HISTORICAL & CONTEMPORARY REASONS
FOR THE EXISTENCE OF 17,000 UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS AND FACTORS BEING EMPLOYED TO LESSEN THEIR NUMBER

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible repeatedly refers to the lost in verses such as "... The Son of man is come to save that which is lost." (Matt. 18:11), "... go after that which is lost ..." (Luke 15:4,) "... them that are lost ..." (II Cor. 4:3). Of those who are lost, many have had numerous opportunities to respond to the Gospel through direct contact within their culture and have chosen to reject Christ. Others, though not directly confronted, have the means by which they could hear and respond to the Gospel because of the availability of Scripture, freedom in the media and access to churches. Still others, though, have not even had one opportunity to hear the Gospel in a culturally relevant manner.

In recent years this latter group of lost people have become known by missiologists as the "unreached peoples," "hidden peoples," or occasionally "frontier peoples." The question being asked by many is, "Why do so many of these unreached people groups exist in 1986?" It has been nearly 2,000 years since Christ's resurrection and over half the world's population has not been confronted with the significance of the Gospel in a culturally relevant manner! Why is this true?

A revived concern, or probably more adequately stated as an abrupt awakening to the fact of so many unreached peoples, was brought to the forefront of evangelical thinking at the International Congress for World Evangelization in 1974 at
Lausanne, Switzerland (LCWE). God's human tool for opening many blinded eyes was Dr. Ralph Winter.

Dr. Winter clearly presented to the 2400 participants in Lausanne that if they were to reach every member in the cultures they were presently attempting to evangelize, 2.4 billion persons would die not having heard the Gospel in a culturally relevant manner.

In Dr. Winter's address at Lausanne, he also provided the following statistics:

1) 1179 million persons call themselves Christians;
2) 336 million persons require E-1 evangelism;
3) 2387 million persons require E-2 or E-3 evangelism.¹

Dr. Winter had done his homework; his minor for his Ph.D. had been in mathematical statistics. The facts he presented could not be easily ignored.

The material Dr. Winter presented at Lausanne had a profound effect on world mission strategy. I am convinced that this paper would not exist apart from the information shared by Dr. Winter in 1974. "Ralph Winter's paper at Lausanne on 'The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism' was a landmark in mission strategy. It introduced the idea of separate 'peoples' within a country . . . ."² An excellent summary of Dr. Winter's Lausanne presentation was given by Dr. Loewen:

The task of evangelism on the basis of the differing cultural distances to be bridged between the myriad of tribes and peoples in the world, can
be classified into three categories:

E-1: evangelism within homogeneous groups;
E-2: evangelism of geographically close and culturally or linguistically related groups;
E-3: evangelism of culturally distant groups in which the evangelist is separated from the people to be evangelized by monumental (Winter's own term) cultural distances.

Some of the terminology and groups introduced in the previous paragraphs will be referred to in this paper along with what is meant by the term "unreached people group."

Second, the historical and contemporary factors which have contributed to the prolonged existence of the unreached people groups will be considered. Lastly, contemporary strategies being employed to reach these unreached peoples will be discussed.
CHAPTER ONE
DEFINING AN UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUP

There is much heated debate as to whether a "people group" is a biblical term or merely a sociological term, as well as a haziness about the term "unreached", among missiologists. Thus, the issues as they relate to the present topic must be considered.

People Group

Seeing the term "people group" as Biblical, are men from the Church Growth movement: Donald A. McGavran, Alan R. Tippett, Tetsunao Yamamori, and Ralph D. Winter. These men view the words in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, panta ta ethne ("every," or "all nations"), as referring to homogeneous sociological groupings. A few quotes from their writings will present their viewpoints:

He had in mind families of mankind—tongues, tribes, castes, and lineages of men. That is exactly what ta ethne means ... in Matthew 28:19.4

The Great Commission was expressed in ethnic terms.5

The apostles were to disciple "all the ethnic units."6 "Peoples," a Biblical concept (Gen. 12:3; 28:14; Mt. 24:14; 28:19, etc.) = "Nations" (not countries), peoples, people groups.7

David J. Bosch, Professor of Missiology at the University of South Africa, disagrees with the former interpretations.
He believes a modern problem has been read back into Matthew 28:19, causing the erection of an imposing superstructure. "The question is, however, not whether panta ta ethne means ethnic units, but whether it refers to Gentiles only, or to nations, including the Jews . . . ."8

Harvie M. Conn of Westminster Theological Seminary sees the Church Growth strategies for evangelism as based on culture and not sound hermeneutics. He says, "Too often the Movement seems to use texts simply to shore up Church Growth theory . . . ."9

Although differing in their interpretation of the word ethne, both groups reach similar conclusions in their strategies for world evangelization. C. Peter Wagner of the Church Growth movement states, "If the goal is to 'make disciples,' . . . the methods which best accomplish the goal should be used provided there is no objection to them from the ethical point of view."10 Conn says, "The greatest contribution of Church Growth strategy has been to make us all aware of peoplehood and its human diversity as a tool in world evangelization."11

MARC (Mission Advance Research Center) defines a people group as "a part of a society made up of people who share basic characteristics which cause them to feel a sense of oneness. The unifying characteristics may be language, religion, economic status, occupation, ethnicity, geographic proximity, or common social problems."12

A "people" is often defined as a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their
shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc., or combination of these.

For example:

Urdu-speaking Muslim farmers of the Punjab; or,

Cantonese-speaking Chinese refugees from Vietnam in France; or,

Welsh working-class miners.13

The above definitions are important because they come from the organizations which provide the majority of statistical data relating to the unreached peoples of the world. The first definition comes from MARC.14 The second is from the initial introductory volume (entitled Unreached Peoples, 1979) in a series of annual volumes printed in an attempt to categorize and list the unreached peoples of the world. This series is put together by the Strategy Working Group of the LCWE.15

Unreached

The term "unreached" has gone through a few changes in the past ten years. In 1974, Dr. Winter defined the unreached as "[the] . . . four-fifths of the non-Christians in the world today [who] will never have any straightforward opportunity to become Christians unless the Christians themselves go more than halfway in the specialized tasks of cross-cultural evangelism."16

The first issue of the Unreached Peoples in 1979 defined the unreached as " . . . a group that is less than 20 percent
practicing Christian."\(^\text{17}\) The 1980 edition of Unreached Peoples pointed out that many readers of the 1979 issue believed the 20 percent figure to be too high, and that the 1980 writers admitted the number was arbitrary; however, it was believed to reflect a degree of realism. The realism factor was based on the assumption that a group could not adequately spread the Gospel by E-1 evangelism until 10-20 percent were practicing Christians.\(^\text{18}\)

The bulletin of the U.S. Center for World Mission of August/September, 1985, clearly stated that the previous definitions were outdated.

\[\ldots\] the definition of "unreached people" in the 1980 book is now outmoded by a very widespread acceptance of a new and somewhat different definition that has nothing to do with a "percentage Christian" but the presence or absence of "a viable, indigenous, evangelizing church movement."\(^\text{19}\)

This definition is fleshed out in the 1984 publication by MARC entitled, The Future of World Evangelization.\(^\text{20}\) Probably the most concise definitions with depth was penned by the LCWE in Chicago on March 16, 1982, which reads, "\ldots an unreached people is 'a group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.'\(^\text{21}\)

**Statistical Data Concerning Unreached People Groups**

The LCWE, officially constituted in January 1975 in Mexico City, was composed of forty-eight international members comprising seven regional committees which deal with evangelistic challenges in their specific parts of the world.
C. Peter Wagner was elected chairman of the Strategy Working Group of the LCWE whose basic tasks are to "... identify ... unreached peoples, ... identify existing forces for evangelism ... to reach them ... and suggest methodologies that could help increase the effectiveness of evangelistic efforts."22

Before the latter tasks can be achieved by the Strategy Working Group, their primary interest lies in the first task, identifying who the unreached are. Over 600 people groups were listed in the Unreached Peoples 1979 volume, and in the 1983 edition, the list had increased to over 4000. Each people group is assigned an identification number whereby any person can write to MARC and receive an information packet on the people group of his interest. This packet will include a computer printout listing various facts about the people group including: languages, religions, attitudes toward Christianity, distinctives, Scripture availability, literacy percentages, Christian activity, and the degree of Christian awareness.23

Various other groups as well are working to identify unreached peoples and have published their findings. For example, The Great Commission Handbook of 1985 provides the following statistics:

1) Muslims - 850 million - representing 4,000 unreached people groups;

2) Buddhists - 283 million - over 1,000 people groups with only 200 North American missionaries working among them;
3) Tribals - 200 million - representing 6,000 tribes of which 5,000 are unreached;

4) Hindus - 610 million - 90% live in India comprised of 3000 non-intermarrying castes, of which 2929 are unreached; and,

5) Chinese - 1 billion - 2000 unreached people groups. Also, the U.S. Center for World Missions published a poster in 1982, detailing the statistics of the unreached peoples. Their list shows the following number of unreached people groups:

1) Tribal 5000;
2) Muslim 4000;
3) Hindu 3000;
4) Han Chinese 2000;
5) Buddhists 1000.

This examination of the definition of the term "unreached people groups" demonstrates the refinement the term has undergone through the years by missiologists. The result is a more concrete and precise definition, usually containing the elements of "an indigenous group incapable of evangelizing itself." The statistical data concerning the unreached people groups reveals that over one-half of the world's population lives in such groups, making this a necessary and primary target for contemporary missionaries.
CHAPTER TWO
HISTORICAL FACTORS

Several historical factors contributed to the present existence of 17,000 unreached people groups. These factors will be chronologically divided into the Early, Medieval, and Modern Periods.

Early Period: 30-300 A.D.

Despite numerous inhumane persecutions, Christianity flourished during this period. Some historians estimate ten percent of the Roman Empire's fifty million persons were Christians by 313. Kenneth Latourette states, "By the middle of the third century thousands were pouring into the Church."26

Medieval Period: 300-1500

In 313 the Edict of Toleration was issued and thousands more poured in the Church. However, this new type of church member did not possess the missionary zeal of the refined Christians who had endured the persecution stage. Christianity soon became the sole religion of the state. According to Latourette, "before the close of the fifth century the overwhelming majority of Roman citizens were professing themselves to be Christians . . . ."27

The Church, once purified by persecution, had become acceptable and popular. With the new view of Christianity came corruption and carnal values. Ceremonialism began re-
placing the reality of the Christian life. Political and economic concerns took precedence over evangelistic concern. A wide chasm between clergy and laity was developing. 28

In 622 one of Christianity's greatest hindrances was born in the religion of Islam. Historian Harry Rosenberg states, "Islam became medieval Christianity's greatest opponent." 29 The Muslim community believed the revelation given to Muhammad was the final one, supplanting all previous revelations including the Old and New Testaments. The Muslims believed themselves to be superior; this superiority complex and other tenets of their new faith would result in the bloodshed of many Christians.

An example of how the Muslims treated Christians during the medieval period is recorded by Latourette. He states that Egypt was predominantly Christian by the fifth century; however, as early as the eighth century, additional financial burdens were placed on those professing Christianity. The persecution became so severe that apostacy was common even among the bishops. Latourette says that "at least the tenth century Christians were forbidden to attempt to convert Muslims, ... display crosses, ring church bells or ... erect houses higher than those of Muslims ... ." 30 He concludes that "... through Islam Christianity suffered the greatest defeat in its history." 31 By the eighth century the Arabs made themselves masters of about half of Christendom, from Syria southward and westward to the Pyrennes. Spain, Portugal,
and Sicily were the only areas to be regained later by Christi-

One of the greatest scars on Christianity was created
during the Crusades (1095-1272). The essence of Christianity
was denied as the Crusaders became the aggressors and need-
lessly slaughtered thousands of Muslims and Jews. Historian-
missiologist Herbert Kane states, "When Jerusalem was liber-
ated in 1099, the Crusaders, not content with wiping out the
one-thousand-man garrison, proceeded to massacre some seventy
thousand Muslims. The surviving Jews were herded into a
synagogue and burned alive." 32

The period between 1350 and 1500 was a time of great
decline for Christianity. Several factors led to this de-
cline including the "Black Death"; it "reduced the population
of Northern Europe by as much as a third and that of England
by one half." 33 The emergence of absolute monarchs with their
nation states hindered Christianity as the monarchs extended
"their control over the Church in their realms." 34

The Renaissance brought with it several factors which
crippled Christianity. The Humanists of this time period had
an "exuberant appreciation of life in this present world . .
. . they tended to rule out God . . . and to ignore life
beyond the grave." 35 A revival of the values of classical
Greek and Roman civilization in the arts, politics, and thought
processes was a large part of the Renaissance. With this in-
terest in classical Greek and Roman civilization came a return
to pre-Christian life-styles although "many Renaissance thinkers reject[ed] or ignore[d] Christianity to admire pagan virtues and practice pagan vices." Modern biblical criticism was started by Lorenzo Valla (1405-57). He subjected the Bible to the same principles of criticism as he did the Greek classical literary works.

Ralph Winter sees this period of history to be greatly lacking in missionary activity. "... much of the Protestant tradition plugged along for over 250 years minding its own business - and its own blessings (like Israel of old) ... ." In a separate article about this time period Dr. Winter writes, "By the year 1800, it was painfully embarrassing to Protestants to hear Roman missionaries writing off the Protestant movement as apostate simply because it was not sending missionaries."

J. Herbert Kane lists four factors contributing to the lack of Protestant missionary activity during this time period:

1) The theology of the Reformers. "They taught that the Great Commission pertained only to the original apostles."

2) "The sad plight of the Protestant churches ... they were extremely small."

3) Geographical isolation of Protestant Europe.

4) The absence of religious orders.

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther publicly posted his 95 Theses against the Roman Church's traditional system of indulgences. This initial act by Luther would lead to much bloodshed as others would soon dare to speak out against the Roman Church system.
Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531) and John Calvin (1509-64) also spoke strongly against the Roman superstructure. Zwingli died at the battle of Kappel, which was the direct result of an army under the orders of five Catholic Forest Cantons. 41

Disagreements among fellow Protestants and the continual battle with the Roman Catholics for survival, allowed little time for missionary endeavors. Zwingli and Luther differed sharply over Christ's presence in communion. 42 "Anabaptists were bitterly persecuted by other Protestants and Roman Catholics... Manz, recaptured, was executed by drowning (January 25, 1527), apparently the first martyr to the Anabaptist cause." 43

In T. G. Talbert's introduction to Philip J. Spener's Pia Desidera, he points out that the state controlled the church in Germany in 1648, and that "Protestant sentiment against Roman Catholicism was exceeded only by controversy within Protestantism." 44 The last of the so-called religious wars was the Thirty Years War, 1618-48. This conflict occurred in Germany and involved primarily the Calvinists against the Catholics. 45

The development of commerce had quenched much of the thirst for God in Colonial America by the beginning of the 18th century. 46 During this same period the Anglican church in England had declined due to a fear of extremes. "Anglicans had a fear of extremes (both Roman Catholic and Puritan) which
resulted in a moderation which frowned on passionate convictions of any kind."

God used George Whitefield and John Wesley to wake up the sleeping Church of England. Mr. Whitefield visited America seven times and assisted Jonathan Edwards as they were used of God to spawn the "Great Awakening." Mr. Whitefield preached his final American sermon to an open-air congregation estimated at 20,000 in Boston in 1740.

In 1792 the prevailing view was that the Great Commission no longer applied to Christians. In this year William Carey's book *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* prompted a landmark in missions history. The landmark would be the establishment of the first "mission society." Carey had insisted that "organized efforts in the form of missions societies were essential to the success of the missionary endeavor." 

The positive contributions of Whitefield, Wesley, Edwards and Carey were greatly needed. It was during this period of history that many "... were prepared to hail the demise of Christianity, ..." states Latourette. The growth of rationalism combined with the French Revolution and the Wars of Napoleon shook Europe and destroyed the faith of many.

**Modern Period 1800-1950**

Church historian Latourette lists six enemies which threatened Christianity in the nineteenth century. These six
enemies were "materialism and secularism, ... reinforced by the scientific and mechanical advances of the day . . . patterns of the burgeoning industrial communities [which] gave little room for worship . . . some of the programmes offered for the reorganization of society, notably communism . . . laboring classes regarded the Church as one of the bulwarks of entrenched privilege . . . numbers of intellectuals believed that science had made Christianity untenable . . . the association of Christianity with Western imperialism . . . ." 53

Some methods employed by the foreign missionaries were often detrimental, such as the establishing of permanent "mission stations." A mission station would often isolate the missionaries from the people they were trying to reach. The missionaries would often push the people "... to become imitation Europeans rather than spiritually reborn nationals." 54

Distinguishing between Western culture and the Christian faith was a common problem. 55 This problem not only hindered Christianity but hastened conversions to Islam, as recorded by Hendrik Kraemer. "Dutch colonial rule tended to hasten Islamization precisely because Islam gave a rallying point against the proud white men who came from 'Christian' lands." 56 Another great black mark against Christianity, namely, the often exploitative colonial rule accompanied by Christian missionaries. The nationals had difficult and often impossible tasks discerning the eternal intentions of the white-skinned missionaries as opposed to the temporal greedy intentions of many of the white-skinned colonizers.
The attitude of superiority by the Western missionaries hindered the spread of the Gospel. "World War I did much to damage the image of "The Christian West . . . the shattering of that image was completed with World War II." The new independent nations, formed after the age of Western political imperialism had ended, rejected the foreign intervention in their lives. Padilla states, "Several countries, notably India, were closed to foreign missionaries."

The economic chaos during the 1930's caused a sharp drop in missions recruiting and income. In 1940 missionary giving was more than one-third less than it had been in 1930.

The conclusions drawn by the Layman's Foreign Mission Inquiry in 1932 was also a detriment to missions. These fifteen laymen representing seven American mission boards visited Asia and Africa and reported that the aim of Christian missions should not be conversion, but to help the adherents of other religions to discover the best in their own traditions. This perspective resulted in a decline of missionary involvement in many denominations.

By 300 A.D. Christianity claimed ten percent of the Roman Empire's population in spite of tremendous persecution. During the Medieval period, 300-1500, Christianity blossomed to become the world's most popular religion. The enemies of Christianity during this period were Islam, the Crusades, political control of the churches, and some of the values resulting from the Renaissance.
The period from 1500-1800 was characterized by much internal strife in Christendom. Fighting between the followers of Catholicism, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and other independent groups such as the Anabaptists, led to much bloodshed, and allowed little time for missionary endeavors. The prevailing theological view was that the Great Commission pertained only to the apostles, and this view robbed motivation for missionary outreach.

Many new obstacles confronted Christianity between 1800-1950. The scientific advances of the Industrial Revolution turned the eyes of many from trusting in God to trusting in man for their provision. Communism was established with views in direct opposition to Christianity and association of Christianity with Western imperialism greatly hindering foreign missions during this period. As is evident, then, all of the stated factors and many unmentioned have worked together from the inception of Christianity to the 1950's to contribute to the existence of 16,700 unreached people groups in 1986.
CHAPTER THREE

ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES CONTRIBUTING TO THE EXISTENCE OF UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

Historical factors are not the only opposition against the unreached. Several contemporary factors are presently on the scene hindering millions of people from hearing the gospel. A few of these factors will be considered in this chapter.

Failure to Convey a Cross-Cultural Missionary Vision to the Converts

The ultimate goal of a missionary should be to see that a foreign mission board is established in the culture he is penetrating with the Gospel. Too often the missionary's long range plan is only to establish a local church or churches in the culture he is entering. This methodology promotes self-centeredness and robs the new Christians of the opportunity to fulfill their role in world evangelization.

Dr. Rene Padilla quotes an African writer as saying, "The church in Africa has for too long been very missionary minded, but only in terms of receiving missionaries . . . ." Missiologists Arthur Glasser and Eric Fife state in a book they co-authored that, "Missionary methodology must go beyond the triad of evangelism, training, and church planting . . . each national church should have its own missionary outreach."
Attempting to Evangelize with Disregard for Anthropological and Sociological Principles

Certain anthropological and sociological principles should be considered when attempting to reach the unreached. The four following areas are important: 1) Homogeneity; 2) People Blindness; 3) Ethnocentrism; and 4) Superiority Complex.

Homogeneity

Donald McGavran states that "men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers." Failure to recognize this fact has created unnecessary tension on several mission fields. McGavran found this principle to be very important as he worked with the complex caste system in India. In another article, McGavran states, "By ignoring social stratification and disregarding homogeneous units and webs of relationship, they [Western missionaries] constantly diminish the effectiveness of their presentation of Christ." Padilla opposes the use of the homogeneous unit principle in church growth as he states, "... the homogeneous unit principle for church growth has no biblical foundation." Ralph Winter argues that a biblical foundation for homogeneity can be found among the Galatian Christians. "... He [Paul] established an apparently non-Jewish congregation among the Galatians." Winter further adds, "No one minds if Japanese Christians gather by themselves in Tokyo ... But there is
considerable confusion . . . whether Japanese, Spanish, or Chinese Christians should be allowed or encouraged to gather by themselves in Los Angeles."^67

People Blindness

People blindness is defined by Ralph Winter as a " . . . blindness to the existence of separate peoples within countries; . . . which seems more prevalent in the U.S. and among U.S. missionaries than anywhere else."^68

People blindness is closely related to the homogeneous unit principle. In David Liao's book, blindness of missionaries toward two million Hakkas of Taiwan is graphically illustrated. Liao explains, " . . . their language has not been learned, and they have had to join Minnan and Mandarin-speaking congregations. Consequently to them, 'becoming Christian' has come to mean 'leaving our beloved Hakka people.'"^69

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is defined as "The assumption that one's own way of living is better than that of another group or society, and that one's own moral philosophy should form the basis for judging that of other groups or societies."^70

Ethnocentrism is another negative practice by many missionaries. A missionary must not allow the standards of his own culture set the pattern for his converts in another culture. This of course refers exclusively to behavioral patterns of the culture he is trying to reach which do not directly violate the Scriptures.
It is often difficult for a Western missionary to distinguish a cultural norm from a Biblical norm. Missionary and social anthropologist, Marvin Mayers states:

There is so little understanding of cultural differences that the church and its mission extension refuse to prepare for multicultural confrontation and thus any adjustment or adaptation to more than one life-way is banned on the grounds of compromise of belief.71

The preferences of another culture's diet, dress, architecture, dialect, disciplinary procedures, government, and a hundred other areas of personal behavioral patterns need not necessarily change before or after the person accepts the Christian faith. The fear of losing cultural identity should not be a stumbling block for one considering converting to Christianity.

Superiority Complex

The superiority complex goes a step beyond ethnocentrism as it expresses prejudice in various ways. This prejudice is primarily an attitude problem which regards the nationals as inferior and as a child to be raised to the social level of the missionary.

The missionary may view the "poor little natives" as being "primitive" simply because they do not have running water, central heat or an automobile. The temptation to "look down" on the nationals in such circumstances must be avoided. Harold Lindsell states, "Instead of being a master, he is a servant."72
Theological Problems Present in Christianity Which Affect Missionary Endeavors

Multiple theological problems exist which affect cross-cultural evangelism. The following theological problems will be discussed: 1) Inerrancy; 2) Liberation Theology; 3) Universalism; and 4) The Social Gospel.

Inerrancy

One of the chief factors affecting missionary endeavors in contemporary days has been the falling away of individuals and groups from a view of Biblical inerrancy. Volumes have recently been written on the subject in an attempt to reaffirm the necessity of this all important foundational truth of the Christian faith. Francis Schaeffer is quoted as saying:

The generation of those who first give up Biblical inerrancy may have a warm evangelical background and a real personal relationships with Jesus Christ so they can "live theologically" on the basis of their limited inerrancy viewpoint. But what happens when the next generation tries to build on that foundation?73

Harold Lindsell gives several statistics on denominations which no longer believe the Scriptures to be inerrant. They are as follows:

1. A 1967 poll of 521 clergy and laymen at the 1966 National Council of Churches General Assembly in Miami Beach revealed that - only 58 percent - regard Jesus as divine, "15 percent believe that children are born into the world already guilty of sin," . . . 62 percent look forward with "complete certainty" to life after death.
2. Data from 4745 Lutherans revealed that "three out of ten do not believe in life after death. . . . seven out of ten believe that all religions lead to the same God."

3. The United Presbyterian Church no longer required a minister to profess belief in Biblical inerrancy in 1924, since then "its overseas missionary force has shrunk by more than 50%." 74

When a person or group believes the Bible has errors, they have a shallow foundation at best. It is difficult for them to leave their own culture and enter another culture encouraging persons to believe in something they themselves are not one hundred percent convinced is true, reliable, or necessary.

Liberation Theology

Liberation theology surfaced in 1968 when a Peruvian priest, Gustava Gutierrez, presented a revolutionary way of approaching the social, economic, and political problems of Latin America. He tends to divide the world into the rich and the poor or the oppressors and the oppressed. He states, "The poor countries are becoming evermore clearly aware that their underdevelopment is only the by-product of the development of other countries, because of the kind of relationship which exists between the rich and the poor countries." 75

The keynote address by Robert McAfee Brown "at the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Nairobi 1975) identified the chief oppressions in the world today as racism, sexism, classism, and imperialism." 76 Brown writes a few years
later that, "God sides with the poor, ... the slaves, rather than with the Pharaohs, ... the influential people in society."77 He further attempts to show that God liberates captives, by using the Exodus Motif (Exodus 1:15-2:15), as an attempt to give Scriptural grounds for his views.

This theology of liberation focuses primarily, if not exclusively, on horizontal relationships (men with men) and not the vertical relationship (men with God). For this reason it hinders true evangelism. Missiologist Charles R. Taber writes, "Versions, such as Liberation Theology, tend to equate salvation with the solution of the world's social problems ... ."78

Universalism

In the broadest sense of the word a person who believes in universalism believes all mankind will ultimately be re-united with a loving God. Universalism takes many forms, many using the Bible for proof of its validity.

Paul Verghese, a priest of the Syrian Orthodox Church, India, and at the time, Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches ... wrote ... Christ wills that all men be saved ... . Can that will be thwarted? No, for His will is commensurate with His power.79

Dean Norman Pittenger of the Episcopal General Theological Seminary of New York City said ... God's loving self-expression is so subtle and so persuasive that all men ... will be won (not coerced) into a response to the Creator ... . Anything less seems to be a blasphemous denial ... of the Christian revelation - God is love - and setting up of a heathen idol who ought not to be worshiped but destroyed.80
Missiologist J. Robertson McQuilkin divides persons of the universalist persuasion into four categories:

1) Universalism - God is good; therefore, all will ultimately be saved.

2) The New Universalism - All will ultimately be saved because of Christ's provision.

3) The Wider Hope Theory - Not all will be saved; however, God will not condemn the sincere seeker after truth.

4) The New Wider Hope Theory - Those who live by the light they have will be saved on the merits of Christ's death; special revelation of Scripture is not necessary for salvation.

The various forms of universalism have been accepted by many Christians. This acceptance caused a radical shift in the definition of the mission of the church. The shift has resulted in a greater, if not exclusive, concern for horizontal problems and not the vertical problem. Mankind's relationship with mankind and not his relationship with God has become of primary concern in many Christian circles of influence. Harold Lindsell commenting on the WCC meeting in Mexico City (1963) and in Bangkok (1972) states:

It was quite apparent that the central thrust of the conferences was based upon a commitment to changing the social, economic, and political structures of society. This was based, in turn, upon the underlying assumption that all men are now in Christ and only need to be informed of what is already true.

The concept of universalism creates many problems. The character of Jesus would have to be examined because He spoke
of eternal torment in Hell. The urgency of spreading the Gospel is quenched. The purpose of missions has to be re-defined because universalism has negatively influenced the Christian missionary movement.

The Social Gospel

The social gospel may appear synonymous with liberation theology; however, the social gospel movement started decades before liberation theology.

The first representatively world-wide international missionary conference was held in 1910 in Edinburgh. The participants predominantly agreed "the Great Commission of Christ (Matt. 28:19) was the only basis needed for the missionary enterprise . . . ." Another world-wide council was held in Jerusalem in 1928 which had a different focal point. Commenting on the Jerusalem Conference, Bishop Stephen Neill states, "Evangelism was no longer in the center of the picture . . . ."

A group of prominent laymen joined a Harvard philosophy professor, Dr. W.B. Hocking, on a tour of world mission fields. At the conclusion of the tour, Dr. Hocking wrote a book, *Re-thinking Missions*, out of which missiologist Arthur F. Glasser cites four recommendations: "Give prominence to the social gospel . . . remove evangelism from schools and medical work . . . regard non-Christian religions and their devotees as fellow-seekers after truth . . . recruit, train, and appoint only liberal-minded missionaries . . . ."
Time magazine's cover story for August 27, 1982, was on "The New Missionary." The author quoted several missionaries on location at their various mission fields. The quotes of these missionaries give an insight as to how deep the social gospel philosophy has permeated. Rev. Simon Smith, head of the Jesuit Missions sent from the United States, argues that "the sharing of Christian beliefs 'has taken second place to being of service to human beings.'" 86

Father Walbert Buhlmann, the Rome-based mission secretary of the Order of the Friars Minor Capuchin, states,

In the past, we had the so-called motive of saving souls. We were convinced that if not baptized, people in the masses would go to hell. Now, thanks be to God, we believe that all people and all religions are already living in the grace and love of God and will be saved by God's mercy. 87

Reverend Willie Cilliers, secretary for missions of the Black Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, argues that the true role of the missionary is simply to reach out to the poor . . . . We have a message to proclaim that from a Christian perspective it is the weak in society who have the first priority. That is what the Christian message is about - reaching out to the weak. 88

The Time reporter provides a synopsis of a day in the life of a model propagator of the "social gospel." Her name is Sister Emanuelle; she is 74 years of age and ministers in Cairo. She awakens at 4:30 a.m. in her dirt floor hut with a hole in the roof and walks through garbage, broken glass, and snarling dogs to complete the two mile walk to morning mass. Spending every ounce of her energy she tries to improve the living conditions of the people in the area where she
ministers. These include preaching on neatness, cleanliness, and browbeating bureaucrats and politicians. She states, "Today we don't talk about conversion any more . . . we talk about being friends. My job is to prove that God is love, to bring courage to these people." She states, "Today we don't talk about conversion any more . . . we talk about being friends. My job is to prove that God is love, to bring courage to these people." The reporter closes the article by saying, . . . "the nun epitomizes the best in today's new missionary."90

Sister Emanuelle is to be commended for her Christ-like altruistic lifestyle. If she is able to bring about a total environmental improvement, her flock will live in improved conditions for their earthly existence, but without a spiritual conversion they will spend eternity in torment.

Miscellaneous Problems Present in Christianity Which Affect Missionary Endeavors

Various problems exist which hinder evangelism of the unreached. The following ideas will be discussed: 1) Local Evangelism is Sufficient; 2) Financial; 3) Everybody is a Missionary; 4) Redefining of Missiological Terms; and 5) Confusion over "The Call."

Local Evangelism is Sufficient

Some groups have come to the conclusion that foreign personnel are not needed in many, if not all, parts of the world to effectively evangelize. A recent article in Time magazine repeats, "Mainline churches believe that indigenous workers should be doing most of the spiritual tasks once
performed by missionaries. Thus churches that belong to the N.C.C. now support only 2,813 career missionaries abroad, compared with 9,844 in 1953.\textsuperscript{91}

It is true that as much work as is possible should be maintained by national personnel; however, to portray the idea that cross-cultural missionaries are no longer needed is hazardous to the spread of the gospel. Ralph Winter states,

Many Christian organizations, ranging widely from the World Council of Churches to many U.S. denominations, and even some evangelical groups, have rushed to the conclusion that we may now abandon traditional missionary strategy and count on local Christians everywhere to finish the job.\textsuperscript{92}

The MARC researchers state that the percentage of Christians to the world population has been declining since 1900.

"... Christians do not recognize that the need for cross-cultural evangelists (missionaries) is greater than at any other time in history, and will continue to be so in the coming years."\textsuperscript{93}

Financial

Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). According to this verse, the hearts of American Christians are far from cross-cultural evangelism. Ralph Winter states, "Yet $1.50\textsuperscript{94}

Missiologist David Bryant states, "... only 4 percent of Christians' annual incomes go to all forms of church
work and only 15 percent of that is used in world evangelization.\textsuperscript{95} To reach the unreached peoples the hearts and wallets of Christendom must open to the cause of world missions.

Everybody is a Missionary

Some churches put a sign near their exit doors which reads, "You are now entering the mission field." This implies that everyone is a missionary and portrays anyone who tells anyone about Jesus as a missionary. The word "missionary" loses its very meaning in this type of appeal.

Sam Wilson writes, "A missionary is someone who crosses cultural barriers . . . . 'And how can they preach unless they are sent.' . . . The world is desperately in need of missionaries."\textsuperscript{96} Dr. William Matheny, former chairman of the Missions Department at Liberty University, stated in one of his classes, "If everyone is a missionary then no one is a missionary."

Certainly all Christians are not cross-cultural missionaries. The emphasis of the need for cross-cultural missionaries tends to lose its appeal when every witnessing Christian is labeled as a missionary.

Redefining Missiological Terms

With the input of the social gospel, liberation theology, universalism and other non-traditional missionary concepts, a new language developed. The words are the same, however, the meanings are different. The new meanings carry a heavy
price tag for the cause of traditionally Biblical Christian missionary work.

Dr. Donald McGavran lists seven words which have taken on new meaning for some contemporary mission groups and persons:

1) Mission - . . . include everything the church ought to do and everything that God wants done both inside and outside the church.

2) Evangelism - . . . the act of changing social structures

3) Conversion - . . . turning from one thing to another. [Example] low views of human race to high views

4) Salvation - . . . salvation today and consists of a series of this-worldly improvements. The human race is saved from poverty, oppression, illness, . . . illiteracy, and so on

5) Liberation - . . . a glorious biblical word. The Bible frequently speaks of liberty, freedom, and release: the year of release; the liberty of the sons of God; when the Lord liberates you, then you are truly free; the truth sets us free; God liberated the Hebrew slaves from Egyptian bondage.

6) Revelation - . . . a compilation of contradictory voices out of many cultural conditions across ten centuries of time.

7) Church - . . . a mere instrument used by God to bring in a better world.

Confusion over "The Call"

The concept of "a call" to serve as a missionary has created much confusion among Christendom. Some say a call does not exist while others say without a specific, personal, unmistakable call a person cannot be a missionary. The degrees of a call, and the definitions of a call are varied.
Representative of those who do not believe in a call is Garry Friesen. He states, "Where the traditional view speaks of a 'call,' the New Testament speaks of a 'desire' or an 'aspiration . . . ."98 Speaking of the missionary call of Barnabas and Saul, Friesen states, " . . . they were to be the first missionaries . . . it is going too far to construe from this unique event that all subsequent missionaries must be similarly called."99

The opposite of the "missionary call" persuasion may be represented by George W. Peters. Speaking of the apostles, he states,

These men were conscious and persuaded of the fact that they had been called of God for the ministry of the Word, . . . "It is the blessed privilege of a servant of the Lord to enjoy the glorious assurance in his mind that he is individually and personally called of the Lord to fill a specific place in the ministry of the church."100

Most of the missionaries we call "'great' have been constrained to go by the commandment in the Word, by the needs of the field, . . . or by the inspiration,"101 or from a Christian with a passion for lost souls, Harold Lindsell points out. He further states, "One aspect of requiring a special call for missionary service is the violence it does to the rest of Scripture. No man would think of interpreting his Bible in this way in other matters."102

Many young people struggle with the idea of a "call." Friesen provides the dilemma of a youth worker who approached
him regarding the subject:

I have always wanted to serve Christ and share the gospel in a part of the world where people have never heard of Jesus. However, teachers and missionaries have told me to be certain that I have an inner call from God before I go. I've never really understood what they meant by a "call" but after listening to them I am quite sure I have not had one. Do you think I could go to the mission field without one of those calls?

The confusion continues and young people stay away from foreign fields because they have not had some mystical experiential call. This is a sad reason for people to die not having heard the gospel, simply because a well-meaning, Christian young person is waiting on some experience to move him or her, which he may never experience.

Thus, a few of the contemporary reasons for the existence of so many unreached peoples have been considered. The few reasons listed do not begin to touch the complexity of the situation. Whether theological, sociological, or for whatever reason missionary endeavors are being hindered, these hindrances must be minimized lest the unreached remain unreached.
CHAPTER FOUR

CONTEMPORARY FACTORS AT WORK
TO REACH THE UNREACHED

In spite of intense opposition toward the spread of the gospel, great strides of progress have taken place in recent days. New groups are forming to target the unreached; older mission agencies are re-thinking their strategies, and new ideas are rising in many places around the globe. In this concluding chapter, several positive factors at work in contemporary missions will be discussed.

Identifying the Unreached

Finding, identifying, categorizing and making known the existence of the unreached people groups has taken great strides in the last decade. A 1982 *Time* magazine article describes the phenomenon this way, "The most important change in Protestant missionary strategy in the past ten years has been to identify and seek to contact some 16,000 tribes and social groups around the world that have been beyond the reach of Christianity." 104

In particular the identification process the *Time* article is referring to is the research primarily conducted by the Missions Advanced Research and Communication (MARC) Center of World Vision International of Monrovia, California. This organization has a working relationship with the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne Committee for World
Evangelization (LCWE).105 These organizations have published their research in a series of volumes.106

The importance of identifying the particular unreached people groups cannot be over emphasized. The knowledge of groups without the Scripture in their particular language has motivated persons to become cross-cultural missionaries for years. Now, identifying and classifying the unreached peoples is equally important. Edward Dayton and Sam Wilson word it this way,

It was also obvious that the Christian world was woefully ignorant about the number and complexity of the people groups. We had identified thousands of language groups and seen the power of such definition to attract and motivate cross-cultural missionaries, but the more subtle and specific groups had seldom been defined.107

**Tent-Making**

Tent-making is a term derived from one of the apostle Paul's sources of income while he was a missionary. Today's tent-makers may be computer operators in Saudi Arabia, English teachers in China, or agricultural consultants in India.

Tent-making opens many closed countries which would normally not allow a Christian missionary in its doors. The tent-maker also avoids the gruesome task of raising financial support from his home country's churches.

John Holzmann points out, "Forty countries - some even in the so-called 'free world' - refuse to grant missionary visas. These countries account for almost half the world's
population. This problem is partly solved by tentmaking missionaries.

Greg Livingstone has assisted over 200 persons enter closed Muslim countries. He suggests the following five avenues to gain entry:

1) Providing consultant aid for an entertainment/recreation project;
2) Consulting in the area of hydrophonics. (Hydrophonics involves growing plants in nutrient solutions);
3) Teaching English;
4) Exporting local goods; and
5) Studying at a university.

This new strategy for entering closed countries has great potential. New groups are being raised up which are using this wise tool to attempt to reach the unreached with the gospel.

**People Movements**

A people movement or group conversion is defined by Donald McGavran as, "... multi-individual mutually independent conversion. It is many individuals believing on the Lord at the same time in shared knowledge of the joint action and mutual independence of each other."

Western thought is dominated by individualism. People can peacefully co-exist in the same house in the West, even when each member of the house is of a different religious persuasion. This is not true in many parts of the world.
Taking a stand for one's beliefs in the West is respectable; to take a stand in many cultures causes complete disharmony and ostracism occurs. Thus the need for a different strategy of evangelism is apparent.

In the past, Western missionaries were suspicious of more than one person coming to Christ at a time. Today, with the increase in socio-anthropological studies, the group conversion is considered legitimate by contemporary missionaries.

An example of group conversion is recorded by Richard Ostling in *Time*. He writes about missionaries Leon and Lorraine Dillinger's experience in Indonesia.

In 1960, when the couple lived in a grass hut in the village of Kelila, the tribal chief surprised them one day by coming to say, "As long as we have our fetishes, we are not ready to hear God." About 5,000 Danis brought charms and spirit paraphernalia to throw onto a bonfire. Recalls Dillinger: 'The men shouted for joy, and people ran up and down, so happy were they to be free of those things. It couldn't have been noisier if U.C.L.A. were playing U.S.C.' Tribal bloodshed ceased, the fear of spirits abated, and gradually more than 100,000 of the Danis became Christians.

**Personnel Increase**

While liberal theological groups are dropping in the number of missionary personnel, the conservative evangelical personnel numbers are greatly increasing. C. Peter Wagner gives the following figures:

... The mission agencies affiliated with the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches were sending out
8,279 missionaries in 1969, but only 4,817 in 1979, a drop of over 40 percent in 10 years. The total number of North American Protestant missionaries sent overseas was 34,460 in 1969 and 53,497 in 1979, an increase of more than 50 percent over the same ten years.\textsuperscript{112}

Mr. Wagner also points out that forty-seven mission agencies were formed between 1975 and 1979.\textsuperscript{113}

Application of Socio-Anthropological Principles

In the past it was common to disregard the social sciences as important to mission work. Strictly a spiritual task, seeing spiritual results, using the Bible as the only tool, was the dominant thinking.

This view has changed in recent years. Sociology and anthropology are now required courses at most missionary preparation schools. Speaking of contemporary missionaries, Richard Ostling says:

In contrast to their predecessors, the new missionaries agree that as much as possible, the preaching of the Gospel should be shorn of Western cultural trappings and adapted to the civilization of the people to whom it is offered. Instead of Christianizing Africa, so the policy runs, missionaries should help to Africanize Christianity.\textsuperscript{114}

International Missionaries

It is often thought that the white American has the dominant role in reaching out to other cultures with the gospel. This may have been true, but the non-Western nations are beginning to catch a missionary vision. According
to the Global Prayer Digest, "15,000 missionaries from non-Western nations and peoples" are presently spreading the gospel.

Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest local church in Seoul, Korea, had sent out seventy-five missionaries as of 1981. C. Peter Wagner states, "A new African independent denomination forms on the average of one per day."

**Media Advances**

The media has strongly influenced the Western world by way of printed materials, television, films, and radio. Films on the life of Christ have been translated in numerous languages.

The tool which has access to more persons on the planet than any other, at this point, is the radio. Recently, the three men in charge of the world's largest Christian broadcasting organizations met to discuss world evangelization. Ron Cline of HCJB (Herald Christ Jesus' Blessings) Radio estimates that 90 percent of the world's 4.7 billion people can hear the gospel in a language they can understand. Mr. Cline signed a joint statement with Robert Bowman of FEBC (Far East Broadcasting Company) and Paul Freed of TWR (Trans World Radio). The men committed to make the gospel available to every human on earth via radio by the year 2000.
U.S. Center for World Mission (USCWM)

Dr. Ralph Winter purchased a college campus in 1978 for the purpose of establishing a center totally centered around reaching the unreached. His wife, Mrs. Roberta H. Winter, describes the purpose of USCWM as follows:

... a center in the U.S. which will study, evaluate, and assist all mission effort in a constructive and helpful way, to move dynamically and decisively to push back the barriers limiting present efforts and penetrate the last 17,000 human groupings within which there is not yet a culturally relevant church.\(^{119}\)

As of the summer of 1984, 300 people (not including students) work at the center. Sixty-six mission agencies are also represented.\(^{120}\) Donald Hoke, founding director of the Billy Graham Center and director of the Lausanne Congress on Evangelism, has said about the USCWM, "This is the single most strategic institution in the world today aimed at evangelizing the 2 billion persons who can only be reached by 'missionary' evangelism."\(^{121}\)

Several organizations are making all-out efforts toward reaching the unreached. An unprecedented clarification of the task at hand is now available.

We have briefly discussed a few factors which are positively influencing the cause for the unreached. This chapter is intended to shed a glimmer of hope, lest the paper leave the impression that the cause of the unreached is hopeless or being challenged by no one or only a few.
CONCLUSION

Over two and one-half billion persons, representing 17,000 people groups, are without an indigenous church capable of evangelizing their people group. These 17,000 groups exist today, in part, because of several historical and contemporary factors, but are being challenged by many concerned missions minded people with new innovations and advanced technology.

Several historical factors such as wars, famines, inner-church struggles, political dilemmas, and theological heresies are but a few in history which have contributed to the unreached presently in our world.

Contemporary factors are numerous and complex, which also contribute to the plight of the unreached. They include various theological, social, and methodological problems. Each unique problem contributes in some way to the continued existence of unreached peoples.

Although historical and contemporary factors have worked and continue to work, causing the existence of the unreached, there are also several factors at work attempting to lessen the number of unreached peoples in our world. These contemporary positive factors include such organizations as the U.S. Center for World Missions, which is an entire college campus solely targeting the unreached. Other factors include media, socio-anthropological and statistical advances.
The unreached peoples exist today because of innumerable reasons. Today the unreached peoples' future looks brighter than at any time in history. They are being brought to the forefront in missionary thinking, and the number of cross-cultural missionaries are increasing annually to meet the challenge.

The negative factors, which contribute to the unreached people groups, will never totally be eliminated. However, the unreached have an eternal promise that their people group will one day hear the gospel:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9).
ENDNOTES


   This volume is an excellent overview of the ten years following Lausanne.

3 Jacob Loewen, "Response to Dr. Ralph D. Winters' Paper," in Douglas, Let the Earth, pp. 246-47.


12 "The Unreached Peoples Program of MARC" (Monrovia, California: Unreached Peoples Desk-MARC). (Typewritten.)

14 Ibid.

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17 Wagner and Dayton, Unreached '79, p. 24.


20 Dayton and Wilson, The Future of World, p. 129.


22 Wagner and Dayton, Unreached '79, p. 8.

23 Ibid.


25 "Unreached Peoples of the World 1985"


27 Ibid.


30 Latourette, History, p. 320.


33 Latourette, History, p. 603.

34 Ibid.


36 Dowley, History, pp. 348-49.

37 Ibid., p. 350.


43 Latourette, History, pp. 779,781.


47 Ibid., p. 444.

48 Ibid., p. 439.


52 Ibid.

53 Latourette, History, p. 1469.

54 Jacob Loewen, "Response to Winter," in Douglas, Let the Earth, p. 250.


58 Ibid., p. 632.

59 Lindsell, Principles, p. 51.

60 Hulbert, World Missions, p. 29.

61 Padilla in Dowley, History, p. 632.


67 Ibid., p. 240.

68 Ibid., p. 221.


74 Ibid., pp. 145-51.


80 Ibid., p. 1208.


87 Ibid., p. 52.

88 Ibid., p. 56.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid., pp. 51-52.


93 Dayton and Wilson, eds., *The Future of World*, p. 25.


99 Ibid., p. 324.


102 Ibid., p. 72.


105 Wagner and Dayton, *Unreached '79*, pp. 7-12.

106 Wagner and Dayton, *Unreached Peoples '79, '80, '81, '82, '83*. These volumes contain in-depth articles by recognized missiologists on reaching the unreached, detailed case studies of some specific unreached peoples, and a cumulative index of unreached people groups.


113 Ibid., p. 11.


115 *Global Prayer Digest* (February 1986), Day 12.


118 *Global Prayer Digest* (February 1986), Day 3.


120 Ibid., p. 333.

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