

Part I: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT

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

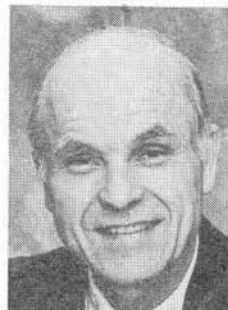
After pointing out that almost from the beginning of the Bible God shows his concern for peoples as sociological and cultural units (see the table of the nations in Genesis 10), Winter delves into concepts and labels. He discusses the term **peoples** (sociological units) versus **people** (individuals)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

Winter then gives some historical examples in what he terms the "three eras of Protestant missions." He refers to John Eliot's "praying villages" of converted American Indians in Massachusetts during the 17th century and in the next century the conversion of the Batak people in Sumatra. The latter was the result of a so-called "people movement," and as such caused a great deal of consternation among theologians in the Pietist and Evangelical camps back home. Warneck, a German missiologist, pondered the phenomenon, however, and began to teach the concept of the "Christianization of peoples," saying, "When Jesus speaks of the need to Christianize all peoples, He means that they must be made Christian on the basis of their natural distinctiveness as a people."

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

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

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entire people to be truly converted?

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

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

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

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

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

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

For the next ten pages or so, Winter meticulously

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

Winter immediately demurred, insisting that almost no "people" by this definition could then be considered evangelized, and the result would be that the truly unreached would then not be given the emphasis and attention which they so desperately needed. But that definition had already been published, so Winter chose another term, "Hidden Peoples" and defined it as

... any linguistic, cultural or sociological group defined in terms of its primary affinity (not secondary or trivial affinities), which cannot be won by E-1 methods and drawn into an existing fellowship of believers.

In 1980, partly as a result of a "call" for such in 1972, there were three world-level missionary conferences, all purporting to be the logical successor to the famed 1910 Edinburgh Conference. Melbourne, organized by the World Council of Churches, mainly discussed problems of social justice; very little if anything was said about unreached peoples. Pattaya, Thailand was the next in the Lausanne tradition, and was scheduled to be largely on unreached peoples. The definition used was the troublesome "20%" one, but what more affected the outcome was the type of person attending, mainly again church leaders. At Edinburgh 1980, the delegates were by design almost exclusively mission executives and field missionaries, at least one-third members of non-Western mission societies. Entirely new was a concurrent young people's conference, which participated in the plenary sessions of the executives but had its own international conference on unreached peoples during other periods. The theme at Edinburgh 1980 was "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000." As suggested, the discussion was entirely on mission strategy for the Hidden Peoples. The definition for that term paralleled and simplified

Winter's: those cultural and linguistic sub-groups, urban and rural, for whom there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people.

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

Sam Wilson, working with Ed Dayton at MARC, had been involved in both Pattaya '80 and Edinburgh '80 and rightly insisted that the use of a 20% definition had always been merely a method of achieving a reasonable likelihood of the presence of an indigenous, evangelizing church. In the 1981 Unreached Peoples Annual, presenting ongoing thinking of the Strategy Working Group, the "presence of a church" concept was newly acknowledged (Wagner, Dayton, 1981: 26):

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

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

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

For our purposes here, the key accomplishment of this meeting was the abandonment of the 20% concept for the

unreached peoples phrase and the adoption of a modification of the presence-or-absence-of-the-church definition further refined for the Edinburgh '80 Consultation. What came directly out of the meeting was:

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

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

There was no reason to assume, of course, that everyone would choose to follow the lead of the C-82 meeting in thus underscoring the presence-or-absence-of-the-church concept since other concepts were also valid. David Barrett, for example, in his master work said that a people was unreached if less than 20% were "evangelized" (p. 19). This definition corresponds to none mentioned here thus far. On the other hand, the phrase "unreached peoples" elsewhere in his dictionary (p. 847) is defined in terms of contact:

Unreached peoples: ethnic, linguistic and other groups without previous contact with Christianity, who have not or not yet had the Gospel brought to them. Note: This is equivalent to his term *untouched peoples* on page 847.

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

Now to review the chronological sequence of concepts and labels:

**Concepts
and Labels
Reviewed**

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

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

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

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

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

6) Winter, 1978:40,42. A Hidden People: "For both spiritual and practical reasons, I would be much more pleased to talk about the presence of a church allowing *people* to be *incorporated*, or the absence of a church leaving people *unincorporable*. Any linguistic, cultural or sociological group defined in terms of its primary affinity (not secondary or trivial affinities) which cannot be won by E-1 methods and drawn into an existing fellowship, may be called a Hidden People." (Note: this is the first published definition of Hidden Peoples.)

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

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

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

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

11) IFMA Frontier Peoples Committee, Feb. 24, 1982: Agreement to use the Edinburgh 1980 definition (#7 above) for all three phrases, Hidden Peoples, Frontier Peoples, and Unreached Peoples. (This action was taken in light of advance information regarding the mood for change on the part of the MARC group. This mood was officially expressed at the C-82 meeting, see #12.)

12) LCWE/Chicago, Mar. 16, '82. Unreached Peoples: "A people group (defined elsewhere) among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group."

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

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

At this point we must try to look back and ask whether or not we are heading in the right direction. Underlying all these definitions (except perhaps the first, which is given only to show where the 20% idea may have had part of its origin) is the concern for evangelistic outreach to

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function in such a way that people (individuals) have a "valid opportunity" to find God in Jesus Christ. As evangelicals we tend to think this will normally take place as the response of an individual without any believing community in the picture. Yet we know better.

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

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

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

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

cessation of need for further work from elsewhere.

Thus, for me, whether the indigenous community possesses "adequate numbers and resources" is not the crucial point, practical though it may be in another sense. The chief question would seem to be whether or not the missiological task has been done. In turn, that should mean, in my opinion, more even than having the Bible in a people's own language. It should mean at least the existence of a handful of believers who have become consciously part of the world fellowship, capable of drawing upon the life and experience of Christian traditions elsewhere, and even capable of consulting the Bible in the original languages. In short, an Unreached People needs very urgent, high priority *missiological* aid until it is quite able to draw on other Christian traditions and is substantially independent, as regards holy writ, of all traditions but those of the original languages themselves.

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

Furthermore, it seems to me that enough mischief has by now been done by the "disengagement syndrome," which was highlighted by Henry Venn's "euthanasia of the mission" concept in the 19th century. I do not believe any church anywhere can ever get so mature that it has no need of continued contact and interchange with other church traditions. The "bailing out" of Hawaii in 1865 by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions certainly was only an armchair victory. Why could not the mission have foreseen the need for at least a few Christian attorneys to defend the Hawaiian believers against the aggressive land-hungry mainlanders who were already arriving in force, not to mention the pressures of the not-so-holy descendants of some of the missionaries themselves?

It is certainly reasonable to question whether a mission agency as such should continue to be linked to the younger church. Once classical mission work concludes,

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

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

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

Part II: THE WHAT, THE WHERE AND THE WHY

By way of review, the various definitions for "Unreached Peoples" given in recent years were considered by the 1982 consensus to now be synonymous. "Unreached Peoples" was chosen as the preferred term, but it was now defined in exactly the same way as "Hidden Peoples" and "Frontier Peoples." The definition chosen was that an unreached people group was one within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group without outside (cross-

cultural) assistance. It is this definition upon which all following comments will be based.

A. Unreached Peoples: What Are They?

Traditionally the task of the church has been defined in terms of extending the Gospel of Christ. In our circles evangelism has so often been said to be the main business of the Church of Jesus Christ that I do not believe I need to discuss the concept of unreached peoples further from a philosophical rationale, but rather from a pragmatic standpoint. We need to know which peoples are unreached, not so much to be able to separate out Christians from non-Christians nor even to count how many unreached peoples there are, but primarily in order to know how the church should go about evangelizing them. The practical premise upon which all this thinking is based is simply the necessity of "giving everyone a valid opportunity to accept Christ." To know what groups are unreached, then, relates to a question which is very pragmatic.

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

Reaching groups is faster. Apart from the fact that it is more Biblical to emphasize the salvation of peoples, not individuals only, it is also true that it is easier to give individuals a valid opportunity to accept Christ if you can get to them within their community on their own wavelength through a fellowship of believers that they can understand and by whom they will be understood. That

strategy is both a better and a faster way to reach people. Some today may think it is more efficient to evangelize the world by spraying the globe with electromagnetic radiation in the form of radio or television. Such efforts are all to the good. But evangelizing at arm's length by radio is not the same as reaching people on their own personal wavelength and within their own culture. Someone once said to me, "It's possible today by satellite to project a message into every home in the world." And I answered, "What language are you going to use? Muslims alone speak 580 different languages." He paused, as he should have, because we are not speaking of mass communication when we evangelize. Jesus was not content with merely a public ministry. He poured most of His energy into one people group, and became himself a part of that group. Ultimately we are dealing with very, very specific communication to the heart, a communication that constitutes an invitation to become part of an existing fellowship of believers, within the same people group.

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

People groups are permanent. Finally, we speak in terms of a church within each people group because peoples as "nations," "tribes" and "languages" may be permanently with us. I won't take the time to elaborate on this point. Pragmatically it isn't that important. But let me say in passing that one of the factors in the picture today is a new appreciation of the fact that peoples as distinct groups are God's creative intent. We are coming to realize that all peoples are potentially of equal beauty to Him. Actually this change of perspective is now coming to be seen as more Biblical than the typical American "melting pot" psychology, in which we are to

become all alike, somehow. All modern versions of the New Testament, for instance, have retranslated Mark 16:15 to say we are to preach the gospel "to all creation" rather than "to every creature," as the King James puts it. What is God's "creation?" Part of God's creation is what we find in Genesis 1—the heavens, the earth, the trees, animals, birds, and so forth. Another part is what we read in Genesis 10, the table of the nations—the *mishpaha* of the earth, the families of the earth, the lineages of the earth.

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

Pseudo-unreached groups. What are unreached peoples? There are some people groups which seem to be unreached, but really aren't, and some that seem to be reached but really aren't. First let us take up the *pseudo-unreached peoples*. Let us say that among the refugees from Southeast Asia in the United States today there are 1000 members of a certain tribal group who now live in Philadelphia. Among them there is not one Christian. Moreover, nobody in Philadelphia can speak their language. Are those people an unreached people? We cannot say either yes or no until we ask a further question: "Has there been somewhere else a missiological breakthrough into this same people group?" We must recognize that the 1000 people in Philadelphia may or may not be the entire "people." Who knows, maybe in New York City there are 100,000 more from the same tribe. The subgroup in New York may have strong, fast growing churches and well educated pastors, and the Bible may be in their language. In that event, it would be folly to treat the Philadelphia people group, 1000 strong, as though it were an unreached people. Wouldn't it be foolish for an ordinary American to try to learn their

language and translate the Bible into their tongue if someone, somewhere else, had already done this? Thus, a group of people among whom there is no church or Christians is not an unreached people if the same group elsewhere is reached. Such a people we can call a pseudo-unreached people.

Pseudo-reached groups. You can also go wrong in the opposite direction. That is, a people may be pseudo-reached even though they have a church. Let us say, for example, that there has been a church for 1,000 years in a particular culture, but the church is invalid in a very practical sense. Its rituals and traditions not only do not lead the people to Christ but actually create a barrier to finding Him: There is such a thing as a dead church; indeed, deadness and liveness are the essence of which we are talking. A pseudo-reached group of this sort may have some missionaries, and some Christians, but it lacks a vital church. The church present in that culture is unable to reach out and evangelize the people of the culture because the church itself needs to be evangelized. *Unreachedness* is thus not defined on the basis of whether there are any Christians or not, or whether there are any missionaries working among them or not. It is defined on the basis of whether or not in that culture there is a viable, culturally relevant, witnessing church movement.

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

I heard the other day that when a group of Mennonites left South Russia, somehow one of their babies was left behind and grew up as part of a Kazakh group of people. By the time this blond, blue-eyed boy was 15 or so years old, he realized he didn't belong to these people. But that

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

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

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

How Big is a People?

the size of these groups. For a more elaborate treatment of the Hebrew words *mishpaha* and *goyim* and the Greek word *ethne*, I would refer you to Richard Showalter's article in this journal.

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

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

However, even within the Cantonese macropeople there are still many mutually unintelligible dialects and thus significant barriers to the communication of the Gospel. Scholars studying the Chinese seem strangely reluctant to confront the linguistic diversity of China. I don't know why this is true. Perhaps the fact that one

writing system unites them all throws us off and gives us a false impression. But to speak of all the dialects of Chinese as the same language is like speaking of all the European languages as a single language, and asking, "Do you speak European?" or "How many of you speak European?" Is European a language? No. There is, of course, a large family of languages called "Indo-European." Russian and English are both part of the Indo-European language family. But so what? I don't understand Russian very well, nor do most Russians understand English.

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

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

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

In other words, the value of these distinctions is to help us evangelize. Once a group is penetrated by the gospel,

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

Finally, we need to ask, what about individuals who seem to belong in more than one people group? It seems obvious that practically everyone in the world is part of more than one group. And in each group, whether a sports group, vocational group, or a genetic relationship, there may be avenues of communication that are superior to all others. Nonetheless I think that what we are really trying to do when we evangelize is to choose that avenue that will maximize the impact and acceptability of our message. It seems to me logical to assume that we are all trying to find that one maximally approachable group for any given individual. We can then say that for every person in the world there is only one people-oriented approach that, to the best of our knowledge, is the best way to reach that particular person. That way no one will be counted twice. Of course we might find out that our guesses were wrong, and we will have to reclassify that person. Let me give you an example. When we talk about a Chinese Muslim, is he primarily Chinese and secondarily a Muslim, or vice versa? We need first to ask, "On what basis should he be evangelized?" Should he be approached as Muslim? Or should strategies effective with Chinese be used? In a given case the person might be classified in either group, but not both. Personally, I think it is better to approach most Chinese Muslims as Muslims. However, it must be that for some Chinese

Muslims it should be the other way around. Whichever it is, it will not be both.

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

I used to use the figure 16,750, which was the sum of a number of educated guesses. But I realize that such an exact figure gave people the (false) impression that the sub-totals were exact figures. For this reason, I now use the total of 17,000 unreached people groups in the world today. In our Unreached Peoples charts we have listed the following figures: 5,000 tribal, 4,000 Muslim, 3,000 Hindu, 2,000 Han Chinese, 1,000 Buddhist groups. These are clearly round numbers. In each case those three zeroes are supposed to announce to everyone that these are guesses—careful guesses, but guesses, nevertheless. At this hour of history it is too bad no one can do better than guess. This what MARC does. This is what the different research agencies on our campus are doing. Everyone is guessing. We are all pleading for help. And every time we guess we are constantly refining our grasp of what the task really is. Thus, when it comes to the total number of unreached peoples, I think we have to realize that once we settle in our minds that everybody belongs in only one group—which for that person is the most reachable context—then we can count the groups without counting anyone twice. Some groups are already *reached* (about 7,000) and some (17,000) are *unreached*, for a rough total of 24,000.

Somebody may remonstrate, "But David Barrett says there are only 8,990 people groups, not 24,000." True, his monumental study, which everyone ought to own, speaks of some 8,990 distinct ethnolinguistic peoples, and it lists specifically 432 larger clusters of peoples, most of which I would consider macro- or even mega-peoples. But notice that even he does not list all 8,990 by name. Also we need to make sure what it is he refers to when he speaks of a people.

How Many Peoples are There?

Do Peoples Overlap?

It is clear in his table that his listing is almost identical to the number of languages he figures need translations. But where does that lead us? Wycliffe Bible Translators, for example, goes into South Sudan and counts how many languages there are into which the Bible must be translated and presented in printed form in order to reach everybody in that area. Wycliffe's answer is 50 distinct translations. What does 50 mean in this instance? Does it mean 50 groups of people? Certainly not, if we are speaking of unreached peoples, because in many cases quite alien groups can read the same translation.

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

It is perfectly reasonable that if Barrett is thinking along the same lines as Wycliffe, he too will also get the smaller number. In fact, if you use the same proportion, $130/50 \times 8,990$ you get a figure very close to the 24,000 total number of peoples in the world which Bruce Graham and I indicated on our *Unreached Peoples 1983* chart. I'll admit that the number just happens to come out the same. We didn't derive our figure in this way, nor, vice versa, did Barrett. But I do think the close correspondence is reassuring. Of course if someone really wants to manufacture disagreement, look in Barrett's book under the chapter on India. There he points out that there are 26,000 different castes in India alone (the sort of thing I would call *micropeoples*). Yet in our *Unreached Peoples 1983* chart we list only 3,000 (unimax) peoples for India. Thus we really appear to be in disagreement there. In this case we seem more conservative, whereas he had a small number in the other case.

If, however, you were to take his 26,000 people groups in India and multiply that figure by all the other countries

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

B. Unreached Peoples: Where Are They?

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

Five thousand of them are the tribal peoples (not counting 1000 already reached). They are all over the world in every country. There are certain areas of the world like the island of New Guinea, the country of Nigeria or Peruvian Amazonia, where there is a large number of different tribal groups. The so-called "tribals" are often basically refugee populations. For example, in a space of 50 by 200 miles in West Cameroon there are 200 different languages, many of which have no similarity. It is a mountainous area, the English part of a country which is otherwise French-speaking. That little neck-of-the-woods, so to speak, happens to constitute an area representing "mountains of refuge" for people of all kinds, from all over Africa. For example, there are groups there that trim their hair so that they have only one lock of hair falling down one side, like you see in the pictures in King Tut's tomb. Apparently these people hailed originally from Egypt. But there they are, in a little mountain valley of West Cameroon, too scared to go in any direction because everybody in every direction is hostile to them.

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

Four thousand of the world's Unreached Peoples are in

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

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

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

About 1,000 are Buddhists in a primary sense, and for vast millions of Chinese and Japanese, Buddhism is certainly a secondary factor. The heartland of Buddhism is no longer the India in which it was born but Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, for example, where its missionary influence was more virile.

In no case above do we refer to *reached* peoples, only *unreached*. Then it is not true that the Chinese peoples or tribal peoples are unreached, although the vast majority in all five categories are unreached. Furthermore, of these five large collections of related peoples—these megapeoples—four are not located in their own distinct geographical area. Nevertheless there are certain parts of the world where each of these largest categories tends to concentrate. Highly significant to Americans is the fact that from each of these five major groups there are thousands upon thousands of individuals in the United States. Of course not all of the specific peoples within these larger megapeoples are represented in the United States, but many of them are, especially the reached peoples. One result of migration in the modern world is simply that we can no longer make any valid

home/foreign distinctions. Once we see the world as 24,000 or so unimax peoples, it no longer matters where these peoples are, whether there is an ocean between us and them, whether even the peoples themselves are separated by an ocean. The question rather is whether the church is yet “domestic” within them or not. It doesn’t really help us, therefore, for our mission boards to continue to be structured along geographical lines. It is like going fox hunting. If the fox jumps over the fence into a different person’s yard, what do you do? We have to be able to track that fox, wherever he goes. And if there are 60,000 Gujaratis in Vancouver, Canada, well that’s where they are. Peoples are where you find them. And if the Los Angeles public schools record 109 different languages spoken in the homes of their pupils, then we had better take a good look to make sure that in our evangelistic strategy we’re not overlooking those that have no internal witness within their group, either here or elsewhere.

The phrase *Hidden Peoples* was suggested originally (by Robert Coleman) because unreached peoples are normally overlooked. Even though one or two of their culture may be sitting right there in church, *as a people group* they are mainly outside the awareness of the church. Paul faced this situation. At the synagogues he visited he noticed that in the back rows were a few “God fearers”, Greeks who represented a people which could never be first class citizens in a synagogue. And one of the most dramatic scenes in the New Testament occurred (in Acts 13) when Paul was forced to start the first Gentile synagogue. The Jews didn’t mind a few Greeks on the fringes, but when crowds of Greeks responded to Paul’s message they were furious. Paul was a missionary because he could *see* these Greeks as a people. To others they were visible only as individuals. Taking seriously their peoplehood created the explosion of the Pauline missionary effort and brought into the New Testament perhaps its most radical concept, a reflection and clarification of the meaning of Gen. 12:1-3 and Isa. 49:6. He quoted the latter verse in Acts 13:47, the former in Gal. 3:8.

Finding the peoples, then, is not easy. Take, for example, the Kazakhs. According to David Barrett’s ethnolinguistic classification, the Kazakhs speak one language and consist of only one of his 8,900 ethnolinguistic groups. Perhaps one printed translation might suffice. But, let’s be realistic! The Kazakhs number

more than 10 million. It is quite likely that they are, in fact, a macropeople comprising many minipeoples of the unimax definition. To be content to observe merely that they speak one language and are one people is wishful thinking. Even geographically they are scattered. Today they are found in Northwest China, and in Southeast and South Russia. Large numbers live in Afghanistan and Iran. There are a million Kazakhs in Turkey, refugees who walked back and forth across the Russian-Afghan or Iranian border going in and out of the U.S.S.R., finally ending up in Turkey. Today, because of the European Economic Community, we find thousands of Kazakhs in Munich. So, if you want to reach the Kazakhs (perhaps more than one variety of them) go to Munich, Germany. Do you see what I mean? Geography is not as important as peoples. Once that is clear, the question of where they are is a very exciting one. It is very significant what can happen in Munich, Germany, once we focus on peoples instead of countries.

C. Unreached Peoples: Why?

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

I think we are in the Third and final era of mission history. Speaking of only the Protestant tradition, the First Era missionaries went out to the coastlands of the world, and after a number of years the work became somewhat stagnated. People seriously did not believe it was useful or safe to go inland. Finally a few missionaries broke through the resistance to opening new inland fields. As a result a whole new wave of awareness engulfed the Protestant world. All the mission agencies had assumed it was impossible to go inland until Hudson Taylor and his followers actually did it. Then, gradually, after about 25 years of respectful watching and waiting, the older mission boards in England and America rapidly retooled, motivated to a great extent by the impact of Moody and the rising demands of the Student Volunteer Movement. And a new rush of recruits went out to these new inland frontiers, epitomized by the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, which made as its focal point the unreached *areas* of the world.

Because they weren't invited to the Edinburgh 1910 conference, however, thousands of missionaries and

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

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

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

Today, Townsend's organization sends out twice as many missionaries as all the member denominations of the National Council of Churches combined. Such a fact calls into question the sense of mission and the alertness of those National Council denominations such as my own. But, I believe that the older boards will eventually retool massively as they did almost a century ago at the beginning of the Second Era.

In a recent two week period, our campus was visited by denominational leaders of the Methodist, United

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

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

The people back home can't easily understand this complexity. We can project the countries of the world on

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

As missionaries, however, we are concerned for the peoples, and we must not be dazzled by the boundaries of countries any more than God is. People back home can be brought to understand this fact. One book which helps is *The Refugees Among Us*, produced by MARC. Another way for people in the pew to understand this "peoples" point of view is to get them to read *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, which has an accompanying 175 page *Study Guide*. Together these two books constitute a four-unit college course, for which a number of schools will give credit. Geneva College, for example, is offering credit to a group of about 55 students at Carnegie-Mellon who are taking that course (and nothing else) from Geneva College. They study right on their own campus, and Geneva College simply handles the academic arrangements and the audiovisuals that week after week are sent in to go with the 20 lessons. An Inter-Varsity staff member on campus at Carnegie-Mellon actually coordinates the course. In Pasadena we offer a one-week intensive program to train these coordinators. Right now there are perhaps five or six hundred students studying through that course, but we hope that within the next two years at any given moment there will be 10,000 students studying that book. It can be done. It doesn't take much money. It doesn't take any more people than are now involved in the educational enterprise. It simply takes management.

Then I want to recommend *The Global Prayer Digest* to which I referred earlier. It is part of the Frontier Fellowship movement, and I assure you is not just an invention in California. Its basic idea of praying daily for the unreached peoples of the world came from Burma. That is why every copy each month has a little picture of a

village in Burma and refers to the Burma plan. It was from a tribal Christian from Burma that we got the idea of a daily devotional discipline that will carry vision, excitement and inspiration into the lives of the average person.

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

Oh, if it were possible for people to realize how nearly within our grasp it is to evangelize the unreached peoples of the world, it would be a revolution of new hope for people all across the country! The reason our mission boards are not receiving the candidates and the funds that they need is that people in the pew have lost hope. If 30,000 missionaries are going to retire in the next 10 years and, as somebody has guessed, only 5,000 are going to replace them, then the present level of giving and going needs to be multiplied many times over. Research is necessary on those statistics as well if we are to turn this situation around and be the blessing to all the families of the earth which God expects us to be simply because He has so greatly blessed us. But we need to communicate hope to people. We need to tell them that 17,000 people groups is not that many after all. Do you know, I don't care if it's 10,000 or 20,000 or what the number is, but it's a finite number. And whatever the number you come up with, just divide it into the number of dedicated evangelicals on the face of the earth today (258 million). You'll get at least 10,000 Bible believing, committed believers who are ready, if awakened, to reach out to each one of these people groups—10,000 per group.

Let me ask you, is that an unrealistic goal for the year 2000? Every week there are 1,000 new churches in Africa and Asia alone. But all these churches are new churches

where there are other churches already. All we need is to found 1,000 per year within these *untouched groups* and we'll be through with this initial job of penetrating the remaining frontiers by the year 2000. I'm not going to tamper with your eschatology, but at least we ought to try to do this. That's my eschatology. We at least ought to try to do what is plain in scripture, what we are expected to do in terms of the blessings we have received. I don't believe there is any hope for this country if we cannot get beyond the syndrome of accepting and trying to preserve and protect our own blessings with MX missiles and horses and chariots and not realize that our only real safety is to *give* the blessings that God has given to us to those for whom he intended them.

NOTES

1. In the following year, *Unreached Peoples '81* over-corrected things and defined the Hidden Peoples as groups where there is "virtually no Christian group" . . . "virtually no Christians" . . . "no known Christians within the group, e.g. zero Christians" (pp. 26-7) even though on pages 140 and 141 there is a reproduction of a statistical table and a pie chart in which the original definition of *Hidden Peoples* is preserved. Thus, neither in the '80 annual, where Hidden Peoples was made to mean 20%, nor in the '81 annual, where it was assumed to be 0%, was the concept presented for Hidden Peoples the same as what was set forth all along ever since the original article was printed in the '79 annual.

2. See Warren, 1971, pages 28 and 172.

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