



Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World

HIDDEN AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE DISABLED

Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 35

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hosted by the
Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization**

In Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 to October 5, 2004

"A New Vision, a New Heart, a Renewed Call"

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The context for the production of the Lausanne Occasional Papers

The Lausanne Movement is an international movement committed to energising
“the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world”.

With roots going back to the historical conferences in Edinburgh (1910) and Berlin (1966), the Lausanne Movement was born out of the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in July 1974. The landmark outcome of this Congress was the *Lausanne Covenant* supported by the 2430 participants from 150 nations. The covenant declares the substance of the Christian faith as historically declared in the creeds and adds a clear missional dimension to our faith. Many activities have emerged from the Lausanne Congress and from the second congress held in Manila in 1989. The Covenant (in a number of languages) and details about the many regional events and specialised conferences which have been undertaken in the name of Lausanne may be examined on the website at www.lausanne.org.

The continuing Lausanne International Committee believed it was led by the Holy Spirit to hold another conference which would bring together Christian leaders from around the world. This time the Committee planned to have younger emerging leaders involved and sought funds to enable it to bring a significant contingent from those parts of the world where the church is rapidly growing today. It decided to call the conference a **Forum**. As a Forum its structure would be to allow people to come and participate if they had something to contribute to one of 31 issues. These issues were chosen through a global research programme seeking to identify the most significant issues in the world today which are of concern in our task to take the *good news* to the world.

This Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) is the report which has emerged from one of these Issue Groups. LOPs have been produced for each of the Issue Groups and information re these and other publications may be obtained by going to the website at www.lausanne.org.

The theme of the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 was “**A new vision, a new heart and a renewed call**”. This Forum was held in Pattaya, Thailand from September 29 to October 5, 2004. 1530 participants came from 130 countries to work in one of the 31 Issue Groups.

The Affirmations at the conclusion of the Forum stated:
There has been a spirit of working together in serious dialogue and prayerful reflection. Representatives from a wide spectrum of cultures and virtually all parts of the world have come together to learn from one another and to seek new direction from the Holy Spirit for world evangelization. They committed themselves to joint action under divine guidance.

The dramatic change in the political and economic landscape in recent years has raised new challenges in evangelization for the church. The polarization between east and west makes it imperative that the church seek God’s direction for the appropriate responses to the present challenges.

In the 31 Issue Groups these new realities were taken into consideration, including the HIV pandemic, terrorism, globalization, the global role of media, poverty, persecution of Christians, fragmented families, political and religious nationalism, post-modern mind set, oppression of children, urbanization, neglect of the disabled and others.

Great progress was made in these groups as they grappled for solutions to the key challenges of world evangelization. As these groups focused on making specific recommendations, larger strategic themes came to the forefront.

There was affirmation that major efforts of the church must be directed toward those who have no access to the gospel. The commitment to help establish self sustaining churches within 6000 remaining unreached people groups remains a central priority.

Secondly, the words of our Lord call us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In this we have failed greatly. We renew our commitment to reach out in love and compassion to those who are marginalised because of disabilities or who have different lifestyles and spiritual perspectives. We commit to reach out to children and young people who constitute a majority of the world's population, many of whom are being abused, forced into slavery, armies and child labour.

A third stream of a strategic nature acknowledges that the growth of the church is now accelerating outside of the western world. Through the participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we recognise the dynamic nature and rapid growth of the church in the *South*. Church leaders from the *South* are increasingly providing exemplary leadership in world evangelization.

Fourthly, we acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's populations are either unable to or unwilling to absorb information through written communications. Therefore, a need exists to share the "Good News" and to disciple new Christians in story form and parables.

Fifthly, we call on the church to use media to effectively engage the culture in ways that draw non believers toward spiritual truth and to proclaim Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways.

Finally, we affirm the priesthood of all believers and call on the church to equip, encourage and empower women, men and youth to fulfil their calling as witnesses and co-labourers in the world wide task of evangelization.

Transformation was a theme which emerged from the working groups. We acknowledge our own need to be continually transformed, to continue to open ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit, to the challenges of God's word and to grow in Christ together with fellow Christians in ways that result in social and economic transformation. We acknowledge that the scope of the gospel and building the Kingdom of God involves, body, mind, soul and spirit. Therefore we call for increasing integration of service to society and proclamation of the gospel.

We pray for those around the world who are being persecuted for their faith and for those who live in constant fear of their lives. We uphold our brothers and sisters who are suffering. We recognize that the reality of the persecuted church needs to be increasingly on the agenda of the whole body of Christ. At the same time, we also acknowledge the importance of loving and doing good to our enemies while we fight for the right of freedom of conscience everywhere.

We are deeply moved by the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS pandemic – the greatest human emergency in history. The Lausanne movement calls all churches everywhere to prayer and holistic response to this plague.

"9/11", the war in Iraq, the war on terror and its reprisals compel us to state that we must not allow the gospel or the Christian faith to be captive to any one geo-political entity. We affirm that the Christian faith is above all political entities.

We are concerned and mourn the death and destruction caused by all conflicts, terrorism and war. We call for Christians to pray for peace, to be proactively involved in reconciliation and avoid all attempts to turn any conflict into a religious war. Christian mission in this context lies in becoming peace makers.

We pray for peace and reconciliation and God's guidance in how to bring about peace through our work of evangelization. We pray for God to work in the affairs of nations to open doors of opportunity for the gospel. We call on the church to mobilize every believer to focus specific consistent prayer for the evangelization of their communities and the world.

In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelism by maximising the gifts of all.

We also recognize the need for greater intentionality in developing future leaders. We call on the church to find creative ways to release emerging leaders to serve effectively.

Numerous practical recommendations for local churches to consider were offered. These will be available on the Lausanne website and in the Lausanne Occasional Papers. It is our prayer that these many case studies and action plans will be used of God to mobilize the church to share a clear and relevant message using a variety of methods to reach the most neglected or resistant groups so that everyone will have the opportunity to hear the gospel message and be able to respond to this good news in faith.

We express our gratitude to the Thai Church which has hosted us and to their welcoming presentation to the Forum. We are profoundly grateful to God for the privilege of being able to gather here from the four corners of the earth. We have developed new partnerships, made new friends and encouraged one another in our various ministries. Notwithstanding the resistance to the gospel in many places and the richness of an inherited religious and cultural tradition we here at the Forum have accepted afresh the renewed call to be obedient to the mandate of Christ. We commit ourselves to making His saving love known so that the whole world may have opportunity to accept God's gift of salvation through Christ.

These affirmations indicate the response of the participants to the Forum outcomes and their longing that the whole church may be motivated by the outcomes of the Forum to strengthen its determination to be obedient to God's calling.

May the case studies and the practical suggestions in this and the other LOPs be of great help to you and your church as you seek to find new ways and a renewed call to proclaim the saving love of Jesus Christ

David Claydon

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Why the “One-Fourth” World has little access to the Gospel

In 1963, some said that the Age of Missions was over and that missionaries were only to go where local Christians invited them. Yet, 1970 figures showed that 44% of the world lived in unreached people groups. In 1974, God used Dr. Winter’s challenge about “Hidden Peoples” and other voices to help generate a truly global mission effort with missionaries sent by Korea, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Indonesia, Kenya, Russia, Latin America, Europe, China and many other parts of the world.

YET, we still send 9 out of 10 missionaries to reached people groups! Mission researchers agree that over one-fourth (25%) of the world (at least 6000 people “systems” or groups) still have little choice and little access to the gospel. The challenge to the Church is to do something about the “one fourth” world.

A Typical Story

A young Muslim man in a major urban centre in Asia, hungry to find real meaning in life, began asking his religious leaders about Isa Almasih’s teachings (Jesus the Messiah). His logical question was “If the Prophet Isa is the second greatest prophet of our religion, why do we not study His teachings carefully?”

His religious leaders refused to discuss Isa’s teachings. He asked his Christian boss (same nationality but different ethnicity) to tell him about “Isa Almasih.” This boss, a building contractor and fine deacon in his local church, was frightened — with good reason. Mobs had been incited before by false accusations of “anti-Muslim” slander to terrorize and burn down “Christian-owned” businesses. This boss suspected that this employee was trying to “cause” a similar problem. He politely refused to tell his employee about Jesus.

This friend then asked to be allowed to buy a Bible so he could seek the truth himself. This request was also declined. Finally, a man in white appeared to him in a dream and said, “Follow me.” He arose at 3:00 in the early morning and rode his bicycle an hour across town, woke up his boss and urgently insisted that he tell him about Isa. The boss finally told him the story of Isa and gave him a gospel tract. When asked what his final step toward accepting Christ was, he begins to cry as he says:

“I read about this Prophet, who chose not to murder His enemies even though He could have done so. Instead, He allowed His enemies to murder Him. And then, Isa looked down from the cross and said ‘Father, forgive him (he shifts to first person), he does not know what he is doing.’”

At this point, he cries out:

“I did not know what I was doing! I was trying to reach God, but did not know how. No one would tell me how to reach God. But He came down and reached me.”

Sadly, many others around the world face similar challenges. God’s astounding plan is that His people are to share all of the Good News with those who have never heard. Yet, many of His people fail to understand that this responsibility requires intentional crossing of cultural, geographical, and economic barriers. God has to almost “force” His people across those barriers so that the gospel can spread among those who have not heard, just as happened in the story of Cornelius and Peter.

This paper will focus on how the global body of Christ can more effectively reach all peoples of the world.

2. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Definitions of key words in this document include:

People Group: The largest group through which the gospel can flow without encountering significant barriers of acceptance or understanding (cf. Winters & Koch, *Perspectives*, 3rd ed., p. 514). A “people group” is not just one section or strata of society (such as just youth, the disabled, or a certain economic class) but a collective system of different parts.

Groups can be defined by language differences from others in their same area. For example, Afghanistan’s 10 million Pashto are separated from the 4 million Afghani Tajik by languages: the Pashto speak *pakhtu* and the Tajik speak a local dialect of *dari*.

Groups can be defined by their shared culture and history. The Han Chinese in China and the Japanese in Japan are separated not only by language, but also by culture. The two groups approach life in different ways. An even sharper distinction could be drawn, for example, between the Han Chinese and Americans or British, where Asian and Western thought forms clash.

Groups can be defined by their geographic location. The Jews of America, for example, have developed a slightly different culture from the Jews of Israel or the Jews of Russia. Although they share some history, American Jews speak a different language and face a different set of lifestyle problems and choices.

Some groups can be defined by their position in their society. For example, India has a caste system which cuts across ethnicity and language and can keep people of one caste from touching people of another caste regardless of shared language or location.

Two terms which will be used almost interchangeably in this document are “Unreached People Groups” (UPGs) and “Least Evangelized Peoples” (LEPs). While the “UPG” term emphasizes the extent of the presence of the church and the “LEP” term reflects evaluation of the amount of evangelistic efforts, most peoples which fall into one of these categories would also fall into the other.

Unreached People Groups: Typically defined as those people groups which lack a movement strong enough to do the task of evangelizing the group without any cross-cultural assistance. A statistical definition is a people group with less than 2% evangelical individuals and less than 5% Christian adherents. Closely related terms include *Hidden*, *Forgotten* or *Ignored* Peoples.

These peoples are found in rural and urban settings and in many countries. Some are resistant to the gospel for religious, historical or cultural reasons. Some are hidden in cities, often overshadowed by larger ethnic groups. Some are hidden because people fail to differentiate between a common nationality and different ethnic backgrounds. They are often in very remote areas or distant countries and unknown to the typical lay Christian. Their faces are rarely known outside their own region.

Least Evangelized People Groups: This term has similar meaning but more specifically relates to the potential access to the gospel or the amount of evangelistic activity focused toward this group (including even the activity which is inappropriate or uncontextualized). This term is based on an extensive set of at least 200 factors (used by David Barrett and Todd Johnson).

10-40 Window: The term popularized by Luis Bush, representing the lines of 10° and 40° Latitude North of the equator, where the majority of these peoples are concentrated. This term has been more easily popularized and marketed, but tends to focus people on a geographical location rather than whether the people have a chance to choose the gospel.

World A: A term pioneered by David Barrett which defines the 27% of the world which has little access to the gospel.

World B: These are people groups with strong Christian minorities

World C: These are people groups with Christian majorities.

These designations are based on the Barrett & Johnson 200 factor list mentioned above.

World A contains 85% of the world's poorest and most abused people and includes massive urban challenges and remote rural challenges. World A is massive waves of refugees inside and outside their own countries. World A is largely below 25 years of age. This term emphasizes the level of access to the gospel but is harder to explain. Some mistakenly interpret the UPG term as people who have not accepted Christ. These terms do not refer to people who can hear the gospel but have rejected it. While such persons may be unconverted or unevangelized, they have more than enough access from within their own cultural arena. More accurately, the UPG term refers to population segments that have almost no access to Christian witnesses and other resources. Despite years of added emphasis on them, UPGs remain neglected, ignored or even forgotten by the Church.

Missions: The task of extending the church to where it is not.

3. ORIGINS OF EMPHASIS ON REACHING THE LEAST EVANGELIZED

Recent Global Efforts: Ralph Winter's "Hidden Peoples" article at the 1974 Lausanne conference, along with other emerging influences, brought a crucial focus on Unreached/Least Evangelized ethnic groups and population segments (cities, economic or geographic designations, etc.). Massive research done by David Barrett, Patrick Johnstone, the Joshua Project and others were later published and provided listings of these people groups.

Mission agencies, churches and denominations began to mobilize awareness of, prayer for and involvement among these groups. The "radical" idea of collaboration across denominational and organizational lines emerged as Christians realized the task was too large for any one organization.

In January, 1989, Christian leaders from across the world gathered in Singapore for the first Global Consultation on World Evangelization, co-hosted by Thomas Wang and Bill O'Brien. Out of this meeting emerged the "AD2000" network. The term *network* was useful since many denominations and mission groups had developed large strategic global plans focused toward the year 2000. The motto of the AD2000 movement was "A church for every people and the gospel for every person by the year 2000."

Major AD2000 meetings in various continents focused strong impetus on UPGs. Regional and country networks emerged, focusing on collaborative ministries to the unreached. Much of the focus was upon the "completion" of the task. Many misunderstood this effort toward completion as the idea that the whole task of evangelizing and serving the whole world would be completed by the year 2000. The actual intent (which was not always publicized well) was to challenge Christians around the world to work together so that EVERY people group or population segment would have initial focus among those people. This focus would include at least a decision to adopt a specific UPG, to pray for God's leading as to how this unreached people might be reached and to start planning for personnel to go and minister among them.

As the AD2000 office intentionally phased out at the end of the year 2000, the global Christian community has continued to examine their concepts, terms and strategies to be adequate for what needs to be done among UPGs.

Historical, theological, philosophical and statistical Issues: This emphasis of reaching the unreached, however, is not new or unfounded.

1. Historical Developments: Cross-cultural witness (mission efforts) has existed since the founding of the Church. Early cross-cultural witnesses included Thomas in India (1st century), Frumentius to Ethiopia (3rd century), the Nestorians to China (6th century), possible Christians in Sumatra by the 8th or 10th century (per Kenneth Scott Latourette) and the Moravians who often went as servants and slaves (17th century).

The modern missionary era began not just because William Carey went to India in 1792. The key characteristic which began to emerge through the Moravians, as well as the Baptist Mission Society which was formed to support Carey, was that an increasing number of church members (that is, not the official Church hierarchy) began to be directly involved in prayer and financial support and in going.

Ralph Winter divides this modern missions era into three periods: The work of the **Coastlands Period** (approx. 1792-1910) was focused on accessible areas along the coastlands of the major continents. Missionaries pioneering into these areas were often sadly met by objections such as the objection made to Carey to "*sit down, young man. If God wants to reach the heathen, he will do it without you or me.*"

The transition into the **Inlands Period** began in 1845 with Hudson Taylor's call to go inland. A mission leader chastised him because so much work was left to be done where he was

and because of the great risk. Taylor was told that if he sent people to the dangerous “interior,” their blood would be on his hands. He reportedly answered that their blood was the responsibility of the Lord.

The third era of **Bypassed or Hidden Peoples** evolved as people realized that although the Church existed in most geo-political nations among certain ethnic groups, many other ethnic peoples in those same countries were largely untouched. For the gospel to spread to these “*Hidden*” peoples, Christians of that nation would have to cross ethnic, social and/or linguistic barriers to bring witness. Again, those considering such a move face similar objections as to why they would leave more responsive areas where many people have great needs.

2. Theological developments: In 1963, the WCC Division on World Mission and Evangelism met in Mexico City and noted the presence of representatives from many nations. Some pronounced that the age of mission was over and that the age of fraternal relationships had begun. Since churches existed in each country, missionaries should go only to serve the local church and do its bidding.

In contrast, George Vicedom’s book, *Missio Dei* (1950) emphasized that the triune nature of God is the only true basis for mission. He emphasized that God, and not the church, is the source of mission. This emphasis helped re-focus the direction of mission strategy and theology and provided an opposing view to the ideas which were to be enunciated at the 1963 WCC meeting. Vicedom argues that “The mission of the Church will always transcend boundaries . . . [and] these can no longer be identified with national frontiers, and certainly not with any supposed line between the ‘Christian’ West and the ‘non-Christian’ East.” Thus, the “*Missio Dei*” emphasis challenges the “ecclesiocentric” thinking of missions.

Church and mission are not consecutive but coexistent. The independence of the church is based on obedience to Christ, not on separation from the mission board. If independence is defined as the latter, the church can stop mission.

The “*Missio Dei*” correctly strikes down an “ecclesiocentric” mission concept and emphasizes that God is the One who will continue to carry His mission and will leave behind those who refuse to move forward. This version of ecclesiocentric training is that any “outsiders” come only to do the bidding of the local congregation as if the “national” congregation is the owner of the mission in its own geographic arena – rather than God. As long as God continues to send people across cultures and across frontiers, collaboration and mutual submission is urgently required.

3. Philosophical Background: Ultimately, the most effective ministry to “difficult to reach” peoples requires a balance of all aspects of the gospel. A truly holistic gospel does not separate church planting from social ministry nor is social ministry separated from church planting (see Jesus’ sermon in Luke 4, based on Isaiah 61).

Recently, an earlier mission philosophy has re-emerged. Church planting movements (CPMs) move beyond having the goal of planting some churches that will reproduce in the distant future. The goal becomes the planting of reproducing congregations who reproduce other congregations and serve the overall well-being of their community and the world, thus creating a movement within that people group. As such, the CPM approach is truly holistic – words and actions.

This concept is not necessarily new. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, two men raised concerns about methods which created dependent churches due to problems including over-subsidy, foreign leadership and poor contextualization. Henry Venn espoused that a healthy church (locally and nationally) should be Self-Governing, Self-Supporting, Self-Propagating. Roland Allen, in *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, emphasized that new congregations should be given the immediate responsibility for leadership, propagation, support, missions and theologizing.

Beginning in the 1950’s, Donald McGavran argued that mission work should measure how much money and personnel were actually invested effectively in church planting. If the

majority of a mission's budget went to support institutions not producing new churches, then that mission was not effective. McGavran also emphasized a homogenous group church planting strategy was required to create an atmosphere by which the gospel would move more naturally and readily along family and relational lines. Such a movement would quickly provide the critical mass necessary not only to sustain it among their people but for the beginning of mission sending to other peoples as well.

4. Statistical and Ethnographic Studies: Mission strategists began to use a variety of disciplines — such as ethnographic analysis of countries, of ethnic groups, of cultural anthropology and sociology — in order to gain measurable understanding of where the harvest field was and what the harvest force potential could be. This collection of information showed that massive parts of the world had very little access to the gospel.

4. THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR REACHING THE REMAINING PEOPLE GROUPS

Paul emphasizes the salvation of all Israel and the end will not come before the “complete number of Gentiles come to God” (Romans 11:25). Often, Christians, churches and organizations so prioritize their immediate area of need and ministry that few (if any) resources are sent to the least evangelized people groups. Yet, Paul emphasizes that the most urgent biblical call and commandment to Jesus’ disciples is to insist that all people are given the chance to come to God.

The biblical basis for such an emphasis follows (see Parks, “The Ethnê who have not Heard”):

(a) *Missio Dei*:

Many mission writers mistakenly interpret the *missio Dei* so broadly as to include all God is doing in the church with no particular emphasis on the goal of God’s mission. The *missio Dei* has a specific goal: God plans to reunite people with Himself and with other peoples into one mosaic made up of every ethnic, cultural, linguistic and geographical grouping, so that an uncountable multitude of men, women and children from every race, tribe, nation and language shall stand saved before God in heaven (Revelation 5:9; 7:9). This focus is clearly seen from the beginning of the Old Testament through to the end of the New Testament.

The salvation history of the Bible is God’s means of fulfilling this goal. God’s plan is to use the few to reach the many. He chose one people (the Jews), one man (Abraham), and his “seed” or descendant, the Messiah (Jesus), to restore mankind to true knowledge and fellowship with God and to bring full salvation to all the peoples of the world. Thus, God’s blessing promised to Abraham can now be given to the Gentiles (Galatians 3:14).

(b) *God’s Heart For the “Peoples” In the Old Testament (OT)*:

The “peoples” (the “goyim” in Hebrew and “ethnê” in Greek) are the ultimate focus of all scripture.

i. From the Beginning: God’s global vision is clear in His command: “*Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it*” (Genesis 1:28). The scope of this command includes both humanity’s stewardship over the physical earth and also humanity’s spiritual responsibility to God and all humanity.

The fall of mankind led to serious consequences in all psychological, social and ecological relationships resulting in never ending brokenness and sinful relationships. Both individuals and people groups are separated from God and separated from each other. Yet, God’s eternal plan included redeeming sinful humanity. Immediately after Adam’s and Eve’s sin, God unveils the promise of the Redeemer who will defeat the Evil One (Genesis 3:15). God shows His universal focus in His general covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:8, 12-13; 10:32).

At Babel, humanity was shattered into different linguistic people groups. God’s salvific covenant with Abraham focuses on all people groups. God gave Abraham both a prophecy and a command when he was told “you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:1-3). This significant covenant is repeated four more times – twice again to Abraham (Genesis 18:18; 22:18), once to Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and once to Jacob (Genesis 35:11).

ii. So His name would be glorified in all the earth: Major events in Israel’s history are frequently “captioned” with the specific purpose of glorifying God or His people in all the earth. The following passages confirm this intent:

- Through the 10 Plagues: Moses, on the Lord’s command, tells Pharaoh: “But I have raised you up for this very purpose ... and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth” (Exodus 9:13-16)

- Through the giving of the Ten Commandments: Moses says to Israel: “Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations” (Deuteronomy 4:6).
- Through the drying up of the Red Sea and Jordan River (Joshua 4:23-24).
- Through God’s fulfilment of His promises in bringing Israel to the Promised land and His demand for their purity for the sake of the nations (Ezekiel 20: 9, 14, 22).
- Through David’s victory over Goliath (1 Samuel 17:46-47).
- Through Solomon’s wisdom which drew men of all nations (1 Kings 4:34).
- In Solomon’s Prayer at the Inauguration of Temple (1 Kings 8:41-43; 59-60) where he asks God to listen to the foreigner who prays toward His temple,
- God’s witness to the nations is propagated by King Darius in praise for Daniel’s deliverance (Daniel 6:25-28).

iii. Inescapable in the Psalms: Over 167 references to the “peoples” occur in the 150 Psalms. Often translated “nations” in English translations, this word actually refers to ethnic groups. While neither Israel nor even each Psalmist may have understood the full meaning of such verses, the global scope of God’s intent remains visible. Some of the most significant passages include: Psalm 2:8: *Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.*

Psalm 105:1: *Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name; make known among the nations what He has done.*

See also 9:11, 18:49, 22:27-28, 45:17, 46:6, 10, 47:1, 57:9, 67:2, 72:1, 72:17, 82:8, 86:9, 117:1, and 126:2.

iv. The “Peoples” and the Prophets: The writings of the OT prophets are also replete with references to the “peoples” around them. Isaiah’s writings may be considered the high point of OT universality. He points to the “Root of Jesse” who will be a banner calling all peoples (11:10-12) and the challenge to make Him known among all peoples (12:4). Isaiah 42 promises a covenant for the peoples and a light to the Gentiles. The Suffering Servant passages and especially Isaiah 49 speak of the Servant’s global impact and the promised “coming” of the peoples to salvation and that priests would arise from among them (66, especially vv 18-21). God’s astounding call to a young, protesting Jeremiah, to be “*a prophet to the nations*” (Jeremiah 1:5-6), shows God’s concern for the world.

Almost all the other books of the OT prophets refer to the nations, and some give prophetic warnings to other peoples. Some of the highlights include:

Joel 3: 11-12: *Come quickly, all you nations from every side, and assemble there. Bring down your warriors, O LORD! 'Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side.'*

Zephaniah 2: 11: *The LORD will be awesome to them when He destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship Him, every one in its own land.*

See also Micah 4: 3; Zephaniah 3:20; Haggai 2:7; Malachi 1:11; 3:12.

The book of Jonah is completely cross-cultural in focus. This Jewish prophet was called to give witness to his hated enemies, the Ninevites (ancestors of modern Iraqis). Jonah runs and proves less faithful to God than “non-believing” sailors. Begrudgingly, he proclaims God’s message and resents the surprising salvation God then gives. God’s obvious love for all nations, even “enemy” nations, is dramatic in contrast to the ethnocentrism of one of God’s “best.”

The OT has significant themes of promised judgment or promised salvation for all the peoples. Though each book’s chronology and purpose is different, their constant theme of the “peoples” shows how deeply God’s plan is woven throughout the OT. The main element, however, is a sense that the time for this coming fulfilment is not quite at hand. The anticipation of the coming of the “peoples” to God prevents the modern church from pleading ignorance of this very definite global intent of God’s message.

(c) God's Heart For The "Peoples" In The New Testament (NT)

1. From the Beginning: God's "eternal" plan to re-join humanity together with Himself and with the rest of humanity is seen immediately in the Gospels.

- Christ's genealogy (Matthew 1) includes not only four women (before Mary) but four Gentile women!
- Jesus' birth was announced not to the religious leaders but to the lowest part of society – the shepherds (Luke 2).
- The second revelation of the birth was to Gentiles (Matthew 2) and again not to Jewish leaders. God inaugurates the era of the Messiah by specifically announcing it to the Wise Men, "foreigners" perhaps from Persia, India or even China.

The early part of Jesus' ministry clearly showed His very specific consciousness that all He did and taught had universal ramifications, including such events as:

- His early work in the very multi-ethnic areas of Capernaum and the "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:12-16)
- His inaugural sermon at Nazareth (Luke. 4:22-30) where He cites Isaiah 61's spiritual application of the "year of jubilee" concept and highlights God's love for the "foreigners" by citing how God helped the widow of Zarepath (1 Kings 17) and Naaman, an enemy general (2 Kings 5). This message infuriated the Jews of His hometown.
- Satan's temptation of Jesus with the "kingdoms of this world" (Matthew 4:1-10).

2. A New Method of Interpretation—OT Context: Crucial to understand Jesus' vision for the peoples is to understand His extensive use of the OT.

First, He developed a new hermeneutic (means of interpreting) the OT, unlike the style of the Jewish Rabbis. It was later to be adopted by the Apostles or Paul. (C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*).

Second, His use and mastery of the Old Testament was truly massive and astounding. He alludes to or quotes over 170 OT verses throughout His teaching in Matthew, Mark and Luke alone.

Third, this new way of interpreting scripture presupposed that no quote or allusion to the OT could be completely understood unless its whole OT context was examined. Significantly, of the 170-plus OT verses Jesus used, 134 of the verses came from OT passages that included, within its immediate context, a clear reference to a "people" or "peoples." These 134 "peoples" allusions come from passages with a variety of themes, but essentially focus on promised salvation (and a redeemer) for the nations, warn the "peoples" of judgment, or urge Israel to treat the "foreigners" correctly and to remember their responsibility to the "peoples."

Jesus, as the greatest teacher who ever lived, carefully wove "peoples" themes through His teaching but He would not unveil the full plan until all of the teaching and all of the events of His death and resurrection were fulfilled. Only then did He brilliantly unveil the plan woven intentionally throughout His teachings.

3. During the Final Week (Pre-Crucifixion): Jesus took key steps to synthesize diverse OT themes into a coherent whole during the final week of His early life. His teaching and actions touched on the great OT visions of the coming "Day of the Lord" or "Year of Jubilee."

(i) Grand Entrance: His grand entrance (John 12 based on Zechariah 9:9-10) presents the king riding on a donkey who "*will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.*" The immediate reference leaves no doubt that the coming of the humble messiah is for all "peoples." At first, "His disciples did not understand all this" (John 12:16).

(ii) The Final Sign: The culminating sign of the end of the age is Jesus' promise that all the "ethnê" will hear and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14). This promise indicates what will happen, but has an imperative requirement to all believers.

(iii) The Coming of the Greeks: When the Greeks came to Jesus, He recognized that “now is the time” for all to be fulfilled (John 12:20-23). Why? Jesus had ministered to symbolic representatives of the Jews (who were His first priority) and He also ministered to the half-Jew Samaritans; to various Gentiles living in Israel and to God-fearing “foreigners” such as the Roman centurion. The foreigners represented that final symbolic segment of humanity which had now come to Jesus. This was the beginning of the global pilgrimage to the “temple” and Jesus recognized this as the final moment being truly here.

(iv) Coming to the Temple: Malachi 3:1-3 promises a sudden, dramatic coming of the messenger of the covenant to the temple. Knowing this, Satan tempted Jesus to jump from the heights of the temple to fulfil one popular interpretation of this passage. Instead, Jesus came to the temple in literal fulfilment of this passage when He stormed into the temple to “cleanse” it (“who will be like a refiner’s fire”).

The Jews had turned the Temple’s Court of the Gentiles into a market place for money changers and sellers of sacrificial animals. Jesus’ righteous fury over this desecration and the disregard of the “foreigners” opportunity to worship the true God exploded upon this “den of robbers: (Jeremiah 7:11). Jesus stressed that His Father’s *“house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”* (Isaiah 56:7) because His “house” was to include all peoples in prayer and worship of the one true God.

4. The “Several” Great Commissions -- The Culmination of OT Themes: Jesus’ birth, life and teachings completely fulfilled the OT patterns and prophecies and He blended the characteristics of four major roles of Prophet, Suffering Servant, Priest and King in a totally new way. This complete fulfilment is then brought to a brilliant climax in His great commissions. Jesus gave not one “great commission” but several with different aspects of His overall command.

(i) Luke 24: 44-48 The Prophet Greater Than Moses: This commissioning took place on the Sunday Resurrection evening. He clearly shows them that in all of the OT, three things are clear: The Messiah must suffer (and die); He will be raised and the gospel will be preached in all the world, i.e. to every ethnic group (ethnê) in the world.

(ii) John 20:21 The Suffering Servant: During that same “all-night” seminar, Jesus gave another aspect of His commission. He said to His disciples, “As the Father has sent me, so send I you.” Short, succinct and profound. Jesus calls His people to minister in all the ways He did. He gave all He had, including His own life. His call to do all He did includes suffering for the sake of others. He stands as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah to call His followers to full sacrifice for the sake of the world.

(iii) Matthew. 28:16-20 The King, Son of David: Two or three weeks later Jesus gave another aspect of the commission. On this unnamed mountain in Galilee, Jesus apparently spoke to over 500 people, some still doubters. The eternal king, the promised descendant of David, says that despite all worldly and evil spiritual opposition, He has all authority both to send His followers and to be with them at all times. The central focus of all of their lives must be in obedience to this highest mandate.

(iv) Acts 1:6-8 The High Priest: Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus appeared on the Mount of Olives before He ascended to the right hand of the Father. Realizing even more than they do that all He has commanded to this point is impossible in their own power, He promises them power to be witnesses in all the world.

In the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus spent His time repeatedly telling His disciples these truths. The following chart highlights the great scope of His commission. To not include all people groups as the focus of missions is would amount to a “great omission.”

Verses	Time & Place	Basis, Mandate	General description of task	Content of preaching	Methods	Geographic al scope	Time limit	Promises of power and help
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Jn 20:19-23	Evening of first Easter in Jerusalem	The Father's sending of His Son v.21	Sending v. 21	Forgiveness of sins v. 23	Like Jesus v. 21	To the world		Receive the Holy Spirit v. 22
Lk 24:44-49	Evening of first Easter in Jerusalem	In His name v. 47	Preaching to all nations v. 47	Repentance and forgiveness for sins v. 47	Preaching v. 47	All people groups from Jerusalem onwards v. 47	The age of the Holy Spirit v. 49	Equipped with power from the high v. 49
Mt 28:16-20	Days after the resurrection on a mountain in Galilee	Jesus was given all authority in heaven and on earth v. 18	Go out and make disciples of all nations v. 19	All that I have commanded you v. 20	Baptizing them and teaching them v. 19-20	All nations v. 19	Until the end of time v. 20	See, I am with you v. 20
Acts 1:8	40 days after Easter just before Ascension on Mount of Olives	Jesus resurrection v.3	Witnessing to the whole world v.8	My witnesses= The testimony about Jesus v. 2	Witnessing v. 8	Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth v. 8	Until Jesus returns v. 11	Receive the power of the Holy Spirit v. 8
Mk. 16:15-18	Summary	Jesus Words	Go out and preach the gospel to all mankind v. 15	The gospel v. 15	Preaching aimed at faith and baptism v. 15-16	For all human beings v.15		And these signs will accompany those who believe v. 17
Summary	At least 3 different times during the 40 days	Christological basis	Sending with the gospel to all people groups	Gospel about forgiveness and call to repentance	Identification & preaching Holistic mission	All people groups from "Jerusalem to the ends of the earth"	Until the return of Christ	The power of the Holy Spirit

5. The Acts of the Spirit in ALL the World: Ten days later Peter preached at Pentecost and showed that the Joel 2 prophecy has just been fulfilled. God's Spirit was only given to certain leaders in the OT: this priest, that prophet, this king, that judge. At Pentecost, a new thing happened! The Spirit was poured out on all believers: men and women, young and old, even servants (Acts 2:17). Men and women now had the power of the Spirit to proclaim the truth of God. It is the vision and focus and excitement to do the job no matter what.

The book of Acts shows the sequence of the real but also symbolic movement of the gospel into each major section of humanity as outlined in Acts 1:8: growth in Jerusalem (2:47); full inclusion of Hebraic and Hellenistic Jews (6); persecution scatters the church through Judea and Samaria (8:1); all barriers are broken down and all peoples are welcome (Peter and Cornelius, 9 & 10); the Antioch launch of ministry to all Gentiles (13.1); the Jerusalem Council accepts that one can become a follower of Jesus from within His own culture (15). Jesus' world mission is finally launched completely.

6. Paul -- Sent to the “Peoples”: Paul is the early church’s greatest missionary and theologian. All of Paul’s letters were written to new, less-than-perfect churches who struggled to discover how to apply God’s truth to their lives and cultures. Many of them understood their role to continue the sharing of the gospel both within their own culture as well as across cultures.

Everything Paul did, and how he lived his life, was subservient to bringing the gospel to the unreached (e.g. Romans 9:2-3, Acts 9:15-16). Any who share this commitment will expect to “take your part in suffering, as a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3). Paul also said that to reach the unreached people groups (ethnê), he worked both verbally and practically by means of word and deeds and with the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:18).

Paul’s missiological argument is: *“How can they believe if they have not heard the message? ... And how can the message be proclaimed if the messengers are not sent out?”* (Romans 10:14-16). He also speaks of his *“ambition . . . to proclaim the Good News where Christ has not been heard”* (Romans 15:20). We cannot know how many people will receive Christ in each people group because “many are called, but few are chosen.”

The highpoint of Paul’s writings may be the Ephesians 3 passage about the “mystery,” long concealed and sought after that was now revealed – *“that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.”* Without any doubt, ALL of the Bible is about the unfolding of this eternal plan: about “ethnê” (peoples) coming to Christ.

7. Hebrews -- A Challenge to Pilgrimage in the World away from Past Structures and Religious Ritual: Hebrews urges us to see that the theology of physical place and old ritual is not consistent with the higher spiritual realities of Christ. Believers can find Christ within new spiritual patterns which can be experienced in **every** culture in the world without unnecessary dependence on the “originating” culture which first brought the witness – whether Jewish or Western or African or Asian culture.

8. Revelation -- The Final Victory: In Revelation 5:8-9, believers focus on Jesus’ work as Suffering Servant – His purchase of people from every tribe, language, people and nation – and His moulding them into a kingdom of priests. Revelation 7:9-11 focuses on the culmination of Jesus’ role as King. His sacrifice and the implementation of His global plan have brought about the intended and final result. Humanity has been completely reunited once again – unity with each other and with God. Humanity has been returned to the pristine purity of the original creation. Celebration and worship is now unhindered in any way. The end vision is given. The implementation by modern believers is all that remains!

The *“missio Dei ”* – to reach all mankind and all nations with salvation — requires that all ministries and mission methods should be subservient to this final goal.

5. Current Status

Some statistical information of the world's least reached peoples

Of the nearly 6.5 billion people in the world today, almost 1/3 are adherents of Christianity... at least in name. Even if you restrict that estimate to include only *evangelical* Christians, you are talking about approximately 1/10 of the world's population. One out of ten! Indeed, Christianity has grown significantly from that initial band of men who left their nets on the shore of the Sea of Galilee two thousand years ago to follow Jesus and become fishers of men. Some researchers estimate that in 100 A.D. there were approximately 360 unbelievers for every committed Christian in the world. By 1000 A.D., that ratio had dropped to 69. With only 9 unbelievers for every committed Christian at the beginning of this third millennium, obviously tremendous progress has been made.

Today, you will find Christians on all seven continents, even on Antarctica. Churches are present in nearly all of the 220+ countries in the world. The annual personal income of church members totals more than 17 trillion US dollars, approximately 340 billion of which is given to Christian causes. Twenty billion dollars is directed to global missions efforts. Churches support more than five million national workers and nearly 450,000 foreign missionaries. Good progress has been made but much more needs to happen.

Despite the appearance that Christianity is everywhere, the truth is that at least one-quarter of humanity *still* has little or no access to the good news of Jesus Christ. These *least reached* are members of over 6,000 (out of about 16,000) distinct people groups whose languages, cultures and/or location have isolated them from believers in significantly more reached people groups living in their own countries and in others around the world.

Although the Unreached or Least Evangelized Peoples still comprise 27% of the world's population, only about 3% of the world's vocational missionaries serve this 27% of the world. Less than 0.5% of Christian donations are given for these peoples. While 115 million persons are newly-evangelized each year, there are 124 million new births a year! Twenty-Six closed countries and thirty-one partially closed countries hinder growth as well (Barrett/Johnson).

Many churches seem ignorant of this vast inequity. Sometimes, in fact, the promotion of becoming involved in reaching this "last one fourth of the Great Commission" seems counter-productive. Many advocates of ministry to other Christians, or to groups having a strong minority of believers among them, push against the World A emphasis as if the information is merely a marketing strategy which competes with interest in existing ministries. Some have suggested that there has been an overemphasis on UPGs.

These people groups, however, have virtually no choice with respect to the gospel. They fail to follow the One who said "Follow Me," not because they have rejected that call, but because they have never heard it. While many UPGs are relatively small in size (approximately 1/2 have populations of less than 10,000 each), at least 1,000 of these least reached people groups have populations of more than 100,000 each. More than 250 of them have populations exceeding one million each!

Where are these least reached peoples? The greatest number are found between 10° and 40° north latitude in a broad belt that sweeps across North Africa, the Middle East and much of Asia. This fact has been popularized in the term *10/40 Window*. Countries with the most Least-Reached people groups include India with 2,084 LEPs out of a total of 2,327; Pakistan with 471 LEPs out of 477 peoples; China with 404 LEPs out of 495 peoples, Nepal, with 377 LEPs out of 395 peoples and Bangladesh with 344 LEPs out of 376 peoples.

While people groups generally concentrate in certain geographic localities, individual members of those groups can and do travel elsewhere. Significant populations of unreached

people groups can be found in nearly every major urban centre: Wolof in New York City, Parsee in London, Algerian Arabs in Paris, Bugis in Singapore . . . to name only a few. Visit <http://peoplegroups.org> or <http://joshuaproject.net> and check out the scores, if not hundreds, of UPGs living in a particular country.

The goal of world evangelization is so that God's glory and kingdom will fill the earth (Revelation 7:9, Habakkuk 2:14). Some indicators of this progress and remaining challenges, provided by Joshua Project, include:

- Bible translation: The New Testament has been translated into the mother tongue of over 80% of the world's population. However, the remaining approximately 20% will require over 5,500 new translations.
- Christian radio broadcasting: Christian radio broadcasts are in the languages of about 81% of the world's population.
- Jesus film: There have been approximately 5.7 billion viewings of the *Jesus* film, and it is available in languages spoken by over 90% of the world's population.
- Status of the gospel for every person: Approximately 70% (4.3 billion) of the world's population have heard the gospel in some form. 30% (2 billion) have had virtually no exposure to the gospel message.

A Description of Major Religious and Cultural Blocs:

Another way to look at the challenge of reaching the least reached is to view them by the major religious and cultural blocks. The majority of the unreached are found in Asia, and where the major religions were founded. India and China, with over half the world's population — are the core of the Hindu and Buddhist worlds and have significant Muslim populations. At the same time, the sheer number of new religious movements is staggering.

Establishing the church among these peoples is our high-priority task. The mission of Christ to establish His church (Matthew 16:13-20) is still progressing. While highlighting some of the needs below at first, case studies in these areas showing the on-going handwork of God to advance His purposes are also included. General categories follow below.

1. Muslim: Awareness of the Muslim world has increased greatly in this century. Yet that knowledge is often either too narrow — focused on the experiences of the learner, or too broad — such as broad stereotypes related to all followers of Islamic tradition. Muslims come from two major camps: Sunni and Shiite. There is also an underlying Sufism (Muslim mysticism) which impacts some groups more than others. Beyond this, folk Islam at the popular level plays out in the way many Muslims relate to their day-to-day lives.

2. Hindu: Hinduism as a religion is unstructured and better described than defined. More accurately, it is a way of life, or fitting its plurality, "ways of life" since it involves much more than what most would call "religion." A broad spectrum exists, from atheism to monotheism to polytheism to animism, with a multiplicity of philosophies, sects, cults, practices, customs, traditions and beliefs. Little pressure for conformity exists. While some practice and observe Hinduism at a philosophical level, the larger percentage follow practical or popular Hinduism.

Commonality of beliefs include aspects of karma, kala, dharma, reincarnation, samsara, mukti (salvation), etc. A distinctive from other cultures may be that the Hindu world peoples live and breathe within community as in no other. The Dharma or way of life of the caste or community cannot be lightly violated. Tolerance of different norms among different people groups contribute to tolerance within caste as well, but Dharmic order must be preserved.

The gospel, therefore, cannot take root in the Hindu world unless it takes root in caste groupings. The social structure of the caste in a given community is the social order. Penetrating them the first time with the gospel normally requires evangelistic efforts focused on that particular caste or group of castes. Christ must be lived out within Hindu communities rather than being seen as one who opposes the cultures and traditions of the Hindu world. While the vast majority of Hindus are found in India and Nepal, they are spread around the world and streams of

Hindu thinking find their way into the West through the New Age movement, guruism and other philosophies.

3. Buddhist: Today, millions in Tibet, Japan, Korea, China, and Southeast and Southern Asia are adherents of some form of Buddhism, usually intermixed with animism and sometimes tempered by modern secularist materialism. There are three major kinds of Buddhism.

Theravada Buddhism (the doctrine of the elders) is found in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and other countries. Some of the basic tenets of all Buddhist's ideal worldview include:

- A strong ingrained belief in Karma (cause and effect) and rebirth (repeated reincarnations)
- A cyclical, rather than linear view of life and history
- An ultimate hope of nirvana, variously defined as non existence or bliss.

All of these were carried over from Hinduism. Those in Theravada would also include a concept of non-soul or non-self (Anatta). Buddhists at the popular level, however, often seek help through supernatural beings (spirits) and objects. They also incorporate a belief in an afterlife.

Mahayana Buddhism (the greater vehicle) is found in China, Korea, Japan and is expanded from Theravada. Both include concepts such as *karma*, rebirth and enlightenment as well as the concepts of the Three Refuges, the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-fold Path. In spite of the fact that some schools such as Zen betray basic Theravada tendencies, certain distinctions of the Mahayana schools reveal a marked difference between them and the more conservative Theravada.

Tibetan Buddhism is gaining converts around the world, in the West especially. It can be found in the Tibetan Autonomous Region within China (as well as other parts of China), Bhutan and Sikkim and other parts of India and Nepal. It is influenced by tantric practices (from India) and thus magic is part of its background.

Approximate figures for adherents of various religions are:

	Approx. Population	Percentage of World Population
Muslims	1,313,983,654	20.36%
Hindus	870,047,346	13.48%
Nonreligious	768,598,424	11.91%
Chinese Universists	404,922,244	6.27%
Buddhists	378,809,103	5.87%
Ethno-religionists	256,340,652	3.97%
Atheists	151,548,030	2.35%
Neo-religionists	108,131,713	1.68%
Sikhs	25,373,879	0.39%
Jews	15,145,702	0.23%
Spiritists	13,030,538	0.20%
Baha'is	7,614,998	0.12%
Confucianists	6,470,714	0.10%
Jains	4,588,432	0.07%
Shintoists	2,789,098	0.04%
Taoists	2,733,859	0.04%
Zoroastrians	2,647,523	0.04%
Other Religionists	254,007	0.00%

Taken from World Christian Database

6. CURRENT CHALLENGES TO REACHING ALL PEOPLES

Undoubtedly there are more than enough churches, mission agencies and funding available to begin sustainable indigenous ministries in every unreached people group. What then prevents the completion of this task? If the mission world has prioritized people groups for the past thirty years, why is God's command to go to every people group unfinished? Many challenges hinder strong Christ-ward movements from developing among UPGs / LEPs. These obstacles must be seen as challenges which Christ can enable His Body to overcome. These challenges relate to the response of the Church and the situation of the UPG itself.

Intrinsic challenges: The remaining people groups and individuals tend to be isolated by a number of reasons related to their identity and location: barriers of language, culture, religious fundamentalism, political resistance and others.

1. Orality / Literacy: More than a billion adults in the world prefer to learn through oral communication. Often negatively called non-literate peoples, they are isolated from the gospel not by their ignorance but by the Church's continued insistence on using the many written forms of evangelism. Many of these "oral learners" can immediately repeat a long, complicated story heard only once, but would have difficulty memorizing a list of abstract principles. Materials prepared for oral communicators are often scarce and presents a big challenge for continued evangelism and leadership training in such cultures.

2. Language Isolation / Unavailability of Scripture / Resources: In spite of the church's effort for reaching people in their languages, many people groups have not yet had the chance to hear the good news of Jesus Christ in their own languages. If translations exist, distribution is often limited. This lack of translation and production of Scripture and other materials makes it very difficult for these peoples to hear the gospel. For example, since January 2001, a worker has produced a thirty minute radio program each week in one of the local languages in Ethiopia. Many feedback letters tell of listeners who responded that they received Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour because they understand better and because they heard Jesus speaking in their language. Thus, Jesus is no longer an outsider who demands something more from them, nor an alien who does not speak their language. He is part of their identity, who appreciates what they have, who they are and calls them to everlasting life in their own language.

Thus, language is not simply a matter of understanding; rather it has a strong element of identifying oneself with that people group. A Welsh participant at the 2004 Forum, who is very fluent in English, expressed that he felt forgotten because *"everybody expects us to communicate in English, which is not our language. Therefore, we are forgotten."*

3. Culture/Society: Cultural boundaries against evangelization are not a new phenomenon, but they are a major hindrance. Resistance of cultures against any intrusion of outside influences is a protective mechanism and helps to propagate that culture. Further, mistakes by well-intentioned but poorly trained cross-cultural messengers often create resistance to the gospel. All missionaries will bring their own cultural understanding along with the gospel. They must work hard to discover how to remove as much of their cultural overhang as possible so that the gospel can enter a culture with relevance and purity. These mistakes often result in an inoculation of the focus group to the gospel due to previous interactions with Christians/missionaries.

Another challenge is that of churches from near cultures which might be blinded to their own cultural failings, or are unwilling to break across cultural barriers because of their conformity with their own culture. Some examples might include cases of intolerance between Caucasians and African Americans in the United States. Another might be how some of the Kambata people of Ethiopia ignore the Fuga who are an outcast minority and another how some Indian castes ignore their responsibility to the Dalits. Christians from any of these cultures would decry such an injustice in another culture, but often do not see their injustices toward others.

4. Governmental Isolation: Numerous governments restrict or forbid the evangelization of their residents. These peoples are isolated from the gospel by government force. Governments can outlaw Christianity as a religion thus banning missionaries from coming in as well as persecuting the believers inside the country. In Saudi Arabia, for example, rewards are offered to anyone who identifies a prayer group. Similar situations exist in other places such as the Maldives Islands. Thus workers are often unable to get to their peoples. One missionary doctor after 4 years of trying had to give up his calling for a nomadic people due to their inaccessability.

5. Religious isolation: Government restrictions in some places, or the strength of societal influence and restrictions can cause individual religious authorities also to act to isolate their members from Christian influence.

6. Geographical isolation: Many groups live in remote locations which are difficult to reach, making it very difficult to financially send and support a missionary. These groups may have little communication outside of their location. Technology like radio and telecommunications is not suitable. Sometimes even natural conditions like climate can prevent missionaries from going for an extended time. All of this combines to make it difficult for the church to evangelize them. Tibetans and Nomads are examples of such challenges.

7. Persecution and Terrorism: Terrorism and religious fundamentalism provide massive challenges to the spread of the gospel. Many Christians fail their Lord's call out of fear. Many others rise up and are extremely faithful. Persecution of Christians results in the deaths of over 165,000 believers every year (500 a day).

The martyrdom of Christians and specifically cross-cultural workers continues to increase. Many sending churches and many volunteers ask if working among a specific people is "safe." Simply put, it is not. The only question is who is willing to take this risk.

8. Social Isolation: The *caste* system in India is one example. *Nomadic* life style is another that is difficult to overcome because the usual church mindset is focused on stationary facilities and programs. Trying to reach people from a western point of view can be very unattractive to some people's culture and does not resonate well with them. Economic poverty is also a two-edged sword in social isolation. Extreme living conditions can make it unattractive for the missionary personally; but also the poverty needs of the people can be overwhelming to the missionary as to where to begin.

9. Migration: Migration of people and problems is a major factor which must be considered in the Christian world. Consider the following material offered by William O'Brien:

- Political refugees displaced within their own countries number well over 30 million and those who have to flee their country are well over 100 million.
- Economic refugees number in the millions. Over 250,000 Arabs live in Dearborn, Michigan, USA alone. There are 7.4 million Filipinos working in other countries.
- Forced migration or "slavery," (especially sexual slavery) has displaced millions.
- Such migrations result in a sizeable number of representatives of 1000 unreached people groups and of 800 non-Christian peoples migrating to the West each year.
- Migration of money away from the poorest is a global disaster. 1.5 trillion US dollars is transferred around the world every 24 hours and yet massive numbers of "peoples" live in extreme poverty.
- Increasingly "unstoppable" diseases migrate constantly and more rapidly across the world, including AIDS, SARS, ebola and a very dangerous version of tuberculosis.

7. CHURCH RELATED FACTORS

Intrinsic factors relate to why UPGs can be called “hidden.” Terms like “forgotten” or “ignored,” however, implies neglect. In many cases, churches around the world are clearly aware of many of the unreached peoples. Why, therefore, are some peoples forgotten or ignored by the church when they so clearly need the gospel shared with them? Included below are a number of church related factors which contribute to the continued “unreachedness” of some peoples.

1. Lack of Specific Prayer Focus: Without prayer, all of the resources, structures and intentions simply do not have the effect God intends. Prayer is not merely a spiritually “blessing” ministry; prayer is the ministry God has given His church to “reach” the unreached.

2. Lack of knowledge: Presently, the church is not yet fully aware of all the challenges that UPGs present because they:

(a) Have never heard the sobering reality of the UPG situation — that there are thousands of people groups comprising hundreds of millions of people who have no access to the gospel.

(b) Are not aware that the church has a God-given mandate and responsibility to bring the good news to every people group. The opportunity to truly comprehend would increase the passion for the great commission that the Holy Spirit has put into believer’s hearts.

3. Lack of vision: Far too many Christians and their leaders are aware of both the need and the mandate, but simply do not care enough to do something about it due to a general spiritual apathy, or to a specific lack of passion for reaching the unreached. Countless churches are so self-centred and inwardly-focused that the claims of the unreached simply fall on deaf ears. For these believers, their vision is not cast beyond their own immediate context.

4. Lack of commitment: In this case, the churches know and care about the unreached, but are simply not willing to do what it takes to reach them. Such scenarios include:

4.1 Low prioritization: Other programs and agendas take precedence over the unreached. The local church may consider local ministries and even foreign missions as vital, but they do not balance their involvement with the urgency of the people groups who have not heard.

4.2 Unwillingness to sacrifice financially: Bringing the gospel to those who have no access costs money. The missions’ budget is usually the first to suffer when things are tight, even though only \$1 in \$86,000 (or 5 cents out of every \$100) earned by Christians globally goes to mission amongst the unreached.

4.3 People: The church’s most promising people are frequently diverted away from mission to serving on the home front, despite the example of the church in Antioch where 2/5 of their leaders (and arguably their best two) went on mission. Around 94% of seminary graduates stay in their home country. Over 85% of all cross-cultural missionaries labour among nominal Christians.

Ralph Winter and Patrick Johnstone, in *Perspectives*, caution that

“41 times as many foreign missionaries work within reached people groups than those doing the exceedingly more difficult work of establishing breakthroughs within unreached peoples... It is a common observation of field practitioners that even among the 26% that are working in peoples dominated by non-Christian religions (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc), most are working to expand the church within groups where a breakthrough has already occurred and are not doing pioneer work within unreached peoples.”

4.4 Suffering: Seeing the church established among all UPGs will not be achieved without significant personal sacrifice. History shows that the greatest expansion of the Kingdom of God has occurred in times and places where the cost was also great and where the church was willing to pay that cost. In fact, more Christians were martyred in the 20th century than in the previous 19 centuries combined. In an age where prosperity and comfort are esteemed values even within

the church, believers may be willing to give their financial and even human resources, but are they willing to give their lives (Revelation 12:8)?

5. Lack of resources: Some churches have the desire and willingness to do what it takes to reach the unreached, but feel that they do not have the resources.

5.1 Financial: Particularly in the majority world, significant numbers of churches and their members are very poor. Taking care of their own (a biblically sound principle) consumes all the money they have.

5.2 Personal/spiritual: Far too many lay Christians believe that they personally have little to offer – their gifts have not been cultivated. The church needs to encourage its lay members to exercise their gifts for ministry.

6. Lack of experience: This is evident when the church is ready and willing to send its members to go, but is not able due to some of the following:

6.1 Lack of structure: Churches simply do not know *how* to send missionaries to UPGs. Contact with mission organizations is vital in these cases.

6.2 Low self esteem/fear: The daunting nature of the task convinces potential missionaries that they are not capable of making a difference.

6.3 Past failures: Some churches have had disastrous experiences with mission. These experiences have made them hesitant, despite their willingness to go.

6.4 Lack of Contextualization: Christian witness and styles of church are often imported in the forms of the cross-cultural witness rather than discovering ways to allow the seed of the gospel to arise in forms which fit the soil of each separate culture.

7. Wrong Definitions of Success: Because reproducibility is always difficult, the mission tendency is to consider tangible projects and institutions as a mark and evidence of success. Mission effort would be strengthened if Churches noted the number of new congregations which have been established as a consequence of missionary effort.

8. The Challenge of Effective but Secure Communication: An area of sacrifice is the need for Christian messengers to the unreached to often remain anonymous or to communicate very sparingly. Often, workers find themselves caught in the tension between meeting the needs of their home church who want to hear stories and reports of progress versus the crucial need to protect the identity and work of both new believers and of the cross-cultural witnesses.

9. The Challenge of Identity: Often times, Christian workers are required to take a “non-missionary” identity in order to be able to live among a difficult people. How can the Christian worker maintain honesty and yet seek to be in countries which prohibit Christian workers? How does one maintain the balance of being “wise as serpents and innocent as doves?” Much discussion continues on the integrity of seeking a “creative access” visa when a “missionary” or “religious” visa is prohibited. Ultimately, the question is whether it is ethical to seek entry into a country which defines as illegal any efforts to ask people to follow Christ (no matter one’s type of visa), or is it ethical to leave “peoples” without a witness by accepting government prohibitions?

8. Strategic Principles for Reaching UPGs

The challenges of reaching the least reached have forced the church to look for all opportunities to meet these challenges. Not all traditional mission methods are appropriate for use among the world's least-reached. Creative methods and entry points are needed. The great advantage that the church has is that God is powerful and will empower those who are willing to witness to the Good News. Key areas of innovation required include the following.

1. The challenge of geographical and physical barriers can make it difficult for Christian witnesses to be among peoples who have little or no access to the gospel. Yet, people groups who live in remote areas, whether isolated by climate, mountains or oceans, must be served. Many technological advances in transportation such as small planes and helicopters, four-wheeled drive vehicles and satellite-linked phones have reduced this difficulty. The greatest difficulty is ultimately the willingness of Christians to serve in remote and difficult areas even where their lives may be at risk.

2. Awareness of and adapting to social and cultural differences so that the gospel can be shared more effectively is essential for effectiveness. Ralph Winter in *"Cross-Cultural Evangelism: The Task of Highest Priority"* highlights the need for awareness of the "cultural distance" between the messenger and the recipient. The nearer the messenger is in cultural adaptation to the recipient culture, the more effective is the sharing of the gospel. This "nearness" may be due to one's culture of origin or even the result of careful adaptation to the recipient culture. The messenger must work hard to understand the other culture by learning their language, traditions, historical problems, religious allegiance and patterns of behaviour.

Often culture and religion are so intertwined that people are not able to distinguish these. Each messenger carries his/her own worldview and culture and must work to discover how to "translate" the gospel effectively into the recipient culture. Cultural adaptation and bonding are thus a crucial strategy. For example, a people group in north-eastern Thailand have been resistant to the gospel (0.3% Christians out of 20 million people) despite a continuing witness by missionaries since the 1900s. Methods which were unproductive included evangelists coming to share the gospel, holding rallies and leaving immediately afterwards. There was little focus on cultural and relational bonding. Today, however, a few missionaries regularly visit the villages while living in a town nearby. They sit with the people on the mats, eat with them using their hands and spend time with them in other activities. As a result, churches have started in three villages due to regular visits and bonding.

3. Contextualization of Culture. Ultimately, effectively sharing the gospel, in word and deed, requires thoughtful, biblical contextualization. The goal is to remove the "cultural overhang" of the gospel so that new followers find an expression within their culture that fits their context without compromising the gospel. The goal is effective contextualization rather than syncretism. The "*kerygma*" or seed of the gospel is planted and grows in the soil of the "new" culture. The new believers are then able to remain inside their own culture and spread the Good News in a way which is not foreign. The spectrum of what is acceptable is truly wide. The struggle, debate and agony over what is consistent with Scripture and what is heretical continues. The pragmatic desire to be effective by removing the "foreign" additions to the gospel brought by the cross-cultural witness always confronts the "prophetic" challenge of Jesus to any culture (beginning with His own Jewish culture).

Contextualization can be defined as removing the "scandal" of **non-scriptural** cultural elements without removing the "scandal" of the cross. The discovery of those concepts and means of communications which carry the essential meaning with the intended impact is crucial. Contextualization requires choosing which word, analogies, worship styles, congregational styles and so forth are appropriate.

While a small laugh in one culture can mean ridicule, it can merely mean embarrassment in another. The term “Yesus” may bring the image of the illegitimate son of a sex act of God and Mary, yet the term “Isa” in the same culture may denote a great prophet. The desire for cultural adaptation might mistakenly lead to renaming local deities with names of saints leading to syncretism rather than the true gospel. Clearly, the choices are agonizing. Centuries of failure to find the right bridges to sharing the gospel continually thrust Christ’s followers into new exploration.

4. Contextualization in Scripture: Contextualization is not new. Jesus’ favourite term about His ultimate plan was “Kingdom of God,” which Paul almost never used. Some accuse Paul of developing a new theology. This is not true. Simply put, Jesus’ Jewish audience had awaited God’s Kingdom for centuries. Paul’s Roman Empire audience saw the highest tribute for the citizen was to claim “Caesar is Lord.” Paul transformed this statement to carry the higher concept of eternal, global rule by Christ. This was the exact intent of Jesus’ use of the phrase “Kingdom of God.”

John uses the Greek philosophical term “*logos*” and refutes some of its characteristics to transform the term into a much higher meaning. “*Logos*” came to mean the complete expression of the one true God. The decision about the place of circumcision was a critical issue requiring contextualization. Some saw it, in the light of strong biblical support, as a pre-requisite to becoming a follower of Christ. Paul, others and finally the Jerusalem council realized the deeper intent of those OT passages was that circumcision (the form) was only a sign of true spiritual submission to God (the meaning). This decision shows two important truths: (1) no one can be required to “convert” to another culture before becoming a follower of Christ, and (2) they should not convert to another culture before becoming a follower of Christ in order that they might reach those from their own culture.

The clear desire is to communicate the gospel in a way which is both true to Scripture and relevant to culture. Contextualization efforts should avoid appearances of deception and should not be made in the attempt to avoid necessary persecution and possibly martyrdom. Many struggle to find the right balance and are sincere in their effort to be completely submissive to Scripture and Christ. They often claim, in fact, that re-examination of Scripture rather than their own traditions, cultures or church history has led them to these new contextualizations.

5. Holistic Approach: God has created us as social beings with body, soul and spirit. He is interested in the restoration and wellbeing of all aspects of our lives, not in compartments, but as a whole. A truly holistic approach requires caring for the needs of the body as well as of the spirit and the soul. With the Holy Spirit at work, ministries with this approach will ultimately lead to the transformation of individuals and communities in the love and power of God.

Most people working among UPGs would agree that our goal is the transformational development of these ethnic groups. Social and physical development and church planting are seen as essential parts of the whole. A holistic approach means balancing the proclamation of the biblical truth on one hand and the practical demonstration of God’s care and concern meeting physical and emotional needs on the other hand.

Ministry to physical needs can include medical care, agriculture, water and sanitation, economic development, training and education, infrastructure, community development and so forth. Ministry to social needs can include ministry to the disabled, street children, drug addicts and the building of strong community relationships. Spiritual ministry can include sensitive proclamation of the Good News in line with the worldview of that culture in order that congregations of believers will multiply.

6. Willingness to Sacrifice: Another major principle is the willingness to lay down one’s life for Jesus. These UPGs will not be reached without both the willingness to sacrifice and the reality of sacrifice.

9. Strategies for the Church: A “Body of Christ” Missiology

Since the “mission” is God’s, the “Body of Christ” is clearly the means He chooses to accomplish this mission. In the two thousand years since Christ, however, His global “body” has rarely understood or applied itself fully to this mission. The analogy of the Body has extensive implications for missions:

1. Trans-denominational, Trans-National -- No “Foreigner” or “Local”: Much current missiology arises out of the nationalistic philosophies of the 20th century. The oft-repeated phrase is that the “cross-cultural” witness is to work him or herself out of a job and transition it over to “national” workers. While the ultimate intent of this concept is the correct “honouring of others more than self,” it originates in an ecclesiocentric understanding of mission. Church-centred missiology suggests that the “foreign” worker helps to create the church and the institutions, initially fills the key roles and then the missionary offers those roles up to “local” believers.

If the cross-cultural worker shares the Good News and mentors developing leaders from the beginning to take those roles and never actually takes an “institutional” role in the church, then this person is operating in a way which enables indigenous leadership to be developed from the outset of the missionary task. The “missionary” by definition must always be pushing toward the frontier and equipping new congregations and new leaders to lead from the beginning.

The pattern which emerges is the non-institutional pattern followed by Jesus and Paul. Jesus only spent about three years equipping a core of believers and a core of leaders and then sent His Spirit to guide them the rest of the way. He taught them to listen to the Spirit and to obey all of His commands (not to know all of them first). Paul rarely if ever spent more than 18-24 months in any one location. He equipped leaders to do the same and move on. Now that there are Christians in most countries we need to work out how best to operate. The way forward is not neo-colonialism, where the “foreign” cross-cultural witness is the main leader, teacher and authority. Nor is it neo-nationalism, where the “local” believers, who are citizens of that country or culture, define all that needs to be done and the “foreign” visitor only does what he is asked to do. What is required by Scripture and global realities is a “body of Christ” missiology where all parts of the body submit to each other out of love for Christ and blend their various cultural, spiritual and personal talents for the sake of better effectiveness. Even as the world now understands the existence of trans-national corporations, the Body of Christ needs to come to understand the necessity of trans-national and trans-denominational cooperation. Such a mutual submission, sharing of resources, giftings and mission efforts would acknowledge cultural or denominational giftings and strengthen the capacity of the church through partnership to take the gospel to another UPG.

Further, God’s plan is now revealed – that Jews and “foreigners” can all be one through Jesus Christ. This plan proves the brilliance (“manifold wisdom”) of God which has been doubted by “rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3.10). Thus, all believers from all peoples are now totally joined as one body with one Lord, one faith, one baptism – and thus one mission (Ephesians 4 and 5)! This “*missio Dei*” can only be carried out in mutual submission to each other (Ephesians 5.21). The Body of Christ must move onward, not to a passing of the mission task from the “West” to believers in other parts of the world, but by a sharing by all peoples of the whole task until it is done.

Beyond the theological foundations which require a partnership missiology, the sheer presence of millions of Christ-followers across the world both now and in coming years requires this understanding of mission approach (Jenkins, “The Next Christendom”).

	2002 – 2 Billion Christians	2025 – 2.6 Billion Christians
Africa	360 Million	633 Million
Latin America	480 Million	640 Million
Europe	560 Million	555 Million

Asia	313 Million	460 Million
North America	260 Million	312 Million

2. Trans-National And Trans-Denominational Collaboration: Collaboration may be the last true frontier of missions (personal conversation with William R. O'Brien). True synergy in the Body of Christ happens as each group offers its resources and distinctives to the global body. Cultural, methodological, and theological blind spots are challenged. Sharing resources will help attain goals much larger than when a group works in isolation. Reunification of humanity begins to take place, overcoming the Babel curse and proving the Pentecost beginning. This reunified humanity becomes both a tangible and intangible witness to the world, proving that the gospel really does work. Further, as we make the long journey to serve all peoples, **we become family along the way!!**

This necessary collaboration will take many forms. Some churches will continue to do missions through agencies because of their perspective and desire to depend on the collective strength, wisdom and experience of such agencies. Others will emphasize local church involvement more directly and will be able to move more quickly and also gain a sense of obedience and fulfilment, but will need to work to gain the strength, wisdom and experience needed to avoid past missiological mistakes.

True partnership will be shared in going, witnessing and serving. Distinctives can be maintained but commonality emphasized. It will not be merely richer Christians "paying" poorer Christians to do the job. It will not be some cultures only teaching missions and other cultures sending the workers. Various UPG-focused partnerships (regional or national or people group focused) are proof that this strategy is working and have advanced work among UPGs in great ways. Through regular dialogue and planning meetings, various organizations find exciting ways to share resources of time, energy, prayer, people and money in new ways. Rather than duplicating efforts such as when three agencies separately spent thousands of dollars and 3-4 years to translate the same Gospel of Luke, these networks or partnerships are now providing the communication opportunities which result, for instance, in several organizations joining to finish the whole NT with no duplication of time or wasting resources.

3. Trans-gifting: All parts of church and gifting: The call for all members, not just the leadership, to be involved in ministry is clear. Further, a Body of Christ missiology requires that all believers and all leaders should find a way to simultaneously fulfil local and global responsibility. All giftings and resources must be used. All personal talents and possessions must be used. Whether the giftings be the more dramatic of evangelism, healing or tongues, or the more "mundane" gift of administration, all are required for the advance of the Good News – just as the body requires every organ to be in excellent health. When such giftings and resources are used, the "mission" will not be given the leftovers of finances, energy, skills, vocations, and personnel. The best will be sent; money will provide for needs of those who have never heard and for those of the workers sent and the vast talents used for "worldly success" will be applied with new ingenuity to the greatest and eternal global plan.

4. Trans-Vocational Versus Vocational: Missions must also become trans-vocational. The best gifting of all parts of the body of Christ must be maximized. The entrepreneurs, the managers, the health care people, the financiers and accountants, the pastors, the teachers, the engineers, the agriculturalists, the attorneys, all have valuable roles to play.

An emerging concept is trans-vocational teams intentionally working together. The members work together as a "more complete" body of Christ by applying all of the varying vocational skills while humbly learning and adapting to new cultures. Thus, the oft-emphasized mission theme of the whole body of Christ spreading the whole gospel to the whole world is fulfilled. Part of the application of trans-vocational teams would be the inclusion of tentmakers who use their vocational skills as a means to build relationships among a people and a related idea of "business as mission" where the goal is not just to "support" mission, but to use business as a

vehicle for effective cross-cultural witness and ministry. The challenge for tentmakers and for “business as mission” is that most UPG population segments are numbered among 85% of the world’s poorest peoples and communities. The lack of infrastructure and immediate possibility of profit brings its own challenges. Yet, in the same settings, good business practices can improve the lives of people as well as help committed believers to enter these communities with little access to the gospel. In this way, holistic church planting – improving the economics of a community and starting new congregations – can occur.

Some new understandings of the gifting of the Body of Christ are required. First, if the spread of the gospel is mainly done by the “equipping” part of the body – the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teacher – then a large part of the church will never be involved. Churches need to examine what percentage of church members are in “business” families – e.g. entrepreneurs, investors, managers and other professionals. The benefit of finding the ways to get these peoples involved is to discover the massive ways which the multi-talented Body of Christ can meet the felt needs of the 27% of the World who have no choice about the gospel .

1. Biblical Basis: Scripture give a basis for multi-vocational witnesses such as the following:

- Abraham was an Iraqi nomad/travelling rancher “very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold” (Genesis 13.2).
- Joseph was the Chief Operating Officer of the key global transnational corporation– Egypt.
- Nehemiah was the Chief Minister of a major city renovation project (Jerusalem).
- Daniel was the Chief Advisor / Consultant to two kings and one of three top administrators for a third king.
- Jesus is described as a “*tekton*,” best translated “builder” or “contractor” than just “carpenter.”
- Matthew was a government employee.
- Peter, Andrew, James and John were part owners in the family fishing business.
- Barnabas was a successful and generous landowner
- Paul’s was a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin whom we know as a trader and craftsman (1 Corinthians 9 and 2 Thessalonians. 3).

2. Some benefits of the “tentmaking” lifestyle provide for the Christian worker are:

- Integrating work and profession with one’s witness in a culture.
- Providing access to cultures where traditional missionary presence is not allowed.
- Gaining identification and credibility with the culture by becoming part of the rhythm of their lives.
- Establishing trust through the building of relationships.
- Showing a service or servant mentality by being available to be interrupted.
- Modelling godly living and behaviour and being willing to be scrutinized
- Finding the sacred in the secular.
- Help avoid segregating missions by focusing only on a part of their redemptive experience by showing that faith should be concerned with the whole of our God-given lives, individually and collectively. (Elton Trueblood, *The Company of the Committed*, Harper & Row 1961, 8-9).

10. CHURCH AND / OR MISSION?

Many have defined today as an age where the “mission” is returned to the “local” church as it was intended. While Ralph Winter has presented excellent evidence that the respective roles of the church (modality) and the related but separate mission team (sodality) (Winter, *Perspectives*, 3d. 224) have always existed, many emphasize that mission is supposed to be an extension of the local church. Assuming for the moment that the mission must be led and totally controlled by the local church, the following significant areas must be improved:

1. Cross-cultural adaptation training: Cultural understanding must be required of those who are sent. The local church and especially the person/people responsible for overseeing the mission team must be trained and even experienced in cross-cultural issues, e.g. cultural adaptation and language learning; culture shock and stress; contextualization, especially of church forms so as to not import the form of the mother church (whether that be cell, congregational, hierarchical, or the style of worship.)

2. Sacrificial and long-term ministry: Emphasis on “returning” the mission to the local church has resulted in many “short-term” mission activities. The long-term worker often spends massive amounts of time serving the visiting church members rather than serving the focus people. While some short-term efforts may have a strategic purpose, much of this effort seems to be to give people a sense of having fulfilled their “mission” duty without too much sacrifice. No church, denominational structure or business entity could be successfully run by short-term personnel. Yet, the most significant work of fulfilling God’s eternal plan is considered by some to be achieved by sending short term people.

3. Simultaneous local and global mission focus: Too many Christian activities, churches and organizations have proven to have little ability to maintain simultaneously a local and a global focus. If the church is to do mission without creating any external structures, it must promote and attain a commitment to genuinely sacrificial service.

4. Optional tracks and centres of interest: Collaboration allows choices of involvement in horizontal partnerships which would focus on the broad spectrum of Christian mission, or on the vertical partnerships which focus on one aspect (such as media partnerships, medical partnerships). Every group and individual can be involved according to interests and giftings and thus have a broader impact than would be possible if they did not work in partnership with others.

5. The team approach: The use of a strong team approach is crucial and preferable to sending a solitary individual or couple. These teams develop a voluntary accountability or covenant system. The teams often recruit specific people with specific giftings. The positive side of such recruitment is the potential to develop strong loyalties and long-term commitment. The negative side can lead to an ingrown team. One of the most positive benefits is that younger or more inexperienced members are personally mentored and nurtured by other team members. Missiological literature shows that such investments lead to longer-term success personally and as a team. The team approach also seeks to counter the trend often cited that young people today cannot make long-term commitments.

6. Covenant teams from varied groups: One approach which can be helpful for a local church who wants to send long-term personnel is that of developing collaborative teams with other churches or with teams from collaborative organizations through covenant agreements. No organization or person would supersede another. Each organization would be equal at the table sharing its resources as it sees fit. Another way forward is to send people to work with an existing mission agency.

7. Home and away – united strategizing: One valuable model for a local church requires interacting groupings. “Away” teams would include long-term and short-term personnel living among the focus people and developing and implementing ministry strategies. The “home” team

would promote and support the work; as well as recruit and equip workers. The “home” team and the “away” team would be involved in serious strategy and methodology discussions on a regular basis. They would also develop a means of effective interactions with other “mission” teams.

True Mission Leadership of the Local Church: Single or Multiple?: A church which seeks a truly “glocal” (global and local) view must seek the same kind of leadership team listed in Ephesians 4:11-12 (see also 1 Corinthians 28-31): This team of leaders would possess the varied giftings of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. Most churches, however, default to a single leader model whose main gifting is that of pastor/teacher. Usually, one leader does not possess all of these giftings. Many pastors are more strongly gifted in teaching/pastoring. The prophetic gift seems to be mainly one of vision. The evangelist is gifted to preach the gospel to people of all kinds. If a church were made up of such a leadership team, its leaders would have a tendency to blend the vision and a desire to break new ground with the compassion of the pastor/teacher.

The biblical church most often cited as the model for “returning” the mission to the local church is the church at Antioch. Careful study of the Act 13 passage shows that this church was: 1) led by five leaders (which can imply a possession of giftings such as in Ephesians 4); and 2) the whole church (not just the five leaders) were fasting and praying when they complied with the Spirit’s leadership to set aside Paul and Barnabas. It is crucial to note here that this mission-minded church sent out 40% of their leaders. Few churches who want to be involved in mission seem willing to make the sacrifice of their best leaders for the mission enterprise – and few “main” leaders seem willing to sacrifice themselves to mission.

Worship and Mission: Many stress that the primary purpose of the church is to “worship,” as highlighted by John Piper. Yet, Piper’s immediate next emphasis is that mission is an urgent task for the church so that churches will be planted among the UPGs and they then will become worshipping churches. More discussion of the role of worship both in reaching the unreached as well as a part of spiritual warfare is required.

Some practical steps for mobilizing churches to reach the unreached: Local churches around the world regardless of location, language, culture and economic and political realities must be actively engaged in reaching those who have not been reached. The key to the mobilization of local churches for missions is the rediscovery by church leadership of their equipping role for the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

1. The impartation of vision can be done through many tools: teaching, group discussion, videos, literature, posters, maps, calendars, bookmarks, media communication, testimonies, questionnaires, reports, graphs, resources like Joshua Project II, Operation World, Caleb Project and the arts through drama and music. Imparting of this vision should include the following concepts:

- The purpose and current impact of the local church as it relates to global evangelization.
- The respective role of the pastor and the congregation in the church and missions.
- The importance and place of personal giftings and ministry in reaching the unreached.
- The biblical basis for serving UPGs.
- Education about the status of peoples who have little access to the gospel.
- Current examples of local church involvement in ministry to the unreached people.

2. Involvement in mission mobilization programmes such as *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* and mission trips to UPGs.

3. Spiritual concern to be developed through prayer involvement through the use of Missions’ Praise and Prayer bulletins, Sunday Services/Cell Group Prayers for

Evangelism/Missions, etc. The result of this activity can be seen in the church becoming motivated to commit itself and its resources for the unreached.

4. Spiritual needs and “blind spots” in relation to missions can be addressed through: teaching, group Bible studies, discipleship classes on the “how to’s” of salvation, Christian growth, acknowledging spiritual gifts, seminars on cultural barriers in missions and developing effective mission strategies. The result is spiritual health and readiness for effective engagement in mission to the unreached.

5. Training in and application of Christian discipline in evangelism and mission. This can be pursued by discipling people to have: a Quiet time; family devotions centred on missions; stewardship of time, talents and finances; reaching out cross culturally to migrant workers, students and using missions’ websites. The result is that believers are equipped with basic ministry skills and involved in developing their gifts and utilizing their time and resources for mission.

6. The establishment of leadership and a framework to sustain involvement in ministries of evangelism/mission, which can be attained by the local church through:

- Establishing a congregational missions committee with a clear job description.
- Establishing a definite annual church plan for missions’ teaching, training and outreach.
- Defining a missions’ strategy for the church based on Acts 1: 8 with the church’s “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth” formula.
- Including definite evangelistic activities in the weekly program (e.g. friendship evangelism, children’s clubs, home Bible studies, Alpha classes, etc.);
- Establishing church contacts with people through the establishment of community projects.
- Setting time for regular reporting and prayer for missions.
- Encouraging members to adopt and pray for specific UPGs and missionaries.

Conclusion: Local churches “equipped and passionate for the ministry” are the key to the evangelization of “all peoples”. Pastors must give themselves to imparting vision, developing spiritual concern, meeting spiritual needs, providing practical training, leadership and a framework to sustain ongoing and effective ministries to the unreached people groups.

11. Prayer as a Crucial Strategy for Reaching the Peoples of this World

God-empowered church planting movements will require God's power. Psalm 2:8 tells believers to ask for the nations as our inheritance. Jeremiah 33:3 tells them to "*Call unto me, and I will answer, and show you great and mighty things that you know not of.*" God acts in response to His people's prayers. God desires to save everyone (2 Peter 3:9). He will build His church (Matthew 16:18). If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us and will give us what we request (1 John 5:14-15). Therefore, His children need to ask. Without prayer, nothing will happen. Believers begin by BEING people of prayer themselves. History gives vivid examples of the priority of prayer:

- In 1727, German Moravians began a prayer meeting that lasted 100 years. Revival swept through the churches, and hundreds of missionaries were sent out.
- In the 1782, the Nottingham Baptist Association in England began monthly concerts of prayer for evangelization. Soon, a member of this association of churches, William Carey, knelt before a map of the world he had drawn and poured out his soul for the world. He and supporters thus gave birth to the modern mission's movement.
- In 1802, the Pee Dee Baptist Association in South Carolina, USA, began a similar monthly concert of prayer. Adoniram Judson and other American missionaries were sent in 1812 to Asia.
- In 1806, students at Williams College in Massachusetts, USA were caught in a rainstorm and took refuge in a convenient haystack. They used the time to pray for the lost and wound up on mission fields, igniting the "Student Volunteer Movement".

Prayer an Essential Element for Church Planting: Prayer is both talking to and listening to God. It is walking in a conversational relationship with our Creator. When we pray we obey Jesus' command, noted in Luke 10:2 to "*Ask the Lord of the harvest...to send out workers into His harvest field.*" Prayer under girds God's work in the world and enables us to discern His priorities and strategies (Psalm 32:8). Prayer not only prepares us as workers; prayer also opens doors and hearts closed to the gospel (1Corinthians 16:9). Prayer releases heaven's resources for the accomplishment of the work and removes obstacles to the advance of His kingdom (Matthew 9:37-38). Prayer is the most important thing we do and the only strategy with no barriers or limits. It is available to every believer and makes all other strategies effective. Prayer models dependence upon the Lord, highlighting that the power and victory are His (John 14:13).

The Biblical Basis and Precedence for Intercession: Prayer must be a priority for reaching the unreached because all believers are told to put on God's armour and then to pray (Ephesians 6:18-20).

1. Authority in Prayer: The whole world belongs to God, the Creator (Psalm 2:8). In faith we set our feet on the grounds of unevangelized areas and proclaim Jesus king of that place, asking Him to give us the nations and peoples. He will answer our intercession. No area or people belong to Satan. We proclaim Jesus as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus gave all believers all authority in heaven and on earth and commanded all to go to make disciples of all nations to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:19-20).

2. Isaiah and Prayer: Believers are to wrestle for nations and peoples who are without the gospel. In Isaiah 64:1-12, a tremendous chapter motivating and inspiring us for intercession. The prophet Isaiah wrestles in prayer for the nation of Israel which had left the right road. Isaiah cries to God, "*No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you.*" He grieves about Zion, which has become a desert and where the Name of our Lord is not worshipped. He cries out about all the sins of the nation (vs. 12) and yet is sure the Lord will answer and act according to His power. In the next sentence (Isaiah 65:1), God answers, "*I reveal myself to those who did not ask for me; I*

was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'" God acted because a prayer warrior, full of faith, dared to intercede for the people even though the people were not crying out to God. Isaiah provides an example of how to intercede for the peoples who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ. Further, Paul alludes to Isaiah 65:1 in Romans 1:20 as assurance that God will call the peoples who do not yet believe. Isaiah's prayer becomes a pattern of prayer for all peoples far from God.

3. Prayer in Acts: In Acts, the most significant aspects of church planting and growth are surrounded by prayer such as praying:

- Before choosing leaders (1:24; 6:6).
- After persecution for boldness (4:31; 9:40).
- For signs and wonders (28:8).
- As the gospel crosses from Jews to Gentiles (10:11).
- Resulting in the release of Peter from prison (12:12).
- About whom to send as the first missionaries (13:1-3).
- Before setting aside new believers as leaders (14:23).
- In prison, resulting in the jailer's conversion (16:25).
- Before departing from a new church "plant" (20:36).
- To commend Paul to a dangerous situation (21:5).
- To get guidance from God (22:17).

Prayer was an integral part of church life for early believers and should be for modern believers as well!

4. Paul and Prayer: The Apostle Paul evangelized in many places, but even for places he never visited, he was sure that he was able to influence people through intercession in order that they could understand the secret in Christ. In Colossians 2:13, he stresses, *"I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally..."* In other words, the Apostle Paul evangelized people through intercession.

He also asks to be prayed for by Christians who do not know Him (Colossians 4:3; Romans 15:30-33). Prayer is crucial for the progress of the gospel. Many peoples and regions will become open to the gospel if believers, like the apostle Paul, will pray for the nations and UPGs (Philippians 4:6) and ask for new cross-cultural workers (Matthew 9:36-38).

Passion for Prayer -- Specificity fuels fervency, and fervency yields results: Passion for Christ is very important to becoming a fruitful intercessor. Intercessors have to be obedient and faithful to the Bible to get divine passion for the lost, because prayer is a marathon and not a sprint. When the believer recognizes the greatness of God, he or she sees that He alone is worthy of all worship, praise and honour. The believer is thus motivated to encourage everyone to know Him too so that He receives the honour and worship due Him.

Felt needs motivate people to pray. Christians must learn about the spiritual and physical needs of UPGs. The desperate needs and pain of UPGs have to be internalized to become a part of the intercessor's life. As one feels more deeply about their lostness and their suffering, urgency is increased in ongoing prayer. Paul prayed without ceasing and was consistent in prayer.

Further, prayer walking, or praying on site among the UPGs helps one see the needs more directly and encourage one to pray more specifically. Joshua 1:3 says, *"Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses."* Of course one can pray from any place for distant peoples. The more specifically we pray, the more fervent we become. Specificity fuels fervency and fervency yields results. James 5:16 tells us: *"The effective, fervent prayer of the righteous avails much."* Concentrated prayer and longer times for intercession often occur on prayer walks without the distractions of home. At home, prayer walking can be done daily when travelling to the office or during daily activities. One can continually pray for a UPG.

The Strategic Value of Prayer Walking: Prayer walking helps:

- To penetrate darkness and unleashes God's power.
- To worship by recognizing and exalting God where He is not yet known or praised and to extend His kingdom.
- To call on Jesus to release captives bound in spiritual darkness (2 Corinthians 4:4) and to ask God to contend with evil, knowing He alone is able to bring all things into submission to His will.
- To bring the presence of Jesus to those who need to come to know Him.
- To give a foretaste of worship that will be experienced when He comes to reign among all peoples (Revelation 7:9-11).
- To bring harvest results which follow evangelistic activity such that new fellowships of believers are established in resistant areas.

Prayer Mobilization Strategies:

1. Tools to strengthen commitment to prayer: Facts about UPGs become fuel to keep the prayer fire burning in the heart of Christians. Believers need the facts to act and to respond. Therefore, books, videos, PowerPoint presentations, flyers, cards, brochures and internet web pages with information about each of the UPGs around the world, pictures of the peoples and maps of their locations help intercessors to pray strategically.

2. Adoption elicits commitment to prayer: After studying the facts, groups or individuals may choose one or more people groups and commit themselves to intercede for them and adopt them. This commitment is not for a short time, but until a church is planted among the people group. It is important to adopt one or more UPGs, because no one can pray for all the UPGs. Christians can sign special cards to commit themselves to intercession for particular groups.

3. Training enables prayer: Teaching and special seminars can be provided so that intercessors understand how to pray for the UPGs and its needs.

4. Fasting empowers prayer: Fasting and praying helps to break down strongholds of darkness and emphasizes the deep concern of the intercessor for the UPG's needs.

5. Events increase prayer: Special UPG prayer initiatives periodically (e.g. special services, congresses and retreats) keep pray-ers motivated and help recruit new intercessors. Churches can establish prayer chains for their adopted peoples, with members taking turns praying and interceding for these peoples. Special days or weeks of 24-hour continuous prayer chains could be organized

6. Networks Link Intercessors: United prayer brings special blessing. A UPG prayer fellowship is a gathering of Christians (e.g. at worship services, home prayer groups, youth groups, children's ministry, etc.) committed to see UPGs or their adopted peoples evangelized. These groups meet regularly (maybe weekly or monthly) and to gather new information and inspiration for intercession. The prayer fellowship must be intentional for real prayer to occur. If every member has prayer points at hand, time is saved for explanation and more time is devoted to intercession. Such groups need leaders with vision and the ability to impart that vision to participants through letters, flyers, phone calls, e-mail, posters, etc., to encourage them to attend and to challenge the pray-ers to remain faithful in this task.

Prayer movements and regular prayer fellowships abound, but often these do not know about the spiritual needs of UPGs. Intercessors who have a burden can initiate prayer for UPGs in other existing prayer fellowships by sharing prayer needs. Prayer points can be channelled to use in church services, youth meetings, Sunday schools, church bulletins, Christian radio programs, etc.

National, regional and international prayer networks are needed in close connection with UPG networks to inspire, mobilize, spread the vision, teach and provide resources, as well as exchange ideas and help one another.

Some Specific Prayer Suggestions:

1. Prayer for Workers

- Boldness and proficiency in proclaiming the gospel
- Godly priorities day by day and fruitfulness in service
- Patience with others and an attitude of servanthood
- Protection from satanic attack and safety in travel
- Family and children in relationships, health, safety and studies
- Expanding sphere of godly relationships and influence
- Enablement in life and ministry and discipline in devotional life
- Flexibility in all situations and courage in danger
- Compatibility with other workers and sensitivity to culture
- Expectant faith and heart of love that never fails for all
- Supply needs and wisdom for their ministry.

2. Prayer for the lost — locally and to the ends of the earth

- Prepared hearts
- Pathways for the gospel
- Presentation of the culturally-appropriate message
- Passionate incarnational messengers
- Partners for every good work
- Perseverance in faith for new believers

3. World news and secure communication keeps prayer on target: Wide circulation of prayer news helps keep prayer on target, but care must be taken with security issues. Frontline ministry must be backed up with prayer, but most UPGs are in sensitive areas. Many general prayer points can be shared without security risks. Prayer letters in print or via email or shared through websites can provide prayer points to be shared weekly or monthly. If there is a secure email network, more detailed and personal prayer points can be shared. To circulate pictures of the work or the people helps intercessors, but great care must be taken not to jeopardize the work. Prayer cards about the workers help their personal intercessors to faithfully pray for them.

4. Claiming God's promises for unreached peoples: The Bible is full of promises that the peoples of the world will be saved. When Hagar and Ishmael (whose name means "The Lord Listens") left the home of Abraham and became lost in the wilderness, Ishmael cried out and his cries were heard by the Lord who met his needs (Genesis 21:17). Israel through the promises to Abraham was given a clear task to become a blessing for the nations – and this challenge to bless all peoples is repeated often in the OT (Genesis 26:4; Psalm 9:11, 96:3, 105:1-2; Isaiah 12:4-5, 34:1, 49:6; 52:15; 60: 3-7 and 66:19) and in the NT (Matthew 24.14 and Revelation 5:9-10, 7:9).

5. Watching God's promises of everlasting fruit come true: News events often reveal the intervention of the Lord after faithful Christians have prayed. For example, the fall of communist governments has allowed churches to exist in Albania and Mongolia. Christians even exist in the Maldives Islands. From west China to the state of Turkey there are more than 30 people groups of the Turkic cluster, all with similar culture and language. Fifteen years ago among all these peoples there was no known church and almost no Christians. Now all these peoples have at least one church. Among the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Uzbek peoples thousands have become believers. Why? Because Christians prayed in faith for many years.

The Arab prayer movement began to pray for the Arab countries. Then a miracle happened: the film "*The Passion of the Christ*" has been seen in cinemas and on DVD. Christ has become a point of discussion and Christians are sought out for more information. Many are reporting about Arabs turning to Christ because of dreams and visions. All are the result of answers to prayer.

Despite this progress, thousands of people still wait for the gospel.

The Challenge for Prayer: Today is the time of the final frontier for missions, a time unprecedented in history for the evangelization of unreached people groups. As God moves to reveal Himself to these people groups, He is stirring the worldwide Church to prayer — resulting in a global “Prayer Movement”. Though these hidden and forgotten peoples have been entrenched in spiritual darkness for thousands of years, prayer and spiritual warfare will play a part in the Lord setting them free. Declaring God’s purposes in prayer is vital to seeing the remaining UPGs come to Him. In the past 15-20 years, new emphasis has been placed on things such as strategic spiritual warfare, spiritual mapping and prophetic prayer. Prayer networks are being formed across the globe and many prayer initiatives launched with special emphasis on the unreached.

As we approach the day when the gospel will be preached in all the world ushering in His second coming, we need to be as the Children of Issachar “*which were men who had an understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do*” (1 Chronicles 12:32). We know from the Bible that God has specific plans for the nations and specific times to bring His purposes to pass. When we learn to combine knowledge gained from demographic studies of unreached people groups; spiritual mapping and understanding of the enemy’s strategies and strongholds over nations, then we will be prepared to prophetically declare God’s destiny to the nations through our prayers. Praying what is on the heart of God for a specific group at a “kairos” moment can launch people group movements and transformation of societies. Our prayers will hit the target, strongholds will come down, blinders be removed from their eyes and hearts prepared to hear.

Believers are challenged to “*Speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute*” (Proverbs 31:8-9). UPGs are spiritually destitute and do not know they can have new life in Christ. These peoples are mute spiritually. We must open our mouths for them. Faithful prayer warriors will see the fulfilment of Isaiah 55:5: “*Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you.*” The promise in Psalm 66:20: “*Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer*” encourages us not to become bored in intercession. Praise the Lord, He is ready to listen to us. If we pray, even cry to the Lord according to His will, He will not refuse our request; He will start something. Our Lord intervenes directly, so peoples will be open to hear and evangelists can explain the gospel. Mention the names of the unreached peoples before God, as Isaiah prayed in chapter 64! Through worldwide intercession, we become part of God’s service globally, although we may never be able to go. Let’s fulfil this divine duty!

12. STORIES OF PROGRESS: A STATEMENT OF HOPE

The Church must not be discouraged by the statistics and obstacles because God is able. Completing the great commission and reaching all remaining people groups is within reach if the local church will own the vision. The resources are available. Progress has been slow in the past, but churches are becoming more educated and involved in missions and moving into holistic ministry for an entire people group. These churches are also finding partnerships that enable them to be effectively involved. Churches within the two-thirds world are rapidly growing in the number of missionaries they are sending, especially into the unreached “one-fourth” world. Although many churches are not as active in missions as they should be, the church in places like China are working to send up to 100,000 missionaries into many areas all the way “back to Jerusalem.” In the Philippines, Christians are working to train what will be 200,000 bi-vocational missionaries.

Mission sending is becoming trans-national. Mission organizations and agencies exist in most countries. Further, collaboration among organizations in regional and international groups is creating a new trans-denominational and trans-cultural synergy. Working with multicultural colleagues is bringing insight and sensitivity necessary to reach every people group. The commitment to take the whole gospel to the whole world continues to grow. Emerging emphasis on “business as mission” is opening the way for holistic church planting as well as opportunities to include the business world as a working partner in missions. The Church is discovering that it holds a chest of resources, which contains everything needed to reach all peoples. Consider the following stories:

Hindu World

1. Nepal: Certainly, the strong breakthrough in Nepal which crosses caste lines throughout the country is one of the amazing works of God. In 1950, there were no known believers. In 1960, there were 29; by 1985, 50,000; by 1990 200,000; and by 2000 some estimated that number to be 400,000 to 500,000.

2. India: While the needs remain great in this large and diverse nation, God is working in many places. For instance, New Life Fellowship in Mumbai is a cluster of house type churches which has been growing over the last twenty years and stretches from the “Bollywood” elite to the slum dwellers and across the eight major language groups.

Buddhist World

1. Mongolia: In 1989 perhaps four former Buddhist believers could be found. By the year 2000, God had worked in a mighty way and 4,000 to 5,000 Mongolians worship on any given Sunday.

2. Thailand: In central Thailand a worker started with social work, community and economic development which has resulted in church planting and the beginning of transformation in the local community.

3. China: In 1949 there were some 1.5 million Protestants in China. The church has continued to grow through the communist years and now there are believed to be 100 million or more Christians. Chinese believers have grown in number through sacrifice and commitment in sharing their faith, prayer and worship despite persecution.

Muslim World

1. Turkey: In 1960 there were 10 known believers. In the year 2000, there were at least 2,000. While many see openness, there is still a long way to go.

2. The Arabian Peninsula: The Arabian Peninsula is made up of seven countries and 42 million Arabs with very few believer fellowships. Modern ministry began with Samuel Zwemer in 1890. Very few workers followed in his steps. The 1991 Gulf War made many parts of the Arabian

Peninsula household names and Christians from around the world began to focus prayer on the region, including with the 1990s “Praying Through the Window” focus on this area.

3. Uighur Case Study: The Uighurs are a Muslim Turkic people group living in Xinjiang province of Northwest China and several countries of Central Asia. Today approximately 9 million Uighurs live in China, 300,000 in Kazakhstan and up to 1 million spread across other parts of the world. More than 70% of Xinjiang Uighurs live in oasis villages around the rim of the Taklimakan Desert and approximately 81% of Xinjiang Uighurs are peasant farmers. The origins of the Uighurs of today are found in a combination of the ancient Uighur Turkic people of southern Siberia and the original inhabitants of the oases ringing the Tarim Basin. Today the Uighurs are a “people without a land”. Xinjiang province was once called Eastern Turkistan but that is not popular with the Chinese government today. There is much animosity between the Chinese and the Uighurs living in China. The largest unit of community for most Uighurs is not Xinjiang or the Peoples Republic of China, but the oasis on which they live. Traditionally, people of the area were not known as “Uighurs” but rather by the name of their oasis (e.g. “I am a Hotanlik” or “I am a Kashgarlik”). Geographical separation has also led to variances in dialect and customs. (Jack Chen, *The Xinjiang Story*; Dru Gladney, *The Ethnogenesis of the Uighur*; Erkiin Alptekin, *The Uighurs*.)

History of Ministry to the Uighurs -- The Nestorians: The first Christian influence on the Uighurs was by the Nestorians from 600-1350 AD. Not much is known about this period but we do know that Buddhists and Nestorian Christians existed side by side. The end of the Nestorian Christians came in the 13th and 14th centuries with persecution. From this time on, the Uighurs became known as a Muslim people group.

The Swedes: Another major influence was the Swedish Mission Covenant Church in Southern Xinjiang (1892-1938). Johannes Avetaranian (Muhammed Shukri), a Turk, was the first known modern missionary. He arrived in Kashgar with a Swede named Nils Hoijer in January 1892, but spent the next 2 ½ years alone. During that time he translated the Gospels of Matthew and Luke into the Uighur language.

The Swedes set up hospitals, orphanages, schools and a printing press. From 1912 until 1935, 70,000 tracts and books were printed and distributed by the press in Kashgar. By 1933 the total of Uighur believers in the four cities numbered over 400. However, 1933 and 1938 saw intense periods of persecution. In 1933, Habil, a young Uighur believer (and first Uighur martyr) was arrested and martyred for his faith. When asked to deny Christ in order to save his life, he knelt down and said, “If my blood can be of any blessing for generations to come, may it be shed.” By 1938 the last Swedes were deported. Most of the Uighur men who were believers were killed or imprisoned. Many suffered from starvation or died of other causes in prison. Most of the women believers were forced to marry soldiers. The Swedes continued their work with Uighur refugees in India until the 1960's. In 1939 the complete New Testament was printed and copies were sent via Inner China to the Chinese church in Kashgar. The last of these shipments went out at Christmas 1950. For many years there was no news of the work amongst the Uighurs in Eastern Turkistan. It seemed that the work had been wiped out. However, in 1967 the Swedish Mission received a letter from Turnisa, a Uighur woman, in the heart of Xinjiang. She was able to visit Sweden in the mid 1980's and returned to Yarkand where she lived until her death in the mid 1990's. In the 1970's she wrote of remnants of the believers getting together to pray and sing the songs they had learned from the Swedes.

Current Xinjiang Ministry: Less than a handful of Uighur believers were known in the early 1980's in the world. In 1984, this door began to open again in China with English teaching opportunities. Foreigners were also permitted to study either the Chinese or Uighur languages. Later opportunities for business opened up. Through the presence of ex-pat workers in China, many Uighurs have come to faith and have been discipled. Some Uigher congregations now exist. Fear still remains, however, a great force that keeps many of these believers from meeting together. Also, it is predominately university students, teachers and merchants who have been

affected. The peasants, which make up over 80% of the population, are still virtually untouched by the gospel. A new Bible translation project began in the middle of the 1980's. In 1986 the Gospel of Mark was printed and widely distributed across the province of Xinjiang. Since that time other portions of the Bible have been printed. After many years of hard work and anticipation, the entire New Testament is about to be printed! Another outreach to the Uighurs has been through radio programs in their heart language. This has the potential to reach the large peasant population in a greater way than ever before.

Current Kazakhstan Ministry: More Uighurs have come to Christ in Kazakhstan in the past 10 years than ever before. Even though only several hundred thousand Uighurs live in Central Asia, in comparison to millions in China, this area has proven to be a ripe harvest field for the Uighur nation. After Communism fell in the early 1990's, the former republics of the Soviet Union found a new freedom for the gospel. In 1993 a handful of foreign workers from China moved across the border to focus on the Uighurs of Kazakhstan. At this time there were only four known Uighur believers in the country! Other workers joined the force and through evangelistic events and friendship evangelism, over one thousand Uighur people prayed to receive Christ into their lives. Seven Uighur churches have been planted in Almaty and three in Uighur towns and villages between Almaty and the Chinese border. Most of these young churches already have national leadership. In Kazakhstan, there are probably 500 Uighurs who are actively involved in fellowship and growing in Christ today.

Another encouraging development is the vision of the Kazakhstan Uighurs to reach across the border to Uighurs in China. Many have gone to Xinjiang on short-term trips and a few are now living there as missionaries to their own people. Even though there are some cultural differences, Uighurs from Central Asia can be much more effective than Westerners in reaching the Uighurs of China.

Barriers and Bridge: One of the greatest barriers is the mindset that Islam is essential to ethnic identity. Becoming a Christian means that they must deny their cultural identity and risk being alienated from family and communities. In China, being Uighur and Muslim gives them an identity that separates them from the Han Chinese and atheism. In Kazakhstan and Central Asia, there is an assumption that Jesus is a Russian God. Non-contextual sharing of the gospel builds walls and keeps Uighurs from really hearing and coming to an understanding of the truth. Overcoming this barrier requires great relationship building which strengthens family and community ties rather than weakens them. When Uighurs see that there are fellowships or communities of Uighur believers, they are much more open to receiving the gospel themselves. Ethnic hatred and even disunity between the Uighurs themselves are huge strongholds over the Uighur nation. Uighurs are very easily offended and this problem has even crept into the newly formed fellowships. There are huge walls of hatred and enmity between the Uighurs and Chinese and also between Uighurs and Russians, Kazakhs and other people groups in Central Asia. It is ironical that the word "Uighur" has been said to have been derived from a word meaning "united". Much prayer is needed to break down this stronghold of disunity over the Uighur nation and to see them truly united as a nation and with the other peoples that surround them. Fear is another huge barrier that prevents Uighurs from becoming disciples. In China there is fear of the government, persecution and the possibility of losing their jobs. In Kazakhstan, these dangers are not as great, but there is fear of being ostracized from the Uighur communities that control their lives. These communities are vital for important life ceremonies; such as weddings and funerals.

Redemptive analogies which can be redeemed for the gospel include the "Korban," the most important Uighur Festival when they celebrate God's provision of the lamb to Abraham to save him from sacrificing his son. Further, music, songs and dance are important bridges. Uighurs love music and dance. Songs have been written and played on Uighur instruments and their dance is being used to worship Isa. Many Uighurs have opened their hearts because they have experienced Uighur music cassettes or music and dance in worship.

Prayer for felt needs has also been very effective in reaching the Uighurs. They are very open to prayer in the Name of Jesus. Many have experienced miracles and healings through prayer and in this way, whole extended families and communities have come to believe in Jesus. Others have experienced supernatural power encounters with the Living God, such as visions, dreams and healings, and have become willing to turn their lives over to Him.

Committed prayer

In praying for UPGs in sensitive areas these key points are noted:

- There must be a sustained prayer initiative, not just for one year but for years to come.
- Full time workers are needed to make it happen.
- Good quality materials (undated) are needed for distribution.

A committee of people based all over the world worked to develop this prayer initiative and came up with the strategies highlighted below. Although this task was huge, with huge commitments of focus, time, money and manpower, it was the most strategic move possible in order to see the breakthrough. The goal was to see at least a million people around the world praying specifically for sensitive areas.

Video was the most precious tool for giving insight and awakening peoples' hearts to pray. A professional team made an up-to-date documentary video highlighting real people who were lost. The video used a simple story line and narrator so it could be easily translated into other languages. Three versions (a 90-second promo; a 5-min. and a 12-min copy) were produced. Promotional literature was used for maximum exposure and included a non-dated, 12 chapter booklet which focused on a different topic or country per month; a small pamphlet with a calendar and a prayer initiative bookmark. Children's materials were developed including maps, fun games, pictures and information to be used in Sunday schools. A web site was the heart of the operation and included a one minute video, all of the written materials, and links to other web sites. New requests and information was posted each week. All material could be translated and distributed in many countries.

Translations of this material, distribution to many national prayer networks and the necessary funding were provided and very soon the materials were in Korean, Chinese, Spanish, German, Hindi, Portuguese, Norwegian —up to 22 languages. Sending prayer promoters to prayer initiatives in other countries (e.g. the Philippines) was the most effective means of prayer promotion. This personal involvement resulted in widespread coverage even through radio interviews and greater involvement in many countries (e.g. Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, South Africa and Korea). Connections with existing prayer networks greatly expanded the prayer involvement around the world (e.g. in the Philippines, S. Africa, Korea, Indonesia, WIN and various denominations).

Finances were required because mobilizing of prayer is hard, expensive work and these needs were met. Producing materials, travel for promotion, developing web sites distribution of materials and translations all cost money. People are willing to pray. They just need good information to pray. An ongoing effort for prayer mobilization is keeping UPGs needs before the Christian community. A new booklet focusing on the major cities in sensitive areas was produced in 2004. Strong effort is also going into producing excellent web sites in the different languages so that the information is readily available for prayer. Specific results related to the increased prayer are difficult to pinpoint, but during the last two or three years we know that God raised up massive amounts of prayer for sensitive areas. Permission to show the 'The Passion of the Christ' in some sensitive countries totally caught us off guard. In open cinemas many watched the basic gospel message and read in Arabic that Jesus is the Way and the Truth and the life — this opportunity in lands where Bibles were confiscated and persecution prevailed. They see clearly the love of God and what forgiveness is all about. People are asking for explanations, requesting Bibles and going to web sites. We believe the difference has been prayer! Much needs to happen but we believe prayer will enable it to happen.

13. The Way Forward: Christ-ward Movements

Over-emphasis on the Unreached? What should the response of the Body of Christ be toward the Unreached and Least Evangelized peoples of the world? Some have reacted negatively to the idea that the planting of a few churches in each people group will help bring closure to the Great Commission task. Some have felt that the last twenty years has had too much emphasis on the unreached peoples and feel that new images and emphases should be provided to stir the imagination of the global Church.

Has there been enough emphasis on UPGs? Has the emphasis brought an imbalance to how Christian resources are spent? Is the emphasis misunderstood on making sure churches are planted among all UPGs? In short, not enough emphasis has been given to the UPGs. The sheer fact remains that at least 25% of the world has little access to the Good News. These peoples are made up of all parts of society – young, old, mainly poor, disabled, refugees, etc. Most disturbing is the fact that the 90% of people, money and ministry time is focused mainly on Christian peoples. For those who seek a balance in the use of resources to reach all people groups, then the Unreached / Least Evangelized will get significantly more than the current 0.5% of ministry monies and more than the 3% of Christian workers.

Transformation, not closure: The correct goal is transformation of all societies. The Church is mandated to make disciples of whole peoples, tribes and even nation-states (see Genesis 10; Revelation 5 and 7) in order that they will move towards obedience to Jesus. This obedience will result in congregations of “Christ-followers” who meet to worship and learn and then go into their communities to bring development and help in areas of justice, health, spiritual salvation, family, society and much more. Some are concerned about what they perceive as a minimal understanding of “closure” or “finishing of the task” (based on Matthew 24.14). Some are also concerned about what they think is a triumphalistic interpretation of the same passage which suggests that the Church can determine the time when Christ will return.

Such concerns are based on false dichotomies. Matthew 24:14 and many other verses require both a deep concern for each people group and a deep sense of responsibility to fulfil Christ’s commands. Further, Matthew 24:14 is both a prediction of what God will do and an indicator of the job He wants His people to do, even as Abraham’s covenant is simultaneously a prediction and a command (“you will be a blessing”).

Working for transformation, discipling peoples and nations, Christ-ward movements and church planting are different terms to express the same goal. No matter the term, the growing emphasis in efforts among the unreached and other parts of the world is to find ways to apply the gospel and to assist towards the impacting of the gospel in the lives of people.

Family Again: Ultimately, the goal is to bring all peoples back into relationship with each other and with God. The purpose is not so tasks can be “completed.” The purpose is so that humanity becomes family again. God is in the process of putting the shattered mosaic of humanity back together. The glorious strengths and beauties of each culture will be added back into the whole. The transformation of a people will bring out the beauty of their culture and the rest of humanity will be enriched by this transformation. More importantly, God will be glorified by the beauty of His re-united family.

The Key Question: In order to reach all peoples, the key question is: “What needs to be done?” rather than “What can I or my church or my denomination do?” The former question opens up the work to all kinds of new possibilities. The latter question focuses on the limited abilities and limited resources of an individual, church or culture.

The Two Choices: Two choices exist. First, we can be on mission with God and live on the front edge of this advance by being passionately focused on making sure all peoples have a

chance to hear and experience the gospel. We must reassert the call to every believer to be involved in carrying the gospel to the whole world, regardless of vocation, economics, or education. Or we can choose to be left behind and become of little use to God for the sharing the news of Christmas and Easter with the world. Will we be an integral part or will we be the ones who are left behind?

Christ-ward Movements: Christ-ward movements or a transformational church planting movements blend full aspects of the gospel including social action and development, sharing of the verbal message of the gospel and worshipping God. As cross-cultural witnesses enter a people group and people respond, congregations of disciples will emerge. These emerging disciples will be trained to be leaders in the congregation and in the community and then immediately train other leaders who will train other leaders. These new congregations are taught to obey and to start new congregations and to minister in their community and the world. Some movements like this have happened among some formerly unreached groups. For example, in Latin America, cell churches provide health, welfare and education where governments do not (Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*). The three categories of such movements include (see Garrison, *Church Planting*):

1. Reproducibility:

- Local (not outside) leadership (both men & women)
- No specialized buildings (using houses, rental space)
- Simple Teaching/leadership style/congregation style
- Cultural identity enhanced and not threatened
- Communal implications and application for evangelism
- Believers quickly incorporated and learning through obedience
- De-centralized leadership
- Low profile of cross-cultural witnesses/leaders

2. Synergistic Mesh of Ministries:

- Human needs, evangelism, media, prayer, miracles
- Broad saturation
- Partnership with other believers

3. Sacrifice and Difficulty:

- Passion and fearlessness of workers
- Price to pay to become a believer
- Workers suffer
- Response created by crisis or vacuum

Why are we to complete the task?

Not because it is our duty,
though it is.

Not because it will bring eternal life to many,
though it will.

Not because it will improve the living conditions of the poor,
though it will.

Not because it will improve stability in the world's institutions,
though it will.

Not because it will improve environmental stewardship,
though it will.

Not because we will be rewarded,
though we will.

We should disciple the nations because Jesus is worthy to receive their honour, glory and praise.
(Revelation 5:12 and 7:9) Taken from Joshua Project, "*Status of World Evangelization – 2004.*"

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15. IG 6A PARTICIPANTS

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16. Hidden Peoples Group - People with Disabilities

Please see Lausanne Occasional Paper 35 B.