

Frontiers in Mission

Discovering and Surmounting Barriers to the *Missio Dei*

This is an inductive, autobiographical presentation of the process of finding, recognizing, or discovering problems. It is only secondarily focused on solving them. Its purpose is to search for solutions for problems already under consideration, but also to use those problems as a means of gaining expertise in the identification of other obstacles to common and uncommon goals.

Ralph D. Winter



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From: <RDW112233@aol.com>

To: <CCIBrasil@xc.org>

Sent: Saturday, June 08, 2002 1:05 PM

Subject: Re: Early history of the idea of "Hidden Peoples"

Dear Jason,

I am very delighted indeed to discover another person wrestling with the facts of mission history and teaching the same.

You said, <<I teach about Carey and Taylor and Townsend (and McGavran) and I also teach about Winter! I focus on Townsend's language emphasis, with the key year being 1932, and on your "hidden peoples" emphasis, with the key year being 1974.>>

First, at Lausanne in 1974 I did not introduce anything so new as Townsend and McGavran, just tried to clarify the statistical implications of what they did. Your idea of a "fourth era." thus does not seem to be as resoundingly different from the third as the third, and second were different from each of their preceding eras. Why? As a matter of fact, buried in the insights of both McGavran and Townsend were, respectively, the reality of the vertical and horizontal "segmentation" of humanity, in vertically deployed castes and horizontally deployed tribes and other societies.

On the other hand, McGavran's perspective did in fact tend to head missions away from unpenetrated groups toward the fostering of "people movements to Christ" within societies already possessing some sort of breakthrough which he called "bridges of God" (meaning a seeker from one group worshipping already on the fringe of another group) and because of this perspective he precisely and logically did not embrace the unreached peoples movement for several years.

He was unvaryingly friendly to me as a person but was, early on, quite dubious about expending limited mission forces on totally unapproached groups when there were groups already penetrated that badly needed "discipling to the fringes." And, Townsend's perspective focused on the practical task of translating the Bible (and a good deal of this kind of challenge even today Wycliffe is investing on groups that are already "reached") but he certainly did highlight the plight of groups isolated by language differences (needing not so much a church movement as the Word in their language).

A comment may also be due concerning the phrase "**hidden peoples**." I was on the ground floor when the early thinking was developed for by-passed peoples, and felt that "unreached" was a bad choice due to its previous and current use with the phrase "unreached people" (meaning individuals unconverted) which is actually a distinctly different concept from the need of a **group within which there is not yet a viable indigenous evangelizing church movement**. Furthermore, and even more importantly, I felt that the World Vision office assisting with the Lausanne Congress unwisely defined what an unreached people was (in the early stages, "less than 20% Christian").

Thus, at the U.S. Center for World Mission, rather than dispute that definition, which presently was affirmed by the Lausanne Strategy Working

Group (somewhat dominated by Ed Dayton of World Vision), we simply chose a different phrase (Hidden Peoples) and defined that kind of an entity as a group lacking "a viable indigenous evangelizing church movement."

The "official" Lausanne-backed definition ran immediately into opposition all over the world on the grounds that the ambiguousness of the term "Christian" (nominal or born again) seesawed the definition between two absurdities. If "nominal," then many groups would make it as "reached" which really weren't, or if "born again" then no group in the world would make it as "reached."

But, for a brief period of years the Strategy Working Group (SWG) felt pressured to talk of "born again Christians" and thus had successively to revise the percentage down to ten, five, two, etc. Meanwhile we employed "hidden peoples" in all our literature. Early in 1982, Ed Dayton approached me with the thought that if we would accept their term "unreached peoples" and give up "hidden" they would accept our "presence-or-absence-of-the-church" definition and would convene a suitably representative meeting of mission executives to endorse that change. They convened the meeting (March 1982 in Chicago, sponsored by EFMA and the Lausanne Committee) and the change was made and we no longer referred to "hidden" peoples (somewhat reluctantly due to the inherent disadvantages of "unreached" as above).

Equally important in my eyes at the same meeting the group endorsed a definition I suggested (actually worked out on the plane going to the meeting) for the kind of people group we were trying to reach: "the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance," and these words were duly added to the already existing but somewhat indefinite Lausanne SWG wording "a significantly large group of individuals . sharing ..."

Soon after the 1982 meeting, and without the backing of the group that attended in 1982, the SWG dropped out the phrase "as a church planting movement" apparently because World Vision did not deal with the planting of churches. However, in all our literature, Perspectives Reader, etc. we have held to the original March wording. This is not because groups that would not qualify for "church planting" (lacking male, female, old, and young) are not of exceedingly great evangelistic strategic importance (see my comments on "sociopeoples" versus "unimax peoples" on page 514 of the latest Perspectives Reader, but rather the fact that unless an integral population is encompassed you really don't have the conditions of church planting—the NT always refers to a family and household-based entity, which is male and female, old and young.

Well, I hope these comments may be of some help. I am enthusiastic about anyone teaching mission history. I am eager to be of any help to you I can.

Warmly,

Ralph D. Winter

The Analysis of a Movement

Ralph D. Winter

From the booklet *Thy Kingdom Come*, for the GCOWE '95 in Korea

May 1995

W1289

Chapter One: *By the Year 2000?*

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

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

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

Note the final phrase especially.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What this means is that our concept of God's desire to reach all peoples and persons must somehow be part of His desire for His Kingdom to

come on earth. Other verses say that He looks toward the time when all the nations of the world will declare His glory.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Every people—kingdoms of darkness

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

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

Satan wields his control over individuals by dominating their groups. Most people follow the lead of their own group. Very few individuals are perfectly unrestricted thinkers for themselves. Sometimes it is baffling to missionaries to know how to penetrate a group. Often the breakthrough comes through a miraculous healing or the unaccountable conversion of a key person, not through normal evangelism. Yes, normal evangelism only becomes possible after that breakthrough occurs.

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

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

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

And we know that it is our fight, not just His, and that He is fighting with us. We do not need to worry about losing. We know that in every place on earth the key effort is not going to be *our*

wisdom or even our hard work. It will be all of that *plus* His sovereign power breaking down the very gates of hell. And we know that He is still doing miracles.

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

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

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

Chapter Two:

A Church

for Every People?

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

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

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

His concern for converts was that they ought to be encouraged to reach their own people rather than separate from them, and to do that he felt that

they should stay within the social sphere of their own people. McGavran's marvelous little "letter" on this subject is printed in full in the Appendix of this booklet. But at this point we need to quote some of it.

Here are two of the seven principles in McGavran's short essay or letter:

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

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

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

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

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

(A closely related) principle is to try to get group decisions for Christ. If only one person decides to follow Jesus, do not baptize him immediately. Say to him, "You and I will work together to lead another five

or ten or, God willing, fifty of your people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior so that when you are baptized, you are baptized with them." Ostracism is very effective against one lone person. But ostracism is weak indeed when exercised against a group of a dozen. And when exercised against two hundred it has practically no force at all.

What is the upshot?

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

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

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

Beware of the Americans!

What is a *church* in the phrase "A Church for Every People?" In America—especially in urban America—churches have become more and more collections of unrelated individuals huddling together—individuals who for the most part have already been loosened up from their natural fami-

lies with the church becoming a kind of substitute family. Married couples may have children and bring them to church (where they are normally segregated off into age-graded fellowships), but they are not often asked about their own parents. And people who are older are not asked about their children. Individual decisions in the church are as important as individualism has become in secular society. Thus, although the churches of urban America to some significant extent perform the functions of a family, they often do so in the absence of—or possibly even at the expense of—the natural families. For example, although I have attended evangelical churches in many parts of the United States, I have never heard a sermon on why or how to have family devotions. Personal devotions, yes; not *family* devotions.

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

If we seriously seek "A Church for Every People" we must recover this Biblical harmony between natural families and "church" families. It will probably be much easier for missionaries from the Third World to do this than for Americans, whose instincts may often lead them (in their haste to "plant a church") to establish congregations composed mainly of "loosened up individuals," social refugees, or even social "deviants." But, in actuality, to work within the culture rather than against it may often be easier, not harder!

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

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

Missiologically defined peoples?

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

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

Chapter Three:

The Gospel for Every Person?

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

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

Groups within groups?

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

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

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

Defining groups by ministry tools

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

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

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

these still-smaller groups may be able to hear via the trade language of their areas.

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

By contrast, note the differing circumstances of the mission groups which employ the *ear-gate*. Take Gospel Recordings, for example. These marvelous people understand perfectly that several groups which can *read* the same printed page may *pronounce* what they see in discordant ways, and as a result the people speaking the different dialects simply will not all listen to a radio or cassette that speaks one of the other dialects—even though its message may appear the same on the printed page. Accordingly, as long as Gospel Recordings uses the ear-gate it has to take these subgroups seriously. As a result, Gospel Recordings estimates more than 10,000 groups to be reached—if you employ the ear-gate and the mother tongue. However, it is possible to put the minimal Gospel message into cassette more easily than it is to produce a substantial portion of the Bible in printed form. Thus, Gospel Recordings, with only a staff of 60, has already dealt with more than 4,500 groups! Peoples need the minimal Gospel on a few cassettes. They also need a substantial portion of the Bible (not necessarily just the New Testament).

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

Barriers of prejudice!

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

Fortunately, however, it is true that virtually all

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

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

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

Measure or verify?

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

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

tions.

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

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

In the meantime...

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

tion about a now fairly comprehensive list of peoples.

This is a practical and temporary shift of attention away from the simple, missiological question, "Is this group reached?" That is, is there a "people movement to Christ" present? Or, is there "a pioneer church planting movement present?" Rather, the question has temporarily become, "Is there published information about this group which could give us some light of some sort on the missiological question?"

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

Do we have enough to work with?

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

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

Appendix

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

Donald A. McGavran

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

The One-by-One Method

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

One single congregation arising in the way just described is almost always a conglomerate church—made up of members of several different segments of society. Some old, some young, orphans, rescued persons, helpers and ardent seekers. All seekers are carefully screened to make sure they really intend to receive Christ. In due time a church building is erected and, lo, "a church in that people." It is a conglomerate church. It is sealed off from all the people groups of that region. No segment of the population says, "That group of worshipers is us." They are quite

right. It is not. It is ethnically quite a different social unit.

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

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

One-by-one, is relatively easy to accomplish. Perhaps 90 out of 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. I want to emphasize that. Perhaps 90 out of every 100 missionaries who intend church planting, get only conglomerate congregations. Such missionaries preach the Gospel, tell of Jesus, sell tracts and Gospels and evangelize in many other ways. They welcome inquirers, but whom do they get? They get a man here, a woman there, a boy here, a girl there, who for various reasons are willing to become Christians and patiently to endure the mild or severe disapproval of their people.

If we understand how churches grow and do not grow on new ground, in untouched and unreached peoples, we must note that the process I have just described seems unreal to most missionaries. “What,” they will exclaim, “could be a better way of entry into all the unreached peo-

ples of that region than to win a few individuals from among them? Instead of resulting in the sealed-off church you describe, the process really gives us points of entry into every society from which a convert has come. That seems to us to be the real situation.”

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

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

The People Movement Approach

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

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

The second principle is that the national leader, or the missionary and his helpers, should concentrate on one people. If you are going to establish a cluster of growing congregations amongst, let us say, the Nair people of Kerala, which is the south-

west tip of India, then you would need to place most of your missionaries and their helpers so that they can work among the Nairs. They should proclaim the Gospel to Nairs and say quite openly to them, "We are hoping that, within your caste, there soon will be thousands of followers of Jesus Christ, who will remain solidly in the Nair community." They will, of course, not worship the old gods; but then plenty of Nairs don't worship their old gods—plenty of Nairs are Communist, and ridicule their old gods.

Nairs whom God calls, who choose to believe in Christ, are going to love their neighbors more than they did before, and walk in the light. They will be saved and beautiful people. They will remain Nairs while, at the same time they have become Christians. To repeat, concentrate on one people group. If you have three missionaries, don't have one evangelizing this group, another that, and a third 200 miles away evangelizing still another. That is a sure way to guarantee that any church started will be small, non-growing, one-by-one churches. **The social dynamics of those sections of society will work solidly against the eruption of any great growing people movement to Christ.**

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

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

"I am a better son than I was before; I am a better father than I was before; I am a better husband than I was before; and I love you more than I

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

Encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their people in most matters.

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

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

The fifth principle is this: **Aim for scores of groups of people to become Christians in an even flowing stream across the years.** One of the common mistakes made by missionaries, eastern as well as western, all around the world is that when a few become Christians—perhaps 100, 200 or even 1,000—the missionaries spend all their time teaching them. They want to make them good Christians and they say to themselves, "If these people become good Christians, then the Gospel will spread." So for years they concentrate on a few congregations. By the time, ten or twenty years later, that they begin evangelizing outside that group, the rest of the people no longer want to become Christians. That has happened again and again. **This principle requires that, from the very beginning, the missionary keeps on reaching out to new groups.** "But," you say, "is not this a sure way to get poor Christians who don't know the Bible? If we follow that principle we shall soon have a lot of 'raw' Christians. Soon we shall have a community of perhaps five thousand people who are very sketchily Christian."

Yes, that is certainly a danger. At this point, we must lean heavily upon the New Testament, remembering the brief weeks or months of instruction Paul gave to his new churches. We must trust the Holy Spirit, and believe that God has called those people out of darkness into His wonderful light. As between two evils, giving them too little

Christian teaching and allowing them to become a sealed-off community that cannot reach its own people, the latter is much the greater danger. We must not allow new converts to become sealed-off. We must continue to make sure that a constant stream of new converts comes into the ever-growing cluster of congregations.

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

As we work for Christward movements in every people, let us not make the mistake of believing that "one-by-one out of the society into

the church" is a bad way. One precious soul willing to endure severe ostracism in order to become a follower of Jesus—one precious soul coming all by himself—is a way that God has blessed and is blessing to the salvation of mankind. But it is a slow way. And it is a way which frequently seals off the convert's own people from any further hearing of the Gospel.

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

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

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

The Story of a Movement

Ralph D. Winter

In the booklet *Thy Kingdom Come*, for the GCOWE '95 in Korea
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Chapter One:

Where the Idea Began

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

William Carey, 1810

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

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

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

Chapter Two:

Where the Idea Almost Ended

John R. Mott, 1910

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

William Carey was called into the ministry

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

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

Thus, in 1906 he wrote:

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

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

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

Oldham), Mott drummed up one of the most influential conferences in world history.

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

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

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

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

Edinburgh, 1910

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

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

2. It focused solely on whatever it would

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, before jumping from 1910 to 1972 (and on to 1980) let's look at some intervening world-level or very large meetings which were not quite the same as the 1910 meeting. Since a general description of such

meetings would take more space than we have available here, what *key ideas* should we look for in these other meetings that were significant factors in 1910?

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

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

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

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

Chapter Three:

Significant Ripples of 1910

Chicago, 1960

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

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

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

Thus, Congress documents highlighted

the “left-behind” concern:

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

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

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

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

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

Wheaton, 1966

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

However, the focus was not so much on plans for finishing the task as on unity around essentials. This emphasis was not unreasonable since the meeting united the

IFMA and the EFMA for the first time. The ten themes stressed in the conference were syncretism, neo-universalism, proselytism, neo-Romanism, church growth, foreign missions, evangelical unity, evaluating methods, social concern, and a hostile world. These were summarized in the widely heralded "Wheaton Declaration." Note, however, that only one of the ten phrases, "foreign missions," referred to the unfinished task. The meeting closed, however, with a "Covenant" which spoke of "the evangelization of the world in this generation," which was part of the watchword of the movement that produced the 1910 meeting. The Canadian historian, Charles Tipp, said

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

Berlin, 1966

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

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

A notable feature of this meeting was the publication, as an official congress document, of a book by Paulus Scharpf, *The History of Evangelism*, (translated from the German by Dr. Henry's wife, Helga) which described a

number of true evangelists preaching justification by faith long before the Reformation.

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

Leysin, Switzerland, 1969

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

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

Greenlake, 1971

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

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

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

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

Chapter Four: A Second 1910?

Wheaton, 1974

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

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

But what was in that “Call?”

Its exact words were:

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

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

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

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

However,

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

2. There was no hint about closure.

These defects were remedied by the sponsoring committee of agency representatives before the meeting actually took place six

years later. Indeed, long before 1980, the '74 call was subject to two other major streams offering to sponsor and control it.

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

Lausanne, 1974

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

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

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

abound.

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

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

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

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

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

glance at a number of other milestones in the global movement we are tracing.

Chapter Five:

Events Along the Way: 1941-1995

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1973—Founding of the Association of Church Missions Committees

1973—Founding of the Asia Missions Association

1973—The great reversal of student attitude

toward missions as evidenced by the sudden rise in the percentage of students who responded to the missionary call at the Urbana Missionary Convention in December 1973; one direct result of that was the beginning of the Perspectives Study Program

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

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

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

1979—The EFMA Executives Retreat focused on Unreached Peoples.

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

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

1982—The formation of the IFMA Frontier Peoples Committee

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

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

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

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

1985—The first national level missions conference in Latin America

1986—Founding of the International Society for Frontier Missiology

1986—Caleb Project met 13,000 college stu-

dents face to face, challenging them for missions.

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

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

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

- the American Society of Church History
- the Wheaton College Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals
- the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
- a general student gathering at the original site at Mt. Hermon, Massachusetts. The heads of Campus Crusade, Navigators and InterVarsity all attended

1986—The Asia Missions Association met on a world level producing the Third-World Mission Association.

1986—At Amsterdam a meeting of 7000 TEMA students was held. (TEMA=The European equivalent of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.)

1987—COMIBAM (Congreso Misionero Ibero Americano), the first continental mission congress launched by Latin Americans, also the largest evangelical meeting ever held in Latin America on a continental basis (3,500 delegates, including 500 from Africa and Asia). This was followed by a similar meeting in Korea, sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (related to the World Evangelical Fellowship).

1987—At Dallas, Texas, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board sponsored a very strategic conference of (U.S.) mission executives to consider the overall global challenge from the standpoint of working on it together.

1989—The Singapore Global Consultation on World Evangelization, and the founding of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement

1989—The Lausanne II meeting at Manila

1989 to 1995—An incredible whirl of activity by the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, leading to the May 1995 meeting in Korea, the Global Consultation on World Evangelization—GCOWE II.

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

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

Chapter Six:

Finally, Edinburgh, 1980

The 1972 proposal for a second 1910 type of meeting to be held in 1980 finally materialized. It almost didn't. It was not easy to defend the significant features of the 1910 meeting which it followed, namely: 1) that its only participants were delegated executives from existing mission agencies, and 2) the focus of the conference was exclusively upon "unoccupied fields." Key leaders in both the World Council (Emilio Castro) and the Lausanne Committee (Leighton Ford) suggested that their traditions respectively would appropriately be the ones to coordinate the proposed meeting.

Consequently, the World Council moved its meeting at Melbourne back from 1981 to 1980. The Lausanne Committee organized a large meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, also for 1980. The chosen date of the latter (during the summer) forced the convening committee of Edinburgh 1980 to move its scheduled date to November, and even to change its more gen-

eral name (World Missionary Conference—as it was in 1910) to “World Consultation on Frontier Missions” at the suggestion of the Lausanne leaders.

Both the Melbourne and the Pattaya conferences were significant gatherings, but neither of them were designed to be parallel structurally to the 1910 conference in the terms mentioned above.

Thus, instead of the 1980 meeting being sponsored by either the WCC or Lausanne, a number of well-known mission agencies contributed members to an ad hoc planning committee for a worldwide conference of mission executives. Larry Allmon, chief executive of Gospel Recordings became the crucial chairperson of that committee. Although there was a certain sense of being overshadowed by the two giant conferences planned for that same year, the organizers clearly understood the distinctives of this particular conference and met every month with a keen sense of anticipation. In a little over a year the entire consultation was organized, and was convened in November of 1980.

In the spring of 1979 International Students, Inc. (see page 16) contributed Leiton Chin as Coordinator of the conference. It is hard to imagine what would have happened had it not been for his secondment for the crucial pre-consultation period.

Long before 1980, the Call of 1974 had been doing its work. In 1976 an article in *Misology, An International Journal*, “1980 and That Certain Elite” described in great detail both the Call (see above under 1974) and the response to it. Max Warren, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, indicated his interest and pledged cooperation (which happened even though he died before 1980). The Liebenzell Mission of Germany offered its facilities for the meeting.

Then Roy Spraggett of WEC in Scotland suggested that the meeting convene at the original 1910 site in Edinburgh, and offered to be responsible for arranging for the facilities there. The committee felt this would be ideal, and Larry Allmon made several trips to

Edinburgh to conclude the arrangements with Spraggett.

In August of 1979, more than a year before the meeting, the sponsoring committee of mission agency representatives voted,

That those formally participating consist of delegates from agencies with current involvement in or with formal organizational commitment to reaching hidden people groups

Note that *Hidden Peoples* were defined as “those cultural and linguistic subgroups, urban or rural, for which there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people.”

This definition, with slight changes of wording, was later adopted by the Lausanne-sponsored meeting in March of 1982 as the meaning of the phrase, *Unreached Peoples*. (See 1982, the Lausanne meeting on definitions, page 16.)

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

The cost of the meeting was very low since agencies appointing delegates provided travel costs as well as food and lodging expense. At the last minute a grant came from Anthony Rossi which assisted some of the Two-Thirds world delegates to be able to come.

A similar financial plan was followed by the January 1989 Singapore Global Conference on World Evangelization by the Year 2000 and Beyond, sparked by the vision of Thomas Wang. Dr. Wang had been deeply impressed in 1980 by the question of what God might be expecting of His people by the year 2000. He wrote a widely influential article, “By the year 2000, Is God Trying to Tell us Something?” The resulting meeting in Sin-

gapore was simple, unadorned, very low budget. A substantial gift from the Maclellan Foundation gave last-minute assistance.

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

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

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

In highlighting the Edinburgh 1980 meeting—this first intentional repetition of the 1910 pattern—it is not intended to imply that the many other great meetings (sometimes with 20 times the attendance, such as

COMIBAM in Sao Paulo in 1987) were somehow less important. The fact is that we need both kinds of meetings—meetings of church leaders, church people, church and mission people, and now and then, meetings exclusively of mission executives.

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

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

From Mission to Evangelism to Mission

Ralph D. Winter

Singapore 2002, Conference on Unreached Peoples

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The most likely interpretation of my topic as I have phrased it could readily be that of a sequence of stages in which *mission* work produces a national church which then engages in *evangelism* and finally begins to send *missionaries*. That is certainly one of the most common and healthy sequences of events in the world today.

However, I would like to pursue a radically different interpretation. I would like to speak of a sequence (not often recognized) in which *mission* work produces a national church that unfortunately is not much more than a projection of the Western style church in the missionary's homeland but tries to do *evangelism*, and then after a while the mission realizes it must go back in *mission* and start over with a more indigenizing kind of mission effort which can produce a much more indigenous church than the one—call it a “first try church”—which has inherited much of the missionary's own culture.

Note that this line of thinking suggests that a people group may not really be reached at all if merely a Western style church is planted within it. That means we will probably need some radical reevaluation of how many groups are reached.

In some ways this point of view almost seems to suggest that we need in many fields to start all over again. It implies that all we have done so far is parallel to the scattered synagogues of Jewish believers across the Roman empire in the time of Paul. That is, they had planted “churches” (synagogues) in a foreign land. But those churches required Greeks and Romans to become Jewish culturally if they wanted to go all the way. And, as Jesus pointed out, Jews were diligently traversing land and sea to make a single proselyte, only to achieve a cultural conversion, not necessarily a conversion of heart.

For example, is there yet a truly Japanese form of our faith? Many serious observers doubt it. This would mean there is still a need for cross-cultural mission in Japan, and that a truly missiological breakthrough is still in the future.

A further example might be the church in India. It consists largely of a Westernization of a population sector which has little to lose and much to gain by grasping for any kind of alternate cultural tradition. This perspective could imply that there is essentially little true mission

work that has thus far been accomplished in India, and that the unreached populations there are far larger than we have commonly conceived them.

Before going further, however, I need to define some terms. I would like to suggest that there can be great value in making a distinction between a *mission* agency and an *evangelistic* agency. Obviously the phrases can be used interchangeably. But for the sake of discussion here I hope you will find it helpful to think of *evangelism* and *mission* as quite different, all mission work being evangelism but not all evangelism being mission, mission being a very special type of evangelism. This distinction is so important, in fact, that I am convinced we would not even need to speak of *frontier* missions if we observed it. In fact this whole conference might not have been so necessary if this kind of a distinction were well understood and taken seriously.

Many church people, for example, talk freely about evangelizing the world. So often does this happen somewhat carelessly that, years ago, I felt it necessary to develop the distinction between E-0, E-1, E-2, and E-3 evangelism.

E-0 stands for evangelism within the church movement itself.

E-1 stands for outreach to those within the same culture as the church.

E-2 stands for a quite different type of missionary cross cultural evangelism within a people quite different from that of the evangelist, different yet still somewhat similar. Enough different to need a separate congregation but still similar, like English culture and Spanish culture.

E-3 stands for even more strikingly missionary cross culture evangelistic outreach to people in a totally different culture from that of those workers who are reaching out, like the difference between English culture and Japanese culture.

In the first two cases you can use existing congregations or simply multiply the same kind of congregations. This is ordinary *evangelism*. By contrast, the second two cases, E-2 and E-3 types of activity, merit the designation *mission* or *missionary evangelism* for the simple reason that E-2 and E-3 efforts reach into strange situations that are so different as to virtually require separate and different kinds of congregations.

Using these terms, all true *mission* differs from

ordinary evangelism because it is an activity involving the special problems of cross-cultural communication and contextualization. That is why all *mission* involves evangelism but that there are types of *evangelism* that do not involve cross-cultural communication and therefore are not true *mission*.

However, mission is not merely a *communication* problem. It is a *creation* problem. What is needed must be created by the Spirit of God as a new church tradition, not just the extension of a Western denomination but perhaps a worshiping movement with a decidedly different church life.

Suppose a mission agency goes to Nigeria and establishes fifty indigenous churches among the Yoruba, and those churches then plant even more Yoruba churches. In that case, the efforts to achieve the initial “missiological breakthrough” would be called *mission* while the further church planting expansion, *whether by missionary or by the Yoruba churches* would be considered *evangelism*. But if now the Yoruba send missionaries to break through to a cultural group where there is not yet an indigenous church movement, then you can say that the Yoruba believers are not only involved in ordinary evangelism but also in cross-cultural work, in the *creation* of a new *worshipping tradition* of Jesus’ followers. Such efforts classify as a *mission* activities.

We can further say that if the initial mission agency is not involved in that further outreach but is content to continue to work with the Yoruba church, then it ceases to be a mission agency but becomes merely what could be called a “foreign evangelism” agency.

Now, since most agencies of mission eventually go through the transition of becoming merely evangelistically involved (and that is certainly one measure of success) it may appear that this kind of distinction devalues much of mission work. On the contrary, the mission that continues in evangelism and allows and encourages an overseas church movement to become missionary is doing a very strategic thing.

However, let me freely admit that I have no power to define words for other people. Most people will go on using *evangelism* and *mission* in whatever way they wish. I am not even terribly concerned to have it my way with these two often-used words. I would be willing to talk about, say, *Type A work* and *Type B work*. The main thing is to understand that reaching out in the same culture is relatively simple and is often automatic while *breaking through to a new and different culture* is both rare and complex.

I actually believe that the achievement of a true *missiological breakthrough* into a new culture is often grossly underestimated as to its complexity.

For one thing not many Christians realize how major a transition it was when our faith spread from its Jewish roots into the Greek and Roman world. The pagan holiday called the *Saturnalia* was converted into Christmas. So were a hundred other things adopted, such as the wearing of wedding rings and the throwing of rice at a wedding. In a further transition our faith spread into the Anglo-Saxon sphere, where early missionaries even made use of a pagan sunrise festival promoting a spring-goddess of fertility (called *Eostre*) as our present-day Easter sunrise service. These were *mission* attempts to indigenize the faith, representing complex cross-cultural evangelistic decisions that went far beyond ordinary evangelism.

Perhaps we don’t often think of the complexities of the past and we may wish they did not extend into the present. But if we take a hard look at the current expansion of the faith around the world from the standpoint of our distinction between *evangelism* and *mission* I am afraid that we must recognize the need for a great deal more in-depth true *mission* than we have thus far accomplished.

For the most part the much heralded march of the Christian faith across the world has been successful mainly in subordinate cultures, where, say, the Koreans, oppressed for so long by the fellow Buddhist country of Japan would grasp a foreign faith almost automatically.

For example, as already mentioned, are churches in Japan today sufficiently indigenous to conclude that all that is left to be done is for these churches to multiply with their relatively Western form of the faith? Some keen observers, as I’ve said, suggest that there is not yet a truly Japanese church movement but only a relatively small Westernized following. Movements like *Soka Gakkai* are quite Japanese, although they embody some Christian elements, but by being rather more indigenous have grown astronomically, proving the existence of a spiritual hunger in Japan despite failing to provide even the minimal elements of Biblical faith.

We have often thought of Unreached Peoples as being small, but when you look more closely at the definitions it is clear that wherever an authentic “missiological breakthrough” has not yet occurred the size of the group does not matter.

From this point of view you can impellingly argue that the true missiological breakthroughs in Africa, India and China are to be seen surpris-

ingly and precisely in movements that are “outside” of what we ordinarily identify as Christianity in those places. Such movements are not readily recognized as Christian despite their characteristically strong focus on the Bible. It is a little known fact that in three key places, Africa, India and China, the truly devout believers in Christ within radically contextualized groups may actually outnumber the truly devout believers in Christ within the more identifiably “Christian” movements of missionary-implemented Western-oriented Christianity.

It has never been true that a people group has been considered reached just because essentially foreign churches were present within that group. The definition mentioned here distinctly requires an “indigenous” church movement.

Of course, there is room for discussion as to just what is truly indigenous or not. Indigenous churches tend to grow, sometimes very rapidly. They are often not initiated by foreign personnel but many times are actually heretical spin offs which highlight certain cultural features lacking in missionary-established churches. They are not always Biblically balanced, although they are often highly respectful of the Bible. Donald McGavran’s perspective was that our relationship to such groups ought to be friendly and supportive if, in fact, they focus on the Bible seriously. That focus will straighten them out in the long run, he felt.

Thus, shocking though it may seem, the world may look substantially different from our usual take if viewed from the perspective of the essential importance of authentic indigeneity. Ordinary *evangelism* must thereby be seen as inadequate if it is going on in a situation still requiring true *mission* with true indigeneity as a goal. The ordinary evangelism of an essentially Western Christianity may in such cases be little more than the promotion of a complex cluster of foreign legalisms which people in characteristically minority and oppressed cultures learn to wear like outer clothing with the hope that they will be benefitted thereby.

Ironically, we have been talking for years about the necessity of mission agencies moving intentionally beyond care-taking existing mission field churches to reach out to still untouched, genuine Unreached Peoples. That is, we have been calling for mission elsewhere *in addition to* evangelism in established beachheads, when we might more accurately have been calling for a much more radical and penetrating *mission instead of* evangelistic outreach from a Western-style church. We may have too easily accepted

the birth of a new national church as truly indigenous when in fact it was still substantially foreign. And, instead of expecting the birth of a new substantially strange and unpredictable movement to appear which could then by itself grow automatically by evangelism, the movements we have planted may themselves need to be subjected to an on-going attempt at true indigenization, which is the object of true mission.

Thus, my title, “From Mission to Evangelism to Mission” can be utilized to describe the ideal sequence of events in truly successful work. However, that sequence may not have truly happened beyond the spread of a church pattern which is still significantly Western. This is not bad. It is not illicit. It may be superficial, however, and it may be a cultural phenomenon in which people under oppression gladly accept anything with promise.

But at the same time the truly successful missiological breakthroughs, such as the Pauline breakthrough to the Greeks, and the Lutheran breakthrough to Germanic culture, have characteristically involved the actual creation of new movements which the older source culture could not recognize as true to the faith. It may well be that a true missiological breakthrough will always be a church movement which is somewhat alienated, and will believe for a good long time that the missionary’s form of the faith is seriously flawed, and that vice versa, the missionary will characteristically reject the validity of the new form of the faith in the receptor culture.

The blunt meaning of this kind of thinking is fairly easy to illustrate from major movements and events that have already taken place in the mission lands. We hear reports that there are 52 million followers of Jesus Christ in Africa who do not belong to any standard Christian tradition. The same is true in India where smaller estimates (14 to 24 million) caste Hindus are reported to be devout followers of Jesus Christ even though they do not call themselves Christians. Finally, much of the most vibrant work in China is not to be found in the state recognized churches but in the millions of followers of Jesus Christ who are to be found in the so called “house churches.”

Thinking along these lines involves receiving and digesting information which we do not expect and are not well prepared to believe. It is a new kind of frontier that must be recognized as soon as possible, and dealt with strategically in ways that are practical and possible, even if not conventional. Are we ready to do that?

I Was Bombed By An Explosive Idea!

Ralph D. Winter
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Thirty years ago I was “bombed” by an explosive idea. I was not the only one. The idea was that thousands of remaining, forgotten, linguistically or culturally isolated groups should be considered additional mission fields, that is, “Unreached Peoples.”

I was asked to present the idea to 2,700 world leaders at the first “Lausanne” conference in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974, the International Congress on World Evangelization.

Six years later, in late 1980, the World Consultation on Frontier Missions at Edinburgh, Scotland, allowed this idea to capture the thoughts of mission leaders from all over the world. That was the largest meeting of purely mission leaders ever to occur on the global level and the first to attract as large a number of (so-called) Third World mission agencies.

Leaders from the non-Western world caught on easily and quickly. By contrast, some of the older agencies in the West were sometimes slow to understand and dragged their feet. In the USA, especially, there was a good deal of confusion. Quite a few church leaders, not necessarily mission executives, even raised the accusation “Racism”! Why did they say that?

Clouded Acceptance

Curiously, Americans had long been fighting “racism” by beating the drum for “integration.” But they soon discovered that ethnic minorities in the USA did not necessarily want to be “integrated.” The term was dropped. Oops, minorities considered integration attempts to be cultural imperialism on the part of European Americans! To them integration WAS racism! But this second perspective gained its way only gradually.

Amazingly, this “explosive idea” was thus diametrically opposed to crass integration! However, the very idea of expecting ethnic minorities (approached as “unreached peoples”) to have their own forms of worship and even theology and to remain “segregated” within their own “homogeneous units” was still “racism” to some. Biblical sensitivity for cultural diversity died hard before the earlier (and understandable) American drive for a “melting pot” society. Once

again the Bible conflicted with conventional thinking!

So, all of this clouded the acceptance of the now widely understood concept of by-passed or unreached peoples. There were other factors. Some incidents were funny.

In the two years after the first Lausanne Congress I was invited to speak to associations of mission executives in England, Norway, and Germany, and present this new doctrine which would radically modify mission strategies. Then, in 1976 I was invited to give the opening address at the EFMA (now, Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies) annual mission executives retreat. Leaders of the conference asked all of the agencies to bring a report the next morning of how many of the by-passed peoples they think their agency could engage by 1990, 14 years later. The tally exceeded 5,000.

However, the next morning I sat down at breakfast at a very small table for three, joining two others wrapped in conversation. One said to the other, “How many groups could your agency reach?” The other swept away the question with the reply, “Oh, we don’t have time for that, we have too many other things on our plate.” At that point he looked up and recognized me as the impassioned speaker of the night before and immediately mumbled something like, “We’ll see what we can do.”

But, this was an honest reaction. Most agencies really did not have extra missionaries they could fling out into totally pioneer fields (newly defined culturally and linguistically, not geographically or politically). Not only that but in the past fifty years missions had become accustomed to serving the needs of already-existing church movements. There were few “pioneer” type missionaries left. Most were into church work not pioneer evangelism. You could say that the new Great Commission went like this, “Go ye into all the world and meddle in the national churches.”

Worse still, and I hesitantly speak of my own denomination, the Presbyterian Church (USA), many had officially or unofficially adopted what I consider a seriously bankrupt strategy of voluntarily tying their own hands with the policy

of never doing any unilateral outreach to new fields, working solely in a new magic word “partnership.”

My good friend Bob Blincoe (U. S. director of Frontiers) years ago sought to be sent as a missionary to northern Iraq among the Kurds, a truly unreached people. However, his denominational board, the PC(USA), said he would have to work *in partnership* with the local, Arab church. That church happens to be the Assyrian Church of the East, quite a few of whose people detested the Kurds. (That reminds us of the American gold rush immigrants into California who despised and slaughtered the Indians who were there first.) Such an invitation from Iraq would never come.

Expectable Problems

U.S. negative reactions to the idea of Unreached Peoples often took the form of arguing over a technical definition of the phrase, “an unreached people.” Its early definition by the Lausanne Strategy Working Group really was not workable. Our center in Pasadena, rather than fight for a more useful definition of the same phrase chose a different one, Hidden Peoples, using our own definition. Finally, in 1982 the Lausanne group joined with the EFMA to convene a large meeting of about 35 executives intended to arrive at settled meanings for new terms related to the new emphasis on reaching out to by-passed groups. At this meeting the consensus was to retain the widely circulated “Unreached people” phrase but to accept our meaning for it, namely, “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread **as a church-planting movement** without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.” Then, **if that kind of an entity were unreached it would not yet have “a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.”**

Confusion continued. “Unreached People” was a phrase that employed such common words that many felt they ought to know what the phrase meant, and should develop their own definition. **We dutifully used the phrase in our publications from 1982 on**, but even before 1982 I had coined the phrase, “Unimax people” to hint at the necessary unity of a group and the **maximum size of a group maintaining that unity.**

A most difficult thing about the concept, no matter what terminology was employed, was the fact that **there was no obvious concrete, verifiable measurement of the presence or absence of “a**

viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement.” I personally thought that you could at least report that a group was *clearly reached, clearly unreached, or not sure.* But the worst problem was that government sources and even Christian compilers did not think in those terms at all.

In fact, in terms of “obtainable data,” a group that extends over a national border will be counted separately in each country, perhaps with a different name. In Africa, by one count, 800 groups are cut in two by political boundaries!

What this confusion means is that **there still is no definitive listing of unreached peoples. The 1982 definition came too late.** Already different interpretations had arisen, as for example, when eye-gate, printed-Bible workers (like Wycliffe) counted up what further tasks they needed to tackle, and ear-gate audio-cassette workers (like Gospel Recordings) estimated their remaining task which inherently requires a larger number of more specific sets of recordings.

Milestone Events

But not only concepts were involved, several *organizational events* made contributions similar to the 1980 Edinburgh conference.

First, a mainline denomination, the Presbyterian Church (USA), allowed a small entity within its bloodstream called the Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship, which now raises more than \$2 million per year specifically for frontier missions. Then the Baptist General Conference declared that its denominational goal was to reach the Unreached Peoples. YWAM declared the same thing and inaugurated a new major division to pursue that goal. In 1989, at Singapore, one of the leading speakers at the 1980 conference, Thomas Wang, at that time the Executive Director of the Lausanne movement, convened a meeting. This meeting, like the 1980 meeting, emphasized mission agency leaders. Out of this meeting came the astounding, globe-girdling AD2000 Movement with the amplified slogan, “A church for every people *and the gospel for every person* by the year 2000.” The addition was not essential, being technically redundant but it helped those who **did not quite realize the strategic significance of a “missiological breakthrough” whereby a truly indigenous form of the faith was created**—and would then be available for every person.

At that Singapore conference were some highly placed Southern Baptists. Although they

had attended the 1980 meeting, this one must have pushed them further because soon one of the most significant “events” in the entire story of Unreached Peoples took place: their entire International Mission Board decided to bring the cause of Unreached Peoples into their organizational center.

Once that happened it was like the icing on the cake. It was now no longer possible for any mission to consider the Unreached Peoples a mere marginal issue.

I remember talking with an International Students’ leader about the significance of choosing to work on campuses with precisely those students representing Unreached Peoples rather than with just any foreign students. They began to compile a list of high priority student origins.

On and on. With many different voices now speaking of ethno-cultural frontiers instead of countries, languages or individuals, a huge, significant strategic shift had taken place all across the mission world.

Back to the Bible

Embarrassingly, the Bible has all along talked in terms of peoples not countries. Now its basic perspective was becoming clearer. Speaking of Biblical perspective, another major contribution to the rising interest in the Unreached Peoples has been the nationwide Perspectives Study Program. In 2004 it enrolled some 6,000 students with classes in 130 places in the USA alone. By then it had been adapted into a version for India, Korea, Latin American, etc. It became more popular in New Zealand than in the USA!

Okay, the issue has been clarified, but the implications and implementation have yet to go. Japan, for example, still only has a very small decidedly “Western” church movement. Scholars say there is not yet a true missiological breakthrough to the Japanese. If that’s true, they are still an unreached people because despite the presence of churches in their midst there is no truly Japanese form of the faith.

The same is true for India. The strong, fine, but relatively small church movement in India is still highly “Western” although now millions of believers exist outside that movement among people who have retained much of their Hindu culture.

So also for Africa where there are now 52 million believers in 20,000 movements which do not easily classify as forms of Western

Christianity. This is a good thing but it is profoundly confusing for those who do not realize that a true “missiological breakthrough” almost always produces a church movement considerably different from what might be expected, just as Paul’s work was very difficult to understand for Jewish believers in Christ, or Latin believers to accept Lutherans, Reformation style churches to accept Pentecostals, Charismatics, etc.

Thus, the rapid growth of our faith across the world is mostly a movement of new indigenous forms of faith that are substantially different from that of the missionary. Thankfully the unique cultures of Unreached Peoples are now being treated with greater seriousness despite the added complexities!

In this we rejoice as the explosion continues!

In Pursuit of the Full Gospel

Ralph D. Winter

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W1304

What is inadequate with this statement?

“The over-arching vision within the Frontier Mission Fellowship group of projects is to see all unreached peoples reached with the gospel and the kingdom to come among them. In evangelical terms **we can know when a group is reached when there is an indigenous church planting movement among them.**”

This paragraph fairly well describes the way we looked at things when we were in the founding period of the FMF. Things are now seen—by me anyway—as both simpler and more complex. We do not intend to give up the priority this statement express for those people groups which have no access to Christ. But we recall that **to “reach” a people merely by eliciting a church planting movement among them has never been all that God might want accomplished.** To add “and the Kingdom to come among them” is helpful but woefully unspecific.

Today, more than a quarter of a century after our founding, I would think we would speak of the four levels of strategy and purpose rather than one or two:

Level 1: Getting people “saved.”

Level 2: Winning them to the Lordship of Christ and into His family

Level 3: Glorifying God

Level 4: Distinguishing evil from God and fighting “the works of the Devil” as a means of glorifying God, that is, understanding the lordship of Christ as involving us in an all-out war against evil, disease, corruption, a war in which we can expect suffering, hardship and death.

The biggest change of perspective for me is the shift away from a picture of man vs. God, which is a polarization that enabled the commercialization of religion at the time of the Reformation, but before and after as well. The service being sold by religious functionaries in many societies is a service which allows, for a price, a better relationship with God or the gods.

The New Testament picture is much more a picture of two sides, the one, that of the god

of this world, the other, God along with man working together to destroy the works of the Devil and reclaim the full glory of God. Currently, the “salvation of man” shoulders out a balanced view of the far more serious cleavage between Satan and God, in which dichotomy man was created to be on God’s side.

In so far as Satan has corrupted man and gained his help in opposing God it is true that man can be on both sides of the struggle. However, it is to Satan’s advantage for the whole conflict to be seen as one of Man vs. God.

A great deal of the conflict between man and man is due to the absence of a clear understanding of the larger conflict between Satan and man and Satan and God. What would immediately and dramatically unify the nations of man would be the sudden exposure of that great enemy Satan. If humans could wake up to the fact that their far greater enemy is rampant in the form of disease germs they might well rally around that common enemy rather than fight each other. In time of war you do not see so much fighting for status, for position, for fame—precisely due to the far greater looming common enemy.

Logically, then, Satan’s most strategic influence on humans is lead them blindly to downplay and ridicule or at least misconstrue his very existence—that is, the existence of an intermediate being of awesome power who is an evil opponent of God (and man). Getting human beings to concentrate totally on their own waywardness toward God is very clever because that tactic easily monopolizes their consciousness and diminishes their awareness of the larger struggle. Indeed, the bulk of all theologizing has to do with “getting man right with God” rather than with restoring full glory to God by distinguishing His works from Satan’s works. The final achievement of Satan is, indeed, the human delusion that evil is from God, and due to His “mysterious purposes.”