our strengths and run into the chaos. We continue to ask the Lord how much we can risk for Him. To our joy, those we have mentored and fathered are now raising up their own like-minded spiritual sons and daughters.  More and more families are joining this small Jesus-tribe.

Each year we ask how many more Unengaged, Unreached Peoples we can love, care for and launch church planting movements among. Our commitment to a war-time lifestyle enables us to live for the King and for the day in which His name is exalted above every other name and worshipped among every tongue, tribe and nation.

We can’t possibly know what difference our lives will ultimately make for eternity. But we do know this: our choice to live a war-time lifestyle has freed us to live for Him.