

From the Unfinished Task to the Finishable

Articles by Ralph D. Winter
in Chronological Order

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PART 1

The 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.

Finish the Job

Mission Frontiers October 1980

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/finish-the-job>

The 1980 Buildup in Foreign Mission Interest

Last time I briefly highlighted 6 world level 1980 conferences. They provide an exciting glimpse of the drum beat of rising concern for the final frontiers in missions.

Personnel at the USCWM have vitally contributed to every single one of these meetings. Of course, that is only fair because earlier meetings at Berlin in 1966 and Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974 have made mighty contributions to the USCWM's very existence.

Berlin set in motion vast, world interest in the task of world evangelism. A whole series of regional conferences followed, leading to a second world level congress in Lausanne in 1974. The writer was invited to present a paper at the 1974 meeting which required further research into the size and shape of the unfinished task.

A direct impetus of the 1974 meeting was the founding of the U.S. Center for World Mission, focused exclusively upon the completion of the task. As only one point in an expanding worldwide network of similar nerve centers (39 other points are already in one stage or another) the U.S. Center defined the all-important measure of missionary need: does a given human society have yet within it a viable cluster of churches that both fit the society and are reaching out within it in evangelism? If not, such a people group is called a Hidden People, a term invented by a USCWM staff member, Bob Coleman, stressing the fact that we mostly FINISH THE JOB!

The 1980 Buildup in Foreign Mission Interest there is not yet a national church. (We often hear talk as if there is by now a national church everywhere.)

By 1976 a table of figures for the major groups of "Hidden People" groups was prepared by the writer for the joint executives retreat that year of the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association and the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association. Such groups amounted to 2.5 billion individuals.

By 1978 these individuals were estimated to be found in roughly 16,750 groups, a much easier target to work on, and Ed Dayton of World Vision observed that the task, the distinctively missionary task consists in penetrating these groups, not winning every last person, the latter is an evangelistic task within those groups, not a missionary outreach to those groups. (Keep in mind that until a church is first planted within these "Hidden" groups no local evangelism is yet possible!)

Also by 1978 a proposal made in 1974 was bearing fruit. In 1974, just prior to the 1974 meeting in Switzerland, a 1980 meeting was proposed for the purpose of gathering mission agency, mission board, and mission society leaders from all over the world. This would be a first. Never before had there been a meeting of that kind, except in 1910 when mission agencies from just the Western world gathered at Edinburgh, for what was nevertheless a significant meeting. Now it appeared that not one, but three meetings were being proposed in answer to the 1974 call.

Melbourne CWME, May 12-14

First of all, the World Council decided to pull back to 1980 the expected 1981 meeting of its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. In May of 1980, 800 people gathered in Melbourne for that meeting. A detailed 20-page evaluation of that conference is available from the USCWM (\$2.00 postpaid) written by Dr. David M. Stowe, former director of the (U.S.) National Council's Division of Overseas Ministries. I commend this analysis to anyone who wants an extended treatment because Stowe is both an insider, and eminently fair, willing to see both strengths and limitations lie frankly admits that the World Council sponsored conference invested the vast majority of its energy in discussing the environments, opportunities and responsibilities of the church bodies making up its membership while making little reference and displaying little concern for the specific spiritual plight of the world's non-Christians. What this means is that political, social, and economic issues dominated the discussion. Imperialism, for example, was condemned in general, but a threatened walk out of USSR delegates narrowly defeated a reference to the bloody repression in Afghanistan.

This meeting is mentioned only because it theoretically aspired to respond to the 1974 call for a meeting on missions. It claimed to be the organic successor, deriving as it does from the 1961 merger of the old International Missionary Council with the World Council. There was sense of mission present but no clear understanding of the spiritual dimension of the task. This is not to say no one present could think evangelistically, but the inevitable result of such wide theological diversity is a great deal of confusion. One Orthodox bishop acknowledged that he did not believe he could regard a certain outstanding evangelical leader as a Christian. No wonder the agenda was highly secular.

Pattaya COWE, June 14-27

By contrast the meeting in Thailand in June brought together explicitly evangelical leaders, or at least leaders directly representing evangelical churches. The meeting was thus more unified in many ways than was the one in Melbourne.

It is an open secret that most missionary work in the Protestant tradition has been done by efforts springing out of the evangelical tradition within Protestantism. Thus not surprisingly it is possible for very nearly the whole Christian movement in Asia and Africa to be represented readily in an exclusively evangelical conference.

One issue that surfaced early in the meeting was the whole question of whether it is a reasonable strategy to think in terms of world evangelization as a task of reaching people groups rather than merely winning individual unbelievers. It is amazing and pleasing that so much of the mission movement by now is pretty much committed to taking the cultural, group identity of people seriously, in addition to being concerned about individual conversions.

But it is also true that the meeting at Pattaya brought together hundreds of people who were not present back in 1974 when the whole people group approach was first set forth and clarified. And thus, the meeting constituted sort of a refresher course for some people and a brand new experience for others.

It is certainly true that the people group approach is absolutely vital to a reasonable, clear cut strategy for further missionary work in the final years of this century. It is good that among leaders, both at Pattaya and in the mission movement the approach is well accepted.

A second issue that came up may not be as easily resolved. It is the constant resurfacing of the issue of social action versus evangelism. At first glance the two conferences, Melbourne and Pattaya each seemed polarized on this issue. Melbourne, some claimed, only talked about social action and Pattaya, some claimed, only talked about evangelism. One difference however is that Pattaya did not claim to talk about more than evangelism, whereas Melbourne went under the banner, "World Mission and Evangelism" and really talked very little about evangelism unless the word is extensively redefined to mean other things.

Maybe, in a way, all social action, all healing, all good deeds are a form of evangelism, but that still does not mean that all evangelism takes the form of social action. For an evangelical, evangelism includes an essential spiritual element which requires people to become children of Abraham in a spiritual sense, new people whose hearts and loyalties are radically lifted and reunited with a living God.

One observer felt that Melbourne was merely seeking to lift the world into the middle class as its ultimate goal and perhaps reduce the extremely wealthy in the process. Pattaya would not think that goal to be good enough. Pattaya focused explicitly and openly and straightforwardly on the task of evangelism as such, building on a spiritual base

It is still too soon to measure the full impact of the Thailand meeting but it would be hard to overestimate it. One pastor, Robert Schuller, came back and declared to his television audience that from now on he was going to focus his ministry upon those people in the world about whom no one else was thinking or caring. That same renewed determination to complete the Great Commission for the benefit of every pocket of mankind as yet untouched could be the most important kind of determination any conference could create.

SEOUL WEC, Aug. 25

The World Evangelization Crusade held in Korea has a history of its own. Twice before, three years apart, there were major meetings that were held out on the so called Yoido Plaza, which was an emergency airport during the Korean war. This plaza is about 21 mile wide and a mile long, and was carefully painted into ten foot squares so that a counselor would be in each square well over 100,000 counselors were necessary. Unlike the previous meetings, one of them highlighted by the presence of Billy Graham, the second highlighted by the direct initiative of the Korean branch of Campus Crusade. The meeting was this time not sponsored by any one organization at all, but was backed by a wide spectrum committee of church leaders ranging from Pentecostal to Presbyterian.

For many months in 1978 these leaders worked together planning this meeting but finally came to the conclusion that though it would be sponsored by this broad committee of leaders, it nevertheless probably had better be managed by a single organization that had both the necessary administrative and management ability and the willing workers to go with it. That organization they reached out for was once more the Korean Campus Crusade, this time not a sponsoring organization but a collaborating organization specifically asked to manage the event.

What a well-managed event it the was! As I was one of the 92 speakers invited to participate I noticed that at the registration desk I was given a small FM AM radio with an earplug and told that I could tune in an English translation of any of the Plaza services

with that little hand-carried device. I was assigned both a guide and a translator. I was waited on hand and foot. There was no possibility that I would get lost or go to the wrong meeting. Amazing! In every detail this was a truly well managed meeting.

No wonder there has never before in history been a meeting this large. It takes Christian devotion, and Christian restraint and Christian discipline to produce such an event. And who knows, there may not be in any other place enough Christians to have a meeting this size.

Seoul, Korea, one of the world's largest cities, is unique in itself. Built overnight historically speaking bristling with new buildings and bustling with Korean built cars, inhabited by a disproportionately large number of Christians verging on 20% of the city. It is the very nerve center of one of the most dynamic populations in the world. This could well be the only city on the outskirts of which an airport could be filled, night after night even in the rain, for a once every three years meeting of this sort.

Undoubtedly this will happen again in three years. Before then, it may even be possible for these Koreans (“have management will travel”) to inspire similar extravaganzas of this sort in other places. How about Los Angeles? We could use the Burbank Airport?

But the meaning of the meeting: it constituted the most dramatic, single, tangible evidence in this century of the vitality of the impact of Christian missions. Perhaps this 2.7 million meeting (the highest attendance of any meeting that week) is really only the tip of the iceberg of the Christian power in Korea. Granted the emphasis most of the week in all the various 400 meetings was on the evangelization of Korea and not the whole world. Nevertheless before the week was out, a call was made to the vast crowd of the final night asking for people to stand who would be willing to go to the ends of the earth for Christ if that was what he wanted them to do. About 1 million people signified their assent to that request! (The very first night 700,000 stood to accept Christ for the first time.)

One amazing thing to me was that although Bill Bright was prominent there was no one personality that brought that thing together. There were all kinds of key people who spoke from both abroad and from Korea but the whole thing it was bigger than any one man. And it will continue.

I was not one of the speakers in the evening meetings but spoke about a dozen other times. One morning I spoke to 3,000 Korean pastors and I had an opportunity to ask them how many of them had members of their congregations who had gone to Saudi Arabia. At least 113 raised their hands. I next asked them in how many cases was the departure of their members crowned by some recognition of the missionary significance of that trip, with a special service, a special prayer or something of that sort. After this question was translated I looked carefully. I could not see one hand!

Thus all of us need to awaken to the missionary significance of people who come to our country or go from our country to other places. I believe God is doing this so that the blessings He has given us can be shared with the nations.

But Korea, and specifically this series of meetings, I shall never ever forget.

Wheaton ASM. Aug. 22-24

I have fudged a bit to throw this meeting in with this series of international meetings. But the American Society of Missiology as it meets annually does attract

people from other countries and in any case the group of scholars constituting its membership is the largest group of mission scholars in the world in any one organization, and there are members in many parts of the world.

The subject of the ASM annual meeting this time was a comparison of the Melbourne and Pattaya conferences. I have already made comparisons myself and shall not pursue that, but you should know that one of the major papers analyzing the Pattaya meeting may be of interest to our readers.

The meeting of course consisted of two major papers. One on Melbourne and one on Pattaya plus response to each one. And as you might imagine in a group of scholars the divergences of perspective were forthrightly presented. The ASM organization is not just an evangelical group of scholars, although the evangelical group is probably the largest single element in it, but there are Catholics and consiliar church people as well.

The thing that amazed me, frankly, as I stepped off the plane from Korea so to speak and then went to this other meeting almost immediately, was the degree to which these fellows could work and discuss things so easily in a completely detached way. It almost seemed that reality to them is what is written on paper and not what is happening outside the window, across the street, or across the world.

I actually asked one small group whether it wouldn't have been relevant to have a bit of a report about the large meetings in Korea and the first response derailed the whole discussion: What about political oppression in Korea? It did not seem that there could have been any other important event in Korea to deal with.

Edinburgh 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions Oct. 27- Nov. 1

As we have already implied the granddaddy meeting in the year 1980 is the one that was proposed the longest ago, in 1972, and seriously defined and recommended in 1974, namely the one that is to draw together the leaders of mission agency structures on a world level to discuss how literally to get the job of the Great Commission done. Since the whole nature of the 1972 proposal was that the meeting be ad hoc rather than sponsored by any existing missions organization, it was to be expected that there would be a certain amount of paralysis at first as the whole matter of initiative lay before the world.

Leave it to the Scottish however, because two years before the due date it was the Scottish Missions Centre which offered to do something at the host end of things and then on the strength of that, shortly after, a youngish Chinese American leader Leiton Chinn stepped forward and persuaded his own mission agency (International Students Incorporated) to second him as a full time office manager to get it rolling. Finally, a number of mission agencies met together in several different parts of the U.S. and a Pasadena committee was strong enough to become a convening committee, while simultaneously other interested agencies and individuals all over the world began to move in the direction of this meeting.

I have asked the World Consultation on Frontier Mission office to allow me to print their latest Countdown letter which is published in full in this issue of Mission Frontiers This will give you a glimpse of the elaborate variety of different agencies from all over the world that will be coming to this historic first meeting. Never before in the history has there been a meeting on the world level of a sizable number of mission

leaders deriving from both the so called mission lands of Asia and Africa as well as the West.

If the Pattaya meeting asked the question “How shall they hear,” concentrating on strategic methods and data, it is clear that a different and significant step further would be the answer to the question at Edinburgh, “Who will go for us?”

Pattaya gathered primarily church leaders, the essential foundation on which any new move to the frontiers must be built. Edinburgh will gather together agency decision makers who can literally field people once the churches are aroused to the task.

In the year 1980 we can truthfully say that the great new fact of our time is the appearance all over the world of mission agency structures that are indigenous to their own non-Western national backgrounds. These new organizations represent the edge of the edge of the vitality of the non-Western Christian movements.

Edinburgh 1980 ISCFM Oct. 27 - Nov. 1

This piggy back meeting, the International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions was proposed as recently as last January by a group of mission minded students in South Africa. The South African headquarters has now blanketed the world in reaching out to key student leaders with a beautifully done six page application form for a meeting at the same time and place as the WCFM has agreed a work alongside of as a sister meeting.

Leaders in their 50's need the help of young people in their 20's and 30's. This is why this double meeting in Edinburgh is beginning to loom up as one of the most significant things that could possibly happen at this juncture of history.

Indeed, it is a fitting climax to the year 1980 for this double header combination of action oriented agency executives plus a large group of eager, ready young people also from all four corners of the earth. The Inter Varsity group at the University of Edinburgh has offered to host the students coming from around the world. The economy with which they are operating would stun even the economy minded mission executives who will be gathering for the WCFM at the same time and same place. But neither conference is an expensive conference. Neither conference has any special source of funds. Neither conference has any organizational sponsorship which could provide funds readily. Both conferences are trying to operate exclusively in terms of the registration fees plus the understanding that delegates will cover their own travel fees.

Some organizational delegates to the WCFM and some young people wanting to attend the ISCFM may not make it simply for the lack of the necessary travel funds. This is why those delegates from organizations that are closer and those young people coming from shorter distances are being urged to offer additional funds to help those who are coming from a great distance.

In any case Edinburgh happens to be the cheapest place (in terms of travel costs) for a world gathering to take place. Somewhere between Frankfurt, London and Edinburgh you will find the geographical airline dead center of the world. If indeed it is possible for those who live closer to share with those who come from a greater distance, it will not only work but it will be cheaper for the cause of Christ to fund a meeting in that triangle than any other place in the world.

We can look forward shortly to reporting on these final two meetings That are just before us. I hope some will come through to give help the last minute to several of the

new agencies (in India and Indonesia) which face restrictions on their funds for foreign travel.

Facing the Frontiers

Mission Frontiers October-November 1982

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/facing-the-frontiers>

It seems to me highly appropriate that the IFMA should base this conference on the theme of “Penetrating Frontiers.” It is my understanding of the history of Christian missions that the Faith Mission Movement, which is primarily embodied in the IFMA, is the only movement of its size and scope which ever embodied at its origin the penetration of frontiers as its specific, major goal.

1. Faith Missions and the Emergence of a Frontier Awareness

In William Carey's lifetime, the major organized Protestant response to the Great Commission was born. At that time frontiers were virtually wherever missionaries might be sent. While many thinkers did have in mind the strategy of planting a national church which would stand on its own two feet, there was not yet any immediate need for an elaborate analysis of mission/church relationships such as has recently been made.

There was a pioneer stage, before any national church existed. Presently this gave way to a paternal stage in which missionaries led the church and trained national leaders so they could take over pastorates and even professorships in theological seminaries. Gradually, a third stage, partnership emerged, in which the missionary/national association as recognized equals became the order of the day. The Hawaiian Islands moved through these three stages rapidly being far enough along by 1865 so that all missionaries were brought home.

In that very same year, Hudson Taylor boldly proposed that pioneer work begin in the interior of China. To do that, he founded under God the China Inland Mission. Due to a great deal of opposition, however, the Faith Mission Movement, following his lead, did not by any means jump into being. It would be hard to overstress the earnest conflict of perspectives during these early developments. The bulk of mission leaders were associated with ongoing, well established beachheads on the coastlands, and tended to despise and ignore the cries of younger leaders who were fascinated and challenged by Taylor's emphasis on pioneering in the inland frontiers.

Thus, in the era of the birth and growth of the Faith Mission Movement, there was clearly (among the leaders of that movement at least) an acute awareness of the special concern of God for the frontiers. Today we look back with amazement upon what resulted a mammoth, far-reaching upsurge in the entire Protestant mission movement, the like of which we have never seen before nor since. Although this movement to new frontiers began in England, its spiritual power derived greatly from the passionate ministry of an American named D. L. Moody. Also, thanks in part to the Student Volunteer Movement that sprouted up in America, the Faith Mission Movement took root in American soil, producing American branches of British Faith Mission structures as well as inspiring many new distinctly American beginnings. Again, mainly due to the SVMFM, the center of gravity of world missions had by the end of the First World War decisively moved to North America. Precisely then, in 1917, sixty five years ago, the IFMA was born.

The IFMA was thus literally born out of a passion for specifically new work rather than follow-through work.

2. The Physical Nature of Mission Frontiers

In a brief essay I was asked to write for the 1974 International Consultation on World Evangelization (ICOWE) meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, I stressed the fact that the Bible gives strategic attention to nations an entity which is smaller than a country but larger than either an individual or what Americans call a nuclear family.

It must be admitted that Americans and other English speaking people sense a certain amount of culture shock whenever they first discover that the Great Commission in Matthew speaks explicitly of the discipling of nations not countries nor individuals. Even when we turn to Mark 16:15, we discover that the long accepted phrase "to every creature," found both in the King James and the New King James, is more exactly translated "to all creation."

Especially curious is the case of Revelation 21:3, where a loud voice from the throne of the New Jerusalem says, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His peoples and God Himself shall be among them." In this case not even the ordinarily literal New American Standard Bible is willing to translate "and they shall be His peoples" (in the plural) as it is in the Greek text. In the book of Revelation, the word peoples in the plural occurs four times, 7:9, 11:9, 17:15, and then in 21:3. The New American Standard Bible dutifully and rigorously translates the word in the plural in only the first three cases. In the fourth, even the American translators are apparently not able to envision the possibility that at the end of time the people of God will be a redeemed humanity still consisting of an aggregate of nonidentical peoples. If what we notice here is true, it has profound meaning for mission strategy.

When I was a kid, the key verse in the Bible was "he that winneth souls is wise," and personal work was the chief priority and strategy of my church. Later I got acquainted with the Navigators, who stressed follow up, and also with the world of missions with its emphasis upon a church planting type of follow up as the chief priority and strategy. Only recently have I begun to rearrange my thought patterns to conform to the perspective of the Commissioning of Abraham in Genesis, and to the Great Commission itself which speaks of the discipling of peoples.

However, the fact that God spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob about the peoples of the earth rather than the people (individuals) of the earth certainly does not mean that God is unconcerned about the winning of individuals. I do not have to throw away what I learned as a youth. But I do believe now that the distinction between individuals versus peoples in these passages means that the Bible itself takes seriously the cultural and linguistic traditions of the individuals we seek to win to Christ. Various mission thinkers have been groping toward a definition of people group. For me, a significant point concerns the potential such groups have for rapid, nearly automatic, internal communication. Since this is the trait that is so significant to missionary communicators, this is undoubtedly the reason such an entity has been highlighted in the Bible all along.

For want of a better word I have decided to call such a group a Unimax People, that is, a group unified in communication, maximum in size. While this definition does not apparently employ Biblical language, I believe it describes an entity important to the

Bible, reflecting the Bible's missionary concern for relentless and rapid evangelism as its reason for importance. In other words, what is crucial about a Unimax People is the size of the group, not just the unified condition of the group.

Let us take, for example, the Cantonese speaking Chinese. They are part of a larger Han Chinese world and are themselves composed of many smaller, quite distinct subgroups. Using terminology I have employed in the past and starting from the largest to the smallest, the Han Chinese are a megasphere or a megapeople. Since there are units smaller than the Cantonese sphere, to which we must as missionary strategist pay specific attention, I have called a mass of humanity as large as the Cantonese a macrosphere, or macropeople.

In this series of macro-mini, micro it is the next to the smallest unit, the minisphere, that should, I believe, be considered the mission relevant, Biblically important Unimax People. The macro is one notch too large to be sufficiently unified, while the micro is unnecessarily small, being part of a larger, still unified group.

We can say, using this terminology, that the distinctive breakthrough activity of a mission is not complete if it has merely penetrated a mega or macrosphere, and if there are still minispheres or what I have called Unimax Peoples still unpenetrated. On the other hand, the unique and distinctive breakthrough activity of a mission agency (as compared to the work of evangelism) may, in fact., be over long before all the tiny microspheres within a Unimax People have been penetrated.

What then is the distinctive, spiritual breakthrough ministry which is unique to the function of a mission agency?

3. The Spiritual Need of the Frontier Peoples

I believe that all groups continue to have spiritual needs, both before and after penetration by the Gospel has taken place. However, Frontier Peoples have a special kind of need with which ordinary evangelism cannot readily cope. To use language we have already employed, we may ask the question, "What crucial, measurable element do so called Frontier Peoples lack?" Or the other side of the coin: what does a mission agency have to accomplish within a Unimax People in order for that group no longer to be considered a frontier?

There is something self correcting about the whole process of staying on or moving to new fields, so long as the remaining frontiers are kept in view. It is frontier vision that is important. By comparison, engagement versus disengagement is secondary.

Thus, it seems to me that the most important practical response of the IFMA agencies to the new emphasis upon the remaining frontiers is to distinguish technically between what is and what is now no longer a mission frontier. I do not mind where a mission sends its people or spends its money so long as the fairly direct goal of the activity is unquestionably Frontier Peoples those most in need of the gospel and least likely to be reached. In this sense all missionaries, wherever they are working, can and must be frontier minded.

A massive educational campaign will be necessary...

Speaking personally, I don't mind if missionaries are sent where people already have the Bible in their own language. It matters what they go for. Do they either go to frontiers or to stir up interest in frontiers? What grieves me greatly is the willingness I see (both at home and abroad) to settle for a gospel that merely blesses people but does not

lay upon them also the Biblical mandate to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. I thus sometimes wonder if there can be any Biblical Christianity that is not frontier mission minded.

It is not enough that every mission engages in some frontier work somewhere. It is the unique distinctive of a mission agency that it must do what is necessary to make sure that all churches everywhere maintain as their highest concern the peoples that have not yet heard. This leads us to a brief reflection on the wide role of a mission agency.

4. The Full Mandate of the Mission Agency

I used to believe very simply that the most distinctive role of a mission is not the nurture of a national church once it is planted, but the constant moving on and on to the remaining frontiers. In this view the missions are the construction companies. Once a building is built they do not convert over to being management experts who then stay on to help the people who inhabit the new building to do their work better. No, they fold up shop and go elsewhere to break ground again.

However, more recently I have begun to wonder whether the full mandate of the mission society is not much more than such an illustration would allow. As I have tried to understand the challenge of frontiers today, I must confess that the major obstacle I now see to the goal of a Church for Every People by the Year 2000 is not at all the unwillingness or inability of the agencies. It is rather that the very existence of frontier peoples is not understood in the home churches nor in the overseas churches. Thus the missions face a dilemma. They are by birthright prepared for the frontiers but no one else is. Sunday school materials reflect either the church situation overseas or nothing at all about missions. Christian schools, colleges and seminaries, both at home and abroad, 98% of the time talk about fields where there is an existing church. On the other hand, resource wise, we have more reason to believe that in a sustained drive we really can reach every last people on the face of the earth by the year 2000. This is especially true if the overseas churches boom in to help.

But today everywhere you look it seems like we are back in Hudson Taylor's day. A massive educational campaign will be necessary if we are going to make any really significant stride forward. God in our time is raising up many new eager young people. But the major infrastructure of their nurture and development is almost totally missing. It has taken me a long time to come to the place where I now believe the full mandate of the mission must be understood to include a great deal more educational effort. We have spent years introducing the people back home to the existence of the national churches now on our older fields. Now we must re-educate them to understand that there are still many places we must go, where there are no national evangelists and where work must start from scratch. For a time I actually believe we may do well to use new people to rebuild the home base of awareness before starting again to ship people out as fast as they are ready. We face a retirement avalanche in the next few years. We could send out 25,000 new missionaries in the next ten years and barely hold our own. We need massive new resources of both personnel and funds. Consequently we must recognize the full mandate of the mission in the home situation.

Proposals

That IFMA missions, in response to the crisis of misunderstanding regarding the frontiers among pastors, laypeople and students take the following action:

Encourage voluntary participation of member agencies in an enlarged public relations activity which can seed articles into Christian publications, develop common study materials and courses for local churches and student groups, get behind Wherever magazine and the Today's Mission magazine and help expand circulation of the EMQ as well, develop joint efforts on campuses wherever possible, employing the IFMA designation rather than the individual mission name as a first step forward.

Help people back home to see the great challenge in less discouraging terms: Why not parcel out the remaining task in measurable people goals? I believe the IFMA mission force ought to be willing to take on 20% of the remaining peoples Biblically defined. Then it should be simple to see just what each agency might try to accomplish by the year 2000. Back in 1909 great goal setting took place because the total number of individuals yet to be won was parceled out so that the major agencies knew concretely what they were responsible for. Both the agencies and the people will be helped by this.

Recommend agencies seriously to consider involvement in a nationwide frontier emphasis prayer campaign such as the Frontier Fellowship being tried by the NAM, AIM, RBMU and SEND, Intl. Such a campaign should motivate and educate on a daily basis the American evangelicals of all ages and of all church persuasions.

“Mission 2000”: Towards a Strategy of Closure

IJFM 2:1, 1985

http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/02_1_PDFs/2_1%20Winter%20Mission_2000%20fixed.pdf

This is purely a basis for discussion. The initial “consortium” which it projects would have complete freedom to modify it in any way. While it has been drawn up by the U.S. Center for World Mission, it is intended only to inspire thinking along the lines of some sort of common “movement” in the U.S.A. and across the world as an absolutely necessary build-up worthy of the resources God has placed in the global family of truly believing Christians.

A. UNDERLYING CONVICTIONS

1. We believe that those who are blessed by God are automatically obligated to be a blessing to all the peoples of the world (Gen. 12:1-3).
2. We believe that “to be a blessing” means to spread the news of the saving power and sanctifying Lordship of Jesus Christ.
3. We believe that the best way to do this is to plant the church within each and every one of the world’s peoples.
4. We believe that this unique, “pioneer,” church planting activity is the most fundamental goal of missions. We are encouraged by the fact that a broad consensus of mission scholars and leaders is in agreement with this conviction.
5. We believe there are ample evangelical resources in the world community (i.e., 147 congregations per group to be reached!) to make a serious attempt to plant the church within every people by the year 2000, and that such a goal for the year 2000 is therefore a reasonable goal to work and pray for.
6. We believe this task is thus more readily within our grasp than ever in history, and that the very end of history may therefore be near.
7. We believe this task is not marginal or secondary, but the primary and preeminent task of the Church for all of those who are children of Abraham by faith, those who are already enjoying the blessing of God in the redemption that is in Christ.
8. This means believers from all nations and peoples everywhere in the world, everywhere there is already a well-established Christian movement, can be expected to be involved. (By no means does this rule out the participation of Western believers in this task.)
9. We believe, finally, that the question of the wholehearted pursuit of the duties involved in this task is the acid test of faith for any Christian group, and that the very well-being of a blessed nation is dependent upon the sharing of that blessing in a serious, obedient, effective, comprehensive way.

B. PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

1. We are convinced that if this is to happen, profound mission renewal will have to take place on a grand scale—in all evangelical communities around the world. We have concluded that what is necessary in the United States must be somewhat of the proportions of a widespread movement, not just the project of any one organization. Stop and listen! It is already happening! To be a movement, people say, “We're doing what

others are doing” (even though there may be many small divergences in materials between the two groups).

2. To generate a true movement, we believe that no single event or campaign will be sufficient, but that a new all-year, year-after-year pattern is necessary.
3. While we believe it is neither necessary nor desirable for initiatives in its build-up stage to be centralized, nevertheless, for such a movement to come into being, a “concert” of decentralized efforts will be much more powerful than a great number of totally independent and dissimilar efforts.
4. We are sure that the primary basis of such a movement must be the local congregation. We do feel it will be helpful if local congregations can be encouraged and assisted by an external “Network.” Such a Network could be a denomination, an already existing renewal movement within a denomination, or some one of many respected para-church ministries with which a given congregation is in close touch. We will assume that each Network will be, nationally, on the order of 100 congregations.
5. We conclude that a movement is most likely to occur if there can be a consortium of such entities working separately, but consciously and supportively in parallel, without the mixing of constituencies.
6. We must concentrate on raising up hope, vision, dedication, and clarification of purpose. To do this, we must recruit people for the task and also funds to support the cause. We regard the local congregation as the normal and the best channel for all giving and going elicited in this movement.
7. At the same time, we see three types of essential structures in cooperation: a) local congregations, b) attending “networks” upon which they normally rely for coordination and updating, and c) certain “Neutral Crucial” functions which are performed by neutral agencies serving everyone, assisting the autonomous networks to efficiently do their job. (In Appendix D is a suggested list of ten such spheres of need. For practical reasons, these crucial, little-understood entities must both be non-profit and also avoid competing for funds from the sources of income of the various networks.)
8. In order to more decisively assure the existence and vitality of these “Neutral Crucial” support activities, it is planned that the Consortium (of networks)—that is, the central office of the Mission 2000 movement—will receive via the networks \$15.50 of the modest, one-time-only registration fee of \$17.50 given by each individual at the grass-roots who enrolls in the campaign. It is well to note that these funds going to the Consortium are the only funds which will go outside of the structure and budgeted giving of the local congregation. They are less than 12% of the total—88% goes to the local congregation. (See Appendix E, Measurable Expectations of Response.) The \$17.50 registration fee has three components: (a) \$15.00 goes to the “Neutral Crucials”; (b) \$.50 goes to Consortium overhead expenses; and (c) \$2.00 is retained by the networks to cover the cost of the registration packet.
9. We do not believe it is realistic for Mission 2000 to be the dominant concern of a local congregation all year. We do believe, however, that a home visitation effort two months of each year is practical for the Cooperating Congregation, in addition to a regular, once-a-month meeting of a “Mission Fellowship” group during the ten intervening months

C. LONG-RANGE GOALS

1. In close relation to the “Underlying Convictions” we have already stated above, we believe that the coming of Christ was not only the central event of history but also that the character of His ministry demonstrates to us the essential meaning of His command “As My Father has sent me, even so send I you.” Specifically: He came and lived among us, teaching us by word and deed, in general respecting the cultural tradition of the people (except where its practices proved to be religiously phony or morally and ethically reprehensible) and confronting the nation with the ultimate authority of the Kingdom of God. He gathered repentant and believing followers, taught them, worked with them, sent them out to their own people, and eventually to other nations. This is essentially what a pioneer missionary does.
2. We believe that the goal of His final commission (Matt. 28:18), for any given people group, is thus most easily and reliably measured by the example of what He Himself in this respect did. We agree with the broad spectrum of mission leaders brought together by the Lausanne Committee at Chicago ’82 when they defined this long-range goal of Christ's Great Commission as the “reaching of unreached people groups.”
3. This then defines the high priority: we must go to all remaining unreached peoples, some 17,000, and establish in their midst, in cooperation with the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, a people movement that is “a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.” This, we believe, is what Jesus did for the Jewish nation. It was and is the Biblical definition of “being a blessing.”

D. INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

1. We recognize that the “reaching of an unreached people” is the most important measurable goal, and that this should be achieved by the year 2000.
2. In order to do that, we assume that the last unreached group must be “engaged” by a mission task force no later than 1995.
3. We recognize that intermediate objectives must include (a) renewed congregations, (b) committed individuals who stay home to keep the cause alive, and (c) missionaries who go to do the work at the “front line,” whether the people group they attempt to reach is found at home or abroad, or both.
4. The following table shows that to enter as many as 2000 new groups per year beginning in 1988, certain intermediate objectives must be met. These are eminently feasible, assuming that a movement can be launched and that churches in other countries help.

"MISSION 2000" - A PROJECTION

By Year	Peoples Engaged		Frontier Missionaries		Annual Cost (in millions)		Support Teams	
	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total	New	Total
1987	1,000	1,000	4,000	4,000	\$50	\$50	4,000	4,000
1988	2,000	3,000	8,000	12,000	\$100	\$150	8,000	12,000
1989	2,000	5,000	8,000	20,000	\$100	\$250	8,000	20,000
1990	2,000	7,000	8,000	28,000	\$100	\$350	8,000	28,000
1991	2,000	9,000	8,000	36,000	\$100	\$450	8,000	36,000
1992	2,000	11,000	8,000	44,000	\$100	\$550	8,000	44,000
1993	2,000	13,000	8,000	52,000	\$100	\$650	8,000	52,000
1994	2,000	15,000	8,000	60,000	\$100	\$750	8,000	60,000
1995	2,000	17,000	8,000	68,000	\$100	\$850	8,000	68,000

(See Appendix A for detail of estimates and assumptions.)

E. THE YEARLY CYCLE

1. The yearly cycle of the Mission 2000 movement consists of two major monthly meetings during a two-month annual campaign period, plus a monthly meeting in each of the remaining ten months of the year, making a total of 12 monthly meetings of a new local "Mission Fellowship," which is a new structure to most present congregations. Earlier in this century it was common in local congregations for there to be women's, men's and young people's "Missionary Societies." Recently, the renowned missiologist Donald A. McGavran, in his article, "A Giant Step in Christian Mission" (International Journal of Frontier Missions, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1984) has called for the restoration of these local mission societies. Since the phrase "mission societies" is nowadays used to refer to sending agencies, we have suggested the phrase "Mission Fellowships."
2. This Mission Fellowship meeting is distinctly different from, and is in addition to, the meeting of a congregational "Mission Committee," which makes financial, personnel and policy decisions. The Mission Fellowship, by contrast, will become the focus, the popular expression, and the carrier vehicle of mission vision in the local church. Such a meeting can be started in any congregation whenever it is deemed feasible.
3. Many materials are already available for the enhancement and enrichment of this meeting. Among others, a monthly audio-visual in three forms is planned: 1) as a set of slides with sound accompaniment, 2) as a videotape in various formats, and 3) as a 16mm film version for use in large gatherings. Each network will likely want to provide a monthly bulletin as well.
4. It is not expected that every member of a local congregation will be involved in the Mission Fellowship. Attendance at the Fellowship meetings will be especially promoted during the annual two-month campaign period and throughout the year on a less intensive basis by the Mission Renewal Teams. (See F-4 below.)
5. Crucial to the Mission 2000 movement is the care and feeding of those who respond to the visitation program during the campaign period. Vision-building will take place

principally through the vehicle of the monthly Mission Fellowship meeting just mentioned.

F. THE TERMS OF AGREEMENT

1. One level of agreement is national. We contemplate a minimum of 30 national “networks,” each of which is capable of enlisting a minimum of 100 “Coordinating Congregations.” This national level of agreement is between the leaders of a given Network constituency and the central office of the Mission 2000 Consortium. Membership in the Consortium implies acceptance and adherence to certain non-negotiable common denominators, such as the definition of unreached peoples, the use of the net \$15.50 registration fee, etc.
2. Each national network will make agreements with its own leaders in an average of ten regional locations.
3. Each regional office will deal with ten local “Coordinating Congregations,” which are the principal operational bases of responsibility of the Mission 2000 movement.
4. Each Coordinating Congregation will be responsible for ten Mission Renewal Teams, the two or three members of each team constituting the nucleus of the monthly Mission Fellowship referred to above. These Renewal Teams can come from, and work in, congregations other than the Coordinating Congregation with which, as a team, they are affiliated. That is, one larger church can be the center for three or four smaller churches, each of which may have only one MRT at work in its membership. Or, a smaller church can be the Coordinating Congregation relating to teams in several other congregations that are larger or smaller.
5. Members of each Mission Renewal Team will have signed on for a stipulated number of “seed plantings”—e.g., presentations to specific individuals in a home visit. As in the Parable of the Soils, the team's goal for the number of individuals to be visited is 30, 60, or 100, so to speak. Some will accomplish more than others. For the sake of evaluating the amount of materials to be produced, etc., we will assume that on the average each Mission Renewal Team (in, say, 15 to 25 visits) will contact 40 individuals. This fairly heavy assignment will be undertaken by only the very highly committed.
6. This “Seed Planting” activity does not absolutely require a visit to the home, although that is assumed to be standard. The initial goal is to register as many as possible and to distribute the inspiring vision-building materials in the registration packet. Each Team can make its own plans and try its own ideas. A team may choose to give a thorough “Presentation” in a home meeting, where six or seven “Simeon” types are invited all at once. (“Simeons” are those already “sold” on missions.) It is also possible that a serious presentation and plea for registrations could take place in some Sunday School class. The main idea is 1) to present people with the exciting challenge of the Mission 2000 campaign and 2) to enlist them in the development of a monthly fellowship in their own setting. Later they will be introduced to the other goals of the movement, such as the daily devotional discipline of the Frontier Fellowship.

G. THE LOCAL PLAN OF ACTION

1. For many of the people drawn into the Mission 2000 movement, their very first discovery of the world of renewed mission vision will occur when a Mission 2000 Renewal Team visits their home. At that time they will hear a presentation, will be shown

some exciting materials to ponder, and will be invited to pay a once-and-for-all \$17.50 Registration Fee to become official, permanent participants in the Mission 2000 Campaign. If they register, the materials shown them, which constitute the “Registration Packet,” become theirs to ponder further. This kind of presentation with its early financial hurdle will fairly accurately determine the true level of their concern at that time.

2. Which individuals should be visited? In the first round, they are the “Simeons” (of Luke 2) who are definitely in the “looking, believing, hoping” category. Fundamental to the Mission 2000 Campaign is the Parable of the Four Soils, in which it is presumed that the farmer is definitely looking for soil which is likely to be reproductive. Rather than just spending our efforts, we seek to multiply them by deliberately and prayerfully enlisting first those who will be most likely to help with further enlistment and renewal efforts. Thus it is strategic to assume that the people to be visited first in any area or group of congregations are those who will welcome the goals and objectives of Mission 2000 and will be delighted by the solid base of additional information about “what God is doing around the world.” (See the first chapter in C. Peter Wagner’s *On the Crest of the Wave*).

3. In terms of the four responses the parable describes, it is possible that of the 40 people carefully chosen to be visited, the following responses will occur:

Pathway: ten will not actually be ready and will decline any involvement at that time;

Shallow soil: ten will respond momentarily, to the point of paying the \$17.50 registration fee and receiving their packet of materials;

Thorny soil: ten will also participate in the annual “Mission Update” study program to which all who register will be invited. And...

Reproductive soil: ten will agree, in addition, to become part of additional Mission Renewal Teams in the second round of outreach (“Operation Andrew”). See Appendix E for details.

4. But the long-term primary goal of the visitation campaign is to enlist people, heart and soul, in the monthly Mission Fellowship. It is this meeting which is to be the central source of materials and expanding interest constituting the foundation of the renewal movement. Area and regional meetings along network lines or across networks in “Concerts of Prayer” may or may not take place. And of course some people will be blessed and inspired who do not come to the monthly Mission Fellowship meeting. But the central force and backbone of the Mission 2000 Renewal is understood to be the Mission Fellowship.

H. THE NATIONAL TIMETABLE

1. It is envisioned that initially only three to five national networks will make up the Mission 2000 Consortium. Their representation will initially constitute the corporate board of the Consortium.

2. At that point, an additional five to ten other networks (denominations, para-church organizations, etc.) will be invited to join an enlarged Consortium. Each new network will, of course, need to agree with the basic concepts and principles already established by the founding consortium. Representatives of the new networks will be added to the board, the earlier group becoming, say, the executive committee.

3. In the third stage, as many as 30 nationwide networks will become consortium members. This number is considered the minimal essential level of viability for a “movement” to take place.
4. The early “unveiling” of the Mission 2000 plan took place at the annual meeting of the (U.S.) Association of Church Mission Committees in July 1985. Some pilot “Coordinating Congregations” have since tested the program. If all goes as planned, we hope that by December 1986 30 networks will be actively considering, if not already involved.

APPENDIX A: FOOTNOTES TO THE TABLE “MISSION 2000—A PROJECTION”
(See section D in the main body.)

Underlying the table in section D are the following assumptions and estimates:

1. There are 17,000 unreached peoples—with no indigenous church yet.
2. We seek “A Church for Every People by the Year 2000.”
3. These unreached peoples contain and seal off half the world's population, and average 150,000 individuals in each group.
4. It will take a minimum of two couples five years to reach each people.
5. We can expect 4,000 new missionaries of this type by the beginning of 1987.
6. The necessary increase of the mission force will be gradual, a rate of 8,000 more missionaries per year, beginning in 1988.
7. It will cost an average of \$12,500 per person per year for these new frontier missionaries, many from other countries.
8. A “Support Team” = 100 people giving an average of \$10.42 per month.
9. Thus each new Support Team enrolled can support, completely, one new missionary.

APPENDIX B: THE CONTENTS OF THE REGISTRATION PACKET

The content of the registration packet is of no essential concern to the Mission 2000 Consortium, other than that it be value received for the \$2 collected in the Registration Fee, and that it be relevant to the basic vision of the movement.

In most cases, it will be the Network involved that will want to choose from the mass-produced, low-priced materials which are being used by other networks. They will also want to put in materials of their own choice.

It may well be that many Networks will see the current “Neutral Crucial” (to which \$15 of the \$17.50 Registration Fee goes) as an added, exciting attraction in their network, and will be happy to have the work of that Neutral Crucial mentioned somewhere in the packet. In other cases the current “Neutral Crucial” can go completely unmentioned.

Following is the kind of packet which might be made up, and which, delivered to the Sponsoring Church, would fit into the allowed \$2 portion of the registration fee:

1. Sample copy of World Christian Magazine.
2. Sample copy of the Frontier Fellowship Global Prayer Digest.
3. Poster: “The Unreached Peoples of the World.”
4. Booklet: “Look at What God’s Doing.”
5. A list of materials at a healthy discount, costing a good deal more than \$2:
 - a) From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya, \$14.95/\$10
 - b) On the Crest of the Wave, \$5.95/\$4.00

- c) World Christian Magazine, \$12/\$9
- d) Global Prayer Digest, \$8/\$6
- e) World Christian Encyclopedia, \$125/\$42.50
- f) International Journal of Frontier Missions, \$15/\$10
- g) Evangelical Missions Quarterly, \$10.50/\$9

(Note: The potential saving on this brief list is more than \$100. A whole catalog of items, discounted to campaign registrants, will also be available.)

APPENDIX C: THE BASIC INGREDIENTS OF THE MONTHLY MISSION FELLOWSHIP MEETING

This is to be a meeting for prayer and inspirational education about the mission cause. Provisions are already being made for the highest-quality, monthly motion pictures on low-cost videotape. Small groups can get the basic equipment and have their own tapes updated for \$1 each month at cooperating Christian bookstores and/or Consortium offices. Soon 8mm tapes (similar to audio tapes) will be available. They will cost far less and can either be sent out on a "one way" basis for about \$4 per month, or updated in the way mentioned. The same materials will be available in both the form of slides and 16mm film, depending upon the option selected.

Monthly printed materials will also be made available (perhaps by the different Networks), in addition to the already existing monthly Global Prayer Digest, which is even at this point backed by 36 different organizations, with 22 different covers (and 8-page customized sections).

Many monthly fellowships will, among other things, take in the "loose change" offerings of those who are participating in the Frontier Fellowship daily-prayer discipline (a take-off from the widespread Asian Christian "handful of rice for missions" pattern).

However, these meetings will be expected to follow widely different formats, and we do not see any great value in trying to standardize a single pattern.

APPENDIX D: THE TEN "NEUTRAL CRUCIALS" (See points 7-8 in section B of the main body.)

Certain crucial functions are deemed essential to an authentic mission renewal movement. They are also characterized by the fact that they cannot readily be in a direct fund-raising mode and—at least in their early stage—need financial assistance. A detailed treatment of ten such needs may be found in the Jan. '84 (Vol 1:1) issue of the International Journal of Frontier Missions. Each of them has been summarized in a phrase below:

- 1) A widespread daily devotional discipline emphasizing the completion of the task.
- 2) The Concerts of Prayer "for spiritual awakening and world evangelization."
- 3) The Global Mapping Project, which can feed the work of countless agencies around the world.
- 4) Certain strategically missing mass media.
- 5) A groundswell, international student mission movement.
- 6) The strategic "enrichment" of certain existing programs and customs.
- 7) The engineering of a new pattern in higher education which will routinely locate college students overseas half of each undergraduate year and which will also involve

them in a work-study program that will prevent them from emerging with debts that keep them out of Christian work.

8) A new missionary associate lifestyle (“Senders”).

9) An international network of cooperative mission centers.

10) A “Mission 2000” type of promotional coalition of Christian organizations.

APPENDIX E: MEASURABLE EXPECTATIONS OF RESPONSE (See point 8 in section B of the main body.)

Even if only ten of the 40 people who are visited by each renewal team are willing to go into a second round of outreach (“Operation Andrew”), the potential can be seen to be enormous. The chart below shows the “Operation Andrew” generation as well as the “Operation Simeon” generation. Note that 100% success (e.g., 40, 30, 20, 10) will multiply the fruits of the first round (“Operation Simeon”) by ten, while 50% success will be five times as large, and even 10% success (e.g., 4, 3, 2, 1, resulting from visits to 40 people) will be equally as large, thus doubling the overall results.

As for financial response, “minimal local church budget increase” is based upon the rough conservative assumption that registrants in categories 1a and 1b may not be inspired to increase their missions giving to their local churches at all, while those in categories 1c and 1d may well be willing to give about an average of \$10.00 more per month. That is one of the matters covered in the visit—reconsideration of present missions giving. The “loose change” offerings are expected from only ten of the forty people visited, and by experience will average out to about \$8.00 per month. People will not “register” each year, but all other funds listed here (“via local churches”) will likely be year-after-year giving.

Mission 2000: A Synopsis

Mission Frontiers April-June 1985

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/mission-20001>

A. Underlying Convictions

1. We believe that those who are blessed by God are automatically obligated to be a blessing to all the peoples of the world. Gen. 12:1 3.
2. We believe that 'to be a blessing means to spread the news of the saving grace and sanctifying Lordship of Jesus Christ.
3. We believe that the best way to do this is to plant the church within each and every one of the world's peoples.
4. We believe that this unique, "pioneer" church planting activity is the most fundamental goal of missions. We are encouraged by the fact that a broad consensus of mission scholars and leaders is in agreement with this conviction.
5. We believe there are ample evangelical resources in the world community (i.e. 147 congregations per group lobe reached!) to make a serious attempt to plant the church within every people by the year 2,000, and that such a goal for the year 2,000 is therefore a reasonable goal to work and pray for.
6. We believe this task is thus more readily within our grasp than ever in history, and that the very end of history may therefore be near.
7. We believe this task is not marginal or secondary, but the primary and preeminent task of the Church for all of those who are children of Abraham by faith, those who are already enjoying the blessing of God in the redemption that is in Christ.
8. This means believers from all nations and peoples everywhere in the world, everywhere there is already a well-established Christian movement, can be expected to be involved. (This does by no means rule out the participation of Western believers in this task.)
9. We believe, finally, that the question of the wholehearted pursuit of the duties involved in this task is the acid test of faith for any Christian group, and that the very wellbeing of a blessed nation is dependent upon the sharing of that blessing in a serious, obedient, effective, comprehensive way.

B. Practical Conclusions

1. We are convinced that if this is to happen, profound mission renewal will have to take place on a grand scale in all evangelical communities around the world. We have concluded that what is necessary for us in the USA must be somewhat of the proportions of a widespread movement, not just the project of any one organization. Stop and listen! It is already happening! To be a movement, the people say, "Were doing what others are doing" (even though there may be many small divergences in materials between the two groups).
2. To generate a true movement, we believe that no single event or campaign will be sufficient, but that a new all year, year after year pattern is necessary.
3. While we believe it is neither necessary nor desirable for initiatives in its build up to be centralized, nevertheless, for such a movement to come into being, a "concert" of

decentralized efforts will be much more powerful than would be a great number of totally independent and dissimilar efforts.

4. We are sure that the primary basis of such a movement must be the local congregation. We do feel it will be helpful if local congregations can be encouraged and assisted by an external Network. Such a Network could be a denomination, an already existing renewal movement within a denomination, or some one of many respected parachurch ministries with which a given congregation is in close touch. We will assume that each Network will be, nationally, on the order of 100 congregations.

5. We conclude that a movement is most likely to occur if there can be a consortium of such entities working separately, but consciously and supportively in parallel, without the mixing of constituencies.

6. We must concentrate on raising up hope, vision and dedication, and clarification of purpose. To do this, we must recruit people for the task and also funds to support the cause. We regard the local congregation as the normal and the best channel for all giving and going elicited in this movement.

7. At the same time, we see three types of essential structures in cooperation: a) local congregations, b) attending “networks” upon which they normally rely for coordination and updating, and c) certain Neutral Crucial functions which are performed by neutral agencies serving everyone, assisting the autonomous networks to be able efficiently to do their job. (In Appendix D is a suggested list of ten such spheres of need. For practical reasons, these crucial, little understood entities must both be non-profit and also avoid competing for funds from the sources of income of the various networks)

8. In order more decisively to assure the existence and vitality of these “Neutral Crucial” support activities, it is planned that the Consortium (of networks) that is, the central office of the Mission 2000 movement, will receive via the networks \$15.50 of the modest, onetime-only registration fee of \$17.50 given by each individual at the grass roots who enrolls with the campaign. It is well to note that these funds going to the Consortium are the only funds which will go outside of the structure and budgeted giving of the local congregation. They are less than 12% of the total, as 88% goes to the local congregation. (See Appendix B, Measurable Expectations of Response.)

9. We do not believe it is realistic for Mission 2000 to be the dominant concern of a local congregation all year. We do believe, however, that a home visitation effort two months of each year is practical for the Cooperating Congregation, in addition to a regular, once a month meeting of a “Mission Fellowship” group during the ten intervening months.

C. Long Range Goals

1. In close relation to the UNDERLYING CONVICTIONS we have already stated above, we believe that the coming of Christ was not only the central event of history but that the character of His ministry demonstrates to us the essential meaning of His command, “As My Father has sent me even so send I you.” Specifically: He came and lived among us, teaching us by word and deed, in general respecting the cultural tradition of the people (except where its practices proved to be religiously phony or morally and ethically reprehensible) and confronting the nation with the ultimate authority of the Kingdom of God. He gathered repentant and believing followers, taught them, worked with them, sent them out to their own people, and eventually to other nations. This is essentially what a pioneer missionary does.

2. We believe that the goal of His final commission (Matt. 28:18), for any given people group, is thus most easily and reliably measured by the example of what He Himself in this respect did. We agree with the broad spectrum of mission leaders brought together by the Lausanne Committee at Chicago '82 when they defined this long range, goal of Christ's Great Commission as the "reaching of unreached people groups."

3. This then defines the high priority: we must go to all remaining unreached peoples, some 17,000, and establish in their midst, in cooperation with the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, a people movement that is "a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement." This, we believe, is what Jesus did for the Jewish nation. It was and is the Biblical definition of "being a blessing."

D. Intermediate Objectives

1. We recognize that the reaching of an "unreached people" is the most important measurable goal, and that this should be achieved by the year 2000.
2. In order to do that, we assume that the last unreached group must be "engaged" by a mission task force no later than 1995.
3. We recognize that intermediate objectives must include renewed congregations, committed individuals who stay home to keep the cause alive, and missionaries who go to do the work at the "front line," whether the people group they attempt to reach is found at home or abroad, or both.
4. The following table shows that to enter as many as 2,000 new groups per year beginning in 1988, certain intermediate objectives must be met. These are eminently feasible, assuming that a movement can be launched and that churches in other countries help.

"MISSION 2000" - A PROJECTION

By Year	Peoples Engaged		Frontier Missionaries		Annual Cost (in millions)			
	New	Total	New	Total	Support Teams			Total
					New	Total	New	Total
1987	1,000	1,000	4,000	4,000	\$50	\$50	4,000	4,000
1988	2,000	3,000	8,000	12,000	\$100	\$150	8,000	12,000
1989	2,000	5,000	8,000	20,000	\$100	\$250	8,000	20,000
1990	2,000	7,000	8,000	28,000	\$100	\$350	8,000	28,000
1991	2,000	9,000	8,000	36,000	\$100	\$450	8,000	36,000
1992	2,000	11,000	8,000	44,000	\$100	\$550	8,000	44,000
1993	2,000	13,000	8,000	52,000	\$100	\$650	8,000	52,000
1994	2,000	15,000	8,000	60,000	\$100	\$750	8,000	60,000
1995	2,000	17,000	8,000	68,000	\$100	\$850	8,000	68,000

(See Appendix A for detail of estimates and assumptions.)

E. The Yearly Cycle

1. The yearly cycle of the Mission 2000 movement consists of two major monthly meetings during a two month annual campaign period, plus a monthly meeting in each of the remaining ten months of the year, making a total of 12 monthly meetings of a new

local “Mission Fellowship,” which is a new structure to most present congregations. (Earlier in this century it was common in local congregations for there to be women’s, men’s, and young people’s Missionary Societies.” Recently, the renowned missiologist, Donald A. McClavran, in his article, “A Giant Step in Christian Mission” (*International Journal of Frontier Missions*, July 1984) has called for the restoration of these local mission societies. Since the phrase “mission societies” is nowadays used to refer to sending agencies, we have suggested the phrase “Mission Fellowships.”

2. This Mission Fellowship meeting is distinctly different from, and is in addition to the meetings of a congregational “Mission Committee,” which makes financial, personnel and policy decisions. The Mission Fellowship, by contrast, will become the focus, the popular expression, and the carrier vehicle of mission VISION in the local church. Such a meeting can be started in any congregation whenever it is deemed feasible.

3. Many materials are already available for the enhancement and enrichment of this meeting. Among others, a monthly audio visual in three forms is planned: 1) as a set of slides with sound accompaniment, 2) as a video tape in various formats, and 3) as a 16 man film version for use in large gatherings. Each network will likely want to provide a monthly bulletin as well.

4. It is not expected that every member of a local congregation will be involved in the Mission Fellowship. Attendance at the Fellowship meetings will be especially promoted annually during the two month campaign period and throughout the year on a less intensive basis by the Mission Renewal Teams. (Sec F 4 below.)

5. Crucial to the Mission 2000 movement is the care and feeding of those who respond to the visitation program during the campaign period. Vision building will take place principally through the vehicle of the monthly Mission Fellowship meeting just mentioned.

F. The Terms of Agreement

1. One level of agreement is national. We contemplate a minimum of 30 national networks, each of which is capable of enlisting a minimum of 100 Coordinating Congregations. This national level of agreement is between the leaders of a given Network constituency and the central office of the Mission 2000 Consortium. Membership in the Consortium implies acceptance and adherence to certain non-negotiable common denominators, such as the definition of unreached peoples, the use of the net \$15.50 registration fee, etc.

2. Each national network will make agreements with its own leaders in an average of ten regional locations.

3. Each regional office will deal with ten local “Coordinating Congregations,” which are the principal operational base of responsibility of the Mission 2000 movement.

4. Each Coordinating Congregation will be responsible for ten Mission Renewal Teams, whose two or three members will constitute the nucleus of the monthly Mission Fellowships referred to above. These Renewal Teams can come from, and work in, congregations other than the Coordinating Congregation with which, as a team, they are affiliated. That is, one larger church can be the center for three or four smaller churches which may have only one MRT at work in its membership. Or, a smaller church can be the coordinating congregation relating to teams in several other congregations that are larger or smaller.

5. Members of each Mission Renewal Team will have signed on for a stipulated number of “seed plantings,” e.g., presentations to specific individuals in a home visit. As in the Parable of the Soils, the team’s goal for the number of individuals to be visited is 30, 60, or 100, so to speak. Some will accomplish more than others. For the sake of evaluating the amount of materials to be produced, etc., we will assume that on the average each Mission Renewal Team (in, say, 15 to 25 visits) will contact 40 individuals. This fairly heavy assignment will be undertaken by only the very highly committed.

6. This “Seed Planting” activity does not absolutely require a visit to the home, although that is assumed to be standard. The initial goal is to register as many as possible and to distribute the inspiring vision building materials in the registration packet. Each Team can make its own plans and try its own ideas. A team may choose to give a thorough “Presentation” in a home meeting, where six or seven “Simeon” types are invited all at once. (“Simeons” are those already sold on missions.) It is also possible that a serious presentation and plea for registrations could take place in some Sunday School class. The main idea is 1) to present people with the exciting challenge of the Mission 2000 campaign and 2) to enlist them in the development of a monthly fellowship in their own setting. Later they will be introduced to the other goals of the movement, such as the daily devotional discipline of the Frontier Fellowship.

Don’t miss the National Conference!

G. THE LOCAL PLAN OF ACTION

1. For many of the people drawn into the Mission 2000 movement, their very first discovery of the world of renewed mission vision will occur when a Mission 2000 Renewal Team visits their home. At that time they will hear a presentation, will be shown some exciting materials to ponder, and will be invited to pay a once and for all \$17.50 Registration Fee to become official, permanent participants in the Mission 2009 Campaign. If they register, the materials shown them, which constitute the "Registration Packet," become theirs to ponder further. This kind of presentation with its early financial hurdle will fairly accurately determine the true level of their concern at that time.

2. Which individuals should be visited? In the first round, they are the “Simeons” (of Luke 2) who are definitely in the “looking, believing, hoping” category. Fundamental to the Mission 2000 Campaign is the Parable of the Four Soils, in which it is presumed that the farmer is definitely looking for soil which is likely to be reproductive. Rather than just spending our efforts, we seek to multiply them by deliberately and prayerfully enlisting first those who will be most likely to help with further enlistment and renewal efforts. Thus it is strategic to assume that the people to be visited first in any area or group of congregations are those who will welcome the goals and objectives of Mission 2000 and will be delighted by the solid base of additional information about “what God is doing around the world.” (See the first chapter in C. Peter Wagner’s *ON THE CREST OF THE WAVE*).

3. In terms of the four responses the parable describes, it is possible that of the 40 people carefully chosen to be visited, the following responses will occur:

Pathway: ten will not actually be ready and will decline any involvement at that time.

Shallow soil: ten will respond momentarily, to the point of paying the \$17.50 registration fee and receiving their packet of materials

Thorny soil: ten will participate in the annual "Mission Update" study program to which all who register will be invited;

Reproductive soil: ten will agree, in addition, to become part of additional Mission Renewal Teams in the second round of outreach.

4. But the long term primary goal of the visitation campaign is to enlist people, heart and soul, in the monthly Mission Fellowship. It is this meeting which is to be the central source of materials and expanding interest constituting the foundation of the renewal movement. Area and regional meetings along network lines or across networks in "Concerts of Prayer" may or may not take place. And of course some people will be blessed and inspired who do not come to the monthly Mission Fellowship meeting. But the central force and backbone of the Mission 2000 Renewal is understood to be the Mission Fellowship.

H. The National Timetable

1. It is envisioned that initially only three to five national networks will make up the Mission 2000 Consortium. Their representation will constitute the corporate board of the Consortium.
2. At that point, an additional five to ten other networks (denominations, para church organizations, etc.) will be invited to join an enlarged Consortium, each agreeing to hold firm to the non-negotiables of the original concepts and principles. Representatives of these will be added to the board, the earlier group becoming the executive committee.
3. In the third stage, as many as 30 nationwide networks will become consortium members. This number is considered the minimal essential level of viability for a "movement" to take place.
4. The early "unveiling" of the Mission 2000 Plan is scheduled to take place at the annual meeting of the Association of Church Mission Committees in July, 1985. Some pilot "Coordinating Congregations" will test out the program before that date, and several national networks will begin in the fall. It is hoped that by January of 1986, ten or more network will be committed and begin operations shortly thereafter. If all goes as planned, by December of 1986 the minimum goal of 30 networks will be involved.

Appendix

A. Footnotes to the Table "The Projection to the Year 2000" (See D.)

Underlying the table in section Dare the following assumptions and estimates:

1. There are 17,000 UNREACHED PEOPLES with no indigenous church yet
2. We seek "A Church for Every People by the Year 2,000."
3. These unreached peoples contain and seal off half the world's population, and average 150,000 individuals in each group.
4. It will take a minimum of two couples five years to reach each people.
5. We can expect 4,000 new missionaries of this type by the beginning of 1987.
6. The necessary increase of the mission force will be gradual, a rate of 8,000 more missionaries per year, beginning in 1988.

7. It will cost an average of \$ 12,500 per person per year for these new frontier missionaries, many from other countries.
8. A "Support Team" = 100 people giving an average of \$10.42 per month.
9. Thus each new Support Team enrolled can support, completely, one new missionary.

B. The Contents of the Registration Packet

The content of the registration packet is of no essential concern to the Mission 2000 Consortium, other than that it be value received for the \$2 collected in the Registration Fee, and that it be relevant to the basic vision of the movement.

In most cases, it will be the Network involved that will want to choose from the mass produced, lowpriced materials which are being used by other networks. They will want to put in things of their own choice, as well.

It may well be that many Networks will see the current "Neutral Crucial" (to which \$15 of the \$17.50 Registration Fee goes) as an added, exciting attraction in their network, and will be happy to have the work or that Neutral Crucial mentioned somewhere in the Packet. In other cases the current "Neutral Crucial" can go completely unmentioned.

However, let us suppose a Network highly favorable to the cause of the current Neutral Crucial were making its selection for this packet. And, let us suppose that Neutral Crucial were the U.S. Center for World Mission. Following is the kind of packet which might be made up, and which, delivered to the Sponsoring Church, would fit into the allowed \$2 portion of the Registration Fee:

1. Sample copy of Mission Frontiers,
2. Sample copy of World Christian Magazine.
3. Sample copy of The Global Prayer Digest.
4. Poster: "The Unreached Peoples of the World."
5. Book. I WILL DO A NEW THING (the story of the 1,1.5. Center for World Mission.)
6. Booklet, "Look at What God's Doing."
7. A lot of materials at a healthy discount, costing a good deal more than \$2

C. The Basic Ingredients of the Monthly Mission Fellowship Meeting.

This is to be a meeting for prayer and inspirational education about the mission cause. Provisions are silently being made for the highest quality motion picture input on a monthly basis, mediated through low cost video tape, Small groups can get the basic equipment and have their own tapes updated for \$1 each month at cooperating Christian bookstores and Inr Consortium offices. Soon Sman tapes (similar to audio tapes) will be available. They will cost far less and can either be sent out on a "one way" basis for about \$4 per month, or updated in the way mentioned. The same materials will be available in both the form of slides and 16mm film, depending upon the option selected.

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However, these meetings will be expected to follow widely different formats, and we do not see any great value in trying to standardize a single pattern.

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The Final Era of World Missions

IJFM 2:3, July 1985

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The Final Era of World Missions

Ralph Winter

The following remarks were given as an address on October 7, 1986 to the triennial convention of the Asia Missions Association in Pasadena, California. The theme of the convention: "Thy Will Be Done on Earth, On Earth Peace Among Men."

As I have been in prayer about this convention and about my words at this moment, something has come to me very forcefully. I will put it this way: this week is not merely a meeting with men. This is an encounter with God. We are here ultimately at His invitation. We are here ultimately to discover His plans, not to create our own.

We must be sure to hear what His word is telling us and what His works around the world are telling us. We must be ready to hear His Voice among us. It is not His business to bless our plans; it is our business to fit in with His. If this is to be the Final Era of World Missions, it will not be because we plan it so, but because it is His plan.

If, as we sit here, we are in the final era of history, what is the most crucial issue? Is it statistics and charts? Is it education or planning? Is it a spiritual revival that does not issue in global responsibility?

As I have prayed and searched the Scriptures, it has suddenly appeared to me that in this meeting this week we are in an unusual position—one very similar to the one in which Caleb and Joshua were outvoted ten to two. They said, "We can do it!" The others said, "It can't be done!"

Ah, how often the Jews would regret this indecision at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 13,14; Deuteronomy 1), this



Ralph Winter is the General Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission.

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rejection of God's highest will for them. The whole Old Testament cries out with pain due to this lapse of faith.

Over a thousand years later, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews rehearses this ghastly failure. Quoting from the Psalms, he fairly shouts out three times, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:7,15; 4:7). He points out that back then they had missed their chance to be on schedule with God. Would they miss it again?

But the Calebs and Joshuas in both periods were outnumbered. In each, even as now, God had great plans for His people, but because their hearts had become hardened, His plans had become a mystery. Even when Jesus came into the picture, they missed it. Yet the good news then and now is the same. God is calling us to be blessed and to be a blessing to the whole world. This *is* the Good News. The author of Hebrews says, "For we also have had the gospel (the good news) preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith" (Heb. 4:2). As a result, they exchanged the Good News for bad news: the fall of Jerusalem was the next thing that happened. God had offered Peace on Earth.

Today, as God is speaking to us, we must listen with hearts full of faith. Woe if we harden our hearts when God wants to move forward.

No doubt, at many pivotal points in history, man's faithlessness has again and again delayed God's purposes. Let's look at two major examples in fairly recent history.

In 1790 William Carey stood forth to say that Englishmen could go to the ends of the earth. But his fellow ministers said it couldn't be done, and William Carey went out to India in a lonesome, almost totally unsupported quest. He believed the Good News. His Bible said that Englishmen were blessed in order to be a blessing—to all the peoples of the earth.

The impact of Carey's prodigious efforts was exceeded only by the impact of his example, as God attracted a handful of American college students, praying outdoors due to anti-Christian sentiments of their Christian-college classmates. They emerged from their prayers with the ringing statement, "We can do it if we will!" Again, their elders said, "It can't be

done! There is much need for you to stay home.” But a tiny trickle of Americans joined the Englishmen and the Germans, the Moravians and others who were not disobedient to the heavenly call.

The key point for us at this meeting is not how much they accomplished, but how *small* their following was in terms of all the Christians who *could* have joined them and who *could* have better supported them. We will never know how much *could* have been done had Western Christians mixed with faith the call of these Calebs and Joshuas.

But the most stunning parallel to what we face in 1986 is what happened exactly a hundred years ago, in 1886, when a large group of students stood forth to agree with God and to say, “It can be done!” They would soon find out that parents, elders, and denominational officials were decidedly unenthusiastic about their hopeless ideas. But they did not invent these ideas.

One year before, in a large meeting sponsored by the evangelist D. L. Moody, A. T. Pierson had explained that it was perfectly possible to evangelize the world within 15 years—that is, by the year 1900. (In appendix B I enclose the entire statement.) His plan was sound. It was far more believable than the plan God had proposed at the time of the original Caleb and Joshua. But did America respond? Limply.

The Student Volunteer Movement that followed 1886 has often been referred to as a wonderful and monumental effort. And so it was! But most Americans could not “mix with faith” the voice of God encouraging them with a gospel for all the peoples of the earth. What followed was what historians call “the Gay Nineties,” when super-wealthy Christians displayed their wealth extravagantly and when relatively few took seriously “An Appeal to Disciples Everywhere.”

The President of the United States interpreted God’s voice to mean the physical acquisition of the Philippines and Western Somoa. Others interpreted it as the conquest of Cuba and the extension of the boundaries of the United States through to the Northwest Pacific. Shortly after the Student Volunteer Movement began, North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and Washington were, within a single month, hastily voted in as states.

God was speaking, but this was not what He meant. Americans responded, but most of them did not respond to the right thing nor in the right way. And even those who did respond to what God was saying did not fully respond. As a result, when the year 1900 approached, a dateless goal had to be substituted: the phrase "by the year 1900" was replaced by "the evangelization of the world in our generation." The Biblical way of putting it would be that, although much good was accomplished, the people in the churches in their "today" to a considerable extent hardened their hearts. Despite the mission enthusiasm of the great 1910 gathering at Edinburgh, the same Western world would soon be abandoning gospel outreach in the orgy of the First World War.

But in our *today*, where do we stand? If we review the statistics of the feasibility of evangelizing the world and see how much more possible it is today than ever, will our generation respond? This is the big decision for our people today. I hesitate to make this observation, but is it possible that *Peace on Earth* is what God will maintain *only if* our generation is willing to obey His call to go to the ends of the earth?

Is it possible that "Peace on Earth" is what God will maintain only if our generation is willing to obey His call to go to the ends of the earth?

Thus, this week is very crucial. We are a tiny minority of the church. Missions has always been at the margin. As Lincoln put it, "The world will little know nor long remember what we say here." Will that be true?

First of all, let us remember we're not working in our own strength. We are a small group of people. Our interests are minority interests in every country from which we come. Not even the Western missionary tradition has made a major effort to encourage Third World missions. In the decade that I worked among American Indians in the mountains of Guatemala, this was my concern on only two occasions. Most of you are not here because of the initiative of Western missionaries. All mission forces put together today are still no great company. Missions are on the margin. Mission people are outnumbered, like Caleb and Joshua.

However, there are some significant differences between 1886 and 1986. Thanks to what was done by the Student Volunteers of a hundred years ago and other missionaries since

then, we are, first of all, closer to completing the task than we have ever been. This we will see in diagrams in a minute.

Secondly, never before—never in my lifetime, surely—have the Christians of the world been so sensitive to the call of the gospel for the whole world.

Thirdly, we are realizing that there is no other gospel. The gospel has always been for the whole world. The gospel has never been merely about how we, individually, can be saved. The gospel has always been the good news that God wants *all* the peoples of the earth to be confronted with His grace and authority. The spring of living water is available to us personally and nationally only if, as Philip Teng has told us, we dig two ditches—one to bring the water to us and one to carry it beyond us.

Thus, as we quickly scan the remaining task, we must ask ourselves at every moment, “Can we believe that this is the *final era of missions*? Is it possible that deliberate efforts employing a small portion of the whole church to reach the whole world can do that by the year 2000?”

We must not *predict* the return of Christ, but we must *prepare* for his return. He may come at any time. And we must be busy about His business. We must not accept other alternatives. We must know the terror of the Lord if we turn back in unbelief. As Paul put it, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” We must also operate in the grace and the love of Christ. We are constrained by love to share the good news.

In a word, we must “no longer live unto ourselves but unto Him who died for us and rose again.” This is the only way to seek Peace on Earth.

Let us turn quickly, then, to a few observations.

I have tried for years to figure out the best way to paint the picture of the progress of the gospel. I hope you will be patient for a few moments as I expose you to my most recent attempts.

First of all, let’s look at the whole world at once. In Diagram 1 you see two large circles: roughly half the world is on each side of the dividing line. The most crucial thing about this diagram is the meaning of that line. If you understand this diagram, all my other diagrams will be clear.

We must not predict the return of Christ, but we must prepare for his return.

On the right-hand side, you see the half of the world that is walled off by ethnic and social distinctives. This half of the world lives within roughly 17,000 unreached people groups, my estimate of the number of groups in unreached categories. The actual number is not as important as to realize that *there exist human beings who are effectively walled off from the gospel by the absence in their society of a vital, evangelizing indigenous church movement.* On the left, you see half of the world, where the gospel is well established.

Many of the unreached groups on the right are very similar to groups on the left (where there is already a church), and such groups can be penetrated by relatively easy E-2 missionary work. There are other groups that are a little more different and are in the more difficult E-2.5 category. And, finally, the darkest and most perplexing situations can only be reached by E-3 mission work. But note how small the completely black portion now is!

Thus, only half the world today is still walled off. This is not anything like a truly hopeless picture.

Let's take a closer look at the situation on the left—where every human being belongs to a group where the church is already well established. The pure white represents evangelizing Christians. The next larger circle, with slanted lines, represents the rest of those who call themselves Christians, whether they truly know the Lord or not. The additional space in the outer circle represents those who are not Christians, but whose social sphere has been penetrated by a vital Christian church. (The actual numbers are in the table in Diagram 5.)

Having simply identified these different categories, we can stand back and reflect for a moment. If you spend a few minutes looking at Diagram 4, you will note that the vast majority of all evangelizing and mission efforts are focused on the nominal Christians and the E-1 non-Christians who live within the range of the church.

Dare I say it? What if 700,000 Italian university students are non-believers? They all have the Bible in their language. Any of them truly seeking God could find Him very shortly, *compared to a person in whose social sphere there is no Bible, no church, no gospel.* I do not say that no one should reach

(text concludes on p. 230)

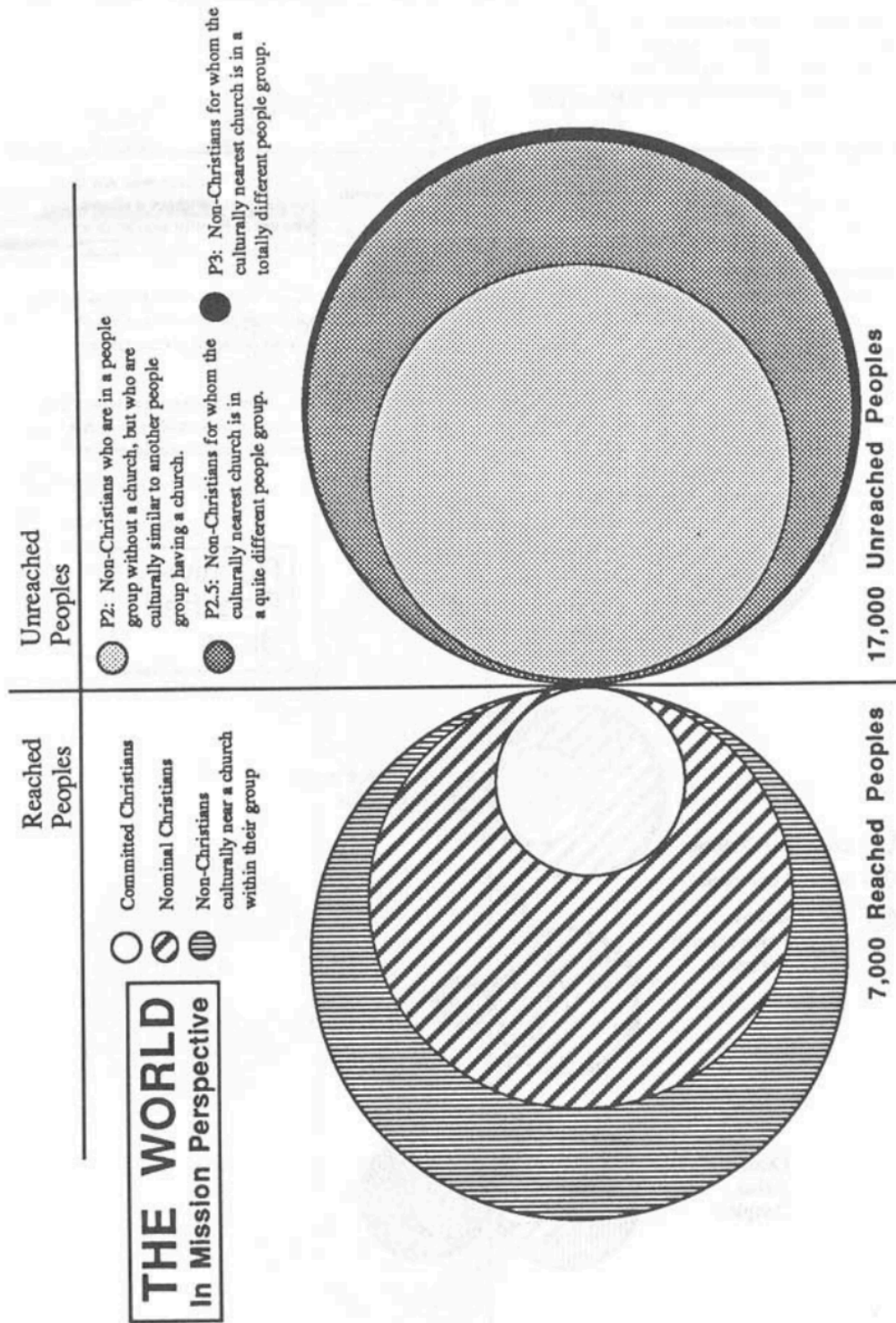


Diagram 1

Ralph Winter
 The Final Era of World Missions

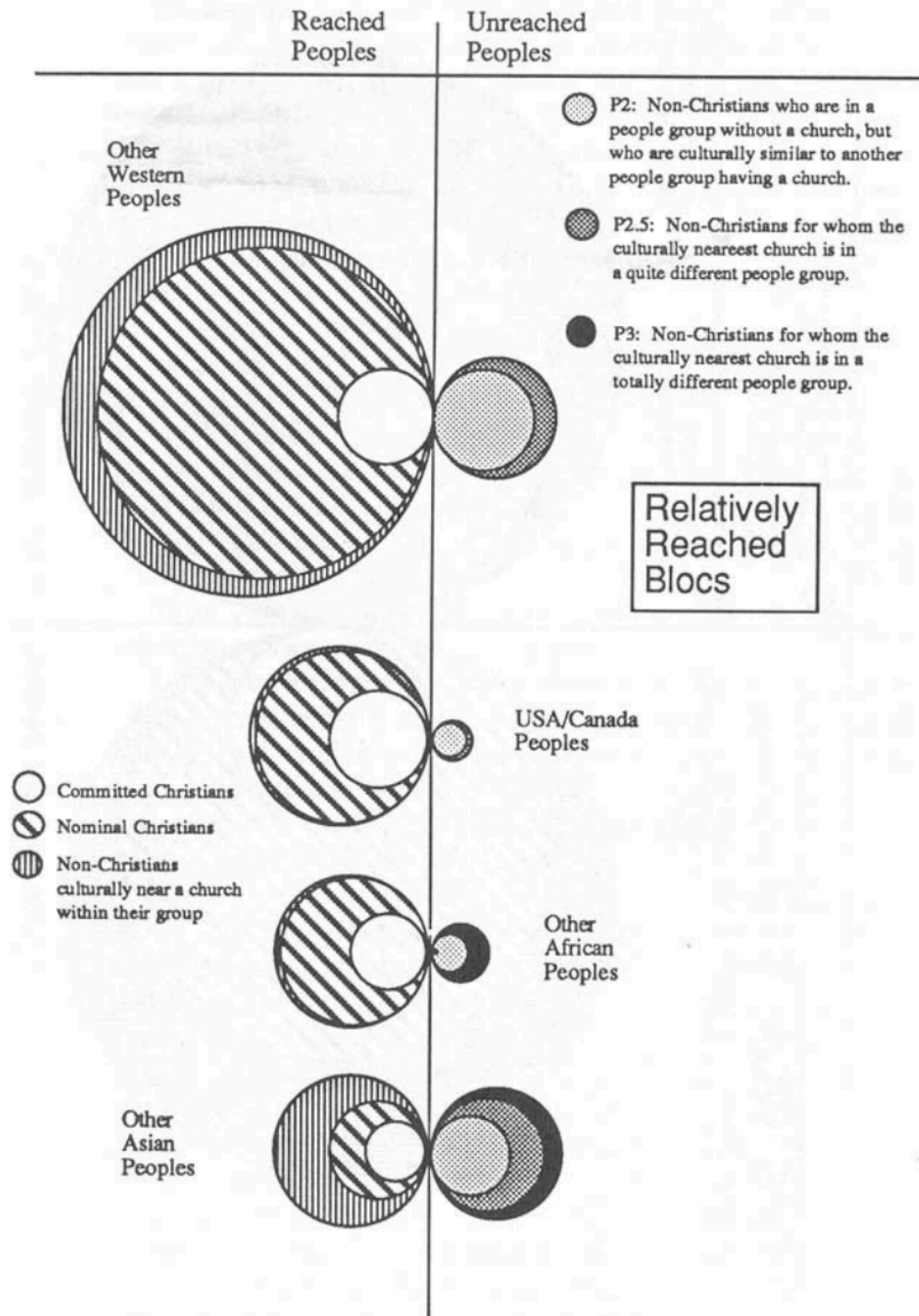


Diagram 2

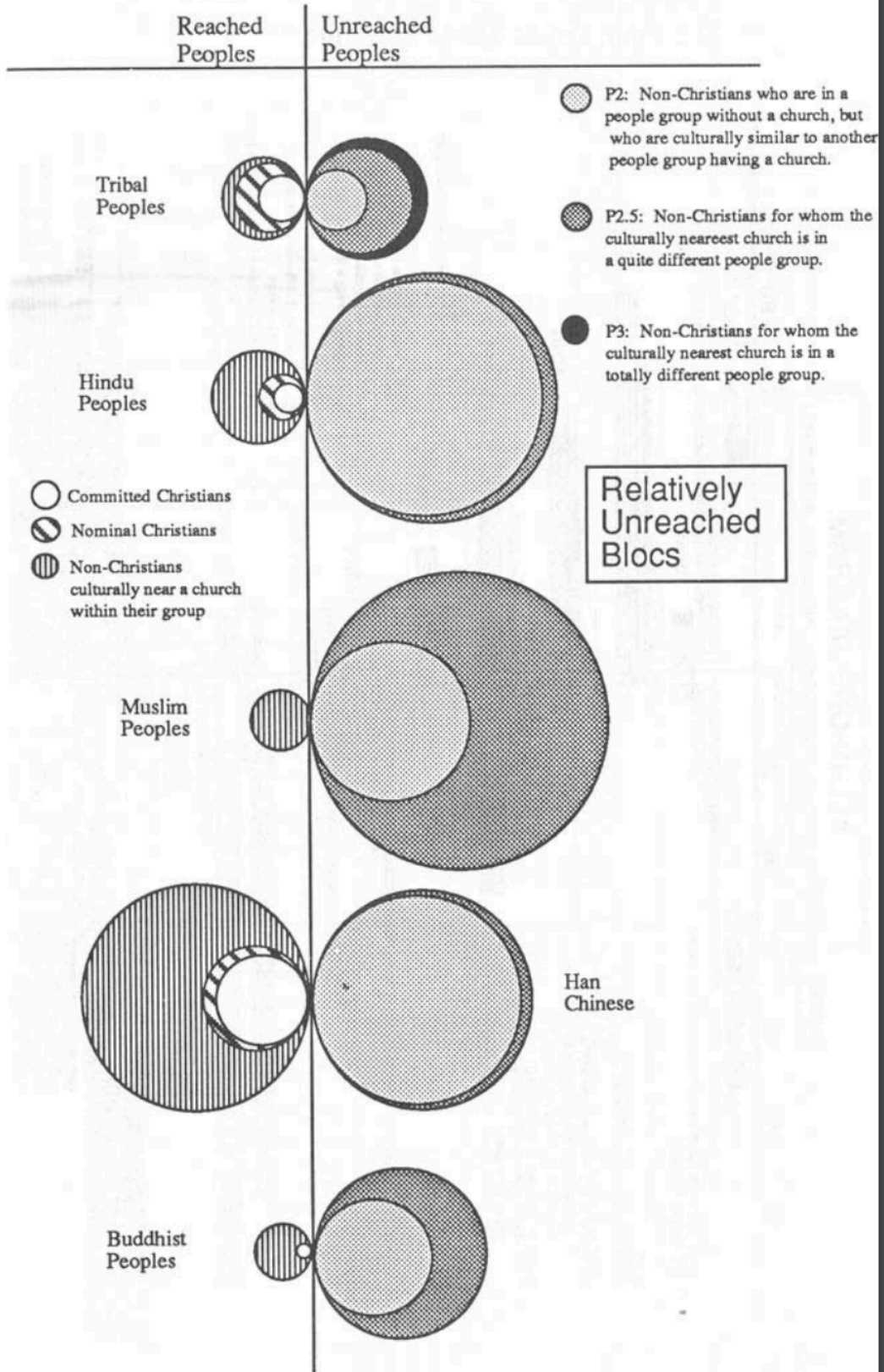


Diagram 3

Ralph Winter The Final Era of World Missions

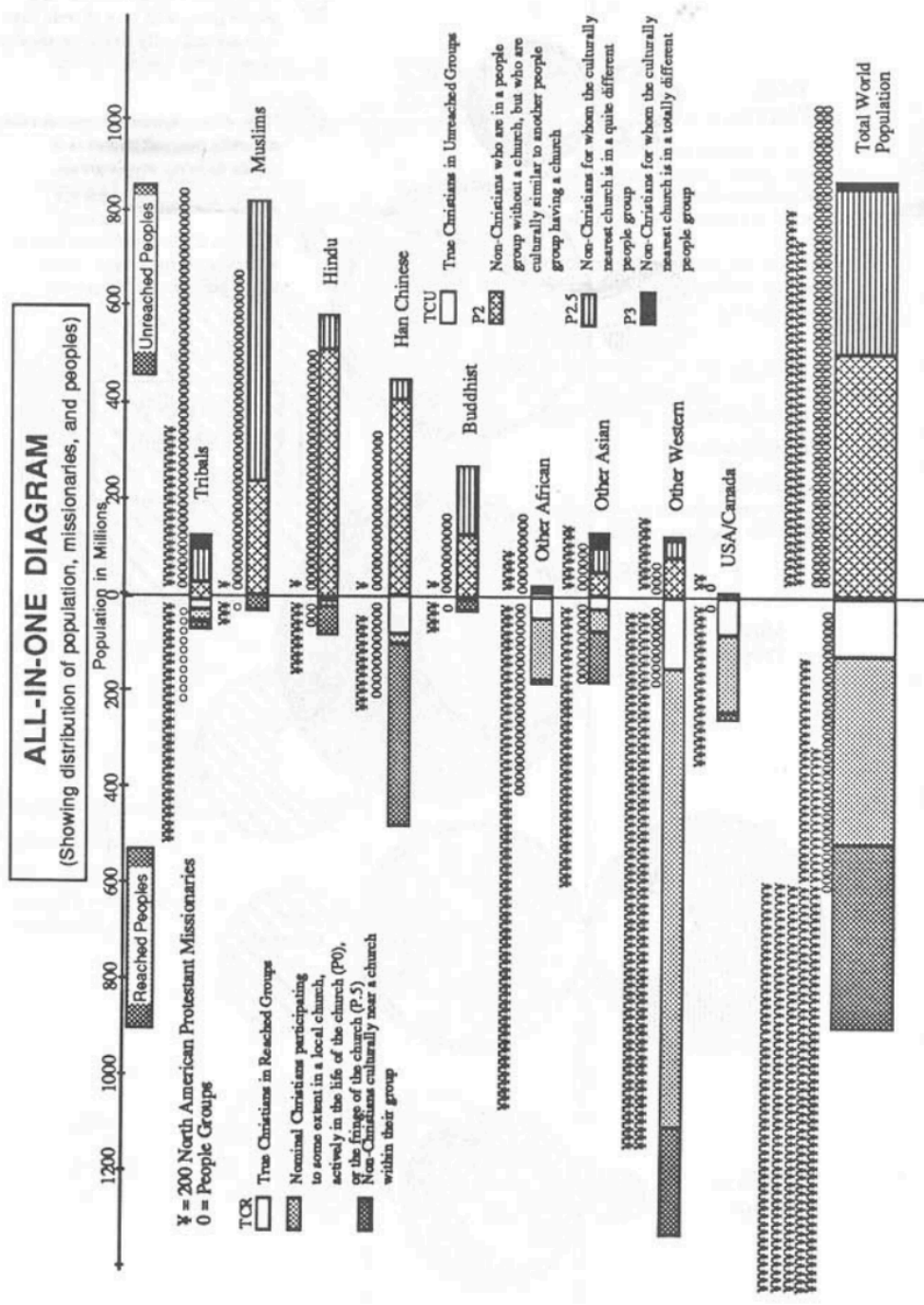


Diagram 4

The Basic Guesswork
(Underlying the Circle/Bar Diagrams)

	A. Reached People Groups					B. Unreached People Groups					World Totals								
	individuals (millions)					individuals (millions)					Individuals (millions)								
	True Christians (TCR)	Nominal Christians (P.O.P.S)	Non-Christians (P1)	Totals	North American Protestant Missionaries	True Christians (TCR)	Non-Christians (P2)	Non-Christians (P2.5)	Non-Christians (P3)	Totals	North American Protestant Missionaries	Languages	People Groups	North American Protestant Missionaries	North American Protestant Missionaries	North American Protestant Missionaries	North American Protestant Missionaries	North American Protestant Missionaries	
Tribal	1,000	20	25	20	65	9	5,000	0.001	35	70	30	135	4,000	3,000	6,000	200	10,000	2,000	2,000
Muslim	30	0.2	0	34	34	600	4,000	0.01	235	587	0	822	250	580	4,030	856	850	500	2,000
Hindu	300	8	12	60	80	1,800	3,000	0.52	514	73	0	588	100	500	3,300	668	1,900	2,000	4,000
Han Chinese	1,200	80	22	379	481	2,400	2,000	0.02	407	44	0	451	200	200	3,200	932	2,600	1,500	200
Buddhists	20	2	1	27	30	800	1,000	0.01	129	146	0	275	200	100	1,020	305	1,000	2,000	1,200
Subtotal	2,550	110	60	520	690	11,600	15,000	0.561	1,320	920	30	2,271	4,750	4,380	17,550	2,961	16,350	8,000	9,400
Other African	2,450	45	124	11	180	12,500	1,000	0.21	11	5	10	26	950	300	3,450	206	13,450	6,000	5,000
Other Asian	1,000	28	47	106	181	7,000	600	0.21	50	51	33	134	1,650	700	1,600	315	8,650	5,000	4,000
Other Western	1,000	147	955	229	1,331	28,000	400	0.01	82	36	11	129	1,850	130	1,400	1,460	29,850	3,000	1,600
USA/Canada	500	76	161	18	255	4,000	100	0.001	9	3	1	13	500	30	600	268	4,500	300	600
Subtotal	4,450	220	1,126	346	1,692	47,500	2,000	0.43	143	92	54	289	4,450	1,130	6,450	1,981	51,950	14,000	10,600
Grand Total	7,000	330	1,186	866	2,382	59,100	17,000	0.991	1,463	1,012	84	2,560	9,200	5,510	24,000	4,942	68,300	22,000	20,000

Evangelism within the same cultural group. E0: Renewal evangelism of church members. E1: Evangelism of non-Christians with no contact with the church. E2: Evangelism of non-Christians in a similar, but different culture. E2.5: Evangelism of non-Christians in a similar, but quite different culture. E3: Evangelism in a completely different culture.

Evangelism external to one's own cultural group. E0: Renewal evangelism of church members. E1: Evangelism of non-Christians with no contact with the church. E2: Evangelism of non-Christians in a similar, but different culture. E2.5: Evangelism of non-Christians in a similar, but quite different culture. E3: Evangelism in a completely different culture.

Certain statistics derived from The World Christian Encyclopedia by David C. Barrett, Oxford Press, N.Y. projected to 1986. Data for third world missionaries taken from Lawrence Keyes The Last Age of Missions, William Cary Library, 1982, projected six years forward to 22,000. Breakdown and projections consist of our estimates. Total world population from Population Reference Bureau, Inc. 1986.

Diagram 5

APPENDIX A: "1986: THRESHOLD TO THE YEAR 2000"

The "Coastlands" Era Begins

- 1792 William Carey founds the Baptist Missionary Society
- 1795 The London Missionary Society is founded "for all evangelicals"
- 1796 The Scottish Missionary Society is founded
- 1796 The Glasgow Missionary Society is founded
- 1797 The Netherlands Missionary Society is founded
- 1799 The Church Missionary Society is founded
- (***** A Student Movement Explodes)
- 1806 The Haystack Prayer Meeting launches students into action
- 1810 American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions founded
- 1858 Awakening of 1858-9 (Fulton Street Prayer meeting)
- 1861 Women's Union Missionary Society formed, soon 40 others

The "Inland" Era Begins

- 1865 Founding of the China Inland Mission by J. Hudson Taylor
- 1875 Revival at Princeton, forms Princeton Foreign Mission Soc.
- 1878 *Missionary Review of the World* founded by Royal Wilder
- 1880 NJ: 250 stud. from 32 seminaries found Intersem. Miss. Alliance
- 1881 Founding of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor
- 1885 "Cambridge Seven" go to China under the China Inland Mission
- 1885 Northfield Conf adopts "An Appeal to Disc Everyw." & 1900 goal
- (***** A Student Movement Explodes)
- 1886 D.L. Moody & 100 "Student Volunteers" at Mt. Hermon, Mass.
- 1886 A.T. Pierson's *Crisis of Missions* pub incl "Appeal" & 1900 goal
- 1888 London "Ecumenical Missionary Conference"—response to 1885
- 1890 Decade of the "Faith" Mission phenomenon
- 1891 First Nat'l Conf Stud. Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions
- 1892 Foreign Mission Conference of North America founded
- 1900 Ecumenical Missionary Conference, New York
- 1906 Laymen's Missionary Movement
- 1910 World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh
- 1914 Beginning of the *International Review of Missions*
- 1917 Founding, Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association
- 1921 Lake Mohonk, formation of International Missionary Council
- 1922 Wm. Cameron Townsend and Donald A. McGavran join SVM
- 1928 Jerusalem meeting of the IMC 1932 Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry
- 1928 Mott pushes for study of Indian mass movements
- 1933 Pickett's *Christian Mass Movements in India*

The "Unreached Peoples" Era Begins

- 1935 Founding of the Wycliffe Bible Translators (Townsend)
- 1936 Pickett/McGavran's *Church Growth and Group Conversion*
- 1936 Latourette recognizes People Movement importance
- 1936 Founding, Student Foreign Miss. Fellowship (Col. Bible College)
- 1939 Founding, Gospel Recordings, Inc.
- 1941 WW II—11 million Americans study missions "on location"
- 1945 Founding of NAE & EFMA
- 1946 IVCF/SFMA Student Missionary Convention at Toronto (pre-Urbana)
- 1955 Publication of *The Bridges of God* by McGavran
- 1960 (IFMA) World Missionary Conference, New York
- 1964 IFMA/EFMA founding of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*
- 1965 Founding of the Fuller School of World Mission
- 1966 Collapse of the Inter-Regional Coordinating Committee
- 1966 Wheaton (IFMA/EFMA) Conference on World Mission
- 1966 Berlin, World Congress on Evangelism, CT & BGEA
- 1969 Founding of the William Carey Library
- 1971 Greenlake, Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission
- 1972 Founding of the American Society of Missiology
- 1972 Copeland's Proposal for a 1980 Conference like 1

- 1972 Copeland's Proposal for a 1980 Conference like 1910
 1973 Founding of the Association of Church Missions Committees
 1973 Founding of the Asia Missions Association
 1973 Urbana Reversal: 8% in '70, now 28% of students sign cards, see '76
 1973 "Seeing the Task Graphically"
 1974 First Summer Institute of International Studies (IIS, a la SIL)
 1974 The formal "Call" for a World Missionary Conference in 1980
 1974 Lausanne, Switzerland, Int'l Congress on World Evangelization
 1976 Kansas City, IFMA/EFMA Joint Executives Retreat, Coggins, Winter
 1976 Founding of the USCWM 1976 Urbana, 50% response, see '79
 1976 250 stud. in IIS studies (now "Perspectives" course), see '85
 1977 First IIS (Perspectives course), on West Coast, at USCWM
 1978 ISI loans Leiton Chin to manage WCFM/1980
 1979 EFMA Exec Retreat on Unreached Peoples—5208 projected by 1990
 1979 "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000", McGavran/Bliss/Gill
 1979 Urbana, 75% response, see '81
 1980 Melbourne, WCC/CWME Conf. on World Mission and Evangelism
 1980 Pattaya, Thailand, Congress on World Evangelization
 1980 Edinburgh, World Consultation on Frontier Missions
 1980 International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions
 1981 Frontier Fellowship begun, *Global Prayer Digest* follows
 1981 IFMA Frontier Peoples Committee formed
 1981 Urbana, 90% response, see '73
 1982 March: Chicago agreement on def. of Un.R Peoples, Hidden Ppls
 1982 Publication of monumental *World Christian Encyclopedia*
 1983 Bryant/Concerts of Prayer confab, Chicago
 1983 Amsterdam '83, 5,000 itinerant evangelists study evangelism
 1983 "Wheaton '83" (World Ev. Fell.)—3rd track stresses frontiers
 1983 Both IFMA and EFMA exec retreats emphasize the Unfinished Task
 1984 IFMA/EFMA/AEPM retreat, at USCWM, confirms frontier interest
 1984 Founding of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*
 1985 "Perspectives" course expands to 59 centers in U.S. and abroad
 1985 First national-level, true mission conferences in Latin America
 1985 Unprecedented "Explo '85" mtg by CCCI, with global satellite TV
 1985 McGavran gathers missiologists/consider Giant Step/Mission 2000
 (***** A Student Movement Explodes??)
 1986 Mandate '86 (800 students in Illinois), nine other regionals
 1986 Caleb Project meets 13,000 students, works with agencies
 1986 Celebration of 1886 meeting: by Am Soc of Ch Hist, Fort Worth
 1986 " by Inst. for the Study of the Am. Evangelicals, Wheaton
 1986 " by Intervarsity, at Ben Lippen
 1986 " by an ad hoc group at Mt. Hermon, MA (the original site)
 1986 Amsterdam '86, 8,000 pastor/evangelists challenged
 1986 Asia Missions Association meets on world level in USA
 1986 Mission '87 (7000 TEMA students will meet at Amsterdam)
 1987 ?IVCF,CCCI,Navs,So Bap,Chi Alpha back student mission consortium
 1987 COMIBAM '87, First Latin American Congress on Missions
 1987 ?1st world-level mtg of Global Network of Centers for W. Mission
 1987 ?First world-level mtg Association of Third World Missions
 1988 ?International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions, and
 1988 ?2nd meeting: World Consultation on Frontier Missions
 1988 ?First Intl mtg of Theological Students for Frontier Missions
 1989 Lausanne: 2nd International Congress on World Evangelization
 1990 ?Joint IFMA/EFMA meeting approves specific allotments for 1995
 1995 ?All 17,000 people groups initially "engaged" by miss. outreach
 1995 ?3rd mtg: World Cons. on Frontier Missions (mission executives)
 1995 ?World-level Lausanne meeting rejoices in progress
 1999 ?World-level meeting representing all people groups on earth

("This Gospel must be preached... as a testimony to all peoples, and then shall the end come.")

**APPENDIX B: "AN APPEAL TO
DISCIPLES EVERYWHERE" (1885)**

**From *The Crisis of Missions*, A.T. Pierson (N.Y.:
Robert Carter & Bros., 1886), appendix, pp. 365-370.**

AN APPEAL TO DISCIPLES EVERYWHERE.

Issued by the Northfield Convention.

*To fellow-believers of every name, scattered throughout the world,
Greeting:*

Assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with one accord, in one place, we have continued for ten days in prayer and supplication, communing with one another about the common salvation, the blessed hope, and the duty of witnessing to a lost world.

It was near to our place of meeting that, in 1747, at Northampton, Jonathan Edwards sent forth his trumpet-peal, calling upon disciples everywhere to unite in prayer for an effusion of the Spirit upon the whole habitable globe. That summons to prayer marks a new era and epoch in the history of the church of God. Praying bands began to gather in this and other lands; mighty revivals of religion followed; immorality and infidelity were wonderfully checked; and, after more than fifteen hundred years of apathy and lethargy, the spirit of missions was reawakened. In 1784, the monthly concert was begun, and in 1792 the first missionary society formed in England; in 1793, William Carey, the pioneer missionary, sailed for India. Since then, one hundred missionary boards have been organized, and probably not less than one hundred thousand missionaries, including women, have gone forth into the harvest field. The Pillar has moved before these humble laborers, and the two-leaved gates have opened before them, until the whole world is now accessible. The ports and portals of Pagan, Moslem, and even Papal lands are now unsealed, and the last of the hermit nations welcomes the missionary. Results of missionary labor in the Hawaiian and Fiji Islands, in Madagascar, in Japan, probably have no parallel even in apostolic days; while even Pentecost is surpassed by the ingathering of ten thousand converts in one mission station in India within sixty days, in the year 1878. The missionary bands had scarce compassed the walls and sounded the gospel trumpet, when those walls fell, and we have but to march straight on and take possession of Satan's strongholds.

God has thus, in answer to prayer, opened the door of access to the nations. Out of the Pillar there comes once more a voice, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." And yet the church of God is slow to move in response to the providence of God. Nearly a thousand millions of the human race are without the gospel; vast districts are wholly unoccupied. So few are the laborers that, if equally dividing responsibility, each must care for at least one hundred thousand souls. And yet there is abundance of both men and means in the church to give the gospel to every living soul before this century closes. If but ten millions, out of four hundred millions of nominal Christians, would undertake such systematic labor as that each one of that number should, in the course of the next fifteen years, reach one hundred other souls with the gospel message, the whole present population of the globe would have heard the good tidings by the year 1900!

Our Lord's own words are, "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations;" and, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Peter exhorts us both to "look for and hasten the coming of the day of God;" and what if our inactivity delays His coming? Christ is waiting to "see of the travail of His soul;" and we are impressed that two things are just now of great importance: first, the immediate occupation and evangelization of every destitute district of the earth's population; and, secondly, a new effusion of the Spirit in answer to united prayer.

If at some great centre like London or New York, a great council of evangelical believers could meet, to consider the wonder-working of God's providence and grace in mission fields, and how fields now unoccupied may be insured from further neglect, and to arrange and adjust the work so as to prevent needless waste and friction among workmen, it might greatly further the glorious object of a world's evangelization; and we earnestly commend the suggestion to the prayerful consideration of the various bodies of Christian believers, and the various missionary organizations. What a spectacle it would present both to angels and men, could believers of every name, forgetting all things in which they differ, meet, by chosen representatives, to enter systematically and harmoniously upon the work of sending laborers into every part of the world-field!

But, above all else, our immediate and imperative need is a new spirit of earnest and prevailing prayer. The first Pentecost crowned ten days of united, continued supplication. Every subsequent advance may be directly traced to believing prayer, and upon this must depend a new Pentecost. We therefore earnestly appeal to all fellow-disciples to join us and each other in importunate daily supplication for a new and mighty effusion of the Holy Spirit upon all ministers, missionaries, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and Christian workers, and upon the whole earth; that God would impart to all Christ's witnesses the tongues of fire, and melt hard hearts before the burning message. It is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, that all true success must be secured. Let us call upon God till He answereth by fire! What we are to do for the salvation of the lost must be done quickly; for the generation is passing away, and we with it. Obedient to our marching orders, let us "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," while from our very hearts we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you all.

Done in convention at Northfield, Mass., August 14, 1885, D. L. Moody presiding.

Committee:

Arthur T. Pierson, Philadelphia, Presbyterian, *Chairman*.

A. J. Gordon, Boston, Baptist.

L. W. Munhall, Indianapolis, Methodist.

Geo. F. Pentecost, Brooklyn, N.Y., Congregationalist.

Wm. Ashmore, Missionary to Swatow, China, Baptist.

J. E. Studd, London, England, Church of England.

Miss E. Dryer, Chicago Avenue Church, Chicago.

Ralph Winter
The Final Era of World Missions

The highest priority of the classical mission agency is to go deliberately to where the light is dim and little or no opportunity exists.

(continued from p. 220)

out to these students, but the highest priority of the classical mission agency is to go deliberately to where the light is dim and little or no opportunity exists.

Mission agencies do not have to do everything. Most Christian money goes to thousands of pastoral and evangelistic ministries. Relatively little goes to mission agencies, and only mission agencies can successfully reach the least-reached peoples. Once a group has a well-established church movement, it ceases to be a mission field and ought to become a mission base! The ultimate test of success for a mission organization is to establish a church that is itself a mission sending church!

Like A.T. Pierson in 1885, we have a task before us that *can* be accomplished by the year 2000 if the Calebs and Joshuas prevail. Perhaps this time they may. If evangelicals around the world will not be busy in God's highest calling, the world may soon see a global war destroy all hope of Peace on Earth in our time and delay the Lord's return for another generation.

Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Mission Frontiers April 1986

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/bright-hope-for-tomorrow1>

Is it really possible for a team of people to serve the entire mission cause? Is it possible to serve mission agencies, denominations, and local churches as such as well as young people on college campuses? What would an organization do to accomplish all that?

1. The USCWM stands for the overall rehabilitation of hope and vision for the Unfinished Task of World Evangelization.

Many organizations have started out with this kind of broad goal but have had so many problems merely surviving that they have ended up promoting themselves more than the other organizations whose life and health are essential to the cause of final outreach. We hope we can do otherwise. For example: a) We are attempting to stock the materials of all the agencies in the world working to penetrate the final 17,000 people groups. b) We are trying to assist the regional and local programs of all mission agencies by stimulating awareness and vision in local churches. c) We are undertaking several projects of a GENERAL nature that no one mission agency can readily perform for itself. For instance, we are:

- setting up an organization which will serve local churches in their attempts to gear into the final countdown of history.
- writing one prayer guide and expecting more than one denomination to use it.
- setting up a basic nationwide college credit course on the mission cause and finding a hundred schools and dozens of mission agencies who want their young people to use it.
- aiding the development of mission strategy by providing support services to a team of computer specialists who are seeking to map and graphically present exact locations and descriptions of every people of the world.

2. Our “impartial” stance means that we can be consulted by the public for a balanced overall picture.

Donors to mission agencies of all kinds can expect to get an impartial picture of things.

Young people considering mission service can talk with us about the whole range of possibilities without getting a pitch for just one organization.

Churches considering where they ought to focus their attention can expect us to give them a balanced picture.

Apart from the minimal immediate needs of our own personnel and facilities, we have nothing to “sell.”

3. What we are doing to serve the entire mission industry in general has led us to grapple with certain specific tasks such as starting new organizations and programs when they are missing.

The William Carey International University.

The mission industry needs the services of a small specialized university devoted to certain pressing problems: a better B.A. degree program, one that may show the way for 100,000 students per year to go through college (under many schools) spending 6 months each academic year overseas.

A better Ph.D. degree program, one that avoids tearing its students away from their work for years on end, and one that takes advantage of the hundreds of missionaries all over the world today who hold Ph.D. degrees building on their knowledge and skills to offer to other missionaries and national leaders the certification governments are more and more requiring.

The Global Mapping Project.

The mission industry needs a specialized computer group focused upon 'mapping' the existing and unfinished task.

The Global Prayer Digest.

The mission industry needs a high quality daily devotional tool which can be customized to meet the needs of any group of 500 or more people.

The Perspectives Extension Program.

The mission industry needs a 200 hour college credit course that can be taken by any student in any state university, secular or Christian campus, at any time.

The Institute of Global Urban Studies.

The Zwemer Institute of Muslim Studies.

All these things are happening right now on the campus of the U.S. Center for World Mission!

A Capsule Comment on Finances

Are these amazing activities and urgent goals going to sink like the Titanic? Are we going to lose this modest, extensive, well used property? Here is a capsule summary of our situation:

\$20 million total value of our 35 acre campus.

\$4.9 million still owed on main campus

\$2.9 million still owed on campus housing

Payments? Item #2 pays for itself. Item #1 cannot possibly do so, and we must pay \$300,000 per quarter (next payment this coming July 1st), which is just about half interest (like rent) and half principal (paying off the property). Paying at this rate, we would pay off the campus in less than 6 years. However, we are required to pay the TOTAL BALANCE on October 1st of next year. (By then, items 1 and 2 will be down to about \$4.1 and \$2.8 million respectively).

Our immediate problem is to make the next \$300,000 payment due July 1st. If we miss that, the rest is academic.

However, we have three action plans:

1. To continue spreading the vision and asking for \$16.95 "Founders" gifts. Why this approach? This project is otherwise self-sustaining, and is committed to assist (not compete with) existing Mission Agencies.

Also, we are beginning to work with the thousands of devout, believing families that need help in using theft time and money more strategically.

We have the seed crystal growing. Forty nine families have given over \$50,000 total and are leading the way for 40,110(1 families (one for each North American Protestant missionary family overseas right now) to live on the level of missionaries on furlough (try two thirds of your income).

When 40,000 families rise to this challenge, it will generate \$500 million in NEW money for missions EVERY YEAR!

mission agencies. This is the most honorable and courteous approach, least damaging to them.

2. As part of a much larger plan (read the next two pages), encourage 40,000 American families to adopt the same lifestyle as a furloughing missionary family, giving the rest to the cause of missions (as the missionaries, in effect, routinely do). This will generate \$500 million per year for others. If however, ten families in 400 churches would like to do this for us (for just three months) we can pay off our entire indebtedness.

3. Finally, we wonder: if right now I could tell you that we had all but the last \$1,000 we needed, how many would rush to help? Actually, some people are already writing in saying they would be willing to do this. We will shortly announce a fund set aside for this purpose: all gifts will be returned if we fail to make up the total. Outside Christian leaders will control this fund.

Meanwhile, pray with it's that not too many will simply stand on the sidelines and watch as July 1st comes around. In April we had to borrow \$141,000 internally. That has not been paid back yet, so we don't have these funds to borrow again!

**Be thrilled by the people who speak up on the next two pages. Ralph D. Winter
From the 49 Families.**

Several weeks ago I wrote to the “One Third Times Three” participants asking them to tell our readers how and why they were able to give a third of their income to missions. Here are extracts from the letters that have come back. I found them extremely interesting and encouraging. I hope you do too.

I am aware that what has been easy for me with a limited budget and an established simple lifestyle will be more difficult for those with more complicated finances. Yet, when the Lord touches hearts, there is always a way to obey.

—M.D.

It has been an incredible joy to experience how God has blessed us financially during this period—money has come to us that was totally unexpected.

—Mr. & Mrs. D.C.C.

When my husband died 3 years ago we had been tithing 10% plus with most of this going to help support a missionary family in Japan. Although my income decreased. I determined to continue this commitment. As this worked out very well for me I gradually began to increase my giving. When! first read your challenge for giving 1)3. I was interested but somewhat hesitant. However it seemed the Lord was nudging me to make

the commitment and trust Him. It took some time before I was ready to make the step, but I haven't been sorry and! am looking forward to seeing what the Lord will do next,

—Mrs. R.R.

I'm so grateful for my sons' developing a wonderful attitude towards giving rather than insisting on more and more for themselves. God has rewarded their willingness to spend the money in this way, like the day they tearfully but willingly gave a portion of their toys to some refugees, and that afternoon, a friend came in, saying her boys had gone through their things and wanted to give them their Logo sets (my boys were ecstatic!).

I wish every family would try to give sacrificially rather than conveniently, like I used to (and I felt then that I was giving generously how, strange!)

Three Grateful Christians

First we took baby steps and (underwent) attitude changes:

Our cars were used we never made a car payment.

We cut up our credit cards and kept track of our spending.

We realized the "American Dream" is a Satanic nightmare.

We began valuing people rather than things.

We found out that simple is better. Your Money Matters (MacGregor) and Freedom of Simplicity (Foster) helped us out.

Gradually our giving increased. We were challenged to invest \$1,000 into missions in order to put our money where our mouth is. We did. Next the percentage per month increased 12%, 15%, 18%. When the U.S. Center gave their challenge, we wondered if we could do it. For the next few months we tried giving 25% to warm up. Then! found out the U.S. Center staff, with their meager earnings, was giving 1/3. So we plunged in and did it too!

You wonder how? Better yet is to wonder what would have happened if we didn't During the 25% and 33% months we had bills totaling over \$3,000 unexpectedly come up for the adoption of our son and our missions education. The Lord abundantly provided for these needs We can be sure to expect the unexpected from God! It was a matter of obedience.

—TB.

We prayed. Our position to participate wasn't the greatest, we owed a lot of money, had many bills, and at times it seemed we didn't have much help. We simply made it a matter of prayer.

My brother tells me he 'was already prepared through a decision made years before?'

—J. P.

When I read, belatedly, of your 1/3 x 3 suggestion I wondered, "Why not me?" Of course I have regular church and missions commitments which could not be overlooked. So. I did some calculations and came up with this figure.

It has been a blessing, this bit of extra giving. I cant say the balance left for my use was miraculously expanded; nor what; I in need at all. It is amazing how many expenditures are really nonessential.

—V.W.

We are retired, on “fixed income” below the level where we would have to pay income tax, but in the light of the situation in the world today, we feel that “spreading the WORD” is the most important thing we can do.

Certainly for us it means watching our pennies more carefully during these months, but we are not really suffering too much. The Lord supplies all our needs and his riches are limitless.

—Mr. & Mrs. Li.

It has been an incredible joy to experience how God has blessed us financially during this time period money has come to his that was totally unexpected.

—B.C.

It wasn't so much a decision to give so that we would be uncomfortable, but rather to give so that others would have life.

[How?] I mention nerve, faith, insight, capability, and financial management. I suspect that nerve is probably the greatest need. . It really doesn't take much faith f you just count your money and figure out what you really need and what you only want Financial management is really very simple if you just don't buy it if you don't need it.

—L.W.

We thought we were being pretty good faithfully giving a tithe and (we) thought that was really all God expected Then we began to see the tithe as just a starting point and (began) giving more and more as we were able..

Matt, 6:21 is a real convicting verse for me: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

—Mr. & Mrs. IC.

The “sending body” of Jesus Christ should be just as financially committed to the Lord's work as the missionaries are. But we're not!

I believe that for most of us who work hard and have a relatively high personal income in America, a commitment to such a lifestyle will bring us out of debt, with a substantial increase for investment in God's Kingdom! Then we must determine what God would have us do with this increase.

—B.B.

**Momentum Is Building! Many Voices Discuss Completing the Task by
2000 A.D.**

IJFM 3:1-4, 1986

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/03_1-4_PDFs/3_1Winter.pdf

Momentum is Building!: Many Voices Discuss Completing the Task by 2000 A.D.

Ralph Winter

This overview of current discussions about "completing the task" is, in part, a response to Karl Franklin's "Unicorns and 'Hidden Peoples'" (the preceding article) and an introduction to Thomas Wang's "By the Year 2000: Is God Trying to Tell Us Something?" (the following article). In addition, Winter supplements Timothy Monsma's comments on "homogeneous networks" (found elsewhere in this issue of the IJFM) with his own observations on the strategic distinctions between "bridges" and "peoples."



Ralph Winter is the founder and director of the U.S. Center for World Mission (Pasadena, California, USA).

What is God trying to accomplish, by when? Many people today, like Simeon of Luke 2, are trying to understand.

Trying to understand more about angels, the medieval philosophers asked, "How many angels could dance on the head of a pin?" Even less pertinent than that, other church leaders debated the proper colors of priestly vestments at the moment of the Bolshevik Revolution. Jesus must have wept then as he did earlier when, looking out over Jerusalem, he cried, "You did not know the time of your visitation!"

If we really expect to stand in His presence some day, and to "see Him face to face," if we really believe He is in control, then we will seek to think God's thoughts after Him. When the early disciples betrayed a preoccupation with getting their lunch, Jesus replied, "My food is to do the will of my Father and to finish His work." Today we are closer to that fulfillment than any previous generation.

Can't we, then, take note of the amazing momentum of discussion about what can be done by the end of the century?

No one I know is trying to *predict* when Jesus will return, but many are convinced that it is *possible* for every tribe and tongue and nation to have a resident church community by the year 2000, a goal which might be one of the bases for the return of Christ.

These are not new people speaking. These new documents represent responsible new statements about basic issues which are not yet completely clear. But we are getting closer!

THE DOCUMENTS

Seven documents illustrate this building momentum:

1. *Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas*, 13th Edition, (Monrovia: Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center), 1986. Within this significant reference volume, edited by Samuel Wilson and John Siewert, is a 46-page interpretive essay, "Taking Aim on 2000 A.D.," by Robert Coote of the Overseas Ministries Study Center.

2. *Unreached Peoples: Clarifying the Task*, (Monrovia: Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center), 1987. This latest addition to the *Unreached Peoples* series is edited by Harley Schreck of World Vision and David Barrett, editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*.

3. *Peoplesfile Index*, (Pasadena: Global Mapping Project), 1986, edited by Alan Starling, a key researcher for Gospel Recordings.

4. *God's New Envoys*, (Portland: Multnomah Press), 1987, written by Tetsunao Yamamori, executive director of Food for the Hungry International.

5. "What's the Score?," the January-February 1987 cover story in *World Christian* magazine. This article was written by Jay Gary, now a planner of the Lausanne Committee-related Leadership '88 conference in the United States.

6. "Unicorns and Hidden Peoples," an article written by Karl Franklin, a linguist with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, for the June-September 1986 issue of *Notes on Anthropology*.

7. Perhaps most significant is "By the Year 2000: Is God Trying to Tell Us Something?," an article by Thomas Wang, International Director of the Lausanne Committee for World

Evangelization, which appears in the June 1987 issue of the Lausanne Committee's bulletin, *World Evangelization*.

BRIEF COMMENTS ON THE DOCUMENTS

1. Robert Coote's essay in the *Mission Handbook* expresses the least optimistic of the voices heard in these materials. In fact, anything that seems optimistic is subjected to serious questions. He rightly inveighs against "setting dates" when Christ is to return, even though that is not the same thing as the setting of goals, which he also seems to decry. He cautions against thinking that anything very great will happen by the year 2000.

For example, he wonders if the Southern Baptists can win the world by themselves by the year 2000, deducing this perspective from some of their materials. However, Southern Baptist mission leaders do not think this way—they readily concede that they cannot do it alone.

2. Harley Schreck and David Barrett labor together in a 39-page initial chapter in the 1987 *Unreached Peoples* annual, this time attempting specifically to "Clarify the Task." Their struggle is to harmonize the so-called "ethnolinguistic" approach (of Barrett and some others) with an approach which takes into account other possible factors (such as religion) when deciding the best avenue of the Gospel. We should not be surprised that these two approaches produce different totals for unreached peoples!

3. Alan Starling, editor of the *Peoplesfile Index*, is a key man within Gospel Recordings, a small group whose founder, Joy Ridderhof, was the one who first persuaded the founder of Wycliffe to expand into Asia. This monumental, long-awaited book indexes over 30,000 names of places, peoples, languages, and dialects, and traces them to specific groups and countries, giving the location of further information on them, as well as a country-by-country summary. The *Index* principally draws upon cross-referenced listings from the *Ethnologue* (Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators), the *Unreached Peoples File* (MARC), and the *Recorded Language Directory* (Gospel Recordings).

4. *God's New Envoys* bristles with good ideas and starts out soberly assessing the world situation. It may over-

emphasize the inaccessibility of peoples, but does show the new approach which most mission boards are now taking more seriously than ever.

*God expects
the Great
Commission
to be com-
pleted,
somehow
affecting all
peoples.
But how?
And by
when?*

5. Jay Gary, writing in *World Christian* magazine, manfully tries to pull all of this into a single picture. More than the others, he finds great problems due to key terms like "unreached peoples" being defined differently by various individuals.

6. Karl Franklin makes an important point: some entities like languages and peoples must ultimately be defined by those who are on the inside. Outsiders can't "count" them accurately.

7. Thomas Wang provides an excellent overview of some the major evangelistic plans and projects within Christendom that hold up the year 2000 as a target date.

As we step back to gain perspective before exploring these documents in more detail, we must remind ourselves that God expects the Great Commission to be completed, somehow affecting all peoples. But we must also ask: How? And by when?

LOOKING MORE CLOSELY

Two totally different issues are involved when the question arises as to what can be done by when: (1) How can we measure how big the *job* is? (2) How can we measure how big are the *resources* to complete the job in the foreseeable future?

However, as we approach these questions and look through these materials, one source of possible confusion is the simple fact that terminology differs. On the one hand, Barrett very legitimately seeks to measure to what extent groups have been evangelized, or "exposed" to the gospel (to use Jay Gary's term). Other researchers, especially since 1982, have been thinking more about what Jay Gary calls "response" measurements. The casual observer, however, may confuse Barrett's estimates of the extent to which peoples have been "exposed" with how many peoples are "reached", where the definition hinges on response. Thus, the definition of an

“unreached people” is a key question.

Obviously, if you have different definitions, you will count things up differently. But there is only one formally accepted definition of the phrase *unreached peoples*, thanks to the diplomacy of Ed Dayton and the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. They sponsored a special meeting near the Chicago O’Hare airport in March 1982 precisely to try to gain agreement on terminology for reaching unreached groups. Those who attended made up a widely diverse and representative group ranging from Wycliffe Bible Translators to the Southern Baptist Convention.

To my knowledge, since that time none of the participants have signaled dissatisfaction with the resulting definitions, which focused on the presence or the absence of a church—basically a matter of “response.” (I am personally happy with the “response” emphasis because in the book of Revelation it seems clear that God intends some response from every group. We can thus best measure the effectiveness of our “exposure” activity by our “response.”)

In a crucial clause, participants in this meeting defined a *people* as

the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of acceptance and understanding.

This same gathering agreed to define an *unreached people* as

a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.

Incidentally, in Jay Gary’s article Sam Wilson and I diverge wildly on the matter of how many people are found within unreached people groups. Actually, Sam and I agree completely, both on the 1982 definition and on the estimate that about 50% of the world’s population lives within unreached people groups.

Equally tame is the problem posed by Karl Franklin. He reports that the Wycliffe Bible Translators find it impossible

“from the outside” to be completely sure how many different groups can read one printed translation. (If they don’t know how, who does?) All estimates of the number of unreached groups, then, suffer the same non-finality until we are able to see the Gospel spread within these groups. But that does not mean Wycliffe should stop trying to estimate the number of languages needing to be taken seriously, and the same goes for the desire to estimate the number of groups we need to take seriously whenever church-planting factors are in the picture.

Thus, it would have been quite reasonable for Franklin’s article to have been entitled, “Unicorns, *Languages*, and Hidden Peoples.” All these terms—*Hidden Peoples*, *Unreached Peoples*, *Unpenetrated Peoples*, *Frontier Peoples*—now refer to the same 1982 definition. All such groups must ultimately be identified as the faith grows within them, just as in the case of language communities.

The key question is: how many peoples need a separate church movement within their group?

In this vein, it has somehow gained credence that if you cannot list all the groups by name, then you should not try to estimate numbers. That’s somewhat like saying that if you can’t give the names for all fifty million believers in China, then you ought not to guess at the number, but the problem is a bit more complex.

For example, Wycliffe, dealing as it does with printed translations, can often reach more than one group with the same text. But Gospel Recordings, which must employ the ear gate (and can thus bypass the literacy problem), needs to make audio cassettes in a larger number of dialects due to frequent local prejudices about pronunciation. Gospel Recordings surveyed southern Sudan some years ago and concluded that 120 languages needed to be dealt with. Wycliffe, with equal professional skill, came up with a figure of only 50 translations needed. Obviously neither organization was “wrong.” They were counting for different purposes.

The audio approach actually lands us nearer to the number of tasks to perform if we ask the key question: how many peoples need, at least initially, a separate church movement within their group in order for everyone to have the opportunity to become a responsible member of a church?

COUNTING THE "BEST-CHOICE" GROUPS

Impatience for easy answers clouds many a question. Just for fun, note that no classification commonly used for human beings produces completely discrete, non-overlapping categories. For example, some people are ethnically half this and half that. They might easily be counted twice in a tally of all different *ethnic* groups. You also get overlapping groups if you classify people by *languages*, since some people are fluently bilingual within their own homes. In all such cases you must resolve to put people in only one best-choice group, or you will end up with more people than there are in the world when you count up all the constituent groups.

It is this problem of overlap that has prompted the authors of some of these documents to despair of the value of counting the number of groups to be reached. Thus, some say that if you use ethnic or linguistic or "ethnolinguistic" criteria you can safely count groups and not be counting anyone twice, but that if you use cultural criteria you must give up being concerned about how many groups there are since they overlap.

Frankly, for mission purposes you want to try to approach every person on the wavelength of ethnicity, language, religion, occupation, or whatever means will most likely succeed. If we assume that in all classifications there is the possibility of overlap if you allow people to be counted in more than one group, then we can conclude that there will be no overlap if we simply agree that until we know better, each person can be assumed to be in one group only. But even though this produces non-overlapping groups, you still face the fact that some of these groups are merely "bridges" for the Gospel in reaching groups that fit the 1982 definition of "peoples." We'll take this up in a moment.

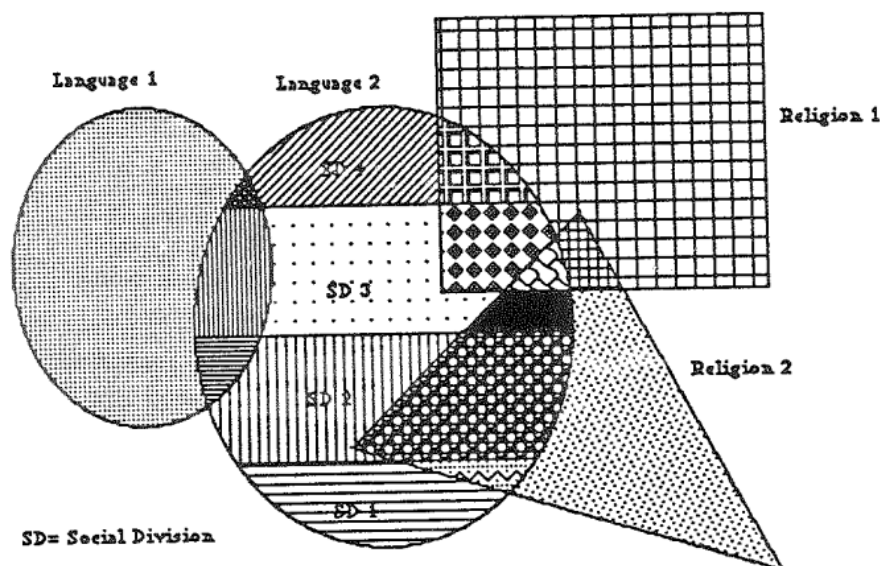
The Frontier Peoples Committee of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America is making a survey right now of how many groups have been reached by each of its member agencies in this century prior to 1980 and since 1980. Definite, wonderful progress is reported. As far back as 1976, a meeting of mission executives within the (U.S.) Evangelical Foreign Missions Association tallied almost 6,000 groups in the unreached category which those agencies alone were in touch with or were planning to reach prior to 1990. Other mission

agencies in other associations are beginning to take similar initiatives. Clearly now is the time to be very sure of our terminology.

BRIDGES AND PEOPLES

The diagram below illustrates how inherently confusing the reality of human diversity actually is! Obviously, if you count all the subgroups in the world, the tally runs up into the hundreds of thousands. And all subgroups are potentially key "bridges of opportunity" to get through to individuals. But these small groups are by no means unreached peoples because they are not candidates for their own church, as is implied by the 1982 definition of "peoples."

WHEN IS A GROUP A PEOPLE—A PEOPLE NEEDING ITS OWN CHURCH?



This is what might actually happen in a suburb of New Delhi, India:

1. Three different languages.
2. Two different religions.
3. Four different, entirely exclusive (non-overlapping) social groupings (castes, in this case).
4. That makes a total of nine groupings not counting overlap, but with overlap there are another ten smaller groupings.

Do missionaries need to target all 19 groupings for church-planting strategy?

Here is the key point: When we speak of unreached *peoples* we are not talking about all the groupings into which people can fall. Every human being has at least ethnic, sex, and age categories, and we don't think we need a special church for each of these groupings.

The strategic question, therefore, is not, "How many groupings are there?", but "How many groups need an indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize the group?" This latter category is a *people*. Yet the smaller groupings may provide "bridges" to the "peoples."

Highly important to mission strategy, then, is the definition of a *people* hammered out by the Lausanne-sponsored gathering in March of 1982. That statement defines a people as "the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of acceptance or understanding."

What this means is that those individuals who fall into the smaller groups may very well be won to Christ in those groups, but still they may feel comfortable in a grouping larger than that. Note the definition: "the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement. . . ." In this diagram, the four castes may exert the most force in the early stages!

Thus, the number of groups that are candidates for their own church, and as such are the focus of strategic mission attention for *church-planting* purposes, is a much smaller number. My own thought is that it would be better to call the smaller groups "bridge groups" rather than "peoples" when such groups are merely opportunities for evangelism, not peoples of the kind defined in the 1982 Chicago meeting—groups where you expect to have to plant a separate, indigenous church.

Donald A. McGavran, the world's leading mission strategist, years ago entitled his classic book, *The Bridges of God*. He refers in part to the fact that once the Gospel penetrates what he calls a responsive "segment" of society, then, as if crossing a bridge, the Gospel can spread rapidly throughout that subcommunity. His now-classical name for this phenomenon is a "people movement."

Thus, I think we can speak of the still-smaller groups as "bridge groups" rather than *peoples* in their own right because

they lead into the community and family types of true peoples, where a church, not mere individual conversion, is the goal.

Note, in the diagram, that the castes of India are ethnic—they do not intermarry, yet they are not linguistically distinguishable. Their primary identification is that of social status, standing, or role. While the necessary Christian strategy must always be to eventually incorporate people into the larger body of Christ, in our initial strategy we need to be very sensitive to what will allow people truly to find Christ without getting involved in what the New Testament describes as “proselytizing,” which makes cultural and linguistic differences tests of faith. To this day, huge numbers of people in India and elsewhere are being shut out of the Christian faith due to unbiblical requirements laid upon them, forcing them to go up or down the social scale in order to be Christian. This is not unique to India! D. L. Moody, for example, was denied membership in a slightly too-cultured Congregational church in Chicago. The problem exists not merely where would-be Christians are kept from joining “up”; the opposite is the case sometimes in India, where prospective believers face the pressure to marry into lower-class groups in which the only form of Christianity in their area is found.

ENTER THE LAUSANNE COMMITTEE AND THOMAS WANG

We have already noted the vital role played by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in forging consensus on the important definitions of “peoples” and “unreached peoples.” But in the last few months this movement has also chosen to highlight the potential significance of the year 2000.

Actually, such an emphasis was evident even in the movement’s beginnings in 1966, when Carl F. H. Henry and Billy Graham, representing, respectively, the periodical *Christianity Today* and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, jointly convened the Conference on World Evangelism held at Berlin. Not since the previous century had any meeting so prominently talked about *closure*, that is, the idea of completing the task of world evangelization. In 1966 they talked about completing the task “in the next 25 years.”

But by 1974, the date of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, “the next 25 years” meant the year 2000, and so it was A.D. 2000—“before the end of this century”—that was in view. The evangelical German missiologist, Dr. Peter Beyerhaus, summarizes the story in a brief history of the Lausanne movement which appears in the March 1987 issue of the Lausanne Committee’s newsletter, *World Evangelization*. He comments,

The cry, “It must be done!” was matched by the confident assurance, “It can be done!”—the completion of world evangelization before the end of this century.

Evangelical mission strategies are often framed with the goal in mind to complete the evangelization of the world by the year 2000. This does not mean that we expect all nations to become Christian, but we should certainly work toward the goal that all unreached peoples have the opportunity to accept or reject Jesus Christ after a meaningful presentation of the Gospel.

Now this emphasis is receiving even greater exposure because of the efforts of Thomas Wang, newly appointed International Director of the Lausanne Committee. Billy Graham is more widely known around the world, but the post Wang holds bears a significant relation to a larger number of vital elements in the global Church than any other position in the world today. Wang’s essay in the June 1987 issue of *World Evangelization* reviews the “year 2000” goals of other ministries and then squarely challenges readers to reflect on the meaning of these things for the future direction of the Lausanne movement.

The appearance of this essay could be a watershed event not just for the Lausanne Committee, but also for other elements of the frontier mission movement around the world. Perhaps there is no better way to conclude this overview of new discussions about the year 2000 than to borrow from Wang’s own conclusion:

What is God trying to say to you and me? . . .

We are all busy preaching, speaking, teaching, researching, writing, publishing, broadcasting and telecasting. But are we listening? Has our frantic way of life made

our relation to God a one-way street? Again, what is He trying to say to you and me through all these happenings around us today?

Perhaps we should all come before the Lord like young prophet Samuel did and say to God, "Speak Lord, for thy servant is listening."

Author's address: 1605 Elizabeth St., Pasadena, CA 91104, USA. Further information on the first four documents described in this article may be obtained by writing to Mission Frontiers Book Service at this same address.

Groundswell Toward A.D. 2000: The Students Are Coming!

Mission Frontiers August 1986

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/groundswell-toward-a.d.-2000>

Tragically, very few ordinary Bible believing Christians have had the chance to become aware of the fact that the world is coming to an end, right before our eyes. This year, 1986, is a THRESHOLD year! Here are some of the evidences. (Watch the students!)

A few days ago (August 27 – Sept 1) the fourth conference this year was held commemorating a crucial turning point in student life exactly too years earlier the Student Volunteer Movement.

In a rare convergence, the speakers at ML Hermon, Massachusetts were the heads of the three largest nationwide student organizations: Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship (Gordon MacDonald), Campus Crusade (Bill Bright), and the Navigators (Jerry White). What an awesome thing to stand where I. L. Moody stood 100 years earlier!

Besides White, Bright, and MacDonald, student mission activists from all over the country were also present. Here are some of their amazing activities:

Caleb Project is coordinating three teams of students “on their way to the field” who will criss-cross the country in the coming academic year in three vans. They expect to hold over 300 meetings and present their message to 30,000.

Nine Annual “Regionals” in the next academic year will bring possibly 5,000 students together in area wide mission conferences.

“Perspectives” Courses in 84 locations will offer mission vision to over 2,000 students occupying about 200 hours of time per student, and making a permanent, lifechanging impression. (See page 16 for locations.)

Missions and Silicon Valley

We may often assume that the world is always ahead of Christians in technical areas. Not right now!

What? Missionaries getting out ahead of “the world’s” technology? It’s true! Some of the things happening right here on our campus are at the very forefront (even ahead of) everyone else in the science of computer mapping.

We have sometimes boasted that our cinema group possesses the world's most sophisticated film dubbing laboratory owned by Christians. But that claim still acknowledges the existence of other, more elaborate labs owned by non-Christians.

Right now, however, nothing in the world tops the breakthroughs resulting from the fertile collaboration here between the USCWM’s Computer Center, the Dalaserve technical staff (and their compatriots up in Silicon Valley), and the hard-driving bunch clustered around Bob Waymire, a global missionary statesman/diplomat carrying the ball for his remarkable Global Mapping Project.

Talk About “Collaboration”!

It’s beautiful, These folks also work with MARC/World Vision, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Gospel Recordings (most derailed files of all), Patrick Johnstone in London,

David Barren: of World Christian Encyclopedia fame, as well as with some 40 other autonomous corporations located right here on this relatively small (35 acre) college campus.

So? It is none too soon. THE STUDENTS ARE COMING. All these facts and figures are being brought together to pierce the darkness with a blaze of light revealing the details of the unfinished task —just in time so that thousands of young people worldwide who are just now before our eyes rising like a massive groundswell can GET THERE, and do the right thing!

Amsterdam Again!

Christianity Today, September 5th, gives cover story attention to the phenomenal Amsterdam '86 gathering (see *Mission Frontiers*, July cover),

Ron Lee does a good job. The article covers many aspects of the world situation with regard to national work as not only evangelists, but missionaries as well! Extensive discussions with key nationals make Lee's story sparkle.

What a meeting! What a world movement the cause of Christ!

75 Million Hear of the Unreached?

The *Global Prayer Digest* is now being read over the air many times each day on each of 130 radio stations. We are told that the potential listening audience of these stations is 75 million. The stations do not charge as for this wonderful service, but it does cost us something to send out the recordings each month. Even if the actual listenership is only 1 per 1,000, it still means an amazing 75, people are hearing the *Global Prayer Digest* each day!

The Most Hopeful Picture You Have Ever Seen!

Mission Frontiers, March 1989

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-most-hopeful-picture-you-have-ever-seen>

The Bible does not lead us to assume that all poverty, debauchery, corruption will be conquered before Jesus returns.

The Bible does tell us that all peoples will be represented in the final, triumphant company of believers, and that “God will wipe every tear from their eyes...no more death or mourning or crying or pain.”

That wonderful hymn, “America, The Beautiful” foresaw “alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears.” (The writer of the hymn had just passed through the Chicago exposition where all the buildings were gleaming white.)

But this is a little different from the Biblical view which simply makes clear that the expanding domain of God’s Kingdom will “break into” (Gen 28:14) every people group and that some from every group will ultimately be represented in that final moment of history (note that in the best Greek text Rev 21:3 says “He will live with them...and they will be His peoples...”)

But In Any Case!

It does not matter what your interpretation of the Bible happens to be as far as the reality of the statistics on this page!

The dramatic decrease in the number of people who do not claim to be Christians in comparison to the number of earnest believers, the dramatic increase in the number of congregations of the faithful in proportion to the number of nations/peoples yet to be reached...these numbers are hard to assail.

Once you recognize the first four columns of pretty irrefutable figures in the table on the next page, the following, shaded columns are straightforward arithmetic!

The decline of the burden and the increase of the vital resources of the Christian movement worldwide constitute the most hopeful picture you could possibly imagine. We are literally running out of people to be evangelized! That is a general statement.

What about the Chinese?

China today is riddled with Christians. Peasants in every part of China are embracing the Christian faith. Chinese intellectuals in Singapore are embracing the Christian faith. I heard yesterday that the government of China is asking minorities what their religion was before Communism tried to stamp it out. The people said, “we are Christians,” and so the government is helping them build a Bible College to encourage their people.

What about the Tribals?

This the largest, most difficult single category of missions today, simply due to the extreme complexity of hundreds of smaller languages and dialects. But it is one of the most responsive spheres of labor, too. And, the world’s largest, most sophisticated

mission agency, Wycliffe Bible Translators is focusing on this specific challenge — nowadays many other missions are sending out tribal workers through Wycliffe.

What about the Hindus?

The horrifying atrocities (the burning of young brides, the systematic abortion of baby girls...) live in uneasy alliance with certain high standards of purity which Christianity at its best also stresses. We understand from people within the situation that perhaps 25% of all Hindus would accept Christ if this could happen without the breakup of their families.

What about the Muslims?

This enormous, long considered “impenetrable” sphere of world population is electrifyingly more open than ever before. More Muslims have become Christians in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Iran, East Africa, in the last 10 years than in the last ten centuries.

Actually, many Muslims were Christians before Islam offered them what appeared to be a superior version of Christianity. (And for many of them Islam actually was superior in some ways to the very inferior version of Christianity they had!)

It is entirely possible that literally millions could turn to a new understanding of the Jesus they already extol. Over 10,000 Muslims in Kenya have recently embraced the Bible as their sacred book. God may not expect us to try to convert these humble seekers into recognized versions of Western Christianity. Our duty is to deliver to them the Word of God, and let the Holy Spirit lead them into all truth.

What about the Japanese?

At no time in Japan’s long history has its people faced so unprecedented a crisis of national confusion. The Christian faith is the only religion that has grown against the very teeth of secular challenge and opposition. Today 35% of the Japanese, according to a Japanese government census, would choose Christianity if they were to accept a religion.

Who Else Is There?

We are not even asked to win every last soul on earth. Ours is not a task of “conquering” but of lovingly, faithfully “confronting.” The Bible, which defends no particular modern civilization, is the phenomenal tool in our hands, for us and for all humankind!

World Evangelization—AD 2000 and Beyond

1. The World is Blind, Deaf, and Dumb to What God Is Doing!

a. There are 16,000 new Christians in Africa every day! —Africa was 4% Christian in 1900, is over 40% Christian today

b. In Latin America the evangelical movement is growing 3 times as fast as the population

c. In the Soviet Union, after 70 years of oppression, the Christian movement is 36% of pop. —that is more than 100 million!—over 5 times the size of the Communist Party

d. Many are aware of the miracle of growth of the Christian movement in China (23,000 new Christians per day!)

e. In Indonesia the percentage of Christians is so high the government will not print it

f. In India 25% of the people would like to be Christians if they could stay within their families

g. Among over 800 million Muslims, Jesus is actually more highly revered than Mohammed, and thousands of Muslims are turning to the Bible in East Africa...

2. We are Nearing the End of History

a. The Completion of the Task and the Return of Christ are linked—Matt 24:14

b. The Gospel is making tremendous progress —In AD100 there were 181 million people in the world, to be won by 500,000 believers (that is 360 to one!) —By 1900 there were 1 billion who did not claim to be Christians, to be evangelized by 40 million Bible-believing Christians—(that’s only 27 to one!) —Today there are 3.4 billion non-Christians, to be evangelized by 500 million Bible- believing Christians—(That’s only 7 to one! See Chart on previous page for details)

c. Looking at the world in terms of peoples is very helpful —Many missiologists, consider the type of group significant to mission strategy to be what a Lausanne-sponsored, widely representative meeting in 1982 concluded: “For evangelistic purposes a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.” — Both David Barrett and I feel that we need to think in terms of about 12,000 such groups still remaining unreached, unpenetrated, without as yet an internal, indigenous, evangelizing church movement, that is, still objects of mission strategy. (Prior to the merging of many groups due to evangelization there were around 60,000 such groups.) —Since there are about 5 million Bible-believing congregations, this means there are about 416 congregations in the world for each of the 12,000 groups yet to be reached. — Furthermore, work has already begun or is about to begin in about 8,000 groups!

3. Unprecedented forces are attempting together to complete this task by AD 2000

a. Mission structures are becoming more prominent than ever —In the United States, 350 new mission agencies have been established since 1950 —Even more significant is the fact that the same number in the same period have come into being in the so-called Third World. —Note the new Third World Missions Advance group now, on the world level —In 1986 the *Congreso de Misiones Ibero-Americano* (COMIBAM), held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, drew the largest delegations from every country of Latin America that had ever attended any previous meeting. (3,500 attended, 500 from Asia and Africa)

b. Young people in the USA, in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia, are more interested in missions today than at any time since the days of the Student Volunteer Movement. The largest meetings of young people interested in missions ever held are appearing in Europe, in Latin America, even in local regions in the United States (1500 at a Midwest meeting).

c. Unprecedented collaboration is taking place —There is now a global association of Centers for World Mission (15 Centers) —There is now an AD 2000

Global Service Office, linking evangelicals and charismatics who gathered in Singapore in January of 1989

Reaching Unreached Peoples

1. The Difference Between Missions and Evangelism

a. Missionary work is a special kind of Evangelism—all missions is evangelism, but not all evangelism is true, pioneer missionary work —92% of today’s missionaries do not work in a true mission field—yet are in a superb position to inspire national churches to reach out to Unreached Peoples!

b. Evangelism means winning individuals to Christ—whoever they are —This could be where the church already is or where the church is not

c. Missions reaches into groups not yet having an adequate internal witness — Such a witness requires an indigenous church movement

2. The Difference Between People (individuals) and Peoples (groups)

a. Genesis, Chapter 11 lists peoples (groups)

b. Psalms refers to peoples —See Ps 67 (the most missionary of all Psalms) —See Ps 87:6, the reference to “A Register of the Peoples” (Likely the same as “The Lamb’s Book of Life,” Rev 20:12, 21:27) (That is, individuals are listed in this Book according to their group, nation)

c. Isaiah 49:6 says Israel is expected to be “A Light to the Gentiles (nations, peoples)”

d. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 refers to discipling peoples, not individuals

e. In the End Times God is still thinking in terms of different peoples —(Rev 21:3 says peoples, not people, in the Greek, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them; they will be His peoples”

f. The Bible NEVER refers to what we today call “countries” —Countries erect political barriers —Missions deals with linguistic and cultural barriers

g. It is important to note what size of groups we are talking about —Notice that it is possible to speak of “the Chinese people” as a whole —But the Bible refers to still smaller groups even smaller than “Mandarin” or “Cantonese” or “Swatow” —12 tribes entered the promised land, but there were 60 “*mishpahah*” “*Mishpahah*” is the word found in Genesis 12:3 e.g. “all peoples on earth will be blessed by you,” Gen 12:3 —In the world today there are only about 300 huge families of human beings, 3000 major groups, about 24,000 smaller groups (12,000 yet unreached) —There once were about 60,000 groups of the kind that missions must penetrate All but about 12,000 have been reached! In about half of these, work has already begun or is already planned! Tribal groups are the largest and toughest part—about 3,000 to be reached

h. Reaching all 12,000 unreached groups is possible by the year 2000—if we hurry!

3. The Difference Between Reaching People (individuals) and Reaching Peoples (groups)

a. Reaching a person means winning that person to Christ.

b. This is why missions is much, much more complicated than ordinary evangelism —perhaps half of all missionaries fall short due to the lack of adequate training —take, for example, “Ancestor Cult” in Chinese society—how to Christianize?

c. Reaching a people is the goal, and it means —penetrating for the first time into a previously unreached group —learning not just the language, but understanding the culture —establishing “a people movement to Christ” that is wholly indigenous (so that people have a fair chance to know Christ)

Editorial Comment on Completion of the Task

Mission Frontiers August-September 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.

Part I: Crucial Issues in Missions: Working Toward the Year 2000

Mission Frontiers June-October 1990

http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/crucial-issues-inmissions-part-1_2

What a time to be peering into the future! It is as if a whole string of volcanoes has erupted in Eastern Europe, and almost the entire world is now clouded by massive and nearly impenetrable dust and fallout!

Do we expect in the nineties to see half of the world finally emerging from a cocoon of totalitarian imprisonment into the new life of beauty and movement the cocoon could never offer?

Or do we look on the massive turmoil in these recent revolutions as though we are confronting the first few warning movements of a dangerous beast that is reviving from an injection of stupefying toxins, but which will shortly arise under new leadership with renewed ferocity to terrorize the nineties?

Already East Germany has made a dubious achievement: for the first time one of its citizens has appeared as a Playboy centerfold. Does this mean we should expect soon to witness an explosion of long suppressed libertarian instincts which will allow a whole new host of nations into competition with the USA for world records in divorce rate, crime rate, drug addiction, pornography production, etc? Will these new "free" nations simply follow our example in spewing out the garbage of our amoralities over all the earth?

Or, will their chastened tastes react against the hollow affluence of our culturally approved greed and inspire our diluted Christianity to draw from deeper wells--wells that have been deepened by suffering and sacrificial obedience to our same Lord?

Surely these distinct alternatives will affect mission in the nineties. They are not mutually exclusive--more than one trend can take place at the same time. They will impact many of the forces and factors and transitions and issues which are already perceptible in the Christian world mission of the present.

Changes in Perspective

1. Mission Field Missionaries. The existence of a thriving "national" church in the so-called mission lands is no longer the only "great new fact of our time." As we burst into the nineties, not just church life, but a possibly more important indigenous mission movement is springing up from within those countries which were once "the mission field."

Of course, there never was anything new about a church on the mission field, because the process of expanding across cultural frontiers began as soon as outside the Jewish cultural tradition there were two or three gathered together in the name of Christ. Neither is there anything essentially new about mission field Christians becoming missionaries in their own right. The Western World itself is merely a mission field that has become a mission-sending base. And it is well known that most of the South Pacific was missionized by South Pacific Islanders themselves, learning foreign languages and going from island to island extending the Christian Movement.

Already there are over 50 indigenous mission agencies that are members of the India Missions Association. The Asia Missions Association is nearing twenty years of existence. The global level Third World Missions Association is picking up momentum. In Nigeria there is not only a strong association of Nigerian mission agencies, but one member mission alone is sending over 600 missionaries to untouched language groups in and outside of Nigeria.

What will be new in the nineties, however, is the astounding prominence and vastly larger muscle of this "Third World" Mission phenomenon in what will possibly overtake Western missions, in terms of total number of missionaries, by 1995 (Pate, 1989:45-46).

A crucial and still unsolved problem is no longer merely the collaboration of a global church movement, but the strategic interfacing of a global mission movement.

2. Business vs. service. A missionary once told me, "You can't mix love and business." I had argued that the loving service expressed in her clinic could not be duplicated dozens of times across the mountain area if it could not somehow become self-supporting, and in that sense a business. If, however, the U.S.- trained-medical workers insisted on using costly American shortcuts to save their own time and also the time of their native workers, their clinic services would not only remain a token effort, but could never survive as a purely national church activity without external subsidy.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of missions have spawned projects which have virtually been designed to require subsidy. We should have learned by now, by hard experience, that such projects uniformly spell disaster for "nationalization," because they do not pay for themselves. The mentality that no truly Christian service can be supported by those who benefit from it is self-defeating. The Apostle Paul surely did not sense a polarization between giving his services and selling his wares. In both he labored to serve, even though providing tents to shelter people may not seem to be as dramatically beneficial as medical service.

The tendency toward dependence on external subsidy was not so marked in the last century, and happily is not universal today. But it is one of the issues in this article least likely to be resolved in the nineties. Amazingly, projects with obvious business and economic dimensions are often the least likely to be designed to support themselves, while the non-business-like congregations seem almost everywhere to be readily nationalized.

3. Triumphalism vs. fatalism. We see both of these extremes. But it is to be devoutly hoped that during the nineties the Lausanne Statistics Task Force, or some other serious body, can bring into widespread public view a far superior picture than most people now have of the true status quo with regard to the growth of Christianity in comparison to other world religions. Surely there must be some remedy to wild quotations like "Muslims are growing at 16% and Hindus at 12%, while Christians are only growing at 9%." I have heard this precise phrase from the lips of three different prominent church leaders, but am entirely at a loss as to where such outlandish numbers came from. What is indisputable is that

1) population growth rates (apart from immigration) range from 0.6% per year in Germany to slightly over 3% for Egypt. But

2) the vital sector of the Christian sphere, which already numbers in the hundreds of millions, is growing by more than 6%, and there is no other religious or political bloc of comparable size with an even remotely comparable growth rate.

During the third of a century when it was easy to assume that everything had gone wrong in China, some theologians developed a theology that excused us from concern over the growth rate of Christianity. However, the adverse comparisons in the quotation up above, besides being untrue, unnecessarily undermine the entire Christian world mission.

4. The sending culture vs. the receiving culture. The nineties will not likely improve greatly the ability of the general citizenry in a sending country to see themselves as those from other countries see them. Yet nothing is more obvious and embarrassing to those of us who have lived in a foreign country for any length of time than the tendency of our people back home to take the worst of the other country and compare it with the best of our own, the sending country. That is no way to see ourselves as we really are!

Americans rail against poor populations overseas supporting themselves by supplying the American appetite for drugs, while not wanting to recall the onerous "opium wars" which Western governments have continued to pursue for more than a hundred years. Are we Americans overlooking our gigantic international cigarette market, which is not only subsidized in this country, but with the help of our federal government is literally forced upon certain South East Asian nations by political processes attempting to "protect" our own drug growers? Noriega and Panama's government are not the only ones that have been involved in pushing drugs! What if our exports to Thailand prompted their troops to invade North Carolina and burn the tobacco plantations--the source of our enforced export of that highly addictive drug? What if they circled the White House, seized Bush and flew him off for trial in Bangkok?

Do we realize we have a hundred times as many alcoholics as hard drug addicts? Will we send troops to smash our own distilleries, or to Scotland to take care of their export whisky production?

We are told that certain Japanese government publications warn against and caricature certain foreign visitors. These documents are surely as outrageous as they are outlandish. But, unfortunately, we can find the same desperate provincialities in our own country wherever people are as isolated from personal contact with foreigners as most Japanese are. Probably no one force in world history has done more to reduce these kinds of phobias than the activities of the Christian world mission. But the nineties are much too short for any great change to take place--except within the Christian movement itself.

Changes in Concepts of Task and Purpose

5. The nature of the task. One of the most urgent areas of reflection and transition, yes even at this late date in history, is in the area of understanding the basic task of the Christian World Mission. In the eighties great progress has been made in recognizing the wholeness of the Gospel. This is reinforced by new understanding of the full meaning of the word "blessing" as it occurs in the Genesis version of the Great Commission, namely Gen 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18 (Abraham); 26:4,5 (Isaac) ; and 28:14 (Jacob/Israel). One

nation is blessed, and all nations are to be blessed. What does this mean? Tony Campolo tells us that it does not mean finally being able to afford a BMW!

In English the word blessing implies merely a benefit--not also a relationship, as in the Hebrew *barak*. Americans, even American missionaries, typically do not understand the full significance of the privileges, obligations, and permanent benefits of the family relationship. Yet a relationship of just this significance is implied in the Hebrew *barak*. The implications here are profound, and exceed the normal intent of the evangelistic Gospel. For example, in a family relationship you do not choose between evangelism and social action!

Will the nineties bring us closer to the full meaning and implications of making into one family people from every tribe and tongue and people? Is the hymn still ahead of most of us, "Who serves my Father as a son is surely kin to me" (Oxenham:1913)?

6. The true receptivity of world religions. This century has emphasized anthropological insights about cultural relativism, and many missionaries today are strikingly better equipped to understand the strong and weak points of all human cultures. But is it still possible for us to reject entire religio-cultural systems *en toto*? We have semantic "snarl" words such as syncretism and accommodation for anything tainted with foreign religion. Yet it is precisely in the area of religion, and specifically in the quest for best words for God, that we may have our best points of contact with other religious systems.

How can we believe, on the one hand, that all humankind derives from God's creative handiwork, and on the other hand expect in our mission contacts to find none of that handiwork still remaining? Why need we quibble about the use of the word Allah for God? Arabic-speaking Christians for centuries before Mohammed came along prayed to Allah. The New Testament itself employs a deeply deficient term for God in the Greek *theos*. Only centuries later, for English speakers, the word God, despite its pagan origin, was adapted and newly charged with meaning.

Phil Parshall's recent book, *The Cross and the Crescent*, goes light years in the right direction. Will the nineties allow us to realize that some of the most devout Muslims are closer to the Kingdom than 1) shaky Muslims who are apparently coming our way only due to their rejection of their own faith, or 2) purely "culture Christians" who don't really believe and obey anything? Isn't the Islamic cultural tradition--prayers, mosque and entire way of life--far more redeemable than the ancient Hellenic way of life with which Paul was willing to work?

7. The Myth of Closed Countries. In the nineties this never-correct concept will hopefully be broken down almost completely. It is fueled by those who have certain specialized mission services to offer. It has been a favorite theme for those who stress "tentmaking" or who are in the Bible-smuggling business, but it tends to paint an unrealistic picture which serves to undermine obedience to the Great Commission. This emphasis may not only divert monies from worthy agencies which are doing unpublishable work in "closed countries," but it may also reduce the guilt level of those who do not in any event wish to support the Christian world mission.

8. The Number of Unreached Peoples. The decade begins with great progress in this area. It is already clear that different evangelistic approaches inevitably produce different

numbers. For example 500,000-watt radio stations (whose prices per minute are high) , or travelling film teams (whose soundtracks cost over \$25,000 per language) cannot think in terms of thousands of languages and peoples, but aim to penetrate the trade languages of a rather small number of major groups (e.g., 280 languages spoken by a million or more people is the radio goal, and perhaps a thousand separate languages are being targeted by Campus Crusades' film approach).

On the other hand, groups like the Wycliffe Bible Translators, using the comparatively inexpensive printed page, feel sure that all peoples can read from print media in not much more than 6,000 written languages.

Meanwhile, those who use audio cassettes have discovered that two or three groups which happily share the same printed version of the Bible can't agree at all on pronunciation (when using a recorder or on local radio). They find they cannot retain listeners whose dialects are substantially different, even though they may use the same printed book, since the printed page helpfully omits many of the nuances of the spoken word. Thus, cassette ministries like Gospel Recordings find they must target at least twice as many groups as Wycliffe counts in order for everyone to be receptive to the cassettes they produce.

For many missiologists, the most strategic goal is that there might be a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement within every human culture--that is, within every community sufficiently homogeneous to enable all to hear and understand in their own milieu. If such an internal witness is lacking, such groups are defined (by a widely representative Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March of 1982), as "Unreached Peoples." It follows that a still different total number is inevitable if this kind of group is being counted. It is also true, embarrassingly, that this number can only be estimated until all clusters of such groups are actually penetrated and the necessary homogeneity is confirmed.

This is so crucial a goal, and is so foundational to mission, that I have thought it justified to coin a term for the basic concept behind this March 1982 definition. I have suggested the term "unimax" peoples, since, as defined, the concept involves the maximum sized groups still sufficiently unified to allow "the spread of a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."

It is fascinating to note that when we think in terms of the necessity of a separate missionary penetration of the kind just described for every unimax group, the significance of political boundaries and even great geographical distances may often be ruled out. This is perhaps more obviously true of Bible translation. Once the Bible is in the language of the people in one place, it does not need to be translated all over again for that same group on the other side of a national border or across the ocean unless there has been sufficient time and isolation to allow divergent language and cultural development. Similarly, wherever a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement exists in one portion of a unimax group, it would be inefficient to initiate pioneer missionary work all over again in another part of the same group, even thousands of miles away. In that case, instead of undertaking brand new missionary efforts, the existing church within the same unimax group is the best source upon which to draw. And in that case it is ordinary evangelism, not pioneer mission strategy, that is in order.

Careful compilations of two or three thousand groups already exist. These compilations, according to the '82 definition, 1) list some Unreached Peoples (unimax

peoples) more than once if their people are found in more than one country, and 2) often list as a single group what are actually clusters of unreached unimax groups, but at least 3) include virtually all remaining unreached unimax groups within these clusters. Nevertheless, it is fairly safe to say that once church planting efforts take place in these clusters, these lists of 2,000 to 3,000 groups will turn out not to include many more than 12,000 total Unreached Peoples--by the March 1982 definition. The Lausanne Statistics Task Force has agreed on 12,000 as a reasonable estimate of the number of these relatively small people groups. Even as we enter the nineties, the task of making new missionary penetrations into 12,000 new cultures is being parcelled out to the various sectors of the mission sending base all over the world--continent by continent, country by country, and even denomination by denomination.

Thus, all of this lays down one of the most concrete and significant mandates for the nineties: reach all such (unimax) groups by A.D. 2000. Or, to use more precise language: establish by the year 2000 a viable, indigenous evangelizing church movement within every people which is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread by a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

Part II: Crucial Issues in Missions Working Toward the Year 2000

Mission Frontiers November 1990

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/part-ii-crucial-issues-inmissions-working-toward-the-year-2000>

The October issue of MF presented Part I of this analysis of the critical issues in the church's mission in the 90s. The first 8 points ended with a definition of a “unimax” people as “the maximum-sized group still sufficiently unified to allow the spread of a church movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.”

9. The Challenge of the Cities. The astonishing thing is that once the '82 definition of Unreached Peoples is clear, it is possible to anticipate that the global urbanization of humanity may very soon carry at least a few key individuals from every unimax people into a city somewhere in the world, where they will likely be much easier to reach. In the 90s the gradual urbanization of much of the world will continue, and it may well be that by the end of the nineties a slight majority of the world's population will be found in cities. The continuing existence of nationalities and ethnic groups in the cities, and even the creation within cities of new groups, will require us to be much more perceptive about the different kinds of peoples we need to deal with in the growing cities of the world.

10. The concepts of closure and countdown. One of the expectable and irrepressible trends in the nineties—at least until the middle of the decade—will be for many to do what was done a hundred years ago, namely, to try to answer the essentially unanswerable question, “What will it take to complete the Great Commission, and can it be done by the year 2000?” Those who feel it is necessary to wipe away every tear, resolve every social problem and cure all poverty, disease, and injustice, may not be attracted to schemes to conclude the task by the end of the century. However, the Unreached Peoples terms defined in '82 make realistic, I believe, the year-2000 goal of completing the necessary initial missionary penetration of every unimax group. This is a heartening and strengthening challenge to work toward with all we have to give. This goal is essentially a refined version of the one developed at the Edinburgh 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions: A Church for Every People by the Year 2000.

Meanwhile, many other goals are being forged for completion by the year 2000. Some of these are not, strictly speaking, closure goals—that is, they do not complete any particular process but simply constitute legitimate, measurable goals to shoot for. An example would be the goal of planting a million churches by the year 2000. By contrast, DAWN's closure version of this goal aims to plant a church in every human community of 500 people or more by the year 2000, however many that may be—an estimated total of 7 million new congregations (Montgomery, 1989). Incidentally, this additional number of 7 million, is about equal to the present number of vital congregations world-wide!

Another significant goal, for which no closure version exists, is the initiative of one Roman Catholic group toward enough individuals being won to the faith that half of the world's population will call itself Christian by the year 2000. I personally think it is best, however, not to think in terms of conquest—how many are won to the faith—but of extending opportunity—how many have been given a chance to respond. The Bible seems

to give no basis for assuming that any particular percentage of the world's population will become Christian on a personal level. Rather, the Bible speaks mysteriously of ethnic groups being “disciplined” in some sense, which is clearly not a case of winning either a certain number of persons or of winning a certain percentage. To plant “a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement,” (a paraphrase of the '82 definition) only requires some minimum, vital, incarnational response within a group. Yet the Bible does speak of every single group being at least partially represented in the ultimate family of God.

Changes in Methodology

11. The changing order of worship. Already it is obvious that the world church is rapidly taking on the cultural characteristics of the so-called pentecostal/charismatic tradition. This mutation is being resisted, but mainly by non-growing groups. Our modern world is now irretrievably more of an emotion-accepting world. It is no longer only at football games that the full range of human emotions can be expressed.

This is not to say that emotions are now being invented or created, nor that the Christian movement had no emotional content before. It is certainly not as though the Spirit of God has been out of action all these centuries. Rather, there is a new dimension in what is more and more a world mood, which has allowed Christian groups in recent years to give this element legitimate public expression. It would not appear that the nineties will retreat in this area.

12. Recovering from a professionally trained ministry. Despite the normal perspective of newly arriving missionaries from the United States, the Christian movement on a global level continues doggedly to depend upon informal apprenticeship methods of ministerial training rather than the historically-recent adoption in the United States of a European state-church style of professional education in residential schools. This is mainly because apprenticeship is more versatile and flexible than the classroom. It may even be that movements in the U.S., such as the rapid growth of new “charismatic” congregations often called Christian Centers, will assist the Christian movement to outgrow the kind of “professional” processes of ministerial formation which have been so assiduously cultivated in the past fifty years in the United States. The fact is, wherever seminaries--or other types of lengthy residential programs--have been introduced overseas and made mandatory for ordination, the growth of the church has been severely crippled.

Thus, what has in some circles become almost universally hailed as a legitimate goal--a “seminary education”—may become more clearly a questionable goal in the nineties, even in the United States. Hopefully, the goal of a highly trained ministry will be achieved, but that methods other than an extractive, residential process will be employed. The latter must be seen both as an inappropriate technology for most of the earth's surface, and also as an undesirable method even where it is employed. Even the Assemblies of God now has its own seminary in the USA, although its great strength was achieved without the help of this kind of residential training that tends to exclude older persons as well as those with jobs and families.

13. Going to, through and beyond partnership. In the nineties we will more and more come to doubt the universal applicability of the very idea of partnership in mission. We

arrived at the concept legitimately as missionary efforts produced church movements all around the globe. Wherever these efforts succeeded, it became necessary to shift gears from outreach among untouched-populations to church-to-church relations, and the definition of mission has adjusted to fit.

Westerners tend to think in terms of political entities, and mistake them for nations in the ethnolinguistic sense. Many of our church boards have overlooked until recently the fact that in most countries they are dealing exclusively with, or through, one tiny minority population and are therefore unable to deal fairly and effectively with the many other legitimate peoples and nations of that same country.

If Christianity were only today reaching the United States through Japanese missionaries to the Navajo Indians, the logic of partnership in mission might suggest that the resulting Navajo church be called "The Church in the United States." This could happen even though, say, its membership were entirely within the Navajo nation. Worse still, it would then be expected that all other Americans could best be reached only through Japanese partnership with Navajo Christians. Worst of all it might imply that the Navajoes could not reach out on their own without Japanese being involved. No, the ultimate worst thing is that partnership has been employed to deny the validity to any pioneer evangelism at all--because, some say, a church must already be there to be able to invite missionaries!

Thus, what for Western mission offices has been an administrative convenience (dealing with one church per country) has turned out to be a missiological nightmare. Missiologically, it would be far better to denote church movements by their culture base than their country. However, surging national churches will in the nineties drastically question the significance of the partnership perspective on a country-wide basis.

14. Pluralistic church, plural mission. Pluralism in mission is one of the inevitable developments in all the older church traditions, especially those that have over the centuries expanded into strikingly different parts of the world, and even within the highly pluralistic United States. A wholesome pluralism is the natural outgrowth of an intelligent response to rich diversity. But, a pluriform unity in a sending church cannot easily be expressed through a single office. In fact, a pluralism in mission fully expressing the pluralism of the home church is a goal yet to be achieved for most Protestant denominations as we begin the nineties.

The United Methodist church has sprouted a new mission sending board in Atlanta, which is at least as well accepted by Methodist leadership as the Church Missionary Society was for many decades in the Anglican tradition. Hopefully the nineties will see a more rapid transition than that within Protestantism. The Roman Catholic tradition has provided us with many excellent models to demonstrate that mission orders are in order in Protestantism. The Internal Revenue Service in the United States is right now involved in a study of what the Protestant equivalent should look like.

15. Home and foreign boards. In the shuffle of recent history, many church boards have wondered if the old home/foreign dichotomy is valid. It is easy to put all "mission" in a single board, as some denominations have done, but this may only perpetuate a confusion about the very definition of mission.

Hopefully, in the nineties, the fact that thousands of Unreached Peoples have at least some small representation within the United States will be recognized as requiring classical "foreign" mission work to be pursued "at home." But local churches and donors are not prepared for this. Much mission money goes only to "those unfortunate countrymen who have been willing to go and suffer in foreign circumstances," and thus builds on sympathy for the missionary rather than concern for the mission purposes involved.

This misunderstanding is not something that will quickly be resolved, even though it is eminently clear. Frontier mission work, everywhere in the world, needs to be cut out of cloth different--both in training and approach--from the kind of mission which emphasizes helping churches to expand within their own ethnic nationalities, but which does not necessarily help them to reach out to Unreached Peoples beyond them. The fact is that about 85% of all missionary personnel are at best now engaged in church expansion programs.

16. Value in secular approaches. Dozens of major mission agencies, both denominational boards and interdenominational agencies, have seen fit to found perfectly secular entities through which they can offer valid, understandable services without confusing governments with their religious motivation. This method of approach will continue to increase. It is not helpful here to mention the names of any of these, but it is worth noting that the most widely respected agencies, denominational and interdenominational, have found this approach helpful.

17. Preparation for mission. It is amazing how much progress has taken place in formal education for mission in the past 25 years. It is probably clear by now that off-the-shelf courses and schools can help a person become well-trained for cross-cultural missionary service. What must be recognized more clearly, and soon, is that the present process holds people back from cultural immersion for at least a decade too long. Thus, budding missionaries face an impossible choice between becoming well-trained but arriving on the field too late to make the proper depth of adjustment, or arriving on the field inadequately trained but with greater potential in some ways. The only possible answer to this dilemma is for schools to unbend and allow for field-based education. This can be done. Will it happen in the nineties? I think so.

18. Proportionate share in the task. A hundred years ago, church leaders who were serious about doing something significant by the end of that century thought very concretely about dividing up the work to be done on a proportionate basis among the several major denominations. Recently, in a nationwide, interdenominational mission congress in Costa Rica, evangelicals broke down proportional shares of the remaining worldwide task of reaching the Unreached Peoples for each country in Latin America. Their breakdown was based on the estimated number of people in each Latin American country who might be counted on to fuel a global missionary outreach focused on Unreached Peoples. Since then, other countries have enthusiastically adopted their proportional share. These national-level meetings have been catalyzed by Edison Queiroz, who heads the COMIBAM movement, and by the AD 2000 Movement, a global

phenomenon headed by the former international director of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization—Dr. Thomas Wang.

Changes in the Not-Quite-Panaceas

Among the many positive forces in the nineties will be five strategies which each have a great deal to offer, but which cannot, by themselves be considered panaceas. They deserve mention because an overemphasis of any of them may divert attention from a balanced approach and lead to an improper balance of funding.

19. Tentmakers—the bi-vocational approach. History reveals the value from time to time of the involvement of missionary personnel in self-supporting activities not directly related to their ministry. The apostle Paul, for example, "made tents for a living" in certain periods of his ministry. There are literally thousands of missionaries working under standard agencies who are occupied in this way, even though the details are not publicized. It is rather unusual, however, for a person not linked in accountability and supervision to a standard mission agency to have a significant impact just by virtue of working in another culture.

Yet there is certainly no doubt that with proper guidance and encouragement the million committed Christians from the Western world already living and working in the non-Western world ought to be able to be more effective in mission. The same is true for the hundreds of millions of national believers who live as citizens in the non-Western world. Who will encourage and assist them to become involved in true cross-cultural outreach to Unreached Peoples? This question leads to the next point.

20. Native missionaries—a fundamental confusion. When, in 1983 and 1986, Billy Graham brought thousands of "itinerant evangelists" to Amsterdam, he was touching only the hem of the garment of the non-Western church. There are probably at least a million such leaders. Very few of these, however, are involved in the Pauline kind of outreach to other peoples within which there is "not yet a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement"—a paraphrase of the March 1982 definition.

Some organizations specialize in supporting "native missionaries," but don't stop to distinguish between those who are faithful, native non-missionary servants of an already existing church movement (created by frontier missions of an earlier era, perhaps) and those very few who are truly frontier missionaries in a language and cultural situation in which they are no longer "natives."

The very phrase "native missionary" is thus a contradiction in terms. I once was a missionary in Guatemala, where I was no longer a native. I am now a native in California where I am no longer a missionary.

21. Short termers in an age of tentativity. The trend to short term missions will continue into the nineties simply because the strain between generations in the Western world keeps young people in a mood of tentativity for a lengthy and unhealthy period. It is unfortunate that young people in short terms usually do not learn about the work of the long-term missionaries, but rather contribute what is almost necessarily of minimal value in view of the limited training, orientation, and language skills involved. In such cases the short term experience may only be an inoculation against further involvement, rather than

a basis for lifelong career effort in mission or even loyal support of long-term mission work.

22. Mass media--the value of the air force. One of the truly marvelous dimensions of life in the nineties is the enormously expanded potential of mass communications. Reference has already been made to the extensive ministry of the great missionary radio groups, now working more closely together than ever. The full impact of the cassette recorder was glimpsed in the rise to power of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. The significance of the fax machine was seen in the Tienanmen Square in China. The spreading plague/blessing of the ubiquitous VCR is also clearly evident. The printed page is still the most significant single mass medium. But none of these can take the place of incarnational witness any more than mass media can replace parents. Our mission is not less than a global family, and families need more than messages coming in the door, or window, or by electronic radiation. However, the effective contribution of the mass media will be developed much further in the nineties.

23. Church-based missionaries—has it ever worked? This is one of the most delicate issues, and no doubt will continue to be throughout the nineties. Some church traditions have emphasized the sole validity of the local church so strongly that any kind of denominational or mission agency type of collaboration is seen as extra-Biblical. Many large congregations in the United States with thousands of members have established their own mission boards. But also certain long-standing traditions, such as the Churches of Christ, and the Plymouth Brethren, also emphasize the idea of missionaries being under the authority and support of only one congregation. This emphasis is common, too, in the thousands of new congregations in the independent Charismatic Center movement, and among similarly independent Chinese congregations all over the world.

The nature of cross-cultural mission is much too complicated, as well as geographically distant from a supporting congregation, for that home body to be solely responsible for the field strategy and supervision of effective mission work. The direct interest of congregations in a particular missionary is certainly to be cultivated, but it is patently obvious from the historical record that direct congregational supervision is a rather unlikely method for the effective deployment of missionaries.

In Summary

The Lord of History has never been outguessed by mortal man. Perhaps no one thing has more regularly humbled His servants than their inability to control the complexity of human events. At the very moment of this writing it is almost terrifyingly clear how ambiguous the future actually is. At best the comments here are only made in view of what is in view. But as someone has said, “we do not know what the future holds, but we do know Who holds the future,” and in that we can seek to give “our utmost for His highest,” with profound confidence of His steadfast love and mercy.

The Diminishing Task: The Field and the Force

Mission Frontiers, January-February 1991

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-diminishing-task>

This message by Dr. Winter was given at a community night meeting on the campus of the U.S. Center with an emphasis \ on the State of the World. We had asked him to share his vision of what's ahead, what we need to be doing, and how the task remaining fits in with all the different pieces of the puzzle of what God is doing in these days. We should consider his words a challenge to prayer and personal commitment.

Where do we fit in God's strategic plan to reach every people, tribe, tongue, and nation? How do we go about finishing the task? I have just two points; one is the FIELD and the other is the FORCE. The field has to do with what we are talking about tonight—it's the task that has yet to be done. It's the sort of thing that we used to refer to as "Mission Fields."

The Field

Now-a-days we have to understand that the fields, as you look out across the world, are not really just geographical places—they are groups of people, groups that don't stand still. They move. They're here today and they're gone tomorrow. For example, the Dai—or other groups in China we were hearing of tonight—are there right now, but they weren't necessarily there earlier, and may not be there tomorrow. And parts of the group may be in more than one place at a time.

There are many, many migrations taking place, like the incredible exodus from the Gulf that has taken place just in the last week. Literally hundreds of thousands of people have gone back to Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, or other countries from which they came because of the crisis there. Where is a group? It is where it is at the moment, and parts of it may even be in two or three places at once.

Perhaps tonight, however, we can use the word "FIELD" in a general sense, at least to paint all that has still to be done. There isn't enough time to go into a lot of detail, as we refer to these major blocs of unreached peoples. But here's an easy way to remember them: the Muslims, the Tribals, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Buddhists, and the "Other." In proportion, they go: four, three, two, one, one, one [in thousands of people groups within each bloc that remain to be reached]. That ought not to be too hard to remember: 4-3-2, 1-1-1.

Now, if the angels of Heaven rejoice because of a single person converted, think how much Heaven would rejoice—or boast—if all these peoples were converted! So all you have to think of is: the Most That Heaven Can Boast Over, and you've got the 6 first letters of Muslims, Tribals, Hindus, Chinese, Buddhist and Other (M-T-H-C-B-O). The "Most That Heaven Can Boast Over" will give you those 6 words. You can write this down, you can pray, you can tell other people about it.

These proportions are rough estimates, of course, and are changing constantly. But it is true that there is wide consensus recently brought about by the Lausanne Statistics Task Force headed by David Barrett on the idea that there are roughly 12,000 groups that may need still to be reached. They are snuggled together within maybe two or

three thousand clusters of unreached peoples, and those 12,000 break down into: 4,000 (Muslim groups), 3,000 (Tribal groups), 2,000 (Hindu groups), then 1,000 (Chinese groups), 1,000 (Buddhist groups), 1,000 (Other groups). This is not all the groups of people there are in the world. These are just those that are yet to be penetrated, or “reached.”

Right off the bat, you realize that we are not talking about evangelism. Evangelism always means evangelism of people, individuals—winning people to Christ. Missions is never merely winning people or planting churches; it is always church-planting in a pioneer situation. Although there are, of course, other legitimate meanings to the word “missions,” the classical meaning is “to go where Christ is not named.”

Thus, when we say “Go,” we are not talking about going to the people of the world but to the peoples of the world. That, in turn, means we are not talking about going to the geographical fields of the world. The overall FIELD consists of 12,000 peoples, and of those peoples roughly 4,000 of them are in the Muslim sphere.

Muslims

We can be grateful for the others who have described the challenge and opportunity in the realm of Islam. The Muslims are the largest unreached bloc in sheer number of human beings. And the estimated 4,000 Muslim groups are relatively large in their average number of human beings—over 200,000 on the average, which is ten times the average size of the remaining tribal groups.

However, unlike the tribals, there is a common denominator across all of Islam. This doesn't mean you can just go after everybody with the same approach, with the same language or anything like that. But there is a common denominator of faith that is carried from one formally Muslim group to another more readily than, say, from one tribe to another tribe.

Furthermore, in the other things presented here—especially the article, “Unlocking Islam” on page 24—you can see that it is already evident that God is taking things into His own hands in presenting us with something like the Cornelius experience Peter ran into in the New Testament. Muslims who are still culturally Muslim are finding Christ and worshiping God through the Jesus of the New Testament. It appears that the New Testament is easily more attractive than the Koran. This allows the Gospel to befriend many truly devout Muslims instead of making their whole families out to be opponents.

Tribals

For some of these very reasons the task represented by 3,000 Tribal peoples is incredibly more difficult than, say, the 4,000 Muslim peoples. In fact 3,000 Tribal peoples would in some ways be more difficult than 10,000 Muslim peoples.

Why? First, because there may be only 1500 languages that separate Muslims from each other, while Tribal peoples are separated by at least 3,000 languages. Those languages aren't necessarily even “cousins” of each other; many of them are radically different. We would have to stand back and say, “Hey, we can't do this job by the Year 2000,” just in terms of the Tribal challenge alone if it were not for the fact that God has raised up the Wycliffe Bible Translators.

They are the world's largest mission, the world's most sophisticated mission, in terms of advanced studies and University backgrounds. (There are more Ph.D.s in Wycliffe than in all the other mission agencies put together). Wycliffe Bible Translators is a sophisticated mission, a mission that was not just "born yesterday." It has been in this precise business for almost 60 years now and has whittled the translation task down more efficiently than ever before. We must be grateful for the fact that if Wycliffe continues to grow at the rate it was growing three or four years ago, it would be able to do this job by itself

Today many other mission agencies—denominational or otherwise—are sending their people through Wycliffe. Even as the old China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship) used to constitute the supervising field body for many small missions in many countries, so Wycliffe has become somewhat of a C.I.M. type mission for Tribal peoples in recent years for denominations ranging from the Assemblies of God to the Presbyterian Church in America, and we are very grateful for that.

Hindus

Now we come to the Hindus. We have an article going in the *Mission Frontiers* in a day or two (see page 18) which talks about the 575,000 villages in India where there are no Christians. It points out that if all the Bible Schools and training programs in all of India put together I produced graduates to reach out, one per village, it would take 75 years of output to reach that group.

Well, good news! At Fuller Seminary where they study the growth of the church around the world, their studies will tell you that the church never grows rapidly on the basis of school products for pastors. There is no way schools can catch up, or keep up, with the evangelistic growth of the Christian movement. I think it's something like 80,000 new churches have been formed in this country in the last 20 years, almost all of them in the charismatic sphere. Very, very few of them, (maybe one out of 20) have what you could call a Bible school or Seminary graduate for their pastor. We don't need for the schools alone to tackle this job. They are very essential, but if there is one person in a congregation who can read, that's all you need for the non-literate populations of the world; the rest of the people can hear what is said. You do need the Bible in print, but there are now ÷ and always will be—hundreds of millions of people who cannot read.

So, back to the 575,000 villages of India which can be reached by school-product-leaders in 75 years. Suppose you stop to think that in India there are at least 200,000 evangelical congregations. If each 1 congregation produces three workers who go with a passion for Christ to other villages, those 575,000 villages could be reached!

But it is much simpler than that. A single caste may extend through a hundred villages, and a Christian penetration of that particular caste will almost automatically reach to other villages. We list 2,000 beachheads to be made in India. Those 2,000 will put the Gospel into contact with all 575,000 villages!

So there you are ÷ 4-3-2:4,000 Muslim peoples, 3,000 Tribal peoples, 2,000 Hindu peoples. These three big blocs right there constitute 9,000 out of the 12,000 unreached peoples. That leaves three relatively smaller blocs yet to reach (although the groups themselves may not necessarily be smaller): the Chinese, the Buddhists and the "Other."

Chinese/Buddhists/Other

Most of the Chinese are Buddhists to some extent so “Chinese” doesn’t sound like the right classification. But we’re talking about the Han Chinese who are not only Buddhist, maybe, but are definitely Chinese. And they have to be taken seriously as Chinese, not just as Buddhists, if you are going to reach them.

Today, things are looking very good for the Chinese. I can remember Arthur Glasser saying years ago that when the missionaries were thrown out of China, you could draw a line across that vast landscape of China, and every 15 miles on that line there would be a church, no matter how you drew the line. Well, there is no change in China that is comparable to the growth of Christians that has taken place. At no time in all the history of the world has anything that size grown that fast, and certainly not in the history of Christianity.

Apart from the non-Chinese tribal peoples of China which others are mentioning here, China is really barely a mission field by comparison, let's say, to the Muslims, Tribal or Hindu peoples. Not only that, but the phenomenon of church growth, since it was to a great extent the growth of Christianity into Buddhism, proves that the Buddhist world itself is not impervious or unapproachable, doesn't it? If 50 million people who were significantly influenced by Buddhism, have become Christians in the past 35 years in China, then surely other Buddhists in other places can be reached! Take Korea, for example, with its 40 million people of whom 20 million are Christians. Since Koreans were mainly Buddhists in their background, what do we have if this isn't Buddhists becoming Christians?

And then there is the “Other” category, which definitely means OTHER—a vast variety of smaller categories which are not contained in any of the previous classifications. Thus far, many of these have been the most receptive to Christianity; that is why they are now in this catch-all category.

To sum up, the “FIELD” picture is not by any means something we need to give up on and think of as hopeless.

The FORCE

But let's shift quickly to the “Force.” Do you recall the diagram of the little men—one man in 100 AD carrying 360 people on his shoulders, then 900 years later, 220 on his shoulders; then 500 years later, 69; 400 years later, 27; and so on?

We arrived at that diagram by essentially taking the number of people in the world who do not consider themselves Christians and dividing it by the number of truly committed, Bible-believing Christians. This ratio has gone from 360, to 220, to 69 to 27 (in the year 1900), 21 (in the year 1950) to 11 in 1980, to seven last year. Now, these numbers could be wrong. They could even be 20% wrong, or 50% wrong. But you would still get a progression, a trend that would be irrefutable.

I believe that we need to take very seriously the FORCE which has been steadily mounting across the centuries. It can be attributed really only to God Himself! The “Field” is one thing; the “Force” is another. And I would encourage you to believe that the overall picture is a runaway success, especially in the global sense of the term, in terms of the expansion of the power of the Spirit of God on the face of the earth.

Now as usual, a lot of the things that we would like to say, we can't say in public. But places like Outer Mongolia are totally different from what they were, as is true with many other countries just in the last few weeks.

On the mobilization front, the marvelous Association of Church Mission Committees now is talking clearly of the goal of the Unreached Peoples. Bill Waldrop just told me at Urbana, "We're getting a lot of flak about this. People are saying that 'missions' means something else besides unreached peoples. But I am with you, Ralph! We've got to press for the unreached peoples as the cutting edge of missions. And this has got to be finished by the Year 2000." Now there is no larger organization on the face of the earth, related to local congregations and denominations than that particular group. The fact that they have this clearly in mind is a very significant thing.

Then, there is the Adopt-A-People movement. It IS a movement today. We find people all over the world who are picking up the idea, without being officially enfranchised, or anything like that. They're pursuing it because it seems clear that the Bible speaks of every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. And we must look for these groups by name, and reach out to them. We know that countries all over Latin America have accepted a certain proportion of the total. A similar diagram was drawn up by Harold Peskett, the chief research person for the present-day O.M.F. at the recent Korean congress for all of the Asian nations. There are all kinds of possibilities in this area.

Stop and think for a moment about the spectacular emergence of a missionary mentality in the minds and hearts of the mission-field churches. In Africa, Latin America, Asia, today it's a clean sweep. Ten years ago, the picture was nowhere near what it is today. Twenty years ago, it was almost non-existent.

I remember being in Argentina not too many years ago when there was not a single mission agency in the country. Today there are not only mission agencies, but there are enough of them to form an association of agencies. In Nigeria, the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association has a number of member mission agencies, one of them alone with over 600 missionaries.

In country after country around the world, there are not only new mission agencies, there are associations of mission agencies. Then, these associations of agencies are gathering in even larger, regional groups, like the Asian Missions Association (AMA). And on a global level, there is the Third World Missions Association (TWMA). This has got to be a major factor in the FORCE.

I sat next to a man named David Kim at Urbana. I know this man very well. I have spoken in his church in Baltimore, a brand new building on the outskirts of Baltimore and Washington, D.C. (The auditorium must seat 2,000.) He just gave up that church to go back to Korea to pastor an even larger church. In his new situation there is a huge building being built, or already built—the tallest building in Korea. On one of the floors there is this new Center for World Mission, which he is in charge of. We just got a Fax from there the other day.

At this Center there is a group of students being trained in a special missionary college—the first of its kind in Korea. They want an American teacher of English. They will pay \$24,000 a year, plus room and board. Now that's not too bad! (Is any reader interested? They need someone by March 1. It is a specifically missionary program, with the students heading for the ends of the earth.)

Right here let me also mention a rather “in-house” something that has to do with the FORCE for missions. That is our Perspectives program which we at the USCWM sponsor.

I get the feeling that this Perspectives program is getting out of control! I've been saying for years that the Christian movement is like a fire burning out of control. The Perspectives movement is like that—it's getting out of control, too. We can be glad for that, although you can pray for Lee Purgason and the staff that is struggling under the crushing burden of 47 centers this coming year. We used to have five or six fulltime people to supervise five or six regional Perspectives courses across the country. Now we have 47 courses and only three full-time people in that office. This isn't just an interesting course; it has to do with the very nature of what God is doing on this earth. Pray that we will be able to deal with it.

Aren't we blessed? What does it mean for us to be blessed? What does it mean for us to be a blessing? Does it mean sending CARE packages? Or sending powdered milk? Does it mean sending all kinds of good things to be a blessing to those people? NO! It does mean that, but not merely that. The word “blessing” in English is one of the most defective translations of any Biblical concept. It means to adopt! God said to Abraham, “I am going to adopt you. And through you, I am going to adopt all these other families of the earth.” Maybe re-adopt or re-inherit would be better, since it was a re-conquest, a reconquering the world for Christ, a benevolent infusion of the authority and power of God to bring son-ship—family relationship—to all of the peoples of the world. It does not mean less than that.

But you know, that IS happening. In spite of all the chaos of the Gulf War, it's putting Muslims and Christians together on the same side; it's pitting people who thought their religion held them together against each other. For example, when Pakistan blew up and the Bengali Muslims were being slaughtered by the West Pakistan Muslims, this obviously didn't tie them together. More recently, as Don Richardson pointed out, the Iraqis fighting against the Iranians did not tie them together. The whole world is opening up, it seems, to the benevolent outreach of the living God, through His Holy Spirit, in His global church, so that all the unreached peoples might be touched by the year 2000.

I got a phone call today from a radio station in Lincoln, Nebraska. I am going to be in a six-hour Saturday seminar there next week. They asked, “Will you tell us, in 30 seconds, why you believe that the Great Commission can be fulfilled by the year 2000?”

I answered, “I cannot do that in 30 hours. I do not know what it means specifically, ‘to fulfill the Great Commission.’ But I can tell you this. All of the unreached peoples of the world can conceivably be reached if Christians get busy and get going. And that, whether it fulfills the Great Commission or not, CAN BE DONE!”

I remember the words of one of the young men at Urbana who was giving his testimony at one point. He said, “We've got to dream a dream that cannot be fulfilled apart from the intervention of God!” Now since when has God been unwilling to intervene on behalf of His glory?

What a phenomenal challenge we have before us!

**The Rallying Cry of the AD2000 Movement:
A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person by the Year 2000”**

Mission Frontiers, January-February 1992

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-rallying-cry-of-the-ad2000-movement-is>

These are beautiful, inspiring words. Let us look closely at them to be sure we know what we are saying when people ask us specific questions about the goals of the AD2000 Movement.

“A Church for every people” is the essential means to the end of getting “the Gospel to every person by the year 2000.” The goal is every person. The means to that end requires that we reach every people.

Only if “every person” has an opportunity within his or her own people to accept Christ in the fellowship of other believers can we be sure that we have done our job. In the final day referred to in Revelation 21 we know that there will be some from “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev 4:9). This is embodied in the famous March 1982 definition of an Unreached People.*

At the same time we realize that at any given date in history “every person on earth: necessarily includes

1. Babies just born and who cannot understand the Gospel
2. Dying people who are still alive but unable to hear, see, or understand.
3. Insane people who may have never had the ability to listen carefully to the

Gospel.

God has always been able in His wisdom to deal with such people. We cannot expect that there will be no such people in the End Times. Their existence all down through history at any given point is something He is fully in charge of already. Our goal is not to win every person. That is our desire. Our goal is to give everyone a chance, to hear as much as they can take in.

Next, what do we mean by “A Church?” In John Richard’s carefully worded “Explanation of the Purpose Statement” in the Appendix of the AD2000 Movement Handbook (p. 58), he indicates that the word, “Church,” does not refer to a single congregation within a people but no less than “a mission-minded church-planting movement”—a condition only approximated if we ask for “less than 1%, 2% or X% Christians.”

1. A list of groups “less than 2% Christian” will inevitably INCLUDE some groups which already have “a mission-minded, church-planting movement” within them. For example, 13.6 million Minnan Chinese in Taiwan are found in one list of “Peoples less than 2% Christian.” We hear there are 400,000 Christians (not less than 2%) in 2,000 congregations. But even if Christians are less than 2%, there clearly exists a “mission-minded, church-planting movement,” and the Minnan are thus not an Unreached People for the lack of an adequate Gospel beachhead.

2. Such a list will also EXCLUDE groups which have less than 2% real believers, but more than 2% Christians of a grossly Gospel-less variety, such as you find in the case of the “Christo-pagan” Indians of the Americas. Not even Roman Catholics consider

them Christians! But, such people are indeed Christians in the eyes of the Encyclopedia Britannica and the United Nations and thus their existence keeps all their groups off the “less than 2% Christian” kind of a list. In this case dozens of Unreached Peoples and millions of individuals will be excluded from any such list.

Similarly, what do we mean by “every people?” Since the goal is every person, a “people” must not have pockets within it which cannot understand or which are alienated from the main body of that people. This, too, is embodied in the rationale of the March 1982 definition of Unreached People*

This observation is also relevant to the listing of “Peoples less than 2% Christian.” We may consider such a list to be a useful approximation of many peoples within which there are no barriers to the Gospel—e.g., “Unreached Peoples” by the March 1982 definition quoted above. Thus:

Some of the larger groups will probably include crucial ethnolinguistic barriers within them, and thus need to be counted as more than one group.

Some “multiple” groups divided by purely country boundaries do not need to be counted as a separate group for each country. E.g. Jewish groups are found in more than 100 countries. Does that make 100 Unreached Peoples? No, because it is possible that a church-planting movement in one of them could spread to at least some of the others without requiring a separate breakthrough. That is, a people group does not have to be located all in one place.

** In March of 1982 a meeting sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization brought together a large representation of mission specialists to decide on closure terminology. After two days this group felt confident enough to propose that an Unreached People ought to consist of, 1) in terms of the kind of group, “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.” That is, it should be sufficiently homogeneous or uniform so every person can be reached with a single mission breakthrough, and 2) in regard to the nature of a minimum essential Gospel presence, a group would be considered Unreached if there were “no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this group.”*

Editorial Comment on Diminishing Task Chart

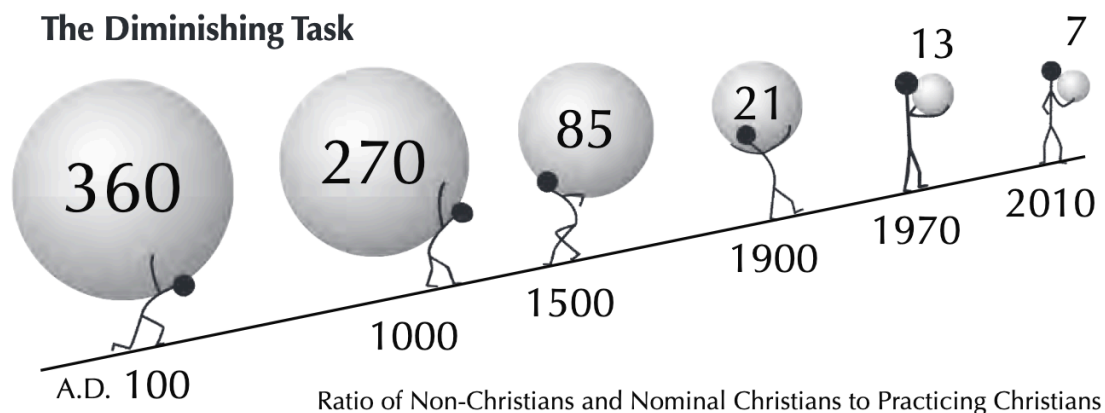
Mission Frontiers March 1992

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment87>

I hope you will find yourself amazed by the rich new diagram across the page. And don't miss the eloquent wording you find there quoted from John R. Stott (at the Manila, 1989 Lausanne Committee congress).

The "Diminishing Task" diagram usually appearing on page five now appears in reduced form below to the right. [*A newer chart is reproduced below.*] Hopefully it is familiar enough so it won't matter if you can't read the type. It basically demonstrates an astonishing trend across 2,000 years. The new diagram describes the current moment of that trend, in 1992.

The small diagram graphically portrays the exciting and reassuring fact that the Bible believing Christians of the world are outnumbered only 7 to one now, after 2,000 years (6.8 to one, to be more exact).



The new diagram on page five is an enlargement of the final situation today—the “7 to one” ratio. Many have been confused at just what the “6.8” means. In our new diagram we are rounding off again to 7 to one, now you can see that the seven is the sum of 4 and 3, that is, the 4 “D”s and the 3 “C”s that appear on the new chart.

The more obvious fact in the new chart is that the 500 million Bible believing Christians constitute 1 out of 10 people in the world, or a 9 to 1 ratio, if you match them against all other kinds of people. Isn't that remarkable?

Let's assume that the spiritually active Christians in the world are the Bible believing Christians whom John R. Stott calls, “The Committed.”

1. For each of them, only four others (the “D”s) require traditional cross-cultural, pioneer mission work.

2. Only three others (the “C”s) require further evangelism (do not require pioneer mission efforts), while,

3. Two others (the “B”s) require the kind of evangelism inside church membership, often called “renewal.”

4. The “A”s themselves need on-going nurture, and mission mobilization!

The disturbing fact is that (these are generalizations) 90% of all money and effort expended by the Bible believing Christian group goes to their own churches, and 90% of the 10% they give away goes to reaching out to those in groups B, and somewhat to the “C”s, leaving only about 1% of their efforts in pioneer fields! (See column 3 on page 39).

The answer in part is for all missionaries everywhere to become newly alerted to the “D” category, and to mobilize the now millions of mission-field Christians toward those still-unreached fields!

Yes, the biggest, little-known reality in the world is the quiet miracle of the mission force emerging from the mission fields themselves.

In this issue, Bill Taylor, the spectacular leader of the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship is highlighted on pages 36-37. He is by now the world’s expert on the emergency of mission training facilities for this vast new missionary resource of the so-called “younger churches.”

The new factor now is the situation in the former domain of the Soviet Union, bristling with opportunities, needs, dangers, unknowns of all kinds. This issue concentrates on the kaleidoscope of need within the Russian Federation alone. The non-Russian populations within many of the autonomous regions within Russia may attempt to wrest control from the Russians. This could put Russia into a prolonged state of unrest and paralysis, even if it did not have enormous political and economic problems already.

Editorial Comment: Are We Winning or Losing

Mission Frontiers May-June 1992

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment86>

I am profoundly disturbed.
 Why can't a simple question be given a simple answer--that is ACCURATE?
 Are we winning or losing?
 Is the Christian cause mounting or waning?
 Is the cause of missions gaining?
 Are Bible-believing Christians gaining on the world population?
 Are they gaining on the growth of the world Muslim population?
 Do Bible believing Christians—every day that goes by—become a higher percentage of the world's population?
 Are they gaining in India, in America, in England, practically everywhere?
 These are all basically the same questions.
 THE ANSWER TO ALL THESE QUESTIONS IS “YES, YES, A 1,000 TIMES YES.”

Then why do people say otherwise? Even quality Christian publications?
 What set me off this time? Here is what happened.

A technical newsletter 1) made an unguarded statement. Sure enough it was misinterpreted by a much more widely distributed and truly superb newsletter, 2) then it was read by a respected mission executive, 3) who proceeded to write a full-page editorial in a widely influential mission house organ.

All in vain! The original statement, once stripped from its context, became a truly false and alarming statement. Readers no longer had the data to interpret it correctly. Inevitably it sent ripples of poisonous falsehood throughout the whole world of missions! In one of many cases, no doubt, an unsuspecting mission executive tried to digest the alarming “fact” optimistically, but with statistics like that, all he could do is to suppose that if we try harder we may reverse a downward trend.

There are two problems: 1) technical skills, and 2) psychological mood.

The first is easy: don't compare a number composed of births minus deaths with another birthrate from which deaths are not subtracted.

The latter—the psychological mood—betrays a widespread loss of hope. I see all kinds of valiant people grabbing up the worst stories and trying to muster the spiritual force to live with them—and in many cases the stories themselves are not quite right.

OK, look at pages 40-43 if you want to see a full-dress review of one of the most astounding examples I have seen yet of the use of statistics negatively. Again, this was done in good faith by a godly, upbeat well-meaning leader!

Racing to the Finish

Mission Frontiers July-August 1992

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/racing-to-the-finish>

An Unusual New Plan in the Evangelical Free Church of America

As an outsider to the Evangelical Free Church I have to say that I am impressed and thrilled by their new mission plans. These new plans mean the EFCA now joins the Baptist General Conference, the Christian and Missionary Alliance and a handful of other key evangelical denominations which have done the very unusual: they have developed competent and thoroughgoing proposals for major new impact on the most remote and untouched places and peoples of the world.

Fog in the Local Church

The new EFCA plan really is revolutionary in view of the pessimistic fog at the local level.

To see what I mean, visit any ten local congregations randomly in America—of any denomination—and each time ask the first ten people you run into how they think their denominational mission program is getting along. You will encounter blank stares and disbelief that anyone would bother asking. Why?

Because Americans are constantly bombarded by negative information. Newspapers, radio, and television conspire to pound into Americans that most everything is going wrong all around the world! The total absence of news about the astonishing advance of the Gospel leaves the impression that things are going wrong in that area as well.

Thus, few Americans are prepared to believe the amazing positive reports of world Christianity—even though the Christian phenomenon has always been an astounding movement.

What IS the Real Truth?

One way to measure the amazing growth of the Gospel throughout the world is to ask the simple question,

How many years did it take for Bible-Believing Christians to number one out of hundred people in the world?

The answer is roughly 1430 AD—shortly before Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

OK, then when did Bible-Believing Christians become two out of a hundred people in the world? The answer is, about the time our country was founded—1790, or about the time a better informed Columbus, William Carey sailed for India.

When was it four out a of hundred? Well, see the table across the page. The point is that the growth of true Christianity is rapidly accelerating.

There is something else here. If you count all types of Christians they make up one-third of the world's population right now. If you add the number of people very favorable toward the person of Jesus Christ in the Muslim world, it becomes over half of the world's population!

In addition, you can reasonably take note of the fact that even in a largely non-Christian country like Japan, two thirds of the population answered (on a government census) that they consider Jesus Christ the most important religious leader in history (note most Japanese are Buddhists—why didn't they say “Gautama Buddha”?).

If you go to India you will find countless millions of Hindus who are very favorably impressed by Jesus Christ.

Two Incontrovertible Things

All of this points up two crucial facts:

1. Bible-believing Christians have grown to be an incredibly large force in the world today. Just think, a group of 540 million people ought to be able to accomplish almost anything they set their minds and hearts to do. Do you realize that “one out of ten” means 540,000,000 Bible-believing people in 7 million congregations?
2. In addition, over half of the world—perhaps two thirds—has high respect for Jesus Christ.

Why can't we see this?

Well, most of us live among people who know about Christ but don't go to church. Since these neighbors of ours are defensive, we readily assume that non-Christians in the rest of the world are probably also opposed to Jesus Christ.

Guess what? The rest of the world is mostly a world that has not rejected Christ. The Christ-rejecting people of this world are those who say they are Christians but do not go to church... The Christ-rejecting people of this world are those who live within the range of the church, who have a Bible in their own language, radio and television broadcasts at their elbow, and who are not seeking to know more, who are running away from God!

No, most of the world will be much more friendly to Jesus Christ than the hardened souls who inhabit the so-called Christian countries.

Travelling as I do between the “Christian West” and the “non-Christian world,” I am constantly struck by the greater friendliness of those around the world who have hardly heard of Jesus Christ as compared to those in our own society who are defensive and sour on the subject.

This does not mean we should stop trying to help our neighbors find Christ.

It does mean that those who may be across the world (or right in Minneapolis sealed off by language and cultural barriers) who will eagerly accept him ought to have a chance, a bigger chance than they now have.

That is the reason for a mission board. The very nature of the language and cultural barriers that isolate us from the unreached peoples of the world means that the normal evangelistic skills of local churches will not suffice. We are talking about a remaining missionary task, one that requires serious language study, anthropological insights, in a word, a professional missionary.

Yes, the remaining unreached peoples of the world cannot be reached readily or they would already be reached. They are walled off. They are isolated to the extent that a professional agency is the best instrument for reaching them. Tourists and short-term workers can't handle it without special help.

Facing the Final Frontiers

Mission Frontiers November 1992

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/facing-the-final-frontiers>

A Report to the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Assn.

This paper was given at the same IFMA meeting 10 years ago at which the IFMA Declaration was made. (See page 33. It is reprinted here to remind us of the critical issues that still need to be addressed as we reach toward the frontiers.—Editor)

It seems to me highly appropriate that the IFMA should base this conference on the theme “Penetrating the Frontiers.” It is my understanding of the history of Christian missions that the Faith Mission Movement, which is primarily embodied in the IFMA, is the only movement of its size and scope which ever embodied at its origin the penetration of frontiers as its specific, major goal. I am not saying the Faith Mission Movement is the first or the only upsurge of interest in missions. I am pointing to the striking uniqueness of its degree of emphasis on frontiers. Time would fail us to recount the many different times and places down through history when a renewed obedience to the Great Commission has moved hundreds, and perhaps even thousands, to the field. However, in order to better understand and better appreciate the frontier emphasis of the Faith Mission Movement, we may do well to trace the struggle in modern times for the development of the very concept of frontiers.

I. Faith Missions and the Emergence of a Frontier Mission Awareness

In William Carey’s lifetime, the major organized Protestant response to the Great Commission was born. Perceptions about missions in his day left little room for--and little need for--much reflection about the relation of mission agencies to national churches. People back home did not think of frontiers as such because at that time frontiers were virtually wherever missionaries might be sent. On the other hand, while many thinkers did have in mind the strategy of planting a national church which would stand on its own feet, there was not yet any immediate need for the kind of elaborate analysis of mission/church relationships which, for example, Harold Fuller has recently written.

Indeed, the very fact that the William Carey era was able to succeed at all is a breathtaking tribute to the inherent power of the gospel and the faithfulness of the Spirit of God. One society in England kept on sending missionaries to Ghana for over a third of a century without a single instance of any missionary living more than two years. However, not all coastlands were quite as disease ridden as Africa’s west coast. Somehow, by the grace of God and as a result of commitment so intense as to be rarely found today, the gospel was finally planted in at least the coastlands here and there all around Asia, Africa, and Latin America. While this era of the coastlands left untouched the vast interiors of the non-Western continents, it does at least give clear evidence of the birth and the growth of national churches almost everywhere missionaries undertook to work.

Harold Fuller's recent book, *Mission/Church Dynamics*, describes four stages in mission activity in the Faith Mission era. We see these same stages in the William Carey era. That is, as Fuller outlines it, there was a pioneer stage, before any national church existed. Presently this gave way to a paternal stage in which missionaries led the church and trained national leaders so they could take over pastorates and even professorships in theological seminaries. Gradually, then, a third stage emerged in which paternal views gave way to partnership stage. The missionary and national associations were recognized as equals.

One of the well-known fields in the era of William Carey is the Hawaiian Islands. It moved through these four stages rapidly, being far enough along by 1865 so that not even continued partnership was considered necessary for the survival and ongoing growth of the national church, and thus with a certain amount of fanfare, all missionaries were brought home. At that point, the relationship of mission to national church could, and I believe should, have entered the fourth stage Harold Fuller mentions in his book. He suggests that beyond the pioneer, the paternal, and the partnership stages may be a participation stage in which expatriate workers effectively continue on, working under the national church. From this perspective I personally believe the doctrinaire evacuation in 1865 of all missionaries from Hawaii was not altogether wise. For one thing, it exposed the virtually defenseless national believers to the ways and wiles of an ever larger influx of non-Christian mainlanders.

Looking beyond Hawaii, however, we see that in 1865 practically all of the other mission efforts of the William Carey era were also moving into the Partnership and Participation stages. This was because they continued to be focused primarily on the coastlands, leaving vast inland areas where not even the first stage of pioneer work had begun. By contrast, in Hawaii there were no inland areas, so that withdrawal in that case could not as easily be questioned.

Nevertheless, it is fascinatingly symbolic that in the same year, 1865, when the missionaries were being brought home from Hawaii, a perceptive young man, Hudson Taylor, boldly stepped forward to propose that pioneer work begin in the interior of China. To do just that he founded what eventually became the granddaddy of the Faith Missions, the China Inland Mission. The rest of the story is well known. We recall that due to a great deal of opposition, however, the Faith Mission Movement, following Hudson Taylor's lead, did not by any means jump into being. At least twenty years went by before it really became even a small movement. Why this twenty-year delay? It would be hard to over-stress the earnest conflict of perspectives during those early developments. We must realize that the bulk of mission leaders were associated with the missions of the earlier, William Carey, era. Since they were understandably preoccupied with the demands of the well-established beachheads on the coastlands, they tended to despise and ignore the cries of younger leaders who were fascinated and challenged by Taylor's emphasis on the inland frontiers. Unfortunately, Taylor's humble and deferential plan not to publish his needs (a policy partly the result of all the criticism he received for even starting a new mission) was a plan that not only attracted a great deal of attention due to its novelty, but also distracted attention from the unique and strategic emphasis on frontiers which dominated all his thinking. Had this focus on frontiers not been the case, the Faith Mission Movement might more likely (and properly) have been called the Frontier Mission Movement, or the Inland Movement. However, central as Taylor's

emphasis upon faith was, are we to believe his means were more important than his ends? That is, from our perspective today, does it seem logical that Taylor's faith in a God who would support him should be considered more significant than his faith in a God who would guide him and point him specifically towards peoples which could only be touched by a highly dangerous penetration of the frontier areas of the interior of China?

In other words, looked at from the home side, the movement understandably gained the name "the faith mission movement." Looked at overseas, it could just as readily have been called "the frontier mission movement." The Faith Mission Movement was indeed the first mission movement to be aimed at someplace else besides where missions had been focused for a hundred years. It is the first movement in which this distinction was crucial. Thus, while the Faith Mission Movement is to this day characterized by a faithful looking to the Lord for support, it is, in my opinion, even more significantly characterized by the Pauline passion to go to new places where the gospel has never been preached. Today as then, arguments more readily arise over the way funds are "reached" than over the way frontiers are "reached." People may support us just because (and so long as) we are willing to suffer "somewhere." God supports us because we are willing to reach the neediest, most desperate, and most helpless peoples, even though we may have to suffer in the process.

Thus, in the era of the growth of the Faith Mission Movement, despite the partial misunderstanding on the part of the people back home, there was clearly (among the leaders of that movement at least) an acute awareness of the special concern of God for the frontiers. They discovered that on that subject, God was indeed willing to arrange for their support. Today we look back with amazement upon what resulted--a mammoth, far-reaching upsurge in the entire Protestant mission movement, the like of which we have never seen before or since. Very soon, not just the new "faith" missions but also the older denominational boards caught the fever for the frontiers. This new emphasis became so central all across the board that by 1910, as is well known, the first world level meeting of mission leaders at Edinburgh took as an organizing principle the decision to limit participation to agencies sending missionaries "among non-Christian peoples." The somewhat clumsy, continent-by-continent implementation of this decision, whether ideal or not, is evidence of their developed concern for the frontiers. In the process they incidentally received a lot of flack from agencies they ruled out.

In any case, although this movement to new frontiers began in England, its spiritual power, even in England, derived greatly from the passionate ministry of an American named D. L. Moody. Also, thanks in part to the Student Volunteer Movement that sprouted up in America, the Faith Mission Movement took root in American soil, producing branches of British Faith Mission structures as well as inspiring many new distinctively American beginnings. Again, mainly due to the SVMFM, the center of gravity of world mission had by the end of the First World War decisively moved to North America. Precisely then, in 1917, seventy-five years ago, IFMA was born. It is interesting that the word foreign rather than faith was used in the IFMA title. I believe it would have been most appropriate had it become the Interdenominational Inland Mission Association or the Interdenominational Frontier Mission Association. But, in view of the terminology of the still powerful Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, it was no doubt generally understood that foreign meant frontiers, and that all frontiers were

foreign—this in spite of the strong emergence of the new inland emphasis versus the coast-land beachheads.

While it is not quite true to say that the entire impetus of the Faith Mission Movement is represented within the membership of the IFMA, it certainly is fair to say that the IFMA more than any other single organized entity today does represent the Faith Mission legacy, which is thus a specifically Frontier Mission legacy. Older missions converted over to frontiers, but the Faith Missions were born for frontiers instead of for well-established fields.

It is relevant to point out that during the existence of the IFMA, many other frontier mission carrier vehicles have bitten the dust. What a tragedy! Suppose, for example, the SVM had not shortsightedly allowed its board of directors to be appointed by five other organizations that were eventually to go liberal. Or, suppose the Edinburgh 1910 leaders had not unthinkingly committed the future of that tradition to an International Missionary Council not clearly constituted by mission leaders, tending increasingly to ignore mission structures as such and to cater to denominational leadership for understanding, support and guidance. Suppose two vastly influential movements—the Young People’s Missionary Movement and the Laymen’s Missionary Movement—had not compromised themselves with the political mechanics of the increasingly mixed traditions of the mainline denominations. And, suppose the Student Foreign Mission Fellowship (founded in 1936 by mainly IFMA-related young people) had not acquiesced to a somewhat similar alliance with a nurture-oriented organization but instead had maintained its autonomy in an exclusively mission emphasis. Or, even, let’s suppose the Christian and Missionary Alliance had given up its early commitment to an across-the-board promotion of the frontiers among all groups becoming, rather, first a mission board and later a denomination in its own right. If any of these frontier vision carrying societies had survived, we might not be able to say, as, unfortunately, we can, that more than any other major structure surviving today, the IFMA stands out significantly as the principal carrier vehicle for the frontier mission vision of the original Faith Mission Movement.

But what about the EFMA? Does it not also have a distinctively frontier mission emphasis? Does it not, in a very real sense, also represent the Faith Mission Movement? Obviously it would be foolhardy to overlook the fact that the thermal explosion of the 1890–1920 period is indeed considerably reflected in the mood and consecrated efforts of the older EFMA agencies especially. However, the specific origin and emphasis of the EFMA derives mainly from the simple fact that the 2nd World War catapulted ten million Americans out across the world into direct contact with existing mission fields, the post-war result being the largest burst of new agencies ever to be formed in so short a period. Moreover, the predominant characteristic of these new, mostly “service missions” was the concern for aiding and abetting the efforts of existing missions in many technical frontiers, but not necessarily mission frontiers.

The other element in the EFMA is, of course, the strong presence of the mission boards of a number of evangelical denominations. Many of these, as I have said, were in fact distinctly frontier groups, especially in their earlier efforts. But is it possible that denominational boards, readily accepting a permanent tie between their churches at home and the new churches overseas, face a slightly greater temptation to prolong their ministry to the overseas national churches? May they more easily tend to misinterpret

their mission function as being simply and permanently service to the overseas churches? In some cases this is happening. In any case, it is certainly true that the mood of the moment of history in which the EFMA was formed was not a mood of pioneering in the strict sense in which Frontiers are being discussed these days. It was, it seems to me, more a mood of carrying forward, expanding and reinforcing existing beachheads. On the other hand, nothing I have said here will prevent the EFMA agencies from a new emphasis upon the frontiers. Indeed, we also see that happening before our eyes. The International Foursquare Gospel has already adopted a goal of reaching 100 Unreached groups by 1990. And at the EFMA Executives Retreat in 1979, a poll of the agencies present indicated that they had engaged or intended to engage close to 6,000 groups by 1990.

Finally, what I have said thus far is not intended in any sense to encourage the IFMA to boast. Indeed, my intention is to make as clear as I can how much more likely it is that God would not forgive the IFMA should it fail to be the very first and foremost today to respond to the challenge of the new frontiers. I am happy to say I believe the IFMA is in some respects taking the lead. I think, for example, that it is reasonable and natural for the IFMA to have been the first of these two major mission associations to establish a Frontier Peoples Committee. Once more, "Why, reasonable?" Because the IFMA was literally born out of a passion for specifically new work versus follow-through work, and as an association had more than a quarter of a century lead over the EFMA in its existence and commitment to such frontiers.

Now let us turn to a consideration of the frontiers themselves.

II. The Physical Nature of Mission Frontiers

The various uses of the word frontier as found listed in the dictionary mostly do not concern us. A frontier is technically a boundary. Even the various uses of the word within the world of missions across the centuries are too diverse to concern us. The specific significance of the word for our use today should, I believe, rest upon the more recent history of deliberations in national and international evangelical gatherings. However, in order to describe both the physical nature and spiritual need represented by the frontiers, we face two quite separate subjects. The nature of these frontiers is that they are a certain type of group of people, a Biblical concept not talked about much in America today. But then, the need of these frontier groups, which we will take up later, is that they lack something that is both theologically and missiologically crucial.

My own earliest attempt at a conceptualization of the physical nature of frontiers was set forth in a brief essay I was asked to write for the 1974 ICOWE meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland. I was certainly not inventing anything, but merely stressing the fact that the Bible gives strategic attention to nations, an entity which is smaller than a country but larger than either an individual or what Americans call a nuclear family.

It must be admitted that Americans and other English-speaking people sense a certain amount of culture shock whenever they first discover that the Great Commission in Matthew speaks explicitly of the discipling of nations, not countries nor individuals. Certainly, individuals are not necessarily excluded from concern by the Biblical concept of nation. However, even when we turn to Mark 16:15, we discover that the long-accepted phrase "to every creature" found both in the King James version and the New King James version, is more exactly translated "to all creation," as in the New American

Standard Bible. Thus the correct translation does not speak of individuals, but leaves the precise breakdown open. In my opinion, the phrase “all creation” can very easily be understood to refer to the Biblical table of nations found in Genesis 10.

Especially curious is the case of Revelation 21:3, where a loud voice from the throne of the New Jerusalem says, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His peoples and God Himself shall be among them.”

In this case not even the ordinarily literal New American Standard Bible is willing to translate “and they shall be His peoples” (in the plural) as it is in the Greek text. In the book of Revelation, the word peoples in the plural occurs four times. 7:9, 11:9, 17:15, and then in 21:3. The New American Standard Bible dutifully and rigorously translates the word in the plural in only the first three of the four cases. In the fourth, even the American translators are apparently not able to envision the possibility that at the end of time the people of God will be a redeemed humanity still consisting of an aggregate of non-identical peoples. If what we notice here is true, it has profound meaning for mission strategy.

However, lest anyone think that the concept of frontiers I am describing here is based upon merely a phenomenon of New Testament Greek, let us go back to the book of Genesis. In chapter 10, where we see the table of nations, a key word used for the units described is the word *mishpahah*. A few verses later, in 12:3, where their redemption is mentioned, the same word occurs. This word comes into English often as families or kindreds, but really has no exact English translation. One thing we do know about the word is that when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, there were 12 tribes but 60 *mishpahah*. Two of the tribes were so small as to be referred to as *mishpahah*. That is, they were both a tribe (*goyim*) and apparently also of the size of one of the *mishpahah*. The other ten tribes were larger and averaged a half dozen *mishpahah* within them. It is especially significant that in the remainder of Genesis, in all five instances where it is clearly said that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are to be blessed and through whom all of the kindreds or peoples of the earth would be blessed, the word *mishpahah* alternates with *goyim*. That is, in the first and last instances, the word is *goyim*, while in the middle three instances the word is *mishpahah*, the smaller entity. In the Septuagint, all five cases are translated uniformly ta ethne, which is the Greek word in the Great Commission of Matthew 28. In none of these instances does the Bible speak with the typical American perspective which would be inclined to translate the key clause, “to be a blessing to all of the individuals of the earth.”

Parenthetically, when American mission leaders prior to the 1910 Edinburgh conference parceled out the remaining task of missions, it is interesting to note that they did it on the basis of the number of individuals to be won, not the number of peoples to be disciplined. I confess I still find myself slipping into that American pattern of thinking. When I was a kid, the key verse of the Bible was “He that winneth souls is wise,” and “personal work” was the chief priority and strategy of my church. Later I got acquainted with the Navigators, who stressed “follow up,” and also with the world of missions with its emphasis upon a church planting type of follow up as the chief priority and strategy. Only recently have I begun to rearrange my thought patterns to conform to the perspective of the Commissioning of Abraham in Genesis and to the Great Commission itself, which speaks of the discipling of peoples.

However, the fact that God spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob about the peoples of the earth rather than the people (individuals) of the earth certainly does not mean that God is unconcerned about the winning of individual souls. I do not have to throw away what I learned as a youth. But I do believe now that the distinction between individuals versus peoples in these passages means that the Bible itself takes seriously the cultural and linguistic traditions of the individuals we seek to win to Christ. For one thing, we must be willing to allow individuals the Christian liberty to seek and to enjoy their own group fellowship so long as this is not seen as an escape from the very real Christian unity and solidarity which God expects from all of those who are bought by the blood of the Lamb.

Before leaving this subject, let us be sure to identify just one thing that we do not mean. There have been legitimate fears abroad that in defining frontiers, we would fall prey accidentally to the American cultural emphasis upon anthropological, sociological, or humanistically defined categories. I personally believe that the Bible almost always refers to units that could be called ethnolinguistic. This is because normal affinities in human societies are developed genetically, and thus there is literally a blood bond in most cases. I certainly do not believe there is any reason to go beyond this Biblical recognition of the usual source of human affinities as we try to do our work today. However, one thing we can do, and I believe we must do, is to try to think God's thoughts after Him in the endeavor to understand just why such resulting units are important to Him. If we are willing to do that then I don't believe we have to go very far before we recognize that one of the significant traits of all such units is the virtually automatic communication which takes place within them. That is, the most efficient missionary target is not necessarily a group tied by common biological genes but one which has common, current, effective, internal communication.

It is true that as various mission thinkers have been groping toward a definition of people group, some definitions may not seem to have been derived from the Bible at all. For me, at least, a significant point concerns the potential such groups have for rapid, nearly automatic, internal communication. Since this is the trait that is so significant to missionary communicators, this is undoubtedly the reason such an entity has been highlighted in the Bible all along. I myself have recently made a new attempt to describe such groups in a manner harmonious with the intent of the Bible, and have come up with what might be called an evangelistic definition as follows: "The nature of the group of people significant for mission strategy is that such a group is the maximum size within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of acceptance or understanding." May we, for this discussion at least, call such a group a Unimax People, that is, a group unified in communication, maximum in size. Now, while this definition does not apparently employ Biblical language, I believe it describes an entity important to the Bible, reflecting the Bible's missionary concern for relentless and rapid evangelism as its reason for importance.

This definition, then, speaks both of size and the quality of internal communication. In order for communication to be evangelistically effective, the size of a Unimax People will normally be relatively small—smaller and more unified than a modern country. How small is it? The two words *mishpahah* and *goyim* are used almost synonymously (for example, in Gen. 10:5, 10:20, 10:31 and 10:32), but *goyim* always comes second and apparently tends to be the larger of the two entities. The same would

be true of the words translated languages and tribes, as we have seen. Wycliffe, for example, tries to deal with languages, while Gospel Recordings must deal with sub-dialects due to variations in pronunciation. Thus we must count more tribal peoples to be reached than Wycliffe lists languages to be translated. That is, “a Unimax People” may often be smaller than a language or tribal group. I have in my own writings tried to allow for the possibility that there are entities both larger and smaller than the size of a given Unimax People or Biblical nation of strategic interest to missionaries. Since the *mishpahah* is a fairly small unit, I have in the past classified it as mini-sphere by contrast to still smaller units that could be called microspheres and larger units that could be called macro-spheres, (e.g. a larger tribe) and still larger units that could be called mega-spheres (e.g., the Semites).

An example can also be drawn from that largest ethnolinguistic unit on this planet--the Han Chinese. Remember that we do not refer to China. Not all peoples in China belong to the Han Chinese mega-sphere, and some Han Chinese peoples (like the Minnan in Taiwan) are mainly outside of China. We further note that the Han mega-sphere contains a number of macro-spheres—the Mandarin, the Cantonese, the Minnan, the Swatow, the Hakka, etc. But these units are not only too large to be *mishpahah* but are internally too diverse to be considered Unimax Peoples. Does the massive *mishpahah* bloc fit my definition, “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of acceptance and understanding?” I think not. Now that the Gospel is clearly loose among the Cantonese, will it spread to touch all Cantonese peoples automatically? I think not. Do we still have to take seriously the dialects and differences within the Cantonese macro-sphere? I think so. That is, neither the Han Chinese nor the Cantonese represent units sufficiently unified to be called a Unimax People.

In other words, what is crucial about a Unimax People is the size of the group, not just the unified condition of the group. Since there are units smaller than the Cantonese sphere to which we must as missionary strategists pay specific attention, that is why I have called a mass of humanity as large as the Cantonese a macro-sphere. The terminology I have employed in the past allows for both mini-spheres and microspheres within the Cantonese macro-sphere. Starting from the largest to the smallest, the Han Chinese are a mega-sphere or a mega-people, the Cantonese are a macro-sphere or a macro-people. But it is the 50 or so sub-groups of Cantonese that are Unimax Peoples, which I have called mini-spheres or mini-peoples. The still smaller clan level, secret society units, for example, are the microspheres or micro-peoples. In this series of mega, macro, mini, micro, it is the next-to-the-smallest unit, the mini-sphere, that should, I believe, be considered the mission-relevant Biblically important Unimax People. The macro is one notch too large to be sufficiently unified, while the micro is unnecessarily small, being part of a larger, still unified group.

This brings us to the doorstep of our next consideration. We can say, using this terminology, that the distinctive breakthrough activity of a mission is not complete if it has merely penetrated a mega or macro-sphere, and if there are still mini-spheres or what I have called Unimax Peoples still unpenetrated. On the other hand, the unique and distinctive breakthrough activity of a mission agency (as compared to the work of evangelism) may, in fact, be over long before all the tiny microspheres within a Unimax

People have been penetrated. What, then, is this distinctive, spiritual, breakthrough ministry which is unique to the function of a mission agency?

III. The Spiritual Need of the Frontier Peoples

I believe that all groups continue to have spiritual needs, both before and after penetration by the Gospel has taken place. However, the Frontier People have a special kind of need with which ordinary evangelism cannot readily cope. To use language we have already employed, we may ask the question, "What crucial, measurable element is absent from those groups called Frontier Peoples by the new IFMA committee?" Or the other side of the coin: what does a mission agency have to accomplish within a Unimax People in order for that group no longer to be considered a frontier? This issue has to be one of the most fascinating, exciting and strategic issues in missions today. It is not enough any longer to get by with phrases such as "turning the work over to the nationals." What kind of work? Which nationals?, etc. , are some of the questions left unanswered. But I do not believe that we need to be overly concerned about some measurement that can infallibly tell us exactly when a mission agency could disengage in whole or in part.

For one thing, it is a myth that mission agencies do not know how to disengage, or that they have not been doing this for a long time. It is also a myth that this is easy to do. Finally, for me at least, there is something self-correcting about the whole process so long as the remaining frontiers are kept in view. By comparison, engagement versus disengagement is secondary.

Thus it seems to me that the most important practical response of the IFMA agencies to the new emphasis upon the remaining frontiers may precisely not be to try to distinguish technically between what is and what is now no longer a mission frontier. In all cases we must either deal with unquestionable frontiers or be active in promoting outreach to unquestionable frontiers. Thus in all mission activity today, just so long as the unquestionable frontiers are kept clear, we cannot go far wrong. It is the Pauline trait that wherever he was, whatever he was doing, he kept clearly in mind the unquestionable frontiers. In this sense Paul was never not a missionary. I have come to believe that the distinctive work of a mission agency is both to work for, not merely to work in the opening up of new fields among truly frontier peoples, the unquestionable frontiers.

I do not mind where a mission sends its people or spends its money so long as the unquestionably Frontier Peoples, living in the darkest, most hopeless and least likely places, are the fairly direct goal of the activity. In this sense all missionaries wherever they are working can and must be frontier minded.

Speaking personally, I don't mind if missionaries are sent where people already have the Bible in their own language. It matters what they go for. Do they either go to frontiers or to stir up interest in frontiers? What grieves me greatly is the willingness I see (both at home and abroad) to settle for a Gospel that merely blesses people but does not lay upon them also the biblical mandate to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. I thus sometimes wonder if there can be any biblical Christianity that is not frontier mission minded. What grieves me is to see the massive investments we have made in church buildings and in school programs, colleges and seminaries both at home and abroad which in almost all cases fail almost completely in taking seriously the debt of all believers to those at the ends of the earth.

It is not enough that every mission engages in some frontier work somewhere. It is the unique distinctive of a mission agency that it must do all its work everywhere with the very last tribe and tongue and peoples of the earth uppermost in mind. This means it must do what is necessary to make sure that all churches everywhere maintain as their highest concern the peoples that have not yet heard the Gospel. This leads us to a brief reflection on the wide role of a mission agency.

IV. The Full Mandate of the Mission Agency

I used to believe very simply that the most distinctive role of a mission is not the nurture of a national church once it is planted, but the constant moving on and on to the remaining frontiers. In this view the missions are the construction companies. Once a building is built, they do not convert over to being management experts who then stay on to help the people who inhabit the new building to do their work better. No, they fold up shop and go elsewhere to break ground again.

However, more recently I have begun to wonder whether the full mandate of the mission society is not much more than such an illustration would allow. Granted that the mission agencies are the technical people most likely to know how effectively to achieve a genuine breakthrough into a new Unimax People. And, if they forget how, that's pretty bad. But as I have tried to understand the challenge of the frontiers today, I must confess that the major obstacle I see to the goal of a Church for Every People by the Year 2000 is not at all the unwillingness or inability of the agencies (as is the widespread perspective of young people and many pastors today). Many large churches are restive, thinking about overseas churches, and begin to wonder if pastors back home do not know better than the missionary how churches are supposed to be run--and so why not send local church people from the U.S. directly to take a hand in the life of the churches overseas? Or people back home get the idea that the national churches are the best ones to do the job because their people don't cost as much and "they already know the language."

What people back home don't understand is that almost by definition true frontier peoples precisely don't have any such national workers. Groups lacking national workers are not ever in the picture seen by the home church anymore. The very existence of frontier peoples is not understood in the home churches nor in the overseas churches. Thus the missions themselves face a dilemma. They are by birthright prepared for the frontiers, but no one else is. Sunday school materials reflect either the church situation overseas or nothing at all about missions. Christian schools, colleges and seminaries, both at home and abroad, 98 percent of the time talk about fields where there is an existing church. On the other hand, resource-wise, we have more reason to believe that in a sustained drive we really can reach every last people group on the face of the earth by the year 2000. This is especially true if the overseas churches boom in to help.

But today everywhere you look it seems like we are back in Hudson Taylor's day. A massive educational campaign will be necessary if we are going to make any really significant stride forward. God in our time is raising up many new eager young people. But the major infrastructure of their nurture and development is almost totally missing. It has taken me a long time to come to the place where I now believe the full mandate of the mission must be understood to include a great deal more educational effort. We have spent years introducing the people back home to the existence of the national churches now on our older fields. Now we must re-educate them to understand that there are still

many places we must go, where national evangelists simply are not to be found, where work must start from scratch. For a time I actually believe we will do well to use new recruits to rebuild the home base of awareness before starting again to ship people out as fast as they are ready. We face a retirement avalanche in the next few years. We could send out 25,000 new missionaries in the next ten years and barely hold our own. The full mandate of the mission in the home situation must now be recognized.

Proposal

That IFMA missions, in response to the crisis of misunderstanding regarding the frontiers among pastors, lay people and students, take the following actions:

1. Encourage voluntary participation of member agencies in an enlarged public relations activity which can seed articles into Christian publications, develop common study materials and courses for local churches and student groups, get behind the Wherever magazine and the Today's Mission magazine and help expand circulation of the Evangelical Missions Quarterly as well, develop joint efforts on campuses wherever possible, employing the IFMA designation rather than the individual mission name as a first step forward."

2. Help people back home to see the great challenge in less discouraging terms: Why not parcel out the remaining task in measurable people goals? I believe the IFMA mission force ought to be willing to take on 20% of the remaining peoples Biblically defined. Then it should be simple to see just what each agency might try to accomplish by the year 2,000. Back in 1909 great goal setting took place because the total number of individuals yet to be won was parceled out so that the major agencies knew concretely what they were responsible for. Both the agencies and the people groups will be helped by this.

3. Recommend agencies seriously consider involvement in a nationwide frontier emphasis prayer campaign such as the Frontier Fellowship being tried by the North Africa Mission, Africa Inland Mission, Regions Beyond Missionary Union and SEND International.

Editorial on Christianity Is Not Losing Ground
Mission Frontiers May-June 1993

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/editorial-comment81>

I am upset again by some recent highly-visible statements to the effect that Christianity is losing ground in the face of the global population explosion. (Is this what I am always talking about? Am I always speaking out against “mission pessimism”? Maybe so. Why not?)

In this issue a whole section is being reprinted that sums up many of the key issues in missions right now. That is our “White-Paper Centerfold” which is pages 27-30.

However, since our cover story highlights the marvelous new edition of Patrick Johnstone’s *Operation World*, (does it present an overall global decline?) it may be sensible to take a new 2,000-year look at things. You can see the detailed table on page 6.

OK, How Do You React?

Are you upset if I tell you that an otherwise trustworthy book by an outstanding mission leader says, “We simply can’t reach the remaining Unreached Peoples using only the missionary approaches of the past.”

Or, how’s this:

“Our best evangelization efforts to date are not capable of reversing the apparent inevitability that the non-Christian population will grow, and grow, and grow.”

Worse still, the latest MARC Handbook, on page nine, has a full page devoted to a tragically erroneous impression: The page heading says “NOT KEEPING UP,” and then it goes on to give estimates that actually prove, if anything, the opposite, concluding with the question, “What (new) mission strategies would help us get ahead of the population curve?”—the implication being that we are lagging behind the curve.

Well, how do you react?

Let’s Get It Straight!

For over 25 years I have been teaching the history of the growth of Christianity. That story is very simply one of expansion. Incredible, constant expansion. We Christians started out as a tiny movement. Today one out of three people in the world is called a Christian. Obviously--between then and now--the proportion of Christians in the world has been increasing!

Really? Yes. Christians went from one in a thousand, to one in a hundred, to one in three! That’s expansion, not “failure to keep up.”

It’s like rabbits and cattle in Australia. In the early years it did not seem like the rabbits could possibly catch up. The annual increase in rabbits was small. But rabbits were “expanding at a higher rate” even though they may have seemed to be “falling behind” in sheer additions every year until they overtook the cattle.

What Is a Christian?

Here is a caution: let’s not be too concerned about the global percentage of “Christians in general.” Frankly, piling up “nominal Christians” is not terribly important compared to counting on the number of Bible-believing, or Bible-studying, or serious

Christians, whatever you want to call them. And that is what is done on page 6. That group starts out at about one quarter of one percent in AD100, and by the middle of 1992 was virtually 10%.

This 10% is a more important number than the fact that “Christians in general” are now over 30% of the world's population. Come on! If you count such nominal Christians you might as well include Muslims, because a large percentage of today’s Christians know no more about the Bible or the Lord than do millions of Muslims.

However, let’s remember that as evangelicals we normally take seriously only those who are seriously Christian, those we say are truly “born again,” and so that is what we are doing in our calculations here.

Calling All Engineers!

As a former engineer, I have been keeping in touch with the latest estimates, and specifically with the world’s most specialized Christian statistician, David Barrett (also a former engineer). We have shared estimates about Christianity at every point in history, relying on as many other sources as possible.

I am therefore often amazed at off-hand statements that are often made, apparently conjured up from a durable perspective of pessimism. In America we seem always eager to shock ourselves. Good. But let's get the figures straight. Page 6 is one more attempt.

How Many Peoples?

Last time we tackled the recurrent question about the “how many people groups are yet to be reached.”

The Adopt A People Clearinghouse now has a valuable book out with about 5,500 peoples listed. The introduction to the book talks about “Clusters of People Groups” and gives an example of how one name listed could contain 200 unreached people groups.

I have found a better way to get at this whole question. When Joshua crossed the Jericho it was

ONE people—“The Children of Israel,” or it was

TWELVE peoples—the various “tribes” of Israel (*goyim* in Hebrew), or it was

SIXTY peoples—kindreds, (*mishpahah* in Hebrew).

Now if you knew the name for all of these, and listed them all in one single list, or if you list just the larger “clusters: you get very different total numbers. The AAPC book of 5,000+ peoples is admittedly a mixture, to be straightened out as soon as possible. But it may end up a list of 11,000, which is our best estimate.

Operation World!

This marvelous book at a mass-distribution price, is available for a few more days, after which time it will cost more to get it to you (double shipping) and a lot of other overhead you can avoid if you take a good look at p. 12 right now!

Blessings!

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 ethnē 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 worldviews, 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?

Operation World: Introduction

Mission Frontiers November-December 1993

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/operation-world-introduction>

This is the introduction to the special 100,000 edition mentioned on page 11. If Zondervan offered to print a special edition of 100,000 copies for you, what kind of an introduction would you devise for such an incredible book as this one? Well, here is what was finally printed:

Greetings!

This is probably the most amazing book you have ever held in your hands—beyond the Bible itself!

Would you like to go “behind the scenes” for a minute and glimpse a few of the unusual events surrounding the publication of this book?

We felt very privileged when Zondervan invited us to sponsor a special edition (identical in size and quality to the bookstore edition). We then contacted the hundreds of organizations listed on the back cover and on the other side of this sheet. The response was overwhelming and the book you hold is part of our order for 100,000! Add in the British version and a couple dozen other special editions and the entire print run is over 300,000 just in the first printing! (For the record: our low cost per copy was passed on right to the penny to those who participated in our 100,000 pre-print order.)

We hope you will be willing to encourage others to go down to the local bookstore and get a copy. It will cost a lot more—just as a vaccination at a doctor’s office needs to cost more than one given in an assembly-line mass vaccination. We hope everyone who gets a copy in our mass distribution attracts two people to buy through the normal bookstore channels!

What is so unusual about this book?

Things you will never hear on television or read in your newspaper are faithfully recorded here—namely, the earth-shaking impact of the Gospel in nearly every area of this globe.

This book sums it all up. It gathers together in one picture what all Christians know in part—their part of the picture, whether it be their missionary, or their denomination's efforts. But only Patrick Johnstone has ever put this all together in a small, economical book! Stop and pray for him—he has just lost his life companion, Jill, who herself had just finished putting together the children’s edition of this book before cancer took her life. As you pray for him, pray for the hundreds of thousands of people all over the globe, in many languages, who will be consulting this incredible picture of the work of God in every part of the world.

What is left to be done?

In view of that movement don’t quit now! Enormous strides have taken place. Christian resources are now greater than ever. One out of every ten human beings is a

Bible believing Christian. Consequently the remaining task is--relative to those major resources—easy!

Easy—if even ten percent of Christendom, even ten percent of the evangelical forces of Christendom, put aside trivialities and get busy to finish the task, and existing agencies get the help they need.

But, while easy, the task is not small. This book makes an enormous stride forward in listing not just the country-level status quo but, roughly, the situation with the actual “nations, tribes, and tongues” within the various countries—a staggeringly larger research task. In the next edition, we can hope, one more major step will be possible, to attempt to list or estimate the number of smaller units within the larger “ethnolinguistic” peoples to which this book refers.

How many groups to “reach”?

Perhaps a little summary would be helpful. The total number of distinct “peoples” in the world (many of them evidently clusters of smaller peoples) is listed in this book as only 11,874. This includes only 432 for India, for example, some of which are larger than ten million. We must remember that many of these have sub-groups (other scholars list anywhere from 1,262 to 2,795 groups for India).

Not surprisingly the Lausanne Statistics Task Force, has wisely suggested that there are likely 24,000 (of the smaller, mission- significant) peoples in the world, and--here is the key point--about half of these 24 thousand 1) still lack a church movement of their own, and 2) are sufficiently different to require separate missionary penetration in the early stages.

Mission agencies in particular, therefore, are concerned about any still-unpenetrated units, no matter how small, since it is their business to plant the Gospel in every “nation, tribe, and tongue”—something the Bible commands us to do. Most mission leaders agree that only when there is a genuine response to the Gospels—in the form of a church movement—can we be sure other members of a group have had a fully valid opportunity to hear the Gospel. Thus, response is the best (and perhaps the only Biblical) measure of adequate exposure.

The key to mission strategy

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization gathered a large group of mission leaders and missiologists in March 1982 and clearly resolved the question of the most important measurement of mission achievement—namely the planting of a church movement within every people. Only when this is done can the Gospel reach every person.

Ever since that meeting in 1982 the majority of mission leaders has shared the view that “reaching a people” must consist of planting an adequate church movement. Note that in this book the definition of “Reached/Unreached” on page 654, may be read as principally an objection to the use of the words reached and unreached rather than a rejection of the concept assigned to those words at the meeting in 1982.

It remains all-important that in any group the individuals we all wish to win must be given the opportunity to join a fellowship not just hear a message. Thus far, the kinds of statistics which are used to judge “percent evangelized,” or “%E,” in this book do not directly define such a goal. It is worth noting also that political boundaries enter into the

statistics in this book, but political boundaries are not always relevant to a church movement. The Gospel hops over borders more easily than it penetrates language and cultural barriers!

We are exceedingly thankful and indebted to Patrick Johnstone for the years of careful research that produced so unusual and valuable a book that it may have one of the highest initial print runs in the history of Christian literature. And—it unmistakably focuses on the completing of the Great Commission!

He has made it possible for all of us to revel in the grandeur of the work of God throughout the world. This book reveals a vital reality totally unknown to the secular media of our time. Both global problems and global faith are galloping to the end of history. Don't miss out! This book is your day by day key to the reality of God.

Is One Kind of Mission Work More Important Than Another?

Mission Frontiers November-December 1993

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/is-one-kindof-mission-work-more-important-than-another1>

No! Yes! No! Yes! How Can We Decide?

“Our mission committee can’t agree on priorities.” “Our money must go for direct evangelism or count me out.” “We can’t support people who are not overseas.” “France is just as important as Asia.” “Real missionaries ought to be working on the frontiers.”

Mission Priorities

Mission committees in local churches are assailed from every side by “new ministries” with new angles, new ideas, new emphases.

When a new idea comes along some members of the committee are the “early adopters” and race out ahead, jumping on the bandwagon.

Others typically are more cautious, and often caution is the best policy. But not always.

Even if we get used to expecting people to jump to new ideas and want to dump old ideas, you can’t just dump missionaries already out there—are some missionaries in the wrong place? (See the article, “Are 90% of missionaries in the wrong Place?” on pages 34 and 35.)

Even mission executives find it very, very difficult to deal with differing mission field priorities.

Let’s take a quick look at the record. In the United States in the last half century no one denomination mission board has a better record in starting mission-minded overseas churches than the Christian & Missionary Alliance. The C&MA supports one of the very largest bodies of cross-cultural missionaries. More than any other agency I know of, it has consistently stressed the inherent mission-planting obligation of a mission agency. C&MA has not considered it good enough just to start an overseas church movement--if that movement does not rise with the vision to add its gifts to the completion of the global missionary task. SIM is quite similar.

And, perhaps the best example of bold stress on frontiers at the expense of other kinds of mission work is the story of the C&MA and SIM and the other “Faith Missions” which a hundred years ago performed the valuable, but thankless task of frontier emphasis. Their founders went around stirring up the frontiers inland (rather than the 10/40 window), and bringing down on themselves enormous criticism.

But the whole mission world began to stir, and within 20 years moved decisively into the new frontiers.

The greatest Christian mobilization effort in history is now gaining momentum, moving ahead with a quickening pace, and with more and more year-2000 goals that are concrete, measurable, and feasible.

At the same time, as we dig out our tools to do this huge job, we find that old slogans are not enough. As we get closer to the end we see things in greater detail.

We are being forced to speak more precisely. We cannot glibly talk of “winning the world to Christ” without specifying just what we expect that to mean. We can’t go on talking about how many people “have never heard the name of Christ” when we have never believed that was good enough anyhow. Confusion right now is necessary, painful, helpful, even encouraging when you take a close look.

RIGHT NOW, IN 1993, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST PRUDENT ORDER OF MISSION PRIORITIES? ONE MAN’S OPINION:

Priority One: More mission mobilizers—mission pastors, more active mission committees, more missionary education on the local level. Why do I say this? Because I believe there must be at least 40,000 younger adults who have in the past few years made a missionary decision but who will never make it to the field—due to local ignorance, indifference, baby-boomer detachment, school debts etc. Only crash education can stem the downward spiral. Anyone who can help 100 missionaries to the field is more important than one missionary on the field.

Priority Two: Missionaries staying where they are, turning to mobilize the overseas churches for missions. This is the greatest single under-utilized resource for missions in the world today. Our missionaries need to be not just church planting but mission planting missionaries. New missionaries might well specialize in this because it is the youth of the mission

Priority Three: Missionaries sent to the pioneer fields, at home or abroad, but especially at home, because most missions cannot do this due to local churches being unwilling to support missionaries reaching truly unreached people groups represented in the United States.

Precise Ways of Talking About Missions

PIONEER MISSIONS = frontier missions, reaching unreached peoples.

UNREACHED PEOPLES = Peoples within which there is no viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.

PEOPLES (in the phrase, Unreached Peoples) = groups within which there are no barriers to the gospel (and thus can be reached with a single “Missiological breakthrough”)