

Unreached Peoples:
Articles by Ralph D. Winter
in Chronological Order

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Hidden Peoples: The Last Frontiers

(*Mission Frontiers*, July-Aug. 1979)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-hidden-peoples>

In 1961 a small metallic object rocketed into airless space and began to circle the earth. Overnight, a startled world stepped hesitantly into the space age. Within ten years the same world watched as a man named Armstrong stepped down on the moon. As a result, modern man plunged into an awareness of a new frontier.

THE FIRST ERA: 1792

A similar new awareness startled English-speaking Christians almost two hundred years earlier when a man named William Carey wrote a small book that confronted his readers with a massive omission. His basic facts and figures proved their obligation to reach the heathen nations with the Gospel. As a result, after almost three centuries of virtually no Protestant outreach, a dozen mission societies sprang into existence, and what was to become a flood tide of evangelical mission activities began to reach every corner of the globe. This was the first stage of Protestant missions.

THE SECOND ERA: 1865

However, almost as soon as mission work began to succeed in Africa and Asia, missionaries came to be overwhelmingly preoccupied with the growing national churches they established, and became less and less aware of peoples still unreached--a second massive omission. Eventually, in 1865, Hudson Taylor launched the second stage of Protestant missions by shifting the gaze of mission leaders from the coastlands to the inland areas. He crossed this geographical frontier and jolted the Christians of his day not only with a new awareness of vast areas of hidden people but with a new means to reach them, and the massive new "faith mission" movement was born.

This new thrust sparked recurrent attention to new frontiers throughout the next 100 years of unprecedented Christian growth until today almost half the people in the world are either committed to Christ or at least claim to be Christians.

But the unbelievable impact of Christian missions upon the world can hardly be measured in its full scope. It has spanned oceans and coastlands and reached inland frontiers and, in those particular cultures which it has penetrated, it has become a transforming power. Quite understandably, it has also typically become overwhelmingly preoccupied with the mushrooming obligations of its success. Revivals are like a fire out of control in many parts of Africa, Latin America, Indonesia and Korea, with 1,000 new churches opening their doors each week. Just to keep up with the needs of this growing movement consumes virtually all present mission efforts.

THE THIRD ERA--Today!

Thus it is a quite disturbing new awareness in the midst of this success to discover that all those thousands of language and cultural pockets now penetrated contain one out of five of the world's non-Christians. The bombshell confrontation for our time is not quite the same as Carey's (the "heathens" can and must be reached) or Taylor's (we've forgotten the inland peoples) but rather, what about the 4 out of 5 non-Christians who are still beyond invisible cultural frontiers?

Careful studies first presented at the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, Switzerland, introduced the concept of the remaining cultural frontiers to be spanned in order for 80% of the world's non-Christians to be won to Christ.

More precisely, of 3,060 million non-Christians in the world today, 2,456 million are beyond these invisible, cultural frontiers. Nearly a billion Chinese with about half billion each of Muslims, Hindus, and other tribal or Asian people, are locked within a mosaic of subcultures, language barriers and social prejudices where as yet no viable Christian church has been founded. Yet, these are the 37 problems which faced the Apostle Paul and 2000 years of missionary outreach. Would you like to visualize how many people that is? Preaching to 60,000 different people per day in this group would take you over 100 years to touch 2,456 million people!

The tragedy is not in the obstacles. This is nothing new in the story of the spread of the Gospel. The tragedy is that less than 1% of all Christian workers are concentrating on these 2.5 billion lost and furthermore, there are almost no plans to reach them.

Nevertheless, there are many indications that these forgotten people will be receptive to the Gospel if the means and strategies are developed to reach them. The new U.S Center for World Mission in Pasadena is small in comparison to the immensity of the task but it is the largest single property in the world today dedicated exclusively to reaching the hidden people. What has been launched in Pasadena must alert us, as did that first satellite, that we have entered a new age, and nothing short of a total effort will conquer this last frontier.

IT IS ASTOUNDING THAT ONLY 1 OUT OF EVERY 10 PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES IS NOW WORKING WITH 16,750 GROUPS REPRESENTING MORE THAN 2 BILLION PEOPLE

Waving the Flag for “Hidden Peoples”

(Mission Frontiers, March 1980)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment101>

In many respects, Dr. Ralph Winter seems quite humble and unpretentious. He speaks in soft tones, and his clothes are simple and not expensive. He works at an old wooden desk which is scratched and piled with books and papers.

Upon meeting him, you might not realize the strategic contribution he is making to world missions today. As founder and director of the U.S. Center for World Mission, he is spearheading what could be one of the most significant projects in mission history: developing strategies to reach the world's “hidden” peoples.

Four out of five non-Christians in the world today, Winter says, are hidden walled off by linguistic or cultural barriers from any existing missionary efforts. By his estimates there are more than 16,000 hidden people groups; many are in India, China and the Muslim world. In all, more than two billion people are hidden and will not hear the gospel without pioneer missionary efforts.

Plans call for a total of 60 Centers for World Mission in numerous countries. Each will work to identify hidden peoples, develop strategies for reaching them and encourage Christians to implement these strategies. More than 40 mission agencies already have representatives working at the U.S. center in Pasadena, and a new university has been established to help the research workers and to offer courses to college students interested in expanding their knowledge of missions. The center has purchased a former Nazarene college campus and is conducting an unusual fund raising drive to pay for it.

Winter recently talked with Worldwide Challenge about the hidden peoples and about the center's financial crisis. Excerpts of that interview follow.

Question: Could you give some examples of what you call “hidden peoples”?

Winter: What makes a hidden people is that, first of all, there is no church in their society that can evangelize on the wavelength of their own culture. The distinctive feature of the society could be linguistic, ethnic, social, economic, geographic, vocational you name it.

Right now we feel that just the tip of the iceberg is showing, the tip being the tribal peoples. To some Christians, they're the only mission field left. The function of each center for world mission is to wave the flag for the other hidden peoples, to lift the iceberg out of the water.

In India, for example, there are 2,900 castes or classes of people in which there are no Christians at all. India has 3,000 sub nations, of which only about 100 have some Christians living in them.

Question: Where are the rest of the 3,000?

Winter: They're in different castes. Almost all the churches in India are located in what formerly was the so called “untouchable” class. These people can't be touched, so to speak. They live in a special little ghetto outside the village, and that's where the church is. This

means that a missionary methodology is needed to get into those other compartments of India's society structure. And to do that takes intelligent, deliberate strategy.

You say, "That's India. That isn't true of the Muslim world. The Muslims love each other." But, you know, only seven percent of the Muslims speak Arabic. What do the rest of them speak? They speak 580 other languages, minimum. Maybe a thousand, depending on what you call a language. If you're going to win Muslims to Christ, you're going to have to deal with 3,500 separate sub nations.

Let's talk about the Chinese. Everybody knows that all Chinese read the same language. Yet they don't speak the same language. There are two groups of people in China: the Han Chinese who are the real Chinese and a great number of other kinds of people who are not Han Chinese. The Han Chinese alone speak at least 200 different languages, and it's very important to talk to Chinese in their own language. Mission work among them requires maybe a thousand different beachheads.

Even the deaf people of the world are a major hidden group. There are more deaf people than there are refugees in the world seven million deaf people in Brazil alone with practically no mission work among them. Once you learn the deaf person's language, you can go anywhere in the whole world and talk to anybody who's deaf.

Question: What would you say are the major accomplishments of the centers in the few years that they have been operating?

Winter: For one thing, the phrase "hidden people" has caught on. I'm told that the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization is using it. A man called from the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, and said that in their July meeting they had voted to go from 170 missionaries to 600 by the year 1990 and to, open 10 new fields where they could reach hidden peoples. I hadn't used that phrase in the conversation before that.

Recently, I gave the opening address at an Evangelical Foreign Missions Association meeting, and the theme of the entire meeting was "The Unreached Peoples of the World." They focused particularly on the hidden peoples. The fact that I was asked to speak wasn't a personal honor so much as it was a recognition of the campaign that we're waging.

An interesting sidelight to that convention is that some of the mission agencies there said that lots of churches were giving them additional money specifically for hidden people missions. But some of them don't have hidden people missions! I was gratified that they have this problem!

Question: From what I understand, the U.S. Center for World Mission has already made several payments on the \$15 million it owes for the campus in Pasadena. How is the fund raising drive going now?

Winter: We owed \$660,000 by last September 15, but we overran that deadline by nearly three months, and we've got another payment coming up immediately. So it's really a spiritual crisis for us.

We have a goal of bringing a new vision for world missions to 10,000 churches and getting one million people to commit themselves to a one time donation of \$15.95. But we're not running around the United States asking for money. The primary way information is spreading is by word of mouth. The problem is it isn't working quite fast enough.

Question: Why do you ask for only a small donation?

Winter: We want it to be big enough so that people don't forget what it was, but we want it small enough that people don't say, "Hey, you're diverting money from missions." We don't ask for a second gift, and we don't ask for more than 50 donations per church so that we'll have to take our vision to more churches and more people. We're not limiting anyone; they can give whatever they want. Any church can give what it wants. But we expect to return or reassign elsewhere all gifts to our founding budget that are larger than \$15.95, once enough small gifts come in.

Question: The task of reaching these 16,000 hidden people groups seems incredible. What needs to happen in order to reach these people?

Winter: You say 16,000 is a big job. I don't believe it is. Reaching into that many societies is a lot easier than reaching the 2.5 billion people involved! Let me tell you why.

First of all, there has never been as much awareness—technical, statistical, factual awareness of the entire task—as there is now. There have never been as many Christians willing to do something about it. One agency alone has said, "We'll reach 800 hidden people groups by the year 2000." At a mission executives meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, next October, they hope to parcel out the 16,750 hidden people groups.

But even more important, we don't have to win all those people as outsiders. The primary mission task is to get a beachhead in each new society and then let the gospel grow by normal evangelism within that society. Thus, to finish the missionary job is relatively simple.

Finally, there are now more than 200 million evangelicals spread out all over the world. If only one new missionary couple were sent out per 1,000 evangelicals, in addition to what we already have, that would be more than 400,000 missionaries coming from about every country and going to every sub nation.

To my knowledge, there's not one country in the world where the percentage of honest to goodness Christians is not at least gradually increasing. I don't know of one country where the percentage of true Christians is declining.

Let me give you an example: East Germany. When the communists first occupied it, 80% of the people were registered as Christians. Now, after 25 years, only 60% are registered Christians. So we're going backwards, right? Not on your life! The number of honest to goodness evangelicals in East Germany is probably more than a million probably more than ever before in history. At some universities, more than a thousand Christian students meet together. It's against the law in East Germany to advertise a Christian meeting, so it goes by word of mouth. They meet for two or three hours and sing and pray and testify. Then they're gone.

To me, these are bright signs of vitality. People may want to be pessimistic about the remaining missions task, like the guy who looks at the glass of water and says it's half empty, while another person says, "Hey, it's half full." in our case, a third of the world's population now professes to be Christian. There are five times as many evangelicals as formal Communist Party members in the world. We have twice as many evangelicals today as there were people on the earth in the days of Jesus! That can't be all bad.

Reflections of a Heart Aflame

(Mission Frontiers August 1981)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/reflections-of-a-heart-aflame>

The following candid remarks were made by Ralph Winter at the close of the Frontier Fellowship meeting in Pasadena July 9, 1981. Dr. Winter followed Titus Tineau, a Christian and Missionary Alliance church leader from Upper Volta. The remarks appear here as originally spoken, without substantial editing.

I sort of wish that there wasn't time left tonight for me to talk, I would have been very glad to hear a lot more about Upper Volta. I think maybe that must be a translation from the French. In this country we speak about "high voltage," not "upper voltage." (laughter) I was just fascinated by what was being said tonight.

I guess my only function here will be to make sure you caught some of the points he made. Very, very significant points.

Kopecks for Missions

Now he said that their group [Christian and Missionary Alliance CMA] was working with one of the larger groups that is there. This isn't always the case, but it is often the case. Missionaries come into a country, they know there are many different languages, like say 400 in Nigeria, and they look around for the place where their efforts can go the furthest once they break into that language.

So they get into that language, they work with that kind of people, and then those people, who very often are dominant in that country, people who crowd out the minorities that are around them, have a kind of snobbishness about the other people. And it just thrilled me to hear his reference to the minorities, and a concern for those people.

How similar it is to Jesus' life among us. He was always disconcerting to the disciples! They always thought that He should talk and give His attention to the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, or somebody here or somebody there, and their intuitions were almost always wrong.

And you can also catch the contrast between this man's vision and the vision of many of the [national] pastors.

Somehow Americans today have this erroneous supposition. Christians in this country, as we well know, are pretty selfish people. Generally, we cough up a few Kopecks for missions which, all across the country amounts, you know, to an enormous sum of money, equal to what we spend for chewing gum. . . and we ship it off, and we're very proud of ourselves! But most Christians are really behind the 8 ball still. They're still struggling with their own salvation.

Mass of Flabby Blessings

About all they've heard of the Gospel is that God loves YOU. And they take that to mean themselves, period. About all they've heard the Bible is good for, is that God has

blessings for you. That's them, period. And so, they even buy Bibles with all the blessing verses tinted in and things like that. It's the same way, I'm sure in High Voltage. (peals of laughter) In other words, people are the same everywhere.

You know, I'm sure none of us could take it if we were to fully plumb the significance of this simple message tonight. There is a secret here. That the gospel as it works produces people who want the blessings for themselves. Not just in America, but in Upper Volta, in Singapore. You go where the Christians are in this world, and you'll find most Christians concerned and even theologically sophisticated primarily about the blessings that God is talking about for them.

You take the great theological statements in history (which of course is what you study in seminary the Westminster Confession, for example). . . there's nothing in the whole Westminster Confession that even implies that anybody should share their blessings with anybody outside their own group! The whole masterpiece of all theological history comes down to us absolutely nerveless, spineless, boneless a mass of flabby blessings! And, I must say, that this is not so much a criticism. It is a reflection on what we are, we Christians.

Outback and Upfront

I was ten years in the outback of Guatemala. I was ten years in the upfront of Fuller Seminary School of World Mission. I had a thousand missionaries going through my classes and one day (you know I am telescoping a long rather slow learning process), one day it became clear that I could stay at that school, deal with those national church leaders and missionaries going out, coming back, for another hundred years, and it would be virtually impossible to focus primarily upon those minorities, those bypassed peoples, those places where the church is not yet.

I wrote down some phrases here [from the previous speaker]: “No organized evangelism to reach out to the Dafing,” “The Sambla tribe, no church among them,” “The Fulanis cannot be converted.” You could just substitute for Fulani the names of 16,000 people groups across the world and you could repeat that with identical significance in every Christian community across the world. Here's another item: “Evangelism on the part of Christians, reaching out in this way, has not yet begun,” that's the exact phrase, “has not begun.”

Outsiders are Best

Or, here's a fascinating insight. Most people would never think of this, they wouldn't believe it. If he had said this and let you think about it, you would have said, “Now wait a minute, that can't be right!” Let me repeat it so you can say, “That couldn't be right!” (laughter)

He said, “The people who can best evangelize them are outsiders.” (pause) Now, you know that couldn't be right! Once there are Christians in Upper Volta, you don't need to send any more missionaries, you don't need Nigerians, you don't need Koreans. Just let the people win their own people.

What simplistic thinking this is! We know that the white citizens of Phoenix Arizona are not going to be the ones to win the Navajo Indians. Even if somehow the Spirit of God would come down upon every church in Phoenix, and all those people would be filled with all the love of God, and they would go up to reach the Navajos, the Navajos wouldn't believe them. They know what those people are like. You need Indians from Bolivia to go

and reach those Navajos. And that is the reason there are people from Upper Volta in California, and hopefully people from California in Upper Volta.

It was last Thursday night that one of our people, working on our staff here for several years was off to the what tribe was he going to? (This is just a final exam here!) He was going to a tribe in what country? [voice in audience: "Sierra Leone!"] Sierra Leone! And to what tribe that had no missionary, no church? What was the name of it? You've been praying all week for it. [voice in audience: "Kono!"] The Kono people.

Now, the fact is that, these people groups about whom no one cares are little known and easily forgotten.

Missions is not Good Enough

What a thrill to flip on the television in a motel in the Chicago area when I was back there for the Billy Graham Center dedication, and to catch Robert Schuller in mid-sentence. He had just come back from the Thailand meetings, where among other things, they were talking about the world's hidden peoples. He said. "For the rest of my life, my ministry will focus on those peoples in the world about whom no one else is thinking or caring!"

Now, I want you to realize tonight, that the word, "missions" is not good enough. "Missions as usual" is not going to do this job! Most missionaries, like the national pastors, are concerned about what is already going on.

Ninety percent of all missionaries are going to work with well-established churches and most of them will never even be exposed to the insight you've heard tonight that we need to break out of our box and go to those people groups where there is nothing going on.

That isn't in the cards for them. They're not thinking about it. They're not bad people, they're not evil people, they just never stop to think. And 95 per cent of all mission funds are going simply to widen and broaden the existing beachheads, without any leapfrogging, without any intentional penetration of other people groups.

Rustling in the Mulberry Bushes

Well, this is CMA Night. Let me tell you my CMA stories. I taught at Nyack one semester, myself. (laughter) Some of my best friends are CMA'ers. (great laughter) But what I remember about the CMA is what I learned before I ever met them face-to-face.

The CMA was not a denomination, it was a movement. It made enemies in almost every denomination. And finally, so much so that many of the Presbyterians involved were just sort of pushed out, and they ended up starting their own denomination. The CMA (as a Presbyterian, I can't take credit for it, but I believe it) certainly shows the reluctance of Presbyterians to move out to new places. Why?

Because it was born back in the days when there was, like there is today, a rustling in the mulberry bushes; in the treetops you hear the rain, you think something new is happening.

CMA, Simpson, Studd

Back in those days, A. B. Simpson and other leaders in the so called "faith mission movement" which produced 40 new mission agencies, and retooled a hundred other mission agencies, marched the whole Christian missionary enterprise out, beyond where they were, into Upper Volta, precisely, in places they were calling "inland" places.

They still weren't thinking of people groups, or pockets, or that sort of thing, bypassed groups, they were just thinking about geographical inlands. But, Simpson was one of the men along with C. T. Studd and others, who backed this movement which electrified and irritated the slumbering Christians who were willing just to send missionaries where there had been missionaries before.

And he tore the whole church wide awake! The Alliance the Christian Alliance, the Missionary Alliance those two organizations coalesced and formed an unbeatable combination. And they tore this nation up and down, top to bottom.

It is not the absence of volunteer young people, it is not the absence of funds, it is not the absence of anything but of hearts set on that which is God's highest.

Now, they are pretty much keeping to themselves, they don't attack the Methodists or the Presbyterians. They don't try to worm their way in and get frontier mission vision in there, you know, but that was an illustrious past. What a tremendous background.

Ninety Percent of all missionaries are going to work with well-established churches.

They were originally a frontier mission movement! More than any other in the United States. No other movement that size ever attacked (that's wisely chosen!) the complacency of all the churches. They enabled those churches to wrest themselves out of the rubbish of neutralism and complacency and "everyday-ism" and all the other "isim's that overtake us, like the little sins that entangle our feet, when we are not on the frontiers of obedience to the living God!

Tearing Away the Blinders

Oh, I pray that either the CMA or some other movement of that scope will come into being. This is why this meeting is here on Thursday nights. The name has been changed, I hope you've noticed.

Ever since Pastor Vuta and Pastor Bawla have come from Burma, we've learned something from them. We've learned if you want to turn the nation upside down, you've got to promote something so radical as a new daily habit of devotion that will gradually, gradually, day after day tear away the blinders from our eyes and open our eyes to these pockets of people.

There will be a day, Titus, when we will know the names of every single hidden people group in Upper Volta, and not only be praying for them by name, but I hope sending people. Probably not exclusively from the United States. . . I hope some of these Koreans [in the audience] will get there.

Network of Centers

Our hope and prayer, of course, here at this Center is, and Ben Jennings will help you work it out, that there would be a sister center in Upper Volta that would, like this center, perform a two-way street for its own nation. It would consider its own nation as a mission field (not too difficult for that to be done after what he has told us of the need that's still there), and also as a mission base

If all the Christians in every concentration across the world look at themselves and their own context as both a mission field and a mission base (and there are sister centers in a network of insight and challenge for the frontiers) then I believe it will be possible to do what we have the muscle to do today!

Needed: Hearts, Set on God's Highest

Never in history has there been the muscle, the unused muscle in the Church of Jesus Christ. Oh, it is not the absence of volunteer young people, it is not the absence of funds, it is not the absence of anything but of hearts set on that which is God's highest, reaching out to those least-reached people with the least opportunity that has always been God's highest goal, and highest purpose.

If you want to turn the nation upside-down, you've got to promote something so radical as a new daily habit of devotion.

I pray that all of us may take a lesson from the CMA, that we'll be challenged by what they did; and that we, too will become irritating campaigners who will disturb the complacency, as the Bible says, "Comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable." (laughter) all across this country and the whole world so that it will not be necessary to go on hearing reports of how Christians are being so successful at keeping the blessings of God for themselves.

Shall we close in a word of prayer.

Unreached Peoples: Development of the Concept

Abstract

This is an abridged, but still lengthy, version of Winter's chapter in the book, *Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge*, edited by Harvie M. Conn (1985). This shorter version was published in 1984 in the second issue of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions (IJFM)*. The *IJFM* editor observes,

After pointing out that almost from the beginning of the Bible God shows his concern for peoples as sociological and cultural units (see the table of the nations in Genesis 10), Winter delves into concepts and labels. He discusses the term, "peoples," (sociological units) versus "people" (individuals) and insists that clear to the end of time in the book of Revelation it is "peoples" that surround the throne, not merely individuals (Winter 1984, 129).

This article gives detailed historical background from the three eras of Protestant missions, from a series of world-level missionary conferences, and from numerous groups and individuals who wrestled with the concept of unreached peoples. The extensive chronological bibliography lists valuable resources for missions history researchers interested in such questions as:

What are unreached peoples?

What does it mean to be reached?

What about sub-divisions of people groups within larger people groups?

Winter advocated that the missionary target should be the "Unimax" level, "*the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of acceptance or understanding.*"

He concludes, "We ought to try to do what is plain in Scripture, . . . in terms of the blessings we have received." He spoke prophetically to the situation we face in America today in the twenty-first century:

I don't believe there is any hope for this country if we cannot get beyond the syndrome of accepting and trying to preserve and protect our own blessings with MX missiles and horses and chariots and not realize that our only real safety is to *give* the blessings that God has given to us to those for whom he intended them.

Abridged Article from *IJFM*

IJFM Editor: It is impossible in these pages to give Winter's entire article on unreached peoples. Of necessity it must be abridged and summarized. The full version can be found in *Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge*, edited by Harvie M. Conn and published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

After pointing out that almost from the beginning of the Bible God shows his concern for peoples as sociological and cultural units (see the table of the nations in Genesis 10), Winter delves into concepts and labels. He discusses the term peoples (sociological units) versus people (individuals) and insists that clear to the end of time in the book of Revelation it is peoples that surround the throne, not merely individuals. In other words, God is interested in saving individuals, but he is also interested in saving them as members of their cultures, indeed redeeming and bringing back to himself the entire race.

Winter then gives some historical examples in what he terms the "three eras of Protestant missions." He refers to John Eliot's "praying villages" of converted American Indians in Massachusetts during the seventeenth century and in the next century the conversion of the Batak people in Sumatra. The latter was the result of a so-called "people

movement,” and as such caused a great deal of consternation among theologians in the Pietist and Evangelical camps back home. Warncke, a German missiologist, pondered the phenomenon, however, and began to teach the concept of the “Christianization of peoples,” saying, “When Jesus speaks of the need to Christianize all peoples, he means that they must be made Christian on the basis of their natural distinctiveness as a people.”

Several Dutch missiologists were very troubled by this statement, insisting that “although the tribal bonds which are still found . . . perform a restraining function in the sphere of morals, they are, nevertheless, completely connected with demonic, collective self-deification so characteristic of heathendom. The tribe must undergo a deep and drastic change.”

Much of this discussion occurred during the Second World War, right at the time when the Dutch had every reason to be suspicious of any evangelization of a people as a whole. Did not the German Nazis claim to be Christians? Was it ever possible, they wondered, for an entire people to be truly converted?

Largely unaware of this discussion in Europe, two Americans were facing the phenomenon itself in widely separated areas. Cameron Townsend became aware of the need to reach a people as a people when he found that after fifty years of missionary activity in Guatemala, the majority of the population, the Indian tribes, were still largely untouched. “God did not speak their language,” it seemed, and Townsend came to realize that they had to be approached in their own languages and in terms of their own distinct cultures. As a result, he started Wycliffe Bible Translators which eminently (almost singlehandedly) reached out to the tribal peoples of the world.

The other American was Donald McGavran, halfway around the world in India. Almost by accident he had become involved in “non-tribal mass movements” which had sprung up among the lower castes.

Thus, in Winter’s words, “During the same period in which missionaries were confronting the ‘horizontal segmentation’ of tribal movements, missionaries in India were confronting the ‘vertical segmentation’ of vast non-tribal movements for which they had not planned.”

Winter goes on to review some of the literature describing the mass movements which gradually reveal the change in understanding by missionaries that these were actually multi-individual decisions within homogeneous groupings, and as such were natural bridges of God to the conversion of a people group.

McGavran’s *Bridges of God* became the forerunner of a massive rethinking of mission strategy which came to be known as the “Church Growth Movement,” based at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

The next few pages detail Winter’s own involvement in that movement, his initial thinking about the still unfinished task, and his involvement as a speaker at the Lausanne Conference on World Evangelization in 1974. Prior to this time, Winter had written an article entitled “Seeing the Task Graphically,” which had been picked up and used in the opening audio-visual. In his plenary address at Lausanne, Winter moved considerably beyond the thinking in that early article. MARC of World Vision, also closely connected to Fuller, was also involved at Lausanne, especially in the Unreached People Directories which it began publishing annually shortly thereafter.

For the next ten pages of so, Winter meticulously details the struggles of the various participating entities to agree on an exact definition of “unreached peoples.” Thanks to McGavran and others who had gone before, the term, “peoples,” was by now not much of a problem. But what, they asked themselves, was “unreached”? By then Winter had established the U. S. Center for World Mission, dedicated entirely to the problem of researching the unreached and mobilizing the church to finish the task of missions. The Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Continuation Committee settled on its own definition, stating that “a people could be considered unreached if less than 20 percent were practicing Christians.”

Winter immediately demurred, insisting that almost no “people” by this definition could then be considered evangelized, and the result would be that the truly unreached would then not be given the emphasis and attention which they so desperately needed. But that definition had already been published, so Winter chose another term, “Hidden Peoples” and defined it as “any linguistic, cultural, or sociological group defined in terms of its primary affinity (not secondary or trivial affinities), which cannot be won by E-1 methods and drawn into an existing fellowship of believers.”

In 1980, partly as a result of a “call” for such in 1972, there were three world-level missionary conferences, all purporting to be the logical successor to the famed 1910 Edinburgh Conference. Melbourne, organized by the World Council of Churches, mainly discussed problems of social justice; very little if anything was said about unreached peoples. Pattaya, Thailand was the next in the Lausanne tradition, and was scheduled to be largely on unreached peoples. The definition used was the troublesome “20 percent” one, but what more affected the outcome was the type of person attending, mainly again church leaders. At Edinburgh 1980, the delegates were by design almost exclusively mission executives and field missionaries, at least one-third members of non-Western mission societies. Entirely new was

a concurrent young people's conference, which participated in the plenary sessions of the executives but had its own international conference on unreached peoples during other periods. The theme at Edinburgh 1980 was "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000." As suggested, the discussion was entirely on mission strategy for the Hidden Peoples. The definition for that term paralleled and simplified Winter's: "those cultural and linguistic sub-groups, urban and rural, for whom there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people."

From this point we quote directly from Winter's article:

The History of Defining "Unreached"

Sam Wilson, working with Ed Dayton at MARC, had been involved in both Pattaya '80 and Edinburgh '80 and rightly insisted that the use of a 20 percent definition had always been merely a method of achieving a reasonable likelihood of the presence of an indigenous, evangelizing church. In the 1981 *Unreached Peoples Annual*, presenting ongoing thinking of the Strategy Working Group, the "presence of a church" concept was newly acknowledged.

When was a people reached? Obviously, when there was a church in its midst with the desire and ability to evangelize the balance of the group.

Also, three new categories of Unreached Peoples were suggested as the result of ongoing thinking in the Strategy Working Group: initially reached, 0–1 percent; minimally reached, 1–10 percent; and possibly reached 10–20 percent. The word *possibly*, I believe, especially suggests the basically predictive purpose of the percentage approach. In the same treatment, a new, divergent definition for Hidden Peoples was suggested.

NOTE: In the following year, Unreached Peoples '81 over-corrected things and defined the Hidden Peoples as groups where there is "virtually no Christian group" ... "virtually no Christians" ... "no known Christians within the group, e.g. zero Christians" (pp. 26-27) even though on pages 140 and 141 there is a reproduction of a statistical table and a pie chart in which the original definition of Hidden Peoples is preserved. Thus, neither in the '80 annual, where Hidden Peoples was made to mean 20 percent, nor in the '81 annual, where it was assumed to be 0 percent, was the concept presented for Hidden Peoples the same as what was set forth all along ever since the original article was printed in the '79 annual.

By now it was only reasonable to assume that some standardization of terminology was desirable. Late in 1981 Ed Dayton, representing the Lausanne Committee, took the initiative to invite Wade Coggins (EFMA) and Warren Webster (CBFMS) to convene a meeting near the Chicago O'Hare airport which I am calling the "C-82" meeting. A wide representation of leaders very willingly gathered, coming from IFMA, EFMA, InterVarsity, NAE, Southern Baptist, ACMC, Billy Graham Center, Dataserve, Gospel Recordings, SIM, NAM, MARC, USCWM, and Wycliffe. The sole purpose of the two-day meeting was to settle on a standard terminology which would foster more effective thinking and action in regard to the world's darkened peoples. A number of additional terms necessary to conceptualize the reaching of peoples were defined, such as *reported, verified, evaluated, selected, supported, engaged*, as well as *reached* and *unreached*.

For our purposes here, the key accomplishment of this meeting was the abandonment of the 20 percent concept for the *unreached peoples* phrase and the adoption of a modification of the-presence-or-absence-of-the-church definition further refined for the Edinburgh '80- Consultation. What came directly out of the meeting was:

Unreached peoples: a group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.

The result was in effect to employ the *Unreached Peoples* phrase from the Lausanne tradition and the *Hidden Peoples* concept from the Edinburgh tradition. However, in continuing to use the *Unreached Peoples* phrase, this meant the old definition would continue to circulate for awhile at least.

There was no reason to assume, of course, that everyone would choose to follow the lead of the C-82 meeting in thus underscoring the presence-or-absence-of-the-church concept since other concepts were also valid. David Barrett, for example, in his master work, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, said that a people was unreached if less than 20 percent were "evangelized" (Barrett 1982, 19). This

definition corresponds to none mentioned here thus far. On the other hand, the phrase, “unreached peoples” elsewhere in his encyclopedia is defined in terms of contact: “Unreached peoples: ethnic, linguistic and other groups without previous contact with Christianity, who have not or not yet had the gospel brought to them” (Barrett 1982, 847).

In regard to evangelization, Barrett has an enormously sophisticated list of all the possible ways the gospel can be “brought,” which is perhaps his main concern. In his *Encyclopedia* he devotes various tables and one entire section, “part 5,” although short, to “Evangelization.” Curiously, it was his earlier work, *Schism and Renewal in Africa* (Barrett 1968, 13) which first mentioned the significance of 20 percent of the population being *adherents* (not merely evangelized), which significantly affected Edward Pentecost’s thinking as he advanced the 20 percent definition for use in the *Unreached Peoples Directory* distributed by MARC at the 1974 Congress.

Now to review the chronological sequences of concepts and labels:

1) Barrett (1968, 137): “By the time the number of Protestant or Catholic adherents in the tribe has passed 20 percent ... a very considerable body of indigenous Christian opinion has come into existence.”

2) Pentecost (1974, 30): Unreached peoples: “We consider that a people is unreached when less than 20 percent of the adults are professing Christians.” (Note: This definition does not require practicing Christians.)

3) MARC (1974, 26): “Unreached Peoples are those homogeneous units (geographic, ethnic, socio-economic, or other) which have not received sufficient information concerning the gospel message of Jesus Christ within their own culture and linguistic pattern to make Christianity a meaningful alternative to their present religious/value system, or which have not responded to the gospel message, because of lack of opportunity or because of rejection of the message, to the degree *that there is no appreciable (recognized) church body effectively communicating the message within the unit itself.*”

4) MARC (1974, 26): Unreached Peoples: For the purposes of this initial Directory, we consider that a people is unreached when less than 20 percent of the population of that group are part of the Christian community.” (Note: does not require “practicing” Christians.)

5) LCWE/SWG 1977 (See Wagner, Dayton 1979, 24). Unreached Peoples: “An Unreached People is a group that is less than 20 percent practicing Christian.” (Note: In demanding “practicing Christians” almost all groups become *unreached*.)

6) (Winter 1978, 42): A Hidden People: “For both spiritual and practical reasons, I would be much more pleased to talk about the presence of a church allowing *people* to be *incorporated*, or the absence of a church leaving people *unincorporable*. Any linguistic, cultural, or sociological group defined in terms of its primary affinity (not secondary or trivial affinities) which cannot be won by E-1 methods and drawn into an existing fellowship, may be called a Hidden People.” (Note: this is the first published definition of Hidden Peoples.)

7) Edinburgh Convening Committee, 1979 for the World Consultation on Frontier Missions: “Hidden Peoples: Those cultural and linguistic sub-groups, urban or rural, for whom there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people.” This concept was also called *Frontier Peoples*.

8) (Wagner, Dayton 1981, 26): “When was a people reached? Obviously, when there was a church in its midst with the desire and the ability to evangelize the balance of the group.”

9) LCWE/SWG 1980 (in Wagner, Dayton 1981, 27): “Hidden People: no known Christians within the group. Initially Reached: less than one percent, but some Christians. Minimally Reached: one to 10 percent Christian. Possibly Reached: ten to 20 percent Christian. Reached: 20 percent or more practicing Christians.” (Note: suggests a different concept for the phrase *Hidden Peoples*.)

10) NSMC (January 1982): “Unreached Peoples are definable units of society with common characteristics (geographical, tribal, ethnic, linguistic, etc.) among whom there is no viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.” (Note that this definition introduces a geographical factor.)

11) IFJA Frontier Peoples Committee (Feb. 24, 1982): Agreement to use the Edinburgh 1980 definition (#7 above) for all three phrases, Hidden Peoples, Frontier Peoples, and Unreached

Peoples. (This action was taken in light of advance information regarding the mood for change on the part of the MARC group. This mood was officially expressed at the C-82 meeting, see #12.)

12) LCWE/Chicago (March 16, 1982). Unreached Peoples: “A people group (defined elsewhere) among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.”

13) LCWE/SWG (May 21, 1982): Same as #12 except that the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Continuation Committee voted to replace “able” by the phrase “with the spiritual resources.”

14) LCWE/Chicago (July 9, 1982): further revision of #12 and #13 by second mail poll. Unreached Peoples: “A people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians *with adequate numbers and resources* to evangelize this people group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.” (Note new phrase emphasized.)

Analysis of the Definitions of Unreached

At this point we must try to look back and ask whether or not we are heading in the right direction. Underlying all these definitions (except perhaps the first, which is given only to show where the 20 percent idea may have had part of its origin) is the concern for evangelistic outreach to function in such a way that the people (individuals) have a “valid opportunity” to find God in Jesus Christ. As evangelicals we tend to think this will normally take place at the response of an individual without any believing community in the picture. Yet we know better.

Slightly to exaggerate McGavran’s view perhaps: it is no more likely that fish will crawl out on the land to get the bait than will individuals embedded in a social matrix (especially a non-Western one) be likely to walk out to become Christians. It is rather our duty to move into their world and win people within it, not to be modern members of “the party of the circumcision” by demanding directly or indirectly that people ignore the social and family bonds within which they have grown up. In the New Testament, Jews did not have to become Gentiles, nor vice versa.

However, to create the realistic, culturally relevant “valid opportunity” for people to accept Christ is not the easiest path, because it ultimately forces us to take “peoples” seriously. Reaching peoples is thus merely the process whereby the realistically valid opportunity is created. Unreached peoples are groups within which individuals really don’t have that opportunity. It is not good enough to send a message nor even extend an invitation people cannot accept without passing extra-Biblical tests.

This need for a “valid opportunity” highlights the existence in these definitions of the word *indigenous* and the phrase *believing community*. But it does not settle the question of the validity of people-churches. In passing, let it be noted that the reality and integrity of a people tends to supercede, at least for awhile, the geographical distribution of the group. That is, a group is not unreached or hidden just because it happens to be a geographically isolated non-Christian portion of a reached people. The reason is that it can be evangelized by a *geographical* strategy rather than requiring a *new missiological breakthrough*.

Also to be noted is the trend in the final definition about (#14) stressing more than any previous definition the need for outside help to finish the job. In my opinion, (see concept #6) the crucial question related to the work of a classical mission agency is whether or not there is yet a culturally relevant church. From that point of view it is the unique burden and role of a mission agency to establish an indigenous beachhead, to achieve what I would call “a missiological breakthrough,” not the cessation of need for further work from elsewhere.

Thus, for me, whether the indigenous community possess “adequate numbers and resources” is not the crucial point, practical though it may be in another sense. The chief question would seem to be whether or not the missiological task has been done. In turn, that should mean in my opinion, more even than having the Bible in a people’s own language. It should mean at least the existence of a handful of believers who have become consciously part of the world fellowship, capable of drawing upon the life and experience of Christian traditions elsewhere, and even capable of consulting the Bible in the original languages. In short, an Unreached People needs very urgent, high priority

missiological aid until it is quite able to draw on other Christian traditions and is substantially independent, as regards holy writ, of all traditions but those of the original languages themselves.

Indeed, it would seem to be a great strategic error for all cross-cultural aid to cease before the new church begins to lend at least some aid to the cross-cultural task of reaching all remaining Unreached Peoples. Perhaps every indigenous church can have—must have—a role to play in the classical endeavor. Note well that this perspective is fundamentally different from preoccupation with the “three-self” type of wholly autonomous national church. History shows that autonomous, isolated, national churches become stagnated and/or heretical.

Furthermore, it seems to me that enough mischief has by now been done by the “disengagement syndrome,” which was highlighted by Henry Venn’s “euthanasia of the mission” concept in the nineteenth century (see Warren 1971, 28, 172.) I do not believe any church anywhere can ever get so mature that it has no need of continued contact and interchange with other church traditions. The “bailing out” of Hawaii in 1865 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions certainly was only an armchair victory. Why could not the mission have foreseen the need for at least a few Christian attorneys to defend the Hawaiian believers against the aggressive land-hungry mainlanders who were already arriving in force, not to mention the pressures of the not-so-holy descendants of some of the missionaries themselves?

It is certainly reasonable to question whether a mission agency as such should continue to be linked to the younger church. Once classical mission work concludes, it would likely be better for home church lay people, pastors, and leaders to take over an on-going liaison through a regular program of interchange mediated by another kind of office. The mission then should be related, if at all, only to the corresponding mission structure within the younger church. We must face the fact that many younger churches (like many older churches) get sealed off and spend not more than one percent of their income on evangelizing their own people, and *nothing* in evangelizing other peoples who live physically intermingled with them. But to pursue this problem would take us beyond the scope of this paper.

Suffice it to say, I would prefer to stress the unreachedness of a people in terms of the presence of absence of a church sufficiently indigenous and authentically grounded in the Bible, rather than in terms of its numerical strength vis-à-vis outside help. That is, I have all along felt in my own mind that the phrase of the Edinburgh formulation (#7), “able to evangelize their own people,” referred back to *the indigenous quality* of the believing community rather than to the *numerical strength* of the indigenous movement. If this interpretation is acceptable, then the concepts expressed in definitions #7 and #12 should be considered basic.

It is gratifying to note that the ultimate unity of mind and heart in all these discussions is the attempt to hasten the completion of the task. In that we must not grow weary. In due time we shall reap if we faint not. Providentially, that “we” here includes a vast, unprecedented world family of believers whose final citizenship is in heaven, whether or not that heaven preserves the magnificent diversity of the world’s peoples—a diversity still irritating so often to our fellow Americans unless they too can come to see these cultural barriers as potential bridges.

By way of review, the various definitions for “Unreached Peoples” given in recent years were considered by the 1982 consensus to now be synonymous. “Unreached Peoples” was chosen as the preferred term, but it was now defined in exactly the same way as “Hidden Peoples” and “Frontier Peoples.” The definition chosen was that an unreached people group was one within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance. It is this definition upon which all following comments on the what, the where, and the why of unreached peoples will be based.

Unreached Peoples: What Are They?

Traditionally the task of the church has been defined in terms of extending the gospel of Christ. In our circles evangelism has so often been said to be the main business of the church of Jesus Christ that I do not believe I need to discuss the concept of unreached peoples further from a philosophical rationale, but rather from a pragmatic standpoint. We need to know which peoples are unreached,

not so much to be able to separate out Christians from non-Christians nor even to count how many unreached peoples there are, but primarily in order to know how the church should go about evangelizing them. The practical premise upon which all this thinking is based is simply the necessity of “giving everyone a valid opportunity to accept Christ.” To know what groups are unreached, then, relates to a question which is very pragmatic.

“Reach” should mean “incorporate.” Some will remonstrate, however, that if we are simply trying to give everyone a valid opportunity to accept Christ, why is it necessary to emphasize the presence or absence of the *church* (as does our definition of an unreached people)? In my thinking, and in the thinking of all those who employ this criterion, there is no such thing as “a valid opportunity to accept Christ” apart from the indigenous presence of his church. Don’t misunderstand me! What I am saying is rather technical. I agree that conceivably a person can accept Christ apart from a church in his context. But normally this is not the way people become Christians, and even if they do, it is not ideal. People do not simply turn on a switch in their hearts or minds in some kind of direct relationship to God and then proceed to grow spontaneously in their new faith. Normally, they need to be incorporated into his fellowship, into his Church. That is the reason why the trend has been for the various definitions of unreached peoples to take into account the presence or absence of an indigenous church.

Reaching groups is faster. Apart from the fact that it is more Biblical to emphasize the salvation of peoples, not individuals only, it is also true that it is easier to give individuals a valid opportunity to accept Christ if you can get to them within their community on their own wavelength through a fellowship of believers that they can understand and by whom they will be understood. That strategy is both a better and a faster way to reach people. Some today may think it is more efficient to evangelize the world by spraying the globe with electromagnetic radiation in the form of radio or television. Such efforts are all to the good. But evangelizing at arm’s length by radio is not the same as reaching people on their own personal wavelength and within their own culture. Someone once said to me, “It’s possible today by satellite to project a message into every home in the world.” And I answered, “What language are you going to use? Muslims alone speak 580 different languages.” He paused, as he should have, because we are not speaking of mass communication when we evangelize. Jesus was not content with merely a public ministry. He poured most of his energy into one people group, and became himself a part of that group. Ultimately we are dealing with very, very specific communication to the heart, a communication that constitutes an invitation to become part of an existing fellowship of believers, within the same people group.

Reaching groups is better. Clearly, the main reason for working with unreached people (individuals) as members of people *groups* is that only when they as new believers can fit into a group of their own kind will they become firmly established in the faith. In this sense, the only valid church is one which is understandable to people because it fits them culturally—that is, in language and custom it belongs to their people group. In the Pauline sense of the word, there is no other kind of church. The church is *by definition* a church which is understandable to the people involved. It isn’t just an arbitrary mixture of people from different kinds of backgrounds. The Bible cries out that people deserve to be met on the level of their own language, tongue, people group. Most mission leaders today agree.

People groups are permanent. Finally, we speak in terms of a church within each people group because peoples as “nations,” “tribes,” and “languages” may be permanently with us. I won’t take the time to elaborate on this point. Pragmatically it isn’t that important. But let me say in passing that one of the factors in the picture today is a new appreciation of the fact that peoples as distinct groups are God’s creative intent. We are coming to realize that all peoples are potentially of equal beauty to him. Actually this change of perspective is now coming to be seen as more Biblical than the typical American “melting pot” psychology, in which we are to become all alike, somehow. All modern versions of the New Testament, for instance, have retranslated Mark 16:15 to say we are to preach the gospel “to all creation” rather than “to every creature,” as the King James puts it. What is God’s

“creation?” Part of God’s creation is what we find in Genesis 1—the heavens, the Earth, the trees, animals, birds, and so forth. Another part is what we read in Genesis 10, the table of the nations—the *mishpaha* of the Earth, the families of the Earth, the lineages of the Earth.

I am only saying that it is futile for us to ignore the people distinctions. God created them, and according to the book of Revelation, these distinctions will be with us until the very end. Our task is to see how God expects us to use these distinctives as a means of bringing mankind to himself. And the first step in that process is to recognize which peoples now have a viable witnessing church in the culture, reaching out to those still without Christ. These are what we have called the reached people groups. On the other hand, which peoples do not have this internal witness? It would seem that once the people group is clearly distinguished, it would be relatively simple to tell if it has a viable, indigenous, witnessing church. But the facts are not quite so simple. Let me elaborate.

Pseudo-unreached groups. What are unreached peoples? There are some people groups which seem to be unreached, but really aren’t, and some that seem to be reached but really aren’t. First let us take up the *pseudo-unreached peoples*. Let us say that among the refugees from Southeast Asia in the United States today there are a thousand members of a certain tribal group who now live in Philadelphia. Among them there is not one Christian. Moreover, nobody in Philadelphia can speak their language. Are those people an unreached people? We cannot say either yes or no until we ask a further question: “Has there been somewhere else a missiological breakthrough into this same people group?” We must recognize that the one thousand people in Philadelphia may or may not be the entire “people.” Who knows, maybe in New York City there are one hundred thousand more from the same tribe. The subgroup in New York may have strong, fast growing churches and well educated pastors, and the Bible may be in their language. In that event, it would be folly to treat the Philadelphia people group, one thousand strong, as though it were an unreached people. Wouldn’t it be foolish for an ordinary American to try to learn their language and translate the Bible into their tongue if someone, somewhere else, had already done this? Thus a group of people among whom there is no church or Christians is not an unreached people if the same group elsewhere is reached. Such a people we can call a pseudo-unreached people.

Pseudo-reached groups. You can also go wrong in the opposite direction. That is, a people may be pseudo-reached even though they have a church. Let us say, for example, that there has been a church for a thousand years in a particular culture, but the church is invalid in a very practical sense. Its rituals and traditions not only do not lead the people to Christ but actually create a barrier to finding him: There is such a thing as a dead church. Indeed, deadness and liveness are the essence of which we are talking. A pseudo-reached group of this sort may have some missionaries, and some Christians, but it lacks a vital church. The church present in that culture is unable to reach out and evangelize the people of the culture because the church itself needs to be evangelized. *Unreachedness* is thus not defined on the basis of whether there are any Christians or not, or whether there are any missionaries working among them or not. It is defined on the basis of whether or not in that culture there is a viable culturally relevant, witnessing church movement.

People distinctives: cultural or genetic? Finally, it is not always easy to clearly determine one’s own “people group.” There are some people who believe that in determining people groups we should only consider ethno-linguistic distinctions. I will not argue with them, but I do think that the label “ethno-linguistic” combines in the phrase itself both genetic and cultural factors. If, therefore, we are going to combine genetic and cultural factors in our descriptions of peoples, why not admit it from the outset? Does anyone believe that genetic relationships between people are ultimately the factor we’re groping for when we’re trying to preach the gospel? We’re trying to get through to people, and to be able somehow to get through to a group of people who are part of the same tradition, linguistically and culturally, is more significant than to get through to people who are accidentally related genetically.

I heard the other day that when a group of Mennonites left South Russia, somehow one of their babies was left behind and grew up as part of a Kazakh group of people. By the time this blond,

blue-eyed boy was fifteen or so years old, he realized he didn't belong to these people. But that was only a genetic awareness. Culturally, linguistically, he was very much a Kazakh. For someone to urge that he should now go back to his people turns out to be an ambiguous statement. Who are his people? As far as the Gospel is concerned, were he to become a Christian, he would be a superb messenger to the Kazakhs compared to his ability to witness, say, to the rest of his own genetic family. Thus, as far as I can see, the phrase "ethno-linguistic" is a useful term, but it should free us not limit us, in our understanding of cultural realities.

What are unreached peoples? Let us talk now in terms of the size of these groups. American traditions have so redefined the English word "people" that it only rarely means a group, and even then does not give a clue as to size.

Does English help or hinder us? For example, the English statement, "John looked out the window and saw the 'people,'" is ambiguous because it is not clear whether he sees an affinity group or a crowd. Does he see a family, a group of people who identify with each other, or does he see merely a large crowd of people who are complete strangers to each other? Ordinarily in English "He saw the *people*" means merely a lot of people or persons. Rarely does "He saw the people" refer to a *people group*. Thus the English language doesn't ordinarily suggest a group meaning for the word "people." While the phrase "a people" requires a group meaning, it is a very rarely used phrase. Therefore, all our exegesis, all our agonizing about the word "*ethne*" is, I believe, strikingly accompanied and subtly influenced by our own cultural American English vocabulary and semantic structure. I'm not sure we're well qualified to ask whether in the New Testament when people spoke of *pante ta ethne* they were referring to a mass of individuals other than Jews who didn't obey God or whether they were thinking of a mass of peoples. We wouldn't think of a mass of peoples. Maybe they would. One thing we never find in the New Testament is the phrase "a Gentile." That it is possible for us to say it in English betrays the possibility that we have similarly pressed the English translation of the Greek word *ethne* into the English paradigm of *people = individuals*. Thus our subconscious perspective makes our exegesis exceedingly difficult. In the Bible, however, you do have different words that are used depending on the size of these groups. For a more elaborate treatment of the Hebrew words *mishpaha* and *goyim* and the Greek word *ethne*, I refer you to Richard Showalter's article, "All the Clans, All the Peoples" (Showalter 1984).

Megapeoples, macropeoples, minipeoples, and micropeoples. Even in English when you speak of the Chinese people, you refer to a billion people who represent many, many peoples in terms of missionary strategy. In grouping for a terminology to define strategic units more precisely, I have tried to press into duty the following unpronounceable series of words. If, for example, we refer to the Han Chinese, we are speaking about only the "Chinese-ish" citizens of China. The tribal peoples of China would not be included in this category. But the specifically Han peoples include not only those in China, but also the Han peoples outside of China. Thus, politics and political boundaries are of lesser significance in this study. One important is what we could call "peoplehood"—a sense of belonging to each other. The Han Chinese, then, could be considered a *megapeople*—which is my largest category of definition of peoples. (Note: There are small megapeoples, too, such as small tribes unrelated to any other.) So, let us refer to the category of all Han peoples as the Han Chinese megapeople. Likewise, we may speak of a Hindu *megapeople* including all those for whom the primary orientation of their lives has come from the impress of Hinduism. But the large megapeoples have significant subdivisions.

Thus, we may proceed to notice that within that massive megapeople called the Han Chinese there are *macropeoples*—smaller groups such as all those who are native speakers of Mandarin. I have heard that in China only 14 percent of the population speaks Mandarin in the home. Certainly many more *understand* Mandarin, since it is the official language of the country. But at home many who understand Mandarin may usually speak Shanghaiese, or Fukien, or Minnan, or Hakka, or Swatow, or Cantonese, etc. Cantonese speakers, for example, make up one of the large macropeoples within the Han Chinese megapeople.

However, even within the Cantonese macropeople there are still many mutually unintelligible dialects and thus significant barriers to the communication of the Gospel. Scholars studying the Chinese seem strangely reluctant to confront the linguistic diversity of China. I don't know why this is true. Perhaps the fact that one writing system unites them all throws us off and gives us a false impression. But to speak of all the dialects of Chinese as the same language is like speaking of all the European languages as a single language, and asking, "Do you speak European?" or "How many of you speak European?" Is European a language? No. There is of course, a large family of languages called "Indo-European." Russian and English are both part of the Indo-European language family. But so what? I don't understand Russian very well, nor do most Russians understand English.

Now, maybe the differences within the Chinese family of languages are not quite as great as are differences between certain of the various languages of Europe. But nevertheless they are very great. Just because many different kinds of Chinese people can read the same writing system doesn't of itself reduce those differences. The Koreans and the Japanese, whose spoken languages are utterly distinct from Chinese, also use the same Chinese writing system. That doesn't make their languages the same, or even related. As English speakers, we could also learn to use the Chinese writing system to write English, if we wanted to. And we probably would if, for example, we were conquered by China! In such an event, we would probably never use a fixed symbol typewriter again since dot-matrix computer printers can easily print Chinese symbols. Why else is it Japan doesn't bother much with letter-quality printers, as they are called, with symbols that strike one at a time?

Granted, then, that the Han Chinese make up what I call a "megapeople," within which are a number of macropeoples. In turn, the Cantonese macropeople, for example, includes many *minipeoples* due to the existence of very different Cantonese dialects. Finally, within such minipeoples there are extended families and clans, etc., which I would call *micropeoples*.

The missionary target, the "Unimax" level. The important thing is that somewhere along the line we have to ask ourselves, "Which of these size levels is the missionary target?" I have proposed that the easiest way to determine this is to say that it is *the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of acceptance or understanding.* (This phraseology was accepted at Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March 1982.)

In other words, the value of these distinctions is to help us evangelize. Once a group is penetrated by the gospel, to what extent can the gospel spread automatically? What size group make for greatest efficiency? That is, what is the largest group within which the gospel can spread without bumping into linguistic or cultural barriers that are for practical reasons insuperable? We ask this because we simply want to get the gospel to everyone. If in order to get at the reality we have to work in terms of megapeoples, macropeoples, minipeoples, etc. fine! For want of a better word, I have suggested the term "Unimax peoples" to refer to *the maximum sized still sufficiently unified group within which the gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding.* I don't love this term, but for the time being I have come up with nothing better, and we do need some definition that deals with this particular unit of peoples. Otherwise, we end up with a megapeople like the Han Chinese, a *people* in almost anybody's language, but not an entity which is in itself an efficient missionary target in the sense we would like an unreached people to be.

Finally we need to ask, what about individuals who seem to belong in more than one people group? It seems obvious that practically everyone in the world is part of more than one group. And in each group, whether a sports group, vocational group, or a genetic relationship, there may be avenues of communication that are superior to all others. Nonetheless I think that what we are really trying to do when we evangelize is to choose that avenue that will maximize the impact and acceptability of our message. It seems to me logical to assume that we are all trying to find that one maximally approachable group for any given individual. We can then say that for every person in the world there is only one people-oriented approach that, to the best of our knowledge, is the best way to reach that particular person. That way no one will be counted twice. Of course we might find out that our guesses were wrong, and we will have to reclassify that person. Let me give you an example. When we talk about a Chinese Muslim, is he primarily Chinese and secondarily a Muslim, or vice versa? We need first to ask, "On what basis should he be evangelized?" Should he be approached as

Muslim? Or should strategies effective with Chinese be used? In a given case the person might be classified in either group, but not both. Personally, I think it is better to approach most Chinese Muslims as Muslims. However, it must be that for some Chinese Muslims it should be the other way around. Whichever it is, it will not be both.

The point is that to do effective evangelism, we must ordinarily approach individuals with full recognition of their peoplehood and deal with them in the group where they can best be approached. We may therefore assume that everybody in the world is in only one group, and we can then count up the groups that result without counting anyone twice. In doing things this way I have arrived, along with the advice of many people, at about 16,750 groups that can be called “unreached” by the definition given here.

I used to use the figure 15,750, which was the sum of a number of educated guesses. But I realize that such an exact figure gave people the (false) impression that the sub-totals were exact figures. For this reason, I now use the total of 17,000 unreached people groups in the world today. In our Unreached Peoples charts we have listed the following figures: 5000 tribal; 4000 Muslim; 3000 Hindu; 2000 Han Chinese; 1000 Buddhist groups. These are clearly round numbers. In each case those three zeroes are supposed to announce to everyone that these are guesses—careful guesses, but guesses, nevertheless. At this hour of history it is too bad no one can do better than guess. This is what MARC does. This is what the different research agencies on our campus are doing. Everyone is guessing. We are all pleading for help. And every time we guess we are constantly refining our grasp of what the task really is. Thus, when it comes to the total number of unreached peoples, I think we have to realize that once we settle in our minds that everybody belongs in only one group—which for that person is the most reachable context—then we can count the groups without counting anyone twice. Some groups are already *reached* (about 7,000) and some (17,000) are *unreached*, for a rough total of 24,000.

Somebody may remonstrate. “But David Barrett says there are only 8,900 people groups, not 24,000.” True, his monumental study, which everyone ought to own, speaks of some 8,900 distinct ethnolinguistic peoples, and it lists specifically 432 larger clusters of peoples, most of which I would consider macro- or even mega-peoples. But notice that even he does not list all 8,900 by name. Also we need to make sure what it is he refers to when he speaks of a people.

It is clear in his table that his listing is almost identical to the number of languages he figures need translations. But where does that lead us? Wycliffe Bible Translators, for example, goes into South Sudan and counts how many languages there are into which the Bible must be translated and presented in printed form in order to reach everybody in that area. Wycliffe’s answer is fifty distinct translations. What does fifty mean in this instance? Does it mean fifty groups of people? Certainly not, if we are speaking of unreached peoples, because in many cases quite alien groups can read the same translation.

How do I know this? Gospel Recordings also goes into South Sudan and counts the number of languages. Their personnel, however, come up with 130. Why? Because they put the gospel out in cassette form and those cassettes embarrassingly represent a more precise language communication than does the written language. I know how this works because where I worked in Guatemala one translation of the New Testament was used for about 300,000 Quiche Indians, a good portion of the entire tribe. But when the church leaders started producing radio programs, all of a sudden they got negative feedback from all over the Quiche areas with the exception of the one valley from which the radio speaker came. Quiche Indians in all the other valleys resented the twang they heard on the radio. They understood it, but they didn’t want to listen to it. It “hurt” their ears.

It is perfectly reasonable that if Barrett is thinking along the same lines as Wycliffe, he too will also get the smaller number. In fact, if you use the same proportion, $130/50 \times 8,900$ you get a figure very close to the 24,000 total number of peoples in the world which Bruce Graham and I indicated on our *Unreached Peoples 1983* chart. I’ll admit that the number just happens to come out the same. We didn’t derive our figure in this way, nor, vice versa, did Barrett. But I do think the close correspondence is reassuring. Of course if someone really wants to manufacture disagreement, look in Barrett’s book under the chapter on India. There he points out that there are 26,000 different

castes in India alone (the sort of thing I would call *micropeoples*). Yet in our *Unreached Peoples 1983* chart we list only 3000 (Unimax) peoples for India. Thus we really appear to be in disagreement there. In this case, we seem more conservative, whereas he had a small number in the other case.

If, however, you were to take his 26,000 people groups in India and multiply that figure by all the other countries in the world, in proportion to a reasonable similarity/diversity factor, you would get a world total of at least 100,000 to 200,000 peoples by that definition. Do you see what I mean? Different authors for different reasons and different organizations for different purposes are counting different things. It isn't as though nobody agrees on anything. I think there is a great deal of interesting and valuable correlation between these different studies. I find Barrett's book of immense value. Obviously, if you are counting peoples specifically for the purpose of estimating how many different printed New Testaments are necessary, you get one number. If you are trying to estimate how many different tapes are necessary, you get a larger number, closer to the Unimax size, and similar to our figure of 16,750 out of the 23,330.

Unreached Peoples: Where Are They?

Now let us turn briefly to the question "Where are the 17,000 unreached peoples?"

Five thousand of them are the tribal peoples (not counting 1,000 already reached). They are all over the world in every country. There are certain areas of the world like the island of New Guinea the country of Nigeria or Peruvian Amazonia, where there is a large number of different tribal groups. The so-called "tribals" are often basically refugee populations. For example, in a space of fifty by two hundred miles in West Cameroon there are two hundred different languages, many of which have no similarity. It is a mountainous area, the English part of a country which is otherwise French-speaking. That little neck-of-the-woods, so to speak, happens to constitute an area representing "mountains of refuge" for people of all kinds, from all over Africa. For example, there are groups there that trim their hair so that they have only one lock of hair falling down one side, like you see in the pictures of King Tut's tomb. Apparently these people hailed originally from Egypt. But there they are, in a little mountain valley of West Cameroon, too scared to go in any direction because everybody in every direction is hostile to them.

This constant fear of all other groups—this imprisoned situation—is typical of tribal peoples. This trait, even if it were a common denominator, is too tenuous to make the tribal category into a cultural bloc. The tribals of the world are a far bigger task than if they were a single megapeople.

Four thousand of the world's Unreached Peoples are in the Muslim sphere. Here we find a massive megapeople scattered all over the world, but nevertheless also concentrated in a number of places. As Americans we tend to think of the Middle East when we think of Muslims. Yet the Middle East is the smallest part of the Muslim world today. Only 7 percent of Muslims speak Arabic.¹ We find larger concentrations of Muslims both east and west of Arabia, and they speak 580 major different languages. Note that although, like the tribals, many different languages are spoken, the evangelistically significant unifying factor of Islam makes the huge Muslim category a megapeople, not just a large category like the tribal group.

Three thousand are Hindu groups, mainly concentrated in India. But again Hindus are scattered all over the world. For example, in places like Trinidad and Guyana in the Caribbean or Fiji in the South Pacific, people with Hindu orientation constitute the majority of the population.

Two thousand are part of the Chinese megapeople. Although these peoples are perhaps a bit more concentrated than any other group, nevertheless they can be found in 61 different countries of the world. Since that statistic is probably two weeks old by now, we should add another five countries.

¹ Editor's Note: The website, *Encountering the World of Islam*, states that 20 percent of the Muslim population speaks Arabic and that Muslims fall into over 2300 language or ethnic subgroups located across the world (<https://www.encounteringislam.org/muslim-world-facts>).

About one thousand are Buddhists in a primary sense, and for vast millions of Chinese and Japanese, Buddhism is certainly a secondary factor. The heartland of Buddhism is no longer the India in which it was born, but Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia for example, where its missionary influence was more virile.

In no case above do we refer to *reached* peoples, only *unreached*. Then it is not true that the Chinese peoples or tribal peoples are unreached although the vast majority in all five categories are unreached. Furthermore, of these five large collections of related peoples—these megapeoples—four are not located in their own distinct geographical area. Nevertheless there are certain parts of the world where each of these largest categories tends to concentrate. Highly significant to Americans is the fact that from each of these five major groups there are thousands upon thousands of individuals in the United States. Of course not all of the specific peoples within these larger megapeoples are represented in the United States, but many of them are, especially the reached peoples. One result of migration in the modern world is simply that we can no longer make any valid home/foreign distinctions. Once we see the world as 24,000 or so Unimax peoples, it no longer matters where these people are, whether there is an ocean between us and them, whether even the peoples themselves are separated by an ocean. The question rather is whether the church is yet “domestic” within them or not. It doesn’t really help us, therefore, for our mission boards to continue to be structured along geographical lines. It is like going fox hunting. If the fox jumps over the fence into a different person’s yard, what do you do? We have to be able to track that fox, wherever he goes. And if there are 60,000 Gujaratis in Vancouver, Canada, well that’s where they are. Peoples are where you find them. And if the Los Angeles public schools record 109 different languages spoken in the homes of their pupils, then we had better take a good look to make sure that in our evangelistic strategy we’re not overlooking those that have no internal witness within their group, either here or elsewhere.

The phrase *Hidden Peoples* was suggested originally (by Robert Coleman) because unreached people are normally overlooked. Even though one or two of their culture may be sitting right there in church, *as a people group* they are mainly outside the awareness of the church. The apostle Paul faced this situation. At the synagogues he visited he noticed that in the back rows were a few “God fearers,” Greeks who represented a people which could never be first class citizens in a synagogue. And one of the most dramatic scenes in the New Testament occurred (in Acts 13) when Paul was forced to start the first Gentile synagogue. The Jews didn’t mind a few Greeks on the fringes, but when the crowds of Greeks responded to Paul’s message they were furious. Paul was a missionary because he could *see* these Greeks as a people. To others they were visible only as individuals. Taking seriously their peoplehood created the explosion of the Pauline missionary effort and brought into the New Testament perhaps its most radical concept, a reflection and clarification of the meaning of Genesis 12:1-3 and Isaiah 49:6. He quoted the latter verse in Acts 13:47, the former in Galatians 3:8.²

Finding the peoples, then, is not easy. Take, for example, the Kazakhs. According to David Barrett’s ethnolinguistic classification, the Kazakhs speak one language and consist of only one of his 8,900 ethnolinguistic groups. Perhaps one printed translation might suffice. But, let’s be realistic! The Kazakhs number more than ten million. It is quite likely that they are, in fact, a macropeople comprising many minipeoples of the Unimax definition. To be content to observe merely that they speak one language and are one people is wishful thinking. Even geographically they are scattered.

² **Genesis 12:1-3:** The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on Earth will be blessed through you.”

Galatians 3:8: Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”

Isaiah 49:6: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the Earth.”

Acts 13:47: For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the Earth.”

Today they are found in Northwest China, and in Southeast and South Russia. Large numbers live in Afghanistan and Iran. There are a million Kazakhs in Turkey, refugees who walked back and forth across the Russian-Afghan or Iranian border going in and out of the USSR, finally ending up in Turkey. Today, because of the European Economic Community, we find thousands of Kazakhs in Munich. So, if you want to reach the Kazakhs (perhaps more than one variety of them) go to Munich, Germany. Do you see what I mean? Geography is not as important as peoples. Once that is clear, the question of where they are is a very exciting one. It is very significant what can happen in Munich, Germany, once we focus on peoples instead of countries.

Unreached Peoples: Why?

Finally, what about the why? This is the question that energizes me the most. These other questions of *what* and *where* I would call simply technical questions. But *why* this subject is important is the mandate of the gospel itself. But it is more than that. Let me recapitulate a bit.

I think we are in the Third and final era of mission history.³ Speaking of only the Protestant tradition, the First Era missionaries went out to the coastlands of the world, and after a number of years the work became somewhat stagnated. People seriously did not believe it was useful or safe to go inland. Finally a few missionaries broke through the resistance to opening new inland fields. As a result a whole new wave of awareness engulfed the Protestant world. All the mission agencies had assumed it was impossible to go inland until Hudson Taylor and his followers actually did it. Then, gradually, after about twenty-five years of respectful watching and waiting, the older mission boards in England and America rapidly retooled, motivated to a great extent by the impact of Moody and the rising demands of the Student Volunteer Movement. And a new rush of recruits went out to these new inland frontiers, epitomized by the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, which had as its focal point the unreached *areas* of the world.

Because they weren't invited to the Edinburgh 1910 conference, however, thousands of missionaries and dozens of mission boards were outraged. The most offended were those working in Latin America. The conference leaders, those young Student Volunteers, now grown up, hadn't looked carefully enough at Latin America. They didn't realize the separate challenge of aboriginal peoples in Latin America nor take with sufficient seriousness the fact that many of the Europeans in Latin America are only superficially Christianized. But the frontier zealots at Edinburgh didn't want to be bothered with Latin America. They were thinking geographically, not with "people-vision." They wanted to go to the predominantly non-Christian areas of the world. However, their hearts were right—their motive and their zeal in 1910 was clearly for the frontiers. A frontier mood epitomized that second wave. As a result the inland areas of the world, especially in African and Asia, were their main thrust.

Nevertheless, at the very end of this Second (Student Volunteer) era, some of the younger missionaries once more began to tinker around and broke through to still another reality, which in the earlier stages was too small to be bothered with. The sequence included Elliot, Nomenson, Keysser, Gutmann, then Pickett, and (preeminently for the English speaking world) McGavran and Townsend.

Townsend symbolizes attention to "horizontally segmented" small groups, first in Guatemala and later as head of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, to tribal groups in general. Townsend, recently deceased, was a wonderful man with a wonderful career and a wonderful impact. More than any other person on the face of the Earth he has been responsible for the evangelization of the world's tribes. His "fields" are less easily contested or ignored than McGavran's, although McGavran's more generalized concern includes far more peoples—tribal plus all the rest, whether horizontally or vertically segmented.

Today, Townsend's organization sends out twice as many missionaries as all the member denominations of the National Council of Churches combined. Such a fact calls into question the

³ Editor's Note: Before his death in 2009, Winter proposed a fourth era he called the "Kingdom Era." See the chapter in this book, "Seven Men, Four Eras."

sense of mission and the alertness of those national Council denominations such as my own. But, I believe that the older boards will eventually retool massively as they did almost a century ago at the beginning of the Second Era.

In a recent two week period, our campus was visited by denominational leaders of the Methodist, United Presbyterian, American Baptist, and the Reformed Church in America churches. Among all of them, particularly their mission-minded minorities, there is a tremendous new awareness of unreached peoples. I don't believe we need to worry that the mission agencies of the world, especially those of the United States, will continue to overlook the final "unreached people" frontiers. It is a wonderful, wonderful achievement that there is a new awareness. No one agency can be credited with this accomplishment—not the USCWM or MARC nor any other, although the Lausanne tradition can certainly take a great deal of credit. I believe this new interest in frontiers is the work of the Spirit of God. This is the thing that makes you tingle, the overwhelming sensation that we are watching God at work, bringing the theme of our conference, *Unreached Peoples*, to the fore among us. The mission agencies, I think, are a clean sweep in this area.

However, the question is, how can the mission agencies operate without an increasing awareness among the people, the people in the pews? Once again, I think the people concept helps a great deal. For years people in the pews in my denomination have been told, "The job is over; we've turned it over to the nationals; we're going home." But the so-called "nationals," for instance in Pakistan, turned out to be part of a very tiny sub-community of former Hindus in that country. They have no significant ethnic or cultural connection to the vast bulk of Pakistanis, even though their language is more or less the same. But if my church were to assume that the Presbyterians in Pakistan were able to effectively evangelize the rest of the country it would be about as absurd (and I use the word advisedly) as to suppose that if Navajos were the only Christians in the United States, seven Navajo-speaking congregations—one in Chicago, one in Seattle, one in Portland, and so forth, could be expected to win the rest of the country by themselves. I'm not stretching the truth. Those Navajo Indian congregations could try their best and could accomplish a great deal. But it is absolutely folly to assume that the job is done because among certain peoples we have gotten in and made our missiological breakthrough. How foolish to assume we can now wash our hands and go home without even communicating a sense of external mission to our mission field churches!

The people back home can't easily understand this complexity. We can project the countries of the world on the screen, and they will recognize them. What we need to do now is to project on that screen the *peoples* of the world. On the map of Africa we would have to show that 800 of the people groups are split into two or perhaps three pieces by a political boundary. Take, for example, the Massai. Half of them are in Kenya, half in Tanzania, although at any given point you're not sure which side of the border they are on because they do migrate back and forth. The politicians in London "drawing rooms" who drew the political boundaries on their maps missed completely the significance of the peoples thus affected. Somehow those politicians saw Africa's *geography* as something to be divided rather than a mosaic of already long-existing people groups.

As missionaries, however, we are concerned for the peoples, and we must not be dazzled by the boundaries of countries any more than God is. People back home can be brought to understand this fact. One book which helps is *The Refugees Among Us*, produced by MARC. Another way for people in the pew to understand this "peoples" point of view is to get them to read *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, which has an accompanying 175-page *Study Guide*. Together these two books constitute a four-unit college course, for which a number of schools will give credit. Geneva College, for example, is offering credit to a group of about fifty-five students at Carnegie Mellon who are taking that course (and nothing else) from Geneva College. They study right on their own campus, and Geneva College simply handles the academic arrangements and the audiovisuals that week after week are sent in to go with the twenty lessons. An Inter-Varsity staff member on campus at Carnegie-Mellon actually coordinates the course. In Pasadena we offer a one-week intensive program to train these coordinators. Right now there are perhaps five or six hundred students studying through that course, but we hope that within the next two years at any given moment there will be ten thousand students studying that book. It can be done. It doesn't take much money. It doesn't

take any more people than are now involved in the educational enterprise. It simply takes management.

Then I want to recommend *The Global Prayer Digest* to which I referred earlier. It is part of the Frontier Fellowship movement, and I assure you is not just an invention in California. Its basic idea of praying daily for the unreached peoples of the world came from Burma. That is why every copy each month has a little picture of a village in Burma and refers to the Burma plan. It was from a tribal Christian from Burma that we got the idea of a daily devotional discipline that will carry vision, excitement, and inspiration into the lives of the average person.

Let me leave you with one last thought. Is there any way that you can more rapidly and more profoundly influence the vision and the purpose of an individual than to get into his hands something which he will read every day? I'll answer my own question. Every other thing we've ever done—even these courses I've mentioned [Perspectives] which are really hefty—carry people into an experience, but time wears that experience away. We've tried everything from Hidden People Sundays to day-long seminars and courses and all kinds of things. We often collaborate in truly wonderful annual mission conferences. But we have concluded that all other activities we have ever launched are by comparison hit-and-run activities if it is vision that you want to implant deeply in the lives and hearts of people. "Nothing that does not occur daily will ever dominate a life."

Oh, if it were possible for people to realize how nearly within our grasp it is to evangelize the unreached peoples of the world, it would be a revolution of new hope for people all across the country! The reason our mission boards are not receiving the candidates and the funds that they need is that people in the pew have lost hope. If thirty thousand missionaries are going to retire in the next ten years and, as somebody has guessed, only five thousand are going to replace them, then the present level of giving and going needs to be multiplied many times over. Research is necessary on those statistics as well if we are to turn this situation around and be the blessing to all the families of the Earth which God expects us to be simply because he has so greatly blessed us. But we need to communicate hope to people. We need to tell them that seventeen thousand people groups is not that many after all. Do you know, I don't care if it's ten thousand or twenty thousand or what the number is, but it's a finite number. And whatever the number you come up with, just divide it into the number of dedicated evangelicals on the face of the Earth today (258 million). You'll get at least ten thousand Bible believing, committed believers who are ready, if awakened, to reach out to each one of these people groups— ten thousand per group.

Let me ask you, is that an unrealistic goal for the year 2000? Every week there are a thousand new church in Africa and Asia alone. But all these churches are new churches where there are other churches already. All we need is to found 1000 per year within these *untouched groups* and we'll be through with this initial job of penetrating the remaining frontiers by the year 2000. I'm not going to tamper with your eschatology, but at least we ought to try to do this. That's my eschatology. We at least ought to try to do what is plain in Scripture, what we are expected to do in terms of the blessings we have received. I don't believe there is any hope for this country if we cannot get beyond the syndrome of accepting and trying to preserve and protect our own blessings with MX missiles and horses and chariots and not realize that our only real safety is to *give* the blessings that God has given to us to those for whom he intended them.

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World Need, World Problems: Can Missions Make any Difference?

(*Mission Frontiers*, Jan-March 1985)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/world-need-world-problems>

Introduction

We may be tired of hearing about monumental world need, spiritual or physical. The summary here is a reassessment. In Part I, it acknowledges and even expands our awareness of the scope of the need, but it shows a way forward. In Part II it suggests that the most strategic overall response Christ inns can make to world need is a string of nerve centers around the world, centers of a new kind, the one in this country being the new United States Center for World Mission. In every country these centers will have two functions:

1. Mission field: They must be information centers concerning unreached people within the country where the center is located so that foreign mission agencies and expatriate missionaries coming into the country can readily avail themselves of precise, reliable local guidance as to where the highest priority needs are. Thus they consider their own country a mission field.
2. Mission base: They must be information centers managing at least the basic outlines of the mission needs in the rest of the world, so as to help people from their country become strategic missionaries to other parts of the world they consider their own country a mission base.

The task of these centers will be to awaken interest in cross cultural mission, to stimulate and encourage support, and to do essential studies and strategic thinking about the unmet needs. In the case of the U.S. Center for World Mission, a vital accessory arm will be the activity of a special, internationally focused university, which has been founded as a sister corporation. This is described in Part III.

Part I. Scoreboard on the Impact of Missions to Date

A. Due primarily to outstanding and sacrificial mission efforts, the church in the “Third World” today is so vast that 100 new churches open their doors for the first time each week. Congregations of believers (often large, but at least little) are to be found in almost every country of the world.

B. But lest we too soon rest back on these hard won achievements, we must reflect on the fact that the Great Commission is not talking about the Gospel going to every “country” of the world but to every “nation” (i.e., Greek: “ethne,” ethnic and cultural unit).

C. Thus, if we look again at precisely which specific ethnic and cultural units and social strata the Gospel has already effectively penetrated, we discover that the amazing and admittedly magnificent far flung fatality of Christian believers around the globe is to be found

in cultural units that contain only 16 percent of the non-Christians of the world, and that this is where almost all the missionaries are too. Eighty-four percent are “beyond.”

D. This means that of the 2.8 billion non-Christians of the world, 2.4 billion (84%) are beyond the normal evangelistic reach of any of the existing churches in the world today. Who are these 2.4 billion people? Seventy percent (2 billion) are either Chinese, Hindus, or Muslims. Some of them, like the Chinese behind the bamboo curtain, are temporarily inaccessible. But most of them, even the Muslims, are today more accessible than ever, even though neither presently deployed missionaries nor presently existing national churches are within normal evangelistic striking range. Example: Hindu background churches in Pakistan are not able to win Muslims into their churches as any major strategy. Nevertheless, the impact of present Christians on the overall life of the countries of the world is often all out of proportion to their number. All non-Christians (even the 84 percent) live in countries where there are visible Christians, often high up in the government. The impact of Christianity is usually measured by its spiritual conquest of the hearts and lives of individuals, as we have shown above. But consider, for a moment, the immense impact of Christianity as a movement, as a faith, as an ethical system, as an attitude toward human problems—the equality of mankind, the treatment of children, the insecure, the crippled, the hungry. This impact is so vast (e.g., 85 percent of the schools in Africa were founded by Christians and are still, in the main, operated by Christians) that now in history it is the Christians of the world, and the people whom they have influenced, who hold the key to the solution to most of the toughest problems of the world.

F. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that Christian missions laid a magnificent foundation. They have won millions of people into the kingdom in virtually every land, and this worldwide Christian family now constitutes the very backbone of a new and transformed element in society which alone constitutes the only real hope of tackling the gravest problems which face mankind toward the end of this century.

Part II. The Decisive Role of the U.S. Center for World Mission

A. This Center now occupies parts of (and seeks to own outright) a twelve million dollar campus, including 83 off-campus houses. Sixteen participating organizations have already moved in.

B. The Center holds as its highest priority the founding, on its premises, of major research institutes that will focus attention upon the Chinese, the Hindus, the Muslims, and the tribal peoples in today's world, developing and sharing information with mission agencies that are in a position to reach such peoples for Christ. The Center will be unrelentingly preoccupied with those who are beyond the range of existing churches, specifically and especially the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Chinese, but in a general way all unreached peoples in the world, whether in the US. or elsewhere.

C. As a secondary priority, the Center will endeavor to attract and/or create centers which will represent the various evangelical traditions offering resources to the cause of missions at the present time. Two such centers are already on campus, one Episcopal, the other Presbyterian. Two more, Lutheran and Christian, are getting started. The evangelicals heading up these centers are intimately acquainted with these specific traditions and seek to expand the base of world mission involvement in these areas.

D. The Center thus expects to define more precisely the targets and at the same time to develop the necessary resources to reach those targets through the two kinds of centers mentioned above all the while working with the existing mission structures in every way possible and in general offering whatever help maybe needed in the cause of missions in the United States.

E. It is expected that if this Center succeeds, similar centers will no doubt spring into being in other countries (both Western and non-Western) where substantial resources and interest in missions exist, and it will be part of the mission of the United States Center for World Mission to encourage such centers and to relate to them. All such centers will have the two way street mission base/mission field function by gathering information and offering guidance 1) to agencies of mission springing from within a given country, working in other countries, and 2) to agencies of mission from other countries, working in the given country. Hardly any nation exists that does not have a need for this very special type of Center which focuses exclusively upon people beyond the range of normal evangelism, even where general evangelism centers of many kinds already exist.

Part III. The Strategic Carrier Vehicle of a University Dedicated Specifically to World Need

A. A sister corporation to the U.S. Center for World Mission, headed up by the very same board of directors, is the newly incorporated William Carey International University. It will function as the educational arm of the USCWM, offering academic supervision leading to the Ph.D. degree. The relationship between the USCWM and the WC1U is similar to that between the Wycliffe Translators and the Summer institute of Linguistics.

B. The fundamental reason for any offerings on the undergraduate level at all is the fact that college graduates in general today are woefully unaware of the needs and unprepared to work cross-culturally. By the time they have spent their time and money in traditional undergraduate schools, it is inconveniently late in their lives for the essential knowledge, insight, linguistic skills, and cultural sensitivities to be developed. On the other hand, we do not feel it is necessary to provide an entire undergraduate curriculum. On this level we will be working cooperatively with existing schools.

C. Thus, for example, by this fall we expect to hold space for two college students to transfer to our campus for one semester only, getting unique international perspective and vision, and discovering the meaning and burden of the U.S. Center for World Mission before transferring back to their base school. This one semester will be very similar to the outstanding Summer Institute of International Studies program at Wheaton for the last three years, and at Colorado State University at Boulder as well, this summer.

D. But eventually we also expect longer term students who will be with us a year or more, long enough to fulfill the high goals of our institution in the area of bicultural awareness (cultural, linguistic, and religious) as well as other distinctives. Our graduate studies will be focused in the phrase "international Development," but will also build on the various fields represented by the major research centers: Chinese, Hindus, Muslims, tribal peoples, etc. The word, development, in this phrase relates profoundly to a great deal of the work missionaries traditionally do, but integrates many factors in a unified concept.

F. We expect to help overseas Americans of all types (but especially missionaries) to do all kinds of further study without coming to Pasadena, the one essential feature being that

what they do fits in with the other factors in development, in several locations around the world we greatly have tentative plans for overseas branches of the university. This will enable both nationals and missionaries to harness their part time for advanced studies. Plans for a Maya Studies Center in Quezaltenango, Guatemala, to name one example, are well along. This eight year old document mentions a planned Maya Study Center which became a casualty of the guerrilla war in Guatemala. All major areas are now in existence, plus FOUR sister centers in North America not then envisioned!

Also not then envisioned:

1. A strong Masters Degree program in Applied Linguistics/Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.
2. A huge, nationwide extension program offering a solid credit bearing course, "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement," what we then envisioned primarily as a program on our campus.
3. An incomparable computer Center, and the associated (and in itself spectacular) Global Mapping Project.
4. An unusual BA program which sends students overseas 6 months every year, and requires them to be interns in one sense or another, so as to gain the kind of education only a job can give but also to prevent students from getting into college debts which war against Christian service.
5. On and on.

Unreached Peoples: Recent Developments in the Concept

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Amazing developments have taken place in the last 15 years since the first Lausanne congress in Switzerland, in 1974. We have begun to see, for example, that we cannot merely focus upon the winning of individuals, but must, even before that, unlock the cultural puzzle of the group to which an individual belongs. And then, if groups must be taken into account, we need to go on to ask what kinds and sizes of groups are to be dealt with first, and how we can evaluate our progress. Then, finally, how do we, as a global Christian movement, go about dividing that task up?

Thus, it seems that we can now understand far more clearly 1) the significant background of our present thinking, 2) the very nature of missionary endeavor, 3) the definitions of the kinds of peoples which deserve highest priority, 4) the good and not-so-good methods for the measurement of our progress toward our goals, and 5) a spectacular method for promoting the completion of the task. We can do this under the following points:

1. The Background
2. Our Method: Pioneer Church Planting
3. The Target: Unreached Peoples
4. Measurements of Progress
5. Promoting the Effort

1. The Background

We'll first glance at the distant background of our discussion, and then specifically at the results of a very special Lausanne-sponsored meeting in 1982

A. Beginning at the Beginning

1. The Old Testament. An important aspect of the development of the Unreached Peoples concept is portrayed centrally in the period of the Old Testament. We now have a new understanding of what the Bible has been talking about all along. The whole Bible talks of the peoples of the earth. At the very beginning, just beyond Genesis 1–11 (which constitutes a general introduction to the whole Bible), right in Genesis 12 we are introduced to the plan of the ages—the commissioning of Abraham through whom all the peoples of the earth will be blessed. This throbbing theme then unifies the Bible into a single book on redemption, beginning in the promised land and moving out to the ends of the earth. We see this theme again and again all through the Old Testament.

2. *The New Testament and Beyond*. In the New Testament and in the history of the expansion of the church beyond the pages of the Bible, we have gained a new appreciation of what earlier missionary efforts have encountered, and how missionaries have reacted to the realities of actual mission field experience. The fascinating twists and turns especially within the last century, have been treated in some detail in my chapter in the book *Unreached Peoples*, edited by Harvie Conn (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1983).

3. *From Lausanne I to 1982*. Events rapidly accelerated during the eight years between Lausanne '74 and a Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March of 1982, which resulted from the initiative of Ed Dayton and the Lausanne Strategy Working Group. Many of those details are also in the Conn chapters just mentioned.

4. *From March 1982 to 1989*. In the following seven years still further developments have taken place. This paper will concentrate on these last seven years, which build on the solid foundation of that unique March 1982 meeting. It would seem logical to summarize briefly what was accomplished at that meeting before going on to describe more recent developments.

B. The Unreached Peoples Meeting of March 1982

A fine example of the catalytic power of the Lausanne movement was the timeliness and representative nature of the meeting in 1982. At no time before or since this meeting has as large or as representative a group gathered for two days to focus specifically upon the necessary definitions for a strategy to reach unreached peoples. (The full document presenting the results, prepared by Edward Dayton, is published in the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol 2:1)

Two basic definitions came from this meeting:

1. *A People Group* is “a significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc. or combinations of these.” For evangelistic purposes it is “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.”

2. *An Unreached People Group* is “a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.”

The following additional terms were also agreed upon as a series of reasonable steps in the process of reaching a people group. I have added my own abbreviated descriptions.

1. Reported—a group is reported to exist.
2. Verified—a group is verified to exist.
3. Evaluated—that is, how large is the group; what previous evangelization? Etc.
4. Selected (or “targeted”)—a group has been selected by a mission agency for later work.
5. Supported (or “adopted”)—the necessary resources of prayer, manpower, and money have been pledged.
6. Engaged—work has begun on site or in specific “non-residential” endeavor.

7. Reached—the group has been reached by the the definition above.

Further on in this paper, I will refer to these terms in the process of dealing with the more pragmatic questions of the concept of “Closure” (which defines the completion of the task), and the “Adopt-A-People” movement which seeks to bring implementation to the task.

2. Our Method: Pioneer Church Planting (Or, is winning individuals good enough?)

By the time of the huge meeting at Lausanne in 1974, a substantial consensus among mission scholars had been reached, mainly through the influence of the teaching of Donald A. McGavran—namely, that merely evangelizing individuals is not a good enough mission strategy.

Winning people to Christ is a concept that is absolutely basic, in the entire evangelical movement. It is the foundational and unshakeable platform on which all other endeavors must be built. But in the last few decades, the Navigators, for example, have put great emphasis upon the need for “follow up.” More recently a great emphasis upon discipleship is seen in our churches, recognizing that the initial decision is merely the beginning of a process as important as the first step. The proliferating evangelistic models in the last two decades all seem to stress the importance of what happens beyond the winning of persons, namely, the accountability between individuals in disciplined Bible studies or “support groups.”

With similar meaning, the overall goal for most mission agencies is nowadays most often stated as the planting of the church. McGavran’s thinking has emphasized the fact that we cannot say that we have genuinely given a person an opportunity to accept Christ if that person does not have the opportunity to become incorporated into a warm, living, loving accountable fellowship of his own people, a structure which McGavran would prefer to call a “church.”

This last emphasis is what stood behind the wording of the definition of “reaching” a people that was hammered out by the Lausanne-sponsored meeting of March 1982, namely, An unreached people group is “a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.”

If properly to give a person the opportunity to “say yes” to Jesus Christ requires the planting of an accountable church fellowship, it is obvious that this requirement defines a fairly lofty goal for our evangelizing method. At the same time we must recognize that we can often approach this lofty goal most efficiently by going at it indirectly through an intermediate step we may call preliminary evangelism. This intermediate step will then introduce us to a another kind of group—one that is not really a candidate for the planting of a church movement, but nevertheless, whose penetration by preliminary evangelism may actually be an essential pathway to a larger kind of group which IS a candidate for a full-blown church movement. And, under our next major point, we’ll need to tussle with names for these two different kinds of groups.

A. Preliminary Evangelism

The very best way to plant a church is often to begin a Bible study, a Navigator discipling relationship, or a small prayer group within some relatively small group of people with natural affinity for each other—such as women washing at a stream, businessmen at lunch, college students living in dorms, new arrivals in the big city from a particular rural group, or military men separated from their families. Let’s take three examples.

Two of the most celebrated examples of church planting flowing from evangelistic work of this kind of preliminary evangelism would certainly be found in the recent story of the amazing growth of Christianity in Korea. In Korea, as a providential supplement to direct, intentional church planting, there have been two powerful mechanisms exemplifying preliminary evangelism, each functioning indirectly in the planting of thousands of churches and the development of hundreds of thousands of wonderful Christians within those churches.

One has been evangelism in the military, where virtually all of the male population growing up is required to spend a certain amount of time. For at least 40 years, this military experience has brought young men from all over Korea into an environment where close to 50% of the people, including virtually all of the military leaders, have been fervent Christians! This factor is often given credit in discussions of the phenomenon of church growth in Korea.

A second, slightly less well known phenomenon, but with equally gargantuan impact on the runaway story of Christianity in Korea, is the existence of the so-called Bible Club Movement. This movement brought together young people in small towns and village settings in what we would call grade-school and high-school classes, all conducted in a high-quality Biblical and evangelistic environment. The movement (as with the early Sunday School movement in Britain) has been a type of Boy Scouts of America which emphasizes fundamental education. Somehow the people of Korea acquired major motivation in the area of schooling, and even non-Christian parents encouraged their young people to be involved in a school/club movement like this, whether or not a Christian testimony would result. The social momentum of this movement has created thousands of schools, many of which have become stable, formal institutions—a fact which may not be as important as the spiritual impact on the young people involved. Nationwide festivals involving close to a quarter of a million young people have taken place in the history of this movement.

In American history we see a third and somewhat similar phenomenon, only occasionally discussed by church growth enthusiasts, namely, the sudden emergence of church-based youth fellowships. In 1881, the first youth fellowship known to have been organized formally within a local congregation was started by a woman interested in imbuing young people with a missionary vision. It is a fantastic story. Within months, many other local congregations adopted the same youth fellowship pattern, and in ten years an interdenominational rally of young people associated with Christian Endeavor brought 30,000 together at the Madison Square Garden in New York City. Four years later 56,000 registered for a week of meetings in Boston, practically gridlocking the city for that period, overflowing into 25 auditoriums from tents that held 10,000. In a short time the movement not only planted 60,000 youth fellowships in the U.S. but an equal number overseas in a movement which today is still in 80 countries of the world, numbering over a million young people!

Thus, whether we consider the military, village schools, or church-based youth fellowships, it is clear that preliminary evangelism of the kind that generates accountable Christian fellowship within affinity groups, while merely preliminary to church planting, is a nevertheless a highly strategic thing. Along this line, John Robb's little book, *The Power of People Group Thinking*, (MARC, 1989), is a marvelous exploration of the potent evangelistic value of accountable Christian fellowships established within social groupings of the type which are not usually to be considered candidates for full-blown church planting. It would be very unfortunate if this level of strategy —preliminary evangelism of sociologically

defined groups—were unintentionally downplayed or in any way ignored by the concern for church planting, which is where preliminary evangelism can effectively lead.

B. Church Planting Evangelism

On the other hand, we must uphold also the importance of going beyond preliminary efforts. Most mission leaders agree that God intends that all of those who “Say Yes” to Jesus Christ should be introduced to something more than mere “fellowship.” The master image of salvation in the Bible is the re-creation of the family of God. The fellowship of the church must offer renewed and vital relationships to one’s own biological family, if at all possible. But in addition, or, if necessary, as a second-best substitute, the church offers a surrogate family—a potentially marvelous cluster of families that edify and uphold one another. New believers must necessarily be involved in the process of re-establishing a Biblical relationship with both their earthly parents and their heavenly father. For new believers to have to settle for peer or vocational fellowship (however Christian and vital such things are as preliminary steps in an ongoing fellowship) must be considered a desperately incomplete answer.

Thus we must applaud and uphold the ultimate significance of church planting and all that phrase implies. At the same time, we must also recognize that the planting of a church fellowship, which heals and holds together both biological and surrogate family structures, is considerably more complicated than many forms of preliminary evangelism, even though church planting is basically quite natural and not difficult. The church family is a considerably more sophisticated vehicle for salvation than a vocational fellowship. Dr. McGavran may be right that unless an individual is able to “say yes” to Jesus Christ and become thereby incorporated into such a fellowship, our missionary and evangelistic efforts have not offered that person the full gospel.

It is important to realize that such a “lofty” church-planting goal is one of the most essential concepts in world evangelization—especially as we ask ourselves just what is the minimum mission achievement (or “missiological breakthrough”). Dr. McGavran would go even further. He is not content with “a” congregation. He is not sure we have done our job unless within every society there is a fully indigenous church movement which others within that society (even outside of the church) acknowledge to belong to that society, because it is so fully indigenous. His now classical phrase for this kind of a goal is the establishment of a “people movement.” It is likely that we should settle for nothing less, and that what he means by a people movement is what should be defined as the minimum mission achievement, e.g., the “missiological breakthrough.”

At least I personally am convinced that we must hold this concept of a people movement as the essential minimum achievement within a society in order to fulfill our obligation to make it possible for everyone in the world to say “yes” to Jesus Christ. Furthermore, I believe this is the concept that was intended by the phraseology of the Lausanne-sponsored meeting of March 1982 in which it was said that an unreached people can be defined as one in which a group does not yet have a community of believers able to evangelize its own people without outside help.

As soon as we emphasize the family nature of the church, it becomes clear that such a church movement is not immediately possible if all we are doing is what I have already referred to as the “preliminary evangelism within affinity groups.” Thus it becomes clear that we need to spend a little time reflecting on the nature of 1) those human groups which are candidates for a full-blown “people movement” by comparison to 2) those which are merely

potential bridges leading from affinity groups to larger groups which are candidates for full blown church-planting efforts.

3. The Target: Unreached Peoples

One of the landmark efforts since Lausanne 1974 is the book entitled *Clarifying the Task*, by Harvey Shreck and David Barrett. In this book, it becomes eminently clear that it is both feasible and important to target groups of both kinds. Those which are candidates for full-blown church movements are referred to as “ethno-linguistic peoples” while those which are merely candidates for affinity evangelism (or what I have here called preliminary evangelism) are called simply “people groups.” It may in fact be hard to remember to make a distinction between “peoples” and “people groups,” since there is nothing inherent in the two phrases that would tend to indicate what the difference is. But the explanation in the book of the nature and relevance of both kinds of groups is both clear and impressive. That is, the two concepts, by whatever name, are crucial. (In some of my writings, for example, I flew the trial balloon of people groups and bridge groups, the latter being bridges to people groups within which a church movement is appropriate. For the moment let us not choose terms but use descriptive phrases.

1. *Smaller, overlapping groups.* For one thing, these two different types of groups really are two radically different concepts. One type of affinity group typically overlaps, such that it is readily possible, say, for a rural woman to be part of group that washes clothes at the river and also be involved in a group that produces a certain type of textiles. Or, an urban man can meet with one group at lunch and another group in an exercise program and still a third group in hunting expeditions.

Preliminary evangelism can exploit any one of these groups as the opportunity presents itself. Missionaries with special interests and vocation skills will find it only natural to pursue their skills and interests and do so in preliminary evangelism. There are thus hundreds of thousands of potential avenues for this kind of preliminary evangelism in our world today. However, trying to count up such groups would not be easy, due to the degree of omnipresent overlap.

It would be possible, theoretically, to count every individual in the world in all groups to which an individual belongs—and end up with many times the world’s population. It would also be possible to categorize each person in the world within the one group in which that person would appear most likely to be reach-able, in which case you would end up with a discrete number of non-overlapping groups in which all of the world’s individuals are counted only once.

2. *Larger, non-overlapping groups.* On the other hand, groups within which the family-life structure of the church can properly be born and flourish are much more likely to count people only once—although there are no doubt millions of individuals who find themselves halfway between two different ethno-linguistic groups and able to function as natives in either group.

But the key question is whether or not a given group happens to be the kind appropriate for a full-blown, church-planting movement which could result in a “people movement.” If so, such a group must then contain natural families involving all ages, and such a group will often tend to be larger than many of the overlapping affinity groups, although not always. This is why the Lausanne meeting in March of ‘82 proposed in its terminology that this second kind of group is the “Largest group within which it is possible for the gospel to spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of

acceptance or understanding.” Note that this definition emphasized two things: the potential for church planting (and the full-blown family relationships which that requires) and 2) the absence of barriers of understanding and acceptance.

(Since this definition points to groups which are the maximum in size still sufficiently unified to be reached with one missiological breakthrough, I suggested, at the IFMA meeting in the fall of 1982, that we might call these groups Unimax Groups. Note also the phrase, missiological breakthrough—we’ll be using that later.)

Later on, in 1982, the Lausanne Strategy Working Group decided it would be helpful to launch a definition which did not emphasize the need for family relationships within evangelistic efforts but merely the absence of barriers of understanding and acceptance. This desire produced a definition which would apply to the generally smaller, overlapping, sociologically definable affinity groups as well as to the generally larger, mostly non-overlapping, ethnolinguistic groups. In order to deal with the smaller groups, the phrase “as a church-planting movement” was removed in order to accomplish this purpose and to implement the high strategy of what we have called here “preliminary evangelism” in sociologically defined groups. It is probably true that the majority of those gathered in March of ‘82 felt it more important to define the kind of group which is a church-planting target than the kind of group which is a preliminary evangelism target. But at this point in history, it is clear that both are highly important.

In any event, both definitions for both kinds of groups stress the fundamental importance of efficient communication within the group, undisrupted by barriers of acceptance or understanding.

It is equally obvious that, depending upon which kind of group you are counting, you will arrive at radically different totals.

3. *Micro, mini, macro and mega “peoples.”* A further strategic dimension involves the fact that once one group has been penetrated by a church planting movement, neighboring groups that are very similar, even if antagonistic, may be readily reachable by the same mission structure whether or not individuals from the first group are willing to be involved in that outreach. This fact gives rise to the distinctions between E-1, E-2 and E-3 evangelism, and recognizes that “language families” like Cantonese, contain dozens of dialects that are linguistically close cousins, but are sufficiently different to be mutually unintelligible, some of them including millions of people.

It would be an underestimation of the remaining task to count the Cantonese as a single group, e.g. a unimax group, needing a missiological breakthrough. We can be glad everyone of the 26 Cantonese groups now has within it an effective people movement to Christ. Since it is not and never was a single group we can call the Cantonese as a whole a macropeople. If we want to include the Mandarin, the Swatow, the Fukien, the Minnan, etc, that is, the entire “Han Chinese” sphere, we can call that a megapeople. Having named the larger groups, it would seem reasonable to call Unimax groups minipeoples, and the still smaller, bridge groups, micropeoples. Employing these terms, then, we could say that the Han Chinese are a megapeople, the Cantonese a macropeople, the Toishan Cantonese a minipeople, and then clans and secret societies within the Toishan would be micropeoples.

Christian Keysser tells of winning one tribal group from within what we can call a macropeople, and then attempting to win a second group within that same macropeople further up the same river valley, a group whose language and culture were very similar but which was walled off by intense antagonism and prejudice. He, as a missionary, was able to go to the second village even though the believers within the first village were defiantly

opposed to such efforts. Although it was relatively easy for him to adjust to the differing dialect, it was relatively hard for the people in the first group to summon the Christian grace to reach out with blessing to centuries-old enemies. But, as group after group up the river valley yielded to Christ, these warring ethnolinguistic groups—a single macropeople—eventually coalesced into a larger Christian fellowship within which even linguistic differences gradually dissolved! This kind of coalescing is the phenomenon that has reduced an estimated 60,000 ethnolinguistic groups in A.D. 100 to say 20,000 today.

It is for these practical reasons, then, that the phrase “barriers of acceptance or understanding” includes the word “acceptance,” not just “understanding.”

4. *Geography again—and politics.* Interestingly enough, the 1982 definition of people groups makes no reference to geographical barriers or political boundaries, for the important reason that the missionary task is not strategically one of surmounting geographical or political barriers but barriers of “acceptance or understanding.”

An illustration involving the unimportance of geography is the case of the Oromo from Ethiopia who have settled both in Seattle and in Portland, Oregon. There are a number of Christians, pastors and congregations among the 1,000 or more who are in Seattle and there is an even larger people movement to Christ within the Oromo who are still in Ethiopia. But in Portland, at one point there were only 100 Oromo, and none of them were Christians, even though on Sundays Christians from the Seattle area were attempting to reach them.

What is important about this illustration is to note that the evangelistic efforts of the Christian Oromo in Seattle (or in Ethiopia) to reach their own people was distinctly easier once there was a people movement to Christ clearly established within their ethnolinguistic group. This is true even though within a given geographical locality there may have been no Christians at all among a group of Oromo. That is, by the 1982 definition, the small group of Oromos in Portland could not be considered an “unreached group” even though they were geographically at some distance from Christians within their own ethnolinguistic sphere. That is, a missiological breakthrough had already occurred for that group. And we count one group for the Oromo, whether they are in Ethiopia or in the United States. The breakthrough has taken place!

This concept of whether or not a “missiological breakthrough” has occurred is so all-important that, for me, the most important single strategic question in global missions is “How many missiological breakthroughs are still necessary?” This is the same as asking how much more distinctly pioneer or frontier mission work is necessary. Right away, of course, the question of measurement arises, which is our next major point.

4. Measurements of Progress (and the Concept of Closure)

“This Gospel must be published in all the world, as a testimony to all peoples, and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14).

The word “closure” refers simply to the idea of finishing. To finish is a happy concept. To finish a task God has asked us to do is even more exciting. But nothing could be more thrilling than to talk about finishing the Great Commission, or finishing what Jesus described as bringing us to the end of history, as this verse in Matthew does, whether or not that great event transpires in A.D. 2000 or sooner, or later.

To publish this Gospel as a “testimony to all peoples” is a phrase worth pondering a great deal. Everything we have talked about depends on this phrase. The two phrases,

“minimum essential mission achievement” and “missiological breakthrough,” of which we have already spoken, are both simply attempts to suggest what this Bible passage talks about.

But within this there are several dimensions:

A. Factors in Closure

1. Hard or easy? Surely the precise kind of “testimony” of which Jesus speaks is intended to be adequate to allow individuals to respond properly to the saving Gospel of Christ. Surely this is not some superficial, technical achievement. And, surely it is better to deal with a serious interpretation of this phrase than a simplistic one.
2. Resolve all problems? On the other hand it is probably unwise to assume that along with our efforts to publish the Gospel such that it is “a testimony to all peoples,” we must also solve all the problems of mankind. I do not think that this phrase, or any other statement in scripture, allows us to think that God is waiting for human beings to resolve all crime, injustice, and evil before Jesus returns. If so, then why does it say in Revelation 21:4 that upon His return, “He shall wipe away every tear” and there would then be no more “mourning, or crying, or pain”?
3. Certainty of definition? On the other hand, we must not lightly assume that our human, current definitions of completion are exactly what God has in mind. I don’t believe we are interpreting scripture correctly if we assume that there is an inevitable linking between completion and His return, although this verse may mean that. I certainly do not feel we ought to try to predict the date of His return, even if we feel we can be certain what kind of work can be done by the year 2000. It is very different to say that we can hope to plant a “people movement to Christ” within every unimax people group by the year 2000, and to predict that it will happen, or that Jesus will return on that date.
4. Good basis for optimism. But it is our very profound privilege to reflect upon, and rejoice over, how much, how incredibly much, God has already accomplished by the present time in history. Thus, we cannot talk about closure without taking into account progress to date, and the accelerating momentum of the Christian movement across the world. But to measure that?

B. Measuring Progress toward Closure

1. The number of Non-Christians versus the number of Believers. One of the simplest measures of the advancing Kingdom of Christ is to ask, for any given date in history, “How many people in the world at this date still do not consider themselves Christians?” and then compare that number with “How large is this number in proportion to the number of believing Christians?”—is it 10%? is it 20%, etc.

All you need to do this is to have an estimate for a given date in history of the number of people who do not claim to be Christians and an estimate of—not the number of “Christians” in the world but—the number of people who truly have a faith they can share. In both cases these numbers are provided for us by David Barrett and the LCWE Statistics Task Force, and you can see them in the table below. The drop from 11 to 7 (to 62%) from 1980 to 1989—in the last nine years—is equivalent to the drop from 360 to 220 (to 62%)—

in the first nine hundred years! Note that any given number could be wrong by a large margin without disguising the overall trend, which is breathtaking.

2. Congregations per Unreached People Group. A second way to size up the remaining task is to go directly to a theme basic to this paper: the Unreached Peoples way of looking at things. Again, the statistics come from the LCWE Statistics Task Force. And, again, the trend is truly breathtaking—see the far column. I have to confess that these two measurements (in the shaded columns) and the trends that they reveal are two of the most hopeful insights I know of. And their significance is virtually irrefutable, in my opinion.

C. Inadequate Yet Popular Concepts of Closure

1. *Reaching all countries.* By now it is obvious that to plant the Gospel in all of the countries of the world is an inadequate measure of closure. Even if it had not already happened, we would have to acknowledge that this is not what the Bible is talking about. It is doubtful whether the Bible ever refers to the kinds of political states we talk about today.

However, we must face the fact that the present day statistical resources of the world are mostly arranged in political units. But even the word country is slippery. Is Hong Kong a separate country, since it still officially “belongs” to Great Britain? Patrick Johnstone, for example, speaks of the only two “countries” in the world where there are no known evangelical Christians. It is to be noted that he is not referring to separate countries such as would be invited to be members of the United Nations, but is referring to tiny, French possessions, which involve only a few hundred thousand people (who are solidly Roman Catholic). But, in any case, even if you count separately all political units, like Hong Kong, rather than include them as part of the countries which govern them, it is obvious that there are Christians of one sort or another in all such political entities. Thus, getting Christians in all countries—by any current definition—is not a good enough measure of closure.

It is probable, then, in terms of mission strategy, that any counting which takes countries into the picture—as targets of pioneer church planting—is probably misleading to that extent. For example, I personally would much rather see Operation World take up 365 clusters of ethnic peoples throughout the year (mini, macro, and megapeoples) than to take up the political units of the world. The obvious reason we do not more often employ such a Biblical frame of reference is that data collection is primarily packaged according to countries. That is, Patrick can much more easily track the political units than the peoples of God’s perspective. And his Operation World is a phenomenal devotional blessing. At present it could not exist if he did not simply take the country data that tends to be much more available!

But why not at least try to talk about peoples and the countries in which they are found, rather than to cut the peoples up with country boundaries! We are told that 800 peoples in Africa alone are isolated in two or more populations by country boundaries. That way we can mention what countries a given people is in rather than start with countries and mention pieces of various peoples as sub-points under each country.

If only a few members of a group mainly in one country are in some other country, that small group can be the key to reaching the entire group they come from. This has accidentally happened many times. This fact is the basis of the concept of “Non-residential missionaries.” People separated from their homeland are often more open to new things and influential when they return. It is not as strategic to know that 10 million Kazakhs are in the Soviet Union, or that 16 million Zhuang are in China, as it is to know that 10 thousand

Kazakhs are in Munich, Germany and that members of the Zhuang peoples can be reached in Hong Kong.

As a matter of fact—as unconventional as this may sound—it is true, at least as a generalization, that fragments of populations, whether refugee, student, business, or governmental, are probably always more strategic as preliminary beachheads than is the main body of a group approached indiscriminately. Taking ethnicity more seriously than geography or politics can introduce us into a whole new perspective on the massive phenomenon of migration in our time. It should be seen as God’s opportunity rather than man’s nuisance!

2. *Winning individuals.* Whenever we hear someone saying “What will it take to win the world to Christ?” we probably encounter a point of view based upon winning individuals. But we are not called to make everyone in the world into a Christian. We are called to confront everyone, to invite everyone, not necessarily win them. Thus, counting how many are won to Christ is not an ultimate measure. What if everyone in the world from this point on simply said “no?” Would that stop us from giving everyone a chance? Yes and no. We do believe that the Bible expects “some from every nation, tribe and tongue and people” to be present among God’s peoples (plural) in the final day. Note that most English translations of Rev 21:3 mistakenly put peoples in the singular. Thus, we would have to expect that there ought to be the possibility of at least a beachhead in every people group. But, beyond that essential missiological breakthrough, the Bible does not assure us that everyone will be won to Christ.

3. *A certain number of churches.* A measure superior to counting individuals won to Christ is the counting of churches, and to report the rate of increase in the number of churches. This is superior because it requires us to produce the minimal context of a full opportunity for anyone to “say yes” to Jesus Christ.

Jim Montgomery, of DAWN (Discipling A Whole Nation), in saying we need 7,000,000 churches by the year 2000, hurries on to specify that there are to be some in every people group. To plant 7,000,000 churches ought not to be too difficult. That is only double the number of evangelical Bible believing churches in the world today. The crucial point, however, is that it would be possible to double the number of churches we have today without penetrating every people group. That is not the way the DAWN people intend this goal to be interpreted. But a sheer “number of churches” goal is not, by itself, good enough to assure that everyone in the world has an adequate chance to “say yes” to Jesus Christ.

4. *Exhausting the limits of a given communication tool.* Many mission enterprises have gained special skills in the use of particular communication tools. In each case, whether it is radio, film, cassette or printed page, it is possible to define a type of closure which is appropriate to the use of that particular medium.

The missionary radio sphere sparkles with competence and global muscle. Nothing in the secular world corresponds to the linguistic diversity and geographic penetrating power of present-day missionary radio stations, whose transmitting wattage commonly exceeds the power of U.S. domestic stations by a factor of ten or more. On the other hand, such enormous wattage cannot be harnessed economically for small languages. Thus, they hope, by the year 2000, to reach every person in the world with a radio signal which is at least in a trade language. That is, closure for them is measurable by how close they are to the goal of working in the 280 languages which have a million speakers or more. By that measure they are over half way, and feel confident they can make the total by A.D. 2000.

A similar and similarly spectacular achievement exists in the program of Campus Crusade, utilizing on-the-spot showings of the Jesus film. They, also, are working in the same languages, with a million or more speakers, and they also are more than half way, with the goal in sight by A.D.2000.

The printed page is still one of the most durable and penetrating means of communication, and the Wycliffe Bible Translators employ printed translations of portions of the Bible, normally the New Testament, at least. From the standpoint of how many such translations are necessary to reach every person in the world, they figure that of 6,170 languages, more than half have adequate scriptures, and a relatively small number remain, when you consider that many of those remaining are not yet verified as to need.

Curiously, if you employ cassette tapes, the job gets both smaller and bigger, smaller because it is a lot easier to put the Gospel into tape than to translate the whole New Testament, develop an alphabet, and teach the people to read. But the job is bigger, too, because people are much more discriminating by ear than by eye. Three different groups which will not speak to each other can read the same printed New Testament, while they will object to the precise dialect which is captured on tape. Gospel Recordings, which is the specialist in this area, has already dealt with over 4,000 languages in this way, but they figure that there are another 8,000 to go—again, not impossible by the year 2000.

All of these communication tools are a blessing and a help in the process of establishing a people movement to Christ in every remaining Unreached People. All of the specialized organizations employing these tools recognize that there are other aspects of the task besides the use of their own special tool. It is marvelous for these particular skills to be so effectively employed and the corresponding goals pursued. But no one claims that the full employment of any given means of communication is in itself a fully adequate measure of completion of the task.

5. Promoting the Effort

Now that the concept of Unreached Peoples has taken hold very widely, it is immediately possible to make plans and unfold intermediate goals with far greater confidence and precision. As a result, there is considerable interest all around the globe today in local churches “adopting” a specific unreached people group by name, and there has been considerable effort to try to make these efforts into an effective movement.

A. The March 1982 meeting, again.

At that meeting, the possible stages in the people reaching process were discussed in detail, as already mentioned above. One of the key points was number 5, “Supported, or Adopted”—the mobilization of sufficient prayer, manpower and funds for a given people group to be reached.

B. The crucial role of mission agencies.

A dangerous trend in some quarters today is the idea that a local church, without the help of a mission agency, can send, or ought to send, its own missionaries directly overseas. This method has been tried. It is probably the one method that has most universally failed. It means the missionaries are not properly supervised, guided, or, in the last analysis, even properly supported, since a single congregation is not as stable as a group of congregations working through a tried and true mission agency. It is very important to realize that Paul was not “sent out” by the Antioch congregation, but Paul and Barnabus were “sent off” by the

group. Paul reported back but did not ask for orders. His missionary team had all the authority of a local church. They were, in effect, a “traveling church.”

The reason to stress this here is that built in to the Adopt A People program is the very basic idea that the first move a local congregation should make is to go to and through their favorite mission board to find and adopt a specific people group. They ought not to look in the encyclopedia, but to support with their prayers, financial and manpower resources the frontier mission work that is already going on, or is soon slated to begin, under the auspices of well-established mission agencies.

C. What is the time table?

I am sure that God has many surprises in store for us. We need to realize that we cannot minutely plan the future. On the other hand it does not seem impossible for the evangelical congregations of the world to “adopt” by name all of the remaining Unreached Peoples by the end of 1991. This, at least, is a good goal to shoot for. Then, the agencies need to try to “engage” every group by the year 1995—that means for missionaries to be at work, either on the spot or as non-residents. As the world Christian movement gains momentum, every remaining unreached group becomes closer and closer to other groups where the Gospel is already being preached; as is often the case it may become easier and easier for people in the remaining new groups to accept the Gospel. There does not seem to be any overarching obstacle which would make it impossible for there to be “A Church for Every People by the Year 2000.” But, as mentioned earlier, to say that this can be done is quite different from predicting that it will be done. A great deal depends on the success of a global Adopt A People movement, it would seem.

D. The Singapore Consultation on World Evangelization by A.D. 2000 and Beyond.

This meeting brought together for the first time in history the key mission agencies of the entire world, with plans for completing the task, or some significant portion of the task, by the year 2000. It set in motion more than one vehicle for keeping in touch. It demonstrated the vital readiness of the mission communities of the world

E. The Adopt A People Symposium of March 1989.

At this symposium, which about 40 different entities attended (mostly mission agencies) an Unreached Peoples Clearinghouse was both designed and established. The idea is that as mission agencies offer to churches the adoption options which the agencies are ready to implement, the resulting countdown or “score” would be kept in a database, which would be available on an electronic bulletin board for consultation by either congregations and agencies. As Patrick Johnson so often stresses, we need to collaborate, and in no case to compete. There is enough to do for everyone to be involved, and there is no room for duplication or blind spots. This kind of centralized, easily accessible, constantly up-dated bulletin board would not only enable more efficient deployment of resources, but would encourage people by making progress visible. It will promote interest, not just facilitate progress.

F. The Lausanne II Congress on World Evangelization, Manila, July 1989.

The people from 190 “countries” at this meeting demonstrated very dramatically the vitality of the global Christian tradition, and the relative nearness of its key leaders to each other. The 4,500 participants in this great meeting have gone back with urgent new

convictions about attempting to complete the task. Many of the 46 groups of workshops pertained in one way or another to completing the task. One evening session was on the year 2000.

G. Costa Rica's "Alcance 2000," August 21-25, 1989.

The chart on page 19 came out of this amazing meeting. If the evangelicals in every country in every continent will think in the "adoption" terms you see there, e.g., will take their share of the remaining task, it is perfectly easy to see that the job can be done by the year 2000—that is, it is not impossible.

In Costa Rica, a little country of 2.5 million people, the evangelical community is getting way up there in percentage of the general population. Guatemala is already 25% and Costa Rica is somewhere between 15 and 25%. (*Operation World* shows only 7%, but the book is four years old and the data might have been old at the time it went to press.) Remember that the galloping gains of the evangelicals in turbulent Central America are positively legendary! To be conservative I put down a figure somewhere between the 7 and 25 percent, and with the jubilant help of an outside speaker from Brazil, Edison Queiroz, head of the fabled COMIBAM for Brazil, pulled together the chart below, much to the delight and challenge of the thousand or more who came to this national-level mission congress. Note, Costa Rica's share is 50 Unreached Peoples.

H. Global division of labor.

It is exciting to see the whole Latin American continent rising with eagerness to do its share. Latin American believers are a generally progressive, educated group, compared to some African and Asian brothers. If they can take 3,000 out of the 12,000 remaining Unreached Peoples, and if other areas of the world can emulate their example it will be a magnificent step forward. North America, for example, might feel obligated to try for 6,000 of the 12,000 peoples. Note that the Latin Americans have gone one step further: they have added 50% to their goal in order to compensate for any other group that may fall short. It would seem likely that church and mission leaders in the other parts of the world may soon begin to estimate how much falls to them, and which of the groups within their sphere are going to do what portion of the task. This kind of division of labor is the very core of completion.

I. Keeping up with what God is doing.

One of our most difficult tasks is to try to keep up with things which God is apparently doing without asking us. Our task is only to fit in with His plans, not to engineer Him to fill out ours. He is doing amazing things. We need to let what God is doing come home to our hearts! The end of the job is in sight!

A Latin American Model for the World!

Will North Americans meet the Challenge?

Only a few days ago, in that alert little country of Costa Rica, in a brand-new auditorium seating more than 3,000 (a new church sanctuary), a nationwide Missions Congress of evangelicals from all over the country was held, with the name "Alcance 2000"--

- meaning something like "Reaching toward the year 2000" (but it can imply "Finishing by the year 2000.") Read the details on page 18, point G, see table below.

Two of the most significant mission leaders in Latin America were there: Luis Bush of Argentina, El Salvador, etc, initiator of the amazing COMIBAM movement, and Edison Queiroz, present director of COMIBAM in that huge country of Brazil, where two-thirds of Latin America's evangelicals are to be found. Taking a cue from the Costa Ricans, Queiroz produced this chart overnight, extending to all of Latin America, the trenchant concept of proportional responsibility for the remaining 12,000 Unreached Peoples of the world.

In North America, similar plans (see following page) are well underway. Asia and Africa will surely follow!

Technical Note on the Numbers Above

Why are all of the numbers in the table above incorrect? Simple. Because populations don't stand still, and these numbers are four years old! Only if the number of evangelicals in a given country somehow did not change for four years would any of these numbers above be correct. These numbers come from Patrick Johnstone's spectacular Operation World (now in Spanish), which was published four years ago, while all of Latin America's evangelical populations are growing to beat the band. Some of the data was old when it was printed, so it would have been possible to increase all of these numbers by a certain average amount, like, say, 5% per year (which would mean 22% more in four years, about 50% in four more years). As a matter of fact the total above, over 34 million, now is over 40 million (a 22% gain) according to what everyone says.

Editorial Comment on Completion of the Task, Waving the Flag

(*Mission Frontiers*, August-Sept. 1989)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment101>

Dear fellow believer in the completion of the task,

Everyone knows our PURPOSE. Not everyone knows our unusual METHOD. Our purpose is to wave a flag for the unreached peoples. Our method is to work for and through other mission agencies.

We have said for years that once our property was paid off we would not necessarily have any direct contact with the public at all. We would prefer to multiply our efforts by working behind the scenes, helping other organizations do their work with greater and greater focus on the unreached peoples.

- not amassing a donor list
- not making as many public appearances as possible not trying “to get known”

Well, then what do we do?

We would like to provide a place where mission agency personnel (retired or not) can come to work together on things helpful to their agencies and all other agencies. About 300 people on our campus each day, with backgrounds in 70 different agencies are now at work on such things.

What things?

- exploration of the detailed problems in the Muslim challenge (The Zwemer Institute)—for the benefit of other agencies
- providing graduate degree studies for missionaries and national leaders (of other agencies) who cannot come to the U.S. to study (William Carey International University)
- steering college students toward other mission organizations (Caleb Resources, Perspectives Study Program)
- helping local churches hear about other missions to unreached (Posters, low-priced books, *Mission Frontiers Bulletin*, etc.)
- helping other organizations to have their own devotional booklet (*Global Prayer Digest*, also on 500 radio stations under other agencies’ names)
- assisting local teams across the country to found their own local Centers to served all churches and all agencies. (Regional offices now in Boston, Philadelphia, Raleigh, Chicago, Minneapolis, Jackson, Baton Rouge, Denver, Portland.)

- assisting students to set up annual mission conferences presenting all agencies, for all students in an entire region (We first helped with one in So. Calif—SCOWE—now there are similar annual regional student conferences in Portland, Midwest, North East, South East, etc.)

Well, this is only an illustrative list. What about Global Mapping International!...etc. The main thing this list lacks is the broad, public recognition of the U.S. Center as such. We are content to be out of sight completely—but don't stop praying! We do lack staff. In fact, many of our staff have left now for more direct ministries. And churches don't as easily support those who want to stay.

Momentum Is Building in Global Missions

(IJFM 7:2, April 1990)

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/07_2_PDFs/7_2%20Winter.pdf

Combine pdf with multiple others.

Editorial Comment about Change

(*Mission Frontiers*, Nov. 1990)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/archive/the-bcc-challenge>

Dear friends,

This issue of *Mission Frontiers* is about change:
 massive,
 ominous,
 mysterious,
 dangerous,
 wonderful,
 totally unexpected
 change
 change
 change
 change
 change

The entire IFMA/EFMA meeting in Denver was about change. See USCWM Executive Director, Greg Parson's article on pages 6-8.

The graphs showing Third World missionary explosion describe CHANGE.

Our final article is precisely about 15 more changes already happening in the 90s in the sphere of missions.

But possibly the most significant change we have ever been able to report in these pages is the "cloud the size of a man's hand" constituted by the cover story. You can't believe the trouble we went to get their striking, eight-page colored brochure inserted right into this issue of *Mission Frontiers*.

Ho hum, what difference does it make if a small, mainly Swedish denomination decides to go after unreached peoples?

I believe the climate is right for this to be a case of dominoes. It does not take a big domino to topple all the rest.

Many things are moving in that direction already.

Many mission boards have shifted gears in the last ten years.

Almost all mission agencies today are moving from effective work well done in established fields into new thinking and strategizing about the Remaining Task in Unreached Peoples terms.

Some agencies, in fact, such as the International Church of the Four Square Gospel has been concentrating on Unreached Peoples ever since 1976, when an EFMA Executives Retreat emphasized Unreached Peoples.

And the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Board, one of the more progress missions today, has 50 specific peoples up for adoption.

The Christian & Missionary Alliance has for years (in Asia especially) been developing outreach to new fields from the churches they have already planted.

Recently the C & M A annual conference voted to take a close look at what all their 1,000 missionaries are doing around the world and see if they are in the best position to promote outreach to the remaining unreached groups. A major move!

Even so large and lumbering a denomination as the Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod voted some years ago to go in this new direction. But big ships take longer to change course.

Then what is so special about the Baptist General Conference now putting in their oar?

For one thing this is not merely a revolution down in a lowly denominational department of missions, this is a revolution from the top and bottom. As Bob Ricker says, the people in our pews are already reading about 12,000 remaining unreached groups

But don't let him kid you. Ricker personally is sold on this new emphasis.

But look, if a big denomination, even with a lot fanfare, went this route, most denominations, being small, could not necessarily follow. (The Southern Baptist Convention is already doing a lot of things along this line that smaller groups cannot easily follow.)

Ricker's challenge is a followable example.

- most vital Christians attend small congregations
- most leaders come out of small backgrounds
- most vital Christians belong to small denominations.
- Small is beautiful don't you think?

Can you imagine a whole lot of denominational leaders seeing how practical, how thrilling, how energizing this new finish-the-job emphasis is?

What You Can Do!

Show your copy of your colored brochure to your pastor and ask him point blank if anything like that is in the wind in your denomination.

Then mail your copy to the denominational board to which your church is related. Mention your conversation with your Pastor.

Or, mail your copy to someone you may know in leadership in the mission mechanism of your denomination.

Get some extra copies (see order page) and place them with prayer in the hands of the right people. You may be surprised how much influence you have.

Remember that the anthropologists have discovered that 90% of all social adoptions of new ideas are by borrowing, not by invention.

Now that a small denomination is out to raise millions for a whole new dimension of outreach you are in a very influential chain of events.

The little colored brochure is like a bombshell ready to go off in the right hands.

And, if you think of other ideas, tell us so we can pass them on.

The 72,000 people who will be getting this brochure happen to be a large and very influential group of church and mission leaders.

Meanwhile

During the very moments that we are going to press (Oct 25) the two London conferences mentioned on page 15 are going on. Both are extremely important, drawing people from all over the world. A phone call yesterday referred to these people as "the cream of the cream."

Early in the week the Adopt-A-People conference, on its heels, some of the same people in the International Association of Centers for World Mission.

Some of the discussions are already being relayed to us, but in our December issue we will report in depth on final results.

**When Feelings Bend Statistics:
Taking a Look at “The Numbers Game in World
Evangelization”**

by Ralph Winter

(*IJFM* 8:4, Oct 1991)

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/08_4_PDFs/8_4Winter.pdf

Defining the Frontiers

(*IJFM* 9:1, January 1992)

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/09_1_PDFs/9_1Winter.pdf

Once for All: What Is an Unreached People Group?

(*Mission Frontiers*, Jan.-Feb. 1993)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/once-for-all-what-is-an-unreached-people-group1>

Let's start with the very basis of the concept. It is a fascinating story.

Landing at an airport, whole square blocks and buildings suddenly jump into focus. Details not visible before become clear as a bell.

This is what happened when Protestants finally decided to send their own missionaries out across a strange and mysterious world. The Biblical command was simple: disciple the nations.

But as soon as missionaries "landed" they discovered that winning individuals was unexpectedly difficult. Most "people" lived within the tight grip of a "people," a social structure, a culture, an extended family. Missionaries found that individuals could not very easily be pried out so as to "be saved" one by one. In fact, highly individualistic Americans today are probably the most likely to be confused by the "obstacles" of social and family constraints in non- Western societies.

In any event, soon or later, missionaries learned that the highest quality church movements were those that did not try to tear up or replace the social fabric of the "nation" to which they were sent. Thus arose the concept of "peoples" (within which people live). More than anyone else, Donald A. McGavran, a third-generation missionary in India, championed a somewhat novel idea: that missionaries ought not to consider their job done, nor assume that they have given any individual a real chance to accept Christ, unless that person can become part of what he called a "people movement."

This radical idea required missionaries to do more than evangelism. They had to plant churches. McGavran would not let missionaries "count raised hands"--only count those who had been securely folded into a vital ongoing fellowship!

A further logical conclusion is then that unless "a people movement to Christ" is set in motion, the basic missionary accomplishment has not yet been made. This means it is not good enough for there to be a few Christians, some missionaries, even a Bible translation, if there is not yet a substantial, indigenous social movement within which new believers can belong.

Aha! This now precisely defines what is or isn't an "unreached people." A people (group) can be reached only if somehow there is achieved "a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement," e.g., one of McGavran's "people movements."

Amazingly, this has brought into focus precisely how to measure progress, how to measure what has yet to be done, how to measure what only mission organizations uniquely do (e.g. penetrate groups, not merely win individuals).

The fascinating question then arises, in any mission situation, "if we can penetrate this group with a fully indigenous people movement, how many individuals will then be brought into an unconfused opportunity to truly accept Christ and become part of His body? In other words, how large is the group?"

This may sound like an unnecessary question, but even the truly professional Wycliffe Bible Translators do not always know in advance how many people, how large a group, how many groups, will be able to read a printed translation they have developed. They number their remaining translation projects by their best guess as to the size of the "reading basin" in which they are working. They might guess there are "3000" such tasks to go.

But when the Bible is put on cassette, or preached, or put on the radio, the distinctions in intelligibility or acceptability are even finer, and the number of groups still to be reached could be three or four times as high. Thus, estimating the number of remaining "unreached peoples" is a very subtle question, ranging as high as 11,000, even though all those groups can be listed under 6,000 or so accepted names for groups.

Big as these numbers are, the global church movement is enormous by comparison. There are well over 600 believing congregations for each remaining unreached people group. That's why the Adopt-A-People concept is so hopeful. The global church has more than enough resources to see every people group reached, perhaps even as soon as the year 2000.

Are 90% Of Our Missionaries Serving In The Wrong Places?

(Mission Frontiers May/June 1993)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/are-90-of-our-missionaries-serving-in-the-wrong-places1>

In the past two centuries, due to the widespread success of evangelical mission agencies--virtually everywhere they have worked around the world--an enormous overseas church movement has resulted which is now the apple of the eye of both the mission agencies and supporting churches. This is truly the glorious result of a virile enterprise of faith coupled with the miracle working power of God.

(Note that this type of pioneer church planting was a distinctly different and more difficult task from that of multiplying more congregations within our own Western world.)

This now-vast phenomenon of the so-called "younger churches" or "daughter churches" (more precisely "pioneer churches"), however glorious it is, is also now soaking up 90% of all mission energies and monies due to an all-absorbing relationship between the Western sending churches and the precious daughter churches. It is as if the Great Commission has been rewritten to say, "Go ye into all the world and work exclusively with the existing churches."

At the same time, events all over the world are bringing to our attention the remaining frontiers--many of the world's nations or ethne within which we have not even begun to disciple.

One response to this unfinished task is that we must drag all or most of our missionaries off the well-established fields and send them to the frontier peoples. Another response is that we ought to channel all our new missionaries to the frontiers, and consider all other missionaries mere international church workers.

I have never agreed with either of these ideas, however well-intentioned they may be. These ideas do indeed focus on a serious problem--the location of most missionaries primarily in successful fields. But these proposals give the wrong answer, I believe, or at least, they surely do not give the best answer to the unfinished task.

Such proposals have understandably churned up a lot of heat and not a lot of light. One true but irrelevant defense is that people who are lost are just as lost if they are citizens of Wheaton or jungle tribesman, citizens of Asian megacities or dwellers in a remote rural mountain vastness. This is not a good answer because people who are equally lost may not be equally difficult to find. Populations equally needy may not have equal opportunity to hear.

Missions--in contrast to evangelistic organizations--are in the lock-picking business. They are the only organizations whose unique skill is pioneering--"getting inside of" a culture that is bafflingly strange. Other kinds of evangelism may not require linguistics and anthropology. Missionaries in the past two hundred years have been the primary source of data for the very development of the two academic fields of linguistics and anthropology.

They have not only cracked the most exotic languages and penetrated the strangest world-views, they have enabled such skills to be taught to others.

The pastor of a congregation made up of his own people does not need such special skills. The evangelist to his own people does not need such skills. Even missionaries no longer need finely honed pioneer skills whenever they are working within well-established fields. Is it not far easier to come into a second-generation mission field and learn a language earlier missionaries have already reduced to writing than it is to begin from scratch?

Thus, it is some kind of a tragedy if mission agencies forget their first calling, their unique experience and expertise, and get so tangled up in the internal politics and growing pains of an overseas church that their special skills, their primary vision falls into disuse or is not passed on to the daughter churches.

Yet, I hold to my position: I do not believe it is the most strategic thing to call for either mass redeployment of existing missionaries or mass diversion of new missionaries going out from the West.

One of the little noticed paradigm shifts in missions in the past few years is the widespread use made by Wycliffe Bible Translators of non-Western believers as front-line Bible translators. Few things are as demanding and technical in mission work as the proper translation of the Bible. Yet, tribal Christians are now being trained for such tasks.

Thus, for me the most exciting reality in missions today is the gradual discovery of the vast unrealized potential of our precious sister churches as the source of new missionaries to go further out. I am not talking about “checkbook missions” whereby U.S. believers sit back and send checks to hire foreign mercenaries. I am talking precisely about our existing missionaries (as well as those who join them), right where they are--wherever they are--catching a new vision. For what? A new perspective on whatever they are doing, making sure that prayed into and breathed into everything they do is a new vision for the so-called younger churches to get involved in their own mission sending. That means national churches sending out evangelists not only to their own people but training up pioneer missionaries with the special skills to go to truly frontier people groups.

Does it really matter whether Western or Non-Western missionaries go? Isn't it more important that more of the unreached peoples are reached? We are talking about mobilization, aren't we? Isn't it fairly obvious that if all missionaries, wherever they are, plunge in to help national Christians to get into missions that it would practically jump-start this whole new era of Third World Missions that is at present dawning so slowly, and with such difficulty? Is it possible that the biggest drawback is the relative non-existing missionaries in creating new missionaries out of the national church believers with whom they are in intimate contact?

I am not at all excited about arguing whether or not “reaching all nations” has to happen before Christ's return, or whether reaching all nations is possible or not, or whether it will ever happen or not. However, I am very excited to be alive at a moment when--in view of the enormous resources of the global Christian movement--the completion of the specific pioneering mission can conceivably be completed by the year 2000! That this is quite conceivable (not inevitable) is a fact. That this global state of affairs exists is no credit to me. But I somehow feel I will have missed out terribly if I am not heart and soul part of the move to the ends of the earth. That is what it means when I pray, “Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.” Is this not “the Lord's prayer,” too?

Editorial Comment on Money and Missions; What Is the Task; etc.

(Mission Frontiers September-October 1994)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment76>

Money and missions is the theme of most of our material this time, but a few minutes ago, when I took out the trash, I noticed that my right front tire was almost flat. I had to go to the garage and get out my seldom used, battery-operated tire pump. As I sat there on the grass watching this neat little engine make imperceptible progress pumping tiny puffs of air into an almost flat tire, I knew I was in for a few-minutes wait.

My thoughts drifted to the fax message that had just come in earlier today. It was a page from a well-known mission magazine.

There it was. One more of my friends had tossed in the towel about finishing the task by AD 2000. The reason was suspicious. We, too, may give up the goal one day, but not yet!

But why now are two of my friends the first to burst into print talking like this? Well, both of them are leaning on the same misleading statement I talked about last issue.

The stumbling block

You judge. Let me cite the provocative, misleading quote on which both of my friends are relying, because they are misreading still another friend of mine--David Barrett.

Barrett is as zealous as anyone to see big things done by AD 2000. But at times his eagerness to encourage greater effort leads in the direction of alarming people. (I used to do that, too.) His confusing quote is: "I just updated my 1990 list of least evangelized peoples. This list was totally unreached in 1974, totally unreached in 1989, and totally unreached today."

Wow! This list is the "least" reached out of a larger number of unreached groups. My friends have misinterpreted this statement.

My comment last time was, roughly: "To suppose that nothing has been done among any of the groups simply because nothing has been done within one sub-section is a serious flaw in logic."

Let's take an example. Suppose (I'm just guessing) there were 120 million smokers in America in 1974, and that this number dropped dramatically to 100 million today. An alarmist could still say (truthfully, but misleadingly) that "There were a certain 20 million really heavy smokers who had not stopped smoking in 1974, who still had not stopped smoking in 1989, and who are still smoking today in 1994." While such a statement could be true, it glosses over the fact that a total of 120 million smokers in 1974 declined to 100 million in twenty years. Sure, a certain 20 million have not stopped smoking, but 20 million *have* stopped! A LOT has been done!

To be specific

Those of you who want to look more closely at what can be done by the year 2000 need to know that the list (“2,000 least evangelized peoples”) referred to by Barrett is unpublished. No one but the owner can verify it. Furthermore, the dozen or so criteria for what constitutes least evangelized are also unrevealed. The hundreds of knowledgeable mission leaders in the world today have no way to make sure new breakthroughs are recorded so as to affect this list.

Finally, the phrase, least evangelized, whatever its criteria, is a quite different concept from the phrase unreached. Unreached has a published definition, carefully arrived at in a two-day study conference of two dozen widely representative mission leaders (in March of 1982, a meeting sponsored by the Lausanne Committee and the then-called Evangelical Foreign Mission Association).

The phrase, a least evangelized people group, has multiple (unpublished) criteria, apparently having to do with degrees of exposure. The last time I saw the list of such groups, one of the groups already had thousands of churches and hundreds of thousands of fervent believers within it.

Thus, a group can be least evangelized and yet already reached, or a group can be unreached and yet already evangelized. How?

The phrase, an unreached people group, has only one criterion: Is there (or isn't there) within that group a viable, evangelizing, indigenous community of believers able to reach the rest of the group?

Also, a group that is unreached is like not yet pregnant. You can't, grammatically, say either slightly, or partially pregnant nor can you say totally pregnant. You CAN say, clearly pregnant” or “possibly pregnant.” Thus, the troublesome quote is not using technical terms when it says “totally unreached” or when it uses least evangelized and unreached synonymously.

The point is that years of effective progress can go on without a group finally attaining the “reached” status. But not quite arrived does NOT mean there is no progress at all.

What is “the task”?

Furthermore, to say “the task can't be completed” is meaningless unless you say what the task is. One of my good friends, Jim Montgomery, is out to plant 7 million churches. He was on our founding board. His marvelous ministry, DAWN (Discipling a Whole Nation), has a brilliant grasp of the local, practical goal of planting a church for every village or cluster of 500 or more people. DAWN now has a global network with committees on the country level which is setting out to do just that. That's why their goal is 7,000,000 churches. (We have been suggesting that even that huge a number means only one more church for each existing church. But Jim Montgomery has corrected us, and we need to speak of only 5 million existing Bible-studying churches.)

However, when I speak of “The Task,” I prefer to speak of “people groups” and the remaining necessity for the cross-cultural missionary type of work to penetrate them. Thus, I am concerned about the number of peoples that have not yet been disciplined--and I go along with the 1982 definition (see col. 3 on p. 4) of “reached/unreached peoples.” This is the cross-cultural missionary task of penetrating every people group, not a task of ordinary evangelism. This point has been voiced since the 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions in Edinburgh as *A Church for Every People by the Year 2000*. Only when that goal

is attained for a given people group, can we pursue the further goal added by the AD 2000 Movement: “and the Gospel for Every Person.”

Therefore, we have always stressed that the first priority is the penetration of the sealed-off (unreached) peoples of the world. We would like to see all of them penetrated (reached). Now, that is a goal that is finishable by the year 2000.

We are getting closer. We may have to give this more specific missionary goal up, but it is much too soon to do so now!

Ethnolinguistic Reality: Complexity of the Task

(IJFM 11:4 OCT./NOV. 1994)

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/11_4_PDFs/08%20Winter.pdf

The Story of the Frontier Mission Movement

(*Mission Frontiers*, Sept.-Oct. 1995)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-story-of-the-frontier-mission-movement>

Chapter One: Where the Idea Began: The GCOWE '95 meeting in Korea shoulders a very significant burden.

Is it part of a discernible movement to the final frontiers? What other meetings have had that burden? What does this movement look like?

William Carey, 1810 In India for more than a decade, William Carey, in 1806, thought that it would be a good idea if all of the missionaries in the world were to meet together four years later at the Cape of Good Hope, in 1810. The purpose of such a meeting would have been very simply to plan together to finish the task of world evangelization. His proposal may have been the first time any human being thought in such concrete and planetary terms.

Carey was obviously not just a field missionary in India, but (like Hudson Taylor after him, and John R. Mott still later) he had his eyes on the whole world. His letters inspired people to go to specific, strategic places other than India. His own son went to Burma. Missionaries often recruit for more than their own fields! Despite his considerable influence by 1806, his idea of a world-level gathering of missionary strategists in 1810 was dismissed by one of his followers as merely "One of William's pleasing dreams."

Chapter Two: Where the Idea Almost Ended

John R. Mott, 1910 But Carey's dream for 1810 didn't die. It was actually a delayed-action fuse. It went off a century later at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910.

William Carey was called into the ministry in August of 1786 and made his proposal 20 years later, after being in India over a decade. John R. Mott stood up as one of the "Northfield 100" in August of 1886 and made his proposal 20 years later after tramping the world for over a decade on behalf of the Student Volunteer Movement.

By 1906, John R. Mott wielded an enormous influence. He had attended a regional meeting of mission leaders in Madras, India, in 1900. By 1906 (exactly 100 years from the date Carey made his suggestion for a world-level meeting of mission leaders) Mott announced his resolve to attempt to head off another "Decennial" popular meeting already scheduled for 1910 and to transform it into a radically different type of meeting. He had been stirred by the significance of mission leaders getting together by themselves to discuss the task before them, and was impressed by the immediate significance of a world-level meeting constituted specifically by missionaries and mission executives.

Thus, in 1906 he wrote: 'To my mind the missionary enterprise at the present time would be much more helped by a thorough unhurried conference of the leaders of the boards of North America and Europe than by a great, popular convention. I feel strongly upon this point.

Unlike church leaders (parallel to mayors and governors) who provide the all-important nurture and spirit of the mission enterprise, mission leaders are parallel to military generals. They have literally in their hands the troops to carry out expeditionary goals. Although a world-level conference of a more typical kind was already contemplated for 1910, Mott resolutely switched to the mission-leader paradigm he had seen in action in India. It took two more years for him to convince enough others. The result was that beginning in 1908, with only two years to go (and with the help of his friends, notably J. H. Oldham), Mott drummed up one of the most influential conferences in world history.

Why is 1910 so well remembered? No doubt because it was the William Carey paradigm. That is, it was not based on church leaders who have only indirect connection to the mechanisms of mission. Well-meaning church leaders often speak warmly of causes in great gatherings but do not necessarily have the administrative structure with which to follow through.

No, the meeting at Edinburgh in 1910, following the example of the India regional gathering (plus the gust of wind coming from a similar meeting in Shanghai in 1907), consisted of the electrifying concept which William Carey had proposed.

Granted, the 1910 meeting was not immediately succeeded by similar meetings. The next meeting in this stream (Jerusalem, 1928) included a wide variety of church leaders and, as a result, switched back to that all-important sphere of church leaders who guide and nurture the troops but do not command them. At the same time, while there have never been many "liberals" among the missionaries themselves, once you invite a wide spectrum of church leaders you will find that theological debates and issues of liberalism tend to crowd out the kind of strategic mission discussions that are the hallmark of dedicated mission leaders who have most of such discussions behind them.

Thus, unfortunately, the 1910 meeting has become known more for the kind of meetings that followed it (eventually leading into the World Council of Churches) rather than for the meeting it really was.

Edinburgh, 1910 What then actually took place in 1910 that did not happen again--for a long time? What made it so unique?

1. It consisted solely and exclusively of delegates sent by mission agencies. (You could not be invited and decide to attend. You had to be delegated--and delegated by a mission agency, not by a church or denomination.)
2. It focused solely on whatever it would take to finish the job. (The topics for discussion were not church/mission tensions nor other mission-related topics which had more to do with the concerns of the national church than with outreach to new areas.)
3. It focused specifically, therefore, on what in those days were called, "the unoccupied fields." Missionaries working in Latin America loudly complained that the conference did not accept delegates from Latin America or Europe. It was assumed that the reason for this was that the conference organizers considered Catholics as saved--and thus did not consider Latin America "an unoccupied field"--the Bible was there, etc. In hindsight, we can see the harm of Mott and the other leaders considering huge territories as "occupied" (e.g. Latin America, North America and Europe): the result was they overlooked the Indians of the Americas, for example. They thought in "field" terms, not "people" terms that is, in geographic terms rather than ethnographic terms.

Therefore, Since 1910 there has been some confusion about that conference. While a number of other conferences have been organized to follow in the 1910 tradition, they have fallen far short. We have to ask ourselves, what have people thought the 1910 conference was but which it actually wasn't? The fact is, 1910 was very simply the first world level conference that consisted of Mission Agency delegates--and the first that focused as exclusively as it did on "the unoccupied fields."

In any event it was not until 1972 (62 years later) at a meeting of the (North American) Association of Professors of Mission, that Professor Luther Copeland of the Southeastern Baptist Seminary specifically proposed another meeting like the one in 1910 to be held in 1980.

However, before jumping from 1910 to 1972 (and on to 1980) let's look at some intervening world-level or very large meetings which were not quite the same as the 1910 meeting. Since a general description of such meetings would take more space than we have available here, what key ideas should we look for in these other meetings that were significant factors in 1910?

1. Did they have closure goals? Was there any reference to "finishing the task" and, if so, in a certain length of time? Goals need dates.
2. Did they focus on mission fields or on peoples? That is, did they speak in terms of geography or ethnography?
3. Who was invited? Mission leaders, church leaders, or both? Western leaders or leaders from the Two-Thirds world, or both?
4. Were all missionaries present Western? Were Two-Thirds World churches expected to send their own missionaries?

Chapter Three: Significant Ripples of 1910

Chicago, 1960 The 1910 meeting was a specific impetus for a very large and influential meeting sponsored by the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association in 1960 deliberately on the 50th anniversary of the 1910 meeting. Chicago, 1960 was a huge success, bringing together 500 missionaries and 800 pastors as well as thousands of lay people. Its published report was entitled "Facing the Unfinished Task." Its use of geographical language was similar to the 1910 conference: We call upon Christian young people to rise in force for the speedy occupation of the remaining unevangelized portions of the world field. It is painful to point out that this magnificent congress suffered unintentionally from pessimism in regard to a key statistical point: By 1960 world population growth had alarmingly expanded. A widespread assumption was that the Christian movement was being left behind-- even though the evangelical sector across the world was expanding much more rapidly than the general population explosion!

Thus, Congress documents highlighted the "left-behind" concern: That the unfinished task of world evangelization was greater by far than it was 50 years before at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. The editor of the published report noted that world population had increased by 75 percent but failed to note that the number of Bible-believing Christians had swelled by 170 percent in the same time period. This caused him to comment,

As of today we are failing...we have actually lost ground...oh, God, it is the knowledge of these things which causes us here to confess that 'we know not what to do.'

Also, marvelous as the 1960 meeting was, it was not a world-level conference. It was sponsored by only the IFMA. Also, note that its program was clearly designed more to motivate church leaders than gather mission leaders to plan for global mission. Only five out of 27 major speakers were missionaries.

A second, similar conference was planned for 1964, but due to changes of leadership and perspectives about cooperation the next conference was shelved in favor of even larger plans for a conference to be held at Wheaton in 1966. This time the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association was involved as a co-sponsor. The EFMA (then called the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association) had been in existence for fifteen years at the time of the 1960 conference, but the EFMA was too new to be taken seriously by the much older IFMA. Furthermore, some leaders felt that the EFMA (as with the National Association of Evangelicals to which it is related) seemed dangerously to involve Pentecostals-and it even seemed to be too open to the world of the historic denominations.

Wheaton, 1966 Thus, at Wheaton College in 1966 a record 150 mission agencies were represented as well as 39 special interest groups, 55 schools, and even 14 non-North American mission agencies.

However, the focus was not so much on plans for finishing the task as on unity around essentials. This emphasis was not unreasonable since the meeting united the IFMA and the EFMA for the first time. The ten themes stressed in the conference were syncretism, neo-universalism, proselytism, neo-Romanism, church growth, foreign missions, evangelical unity, evaluating methods, social concern, and a hostile world. These were summarized in the widely heralded "Wheaton Declaration." Note, however, that only one of the ten phrases, "foreign missions," referred to the unfinished task. The meeting closed, however, with a "Covenant" which spoke of "the evangelization of the world in this generation," which was part of the watchword of the movement that produced the 1910 meeting. The Canadian historian, Charles Tipp, said The Wheaton Congress provided the most comprehensive forum for evangelical interaction since Edinburgh in 1910.

Berlin, 1966 Credit goes to Carl F. H. Henry, at that time the editor of Christianity Today, for the idea of a world level meeting on global evangelization. It was held on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the magazine, with Billy Graham as a co-sponsor, but it consciously leaned back on the vision of the 1910 conference. Both Billy Graham and Carl F. H. Henry referred approvingly of the 1910 meeting.

Unlike the Chicago 1960 and Wheaton 1966 meetings, Berlin 1966 was a large world-level meeting called the World Congress on Evangelism. Had it been a "congress on world evangelism" rather than a "world congress on evangelism" a closure emphasis might have been more prominent. The idea of closure, however, was mentioned by Billy Graham in his opening message when he said, "We have one task--the penetration with the Gospel of the entire world in our generation." A notable feature of this meeting was the publication, as an official congress document, of a book by Paulus Scharpf, *The History of Evangelism*, (translated from the German by Dr. Henry's wife, Helga) which described a number of true evangelists preaching justification by faith long before the Reformation.

Outstanding evangelists from all over the world--not necessarily mission leaders--were prominent at this important meeting in Berlin. At one exhibit a "population clock" kept ticking all through the meeting, emphasizing the fearfully fast growth of world population. However, there was no parallel evidence of awareness that the growth rate of the enormous global community of evangelical Christians was greater, and getting steadily greater.

Leysin, Switzerland, 1969 A small but global Saturation Evangelism Consultation in 1969 reflected in part a growing global enthusiasm over the "Evangelism-in- Depth"

movement emanating from the Latin America Mission in Costa Rica and subsequently tried out in many other countries in Latin America and the world. (This strategy was to be greatly improved and promoted more recently by the DAWN movement.) Such an approach, however valuable it is, can sometimes be misunderstood as an emphasis on finishing the job where we are rather than going where we aren't. Theoretically, the saturation of any one area or country will turn up pockets of unreached peoples. The problem then is the fact that the near neighbors of such unreached groups are often the least loving or at least the least trusted by those who are still sealed off in unreached groups. Thus, missionaries from a good distance (not necessarily those who are culturally closest) are often needed wherever unpenetrated populations exist. Therefore, nationwide, nation-focused evangelistic planning often tends to overlook or bypass precisely the most needy sub-populations. To reach such populations it is probable that every nationwide strategy needs to send and receive workers from other countries. In huge countries like India, people from a totally different part of the country may often be more acceptable than immediate neighbors.

Greenlake, 1971 One of the urgent concerns that surfaced at the Wheaton, 1966 meeting-- but was not seriously dealt with --was the matter of the increasingly complex relationships between mission agencies on the field and the growing national churches on the field, that is, mission/church relations. Thus, this was taken up five years later at Greenlake, Wisconsin, but it was broadened to include (a subordinate emphasis on) the long-standing complexities of the relationship between sending churches and the mission agencies, that is, church/mission relations. Since I was invited to be a consultant at this meeting, I asked specifically at the opening session whether any aspect of the meeting would be devoted to the relationship of the field churches to their own foreign missionaries (missionaries sent out by the national churches themselves). In 1971, apparently, the concept of non-Western mission agencies had not been widely understood. Missionaries had planted churches but had not planted mission agencies!

As a result of my question, the leaders of the conference held a hasty huddle on the platform and concluded that my concern was not on the agenda. Peter Wagner, who later edited a book on the conference, invited me to include a chapter which I entitled, "The Planting of Younger Missions" in *Church/Mission Tensions Today*.

In attendance were 378 people from 122 mission agencies (only 75 IFMA or EFMA) and about 50 other entities (schools, churches), as well as national church leaders from "mission fields." As a single-issue conference on the chosen subject you would not expect any reference to closure or the unfinished task, although the concept of unreached peoples within existing mission fields might well have been addressed.

Chapter Four: A Second 1910?

Wheaton, 1974 The only reason for mentioning Wheaton, 1974 is that we must now take note of the first formal proposal of a second 1910-type meeting. We earlier mentioned that Luther Copeland had proposed this in 1972 at a regular meeting of the Association of Professors of Mission. The next year I stood up and "seconded" Copeland's proposal, and at the meeting the following year, in 1974, Copeland himself presided at the blackboard when the wording of a formal "Call" was hammered out. Signing this call were two prominent international scholars--David Cho of Korea and David Bosch of South Africa.

Inspiration was high. Arthur Glasser, Dean of the Fuller School of World Mission, had 3,000 little red buttons made up for the Lausanne Conference which was to occur a few days later, each button proclaiming "World Missionary Conference 1980." As a result, thousands of these buttons were passed out at the Lausanne meeting which followed.

But what was in that "Call"? Its exact words were:

It is suggested that a World Missionary Conference be convened in 1980 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world missions. The conference should be constituted by persons committed to cross-cultural missions, broadly representative of the missionary agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis.

1. Note the crucial phrase which spoke of representatives of the mission agencies constituting the conference.
2. Also note that "missionary" was defined to be "cross-cultural," presumably in outreach to non-Christians.
3. And note that this Call clearly did not address itself merely to Western mission agencies.

However,

1. It failed to employ either geographical or "people" terminology.
2. There was no hint about closure. These defects were remedied by the sponsoring committee of agency representatives before the meeting actually took place six years later. Indeed, long before 1980, the '74 call was subject to two other major streams offering to sponsor and control it.

Meanwhile, however, a few weeks after this Call was drafted, the world turned its attention to a perfectly huge and amazing meeting.

Lausanne, 1974 The International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE) was an unforgettable meeting. It became the first international meeting to frame the remaining task in people terms rather than geographical terms. It also launched the phrase "Unreached Peoples," defining an unreached people by the presence of less than a certain percentage of Christians (later defined by the presence or absence of a church movement--that would come in 1982). This meeting is famous for all of the regional meetings which it spawned of a similar type. Probably no meeting since 1910 had an equivalent "fallout" of beneficial influence on subsequent meetings all around the world.

But what kind of emphasis did this original Lausanne meeting have? It is ironic but fair to say that the surprise and pleasure of the Western world at the vital surge of believers in the former "mission fields" generally tended to lead to the conclusion that we don't need to send any more missionaries. The thought follows immediately that we just need to encourage and reinforce the new believers in the non-Western world and let the Church in each country deal with its own evangelistic challenge.

Thus, in 1974 it seemed quite obvious that there was widespread (but unfortunate) agreement that each country ought to be able to take care of its own evangelistic challenges. In-country evangelism should suffice, according to this perspective. Both at Lausanne '74 and at the World Council of Churches the idea of expatriate missionaries still being crucial was virtually ignored--despite the fact that Christian communities in many countries are still tiny, embattled minorities, and pockets of unreached peoples abound.

But even if every country contained sufficient evangelical strength, what is often ignored is that pockets of unreached peoples cannot be reached by ordinary "near-neighbor" evangelism. What fell to this writer at Lausanne '74 was a plenary paper in which I endeavored to show that over half of the people in the world who are not Christians are

people who cannot be reached by anything but pioneer missionary techniques, not ordinary mono-cultural evangelism, not believers speaking their own native language.

As Arthur Glasser put it shortly after Lausanne, "If every congregation in the world were to undergo a great revival and reach out to every person within their own people--that is, to everyone in the cultural spheres represented by each congregation--over half of all remaining non-Christians would still not be reached." My earnest plea at that conference is apparent from the title of my talk: "Cross-cultural Evangelism, the Highest Priority."

The Lausanne Congress is also widely known for the Lausanne Covenant, a marvelous document which came out of it, and, in particular, for the articulation of a social concern (as if missions have not always had a social concern).

But to this writer, the most important achievement of the conference was the great emphasis on looking at the world as peoples rather than as countries. Strategically, Lausanne also changed one key word from Berlin: the World Congress on Evangelism of 1966 became the International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974--the word evangelism being a never-ending activity, and evangelization being intended to be a project to be completed. Here, in embryo, was the concept of closure.

At this point in our story we could conceivably move on to the 1980 meeting at Edinburgh, which has been called by some Edinburgh II, although its actual name was the "World Consultation on Frontier Missions." But before doing that, we need to glance at a number of other milestones in the global movement we are tracing.

Chapter Five: Events Along the Way: 1941–1995

If we only chronicle the great meetings, we will overlook other evidences of the growth of a significant historical movement. Here are a few other kinds of events which reflect the exploding rebirth of global vision. (I regret that I may have inadvertently overlooked some very important conferences and events, and will welcome suggestions. In general I have omitted purely regional meetings.)

- 1941-After Pearl Harbor "awakened a sleeping giant," America sent millions of its youth all over the globe. Many of these were evangelical Christians.
- 1945-Eleven million Americans began to return from the "ends of the earth" where God had forced them to study missions "on location." (As a result 150 new mission agencies came into existence!)
- 1946-The first of the "Urbana" Missionary Conventions was held, this one in Toronto.
- 1955-Publication of *The Bridges of God* by Donald McGavran
- 1960-The Chicago Conference
- 1964-Founding of the Evangelical Missions Quarterly, jointly sponsored by IFMA and EFMA.
- 1965-Founding of the Fuller School of World Mission by Donald McGavran.
- 1966-Wheaton Conference (See comments, page 7.)
- 1966-Berlin Conference (See comments, page 8.)
- 1972-Founding of the American Society of Missiology, and its journal, *Missiology, An International Review*.
- 1973-Founding of the Association of Church Missions Committees
- 1973-Founding of the Asia Missions Association

- 1973-The great reversal of student attitude toward missions as evidenced by the sudden rise in the percentage of students who responded to the missionary call at the Urbana Missionary Convention in December 1973; one direct result of that was the beginning of the Perspectives Study Program.
- 1974-Lausanne Conference (See comments, pages 12-14.)
- 1976-Founding of the U. S. Center for World Mission
- 1978-International Students, Inc. assigned Leiton Chin to coordinate the development of the 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions.
- 1979-The EFMA Executives Retreat focused on Unreached Peoples.
- 1980-A follow-through world-level conference sponsored by the Lausanne Committee, in Pataya, Thailand
- 1980-The original Call for a 1910-type meeting in this year actually brought three into existence (see below).
- 1982-The formation of the IFMA Frontier Peoples Committee
- 1982-The Lausanne Committee sponsored a two-day study retreat of about 30 representatives from a wide variety of missions to settle the meanings of key words for speaking of unreached peoples. The definition of "Reached Peoples" now required evidence of a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement-not a certain percentage of "Christians."
- 1983-The World Evangelical Fellowship sponsored a global meeting at Wheaton; one of three tracks was Unreached Peoples
- 1983-The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association held a conference for 10,000 Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam.
- 1984-Founding of the International Journal of Frontier Missions
- 1985-The first national level missions conference in Latin America
- 1986-Founding of the International Society for Frontier Missiology
- 1986-Caleb Resources met 13,000 college students face to face, challenging them for missions.
- 1986-A second Itinerant Evangelists conference was held in Amsterdam by the BGEA.
- 1986-Nine regional student-led mission conferences were held in North America. But student-led organizations tend to self-destruct as their leaders graduate.
- 1986-The launching of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) in 1886 commemorated by four U.S. bodies: --the American Society of Church History --the Wheaton College Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals --the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship --a general student gathering at the original site at Mt. Hermon, Massachusetts. The heads of Campus Crusade, Navigators and Intervarsity all attended.
- 1986-The Asia Missions Association met on a world level producing the Third-World Mission Association.
- 1986-At Amsterdam a meeting of 7000 TEMA students was held. (TEMA=The European equivalent of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.)
- 1987-COMIBAM (Congreso Misionero Ibero Americano), the first continental mission congress launched by Latin Americans, also the largest evangelical meeting ever held in Latin America on a continental basis (3,500 delegates, including 500

from Africa and Asia). This was followed by a similar meeting in Korea, sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (related to the World Evangelical Fellowship).

- 1987-At Dallas, Texas, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board sponsored a very strategic conference of (U.S.) mission executives to consider the overall global challenge from the standpoint of working on it together.
- 1989-The Singapore Global Consultation on World Evangelization, and the founding of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement
- 1989-The Lausanne II meeting at Manila
- 1989 to 1995-An incredible whirl of activity by the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, leading to the May 1995 meeting in Korea, the Global Consultation on World Evangelization-GCOWE II.

I lack dates for other key developments such as the founding and remarkable growth of the India Mission Association, the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association, the Third World Mission Association, plus the highly significant development during the last few years of a renewed and activated Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. The latter, in turn, has highlighted the existence and recent emergence of many mission training programs, centers and specialized schools.

Thus, we must at this moment leave for a later edition of this booklet many additional evidences of a growing, global awareness of the ability to finish the task, a task often shunned or considered hopeless. Let us now return to the specifically 1910 thread.

Chapter Six: Finally, Edinburgh, 1980

The 1972 proposal for a second 1910 type of meeting to be held in 1980 finally materialized. It almost didn't. It was not easy to defend the significant features of the 1910 meeting which it followed, namely: 1) that its only participants were delegated executives from existing mission agencies, and 2) the focus of the conference was exclusively upon "unoccupied fields." Key leaders in both the World Council (Emilio Castro) and the Lausanne Committee (Leighton Ford) suggested that their traditions respectively would appropriately be the ones to coordinate the proposed meeting. Consequently, the World Council moved its meeting at Melbourne back from 1981 to 1980. The Lausanne Committee organized a large meeting in Pataya, Thailand, also for 1980. The chosen date of the latter (during the summer) forced the convening committee of Edinburgh 1980 to move its scheduled date to November, and even to change its more general name (World Missionary Conference--as it was in 1910) to "World Consultation on Frontier Missions" at the suggestion of the Lausanne leaders.

Both the Melbourne and the Pataya conferences were significant gatherings, but neither of them were designed to be parallel structurally to the 1910 conference in the terms mentioned above. Thus, instead of the 1980 meeting being sponsored by either the WCC or Lausanne, a number of well-known mission agencies contributed members to an ad hoc planning committee for a worldwide conference of mission executives. Larry Allmon, chief executive of Gospel Recordings, became the crucial chairperson of that committee. Although there was a certain sense of being overshadowed by the two giant conferences planned for that same year, the organizers clearly understood the distinctives of this particular conference and met every month with a keen sense of anticipation. In a little over a year the entire consultation was organized, and was convened in November of 1980.

In the spring of 1979 International Students, Inc. contributed Leiton Chin as Coordinator of the conference. It is hard to imagine what would have happened had it not been for his secondment for the crucial pre-consultation period.

Long before 1980, the Call of 1974 had been doing its work. In 1976 an article in *Missiology, An International Journal*, "1980 and That Certain Elite" described in great detail both the Call (see above under 1974) and the response to it. Max Warren, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, indicated his interest and pledged cooperation (which happened even though he died before 1980). The Liebenzell Mission of Germany offered its facilities for the meeting. Then Roy Spraggett of WEC in Scotland suggested that the meeting convene at the original 1910 site in Edinburgh, and offered to be responsible for arranging for the facilities there. The committee felt this would be ideal, and Larry Allmon made several trips to Edinburgh to conclude the arrangements with Spraggett. In August of 1979, more than a year before the meeting, the sponsoring committee of mission agency representatives voted, That those formally participating consist of delegates from agencies with current involvement in or with formal organizational commitment to reaching hidden people groups.

Note that Hidden Peoples were defined as "those cultural and linguistic subgroups, urban or rural, for which there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people." This definition, with slight changes of wording, was later adopted by the Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March of 1982 as the meaning of the phrase, Unreached Peoples.

A book, *Seeds of Promise*, edited by Alan Starling, contains the complete papers and presentations of the 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions. Its statistical data indicates that more mission agencies were represented at this meeting than at any previous (or subsequent) global conference, and that Edinburgh 1980 was the first world-level conference since 1910 to be composed exclusively of delegates of mission agencies (rather than invited participants of various kinds).

The cost of the meeting was very low since agencies appointing delegates provided travel costs as well as food and lodging expense. At the last minute a grant came from Anthony Rossi which assisted some of the Two-Thirds world delegates to be able to come. A similar financial plan was followed by the January 1989 Singapore Global Conference on World Evangelization by the Year 2000 and Beyond, sparked by the vision of Thomas Wang. Dr. Wang had been deeply impressed in 1980 by the question of what God might be expecting of His people by the year 2000. He wrote a widely influential article, "By the year 2000, Is God Trying to Tell Us Something?" The resulting meeting in Singapore was simple, unadorned, very low budget. A substantial gift from the Maclellan Foundation gave last-minute assistance.

Since Wang was one of the four plenary speakers at Edinburgh 1980, it is no accident that the purpose statement of GCOWE II came, in essence, from the 1980 meeting, namely "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000." To these words, the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement added for clarification "and the Gospel for Every Person."

But the most unusual and powerful feature of the 1980 meeting was the fact that fully one-third of all of the delegates came from Two- Thirds World agencies. By comparison, in 1910, although a handful of non-Western agencies existed, they were accidentally overlooked! Bishop Azariah, for example, who had already founded two different mission agencies in India, was not invited to send delegates from his agencies. He was, instead, sent to the conference as a delegate of the Church Missionary Society working in South India! That was appropriate, but it revealed the woeful fact that the Mott leadership

team failed even to conceive of the possibility of what we now call Two-thirds World mission agencies!

All of the largest non-Western agencies were represented at Edinburgh 1980. Three of the four invited plenary speakers, including Thomas Wang, came from the so-called mission lands. The delegates to this conference, on going back to their countries around the world, have been involved in many notable advances of the specific emphasis on finishing the task and upon reaching the unreached peoples (as the necessary precursor to reaching every person). That amazing global impulse of the 1980 meeting for the build-up of momentum for world evangelization is a story that will have to be told later when the data is gathered.

In highlighting the Edinburgh 1980 meeting--this first intentional repetition of the 1910 pattern--it is not intended to imply that the many other great meetings (sometimes with 20 times the attendance, such as COMIBAM in Sao Paulo in 1987) were somehow less important. The fact is that we need both kinds of meetings--meetings of church leaders, church people, church and mission people, and now and then, meetings exclusively of mission executives.

As alluded to earlier, if you want to fight a war you need the backing of the mayors and state governors. But for the planning and execution of the war it is also necessary for the military leaders to get together and weld themselves into a single fighting force. Recently we have certainly seen that kind of wholesome and hearty cooperation between otherwise totally independent agencies in Russia where both the CoMission and the Strategic Alliance for Church Planting are the intentional integration of more than 50 separate agencies working in great harmony. Why not tackle the whole world in the same way?

A Call For the World's Mission Agency Leaders to Meet in 1996 The time has come for those who are the active leaders of mission agencies to gather in a low-budget conference not just for fellowship but for the purpose of joint planning and action, for the kind of goal setting for each agency which is not developed by the agency itself but by the consensus of the group. It is as if an agency in a "Strategic Partnership" voluntarily gives up its right to determine its own goals and instead takes its orders from the combination of minds and hearts of a number of different agencies which then work in complete harmony. This has already happened many times down through mission history. In recent years Interdev has marvelously spearheaded developments of this kind on a regional level. A single, world-level gathering of this type in 1996 would be a marvelous way to follow through on the foundation laid by GCOWE II at Seoul, Korea in 1995.

Christian Leaders Express Support for Joshua Project 2000 and the Cooperative Effort in Listing the Least-Evangelized Peoples

(*Mission Frontiers* November-December 1995)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/christian-leaders-express-support-for-joshua-project-2000-and-the-cooperati>

The ISFM acknowledges the complex task of enumerating and categorizing humanity into peoples and their status in relation to the gospel. In light of this the ISFM recognizes this list as a significant but not comprehensive effort toward identifying peoples requiring frontier mission endeavors. The ISFM is grateful for the progress this list represents and recommends its use as a priority for prayer and strategy resource. International Society for Frontier Missiology, Annual Meeting, September, 1995

What a joy to affirm the great cooperative effort that has produced the Target List of 2000 Least-Evangelized Peoples. This list goes a long way toward fulfilling the hopes of the Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse when it released its first rough list back in 1993. Focusing on the "least reached" rather than on the "unreached" makes possible broad subscription to a list that is definable, functional, and reasonably verifiable in its boundaries. At the same time, it reflects a compilation of the best information now available. Here is a tool that all believers, churches and mission agencies can use confidently to focus attention, prayer and resources on the squeakiest wheels in the Great Commission task. Gary Corwin of SIM and Evangelical Missions Quarterly Associate Editor

The AD 2000 list is the next step toward completing the "last commandment" that Jesus gave us on the Mount of Ascension. This is our next frontier in missions. Others will follow or run in parallel. By God's grace--let's do it together! Loren Cunningham, founder and chairman, Youth With A Mission (YWAM) International

When I first joined the staff of the U.S. Center for World Mission in 1981, I fully expected to see a "war room" like we had in Vietnam when I served in U.S. Army Headquarters. I thought we would have the 16,750 unreached peoples listed on a wall, and cross them off as they were adopted and reached. I soon learned that we were a long way from that kind of detailed list. In the intervening fourteen years, there has been discussion, confusion and controversy about who still needs to be reached. However, with the development of this present list, there is at last a consensus about the essential next steps so that we can focus our available resources on the highest priority task we face. David Dougherty, Overseas Missionary Fellowship

As a German, I do not always get easily excited. Scratching the surface of a lot of seemingly wonderful stories frequently yields another more complex, less black-and-white, picture. For years I have monitored the often frustrating and convoluted attempts to enumerate and categorize humanity into peoples--reached and unreached. Humanity is

complex, making the task extremely difficult, and only God, in the final analysis, knows when a person is "reached." For the first time, I now see a wide consensus emerging. While no list of peoples can be totally accurate, the AD 2000 momentum has now yielded a useful and significant listing of the gospel-neediest peoples on earth. I am excited, and happily endorse emerging efforts to train and send research / prayer teams to these 2,000 peoples. I hope that their reports will be truthful and yet faith filled, and result in greater mobilization of many new missionary initiatives to these peoples. Paul Filidis, Director, Youth With A Mission, International Communications Network

Since 1974, when the concept of unreached people groups was first introduced, missiologists have been struggling to compile lists of these groups. During the past couple years several lists have been produced, but none of them have gained popular acceptance. Finally, a manageable list with popular acceptance has been produced. I expect that this list will help generate consensus agreement regarding where our mission resources can be strategically invested. This will help

increase partnership and therefore speed the completion of world evangelization. I'm thankful for those who have worked to produce this list of the least-evangelized peoples. Greg Fritz, president, Caleb Resources

I want to take this opportunity to voice my support for Patrick Johnstone, John Gilbert, Ron Rowland and others in their commitment to clean up the GCOWE '95 list of peoples. I support this effort and have been a part of the dialogue for some time. The cleaned-up list is a solid contribution to the effort to define where Christians should be placing their missions resources. Our work on peoples in the forthcoming World Christian Encyclopedia (with Patrick Johnstone as contributing editor) will merely place this "sublist" in its larger context among all the peoples of the world. For now, in my opinion, the GCOWE '95 list should be utilized by mission agencies and churches for targeting and engaging peoples. Todd Johnson, World Evangelization Research Center

Praise the Lord, I feel now we have a list that we can work on happily and make it a more flexible tool for the big push over the next five years. Patrick Johnstone, author of Operation World, Chairman of Unreached Peoples Network, AD 2000 and Beyond Movement

The most significant impact of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement for world evangelization is launching a crusade for mobilizing the whole Church to conquer the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. If the Church would unite for one common goal -- a church for every people and the gospel for every person -- I am sure that the Church will see the fulfillment of the Great Commission by reaching the unreached by the year 2000. The 2000 unreached people group listing created by AD2000 will be a most important guide for pioneering ministry for the unreached, which will change mission history within just a few years and reach the world for Christ. Joon Gon Kim, chairman of Korean AD2000 and Beyond Movement

Women in many countries are offering themselves to visit unreached villages and tribes to do on-site research. I believe their insights will be extremely helpful in finding cultural keys to open doors into previously closed communities. We as a network are encouraging women to focus on at least three unreached people groups in each country. Lorry Lutz, international coordinator, AD2000 Women's Network

I think it is great that for the next five years we can all work from the same page to see these peoples engaged and the church planted. If anyone wants to take on some other groups... Praise the Lord, but for us let's join hearts and arms with brothers and sisters

around the globe to see a church-planting movement among these nearly 2,000 by 2000. Paul McKaughan, executive director, Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Associations

The listing represents the frontier of missions today, and we will do everything we can to support you in this endeavor. Jerry Rankin, Avery Willis and John Gilbert, Foreign Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention

I believe that the current cleaned-up list of approximately 2000 peoples with populations of more than 10,000 and evangelicals less than 5% of population can be confidently used for adoption of the least evangelized peoples, for focused prayer profiles and for other aspects of Joshua Project 2000. Ron Rowland, SIL and Wycliffe Bible Translators, coordinator of PIN (People Information Network) and Chairman of GMI (Global Mapping International)

I pray this vision and information will get into the hands of millions of believers and that they will respond to the challenge. George Verwer, international director, Operation Mobilization

A mass of information has been collected on the unreached peoples of the world that is unprecedented in the history of the Christian Church. Many fine minds have devoted themselves to this task for years, and we should be deeply grateful for the results. Now, after all the research, collating, analysis and planning, the effort finally comes down to where we knew it would: local churches committing their resources of people, prayer, technology and money to enter the remaining nearly 2000 major peoples and plant the New Testament church. I rejoice to see this day, because every church that chooses to be involved will experience the refining fire of the Holy Spirit. Each of these churches will have to rethink what the local church is supposed to be--a visible exhibit of redeemed people living out kingdom values together and individually in the midst of darkness, communicating the saving message of Jesus Christ. In so doing, the sending church will find itself being purified as it seeks to plant a healthy church elsewhere in the world. This is the stuff of revival! Bill Waldrop, president, APMC

The intercessory prayer efforts by churches and individuals focused by means of the prayer profiles for each of the nearly 2000 target peoples and the special October 1997 prayer effort to each for these peoples will be vital for the "small cloud" on the horizon to become a "great rain" of God's blessing. Praise the Lord that our missions leaders are now unanimous on the list of nearly 2,000 least evangelized peoples of the world. This is a major achievement. What a breakthrough! God's heart must be pleased. Let's rally around this cause and fast and pray for Joshua Project 2000. Thomas Wang, international board chairman, AD 2000 and Beyond Movement

When Jesus told His disciples to pray "Thy Kingdom come, on earth" He referred to the effect of an exciting, powerful but humble, expanding movement that has grown across the centuries through thick and thin to encompass one-third of the world's population today including more than half of all "nations, tribes and tongues." Furthermore, the active, seriously believing people within this colossal world family called Christian themselves number in the hundreds of millions, to be found in millions of Bible-believing churches, speaking all of the major languages of the planet. With these unprecedented resources we thus look forward to the year 2000 with a specific list of less than 2,000 doorways through which almost every unreached person in the world is to be found. This list will be the object of history's largest network of Christian bodies as its detailed contents are verified and further defined. It is the logical way to go when congregations and mission agencies around the world are now "signing up" to take their fair share of the load.

Editorial Comment on Joshua Project 2000

(*Mission Frontiers*, Nov.-Dec. 1995)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-november-december-1995>

Monday, October 23, 1995 I am scared to death of two tragic possibilities, no three. First, as I write these words in this editorial (in the first-ever issue of *Mission Frontiers* edited entirely by people not on our staff) I am seriously concerned that the stark, astounding significance of the movement described here will be vastly underestimated by preoccupied believers-like the maidens who ran out of oil, or worse still, like the people who didn't take Noah seriously (As is the days of Noah...). This issue is only the tip of the iceberg of AN INCREDIBLE NEW FACTOR that explodes all previous estimates of what can be done by the year 2000.

Secondly, I am scared stiff that this atomic explosion of global interest in completing the task of Global Mission will go wrong in several ways.

Thirdly, I am afraid that despite all of the careful explanations, the important linking of the smaller list published in this issue (part of a larger list) is not going to be easily understood. Yet it is very important how this list leads to other smaller groups of people, and how mission strategy may often begin with the smaller fragments of the peoples listed here. Read on.

1. Fear One: Underestimating the hand of God

O.K, people may say, so what if 60,000 university students in Korea get all excited about missions?

Well, you know students everywhere...they are our true world citizens. They are eager to keep up with the students in other countries. In 1996 we may see not just students in Korea rising to the challenge, but students around the globe also putting their shoulders to the task.

Next year is an Urbana year, and even before the GCOWE meeting in Korea, Urbana leaders were planning to link up by satellite with other large student meetings around the world. And, read what this issue says further on: already the Brazilian students are determined to follow the Korean example. Already the South African students have stood up to be counted.

The events presented in this issue of *Mission Frontiers* if rightly understood, constitute not just a Korean oddity but a global reality! They are a series of amazing and unpredicted events which, linked to the Joshua Project, force a transformation of all previous estimates of the remaining task!

It is not as though we are predicting the time it takes for an underpowered car to make it up a long steep grade. The "car" of global Christianity today is twenty times as powerful as it needs to be to climb the grade in good time. It simply has not been running on all cylinders. Where I meet pessimism is often when people whose work contributes little to the countdown condone their lack of involvement by saying "the task is now impossible."

But, do you know? Those students in Korea were the sparkplug to generate all those millions that carried that amazing global gathering in May into the black. In fact, they still have a surplus of \$2 million with which to be serious about the 60,000 commitments that were made.

Furthermore, those Korean students are the basis for a new wave of unprecedented collaboration in Korea. Thomas Wang and I addressed their huge "Mission Korea" meeting four years ago-and we were amazed to see all of the different student traditions, IVCF, CCCC, Navigators, Operation Mobilization, etc., cooperating together! Dear reader, pray that God will not allow you to underestimate Him in this hour of opportunity!

2. Fear Two: Will fools rush in where angels fear to tread?

But there are real dangers. I have taught the story of Christianity for many years. I recall many times down through history when explosions of renewal have taken place. Alas, it does not always turn out well.

We don't usually talk in public about all of the gross mistakes tourist type visitors to the mission field have made. Brief, superficial trips spurred on by the sense of adventure and travel more than deep concern for the Spiritual realities don't always help. In some cases all we really see accomplished is the realization that good intentions are not good enough.

With the proper preparations and cautions from veteran workers a lot of great good can be done by both pure-hearted Prayer Walkers and "On- site-investigators." But real damage is also possible without great care. Casual, minimal knowledge may be "the little knowledge which is a dangerous thing."

Take one simple problem: people may easily assume that mission work can be done by using ordinary evangelistic methods.

If masses rush into mission fields to finish the mission task, the real danger is that they will tend to use tried and true evangelism concepts, drawing understandably on their experience witnessing in their own culture. But Hindus who already expect reincarnation may be confused by talk about being "born again." We can't assume our way of explaining things back home will make sense in an exotic, little- understood unreached people. Cross-cultural mission requires something that is not immediately apparent.

3. Fear Three: Misuse of the list of peoples in this issue

POINT ONE: Be sure to read Dan Scribner's three-page explanation of the list (on pages 12-14). Note how many other people Dan mentions for the results published on pages 17-23. Note the many precautions and provisos he gives, which I do not need to repeat here. Also note his statement that "groups with populations below 10,000 will be considered in future revisions of this list." I'll bring this up in a moment.

POINT TWO: Sources. The most reliable sources are field missionaries, but they are not everywhere. Barbara Grimes of Wycliffe, editor of the *Ethnologue*, has undoubtedly spent more time across the years than any other person drawing information from the formidable human distribution of Wycliffe's 6,000 personnel scattered around the globe, but even that kind of coverage leaves gaps where government statistics must ultimately be consulted. However, some governments don't pay much attention to minorities. Others, like Australia, lists groups even less than 10 in population! In some cases, as with Jews and Turks, exhaustive studies were available, and so, of course, they show up in many countries!

POINT THREE: What about a larger list including groups smaller than 10,000? This is coming, Dan says, but what will it mean? First of all, the smaller groups are very numerous! The graph to the right portrays the fact that the smaller the groups the larger the

number of such groups, logically enough. In this particular Southern Baptist list of 10,493 peoples, the groups less than 10,000 in population number only 5,647, but if all governments listed smaller groups there might be 20,000 since three out of four governments do not bother to report smaller groups.

But the most important reason for those adopting peoples on the present list is the amazing rule of thumb that missionary breakthroughs are more likely to succeed in smaller rather than larger groups!

Suppose a church, working with a mission agency, wants to help reach the Pathans, the legendary people of the Khyber Pass between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The heartland of this cluster of peoples (speaking various dialects of Pashto) is Afghanistan (page 17), where you'll see 12 million listed, and across the border in Pakistan (on page 21) you'll see 11 million Eastern Pathans plus 7.4 million Southern Pathans. But neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan are very easy places to work on Pathans. You will find thousands more in Iran, United Arab Emirates (two different groups), and the United Kingdom, on pages 20 and 23, respectively. The 87,000 in Great Britain are less than 1/3 of one percent, yet there are some Christians among them--who do not need to live in fear of the British government harassing them. And there might be some highly educated people who are already open to the Gospel who could participate in a powerful colloquial translation of key portions of the New Testament. You could not pursue that course readily in either Afghanistan or Pakistan where many of the main body of Christians look down on the Pashto-speaking "border people." No wonder 30 million Pashto speakers are still awaiting an effective translation--and a virile church movement!

POINT FOUR: This list is a list of serious, sensitive peoples, often where missionaries are already at work locally.

A close friend who has been among the Pathans for over ten years tells me about an outside group that was trying to raise \$70,000 to pay for a study of the Pathan situation, ignoring the enormous efforts of past (and present) missionaries.

In other words, the list of "target" peoples must not mean we "shoot at" these peoples with naive, outside efforts. I heard the other day about a certain church that "adopted" a specific people and poured an enormous amount of study into the situation, even sending church members to scout out the group. But they did not know that an outstanding missionary-professor had written an entire book on that group after working among them for many years.

POINT FIVE: As we approach the historic completion of all the necessary mission breakthroughs the casual terminology we have often used in the past will need to give way to more precise language. We used to say we wanted "to win the world to Christ" without bothering to think concretely about what that would entail.

Preparing the Gospel FOR every person in a group is a mission task of accomplishing the very complicated goal of making sense in every strange group, establishing a church movement into which people can belong without leaving their people and their culture. Then the Gospel can be taken TO every person--in evangelism.

Once a group on this list is chosen the next thing is to know where all similar groups are to be found. To do that you may wish to order 1) a copy of this list sorted out by language rather than by country, and 2) the larger list of 10,493 peoples which includes groups smaller than 10,000 but which may speak the same language as groups in this list. If so, send \$2.50 to me at the address below for these two additional lists. However, you can get all of this and much more on six IBM disks for \$15 from John Gilbert--see his address on page 14.

When Jesus said, “This Gospel must be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all peoples,” ...what did He mean by “all peoples?”

(*Mission Frontiers*, Nov.-Dec. 1995)

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/when-jesus-said-this-gospel-must-be-preached-in-the-whole-world-as-a-testim>

Note that there is only one major “people” within the borders of the country to the left (see Col. A). But this people of 12 million has three major geographic spheres (Col. B) within which (Col. C) there are seven major (mutually unintelligible) dialects. Within each dialect area there are perhaps 20-30 “confederations of tribes,” Col D. And, in the final column E you see what may be 70 to 90 tribal groups (which may or may not be friendly to each other but which) certainly consider themselves separate.

So how many “peoples” are there in this country? You’ll note we are having to guess at how many groups at the lower levels. In any case the total number depends on which level you count.

For example, Wycliffe Bible Translators will probably find that they can get by with printed (eye gate) Bible translation on the level of the three major spheres, or at the worst, at the level of the seven dialects. For Wycliffe there may be no more than three or seven “peoples” to deal with.

But Gospel Recordings (people who deal with the much more discriminating ear gate) inevitably needs to deal with the next level of 20 to 30 groups, and just perhaps even in some cases with the tribal level in case the language differences when spoken out loud at that lowest level are sufficiently different or even if they are merely offensive!

Remember, both printed and audio media are valuable, but the relevant number of groups is different in each case. To make things more complicated, note that sizable groups of this overall people are in nine other countries, as well! And, these other groups come from any one of these different levels you see here.

But, now, at what level was Jesus speaking? He wants, of course, to reach through to all groups, behind whatever barrier of understanding or acceptance there may be. The answer is simply that we’ll find out the answer the closer we get to the situation. In the meantime we need to live with guesses.

This is why it is literally possible to say--depending on whether we are referring to levels A, B, C, D or E--that there are only 250 or so major peoples in the whole world, or 900 or so major language families, or 4,000 significant peoples (of which 1,700 are in great spiritual need) or 10,000 or 20,000 still smaller peoples. It all depends on which level you are concerned.

Right now, the list of 1,700 needy peoples listed in this issue (pp. 17-23) is a concrete and valuable target. We can only learn more as we go!

AND, at this hour greater human resources are looming into view than have ever been available to the unfinished task! Are you part of it?

Analysis of a Movement

**(From the booklet, Thy Kingdom Come for GCOWE '95 in Korea,
May, 1995)**

(Frontiers in Mission, 135-44)

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5be3338f21c67c84dfc1b9f1/1541616554604/Frontiers_in_Mission+4th+ed+copy.pdf

By the Year 2000?

The AD 2000 Movement has a profound mission statement. It is more profound than meets the eye:

A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person By the Year 2000.

Do these three phrases give us a crystal clear mandate? The Bible says “if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound...”

Note the final phrase especially.

“By the year 2000” is the most electrifying phrase in the statement; it also causes the most hesitation. No one objects to the idea of goals for the year 2000, but here we see “every people” and “every person.” Doesn’t the presence (twice) of the word “every” make these goals for AD 2000 seem audacious and perhaps even foolish?

Suppose we could arrive at the place where we were absolutely confident that every person on earth has heard the Gospel and understood it, that is, everyone who is over 2 years old, say, and also not so old as to be unable to hear, or so sick as to be unable to think. In any case, suppose we could come to the place where every “hearing” person has heard. At midnight on a certain night—we have finished the job!

One day later, over a million more tiny tots have arrived at the age of two, and over a million more people have plunged beyond a condition of intelligibility.

[Note that God must know what to do with all such people. There are probably 500 million children in the world at any given time under the age of two. Who knows how many older or sick folks there are?]

But this is the point: is God really playing with statistics...watching curves on a computer graph? Is He mechanically waiting for a certain number of souls to be saved? Is counting peoples and persons the name of the game? Is that all He expects us to shoot for by AD 2000?

What CAN be done by the year 2000? What is it that we can all pray for?

Well, what did Jesus tell us to pray for? He said that we must pray “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

What this means is that our concept of God’s desire to reach all peoples and persons must somehow be part of His desire for His Kingdom to come on earth. Other verses say that He looks toward the time when all the nations of the world will declare His glory.

What does it really mean for His Kingdom to come? Jesus once said, “If I with the finger of God cast out devils, then has the Kingdom of God come upon you” (Luke 11:20).

Is this what it means for the Kingdom of God to come? Is it possible that we have become so tied up with our measurements of evangelism, social reform, and economic growth that we have forgotten that God is primarily in the business of conquering Satan?

We look forward toward the time when “The Kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev 11:15). Surely He seeks to vanquish the “Rulers of the darkness of this earth” (Eph 6:12)?

But this is not simply a case of political or military conquest. Jesus made that plain when He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” So we’re not looking for a Christianized United Nations any more than we are looking forward to every human being being converted to Christ, or even all social wrongs righted. Indeed, in Revelation 21 we note that AFTER He returns “He shall wipe away every tear...”

Is it possible that the essence of the Return of Christ will inevitably be a moment when “measurable” evangelistic goals will be overwhelmed by a total newness of God’s own design?

Certainly we should take our evangelistic measurements seriously, but not as ultimate parameters of God’s plan. We must look forward to the year 2000, knowing that He may evaluate things by measures we cannot fully comprehend. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Meanwhile, with regard to His known will, we can and must go all out.

Can we be overly concerned about bookkeeping tallies in heaven and less concerned about declaring His glory on earth? Can souls get saved without His Name being glorified? I actually believe that brilliant evangelical thinkers who are wrestling with front-line science are part and parcel of the global struggle to glorify His Name.

And, this is why breaking through into every people has got to be a precursor to reaching every person. Satan holds whole peoples in bondage. We can’t wrestle a single soul out of his hand without challenging his authority in that particular people group.

In those groups where Satan’s hold has already been broken, it is well understood how to win souls. But, in groups where no real breakthrough has occurred, the contest is still a “power encounter” between the Spirit of God and the powers of darkness.

This is why the front line is prayer. This is why Asian evangelists say they must first “bind the strong man” before entering a village that sits in darkness waiting for the great light.

We must remember that taking the light into dark places will meet fierce resistance. In the Bible the concept of darkness is not merely the absence of light but the presence of a malignant, destroying Person. That is why the kingdoms of this world will not easily yield.

Every people—kingdoms of darkness

The phrase Every People refers to these kingdoms of darkness. This is why this phrase comes first in the slogan. Only when the gates of those kingdoms are broken down can the Gospel be available “for every person.”

What does a darkened kingdom look like? How can we tell when a kingdom has been brought under God’s sway? Isn’t this the definition of spiritual mapping?

Satan wields his control over individuals by dominating their groups. Most people follow the lead of their own group. Very few individuals are perfectly unrestricted thinkers for themselves. Sometimes it is baffling to missionaries to know how to penetrate a group. Often the breakthrough comes through a miraculous healing or the unaccountable

conversion of a key person, not through normal evangelism. Yes, normal evangelism only becomes possible after that breakthrough occurs.

Back to our point: it may be, therefore, somewhat artificial to try to figure out how many individuals are, or aren't, won to Christ. Maybe what we face is a much more direct question: are there still kingdoms of this world where His Name is not glorified? Every people and every person are stepping stones in that direction and are the result of the invasion of God's glory. But the conquering of the kingdoms of this world is both more and less than every people and every person.

That this is primarily a spiritual battle certainly does not mean we can set aside careful planning for evangelism and pioneer penetration and just pray that God will go out and do His thing.

What it does mean is that "We fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:12).

And we know that it is our fight, not just His, and that He is fighting with us. We do not need to worry about losing. We know that in every place on earth the key effort is not going to be our wisdom or even our hard work. It will be all of that plus His sovereign power breaking down the very gates of hell. And we know that He is still doing miracles.

All of this cannot be brought together into a single human plan; yet it calls upon every planning effort, all creative approaches, and all the sacrifice we can muster. We do know that our measurements—our peoples and persons—are merely concrete goals. We know also that He is with us and we are acting in obedience to the Heavenly call.

We can be embarrassed by the outcome in the year 2000. But we will be embarrassed only if when that day comes we cannot say we have done everything in our power to find and approach and reach every people and every person on earth.

But what does "A Church for Every People" mean?

Chapter Two:

A Church for Every People?

In the five-word phrase, "A Church for Every People," the word "church" means much more than an empty building or even a small congregation.

The first five words of the AD 2000 Movement slogan were launched in 1980 by a global-level meeting of mission executives coming from both the Western world and the Two-Thirds world. At that meeting (at which Thomas Wang was a plenary speaker) the fulfillment of the phrase "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000" was certainly not for one symbolic congregation to be planted within every group by the year 2000. I was at that meeting and know that what was behind this simple phrase "A Church for Every People" was essentially "a church movement."

The phrase "A Church for Every People" was actually based on a concept of Donald McGavran's made famous almost thirty years earlier when he spoke of "a people movement to Christ." He was there with us when a small group of people met in a private home a few months before the 1980 meeting and hammered out this new "watchword." Dr. McGavran's conviction which had influenced so many others was that *we cannot say that we have evangelized a person unless that person has been given a chance to unite with an indigenous movement within his or her own society.* Note that if we take this seriously we cannot even speak of the Gospel for Every Person without planning to achieve an indigenous "people movement to Christ" in every people.

His concern for converts was that they ought to be encouraged to *reach* their own people rather than *separate* from them, and to do that he felt that they should stay within the social sphere of their own people. McGavran's marvelous little "letter" on this subject is printed in full in the Appendix of this booklet. But at this point we need to quote some of it. Here are two of the seven principles in McGavran's short essay or letter:

(One)...principle is to encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their own people in most matters. They should continue to eat what their people eat. They should not say, "My people are vegetarians but, now that I have become a Christian, I'm going to eat meat." After they become Christians they should be more rigidly vegetarian than they were before. In the matter of clothing, they should continue to look precisely like their kinfolk. In the matter of marriage, most people are endogamous, they insist that "our people marry only our people." They look with great disfavor on our marrying other people. And yet when Christians come in one-by-one, they cannot marry their own people. None of them have become Christian. Where only a few of a given people become Christians, when it comes time for them or their children to marry, they have to take husbands or wives from other segments of the population. So their own kin look at them and say, "Yes, become a Christian and mongrelize your children. You have left us and have joined them."

All converts should be encouraged to bear cheerfully the exclusion, the oppression, and the persecution that they are likely to encounter from their people. When anyone becomes a follower of a new way of life, he is likely to meet with some disfavor from his loved ones. Maybe it's mild; maybe it's severe. He should bear such disfavor patiently. He should say on all occasions,

"I am a better son than I was before; I am a better father than I was before; I am a better husband than I was before; and I love you more than I used to do. You can hate me, but I will not hate you. You can exclude me, but I will include you. You can force me out of our ancestral house; but I will live on its veranda. Or I will get a house just across the street. I am still one of you, I am more one of you than I ever was before."

(We must) encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their people in *most* matters.

Please note that word *most*. They cannot remain one with their people in idolatry, or drunkenness or obvious sin. If they belong to a segment of society that earns its living stealing they must "steal no more." But, in most matters (how they talk, how they dress, how they eat, where they go, what kind of houses they live in), they can look very much like their people, and ought to make every effort to do so.

(A closely related) principle is to try to get group decisions for Christ. If only one person decides to follow Jesus, do not baptize him immediately. Say to him, "You and I will work together to lead another five or ten or, God willing, fifty of your people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior so that when you are baptized, you are baptized with them." Ostracism is very effective against one lone person. But ostracism is weak indeed when exercised against a group of a dozen. And when exercised against two hundred it has practically no force at all.

What is the upshot?

The churches of the New Testament avidly sprouted up in part because of the impasse experienced by the Gentile "devout persons" attending Jewish synagogues out in

Gentile territory. Many of the synagogues of the Jewish dispersion had generously invited Gentile seekers to sit in the back rows. But such invitees were not given an inch by the devout Jewish core of those synagogues when it came to the laying aside the Jewish cultural tradition. Like many Christians today, the faithful had to some extent confused their cultural tradition (diet, calendar, dress, etc.) with the faith itself. Their tradition had become traditionalism, to use Jaroslav Pelican's language—"Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."

Paul came along and dared to call out all such (Greek) "devout persons" into what would become essentially Gentile-run synagogues. Now the fast growing traits of early Christianity began to appear. Once the faith was indigenized (or contextualized") it grew rapidly. Within two centuries more than one third of the entire population in the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire had decided to follow Christ!

But a factor more important than mere culture was involved. Paul, referring to Aquila and Priscilla, spoke of "the church that is in their house" (Rom 16:5, 1 Cor. 16:19), a situation (unnoticeable to many American readers) where family ties and church worship went together, where church authority and family authority were often indistinguishable, where church discipline and family respect were one and the same thing, where "honor thy father and thy mother" were not different from spiritual accountability in the church. In such a "church" it is unlikely that the ostracism McGavran fears would occur. It is likely that the synagogues of the New Testament period as well as the Gentile-run churches of the New Testament period mainly consisted of a cluster of extended families guided by the elders of those families.

Beware of the Americans!

What is a church in the phrase "A Church for Every People?" In America—especially in urban America—churches have become more and more collections of unrelated individuals huddling together—individuals who for the most part have already been loosened up from their natural families with the church becoming a kind of substitute family. Married couples may have children and bring them to church (where they are normally segregated off into age-graded fellowships), but they are not often asked about their own parents. And people who are older are not asked about their children. Individual decisions in the church are as important as individualism has become in secular society. Thus, although the churches of urban America to some significant extent perform the functions of a family, they often do so in the absence of—or possibly even at the expense of—the natural families. For example, although I have attended evangelical churches in many parts of the United States, I have never heard a sermon on why or how to have family devotions. Personal devotions, yes; not family devotions.

But as the church of Jesus Christ grows up in soil of the traditional societies around the world (most of which are not yet so individualistic) it often becomes a movement which normally reinforces, not dismantles, natural families, which are part of Creation. This result is not what the average American missionary always expects, however. Sometimes missionaries feel they must stress that people who come to Christ do so in opposition to their parents lest their decisions not be real. On the other hand I heard the story of a North Korean young person that came to Christ. His father asked him what Christianity taught him. He said that it taught him to honor and respect his father and mother. The father's response was, "Good."

If we seriously seek "A Church for Every People" we must recover this Biblical harmony between natural families and "church" families. It will probably be much easier for

missionaries from the Third World to do this than for Americans, whose instincts may often lead them (in their haste to “plant a church”) to establish congregations composed mainly of “loosened up individuals,” social refugees, or even social “deviants.” But, in actuality, to work within the culture rather than against it may often be easier, not harder!

Nevertheless, there will still be times and situations when the American practice of putting together scattered family fragments in brotherly love will be a helpful technique, especially as urban conditions around the world may evolve the tragic degree of family fragmentation which we now have in the U.S.A. (The mission theologian, Howard Snyder, in his new book *Earthcurrents*, says, “In the United States, the most dramatic change has been the drop in households headed by a married couple—from about one half to one tenth in just 40 years,” p. 34.)

However, the global threat of American and Western hyper-individualism, so closely allied with Christianity as it now is, may more often pose one of the most serious obstacles to the realization of “A Church for Every People.”

Missiologically defined peoples?

In any case, only after we recognize clearly that “a people movement to Christ” should be the basic goal of missionary activity within a people is it possible to think clearly about what kind of a people we are talking about. If we see clearly that a “people movement” is highly indigenous, and that the members of the people feel a sense of belonging to each other, then it is possible to recognize the inherent barriers that result from rivalries or enmities within groups which may appear unified and barrierless to outside observers. Those of us who often count ethnolinguistic groups usually take very seriously the tangible differences in dialect or vocabulary of different groups but may not often take seriously the many different kinds of intangible “prejudice barriers” that define additional subgroups.

In other words, if there are divisions which prevent all the people in a group joining in with a “people movement” that has grown up, it is likely that (from the standpoint of missionary strategy) there are really two or more groups, not just one, and that more than one people movement must be started to fulfill the goal of “The Gospel for Every People.” Is this what it will take for every person to have access to the Gospel?

Chapter Three: The Gospel for Every Person?

What does it mean for us to try to take seriously the statement that *we cannot say that we have evangelized a person unless that person has been given a chance to unite with an indigenous movement within his or her own society?*

If it is imperative for there to be an indigenous church movement within every people in order for every person to have a reasonable opportunity to know Christ, then it is comes with equal force that if every person in a group cannot join an existing people movement, it is apparently true that that group consists of more than one group needing the incarnation of an indigenous church movement. In a word, from the standpoint of church planting strategy there may be important subdivisions within the group which we have assumed is just one group.

Groups within groups?

This fact has caused a lot of confusion. It means we can’t start out by counting how many groups there are except in a guess-work sense. Some or many of our groups may turn out to be clusters of groups. Only when a people movement gets going will it define the

practical boundaries and allow us to be sure how many groups there actually are. It means that we can only count groups accurately after the Gospel has come, not before. We don't want to count more groups than really can be reached with a single people movement; yet we don't want to ignore silent, alienated minorities which feel left out of a majority movement. The technical wording goes like this: a group with mission significance is "the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."

These words were framed by a large and representative group of mission experts at a Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March of 1982. Neither before nor after has there ever been a similar meeting to define such concepts and terms, although people are free to ignore or oppose this definition. The most common objection is that this particular wording results in a people of a type defined by missiological criteria, which is meaningful primarily to mission strategists. Pragmatically, however, you can't find data of this kind in encyclopedias or world almanacs or reference materials coming from the United Nations. Secular researchers don't think in such terms. Rather, what you do find is data based on country units, which often (very often) split a single people group into two or more groups because of country borders.

Defining groups by ministry tools

Christian workers may be confused partly because they naturally tend to define the world's population in terms of the groups which are reasonable targets for the particular tools of evangelism *in which they specialize*.

For example, those missionaries who hold in their hands immensely powerful radio stations have understandably concluded that they must limit their outreach to 280 groups of people in the world—those that are over 1 million in size. Missionary radio, the enormous and expensive tool in their hands, does not allow them to cope with the smaller groups within these 280 spheres, smaller groups which have differing dialects. The thought is that the smaller groups can understand through a trade language within the 290.

Or, take Campus Crusade's amazing *Jesus* film strategy. Although Jesus film strategists started out targeting the same 280 groups of 1-million or more, their indefatigable efforts have taken them deep into the grass-roots reality. As a result they have now developed less expensive ways of producing sound tracks for the film and as a result of this modification of their "tool" they are now able to focus on groups which are only 75,000 in number or larger. The new less-expensive approach allows them a goal of just over 1,000 such groups. Within these groups are still smaller groups, which, if you were to count them all would produce a much larger number. Again, these still-smaller groups may be able to hear via the trade language of their areas.

Understandably, one of the oldest and largest missionary forces, the Wycliffe Bible Translators, has chosen its tool to be the printed page. That choice is the least expensive medium, and thus enables them to reach every group in the world. *Note that written materials are usable by more than one dialect!* If each dialect able to read the same text were to be pronounced out loud it very well might be unintelligible or objectionable to other groups which can nevertheless read from the same page! In any event, use of the printed page both allows and requires a total of more than 6,000 groups to be approached, only about half of which still need (printed) translation help.

By contrast, note the differing circumstances of the mission groups which employ the *ear-gate*. Take Gospel Recordings, for example. These marvelous people understand perfectly that several groups which can read the same printed page may *pronounce* what they see in discordant ways, and as a result the people speaking the different dialects simply will

not all listen to a radio or cassette that speaks one of the other dialects—even though its message may appear the same on the printed page. Accordingly, as long as Gospel Recordings uses the ear-gate it has to take these subgroups seriously. As a result, Gospel Recordings estimates more than 10,000 groups to be reached—if you employ the ear-gate and the mother tongue. However, it is possible to put the minimal Gospel message into cassette more easily than it is to produce a substantial portion of the Bible in printed form. Thus, Gospel Recordings, with only a staff of 60, has already dealt with more than 4,500 groups! Peoples need the minimal Gospel on a few cassettes. They also need a substantial portion of the Bible (not necessarily just the New Testament).

If you ponder carefully the effect of using differing tools of evangelism, it will become clear that the goal of the Gospel for Every Person will more likely require penetration by people movements into the smaller groups—eventually, that is, into groups the size Gospel Recordings works with. Why? Because otherwise some small groups of people in many places will not feel part of Christian people movements that talk in objectionably different ways.

Barriers of prejudice!

Tragically, near-neighbors often hate and fear each other. Thus, in the early stages of evangelism such groups often refuse to become part of the same “people-movement church.” In the early stages of evangelism such enmities will require such groups to be dealt with separately—in the early stages, that is.

Fortunately, however, it is true that virtually all such smaller groups are part of larger clusters of groups. This makes it possible to include all remaining unreached groups without listing more than 2,500 or so groups, some of which are clusters. These are a tangible list of targets for distinctively missionary strategy. Once these clusters are successfully penetrated it gives insight into how other groups within the same cluster may yield to the Gospel, even though the Gospel may not automatically flow from one group in a cluster to its near-neighbor enemies.

And history shows that eventually a large host of smaller, often warring groups, once they become Christian, start to coalesce into larger groups. For example, at the time Christianity first began to be adopted in the Scandinavian area, hundreds of mutually hostile tribes inhabited the region. The Norwegian, Swedish and Danish spheres today are the result of widespread reconciliation and consequent unification resulting from the adoption of Christian faith on the part of many smaller, formerly warring groups. Christian faith did not quite prevent the Rwanda massacres, but it is clearly the only thing that unites the two groups. Satan simply took advantage of the overall good will between the two groups whose people were living side by side and unleashed a malignant minority to do his dirty work, exploiting a settle situation of integration. Note that for the most part one group was not won to Christ by the other group but by people from a long way away.

It is valuable for the AD 2000 movement to have added “and the Gospel for Every Person” to the 1980 slogan, “A Church for Every People,” because it may not be obvious that reaching every people is the essential means of reaching every person, It also may not be obvious that once that essential people movement to Christ has been created by the divine-human effort of cross-cultural evangelism (which is what missions is), that central achievement then essentially makes accessible and available “the Gospel for Every Person,” and is perhaps the best way to define it.

Measure or verify?

But how measurable is the presence of this “essential people movement to Christ?” It might perhaps be better to say “verifiable” than “measurable.” We don’t normally say a woman is partially pregnant, or that a person is partially infected by AIDS. Rather, in such cases we “verify” the presence or absence of a condition.

For example, measuring the percentage of the individuals in a group that seem to be active Christians may not be the best indicator of the presence or absence of a people movement to Christ. Two percent of a small group of 700 is only 14 people; 2% of the Minnan Chinese in Taiwan happens to be 400,000 believers in 2,000 congregations.

What makes it easier to verify the existence of an unreached people is the fact that we are looking for the groups with the least opportunity, the least access. While it may be difficult to say at just what point a people movement securely exists or not, it is certainly easy to identify those groups *where there is no doubt* one way or the other. You end up with three categories: 1) groups definitely unreached, 2) groups where there is doubt, and 3) groups definitely reached. This could be boiled down to 1) unreached, 2) doubtful, and 3) reached. Logically we expect to focus our highest priority energies on those that are definitely unreached. The only thing is that 2%, or any percentage as such, may be an indirect and misleading measurement.

But, unfortunately, it is still almost entirely theoretical to ask the simple question of whether or not a group has a people movement to Christ within it (e.g. is it reached or not by the 1982 definition). Why? Because this is not the way the world’s statistical machinery is working. The U.N. does not ask such questions. Neither do the secular encyclopedias, nor the military or political researchers. Who does? The three major Christian research offices, those of Patrick Johnstone, David Barrett, and Barbara Grimes, have been at work for years and control masses of data on the World Christian movement, drawing on sources all over the world but mainly upon annual publications of some kind or another, both secular and church publications, etc. These, understandably, are primarily sources for *what is being done*, not so much for what is not being done. Few of these sources render information on peoples with whom they do not yet work, and if they do, still fewer ask this particular, specific “unreached peoples” question. The very concept is still fairly new. Thus, there is inadequate information at the present time.

In the meantime ...

As a result we must be content with the best we can do with the data available. This is where the kind of “less than 2% Christian” type of “available data” comes back in as better than nothing. The AD 2000 movement has drawn together a fine group of willing researchers and has put together a list which combines differing criteria that may all be significant. These sources have drawn upon data from mission agencies, from individual missionaries, from church publications and lists gathered for other purposes and with other criteria. Some research agencies tabulate the percentages of different religious adherents. Some tabulate degrees of ethnicity, and so on. Thus, the practical thing to do is what AD 2000 has done in this still early state of affairs—namely, to take lists from various sources and various criteria and make up “a list of lists,” giving all of the available information about a now fairly comprehensive list of peoples.

This is a practical and temporary shift of attention away from the simple, missiological question, “Is this group reached?” That is, is there a “people movement to

Christ” present? Or, is there “a pioneer church planting movement present?” Rather, the question has temporarily become, “Is there published information about this group which could give us some light of some sort on the missiological question?”

The goal has not changed. It is still “A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person by the Year 2000.” One of the most exciting things to see happen following GCOWE II in Korea is the vast increase of information which is bound to be uncovered in the months and years between now and the Year 2000.

Do we have enough to work with?

The really crazy thing is that we have all the information we need for the new outreaches for which we are prepared right now. The more we penetrate the pioneer peoples the more we will know. We don’t really need to know more than we can digest right now. We don’t need to wring our hands because we don’t know the middle name of every baby in every ghetto in order to reach out with mercy to those whose existence we already know. We don’t need to know in advance the name of everyone in every house on every block to be able to leave brochures about the Jesus film. We will find out a lot more about a lot of the details when we get out there and get to work. The world is now incredibly small. There is no place on earth you cannot go in a few hours. We must keep our goals clearly in mind and not worry too much about the details. We need not suppose that everything depends on us, but we must understand that God is asking everything of us. That, in turn, is the same as saying that He wants to touch our tongues with a live coal from the altar. It means He wants our love for all the world to reflect the genuineness and compassion of His love for all the world, which has already profoundly benefitted us. Paul explained his motivation when he said, “Christ died for all that those who live might no longer live unto themselves but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (II Cor. 5:15).■

NOTE: The pages in the Appendix present one of the most significant documents McGavran ever wrote. It was at the very end of his life and distilled his misgivings at superficial attempts to barge into untouched groups with the Gospel. Much of his whole life of insights is remarkably distilled here for all to see.

Appendix

A Church in Every People: Plain Talk about a Difficult Task

Donald A. McGavran

In the last eighteen years of the twentieth century, the goal of Christian mission should be to preach the Gospel and, by God’s grace, to plant in every unchurched segment of mankind—what shall we say—“a church” or “a cluster of growing churches”? By the phrase “segment of mankind” I mean an urbanization, development, caste, tribe, valley, plain, or minority population. I shall explain that the steadily maintained long-range goal should never be the first; but should always be second. The goal is not one small sealed-off conglomerate congregation in every people. Rather, the long-range goal (to be held constantly in view in the years or decades when it is not yet achieved) should be a cluster of growing congregations in every segment.

The One-by-One Method

As we consider the phrase italicized above, we should remember that it is usually easy to start one single congregation in a new unchurched people group. The missionary arrives. He and his family worship on Sunday. They are the first members of the congregation. He learns the language and preaches the Gospel. He lives like a Christian. He tells people about Christ and helps them in their troubles. He sells tracts or Gospels, or gives them away. Across the years, a few individual converts are won from that. Sometimes they come for very sound and spiritual reasons; sometimes from mixed motives. But here and there a woman, a man, a boy, a girl do decide to follow Jesus. A few employees of the mission become Christian. These may be masons hired to erect the buildings, helpers in the home, rescued persons or orphans. The history of mission in Africa is replete with churches started by buying slaves, freeing them and employing such of them as could not return to their kindred. Such as chose to could accept the Lord. A hundred and fifty years ago this was a common way of starting a church. With the outlawing of slavery, of course, it ceased to be used.

One single congregation arising in the way just described is almost always a conglomerate church—made up of members of several different segments of society. Some old, some young, orphans, rescued persons, helpers and ardent seekers. All seekers are carefully screened to make sure they really intend to receive Christ. In due time a church building is erected and, lo, “a church in that people.” It is a conglomerate church. It is sealed off from all the people groups of that region. No segment of the population says, “That group of worshipers is us.” They are quite right. It is not. It is ethnically quite a different social unit.

This very common way of beginning the process of evangelization is a slow way to disciple the peoples of the earth—note the plural, “the peoples of the earth.” Let us observe closely what really happens as this congregation is gathered. Each convert, as he becomes a Christian, is seen by kin as one who leaves “us” and joins “them.” He leaves “our gods” to worship “their gods.” Consequently, his own relations force him out. Sometimes he is severely ostracized; thrown out of house and home; his wife is threatened. Hundreds of converts have been poisoned or killed. Sometimes, the ostracism is mild and consists merely in severe disapproval. His people consider him a traitor. A church which results from this process looks to the peoples of the region like an assemblage of traitors. It is a conglomerate congregation. It is made up of individuals who, one by one, have come out of several different societies, castes or tribes.

Now if anyone, in becoming a Christian, is forced out of, or comes out of a tightly-structured segment of society, the Christian cause wins the individual but loses the family. The family, his people, his neighbors of that tribe are fiercely angry at him or her. They are the very men and women to whom he cannot talk. “You are not of us,” they say to him. “You have abandoned us, you like them more than you like us. You now worship their gods not our gods.” As a result, conglomerate congregations, made up of converts won in this fashion, grow very slowly. Indeed, one might truly affirm that, where congregations grow in this fashion, the conversion of the ethnic units (people groups) from which they come is made doubly difficult. “The Christians misled one of our people,” the rest of the group will say. “We’re going to make quite sure that they do not mislead any more of us.”

One-by-one, is relatively easy to accomplish. Perhaps 90 out of 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. I want to emphasize that. Perhaps 90 out of every 100 missionaries who intend church planting, get only conglomerate congregations. Such missionaries preach the Gospel, tell of Jesus, sell tracts and Gospels and evangelize in many other ways. They welcome inquirers, but whom do they get? They get a

man here, a woman there, a boy here, a girl there, who for various reasons are willing to become Christians and patiently to endure the mild or severe disapproval of their people.

If we understand how churches grow and do not grow on new ground, in untouched and unreached peoples, we must note that the process I have just described seems unreal to most missionaries. “What,” they will exclaim, “could be a better way of entry into all the unreached peoples of that region than to win a few individuals from among them? Instead of resulting in the sealed-off church you describe, the process really gives us points of entry into every society from which a convert has come. That seems to us to be the real situation.”

Those who reason in this fashion have known church growth in a largely Christian land, where men and women who follow Christ are not ostracized, are not regarded as traitors, but rather as those who have done the right thing. In that kind of a society every convert usually can become a channel through which the Christian Faith flows to his relatives and friends. On that point there can be no debate. It was the point I emphasized when I titled my book *The Bridges of God*.

But in tightly-structured societies, where Christianity is looked on as an invading religion, and individuals are excluded for serious fault, there to win converts from several different segments of society, far from building bridges to each of these, erects barriers difficult to cross.

The People Movement Approach

Now let us contrast the other way in which God is discipling the peoples of Planet Earth. My account is not theory but a sober recital of easily observable facts. As you look around the world you see that, while most missionaries succeed in planting only conglomerate churches by the “one-by-one out of the social group” method, here and there clusters of growing churches arise by the people-movement method. They arise by tribe-wise or caste-wise movements to Christ. This is in many ways a better system. In order to use it effectively, missionaries should operate on seven principles.

First, they should be clear about the goal. The goal is not one single conglomerate church in a city or a region. They may get only that, but that must never be their goal. That must be a cluster of growing, indigenous congregations every member of which remains in close contact with his kindred. This cluster grows best if it is in one people, one caste, one tribe one segment of society. For example, if you were evangelizing the taxi drivers of Taipei, then your goal would be to win not some taxi drivers some university professors, some farmers and some fishermen, but to establish churches made up largely of taxi drivers, their wives and children and mechanics. As you win converts of that particular community, the congregation has a natural, built-in social cohesion. Everybody feels at home. Yes, the goal must be clear.

The second principle is that the national leader, or the missionary and his helpers, should concentrate on one people. If you are going to establish a cluster of growing congregations amongst, let us say, the Nair people of Kerala, which is the south west tip of India, then you would need to place most of your missionaries and their helpers so that they can work among the Nairs. They should proclaim the Gospel to Nairs and say quite openly to them, “We are hoping that, within your caste, there soon will be thousands of followers of Jesus Christ, who will remain solidly in the Nair community.” They will, of course, not worship the old gods; but then plenty of Nairs don’t worship their old gods—plenty of Nairs are Communist, and ridicule their old gods.

Nairs whom God calls, who choose to believe in Christ, are going to love their neighbors more than they did before, and walk in the light. They will be saved and beautiful

people. They will remain Nairs while, at the same time they have become Christians. To repeat, concentrate on one people group. If you have three missionaries, don't have one evangelizing this group, another that, and a third 200 miles away evangelizing still another. That is a sure way to guarantee that any church started will be small, non-growing, one-by-one churches. The social dynamics of those sections of society will work solidly against the eruption of any great growing people movement to Christ.

The third principle is to encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their own people in most matters. They should continue to eat what their people eat. They should not say, "My people are vegetarians but, now that I have become a Christian, I'm going to eat meat." After they become Christians they should be more rigidly vegetarian than they were before. In the matter of clothing, they should continue to look precisely like their kinfolk. In the matter of marriage, most people are endogamous, they insist that "our people marry only our people." They look with great disfavor on our marrying other people. And yet when Christians come in one-by-one, they cannot marry their own people. None of them have become Christian. Where only a few of a given people become Christians, when it comes time for them or their children to marry, they have to take husbands or wives from other segments of the population. So their own kin look at them and say, "Yes, become a Christian and mongrelize your children. You have left us and have joined them."

All converts should be encouraged to bear cheerfully the exclusion, the oppression, and the persecution that they are likely to encounter from their people. When anyone becomes a follower of a new way of life, he is likely to meet with some disfavor from his loved ones. Maybe it's mild; maybe it's severe. He should bear such disfavor patiently. He should say on all occasions,

"I am a better son than I was before; I am a better father than I was before; I am a better husband than I was before; and I love you more than I used to do. You can hate me, but I will not hate you. You can exclude me, but I will include you. You can force me out of our ancestral house; but I will live on its veranda. Or I will get a house just across the street. I am still one of you, I am more one of you than I ever was before."

Encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their people in most matters. Please note that word "most." They cannot remain one with their people in idolatry, or drunkenness or obvious sin. If they belong to a segment of society that earns its living stealing they must "steal no more." But, in most matters (how they talk, how they dress, how they eat, where they go, what kind of houses they live in), they can look very much like their people, and ought to make every effort to do so.

The fourth principle is to try to get group decisions for Christ. If only one person decides to follow Jesus, do not baptize him immediately. Say to him, "You and I will work together to lead another five or ten or, God willing, fifty of your people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior so that when you are baptized, you are baptized with them." Ostracism is very effective against one lone person. But ostracism is weak indeed when exercised against a group of a dozen. And when exercised against two hundred it has practically no force at all.

The fifth principle is this: Aim for scores of groups of people to become Christians in an even flowing stream across the years. One of the common mistakes made by missionaries, eastern as well as western, all around the world is that when a few become Christians—perhaps 100, 200 or even 1,000—the missionaries spend all their time teaching them. They want to make them good Christians and they say to themselves, "If these people become good Christians, then the Gospel will spread." So for years they concentrate on a few congregations. By the time, ten or twenty years later, that they begin evangelizing outside that group, the rest of the people no longer want to become Christians. That has happened

again and again. This principle requires that, from the very beginning, the missionary keeps on reaching out to new groups. “But,” you say, “is not this a sure way to get poor Christians who don’t know the Bible? If we follow that principle we shall soon have a lot of ‘raw’ Christians. Soon we shall have a community of perhaps five thousand people who are very sketchily Christian.”

Yes, that is certainly a danger. At this point, we must lean heavily upon the New Testament, remembering the brief weeks or months of instruction Paul gave to his new churches. We must trust the Holy Spirit, and believe that God has called those people out of darkness into His wonderful light. As between two evils, giving them too little Christian teaching and allowing them to become a sealed-off community that cannot reach its own people, the latter is much the greater danger. We must not allow new converts to become sealed-off. We must continue to make sure that a constant stream of new converts comes into the ever-growing cluster of congregations.

Now the sixth point is this: The converts, five or five thousand, ought to say or at least feel:

We Christians are advance guard of our people, of our segment of society. We are showing our relatives and neighbors a better way of life. The way we are pioneering is good for us who have become Christians and will be very good for you thousands who have yet to believe. Please look on us not as traitors in any sense. We are better sons, brothers and wives, better tribesmen and caste fellows, better members of our labor union, than we ever were before. We are showing ways in which, while remaining thoroughly of our own segment of society, we all can have a better life. Please look on us as the pioneers of our own people entering a wonderful Promised Land.

The last principle I stress is this: Constantly emphasize brotherhood. In Christ there is no Jew, no Greek, no bond, no free, no Barbarian, no Scythian. We are all one in Christ Jesus. But, at the same time, let us remember that Paul did not attack all imperfect social institutions. For example, he did not do away with slavery. Paul said to the slave, “Be a better slave.” He said to the slave owner, “Be a kindlier master.”

Paul also said in that famous passage emphasizing unity, “There is no male or female.” Nevertheless Christians, in their boarding schools and orphanages, continue to sleep boys and girls in separate dormitories!! In Christ, there is no sex distinction. Boys and girls are equally precious in God’s sight. Men from this tribe, and men from that are equally precious in God’s sight. We are all equally sinners saved by grace. These things are true but, at the same time, there are certain social niceties which Christians at this time may observe.

As we continue to stress brotherhood, let us be sure that the most effective way to achieve brotherhood is to lead ever increasing numbers of men and women from every ethnos, every tribe, every segment of society into an obedient relationship to Christ. As we multiply Christians in every segment of society, the possibility of genuine brotherhood, justice, goodness and righteousness will be enormously increased. Indeed, the best way to get justice, possibly the only way to get justice, is to have very large numbers in every segment of society become committed Christians.

Conclusion

As we work for Christward movements in every people, let us not make the mistake of believing that “one-by-one out of the society into the church” is a bad way. One precious soul willing to endure severe ostracism in order to become a follower of Jesus—one precious soul coming all by himself—is a way that God has blessed and is blessing to the

salvation of mankind. But it is a slow way. And it is a way which frequently seals off the convert's own people from any further hearing of the Gospel.

Sometimes one-by-one is the only possible method. When it is, Let us praise God for it, and live with its limitations. Let us urge all those wonderful Christians who come bearing persecution and oppression, to pray for their own dear ones and to work constantly that more of their own people may believe and be saved.

One-by-one is one way that God is blessing to the increase of His Church. The people movement is another way. The great advances of the Church on new ground out of non-Christian religions have always come by people movements, never one-by-one. It is equally true that one-by-one-out-of-the-people is a very common beginning way. In the book, *Bridges of God*, which God used to launch the Church Growth Movement, I have used a simile. I say there that missions start proclaiming Christ on a desert-like plain. There life is hard, the number of Christians remains small. A large missionary presence is required. But, here and there, the missionaries or the converts find ways to break out of that arid plain and proceed up into the verdant mountains. There large numbers of people live; there great churches can be founded; there the Church grows strong; that is people-movement land.

I commend that simile to you. Let us accept what God gives. If it is one-by-one, let us accept that and lead those who believe in Jesus to trust in Him completely. But let us always pray that, after that beginning, we may proceed to higher ground, to more verdant pasture, to more fertile lands where great groups of men and women, all of the same segment of society, become Christians and thus open the way for Christward movements in each people on earth. Our goal should be Christward movements within each segment. There the dynamics of social cohesion will advance the Gospel and lead multitudes out of darkness into His wonderful life. Let us be sure that we do it by the most effective methods.

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The Story of a Movement

(From the booklet, *Thy Kingdom Come for GCOWE '95 in Korea, May, 1995*)

(*Frontiers in Mission*, 145-54)

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Chapter One: Where the Idea Began

The GCOWE '95 meeting in Korea shoulders a very significant burden. Is it part of a discernible movement to the final frontiers? What other meetings have had that burden? How does this movement compare?

William Carey, 1810

In India for more than a decade, William Carey, in 1806, thought that it would be a good idea if all of the missionaries in the world were to meet together four years later at the Cape of Good Hope, in 1810. The purpose of such a meeting would have been very simply to plan together to finish the task of world evangelization. His proposal may have been the first time any human being thought in such concrete and planetary terms.

Carey was obviously not just a field missionary in India, but (like Hudson Taylor after him, and John R. Mott still later) he had his eyes on the whole world. His letters inspired people to go to specific, strategic places *other than India*. His own son went to Burma. Missionaries often recruit for more than their own fields!

Despite his considerable influence by 1806, his idea of a world-level gathering of missionary strategists in 1810 was dismissed by one of his followers as merely “One of William’s pleasing dreams.”

Chapter Two: Where the Idea Almost Ended

John R. Mott, 1910

But Carey’s dream for 1810 didn’t die. It was actually a delayed-action fuse. It went off a century later at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910.

William Carey was called into the ministry in August of 1786 and made his proposal 20 years later, after being in India over a decade. John R. Mott stood up as one of the “Northfield 100” in August of 1886 and made his proposal 20 years later after tramping the world for over a decade on behalf of the Student Volunteer Movement. By 1906, John R. Mott wielded an enormous influence. He had attended a regional meeting of mission leaders in Madras, India, in 1900. By 1906 (exactly 100 years from the date Carey made his suggestion for a world-level meeting of mission leaders) Mott announced his resolve to attempt to head off another “Decennial” popular meeting already scheduled for 1910 and to transform it into a radically different type of meeting. He had been stirred

by the significance of mission leaders getting together by themselves to discuss the task before them, and was impressed by the immediate significance of a *world-level meeting constituted specifically by missionaries and mission executives*.

Thus, in 1906 he wrote:

To my mind the missionary enterprise at the present time would be much more helped by a thorough unhurried conference of the leaders of the boards of North America and Europe than by a great, popular convention. I feel strongly upon this point.

Unlike church leaders (parallel to mayors and governors) who provide the all-important nurture and spirit of the mission enterprise, mission leaders are parallel to military generals. They have literally in their hands the troops to carry out expeditionary goals.

Although a world-level conference of a more typical kind was already contemplated for 1910, Mott resolutely switched to the mission-leader paradigm he had seen in action in India. It took two more years for him to convince enough others. The result was that beginning in 1908, with only two years to go (and with the help of his friends, notably J. H. Oldham), Mott drummed up one of the most influential conferences in world history.

Why is 1910 so well remembered? No doubt because it was the William Carey paradigm. That is, it was not based on church leaders who have only indirect connection to the mechanisms of mission. Well-meaning church leaders often speak warmly of causes in great gatherings but do not necessarily have the administrative structure with which to follow through.

No, the meeting at Edinburgh in 1910, following the example of the India regional gathering (plus the gust of wind coming from a similar meeting in Shanghai in 1907), consisted of the electrifying concept which William Carey had proposed.

Granted the 1910 meeting was not immediately succeeded by similar meetings. The next meeting in this stream (Jerusalem, 1928) included a wide variety of church leaders and, as a result, switched back to that all-important sphere of church leaders who guide and nurture the troops but do not command them. At the same time, while there have never been many “liberals” among the missionaries themselves, once you invite a wide spectrum of church leaders you will find that theological debates and issues of liberalism tend to crowd out the kind of strategic mission discussions that are the hallmark of dedicated mission leaders who have most of such discussions behind them.

Thus, unfortunately, the 1910 meeting has become known more for the kind of meetings that followed it (eventually leading into the World Council of Churches) rather than for the meeting it really was.

Edinburgh, 1910

What then actually took place in 1910 that did not happen again—for a long time? What made it so unique?

1. It consisted solely and exclusively of delegates sent by mission agencies. (You could not be invited and decide to attend. You had to be delegated—and delegated by a mission agency, not by a church or denomination.)

2. It focused solely on whatever it would take to finish the job. (The topics for discussion were not church/mission tensions nor other mission-related topics which had more to do with the concerns of the national church than with outreach to new areas.)

3. It focused specifically, therefore, on what in those days were called, “the unoccupied fields.”

Missionaries working in Latin America loudly complained that the conference did not accept delegates from Latin America or Europe. It was assumed that the reason for this was that the conference organizers considered Catholics as saved—and thus did not consider Latin America “an unoccupied field”—the Bible was there, etc.

In hindsight, we can see the harm of Mott and the other leaders considering huge territories as “occupied” (e.g. Latin America, North America and Europe): the result was they overlooked the Indians of the Americas, for example. They thought in “field” terms, not “people” terms that is, in geographic terms rather than ethnographic terms.

Since 1910 there has therefore been some confusion about that conference. While a number of other conferences have been organized to follow in the 1910 tradition, they have all fallen far short. We have to ask ourselves, what have people thought the 1910 conference was but which it actually wasn’t? The fact is, 1910 was very simply the first world level conference that consisted of Mission Agency delegates—and the first that focused as exclusively as it did on what they understood as “the unoccupied fields.”

In any event it was not until 1972 (62 years later) at a meeting of the (North American) Association of Professors of Mission that Professor Luther Copeland of the Southeastern Baptist Seminary specifically proposed another meeting like the one in 1910 to be held in 1980.

However, before jumping from 1910 to 1972 (and on to 1980) let’s look at some intervening world-level or very large meetings which were not quite the same as the 1910 meeting. Since a general description of such meetings would take more space than we have available here, what *key ideas* should we look for in these other meetings that were significant factors in 1910?

1. Did they have closure goals? Was there any reference to “finishing the task” and, if so, in a certain length of time? Goals need dates.

2. Did they focus on mission *fields* or on mission *peoples*? That is, did they speak in terms of geography or ethnography?

3. Who was invited? Mission leaders, church leaders, or both? Western leaders or leaders from the Two-Thirds world, or both?

4. Were all missionaries present Western? Were Two-Thirds World churches expected to send their own missionaries?

Chapter Three: Significant Ripples of 1910

Chicago, 1960

The 1910 meeting was a specific impetus for a very large and influential meeting sponsored by the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association in 1960—deliberately on the 50th anniversary of the 1910 meeting. Chicago, 1960 was a huge success, bringing together 500 missionaries and 800 pastors as well as thousands of lay people. Its published report was entitled “Facing the Unfinished Task.” Its use of geographical language was similar to the 1910 conference:

We call upon Christian young people to rise in force for the speedy occupation of the remaining unevangelized portions of the world field.

It is painful to point out that this magnificent congress suffered unintentionally from pessimism in regard to a key statistical point: By 1960 world population growth had alarmingly expanded. A widespread assumption was that the Christian movement was being left behind—even though the evangelical sector across the world was expanding much more rapidly than the general population explosion!

Thus, Congress documents highlighted the “left-behind” concern:

That the unfinished task of world evangelization was greater by far than it was 50 years before at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910.

The editor of the published report noted that world population had increased by 75 percent but failed to note that *the number of Bible-believing Christians had swelled by 170 percent in the same time period*. This caused him to comment,

As of today we are failing...we have actually lost ground...oh, God, it is the knowledge of these things which causes us here to confess that ‘we know not what to do.’

Also, marvelous as the 1960 meeting was, it was not a world-level conference. It was sponsored by only the IFMA. Also, note that its program was clearly designed more to motivate church leaders than gather mission leaders to plan for global mission. Only five out of 27 major speakers were missionaries.

A second, similar conference was planned for 1964, but due to changes of leadership and perspectives about cooperation the next conference was shelved in favor of even larger plans for a conference to be held at Wheaton in 1966. This time the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association was involved as a co-sponsor. The EFMA (then called the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association) had been in existence for fifteen years at the time of the 1960 conference, but the EFMA was too new to be taken seriously by the much older IFMA. Furthermore, some leaders felt that the EFMA (as with the National Association of Evangelicals to which it is related) seemed dangerously to involve Pentecostals— and it even seemed to be too open to the world of the historic denominations.

Wheaton, 1966

Thus, at Wheaton College in 1966 a record 150 mission agencies were represented as well as 39 special interest groups, 55 schools, and even 14 non-North American mission agencies.

However, the focus was not so much on plans for finishing the task as on unity around essentials. This emphasis was not unreasonable since the meeting united the IFMA and the EFMA for the first time. The ten themes stressed in the conference were syncretism, neo-universalism, proselytism, neo-Romanism, church growth, foreign missions, evangelical unity, evaluating methods, social concern, and a hostile world. These were summarized in the widely heralded “Wheaton Declaration.” Note, however, that only one of the ten phrases, “foreign missions,” referred to the unfinished task. The meeting closed, however, with a “Covenant” which spoke of “the evangelization of the

world in this generation,” which was part of the watchword of the movement that produced the 1910 meeting. The Canadian historian, Charles Tipp, said.

The Wheaton Congress provided the most comprehensive forum for evangelical interaction since Edinburgh in 1910.

Berlin, 1966

Credit goes to Carl F. H. Henry, at that time the editor of *Christianity Today* (whose wife was the daughter of a missionary) for the idea of a world level meeting on global evangelization. It was held on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the magazine, with Billy Graham as a co-sponsor, but it consciously leaned back on the vision of the 1910 conference. Both Billy Graham and Carl F. H. Henry referred approvingly of the 1910 meeting.

Unlike the Chicago 1960 and Wheaton 1966 meetings, Berlin 1966 was a large world-level meeting called the World Congress on Evangelism. Had it been a “congress on world evangelism” rather than a “world congress on evangelism” a closure emphasis might have been more prominent. The idea of closure, however, was mentioned by Billy Graham in his opening message when he said, “We have one task—the penetration with the Gospel of the entire world in our generation.”

A notable feature of this meeting was the publication, as an official congress document, of a book by Paulus Scharpf, *The History of Evangelism*,” (translated from the German by Dr. Henry’s wife, Helga) which described a number of true evangelists preaching justification by faith long before the Reformation.

Outstanding evangelists from all over the world—not necessarily mission leaders—were prominent at this important meeting in Berlin. At one exhibit a “population clock” kept ticking all through the meeting, emphasizing the fearfully fast growth of world population. However, there was no parallel evidence of awareness that the growth rate of the enormous global community of evangelical Christians *was greater, and getting steadily greater.*

Leysin, Switzerland, 1969

A small but global Saturation Evangelism Consultation in 1969 reflected in part a growing global enthusiasm over the “Evangelism-in-Depth” movement emanating from the Latin America Mission in Costa Rica and subsequently tried out in many other countries in Latin America and the world. (This strategy was to be greatly improved and promoted more recently by the DAWN movement.) Such an approach, however valuable it is, can sometimes be misunderstood as an emphasis on finishing the job *where we are* rather than going *where we aren’t*.

Theoretically, the saturation of any one area or country will turn up pockets of unreached peoples. The problem then is the fact that the near neighbors of such unreached groups are often the least loving or at least the least trusted by those who are still sealed off in unreached groups. Thus, missionaries from a good distance (not necessarily those who are culturally closest) are often needed wherever unpenetrated populations exist. Therefore, nationwide, nation-focused evangelistic planning often tend to overlook or bypass precisely the most needy sub-populations. To reach such populations it is probable that every nationwide strategy needs to send and receive

workers from other countries. In huge countries like India, people from a totally different part of the country may often be more acceptable than immediate neighbors.

Greenlake, 1971

One of the urgent concerns that surfaced at the Wheaton, 1966 meeting—but was not seriously dealt with—was the matter of the increasingly complex relationships between mission agencies on the field and the growing national churches on the field, that is, mission/church relations. Thus, this was taken up five years later at Greenlake, Wisconsin, but it was broadened to include (a subordinate emphasis on) the long-standing complexities of the relationship between sending churches and the mission agencies, that is, church/mission relations.

Since I was invited to be a consultant at this meeting, I asked specifically at the opening session whether any aspect of the meeting would be devoted to the relationship of the field churches to their own foreign missionaries (missionaries sent out by the national churches themselves). In 1971, apparently, the concept of non-Western mission agencies had not been widely understood. Missionaries had planted churches but had not planted mission agencies!

As a result of my question, the leaders of the conference held a hasty huddle on the platform and concluded that my concern was not on the agenda. Peter Wagner, who later edited a book on the conference, invited me to include a chapter which I entitled, “The Planting of Younger Missions” in *Church/ Mission Tensions Today*.

In attendance were 378 people from 122 mission agencies (only 75 IFMA or EFMA) and about 50 other entities (schools, churches), as well as national church leaders from “mission fields.” As a single-issue conference on the chosen subject you would not expect any reference to closure or the unfinished task, although the concept of unreached peoples within existing mission fields might well have been addressed.

Chapter Four: A Second 1910?

Wheaton, 1974

The only reason for mentioning Wheaton, 1974 is that we must now take note of the first formal proposal of a second *1910-type meeting*. We earlier mentioned that Luther Copeland had proposed this in 1972 at a regular meeting of the Association of Professors of Mission. The next year I stood up and “seconded” Copeland’s proposal, and at the meeting the following year, in 1974, Copeland himself presided at the blackboard when the wording of a formal “Call” was hammered out. Signing this call were two prominent international scholars—David Cho of Korea and David Bosch of South Africa

Inspiration was high. Arthur Glasser, Dean of the Fuller School of World Mission, had 3,000 little red buttons made up for the Lausanne Conference which was to occur a few days later, each button proclaiming “World Missionary Conference 1980.” As a result, thousands of these buttons were passed out at the Lausanne meeting which followed.

But what was in that “Call?”

Its exact words were:

It is suggested that a World Missionary Conference be convened in 1980 to confront contemporary issues in Christian world missions. The conference should

be constituted by persons committed to cross-cultural missions, broadly representative of the missionary agencies of the various Christian traditions on a world basis.

1. Note the crucial phrase which spoke of representatives of *the mission agencies* constituting the conference.

2. Also note that “missionary” was defined to be “cross-cultural,” presumably in outreach to non-Christians.

3. And note that this Call clearly did not address itself merely to Western mission agencies.

However,

1. It failed to employ either geographical or “people” terminology.

2. There was no hint about closure.

These defects were remedied by the sponsoring committee of agency representatives before the meeting actually took place six years later. Indeed, long before 1980, the ’74 call was subject to two other major streams offering to sponsor and control it.

Meanwhile, however, a few weeks after this Call was drafted, the world turned its attention to a perfectly huge and amazing meeting.

Lausanne, 1974

The International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE) was an unforgettable meeting. It became the first international meeting to frame the remaining task in people terms rather than geographical terms. It also launched the phrase “Unreached Peoples,” defining an *unreached people* by the presence of less than a certain *percentage of Christians* (later defined by the presence or absence of a *church movement*—that would come in 1982). This meeting is famous for all of the regional meetings which it spawned of a similar type. Probably no meeting since 1910 had an equivalent “fallout” of beneficial influence on subsequent meetings all around the world.

But what kind of emphasis did this original Lausanne meeting have? It is ironic but fair to say that the surprise and pleasure of the Western world at the vital surge of believers in the former “mission fields” generally tended to lead to the conclusion that we don’t need to send any more missionaries. The thought follows immediately that we just need to encourage and reinforce the new believers in the non-Western world and let the church in each country deal with its own evangelistic challenge.

Thus, in 1974 it seemed quite obvious that there was widespread (but unfortunate) agreement that each country ought to be able to take care of its own evangelistic challenges. In-country evangelism should suffice, according to this perspective. Both at Lausanne ’74 and at the World Council of Churches the idea of expatriate missionaries still being crucial was virtually ignored—despite the fact that Christian communities in many countries are still tiny, embattled minorities, and pockets of unreached peoples abound.

But even if every country contained sufficient evangelical strength, what is often ignored is that pockets of unreached peoples cannot be reached by ordinary “near-neighbor” evangelism. What fell to this writer at Lausanne ’74 was a plenary paper in which I endeavored to show that over half of the people in the world who are not Christians are people who cannot be reached by anything but pioneer missionary

techniques, not ordinary mono-cultural evangelism, not believers speaking their own native language.

As Arthur Glasser put it shortly after Lausanne, “If every congregation in the world were to undergo a great revival and reach out to every person within their own people—that is, to everyone in the cultural spheres represented by each congregation—*over half of all remaining non-Christians would still not be reached.*” My earnest plea at that conference is apparent from the title of my talk: “Cross-cultural Evangelism, the Highest Priority.”

The Lausanne Congress is also widely known for the Lausanne Covenant, a marvelous document which came out of it, and, in particular, for the articulation of a social concern (as if missions have not always had a social concern).

But to this writer, the most important achievement of the conference was the great emphasis on looking at the world as *peoples* rather than as *countries*. Strategically, Lausanne also changed one key word from Berlin: the World Congress on Evangelism of 1966 became the International Congress on World *Evangelization* in 1974—the word *evangelism* being a never-ending activity, and *evangelization* being intended to be a project to be completed. Here, in embryo, was the concept of closure.

At this point in our story we could conceivably move on to the 1980 meeting at Edinburgh, which has been called by some Edinburgh II, although its actual name was the “World Consultation on Frontier Missions.” But before doing that, we need to glance at a number of other milestones in the global movement we are tracing.

Chapter Five: Events Along the Way: 1941–1995

If we only chronicle the great meetings, we will overlook other evidences of the growth of a significant historical movement. Here are a few other kinds of events which reflect the exploding rebirth of global vision. (I regret that I may have inadvertently overlooked some very important conferences and events, and will welcome suggestions. In general I have omitted purely regional meetings.)

1941—After Pearl Harbor “awakened a sleeping giant,” America sent millions of its youth all over the globe. Many of these were evangelical Christians.

1945—Eleven million Americans began to return from the “ends of the earth” where God had forced them to study missions “on location.” (As a result 150 new mission agencies came into existence!)

1946—The first of the “Urbana” Missionary Conventions was held, this one in Toronto.

1955—Publication of *Bridges of God* by Donald McGavran

1960—The Chicago Conference (See comments, page 5).

1964—Founding of the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, jointly sponsored by IFMA and EFMA.

1965—Founding of the Fuller School of World Mission by Donald McGavran.

1966—Wheaton Conference (See comments, page 7.) 1966—Berlin Conference (See comments, page 8.)

1972—Founding of the American Society of Missiology, and its journal, *Missiology, An International Review*.

1973—Founding of the Association of Church Missions Committees

1973—Founding of the Asia Missions Association

1973—The great reversal of student attitude toward missions as evidenced by the sudden rise in the percentage of students who responded to the missionary call at the Urbana Missionary Convention in December

1973; one direct result of that was the beginning of the Perspectives Study Program

1974—Lausanne Conference (See comments, pages 12-14.)

1976—Founding of the U. S. Center for World Mission

1978—International Students, Inc. assigned Leiton Chin to coordinate the development of the 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions.

1979—The EFMA Executives Retreat focused on Unreached Peoples.

1980—A follow-through world-level conference sponsored by the Lausanne Committee, in Pattaya, Thailand

1980—The original Call for a 1910-type meeting in this year actually brought three into existence (see below).

1982—The formation of the IFMA Frontier Peoples Committee

1982—The Lausanne Committee sponsored a two-day study retreat of about 30 representatives from a wide variety of missions to settle the meanings of key words for speaking of unreached peoples. The definition of “Unreached Peoples” now required evidence of a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement—not a certain percentage of “Christians.”

1983—The World Evangelical Fellowship sponsored a global meeting at Wheaton; one of three tracks was Unreached Peoples

1983—The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association held a conference for 10,000 Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam.

1984—Founding of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*

1985—The first national level missions conference in Latin America

1986—Founding of the International Society for Frontier Missiology

1986—Caleb Project met 13,000 college students face to face, challenging them for missions.

1986—A second Itinerant Evangelists conference was held in Amsterdam by the BGEA.

1986—Nine regional student-led mission conferences were held in North America. But student-led organizations tend to self-destruct as their leaders graduate.

1986—The launching of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) in 1886 commemorated by four U.S. bodies:

—the American Society of Church History

—the Wheaton College Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals

—the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

—a general student gathering at the original site at Mt. Hermon, Massachusetts.

The heads of Campus Crusade, Navigators and InterVarsity all attended

1986—The Asia Missions Association met on a world level producing the Third-World Mission Association.

1986—At Amsterdam a meeting of 7000 TEMA students was held. (TEMA=The European equivalent of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.)

1987—COMIBAM (Congreso Misionero Ibero Americano), the first continental mission congress launched by Latin Americans, also the largest evangelical meeting ever

held in Latin America on a continental basis (3,500 delegates, including 500 from Africa and Asia). This was followed by a similar meeting in Korea, sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (related to the World Evangelical Fellowship).

1987—At Dallas, Texas, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board sponsored a very strategic conference of (U.S.) mission executives to consider the overall global challenge from the standpoint of working on it together.

1989—The Singapore Global Consultation on World Evangelization, and the founding of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement

1989—The Lausanne II meeting at Manila

1989 to 1995—An incredible whirl of activity by the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, leading to the May 1995 meeting in Korea, the Global Consultation on World Evangelization—GCOWE II.

I lack dates for other key developments such as the founding and remarkable growth of the India Mission Association, the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association, the Third World Mission Association, plus the highly significant development during the last few years of a renewed and activated Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. The latter, in turn has highlighted the existence and recent emergence of many mission training programs, centers and specialized schools.

Thus, we must at this moment leave for a later edition of this booklet many additional evidences of a growing, global awareness of the ability to finish the task, a task often shunned or considered hopeless. Let us now return to the specifically 1910 thread.

Chapter Six: Finally, Edinburgh, 1980

The 1972 proposal for a second 1910 type of meeting to be held in 1980 finally materialized. It almost didn't. It was not easy to defend the significant features of the 1910 meeting which it followed, namely: 1) that its only participants were delegated executives from existing mission agencies, and 2) the focus of the conference was exclusively upon "unoccupied fields." Key leaders in both the World Council (Emilio Castro) and the Lausanne Committee (Leighton Ford) suggested that their traditions respectively would appropriately be the ones to coordinate the proposed meeting.

Consequently, the World Council moved its meeting at Melbourne back from 1981 to 1980. The Lausanne Committee organized a large meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, also for 1980. The chosen date of the latter (during the summer) forced the convening committee of Edinburgh 1980 to move its scheduled date to November, and even to change its more general name (World Missionary Conference—as it was in 1910) to "World Consultation on Frontier Missions" at the suggestion of the Lausanne leaders.

Both the Melbourne and the Pattaya conferences were significant gatherings, but neither of them were designed to be parallel structurally to the 1910 conference in the terms mentioned above.

Thus, instead of the 1980 meeting being sponsored by either the WCC or Lausanne, a number of well-known mission agencies contributed members to an ad hoc planning committee for a worldwide conference of mission executives. Larry Allmon, chief executive of Gospel Recordings became the crucial chairperson of that committee. Although there was a certain sense of being overshadowed by the two giant conferences planned for that same year, the organizers clearly understood the distinctives of this

particular conference and met every month with a keen sense of anticipation. In a little over a year the entire consultation was organized, and was convened in November of 1980.

In the spring of 1979 International Students, Inc. (see page 16) contributed Leiton Chin as Coordinator of the conference. It is hard to imagine what would have happened had it not been for his secondment for the crucial pre-consultation period.

Long before 1980, the Call of 1974 had been doing its work. In 1976 an article in *Missiology, An International Journal*, “1980 and That Certain Elite” described in great detail both the Call (see above under 1974) and the response to it. Max Warren, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, indicated his interest and pledged cooperation (which happened even though he died before 1980). The Liebenzell Mission of Germany offered its facilities for the meeting.

Then Roy Spraggett of WEC in Scotland suggested that the meeting convene at the original 1910 site in Edinburgh, and offered to be responsible for arranging for the facilities there. The committee felt this would be ideal, and Larry Allmon made several trips to Edinburgh to conclude the arrangements with Spraggett.

In August of 1979, more than a year before the meeting, the sponsoring committee of mission agency representatives voted,

That those formally participating consist of delegates from agencies with current involvement in or with formal organizational commitment to reaching hidden people groups.

Note that *Hidden Peoples* were defined as “those cultural and linguistic subgroups, urban or rural, for which there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people.” This definition, with slight changes of wording, was later adopted by the Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March of 1982 as the meaning of the phrase, *Unreached Peoples*. (See 1982, the Lausanne meeting on definitions, page 16.)

A book, *Seeds of Promise*, edited by Alan Starling, contains the complete papers and presentations of the 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions. Its statistical data indicates that more mission agencies were represented at this meeting than at any previous (or subsequent) global conference, and that Edinburgh 1980 was the first world-level conference since 1910 to be composed exclusively of delegates of mission agencies (rather than invited participants of various kinds).

The cost of the meeting was very low since agencies appointing delegates provided travel costs as well as food and lodging expense. At the last minute a grant came from Anthony Rossi which assisted some of the Two-Thirds world delegates to be able to come.

A similar financial plan was followed by the January 1989 Singapore Global Conference on World Evangelization by the Year 2000 and Beyond, sparked by the vision of Thomas Wang. Dr. Wang had been deeply impressed in 1980 by the question of what God might be expecting of His people by the year 2000. He wrote a widely influential article, “By the year 2000, Is God Trying to Tell Us Something?” The resulting meeting in Singapore was simple, unadorned, very low budget. A substantial gift from the Maclellan Foundation gave last-minute assistance.

Since Wang was one of the four plenary speakers at Edinburgh 1980, it is no accident that the purpose statement of GCOWE II came, in essence, from the 1980

meeting, namely “A Church for Every People by the Year 2000.” To these words, the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement added for clarification “and the Gospel for Every Person.”

But the most unusual and powerful feature of the 1980 meeting was the fact that fully one-third of all of the delegates came from Two-Thirds World agencies. By comparison, in 1910, although a handful of non-Western agencies existed, they were accidentally overlooked! Bishop Azariah, for example, who had already founded two different mission agencies in India, was not invited to send delegates from his agencies. He was, instead, sent to the conference as a delegate of the Church Missionary Society working in South India! That was appropriate, but it revealed the woeful fact that the Mott leadership team failed even to conceive of the possibility of what we now call Two-thirds World mission agencies!

All of the largest non-Western agencies were represented at Edinburgh 1980. Three of the four invited plenary speakers, including Thomas Wang, came from the so-called mission lands. The delegates to this conference, on going back to their countries around the world have been involved in many notable advances of the specific emphasis on finishing the task and upon reaching the unreached peoples (as the necessary precursor to reaching every person). That amazing global impulse of the 1980 meeting for the build-up of momentum for world evangelization is a story that will have to be told later when the data is gathered.

In highlighting the Edinburgh 1980 meeting—this first intentional repetition of the 1910 pattern—it is not intended to imply that the many other great meetings (sometimes with 20 times the attendance, such as COMIBAM in Sao Paulo in 1987) were somehow less important. The fact is that we need both kinds of meetings—meetings of church leaders, church people, church and mission people, and now and then, meetings exclusively of mission executives.

As alluded to earlier, if you want to fight a war you need the backing of the mayors and state governors. But for the planning and execution of the war it is also necessary for the military leaders to get together and weld themselves into a single fighting force. Recently we have certainly seen that kind of wholesome and hearty cooperation between otherwise totally independent agencies in Russia where both the CoMission and the Strategic Alliance for Church Planting are the intentional integration of more than 50 separate agencies working in great harmony. Why not tackle the whole world in the same way?

The time has come for those who are the active leaders of mission agencies to gather in a low-budget conference not just for fellowship but for the purpose of joint planning and action, for the kind of goal setting for each agency which is not developed by the agency itself but by the consensus of the group. It is as if an agency in a “Strategic Partnership” voluntarily gives up its right to determine its own goals and instead takes its orders from the combination of minds and hearts of a number of different agencies which then work in complete harmony. This has already happened many times down through mission history. In recent years Interdev has marvelously spearheaded developments of this kind on a regional level. A single, world-level gathering of this type in 1996 would be a marvelous follow through on the foundation laid by GCOWE II at Seoul, Korea in 1995. ■

“Thy Kingdom Come”: An Analysis of a Vision

(IJFM 13:2 APRIL-JUNE 1996).

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/13_2_PDFs/04_Winter.pdf

“Peoples and Ethnic Groups”

(1996, WCF Lesson 73, Module 4)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5be39ebc8985830adc1d1d47/1541643965122/Peoples+and+Ethnic+Groups.pdf>

“The New Focus on Peoples”

(1996, WCF Lesson Overview 15, Module 4)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5be39f7b575d1fe9b127108d/1541644156357/New+Focus+on+Peoples.pdf>

Four Men, Three Eras, Two Transitions; Modern Missions

(1999) (Foundations Reader, 229-35)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed13d18cfba127f3c41f09d/1590770998243/Foundations+Reader.pdf>

Editorial: Three Crucial Mission Frontiers

(*IJFM* 18:2, April-June 2001).

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/18_2_PDFs/Rdwed.pdf

Editorial:

Assemblies of God Transition to Unreached Peoples

(*IJFM* 18:3, July-Sept 2001)

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/18_3_PDFs/EditorsDesk.pdf

Almost like new episodes in a weekly TV drama, the series on external vs. internal boards moves from the experience of Paul and Patrick to Ricci and Carey which in each case portray vividly how disastrous external control can be. The end of this series (in 18: 4) will present, finally, how the cliff-hanging situation with Hudson Taylor turned out well (well, almost entirely well). But in this issue you will encounter two more early examples, Catholic and Protestant, each of them potent and classic.

Meanwhile, Alan Johnson's story of the significant transition to Unreached Peoples is now complete in this issue. Interestingly, here is a subtle relation to the external/internal board issue. Both of these series are grappling, one way or another, with the nearly inevitable discrepancy between the understanding of mission on the part of donors and missionaries. Donors back home, for example, can readily "relate" to the subject of "missions" once there are emerging churches in what were once untouched mission fields. The care and feeding of those churches is a natural for donors hungry to see fruit appear and develop (even if donors are not exactly in an ideal position to know how to help that happen in a healthy way). Even missionaries can easily become content to shift away from the special problems and perplexities of pioneer work and relax a bit among bright-eyed converts. In this way the challenge of remaining frontiers is often obscured by the "high grass" of the emerging church. This is especially confusing if indeed an entire country is considered "the field," not the additional peoples beyond that "grass" are subsumed as part of what is already being done.

Johnson deftly, if gingerly, picks his way through the minefield of controversy between those emphasizing the frontiers and those deeply involved with extending the enormous growth of churches only where that is happening in the mission lands. He points out that it is almost predictable that you cannot emphasize a neglected aspect of the mission challenge without being accused of saying that is the only thing we must do. It is equally to be expected that you cannot define intermediate goals (a missiological breakthrough in every people) without being accused of redefining final goals (the completion of the Great Commission).

Personally I have never decried the location or the work of a single missionary no matter how "behind the scenes" their work might be. I simply believe that, okay, modern missions has now successfully turned almost all formerly pioneer fields into growing church movements. Can we then ignore the still unreached pioneer challenges? Indeed, missionaries in general are superbly located where they can very strategically endeavor to make sure that the churches with which they are working are involved in reaching out further to unreached peoples. To do that they usually must stay with the new churches not leave them before that vision is born. A frontier missionary is just as much the one who is behind the scenes

promoting and educating existing churches about the frontiers as the one who is right in the middle of a pioneer situation. There should be no “second class” missionaries just because they are not located in a pioneer field.

Goodness, if that were not true I could not be writing this editorial about frontiers (safely and soundly in gang-ridden, smog laden Southern California). Alan Johnson should not have taken the time to portray for us all this exciting account of a strategic movement. Well, for that matter, we couldn't keep any of our sorely needed staff in Pasadena!

Equally logical but mainly armchair reasoning has fueled a unique objection to goals and planning in mission endeavors, coming mainly from Latin America. The battery of social science and anthropological and linguistic and even management skills which Americans have been learning to employ for some time has provoked an earnest, kindly, and yet somehow twisted objection to most all North American mission endeavors. The malady has been cutely named “Managerial Missiology,” and the author of that concept has now for at least a decade insisted that this is something undesirable.

Only a Latin American could stand up credibly to this twisted logic, and Dr. Levi DeCarvalho has decided to do so—without any prompting from North Americans! His paper is a jewel, truly a marvel of level-headed evaluation of the issue. It throws a great deal of light on this major area, which otherwise could tear down a great deal of confidence in the outstanding strides which missions in general have made, with perhaps Wycliffe in the lead, in harnessing many different secular fields of expertise for the progress of the Gospel.

Actually, the acquisition of technical skills, whether in perfectly enormous international radio ministries, or in the gathering statistics of the different aspects of the unfinished task, or the computer skills which enable publication on a whole new level—the harmonious digestion of all this in the pursuit of the Heavenly Vision has been a formidable frontier which is now mainly in the past, a fact for which we can devoutly rejoice.

From Mission to Evangelism to Mission (2002, Conference on Unreached Peoples)

(Frontiers in Mission, 155-57)

The most likely interpretation of my topic as I have phrased it could readily be that of a sequence of stages in which mission work produces a national church which then engages in *evangelism* and finally begins to send *missionaries*. That is certainly one of the most common and healthy sequences of events in the world today.

However, I would like to pursue a radically different interpretation. I would like to speak of a sequence (not often recognized) in which mission work produces a national church that unfortunately is not much more than a projection of the Western style church in the missionary's homeland but tries to do evangelism, and then after a while the mission realizes it must go back in mission and start over with a more indigenizing kind of mission effort which can produce a much more indigenous church than the one—call it a “first try church”—which has inherited much of the missionary's own culture.

Note that this line of thinking suggests that a people group may not really be reached at all if merely a Western style church is planted within it. That means we will probably need some radical reevaluation of how many groups are reached.

In some ways this point of view almost seems to suggest that we need in many fields to start all over again. It implies that all we have done so far is parallel to the scattered synagogues of Jewish believers across the Roman empire in the time of Paul. That is, they had planted “churches” (synagogues) in a foreign land. But those churches required Greeks and Romans to become Jewish culturally if they wanted to go all the way. And, as Jesus pointed out, Jews were diligently traversing land and sea to make a single proselyte, only to achieve a cultural conversion, not necessarily a conversion of heart.

For example, is there yet a truly Japanese form of our faith? Many serious observers doubt it. This would mean there is still a need for cross-cultural mission in Japan, and that a truly missiological breakthrough is still in the future.

A further example might be the church in India. It consists largely of a Westernization of a population sector which has little to lose and much to gain by grasping for any kind of alternate cultural tradition. This perspective could imply that there is essentially little true mission work that has thus far been accomplished in India, and that the unreached populations there are far larger than we have commonly conceived them.

Before going further, however, I need to define some terms. I would like to suggest that there can be great value in making a distinction between a *mission* agency and an *evangelistic* agency. Obviously the phrases can be used interchangeably. But for the sake of discussion here I hope you will find it helpful to think of *evangelism* and *mission* as quite different, all mission work being evangelism but not all evangelism being mission, mission being a very special type of evangelism. This distinction is so important, in fact, that I am convinced we would not even need to speak of *frontier missions* if we observed it. In fact this whole conference might not have been so necessary if this kind of a distinction were well understood and taken seriously.

Many church people, for example, talk freely about evangelizing the world. So often does this happen somewhat carelessly that, years ago, I felt it necessary to develop the distinction between E-0, E-1, E-2, and E-3 evangelism.

E-0 stands for evangelism within the church movement itself.

E-1 stands for outreach to those within the same culture as the church.

E-2 stands for a quite different type of missionary cross cultural evangelism within a people quite different from that of the evangelist, different yet still somewhat similar. Enough different to need a separate congregation but still similar, like English culture and Spanish culture.

E-3 stands for even more strikingly missionary cross-culture evangelistic outreach to people in a totally different culture from that of those workers who are reaching out, like the difference between English culture and Japanese culture.

In the first two cases you can use existing congregations or simply multiply the same kind of congregations. This is ordinary evangelism. By contrast, the second two cases, E-2 and E-3 types of activity, merit the designation mission or missionary evangelism for the simple reason that E-2 and E-3 efforts reach into strange situations that are so different as to virtually require separate and different kinds of congregations.

Using these terms, all true *mission* differs from ordinary evangelism because it is an activity involving the special problems of cross-cultural communication and contextualization. That is why all *mission* involves evangelism but that there are types of *evangelism* that do not involve cross-cultural communication and therefore are not true *mission*.

However, mission is not merely a *communication* problem. It is a *creation* problem. What is needed must be created by the Spirit of God as a new church tradition, not just the extension of a Western denomination but perhaps a worshipping movement with a decidedly different church life.

Suppose a mission agency goes to Nigeria and establishes fifty indigenous churches among the Yoruba, and those churches then plant even more Yoruba churches. In that case, the efforts to achieve the initial “missiological breakthrough” would be called *mission* while the further church planting expansion, *whether by missionary or by the Yoruba churches* would be considered *evangelism*. But if now the Yoruba send missionaries to break through to a cultural group where there is not yet an indigenous church movement, then you can say that the Yoruba believers are not only involved in ordinary evangelism but also in cross-cultural work, in the *creation* of a new worshipping tradition of Jesus’ followers. Such efforts classify as a *mission* activities.

We can further say that if the initial mission agency is not involved in that further outreach but is content to continue to work with the Yoruba church, then it ceases to be a mission agency but becomes merely what could be called a “foreign evangelism” agency.

Now, since most agencies of mission eventually go through the transition of becoming merely evangelistically involved (and that is certainly one measure of success) it may appear that this kind of distinction devalues much of mission work. On the contrary, the mission that continues in evangelism and allows and encourages an overseas church movement to become missionary is doing a very strategic thing.

However, let me freely admit that I have no power to define words for other people. Most people will go on using *evangelism* and *mission* in whatever way they wish. I am not even terribly concerned to have it my way with these two often-used words. I would be willing to talk about, say, *Type A* work and *Type B* work. The main thing is to understand that reaching out in the same culture is relatively simple and is often automatic while breaking through to a new and different culture is both rare and complex.

I actually believe that the achievement of a true *missiological breakthrough* into a new culture is often grossly underestimated as to its complexity.

For one thing not many Christians realize how major a transition it was when our faith spread from its Jewish roots into the Greek and Roman world. The pagan holiday called the *Saturnalia* was converted into Christmas. So were a hundred other things adopted, such as the wearing of wedding rings and the throwing of rice at a wedding. In a further transition our faith spread into the Anglo-Saxon sphere, where early missionaries even made use of a pagan sunrise festival promoting a spring-goddess of fertility (called *Eostre*) as our present-day Easter sunrise service. These were *mission* attempts to indigenize the faith, representing complex cross-cultural evangelistic decisions that went far beyond ordinary evangelism.

Perhaps we don't often think of the complexities of the past and we may wish they did not extend into the present. But if we take a hard look at the current expansion of the faith around the world from the standpoint of our distinction between evangelism and mission I am afraid that we must recognize the need for a great deal more in-depth true mission than we have thus far accomplished.

For the most part the much heralded march of the Christian faith across the world has been successful mainly in subordinate cultures, where, say, the Koreans, oppressed for so long by the fellow Buddhist country of Japan would grasp a foreign faith almost automatically.

For example, as already mentioned, are churches in Japan today sufficiently indigenous to conclude that all that is left to be done is for these churches to multiply with their relatively Western form of the faith? Some keen observers, as I've said, suggest that there is not yet a truly Japanese church movement but only a relatively small Westernized following. Movements like *Soka Gakkai* are quite Japanese, although they embody some Christian elements, but by being rather more indigenous have grown astronomically, proving the existence of a spiritual hunger in Japan despite failing to provide even the minimal elements of Biblical faith.

We have often thought of Unreached Peoples as being small, but when you look more closely at the definitions it is clear that wherever an authentic "missiological breakthrough" has not yet occurred the size of the group does not matter.

From this point of view you can impellingly argue that the true missiological breakthroughs in Africa, India and China are to be seen surprisingly and precisely in movements that are "outside" of what we ordinarily identify as Christianity in those places. Such movements are not readily recognized as Christian despite their characteristically strong focus on the Bible. It is a little known fact that in three key places, Africa, India and China, the truly devout believers in Christ within radically contextualized groups may actually outnumber the truly devout believers in Christ within the more identifiably "Christian" movements of missionary-implanted Western-oriented Christianity.

It has never been true that a people group has been considered reached just because essentially foreign churches were present within that group. The definition mentioned here distinctly requires an "indigenous" church movement.

Of course, there is room for discussion as to just what is truly indigenous or not. Indigenous churches tend to grow, sometimes very rapidly. They are often not initiated by foreign personnel but many times are actually heretical spin offs which highlight certain cultural features lacking in missionary-established churches. They are not always Biblically balanced, although they are often highly respectful of the Bible. Donald McGavran's perspective was that our relationship to such groups ought to be friendly and supportive if,

in fact, they focus on the Bible seriously. That focus will straighten them out in the long run, he felt.

Thus, shocking though it may seem, the world may look substantially different from our usual take if viewed from the perspective of the essential importance of authentic indigeneity. Ordinary *evangelism* must thereby be seen as inadequate if it is going on in a situation still requiring true *mission* with true indigeneity as a goal. The ordinary evangelism of an essentially Western Christianity may in such cases be little more than the promotion of a complex cluster of foreign legalisms which people in characteristically minority and oppressed cultures learn to wear like outer clothing with the hope that they will be benefitted thereby.

Ironically, we have been talking for years about the necessity of mission agencies moving intentionally beyond care-taking existing mission field churches to reach out to still untouched, genuine Unreached Peoples. That is, we have been calling for mission elsewhere *in addition to* evangelism in established beachheads, when we might more accurately have been calling for a much more radical and penetrating *mission instead of* evangelistic outreach from a Western-style church. We may have too easily accepted the birth of a new national church as truly indigenous when in fact it was still substantially foreign. And, instead of expecting the birth of a new substantially strange and unpredictable movement to appear which could then by itself grow automatically by evangelism, the movements we have planted may themselves need to be subjected to an on-going attempt at true indigenization, which is the object of true mission.

Thus, my title, "From Mission to Evangelism to Mission" can be utilized to describe the ideal sequence of events in truly successful work. However, that sequence may not have truly happened beyond the spread of a church pattern which is still significantly Western. This is not bad. It is not illicit. It may be superficial, however, and it may be a cultural phenomenon in which people under oppression gladly accept anything with promise.

But at the same time the truly successful missiological breakthroughs, such as the Pauline breakthrough to the Greeks, and the Lutheran breakthrough to Germanic culture, have characteristically involved the actual creation of new movements *which the older source culture could not recognize as true to the faith*. It may well be that a true missiological breakthrough will always be a church movement which is somewhat alienated, and will believe for a good long time that the missionary's form of the faith is seriously flawed, and that vice versa, the missionary will characteristically reject the validity of the new form of the faith in the receptor culture.

The blunt meaning of this kind of thinking is fairly easy to illustrate from major movements and events that have already taken place in the mission lands. We hear reports that there are 52 million followers of Jesus Christ in Africa who do not belong to any standard Christian tradition. The same is true in India where smaller estimates (14 to 24 million) caste Hindus are reported to be devout followers of Jesus Christ even though they do not call themselves Christians. Finally, much of the most vibrant work in China is not to be found in the state recognized churches but in the millions of followers of Jesus Christ who are to be found in the so called "house churches."

Thinking along these lines involves receiving and digesting information which we do not expect and are not well prepared to believe. It is a new kind of frontier that must be recognized as soon as possible, and dealt with strategically in ways that are practical and possible, even if not conventional. Are we ready to do that?

Letter re Early History of the Idea of “Hidden Peoples”

(2002) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 133-34)

From: <RDW112233@aol.com>
 To: <CCIBrasil@xc.org>
 Sent: Saturday, June 08, 2002 1:05 PM
 Subject: Re: Early history of the idea of “Hidden Peoples”
 Dear Jason,

I am very delighted indeed to discover another person wrestling with the facts of mission history and teaching the same.

You said, <<I teach about Carey and Taylor and Townsend (and McGavran) and I also teach about Winter! I focus on Townsend's language emphasis, with the key year being 1932, and on your "hidden peoples" emphasis, with the key year being 1974.>>

First, at Lausanne in 1974 I did not introduce anything so new as Townsend and McGavran, just tried to clarify the statistical implications of what they did. Your idea of a “fourth era.” thus does not seem to be as resoundingly different from the third, and second were different from each of their preceding eras. Why? As a matter of fact, buried in the insights of both McGavran and Townsend were, respectively, the reality of the vertical and horizontal “segmentation” of humanity, in vertically deployed castes and horizontally deployed tribes and other societies.

On the other hand, McGavran's perspective did in fact tend to head missions away from unpenetrated groups toward the fostering of “people movements to Christ” within societies already possessing some sort of breakthrough which he called “bridges of God” (meaning a seeker from one group worshipping already on the fringe of another group) and because of this perspective he precisely and logically did not embrace the unreached peoples movement for several years.

He was unvaryingly friendly to me as a person but was, early on, quite dubious about expending limited mission forces on totally unapproached groups when there were groups already penetrated that badly needed “discipling to the fringes.” And, Townsend’s perspective focused on the practical task of translating the Bible (and a good deal of this kind of challenge even today Wycliffe is investing on groups that are already “reached”) but he certainly did highlight the plight of groups isolated by language differences (needing not so much a church movement as the Word in their language).

A comment may also be due concerning the phrase “hidden peoples.” I was on the ground floor when the early thinking was developed for bypassed peoples, and felt that “unreached” was a bad choice due to its previous and current use with the phrase “unreached people” (meaning individuals unconverted) which is actually a distinctly different concept from the need of a group within which there is not yet a viable indigenous evangelizing church movement. Furthermore, and even more importantly, I felt that the World Vision office assisting with the Lausanne Congress unwisely defined what an unreached people was (in the early stages, “less than 20% Christian”).

Thus, at the U.S. Center for World Mission, rather than dispute that definition, which presently was affirmed by the Lausanne Strategy Working Group (somewhat dominated by Ed Dayton of World Vision), we simply chose a different phrase (Hidden Peoples) and defined that kind of an entity as a group lacking “a viable indigenous evangelizing church movement.”

The “official” Lausanne-backed definition ran immediately into opposition all over the world on the grounds that the ambiguousness of the term “Christian” (nominal or born again) seesawed the definition between two absurdities. If “nominal,” then many groups would make it as “reached” which really weren’t, or if “born again” then no group in the world would make it as “reached.”

But, for a brief period of years the Strategy Working Group (SWG) felt pressured to talk of “born again Christians” and thus had successively to revise the percentage down to ten, five, two, etc. Meanwhile we employed “hidden peoples” in all our literature. Early in 1982, Ed Dayton approached me with the thought that if we would accept their term “unreached peoples” and give up “hidden” they would accept our “presence-or-absence-of-the church” definition and would convene a suitably representative meeting of mission executives to endorse that change. They convened the meeting (March 1982 in Chicago, sponsored by EFMA and the Lausanne Committee) and the change was made and we no longer referred to “hidden” peoples (somewhat reluctantly due to the inherent disadvantages of “unreached” as above).

Equally important in my eyes at the same meeting the group endorsed a definition I suggested (actually worked out on the plane going to the meeting) for the kind of people group we were trying to reach: “the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance,” and these words were duly added to the already existing but somewhat indefinite Lausanne SWG wording “a significantly large group of individuals . sharing . . . ”

Soon after the 1982 meeting, and without the backing of the group that attended in 1982, the SWG dropped out the phrase “as a church planting movement” apparently because World Vision did not deal with the planting of churches. However, in all our literature, Perspectives Reader, etc. we have held to the original March wording. This is not because groups that would not qualify for “church planting” (lacking male, female, old, and young) are not of exceedingly great evangelistic strategic importance (see my comments on “socio-peoples” versus “unimax peoples” on page 514 of the latest Perspectives Reader, but rather the fact that unless an integral population is encompassed you really don't have the conditions of church planting—the NT always refers to a family and household-based entity, which is male and female, old and young.

Well, I hope these comments may be of some help. I am enthusiastic about anyone teaching mission history. I am eager to be of any help to you I can.

Warmly,
Ralph D. Winter

In Pursuit of the Full Gospel

(2004) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 167)

What is inadequate with this statement?

“The over-arching vision within the Frontier Mission Fellowship group of projects is to see all unreached peoples reached with the gospel and the kingdom to come among them. In evangelical terms we can know when a group is reached when there is an indigenous church planting movement among them.”

This paragraph fairly well describes the way we looked at things when we were in the founding period of the FMF. Things are now seen—by me anyway—as both simpler and more complex. We do not intend to give up the priority this statement express for those people groups which have no access to Christ. But we recall that to “reach” a people merely by eliciting a church planting movement among them has never been all that God might want accomplished. To add “and the Kingdom to come among them” is helpful but woefully unspecific.

Today, more than a quarter of a century after our founding, I would think we would speak of the four levels of strategy and purpose rather than one or two:

Level 1: Getting people “saved.”

Level 2: Winning them to the Lordship of Christ and into His family

Level 3: Glorifying God

Level 4: Distinguishing evil from God and fighting “the works of the Devil” as a means of glorifying God, that is, understanding the lordship of Christ as involving us in an all-out war against evil, disease, corruption, a war in which we can expect suffering, hardship and death.

The biggest change of perspective for me is the shift away from a picture of man vs. God, which is a polarization that enabled the commercialization of religion at the time of the Reformation, but before and after as well. The service being sold by religious functionaries in many societies is a service which allows, for a price, a better relationship with God or the gods.

The New Testament picture is much more a picture of two sides, the one, that of the god of this world, the other, God along with man working together to destroy the works of the Devil and reclaim the full glory of God. Currently, the “salvation of man” shoulders out a balanced view of the far more serious cleavage between Satan and God, in which dichotomy man was created to be on God’s side.

In so far as Satan has corrupted man and gained his help in opposing God it is true that man can be on both sides of the struggle. However, it is to Satan’s advantage for the whole conflict to be seen as one of Man vs. God.

A great deal of the conflict between man and man is due to the absence of a clear understanding of the larger conflict between Satan and man and Satan and God. What would immediately and dramatically unify the nations of man would be the sudden exposure of that great enemy Satan. If humans could wake up to the fact that their far greater enemy is

rampant in the form of disease germs they might well rally around that common enemy rather than fight each other. In time of war you do not see so much fighting for status, for position, for fame—precisely due to the far greater looming common enemy.

Logically, then, Satan's most strategic influence on humans is lead them blindly to downplay and ridicule or at least misconstrue his very existence—that is, the existence of an intermediate being of awesome power who is an evil opponent of God (and man). Getting human beings to concentrate totally on their own waywardness toward God is very clever because that tactic easily monopolizes their consciousness and diminishes their awareness of the larger struggle. Indeed, the bulk of all theologizing has to do with “getting man right with God” rather than with restoring full glory to God by distinguishing His works from Satan's works. The final achievement of Satan is, indeed, the human delusion that evil is from God, and due to His “mysterious purposes.”

Beyond Unreached Peoples

(2004) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 186-87)

One of our recent publications states the following for the general public:

We're glad you're here! Our purpose in meeting each Thursday night is to celebrate what God is doing around the world and to learn how we can better participate in His purposes for the nations. In particular, we come to give special attention to frontier mission among 10,000 unreached peoples without strong, culturally relevant church movements in their midst. Let's seek God together for how we should respond to what we hear.

Note the fact that the phrase by itself, Unreached Peoples, could easily be misunderstood by visitors apart from the additional defining phrase, "without strong, culturally relevant church movements in their midst." It is very good for that to be added. The need for that additional phrase, incidentally, explains why, as an institution, we had earlier objected to the phrase, Unreached Peoples, preferring our own phrase, Hidden Peoples, as well as a different definition.

Thus, I approve of the helpful "appositional" phrase that explains to the general public very accurately what Unreached Peoples means to us.

Here is a statement from another document that attempts to state what we are all about:

The over-arching vision within the Frontier Mission Fellowship group of projects is to see all unreached peoples reached with the gospel and the kingdom to come among them. In evangelical terms we would know when a group was reached when there was an indigenous church planting movement among them.

I would like to see if we can go beyond these statements to something more.

If we think of the remaining unreached peoples as enemy occupied territories, rather than merely unenlightened areas, "reaching" them with "a viable, evangelizing, indigenous church movement" could seem to assume the possibility that the problem of unreached peoples is merely the absence of good news.

I continue to believe that "reaching unreached peoples" with a viable, evangelizing, indigenous church movement is a most worthy and important thing to do. However, it may involve unexpected, perplexing opposition and danger. In that case is it fair to prospective missionaries to talk as though it is merely a communication problem? And, is it fair to the people within the group we are trying to reach, for them to think that we see no use for the significant knowledge we in fact possess that could enable many of them not to become victims of disease?

Otherwise it would seem to be sort of like telling willing recruits that they need merely to walk into Falouja thinking that the only thing they need to do is inform the people that democracy is the answer to all their problems. In other words after we make the missiological breakthrough and see a people movement to Christ, what do we do with the fact that most of the new believers will die very, very prematurely because of pathogens

about which neither Jesus or Calvin said a word, but pathogens about which we now know a great deal?

Jesus extensively demonstrated God's concern for the sick. Are we today under any obligation to demonstrate even more cogent ways of fighting off illness, due to the additional insight God has allowed us to gain? Or is it no longer important for people to know that sickness is very definitely a concern of God? Are those who hear our words and witness our work and our concerns supposed to think that our God is just the God of the next world?

This morning Gordon Kirk at Lake Avenue delivered a powerful sermon in effect galvanizing believers to shape up, quit quibbling over peripherals, regain their faith and joy and demonstrate unity. It was all to the good.

However, it was somewhat like giving a rousing charge during wartime to the individuals in an army to stop quarrelling, vying for leadership, grumbling, living with disunity in the ranks, etc. without mentioning the crucial additional truth that there is a war to fight. What unifies disparate, normally quarrelsome men is precisely the unity of fighting the same war. No wonder so many veterans groups emerge from a war, groups of men who are astounding disparate otherwise.

Churches that are riven by internal disunity may often be plagued in part by the lack the unifying power of a significant external goal. Even if that goal is merely getting pamphlets to Iraq it will certainly help unify the church. However, if the goal is to confront a hideous, invisible enemy that has infiltrated the bloodstream of every member of the church and will be causing pain and suffering and premature death, that unity might come much more quickly and solidly.

I had similar concerns recently as I listened to Greg Livingstone share his experiences with several key Muslims who were apparently glad to talk to him but did not appear to be seeking God. They are Muslims, perhaps, only in the sense that they may be caught up in a cultural tradition they felt they could not abandon. I wonder what would have happened if he had shared with them his awe for the glory of God? How would he have done that and how would these men have reacted? Maybe their disinterest would have turned them away and he would then have had to spend time with others whose hearts toward God were more tender?

The average missionary in a Muslim village does not share with the people many similar goals. The one common denominator which might possibly draw both missionary and Muslim together could be to share, positively and humbly, genuine awe for the glory of God as seen in a microscope, and negatively, to share genuine awe and fear for the additional evidence in that same microscope of an intelligent, malicious enemy of them both. The missionary and the Muslim can both be awed (and worship) as they contemplate God's glory together, and they can together be gripped by the urgent, crucial task of fighting a common enemy that is constantly tearing down that glory. Isn't that what Jesus' extensive healing ministry would teach us to do?

I Was Bombed by an Explosive Idea!

(2004)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed13d18cfba127f3c41f09d/1590770998243/Foundations+Reader.pdf>

Abstract

In 2004, Ralph Winter described the “explosive” idea he and others had had thirty years previously: the idea was that thousands of remaining, forgotten, linguistically or culturally isolated groups should be considered additional mission fields, that is, “Unreached Peoples.” He described the barriers to understanding that this idea faced. “However, the very idea of expecting ethnic minorities ... to have their own forms of worship and even theology and to remain ‘segregated’ within their own ‘homogeneous units’ was ... ‘racism’ to some. Biblical sensitivity for cultural diversity died hard before the earlier (and understandable) American drive for a ‘melting pot’ society.”

But the ultimate result of this explosive idea is still true today: “With different voices now speaking of ethno-cultural frontiers instead of countries, languages, or individuals, a huge, significant strategic shift had taken place all across the mission world.”

The Explosive Idea

Thirty years ago I was “bombed” by an explosive idea. I was not the only one. The idea was that thousands of remaining, forgotten, linguistically, or culturally isolated groups should be considered additional mission fields, that is, “Unreached Peoples.”

I was asked to present the idea to 2,700 world leaders at the first “Lausanne” conference in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974, the International Congress on World Evangelization.

Six years later, in late 1980, the World Consultation on Frontier Missions at Edinburgh, Scotland, allowed this idea to capture the thoughts of mission leaders from all over the world. That was the largest meeting of purely mission leaders ever to occur on the global level and the first to attract as large a number of (so-called) Third World mission agencies.

Leaders from the non-Western world caught on easily and quickly. By contrast, some of the older agencies in the West were sometimes slow to understand and dragged their feet. In the USA, especially, there was a good deal of confusion. Quite a few church leaders, not necessarily mission executives, even raised the accusation, “racism”! Why did they say that?

Clouded Acceptance

Curiously, Americans had long been fighting “racism” by beating the drum for “integration.” But they soon discovered that ethnic minorities in the USA did not necessarily want to be “integrated.” The term was dropped. Minorities considered

integration attempts to be cultural imperialism on the part of European Americans! To them, integration was racism! But this second perspective gained its way only gradually.

Amazingly, this “explosive idea” was thus diametrically opposed to crass integration! However, the very idea of expecting ethnic minorities (approached as “unreached peoples”) to have their own forms of worship and even theology and to remain “segregated” within their own “homogeneous units” was still “racism” to some. Biblical sensitivity for cultural diversity died hard before the earlier (and understandable) American drive for a “melting pot” society. Once again the Bible conflicted with conventional thinking!

So, all of this clouded the acceptance of the now widely understood concept of by-passed or unreached peoples. There were other factors, too.

In the two years after the first Lausanne Congress I was invited to speak to associations of mission executives in England, Norway, and Germany, and present this new doctrine which would radically modify mission strategies. Then, in 1976 I was invited to give the opening address at the EFMA (Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies; now The Mission Exchange), an annual mission executives retreat. Leaders of the conference asked all of the agencies to bring a report the next morning of how many of the by-passed peoples they thought their agency could engage by 1990, fourteen years later. The tally exceeded five thousand.

However, the next morning I sat down at breakfast at a very small table for three, joining two others wrapped in conversation. One said to the other, “How many groups could your agency reach?” The other swept away the question with the reply, “Oh, we don’t have time for that, we have too many other things on our plate.” At that point he looked up and recognized me as the impassioned speaker of the night before and immediately mumbled something like, “We’ll see what we can do.”

But, this was an honest reaction. Most agencies really did not have extra missionaries they could fling out into totally pioneer fields (newly defined culturally and linguistically, not geographically or politically). Not only that, but in the past fifty years, missions had become accustomed to serving the needs of already-existing church movements. There were few “pioneer”-type missionaries left. Most were busy with church work, not pioneer evangelism. You could say that the new Great Commission went like this, “Go ye into all the world and meddle in the national churches.”

Worse still, and I hesitantly speak of my own denomination, the Presbyterian Church (USA), many had officially or unofficially adopted what I consider a seriously bankrupt strategy of voluntarily tying their own hands with the policy of never doing any unilateral outreach to new fields, working solely in a new magic word, “partnership.”

Bob Blincoe, the current U. S. director of Frontiers, years ago sought to be sent as a missionary to northern Iraq among the Kurds, a truly unreached people. However, his denominational board, the PC(USA), said he would have to work in partnership with the local Arab church. That church happens to be the Assyrian Church of the East, quite a few of whose people detested the Kurds. (That reminds us of the American gold rush immigrants into California who despised and slaughtered the Indians who were there first.) Such an invitation from Iraq would never come.

Expectable Problems

Americans’ negative reactions to the idea of Unreached Peoples often took the form of arguing over a technical definition of the phrase, “an unreached people.” Its early

definition by the Lausanne Strategy Working Group really was not workable. The U. S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena, rather than fight for a more useful definition of the same phrase, chose our own term—Hidden Peoples. Finally, in 1982 the Lausanne group joined with the EFMA to convene a large meeting of about thirty-five executives intended to arrive at settled meanings for new terms related to the new emphasis on reaching out to by-passed groups. At this meeting the consensus was to retain the widely circulated “Unreached People” phrase but to accept our meaning for it, namely, “the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.” Then, if that kind of an entity were unreached it would not yet have “a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.”

Confusion continued. “Unreached People” was a phrase that employed such common words that many felt they ought to know what the phrase meant, and should develop their own definition. We dutifully used the phrase in our publications from 1982 on, but even before 1982 I had coined the phrase, “Unimax people,” to hint at the necessary unity of a group and the maximum size of a group maintaining that unity.

A most difficult thing about the concept, no matter what terminology was employed, was the fact that there was no obvious concrete, verifiable measurement of the presence or absence of “a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.” I personally thought that you could at least report that a group was clearly reached, clearly unreached, or not sure. But the worst problem was that government sources and even Christian compilers did not think in those terms at all.

In fact, in terms of “obtainable data,” a group that extends over a national border will be counted separately in each country, perhaps with a different name. In Africa, by one count, eight hundred groups are cut in two by political boundaries!

What this confusion means is that there still is no definitive listing of unreached peoples. The 1982 definition came too late. Already different interpretations had arisen, as, for example, when eye-gate, printed Bible workers (like Wycliffe) counted up what further tasks they needed to tackle, and ear-gate audio-cassette workers (like Gospel Recordings) estimated their remaining task which inherently requires a larger number of more specific sets of recordings.

Milestone Events

But not only concepts were involved; several organizational events made contributions similar to the 1980 Edinburgh conference.

First, a mainline denomination, the Presbyterian Church (USA), allowed a small entity within its bloodstream, called the Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship, which now raises more than two million dollars per year specifically for frontier missions. Then the Baptist General Conference declared that its denominational goal was to reach the Unreached Peoples. YWAM declared the same thing and inaugurated a new major division to pursue that goal. In 1989, at Singapore, one of the leading speakers at the 1980 conference, Thomas Wang, at that time the Executive Director of the Lausanne movement, convened a meeting. This meeting, like the 1980 meeting, emphasized mission agency leaders. Out of this meeting came the astounding, globe-girdling AD2000 Movement⁴ with the amplified slogan, “A church for every people and the gospel for every person by the year

⁴ Editor’s Note: This is now the AD2000 & Beyond Movement.

2000.” The addition was not essential, being technically redundant but it helped those who did not quite realize the strategic significance of a “missiological breakthrough” whereby a truly indigenous form of the faith was created—and would then be available for every person.

At that Singapore conference were some highly placed Southern Baptists. Although they had attended the 1980 meeting, this one must have pushed them further because soon one of the most significant “events” in the entire story of Unreached Peoples took place: their entire International Mission Board decided to bring the cause of Unreached Peoples into their organizational center.

Once that happened, it was no longer possible for any mission to consider the Unreached Peoples a mere marginal issue. I remember talking with an International Students’ leader about the significance of choosing to work on campuses with precisely those students representing Unreached Peoples rather than with just any foreign students. They began to compile a list of high priority student origins.

With many different voices now speaking of ethno-cultural frontiers instead of countries, languages or individuals, a huge, significant strategic shift had taken place all across the mission world.

Back to the Bible

Embarrassingly, the Bible has all along talked in terms of peoples, not countries. Now its basic perspective was becoming clearer. Speaking of biblical perspective, another major contribution to the rising interest in the Unreached Peoples has been the nationwide Perspectives Study Program. In 2004 it enrolled some six thousand students with classes in one hundred thirty places in the USA alone. By then it had been adapted into a version for India, Korea, Latin America, etc. It became more popular in New Zealand than in the USA!

Okay, the issue has been clarified, but the implications and implementation have yet a long way to go. Japan, for example, still only has a very small, decidedly “Western” church movement. Scholars say there is not yet a true missiological breakthrough to the Japanese. If that’s true, they are still an unreached people because despite the presence of churches in their midst there is no truly *Japanese form* of the faith.

The same is true for India. The strong, fine, but relatively small church movement in India is still highly “Western,” although now millions of believers exist outside that movement among people who have retained much of their Hindu culture.

In Africa there are now fifty-two million believers in twenty thousand movements which do not easily classify as forms of Western Christianity. This is a good thing, but it is profoundly confusing for those who do not realize that a true “missiological breakthrough” almost always produces a church movement considerably different from what might be expected. Paul’s work was very difficult to understand for Jewish believers in Christ, or Latin believers to accept Lutherans, Reformation style churches to accept Pentecostals, Charismatics, etc.

Thus, the rapid growth of our faith across the world is mostly a movement of new indigenous forms of faith that are substantially different from that of the missionary. Thankfully, the unique cultures of Unreached Peoples are now being treated with greater seriousness despite the added complexities! In this we rejoice as the explosion continues!

Editorial Comment on People Group Barriers

(*Mission Frontiers*, Jan.-Feb. 2005).

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment25>

Dear Reader,

Don't let the masses of numbers deter you from enjoying this valuable issue of *Mission Frontiers*. This presentation will give you a peek into some of the factors mission leaders mull over in deciding where to work.

But, first of all, rejoice that both the Nov-Dec issue and now this Jan-Feb issue display an awesome abundance of data. This is far more than we had when we gathered on the world level in 1980 at Edinburgh for the World Consultation on Frontier Missions. We have come a long way!

Second, note the fascinating tension between two different and valid approaches. In these two issues of *Mission Frontiers* the main thrust is the first of two kinds of approaches. The thrust presented in these two issues is intended to enable informed choices of where to work.

If your agency or your church is seeking out the most needy people groups, you need to rely on some objective factors, such as the reported language (how different is it from your own?) or caste or clan, as well as what initial Christian efforts have already been expended for a given group. Thus, one thrust is deciding which group to approach.

The second approach, which is equally necessary, is to decide (after work has begun) just where the meaningful boundaries are for the group with which you are working.

As Todd Johnson points out, it would be nice to know in advance which groups are integral (are really one) and which are composed of mutually alienated sub-groups. Remember, people are usually more harshly divided from near-neighbors whom they don't like than by major differences of language or culture.

Thus, to go beyond major differences of language and culture, you must also take into account more subtle factors if you want to talk about truly Unreached Peoples, also called Unimax Peoples, which are defined as:

The largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

Note the all-important final word: acceptance. Of this you can't be sure before you get there.

Only after missionaries begin work in a group (if all else fails to tip them off concerning an invisible barrier they have encountered), simply acceptance (not linguistic similarity or whatever) will tell them they have more than one group to deal with, and that they have to make more than one beachhead. Many missions work for years in a group that at first seems like one group but that eventually reveals sectors which after years of outreach simply don't respond.

Even in the United States churches very often are puzzled because their congregations simply don't absorb many (or any) members of certain social or ethnic groups. What to do? First, realize that it may not happen at all in this life. They may need to call in

another mission or denomination because of high feelings of estrangement between two local groups. This is what denominations are for!

Denominationalism? Yes, if America did not have hundreds of denominations, we would not see our faith so deeply embedded in this country. Despite all that has been said negatively about the Body of Christ being split up, the Bible nevertheless portrays the different parts of the Body, each of which is performing a different function.

That is why, once a missionary gets things going in a people group, he or she must watch carefully for invisible barriers which may possibly require a new beginning. For example, just as the large majority of Black Muslims in America have grown up within the culture of the black churches, and their choice of Islam is mainly based on their disinclination to follow the white man's religion, so in every mission field we can expect new groups to spin off in order to keep their distance from Western culture.

Thus, the Unreached People and Unimax approach is mainly a help to those already working in an area, country, or language and who may think that once a church-planting movement has started, it can easily spread (as the same movement) more widely than it actually can.

It would be nice to know in advance just what the Unimax list would be like. Unimax thinking is certainly the most important way of defining mission tactics on the ground (not strategy at a higher level). But, prior to entering a people, guesswork on this approach is very necessary. See the estimates on page 15 on what may turn out to be truly Unreached or Unimax peoples.

So, relax if you thought that we need to await a definitive list of Unreached Peoples before we can choose which to reach. We find out, after we land and begin the work, just what may be the subdivisions of expansion.

By the way, this is where the concept of Unreached Peoples came from in the first place. Overlooking a group that is sufficiently different creates a bypassed or unreached people. Donald McGavran's insights came from India, where subtle and invisible caste distinctions effectively wall off millions of people even if there is a church within walking distance. The same thing is happening in America, where we don't even talk about caste. But, back to the higher-level approach of where to choose a new mission field: the data of the kind in these two issues is of great value.

I would add one word of caution about the use of labels. Most of the high-priority lists here consist of Muslim peoples. Since today we know of many Muslims who have found Christ without rejecting their families and cultural tradition (and we also know of millions of people who are still culturally Hindu as well as devout followers of Christ), let's remind ourselves that we are preaching Christ, not Christianity. Followers of Christ in the New Testament did not call themselves Christians; some in the Semitic sphere, I am guessing, may have called themselves "muslims" (surrendered to God).

Reflections on the shape and mission of the Church have recently surfaced in several places. Christianity Today (November 2004) has a cover story about the "emerging church" phenomenon. One of the leaders in this movement, Brian McLaren, is quoted as saying,

One of the greatest enemies of evangelism is the church as fortress or social club; it sucks Christians out of their neighborhoods, clubs, workplaces, schools, and other social networks and isolates them in a religious ghetto ...warehoused as merchandise for heaven, kept safe in a protected place to prevent spillage, leakage, damage, or loss until their delivery (p. 43).

He wants Christians to go out into the world and work for God:

What does it mean to be “saved”? When I read the Bible I don’t see it saying [merely] ‘I’m going to heaven after I die’ (p. 40).

In other words, we have work to do, now, before we die!

Nancy Pearcey, in her new book *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*, in the first sentence of her Introduction quotes a friend as saying,

Your earlier book says Christians are called to redeem entire cultures, not just individuals ...I’ve always thought of salvation strictly in terms of individual souls (p. 17).

This is certainly a must-have book, by the way, for every serious believer, just loaded with profound insights. Our mission is clearly bigger than getting people to heaven. I intend to make use of it when I teach a course on “Frontiers in Mission” at Columbia International University in South Carolina in January.

Twelve Frontiers of Perspective

(2005) (Foundations Reader, 267-81)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5ed13d18cfba127f3c41f09d/1590770998243/Foundations+Reader.pdf>

When Mission Can Be Business Where Both Business and Mission Fall Short

(2005) (*Frontiers in Mission*, 41-47)

We hear some people these days talking as if “business as mission” is going to replace—not merely augment—missions. Granted, business-as-mission is different from the kind of tentmaking effort in which people go overseas to “take a job.” The former approach goes overseas owning a business that hires people—and also provides some good service of some kind. Some say the usual tentmaker takes jobs, while “business as mission” makes jobs. However, it is likely not that simple.

Some people think that missionaries only do “church work.” True, missionaries do believe that their central strategy must be to bring people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and into accountable fellowships within the family and small groups. But missionaries also set up schools, clinics, agricultural ventures and businesses. They are the only workers for whom no human problem is outside their mandate. And one main reason they can pursue any problem is precisely because they do not have to restrict themselves to things that will pay them back for their effort. They don’t have to support themselves. They can do many things by that method that businesses cannot do. This is not to say that good businesses are not an essential backbone in every society.

However, every time a new thought gains wide interest there is the tendency to describe it as entirely new and distinct from earlier ideas (and far better). I have noticed this sort of thing since I myself have done a lot of thinking about the emergence of new ideas in mission. The bulletin of the U.S. Center for World Mission is actually named *Mission Frontiers*, and has been published continuously for more than 25 years. The International Society for Frontier Missiology has been around many years, and its associated journal, the *International Journal of Frontier Missions* (which I have edited the last four years) just now completes its 21st year.

There are Many Mission Frontiers

More specifically, I have been writing and adding to a paper mentioning (now twelve) major frontiers, which, as I see it, have gained our attention during just the relatively short history of our work at the U.S. Center for World Mission.

But even those twelve frontiers range widely over the general field of missions and, of course, all are frontiers in mission in particular. In that list I include frontiers that are no longer entirely frontiers, such as the massive switch in mission thinking from evangelizing individuals of whatever background to the evangelization of specific people groups. This particular frontier peaked in a sense at the World Consultation of Frontier Missions held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1980.

Another frontier I mention in that list of twelve is far less well addressed as yet, and has been called “Radical Contextualization.” It is closely associated with the even more radical concept of the Gospel expanding now around the world in ways not associated directly with identifiable forms of what we loosely call “Christianity.” This more radical frontier I have called “Beyond Christianity.”

Other frontiers mentioned in that paper touch on the way we train leaders in mission lands, the rarely considered interface between Christianity and science, and the perplexing confusion about the works of Satan today. Those works include clever disease germs, which display unexplainable intelligence. Furthermore, they continue their deadly work unnoticed theologically and are thus almost totally unassailed from any theological or Christian point of view. (People in Calvin's day did not know about germs.)

New Frontier: "Business as Mission"

My purpose here, however, is to turn specifically to what could be considered a thirteenth frontier of thinking: "Business as Mission." Although the idea is certainly not altogether new, the mounting and widening discussion of the idea is new—witness the new swirl of related books and conferences. No doubt "Business as Mission" can legitimately be called a "new" frontier in mission awareness and thinking.

This sphere interests me greatly, in part because some of my own experiences involve business activities. During grade school I delivered papers early in the morning. I got paid by the people I served for doing what they were willing to pay for. While in high school, I worked one summer in a heating company spray painting on the night shift. My pay came from the people I served since I was doing what they were willing to pay for. Another summer I worked for the Square-D Electric Company, first as a mechanical draftsman, then later in its quality-control department. Again the customers being served paid for that service. After the war I was hired to do a topographical survey of the Westmont College campus. I did what they wanted me to do. While in seminary I worked as a civil engineer for an engineering company. Those who paid for this activity were being directly served. In missions, however, I have for 50 years rarely been paid by the people whom I directly served—a distinctly different dynamic.

Nevertheless, as a missionary in Guatemala I initiated 17 small business endeavors that others ran. I enabled seminary students to earn their way while in school. More importantly, that then gave them a portable trade after graduation, allowing them to serve beyond the confines of their own acreage. Most earlier pastors were tied down to the soil, so these 17 "businesses" were all portable (as with the Apostle Paul). These registered businesses were also the first ever in which mountain Indians became the registered owners.

Two other missionaries (from other missions) and I started the Inter-American School, which is thriving to this day. I helped very slightly in the founding of an Evangelical university, which today has 30,000 students and has provided almost all the judges in Guatemala.

At Fuller, while on the faculty, I was urged to set up a publishing activity, which is called the William Carey Library. It has been operating for 35 years, sells \$1 million worth of books a year, and is now wholly owned by the U. S. Center for World Mission. I also helped set up the self-sustaining American Society of Missiology, not to mention the U. S. Center for World Mission and the William Carey International University. Both of the latter involve many essentially business functions. The history of missions is full of other examples. The Moravians went out to establish new villages with all of the trades necessary to a small town. They planted what is today the largest retail company (a kind of Sears Roebuck) in Surinam. William Danker's book *Profit for the Lord*, which may well be the classic text on business-as-mission, tells how Swiss missionaries planted a chain of hardware stores in Nigeria. Those stores not only fulfilled a much-needed function but also displayed an attitude toward customers that was a marvelous Christian testimony. And, of course, every church or school that is planted on the mission field, and is self-supporting, is like a business in the sense that

it renders a service and is provided for by those whom it serves. If you add up all such “small businesses” on the mission field (churches and schools), it would run into millions of businesses. This is “Big Business” no matter how you look at it. In fact, I read yesterday that there are “over 500,000 pastors” in Nigeria alone, who are essentially—even if only part time—in that kind of “business.” However, let's look more closely at a general question.

What is business?

Business is basically the activity of *providing goods and services to others on the condition of repayment to cover the cost of those goods and services*. This is not to say that businesses never do anything that does not at least indirectly assist their efforts in image building, public relations or something of that kind. However, businesses that use profits in ways that add nothing to the business would seem to be very rare. Businesses, in fact, that try to do that would, it seems, inevitably run into conflict with their customers' interests, employees' interests, or stockholders' interests. Why? They are jealous if any considerable proportion of the gross income is diverted by the owners to private interests of no concern to customers, employees or stockholders.

Note that business typically involves a concrete understanding between two parties (the customer and the company) and comprises what is essentially a two-way street: the company gives the customer something and the customer gives back something previously agreed-upon. Missionaries, by contrast, serve people from whom they do not necessarily expect to receive anything previously agreed-upon.

However, mission work is, in one sense, actually a business. Donors and supporters of missionaries are, in a sense, the customers paying for a service they wish to see rendered to a third group. The missionaries are providing the services for which the donors are “hiring” them. Note that the ultimate beneficiaries of the missionaries' labors, and of the donors' payments, are needy people in foreign lands who receive aid of some sort without paying for it. Incidentally, when those final recipients get something for nothing it is hard for them to believe what is happening and they often impute lesser motives to the missionaries.

However, missions are not like businesses in one unfortunate way. I refer to the simple fact that most missionaries are not adequately managed and face temptations to slack off or, more likely, to overdo. Most humans cannot survive under those circumstances. Missionaries are for the most part highly dedicated people. That does not mean they will inevitably be good managers of themselves.

However, sooner or later it may dawn on the ultimate recipients that someone wants to help them without asking payment, as in Jesus' case. Is there any better way to communicate God's love?

Of course, it is equally true that a goodhearted and hard-working businessman may be providing a very beneficial service out of genuine love, not just as a means to earn a living. That is equally true, but to the customer, not equally obvious—altruism is so often missing from the marketplace that suspicions will rule.

What Types of Businesses?

You can well imagine that some business missionaries will go overseas and start a business that will be owned and operated by citizens of that country. Others will plant a business or a branch of an international business, owned by the business/missionary, which is an activity that truly serves the people, and is itself therefore a type of ministry. Others will not only plant a business but will expect to support other work from the profits.

Still others may not have the capital necessary or the required expertise to set up a business but can only take a job in the foreign land. Not everyone can buy 20 tons of castor oil at a time, as described in an excellent book I will mention below. The biggest problem I see with Christian college courses on business-as-mission is simply that the average student taking that course may be enamored of this new approach but not be wealthy enough to swing it, even in his own country, let alone amidst all the increased hazards and bureaucracy of foreign lands.

However, just getting a job in a foreign land is what is more often thought of when the phrase tentmaker is used.

Ironically, Paul the Apostle was not that kind of tentmaker. He essentially owned his own business. He evidently on occasion supported both himself and others with him, although they, too, may have helped him in his leatherworking tasks. He also accepted gifts from churches so as to cut down on his need to do leatherworking—that is, he apparently valued his other ministries more highly than his leatherworking as a ministry to customers. Thus, he fits all of these patterns except the one we most often associate with tentmaking, namely becoming an employee in a foreign country.

How is the Business Viewed by the Customer?

I firmly believe there is ample room for businesses owned by believers who work with Christian principles. Those principles, however, may not always be clear to everyone. I mentioned earlier a hardware chain founded by Swiss missionaries. It astonished people by the fact that if a customer bought something that had the wrong specifications or that did not work he could exchange it or get his money back. Thus, for a business to be effective mission, it needs to be perceived by onlookers as a service, not just a way for businesses to make money for the owners, although, frankly, most onlookers will still suspect the latter.

Here in America, of course, all businesses loudly proclaim their desire to serve the customer. We get used to that. We don't really believe it. Businesses in many overseas situations don't even claim to be working for the customer. Neither the customer nor the business owner views the money received as simply a means of continuing the service rendered, but as a contest to see who gets the best end of the deal.

It is also true that no matter how altruistic an owner is, what pulls down many a business or ministry is the very different attitudes of the employees. The owner may have high purposes. The employees may not.

Furthermore, once a business starts overly siphoning off “profits” (whether to increase the owner’s wealth or to help fund some Christian work), the business may be unable to withstand competitors who plow almost all profits back into what they do, either to refine it or to lower their prices below what the Christian-owned business—with its extra drain on profits—can afford to offer.

One of our board members, Ted Yamamori, has edited an excellent book entitled *On Kingdom Business, Transforming Missions through Entrepreneurial Strategies*. In several chapters, the various authors wisely question businesses run by missionaries as a “front” or a disguise for mission work. And they should. To “see through” such disguises is not at all difficult for governments or private citizens. It is questionable whenever “business-as-mission” is simply a clever disguise.

We also read that “micro-enterprises” have their problems. If one woman in a village gets a micro-loan enabling her to utilize a sewing machine, she may produce more for less and be better off. At the same time she may simply put a number of other women out of work in that same village, which is not the most desirable witness.

Special Circumstances with Unreached Peoples

Most of the chapters in Yamamori's book do not distinguish between the attitudes people have where mission work has been long established, and where it is just beginning.

Consider this example. When I first went to Guatemala, as I neared the Mexico-Guatemala border it occurred to me that the border officials of a predominantly Catholic country might not welcome a Protestant missionary. It also occurred to me that, since my most advanced education was in the field of anthropology (not theology), I might get through the border with less hassle if I presented myself as an anthropologist.

I had to give up that idea the moment we got out our passports at the border and I noticed that mine (back in those days) plainly labeled me a "missionary." As it turned out, when we got out of the car at the border station, our two little daughters (ages two and three at that time) worked their magic, wandering around among the desks of the customs officials and charming everyone with their blond hair. We had no difficulty getting into Guatemala.

Two years later I experienced an "aha" moment when I found myself down at the capital renewing my passport at the U.S. Embassy. For a brief moment in that process the thought again flew through my mind: "Now I can change my designation from missionary to anthropologist." But instantly, I recoiled at the thought. After two years in Guatemala I had the decades people had learned the difference between a missionary and an anthropologist. Anthropologists are often possessed of the idea that culture is completely relative, so it does not matter how you act. Mountain villages had seen anthropologists whisk in for a few weeks and go out again, leaving behind a reputation of totally immoral behavior. Missionaries, by contrast, came and stayed—for years on end—and were accorded the very highest respect. If I were in a mountain town and needed some cash, as a missionary I could write a simple IOU on a scrap of paper and borrow five dollars from anyone, believer or not. Moreover, the rural towns of Guatemala, even if solidly Catholic, almost always chose a Protestant believer to be the town treasurer.

Thus, in much of the world, even governments with formal restrictions on mission work know the difference between missionary personnel and others. Even where formal government barriers exist, if there has been any long-standing missionary work, there will likely be an ocean of good will among the people toward missionaries.

However, forget all that if you seek to work among a truly Unreached People. In such cases you may wonder how you can ever gain the trust of the people. Whatever you do, business or missionary, will be subject to suspicion. Any good deed, no matter how generous, will be interpreted as somehow to your benefit. The constant question in the people's minds for perhaps years will be "What's he up to now?" Even in Guatemala, where I had instant respect due to the missionaries who came before me, the people were quite surprised when we returned for our second five-year term. Knowing a bit about the affluence of the society from which we came, they were more likely to wonder why we would want to come back than to discern good will when they saw it.

No Matter What

In any case, "no matter what," every society needs many basic functions and services. Whether as formal businesses or as an aspect of standard mission work, all societies need certain things. They need a banking system. They need fully reliable channels of raw materials and finished products. Curiously, they need guidance in the production of many things they have never seen and for which they can see no use. Think of all the seemingly bizarre novelties coming out of South China these days! And now rural people in the

remotest spots around the world can use cell phones to find out what the prices are in a distant market.

Yet in all of this there is absolutely no substitute for honesty and reliability. Honesty is so rare that the absence of integrity alone is the chief drag in many societies. There will always be room for integrity and good will, for the one who keeps his word. In the growth of our young republic, when westward expansion was rapid, connections between suppliers and buyers East and West were tenuous. Two Evangelical businessmen in New York, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, founded a company to compile a list of businessmen west of the Appalachians, mainly those encompassed by revival—people whom they could trust. Today that company is called Dunn and Bradstreet.

J. C. Penney, in the early days, attempted quite successfully to found a business-in-mission. A devout Christian, Penney sought to deliver at the lowest price what people truly needed. A mother in Nebraska could send her two children down to the J. C. Penney store with a note for the storeowner to outfit them for the fall school term. She did not have to worry that they would come home with things they did not need.

In the early days of IBM, any salesman would be fired who ever oversold IBM machinery or services to any company beyond their real needs. As a result, companies no longer put out competitive bids because they could trust the advice and wisdom of the IBM salespeople. Indeed, at IBM even the highest executives had to get out and do sales work once a month in order to stay close to the customer. IBM became strong because it truly served.

Thus, there will always be a tension, real or suspected, between business services and business profit. In one sense, when a customer pays for a good or service, he turns those funds over to a business owner who might do well to consider those funds as held in trust. That money is needed to buy more goods of the kind just sold, to pay wages to the employees serving the customer, and to keep the owner in food and lodging. Those funds may also be needed to pay the equivalent of interest on any business loans that are making the enterprise possible. Certainly, customers' payments ought to be spent on improving the service rendered. The funds the customer gives ultimately and most legitimately should be used to benefit the customer, to maximize the service rendered. It ought not be a question merely of how much a business can "get" for something it is selling.

Now what if the product the customer is paying for is scarce or unique and a high price can readily be charged? The income beyond cost can effectively be spent in improving the product or streamlining the service. Can it legitimately be diverted to a Christian ministry unrelated to the customer's interests?

Polarization

Here at our Center in Pasadena we also have a university, the William Carey International University. The latter is committed to what we term "International Development." This phrase refers to any and all types of contributions in a society—religious or secular—that contribute to the building up and healthy development of that society. This is what beneficial businesses are doing. This is also what missions are doing. The latter more often renew hope and vision, while the former deal with more concrete things, the essential stuff of daily life. At times, the missions are more heavenly minded than they are of earthly good. Businesses are sometimes the opposite, of genuine earthly good but with no thought whatsoever for eternal values. This is an unfortunate polarization.

In our own midst, we sense this same polarization. We have three staff families in India. One has started a business that is owned and operated by Indians. In the second, the

husband has held an academic position in a university there and still is able to witness among a wide range of intellectuals that church people in India could hardly touch. The third is working with church leaders on a curriculum with mission vision, even though the husband has an advanced degree in science.

All this can be confusing. Right on our campus we have a university devoted to development, mainly run by missionaries without business experience. Some people may find it hard to understand why it exists because they don't understand the full spectrum of missionary concern as exemplified by the broad perspective of William Carey after whom the university is named. Even in this book to which I have referred I sense this same polarization.

When I was in Guatemala I lay awake many nights pondering the problem of a vast mountain Indian population that had cut down all the trees for fuel and heat, eaten every animal form of life for food, and tilled every square inch of flat (and even very steep) land. Among these dear people were thousands of faithful believing (and slowly starving) Christians.

For my own thinking process I wrote a paper entitled "The Future of the Rural Man." I showed it to a State Department official who happened to be visiting a missionary friend out in our area of the mountains. He showed it to the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City and suddenly I got invited down to the capital to talk it over with about twenty of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) workers assigned to Guatemala.

When I was done with my presentation, one man asked me what I would do if they allocated \$10,000 to my work. I told them that what my people needed were raw materials light enough to be imported economically, the capital to buy those materials in advance and to pay for essential equipment, the know-how for which their patience and hand skills were appropriate, and reliable connections to outside markets. I realized that they could never get out of poverty selling to each other (why do the microenterprise people not see this?) Thus, I said, if given \$10,000 I would use it to place ads in the *Wall Street Journal* seeking multinational businesses to discover the potential labor market these Indians constituted. I never saw any of their money.

I perceived at that time a subconscious polarization between five different spheres:

1. *USAID type (money-giving) agencies.* They have often worked as if they can solve any problem by throwing money at it.
2. *The commercial world.* Whatever people say, this is a substantial backbone to any country, but which is an activity not expected to be altruistic.
3. *Political people at the State Department level.* For these people governmental reform is the most vital matter.
4. *Peace Corps people.* They were assigned a variety of good things to do, such as starting chicken farms. In Guatemala they were instructed to have nothing to do with missionaries.)

5. *Finally, religious agencies.* These entities, like my own Presbyterian mission, were involved in building schools and conference centers, doing Bible translation, church planting and literacy work, founding hospitals and medical clinics, and even fielding fulltime agricultural specialists, etc.

An Example

The Peace Corps man, who lived in a village near where I worked, always avoided me. But once I found myself going up a steep narrow street and saw him coming down. I instantly knew that we would at least have to exchange a greeting. I had heard that his two-

year term was soon to end and wondered what he had understood of what I was doing. When he approached I stuttered out a hello and asked him how the chicken farm was going. “Lousy,” he complained. “I don’t think it will continue when I leave.” I knew he had put his heart into it, so I asked him what was the problem. He snarled, “You can’t trust these Guatemalans. When I leave each month to go to the capital for our Peace Corps briefing, the egg production drops on exactly those two days. No, you can’t trust these Guatemalans.”

By this time I had been in Guatemala for almost ten years, so I took some offense. I found myself replying, “Look, you want to find an honest Guatemalan? That’s the business I’m in. I can find you an honest man in any village of Guatemala.” By then every village in Guatemala had at least one Evangelical congregation of humble people whose lives had been renewed because of a heavenly hope and a new earthly Master for whom deceit and dishonesty were detestable.

I could tell he didn’t believe me. Maybe I exaggerated a little. Nevertheless, mission work still has an inherent advantage. The diversity, mutual antagonism, and lack of coordination of the earnest efforts of the agencies I have listed above is a real burden and hindrance to development and hope. This burden and barrier is really only nearly erased when you get into the world of the religious agencies, particularly the standard missions. By “standard missions” I don’t mean the specialized religious relief and development agencies. They also cannot be effective in most cases unless the religious agencies get there first and generate honest people. All agencies need enough renewed people to create the minimal integrity required to manage the essential developing infrastructure of a country.

Not even in this country do we have enough renewed people of that kind. I am disappointed with the amazingly popular (and good) book—Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life*—which is entirely devoted to all the good things church members can do in helping their local churches in their after-hours time. I can’t find one word about the quality or focus of the believer’s work during their forty-hour week. Not even in this country are there very many visible Christian businesses, for that matter.

But there is one more consideration.

The Cultural Mandate?

A number of people these days refer to the Genesis “Cultural Mandate” which was given to Adam, note, before the Fall. This way they feel they can rightly and reasonably justify earnest Christian efforts in just about any good business which is essential to the growth and welfare of society. These people also speak of what is called “The Evangelistic Mandate,” which arose of necessity after the Fall, and was intended to advance the Kingdom and thus redeem the fallen creation.

However, these are not complementary mandates. They are sequential. The cultural mandate came first, and assumed no emergency. The cultural mandate is like what happens in peacetime. But, when an emergency strikes (such as a tsunami or war), while cultural (read domestic) activities cannot totally cease, they will be radically modified. As I look back on my experience during the Second World War, I remember both civilians and servicemen being totally caught up in the war. I vividly recall that even domestic activity was extensively bent and refitted to support both the true essentials of society as well as the war effort.

The gasoline being burned up by war vehicles on land, armadas of ships and submarines at sea, and hundreds and even thousands of fuel-burning planes in the air, did not leave enough gasoline for anything but truly essential use at home. You could be fined \$50 (today that would be \$500) for going on a Sunday drive with the family if that trip did

not include some war-related or crucial civilian-related purpose. Nylon stockings vanished in favor of parachute cords. Coffee totally disappeared as a non-essential.

What I am saying is that, while the vast array of activities that can be included in a business or Cultural Mandate are good and important—and while the Cultural Mandate has never been rescinded—after the Fall of Adam the Cultural Mandate is no longer enough. Nor can the Evangelistic Mandate be purely “heavenly-oriented.” After the Fall it is no longer merely a matter of getting people prepared for heaven, it is a case of preparing them both for heaven and for all-out, knock-down, drag-out war against the powers of darkness and evil. Emergencies, both physical and spiritual, now exist and must be dealt with on a wartime basis or the glory of God will continue to suffer.

Two Mandates or One?

It is impelling that both mandates should be merged into a single “Military Mandate,” which, in this life, in the story of a reconquering Kingdom of God, may well be the only mandate we should be concerned about. A Military Mandate logically includes all the essential civilian functions. It must also include fighting evil and the works of the devil, which is essential to the “reglorification” of God. This is in addition to true reconciliation of humans and the new life of Christ within them and whatever is necessary to accomplish that redemptive and recruiting function.

The Second World War definitely unified these two mandates. When the Allied forces were poised to invade the continent on D-Day, they were, of course, seeking to liberate the French (Belgians, Dutch, etc.) from the oppression of Nazi occupation. But that could not be their only purpose. To do that they first had to track down and defeat Hitler and destroy his evil empire. In fact, defeating an evil empire was no doubt more prominent in their minds than liberating Paris.

Today in business or missions, then, we cannot simply go out to do good to people in need. People don’t just happen to be poor. They are oppressed. Yes, by humans, but also by intelligent, evil powers behind both social and biological evils. Human societies are riddled with graft and corruption and greed and unscrupulous operators of all kinds, for whom human life is meaningless. Furthermore, all poor populations, more than anything else, are dragged down and decimated by intelligent evil attackers too small to see with the naked eye.

Missions and businesses are both good at helping people who get sick. In fact, money from sick people fuels the single largest industrial complex in this country next to education, namely the medical/pharmaceutical complex. But virtually nowhere is many needy and crucial activities for which sick people are not paying, that is, the eradication of the very pathogens that haunt most human societies on the face of the earth. Even in the U.S.A., these deadly but tiny terrorists kill millions per year, dragging down nine out of ten Americans to a premature death. Note that in this arena we can find no insights in Luther or Calvin’s writings because they did not know about germs.

But, in any case, where there is no income there is no business. The medical/pharmaceutical complex gravitates to artificial substances that can be patented and sold at a very high price, and to medicines for chronic diseases which ensure that their customers will be long term. That’s just “good business.” This means that market remuneration will not as effectively support a business if it seeks outright cures or especially if it seeks to eradicate the causal pathogens. Only a supported “mission” can deal with those things. That sort of “mission” can be found in the Carter Center (which is attempting to eradicate five major diseases), and also in the nearly unique Howard Hughes Medical

Institute. The latter, unlike most universities and even the National Institutes of Health, is not dependent on funding and bonuses from the pharmaceutical industry.

Lamentably, most of the research done by universities and our government is extensively subsidized (and in effect controlled) by outside commercial interests. Thus, the monetary investment in all the world's efforts focused on eradicating pathogens amounts to pennies when compared to the energies expended when humans notice and must pay for help with their illnesses. It simply is not "good business" to create medicines for poor people.

If we wish truly to glorify God in all the earth, we need to realize that we cannot go on allowing people to believe that our God is not interested in defeating the Evil One. The Bible plainly states that "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the Devil" (1 Jn 3:8). Only that way can France and Belgium be truly liberated. Only that way can we do as Paul described in his mandate to Agrippa: "To open [peoples'] eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18).

Unfortunately, I don't see business being of any great help in this. And, while I see missions focusing on both earthly and heavenly blessings, I don't see any significant effort—mission or business—aimed specifically at the defeat of the works of Satan, beyond rescuing humans from their spiritual problems. They are certainly not significantly recruiting them for war and the casualties war expectably entails. In this case, I refer to everything from auto accidents, diseases, addictions, marital distress—you name it—things that we do not usually attribute to an intelligent enemy, but which drastically curtail effective ministry. We seem to assume that the world is simply the absence of good rather than the presence of both good and dynamic, intelligent evil. Is there even one substantial Christian agency (or even secular or Christian business) in the world focused specifically on the eradication of pathogens that tyrannize the entire world to this day?

Realistically, in a given country either sluggish or lagging Gross Domestic Profit (GDP) is more likely the result of disease than any other single factor. We are almost blind to that fact, even if we ourselves get sick. During ten years in Vietnam we lost ten American soldiers per day. In Iraq we are losing ten a day. But in this country due to cancer and cardiovascular disease alone we are losing 300 times that many per day. In other words, our losses due to heart disease day by day equal 300 Vietnam or Iraq wars. Meanwhile, note that while we poured billions of dollars into Vietnam and are pouring multiple billions into Iraq, not one percent of the money spent on patching up heart patients is focused on deciphering the now clear evidence that infection is the initial and major factor in heart disease.

What is our "business" under God? Is it good enough for us to traverse the globe with good but relatively superficial remedies? Or, does our mandate derive from the larger, Biblical purpose of defeating the intelligently designed works of the Devil and in that way restoring glory to God (which, incidentally, benefits man)?

Or, is it good enough simply to make people feel secure in this life and hopeful about eventually getting out of this sin-filled world and through the pearly gates? Right now that is the main thing the church is doing. In stark contrast are things like restoring creation, restoring God's glory, rediscovering Satan's works, and deliberately destroying his deeds and deadly delusions. You can't win a war simply by caring for the wounded. The fruits of evil—sickness, poverty, illiteracy, and inhumanity—draw our attention when we need to be concerned with the roots of evil.

This is a "wartime" and Biblical perspective, yet it has apparently evaporated into the thin air of the current mood, which is defined by an artificial and inadequate (albeit pervasive) peacetime mandate. The Biblical mandate is "the Gospel of the Kingdom," not

merely a “Gospel of salvation.” The Gospel of the Kingdom is the central matter of God’s will being done “on earth as it is in heaven.” It is a mandate that is distinctly larger than getting along in this life with the help of business, and getting to heaven with the help of missions. God’s glory is at stake. His glory is our main business. ■

**Excerpts on Reaching Certain Unreached Peoples while
Fighting the Works of the Devil:
See Book Review, *The Epic***

IJFM 23:2 (April-June 2006).

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/23_2_PDFs/Book_Reviews.pdf

Editorial Comment on what it takes to “engage” a people group

(*Mission Frontiers* November-December 2006).

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment14>

We used to concern ourselves with listing all the “Unreached Peoples” in the world. The cover story this time is “What does it take to ‘engage’ a people group?” Why ask that? Good news!

So many agencies have turned their attention to Unreached Peoples that now the Southern Baptists (as evidenced in our January-February 2006 issue) are trying to list Unreached Peoples which are still “unengaged” by any agency or entity.

Jeff Liverman proposes a four-fold test. Jim Haney tweaks all four, suggesting that it is not necessary to have a resident missionary, and that a foreign missionary may not even be necessary if someone within the culture goes outside and later, as a bi-cultural believer, goes back into his own people.

Bravo! The bi-cultural possibility has often been overlooked by mission agencies. They may not realize that the two most prominent “missionaries” in the New Testament (Paul and Barnabas) were both bi-cultural.

When the Jerusalem Council needed a missionary to go to the new Greek believers in Antioch, they chose a bi-cultural (Barnabas). When Barnabas needed help, he sought out another bi-cultural (Paul).

Today around the world there are thousands more bi-culturalists than at any previous time in history. This is due to massive migration of peoples. Only a handful of the smallest groups locked away in some hidden valleys do not yet have a number of their people in the outside world.

Migrating people are a global phenomenon today. When people migrate, they often are much more open to new ideas than back in their homeland.

Thus, we need not merely list Unreached Peoples and Unengaged Peoples and send foreign missionaries. We must assiduously seek out bi-culturalists who are already introduced to Jesus Christ and who can reach their own people better than any outsider.

I must add one caution to what both Liverman and Haney have said. My suggestion: let’s stop talking about “church planting.” Why? Because of what we often assume a “church” to be.

We Americans live in a country where families are almost expected to drift apart, creating artificially “individualized” people. Thus, as a result we produce artificial “church” fellowships which collect loose individuals or family fragments (such as “nuclear families”) into a helpful surrogate family — which we then call a “church.”

However, in much of the world our missionaries find that multi-generational families are still intact! Often the only thing they know to do is to pull people out of those families so they can gather in an artificial “church” family. What an astounding contrast to the New Testament! There worshipping households were the “churches.”

I am sure that both Liverman and Haney know this. But, in that case, wouldn't it be better not to continue to use such a misunderstood term as "church" for what they are advocating?

In our last issue Bob Goodmann presented a crucial series of charts talking not about "church planting" but instead about "movements to Christ", namely, fellowships built on families, not groups made up of loose individuals. Way to go!

But, are we finishing the task? (Part 1)

Yes, in a way. However, this issue of Mission Frontiers could easily be taken to reinforce the common assumption that if we can see a movement to Christ in every nation, tribe, and tongue, we will have fulfilled the Great Commission and have even fulfilled the final conditions for the return of Christ! Wrong.

Admittedly, Matthew 24:14 does say, "This Gospel must be preached in the whole world as a testimony to every people and then the end will come." But did you note that I left a word out of that quote?: "Kingdom" – "this Gospel of the Kingdom. " This reminds us of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth . . ."

The most shocking, tragic and incredible delusion built right into contemporary Evangelicalism in many areas is the idea that we are here on earth simply to get more people fixed up for eternity.

That aspiration is basic, of course. But it's preliminary to a life lived 24/7 in an all-out battle against those things that dishonor God: evil things, disease germs, corruption, dishonesty in industry and government. 1 John 3:8 says, "The Son of God came for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the Devil." And, as the Father sent Him, so He sends us!

In fact, glorifying God by fighting evil is the best way to win people to Christ. Jesus Himself fought evil, dishonesty and greed — and disease. He did this to reveal to us the character of our heavenly Father. It is not merely a case of overcoming evil with good, as when we run up against "flesh and blood." We must also deliberately seek out and destroy evil in order to defend and confirm the character of our Father in Heaven.

I just read that annually over 200,000 hours of work are lost in the USA to dental disease among seniors. By contrast, in Africa, 45 million work years are annually lost to malaria. That's 2 million times as many man-hours! Is that why Africa's people are malnourished and poor? You bet. Should we fight malaria as Christians? Yes. Are we doing so? NO. (Bill Gates is). We have no theology to fight disease. We think caring for the sick is all we need to do. Yes, we must reach every Unreached People. But we must also faithfully reveal the Father, or we won't win very many.

Are we finishing the task? (Part 2)

Yes, in a way. If we confine our attention to the remaining Unreached Peoples and not for the moment concern ourselves with all the Lord's Prayer means, we can deal with some very concrete figures.

An Unreached People has been technically defined as lacking an indigenous community of believers. A department of the USCWM (www.JoshuaProject.net) uses a more researchable definition of less than 2% believers and 5% adherents. Their total of 6,637 such groups I have divided into three categories. Some of the first category may actually be "Reached" as defined technically.

Probably the most surprising number in the chart is the small total population for the 3,473 groups in the third category – 6.7 million. That is less than one-tenth of one percent of the global population (about one-thousandth).

Note well that there are now thousands of churches worldwide which could become part of the harvest force for each of these “least-reached” groups. And mission outreach is now exploding in Korea, Singapore, the Philippines, Brazil, etc. Not bad!

The Evangelical Renaissance, 1600–2000 CE

(Foundations Course Lecture 14 (2007))

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035f239f92865859c06885/1594056486339/Foundations%2BLectures.pdf>

Post-World War II: The Expansion of New Missions.

Foundations Course Lecture 16 (2008)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b3157f3b40b9d21a8096625/t/5f035f239f92865859c06885/1594056486339/Foundations%2BLectures.pdf>

Seven Men, Four Eras

7/13/08

Frontiers in Mission, 308-16

It is clear that the Biblical mission mandate has quite often been overlooked during most of the centuries since the apostles. Even our Protestant tradition with all its focus on the Bible plugged along for over 250 years minding its own business and its own blessings (like Israel of old)—until a young man of great faith and incredible patience appeared on the scene—William Carey.

In this chapter we are going to focus in on the period following A.D. 1800, which his life and witness greatly affected. No other one person can be given as much credit for the vibrant new impetus of the last two hundred years. He was one of seven specific men whom God used, all of them working against conventional thinking. Four great “eras” of plunging forward into newly perceived frontiers, into new awareness resulted from their faith, vision and obedience. It took two of them to launch the third, and three more to push for the fourth era. Between the first three of these eras, we see two transitions of four “stages” of mission strategy. A third perplexing “transition” of strategy appeared as the fourth era unfolded. It is easier to see this in a diagram. Better still, the story.

The First Era

An “under thirty” young man, William Carey, got into trouble when he began to take the Great Commission seriously. When he had the opportunity as a young minister to address a group of older ministers, he challenged them to give a reason why the Great Commission did not apply to them. They rebuked him, saying, “When God chooses to win the heathen, He will do it without your help or ours.” He was unable to speak again on the subject, but a businessman asked him to write out his analysis, *An Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.

The resulting small book convinced a few of his friends to create a tiny mission agency, the “means” of which his *Enquiry* had spoken. This agency was flimsy and weak, providing only the minimal and sporadic backing he needed to go to India. However, the impact of his example reverberated throughout the English-speaking world, and his little book became the Magna Carta of the Protestant mission movement.

William Carey was not the first Protestant missionary. For years the Moravians had sent people to Greenland, America and Africa. But his little book, in combination with the Evangelical Awakening, quickened vision and changed lives on both sides of the Atlantic. Response was almost instantaneous: a second missionary society was founded in London; two in Scotland; one in Holland; and then still another in England. By then it was apparent to all that Carey was right when he had insisted that *organized* efforts in the form of mission societies were essential to the success of the missionary endeavor.

In America, five college students, aroused by Carey’s book and his letters, met to pray for God’s direction for their lives. This unobtrusive prayer meeting, later known as the

“Haystack Prayer Meeting,” resulted in an American “means”—the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. Even more important, those students started a student mission movement, the Student Missionary Inquiry, which became the example and forerunner of other student movements, even underlying the much later Student Volunteer Movement.

In fact, during the first 25 years after Carey sailed to India, a dozen mission agencies were formed on both sides of the Atlantic, and the First Era in Protestant missions was off to a good start, building much faster than later eras. Realistically speaking, however, missions in this First Era was a pitifully small shoe-string operation, in relation to the major preoccupations of most Europeans and Americans in that day. The idea that we should organize in order to send missionaries did not come easily, but it eventually became an accepted pattern.

Carey’s influence led some women in Boston to form women’s missionary prayer groups, a trend which led to women becoming the main custodians of mission knowledge and motivation. After some years women began to go to the field as single missionaries. Finally, by 1865, when more than half of all men in a large age-range were killed in the Civil War, unmarried American women established women’s mission boards which, like Roman Catholic women’s orders, only sent out single women as missionaries and were run entirely by single women at home.

There are two very bright notes about the First Era. One is the astonishing demonstration of love and sacrifice on the part of those who went out. Africa, especially, was a forbidding continent. All mission outreach to Africa prior to 1775 had totally failed. Of all Catholic efforts, all Moravian efforts, nothing remained. Not one missionary of any kind existed on the continent on the eve of the First Era. The gruesome statistics of almost inevitable sickness and death that haunted, yet did not daunt, the decades of truly valiant missionaries who went out after 1790 in virtually a suicidal stream cannot be matched by any other era or by any other cause. Very few missionaries to Africa in the first 60 years of the First Era survived more than two years. As I have reflected on this measure of devotion I have been humbled to tears, for I wonder—if either my people or myself today could or would match that record? Can you imagine our Urbana students today going out into missionary work if they knew that for decade after decade 19 out of 20 of those going before them had not lived more than 24 months? No wonder they began going to the field with their belongings packed in caskets.

A second bright spot in this First Era is the development of high quality insight into mission strategy. The movement had several great missiologists. In regard to the role of home structure, they clearly understood the value of the mission structure being allowed a life of its own. For example, we read that the London Missionary Society experienced unprecedented and unequalled success, “due partly to its freedom from ecclesiastical supervision and partly to its formation from an almost equal number of ministers and laymen.” In regard to field structure, we can take a note from Henry Venn who was related to the famous Clapham Evangelicals and the son of a founder of the Church Missionary Society. Except for a few outdated terms, one of his most famous paragraphs sounds strangely modern:

Regarding the ultimate object of a Mission, viewed under its ecclesiastical result, to be the settlement of a Native Church under Native Pastors upon a self-supporting system, it should be borne in mind that the progress of a Mission mainly depends upon the training up and the location of Native Pastors; and that, as it has been happily

expressed, the “euthanasia of a Mission” takes place when a missionary, surrounded by well-trained Native congregations under Native Pastors, is able to resign all pastoral work into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendence over the pastors themselves, ’til it insensibly ceases; and so the Mission passes into a settled Christian community. Then the missionary and all missionary agencies should be transferred to the “regions beyond.”

Note well that while there was no thought here of the national church launching its own mission outreach to new pioneer fields! Nevertheless, we do see here something like *stages of mission activity*, described by Harold Fuller of SIM in the alliterative sequence:

Stage 1: A **Pioneer** stage—first contact with a people group.

Stage 2: A **Paternal** stage—expatriates train national leadership.

Stage 3: A **Partnership** stage—national leaders work as equals with expatriates.

Stage 4: A **Participation** stage—expatriates are no longer equal partners, but only participate by invitation.

Slow and painstaking though the labors of the First Era were, they did bear fruit, and the familiar series of stages can be observed which goes from no church in the pioneer stage to infant church in the paternal stage and to the more complicated mature church in the partnership and participation stages.

Samuel Hoffman of the Reformed Church in America Board puts it well: “The Christian missionary who was loved as an evangelist and liked as a teacher, may find himself resented as an administrator.”

Rare is the missionary in whose own career this whole sequence of stages takes place. More likely the series represents the work in a specific field with a succession of missionaries, or it may be the experience of an agency which in its early period bursts out in work in a number of places and then after some years finds that most of its fields are mature at about the same time. But rightly or wrongly, this kind of succession is visible in the mission movement globally, as the fever for change and nationalization sweeps the thinking of almost all executives at once and leaps from continent to continent, wrongly affecting both new fields still in earlier stages, as well as old fields in the latter stages.

At any rate, by 1865 there was a strong consensus on both sides of the Atlantic that the missionary should go home when he had worked himself out of a job. Since the First Era focused primarily upon the coastlands of Asia and Africa, we are not surprised that literal withdrawal would come about first in a case where there were no inland territories. Thus, symbolizing the last two stages of the First Era was the withdrawal of all missionaries from the Hawaiian Islands, then a separate country. This was done with legitimate pride and fanfare and fulfilled the highest expectations, then and now, of successful progress through the stages of missionary planting, watering and harvest. But it interfered with the initial stages of the Second Era, as we shall see.

The Second Era

A second symbolic event of 1865 is even more significant, at least for the inauguration of the Second Era. A young man, after a few years in China and like Carey still under thirty, in the teeth of counter advice, established the first of a whole new breed of mission agencies emphasizing the inland territories. This second young upstart was at first given little but negative notice, but like William Carey, he brooded over statistics, charts and maps. When he suggested that the inland peoples of China needed to be reached, he was told you could not get there, and he was asked if he wished to carry on his shoulders the blood of the young

people he would thus send to their deaths. This accusing question stunned and staggered him. Groping for light, wandering on the beach, it seemed as if God finally spoke to resolve the ghastly thought: “You are not sending young people into the interior of China. I am.” The load lifted.

As part of England’s lower class, with only trade school medicine, without any university experience much less missiological training, and a checkered past in regard to his own individualistic behavior while he was on the field, he was merely one more of the weak things that God uses to confound the wise. Even his early anti-church-planting missionary strategy was breathtakingly erroneous by today’s church-planting insights. Yet God strangely honored him because his gaze was fixed upon the world’s peoples who had never heard. Hudson Taylor had a divine wind behind him. The Holy Spirit spared him from many pitfalls, and it was his organization, the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship)—the most cooperative, servant organization yet to appear—that eventually served in one way or another over 6,000 missionaries, predominantly in the interior of China. It took 20 years for other missions to begin to join Taylor in his special emphasis—the *inland* frontiers.

One reason the Second Era began slowly is that many people were confused. There were already many missions in existence. Why more? Yet as Taylor pointed out, all existing agencies were focused on the coastlands of Africa and Asia, or islands in the Pacific. People questioned, “Why go to the interior if you haven’t finished the job on the coast?”

I am not sure the parallel is true today, but the Second Era apparently needed not only a new vision but a lot of new organizations. Taylor not only started an English *frontier* mission, he went to Scandinavia and the Continent to challenge people to start new agencies. As a result, directly or indirectly, over 40 new agencies took shape to compose “the faith mission movement” that rightly should be called *frontier* missions as the names of many of them still indicate: China Inland Mission, Sudan Interior Mission, Africa Inland Mission, Heart of Africa Mission, Unevangelized Fields Mission, Regions Beyond Missionary Union. *Taylor was more concerned for the cause than for a career.* At the end of his life he had spent only half of his years of ministry in China. In countless trips back and forth from China he spent half of his time as a mobilizer on the home front. For Taylor, the cause of Christ, not his mission, and not even China, was the ultimate focus of his concern.

As in the early stage of the First Era, when things began to move, God brought forth a student movement. This one was more massive than before—the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, history’s single most potent mission organization. In the 1880s and 90s there were only 1/37th as many college students as there are today, but the Student Volunteer Movement netted 100,000 volunteers who gave their lives to missions. Twenty-thousand actually went overseas. As we see it now, the other 80,000 had to stay home to deepen the foundations of the mission endeavor and support system. They strengthened existing women’s missionary societies and began the Laymen’s Missionary Movement which in ten years quadrupled the giving to missions of the churches involved.

However, as the fresh new college students of the Second Era burst on the scene overseas, they did not always fathom how the older missionaries of the First Era could have turned responsibility over to national leadership who lived at the least educated levels of society. First Era missionaries were in the minority now, and the wisdom they had gained from their experience was bypassed by the large number of new college-educated recruits. Thus, for decades in the early stages of the Second Era, the new college-trained missionaries, instead of going to new frontiers, sometimes assumed leadership over existing churches, not heeding the experience of previous mission workers. As a result they often forced into the

background First Era missionaries and national leadership (which had been painstakingly developed). In some cases this caused a huge step backward in mission strategy.

By 1925, however, the largest mission movement in history was in full swing. By then Second Era missionaries were finally learning the basic lessons they had first ignored, and produced an incredible record. They had planted churches in a thousand new places, mainly “inland,” and by 1940 the reality of the “younger churches” around the world was widely acclaimed as the “great new fact of our time.” The strength of these churches led both national leaders and missionaries to assume that all additional frontiers could simply be mopped up by the ordinary evangelism of the churches scattered throughout the world. More and more people wondered if, in fact, missionaries were no longer needed so badly! Once more, as in 1865, it seemed logical to send missionaries home from many areas of the world.

For us today it is highly important to note the overlap of these first two eras. The 45 year period between 1865 and 1910 (compare 1934 to 1980) was a transition between the strategy appropriate to the mature stages of Era 1, the Coastlands era, and the strategy appropriate to the pioneering stages of Era 2, the Inland era.

Not long after the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, there ensued the shattering World Wars and the worldwide collapse of the colonial apparatus. By 1945 many overseas churches were anticipating not only the withdrawal of the colonial powers, but the absence of the missionary as well. While there was no very widespread outcry of, “Missionary Go Home,” as some might suppose, nevertheless things were different now, as even the people in the pews at home ultimately sensed. *Pioneer* and *paternal* were no longer the relevant stages, but *partnership* and *participation*.

In 1967, the total number of career missionaries from America began to decline. Why? Christians had been led to believe that all necessary beachheads had been established. By 1967, over 90 percent of all missionaries from North America were working with strong national churches that had been in existence for some time.

The facts, however, were not that simple. Unnoticed by most everyone, another era in missions had begun.

The Third Era

This era was begun by a pair of young men of the Student Volunteer Movement—Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran. Cameron Townsend was in so much of a hurry to get to the mission field that he didn’t bother to finish college. He went to Guatemala as a “Second Era” missionary, building on work which had been done in the past. In that country, as in all other mission fields, there was plenty to do by missionaries working with established national churches.

But Townsend was alert enough to notice (and it was pointed out by older missionaries) that the majority of Guatemala’s population did not speak Spanish. As he moved from village to village, trying to distribute scriptures written in the Spanish language, he realized that Spanish evangelism would never reach all of Guatemala’s people. He was further convinced of this when, legend has it, an Indian asked him, “If your God is so smart, why can’t He speak our language?” He was befriended by a group of older missionaries who had already concluded the indigenous “Indian” populations needed to be reached in their own languages. He was just 23 when he began to move on the basis of this new perspective.

Surely Cameron Townsend is one person comparable to William Carey and Hudson Taylor. Like Carey and Taylor, Townsend saw that there were still unreached frontiers, and

for almost a half century he waved the flag for the overlooked tribal peoples of the world. He started out hoping to encourage older boards to reach out to tribal people. Like Carey and Taylor, he ended up in 1934 starting his own mission agency, later called Wycliffe Bible Translators, which is dedicated to reaching these new frontiers. At first he thought there must be about 500 unreached tribal groups in the world. (He was judging by the large number of tribal languages in Mexico alone). Later, he revised his figure to 1,000, then 2,000, and now it is over 5,000. As his conception of the enormity of the task has increased, the size of his organization has increased, numbering over 6,000 adult workers.

At the very same time Townsend was ruminating in Guatemala, Donald McGavran was beginning to yield to the seriousness, not of linguistic barriers, but of India's amazing social and cultural barriers. Townsend acted on, and promoted, the reality of linguistically diverse (and overlooked) tribes; McGavran highlighted and promoted the social and cultural diversity of a more nearly universal category he labeled "homogeneous units," which today are more often called "people groups." Paul Hiebert, a missionary anthropologist, has employed the terminology of "horizontal segmentation" for the tribes, where each occupies its own turf, and "vertical segmentation" for groups distinguished not by geography but by rigid social or cultural differences. McGavran's terminology described both kinds even though he was mainly thinking about the more subtle vertical segmentation.

Once such a social group is penetrated, by diligently taking advantage of a missiological breakthrough along social lines, McGavran's strategic concept of a "bridge of God" to that people group comes into the picture. The corollary of this truth is the fact that *until* such a breakthrough is made, normal evangelism and church planting cannot take place.

McGavran did not found a new mission (Townsend did so only when the existing missions did not adequately respond to the tribal challenge). But, McGavran built the largest school of mission in the world and his active efforts and writings spawned both the Church Growth Movement and indirectly the frontier mission movement, the one devoted to expanding within already penetrated groups, and the other (which he did not contemplate until his last few years) devoted to deliberately approaching the remaining unpenetrated groups.

As with Taylor before them, for twenty years Townsend and McGavran attracted little attention. But by the 1950s both had wide audiences. In 1980, 46 years from Townsend's 1934 organizational move, a 1910-like conference was held, focusing precisely on the forgotten groups these two men had emphasized. The Edinburgh-1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions was the largest mission meeting in history, measured by the number of mission agencies sending delegates. And wonder of wonders, 57 Third World agencies sent delegates. This meeting is the sleeper of the Third Era! Also, a simultaneous youth meeting, the International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions, pointed the way for all future mission meetings to include significant youth participation. It later started the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* (its hundreds of keen articles are all available on the web, www.ijfm.org).

As happened in the early stages of the first two eras, the Third Era has spawned a number of new mission agencies. Some, like the New Tribes Mission, carry in their names reference to this new emphasis. The names of others, such as Gospel Recordings and Mission Aviation Fellowship, refer to the new technologies necessary for the reaching of tribal and other isolated peoples of the world. Some Second Era agencies, like the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, have never ceased to stress frontiers, and have merely increased their staff so they can penetrate further—to people groups previously overlooked.

More recently many have begun to realize that tribal peoples are not the only forgotten peoples. Many other groups, some in the middle of partially Christianized areas, have been completely overlooked. These peoples, including overlooked tribals, are being called the “Unreached Peoples” and are defined by ethnic or sociological traits to be peoples so different from the cultural traditions of any existing church that specifically cross-cultural mission strategies (rather than ordinary evangelistic techniques) are necessary to achieve the missiological breakthrough essential to the planting of truly indigenous churches within their particular cultural traditions.

If the First Era was a new awareness of mission responsibility, characterized by reaching coastland peoples and the Second Era was an additional awareness, emphasizing inland territories, the Third Era began a new awareness of the more difficult-to-define, non-geographical category which we have called “Unreached Peoples”—people groups which are either socially or culturally isolated. Because this concept has been so hard to define, the Third Era has been even slower getting started than the Second Era. Cameron Townsend and Donald McGavran began calling attention to bypassed peoples for 40 years but not until 1980 had any major attention been given to them. More tragic still, many mission agencies have essentially forgotten the pioneering techniques of the First and Second Eras. Thus, they have needed to reinvent the wheel as they learned once more how to approach groups of people completely untouched by the gospel.

We know that there are thousands of people groups in the “Unreached Peoples” category, which can be gathered in clusters of similar peoples, these clusters being far fewer in number. Yet, each single people will require a separate, new missionary beachhead. Is this too much? Can this be done? Yes it can!

The Fourth Era

We need to be alert to the appearance in the last few years of other frontiers of mission, other new awarenesses of mission responsibility. The First Era of Coastland church planting is well established. So is the Second, Inland Era. Even the Third, Unreached People Era is widely embraced. People are now talking about a Fourth Era. Candidates for that label include the often-mentioned challenge of looming **urban populations**, which both preserve existing people groups as well as break down differences and create new groups. Another new awareness is the welcome surge of so-called **Third World Mission Agencies**. Related is the frontier which has been called **Diaspora Missiology**, which attempts to understand the massive movement of thousand of peoples from their traditional homelands. Then there is the colossal development of a movement to **two-week “short terms,”** which gives millions a cross-cultural experience yet eats up many times the total cost of all long-term missionaries—a “new awareness” of mixed value. Similarly there is the new challenge of many churches deciding to bypass seasoned agencies to send out their own missionaries with little pre-field or on-field guidance, teamwork or encouragement—a word for this development is “The Phenomenon of **Disintermediation.**” Some would hail this as a challenging new awareness, but as such it is dubious. A similar mixed blessing, though not new, but growing, is the shift to sending just money overseas not missionaries, paying local believers to reach out to nearby peoples. I hope this does not get promoted as a fourth era.

However, one new awareness would seem to be more significant than any of the other contenders for the Fourth Era label. It is the challenge, which has always been in the pages of this course, to understand and implement *a clearly broader-than-common interpretation of the Great Commission.*

Curiously, in the 19th Century, prior to the American Civil War, Evangelical initiatives made unprecedented, truly momentous changes in society. This was possible because Evangelicals held influential positions in the civil order, and, as a result, both social and personal salvation were feasible—and vigorously pursued. But the ten million people who lived in the USA in 1820 were flooded with an additional thirty million by 1870. In another thirty years the vast majority of Evangelicals were non-college people, and did not run the country, and understandably focused on more modest good works. As the 20th century wore on their 157 Bible Institutes gradually became colleges and universities and their influence mounted once again as thousands of Evangelicals entered the professions, became university professors. Most Evangelical young people now went to college. Accordingly, Evangelicals regained the awareness that the Gospel would be greatly empowered as they sought to bring about God's will on earth, since it is *deeds* that both reveal God's character and give meaning that is essential to the *words* of the Gospel.

This recovered perspective may require a second thought for Evangelicals, who earlier in the 20th century tended to view the salvation of man as God's primary concern. A passage in Ezekiel sheds important light on this common idea. After 35 chapters of woes, Israel is now to be blessed, and then, unexpectedly in Ezek. 36:22, God says, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name." Here we see that God has bigger purposes than human redemption.

The Bible is thus not only about how man can be reconciled to God but, perhaps, how reconciled man working with God can together destroy the Kingdom of Darkness, putting away both human evil and natural evil (such as disease germs). Note well: I John 3:8, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the Devil." Was that what Jesus meant when He said, (Matt 16:14) "I will build my church and fortress of Hell will be unable to resist its onslaught."

We come away from these verses with the impression that drawing people into the church is not the end product but, significantly, the beginning of the involvement of redeemed people in the work of the Son of God. But we must not forget that good works today, even if greatly strengthened by expanding technology and wealth, are nevertheless futile apart from transformed individuals. Yet, it is still true, as Jesus explained, that He would build His church not just to assure His people a place in heaven but to break down the gates of hell and, in effect, destroy the Kingdom of Darkness.

Thus, toward the year 2000 Evangelicals gradually moved to recover Jesus' primary emphasis on the extension of the Kingdom, that is, God's will on earth, rather than focusing primarily on getting personal salvation to individuals. More and more, apparently, no longer pray the Lord's prayer thinking that they are waiting until they die or Jesus comes to see the Kingdom come.

Missionaries in particular have used their intuition, knowledge of the Bible and personal love to demonstrate through their deeds—in this world—the character of God and His glory thus empowering their evangelism. But now that longstanding missionary intuition is often being reinforced by a theology that no longer sees evangelism and social action as two different things but as part and parcel of a single Biblical "Gospel of the Kingdom" in which both words and deeds are recognized as essential in communicating God's love, power and authority. That is, it is more and more often realized that *words* need *deeds* to make them meaningful—technically, both wordless deeds and deedless words are ineffective. Even a purely spoken sermon depends on references to deeds. This is why the Bible is so full of graphic examples of good deeds. This why the usual conversion of Muslims to Christ turns on the integrity of the witness rather on the words they speak.

This increasing interest in the New Testament emphasis on the Gospel of the Kingdom then challenges both missionaries and lay believers with a nuanced understanding of God's mission as encompassing every believer, albeit with different types of roles and expectations. It means that every Perspectives student can and must be able to sense a personal mission that in some way helps fulfill this broader-than-conventional interpretation of the Great Commission—even if they are not going to become a pastor or go to work in the classical and still crucial “cross-cultural pioneering” that is normally called *missionary*. Why? Because our evangelism is degraded if those sending the evangelist do not display the character of God. In this sense we are all called to a mission as soldiers in the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Darkness.

Thus, if a believer's 40-hour work week does not contribute directly or indirectly to that Cause, and if for that reason our daily work has not become a *holy calling*, then basic changes are in order, since we are all called to do “Our Utmost for His Highest” (*His highest*, not highest pay). This concept of a Kingdom Era, a Fourth Era, is a huge expansion of conventional mission perspective since it demands that every believer find his or her place in the Kingdom effort.

Each of the four Eras is based on a certain kind of new, deeper awareness without subtracting anything from any earlier era. It does not just mean getting to the door of every Unreached People, but how to enter, what to do. The Fourth, Kingdom Era, means, for example, that fighting all corruption, injustice, poverty or human trafficking must be seen as mainstream portrayals of God's love and righteousness in the unfolding of His will on earth. Good deeds on the part of existing believers thus undergird and make understandable our evangelistic efforts. Equally so is the testimony of the good deeds resulting in the lives of our converts who follow Christ. And today we are able to tackle far larger problems than ever before.

To understand why this transition to Kingdom thinking has taken so long, it is helpful to remember that millions of Evangelicals in the early part of the 20th century were non-college people whose dozens of Bible institutes did not lead them into the professions much less to public office, Congress or the White House. Their range of thinking was reasonably narrowed significantly, as in the case of the beautiful music of the so-called “Negro Spirituals.” Those hymns were produced by slaves who understandably did not contemplate transformation of this world but focused on the glories of Heaven later on. *Thus, millions of non-college Evangelicals took almost a century to become the influential college-level movement of today.*

By the middle of the last century three key Evangelicals, all of them professors in higher education, came out with books that heralded what was to come.

Carl F. H. Henry in 1947 wrote his stirring landmark *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*.

Timothy Smith wrote his truly surprising *Revivalism and Social Reform* in 1957, describing the long forgotten all out Evangelical assault of the evils of this world which occurred in the earlier century.

David O. Moberg came out in 1967, and 1972, with his arresting writings on *The Great Reversal*, which further described the new responsibilities resulting from increased wealth and influence in society.

The increasing momentum of this renewed perspective can be seen in the fact that while conventional evangelism and church-planting mission agencies in the USA grew 2.7% from 2001 to 2006, relief and development agencies grew 75%. The impetus of the three thinkers mentioned was not all that happened, but those three can reasonably be considered the pioneers of a long-growing and now momentous Kingdom Era of American Evangelicals

and their mission agencies in the 20th and 21st centuries. Thus we now have “Seven Men and Four Eras.”

When did the Fourth Era begin? Why not say that by the time the transition was a foregone conclusion—when Moberg weighed in, in 1967. Even now the awareness is not yet widely shared. As before, it overlaps the preceding era in a transition of considerable heated debate and confusion, a transition from 1967 until 2000. By the latter date the once new “awareness of Unreached Peoples” was no longer new, even though the last Unreached People was not yet reached.

Can We Do It?

Despite the dauntingly larger implications of a Kingdom Era, the task is not as difficult as it may seem for several surprising reasons.

In the first place, the great Evangelical missions like SIM and AIM have for a hundred years been making monumental contributions to society (e.g. building roads and bridges, vocational schools, providing better seeds and animal husbandry, etc.) even though those endeavors may not have been what some donors have wanted to hear.

Also, the task is not merely an American one, nor even a Western one. It will clearly involve Christians in every continent of the world. Believers living in the Global South are already becoming involved in countless praiseworthy initiatives involving deed-empowered evangelism.

One thing is very clear. In most cases the will of God cannot come on earth if all we do is to encourage *individuals* to do good works. Most of the major problems cannot be solved by individuals. We must expect to start many new businesses and even new mission structures that will specifically tackle such problems—whether that means cooperating with China as it is forthrightly facing the terror of widespread corruption (and is considering Christianity as part of the solution) or working with secular organizations in fighting to extinction the many plagues of deadly viruses, bacteria and parasites (like Malaria).

Basic to the concept of a Fourth Era, is the fact that the enormously increased wealth and influence of both Western Evangelicals and the second and third generations etc. of the new believers in the rest of the world means that we can be expected to move beyond *micro* good deeds to take on some of the largest problems facing humanity in the world today. We can hope that as believers are able they will add organized muscle and insight to existing (and not-yet-launched) efforts to deal with *macro*- problems such as world poverty, global slavery, or the eradication of deadly diseases. As this happens the reputations of both Evangelicals and the God Whom they serve will be significantly improved, God will be glorified, and our evangelism greatly empowered.

Very important is the fact that once a beachhead is established cross-culturally within an untouched culture, the specialized mission task of creating a “Missiological Breakthrough” is at that point complete and the full implications of the Kingdom Era can then become the responsibility of all new believers, not just the missionaries.

Furthermore, “closed countries” are less and less of a problem, because the modern world is becoming more and more open and interdependent. There are literally no countries today that admit no foreigners. Many of the countries long considered “completely closed”—like - - Arabia—are in actual fact avidly recruiting thousands of skilled people from other nations. And the truth is, they prefer devout Christians to boozing, womanizing, secular Westerners. Christians with a sense of mission must become more and more prominent in these

enterprises whether working directly for foreign countries or for external efforts to alleviate poverty and disease.

But our work in the Third and Fourth Eras has many other advantages. Not only do we have, potentially, a worldwide network of churches that can be aroused to their central mission. We know roughly how many groups need to be reached—how many doors we need to knock on. Now, we need to be much clearer about what to do to go through those doors. Best of all, nothing can obscure the fact that the Unreached Peoples Era and the Kingdom Era could well be the *final* eras. No serious believer today dare overlook the fact that God has not asked us to assist in the expansion of the Kingdom of God into every nation, tribe and tongue *without intending it to be done*. No generation has less excuse than ours if we do not go all out to do what is clearly His will.