

Unreached Peoples Resource Network

*All the peoples you have made will come and worship before you O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and will do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.
(Psalm 86:9-10)*

by Patrick Johnstone and John Robb

Purpose of Unreached Peoples Resource Network

To work with Christian leaders of all denominations and organizations, to encourage existing or form new cooperative ministry task forces and prayer networks for unreached peoples, concentrating on the 2,500 least evangelized ethnolinguistic peoples (clusters of peoples) less than 2 percent Christian to the end that holistic mission-minded church planting movements may emerge in them by the year 2000.

Progress Since 1989

Formation of ministry task forces, partnerships and networks

Through the efforts of INTERDEV there are now 30 active and developing partnerships focused on the unreached. These involve hundreds of agencies working in an integrated way. Unreached Peoples Seminars and consultation supported by World Vision have included approximately 10,000 Christian workers to 50 countries, producing several hundred cooperative ministry strategies and perhaps 200 on-going ministry networks for both ethnolinguistic and sociological people groups.

Prayer Networks

Informed, united intercession is foundational to the whole mission of reaching unreached peoples (Matthew 9:36-38; Psalm 2:8). There is increasing evidence that spiritual warfare—that more aggressive and authoritative praying consisting of the driving out of spirits afflicting people groups and human institutions—is removing the resistance caused by the one who blinds the minds of unbelievers (e.g. Bateke tribe of Zaire; 100s of Hindu villages of Madhya Pradesh, India).

It is difficult to know how many of these 2,500 ethnolinguistic peoples are covered with ongoing, informed intercession—perhaps 500 (rough estimate) through the international Adopt-A-People Movement and national prayer efforts (Women's Aglow, Generals of Intercession, Lausanne, etc.). *The most vital factor in attaining the AD 2000 goal of "A Church for Every people by the Year 2000" is the adoption of every unreached people by congregations and cell groups committed to informed intercession.* The United Prayer Resource Network, the Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse and the Unreached Peoples Resource Network have recently begun a joint effort to mobilize 50,000 churches and cell groups to intercede for these least reached peoples (20 entities per people group). *Unreached Peoples Research and Information*

The Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse in cooperation with several other organizations has produced a list of unreached and adoptable peoples and collected more than 1,800 people profiles which are being distributed to adopting churches and prayer groups. They are in the midst of building an integrated database, including all information relating to the status of evangelization for each people (agencies working among them or targeting, churches adopting, information resources, etc.).

Research surveys in many countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and India continue to uncover valuable information and give a wake-up call to mission agencies and national churches to adjust priorities in favor of still neglected peoples.

Operation World and *You can Change the World* (1993) provide updated

information on countries and peoples to guide intercessory prayer. Kaleb Jansen and Patrick Johnstone produced a brochure on the "Gateway Peoples" for "A Day to Change the World," June 25, 1994. It sensitized hundreds of thousands to the need of unreached peoples and provided a helpful seven-day approach to interceding for some of the most difficult and influential ones.

We do not agree with the notion that there has been no progress in reaching the least evangelized peoples. Many new efforts are in gestation with agencies developing cooperative plans and missionaries in the pipeline. Pioneer church planting, and especially ministries in resistant contexts, take time to germinate and show up on a mission researcher's computers screen back in the West. Still there are marvelous break through occurring in many areas of the world:

Ethiopia-A rapidly developing missions movement targeting 34 peoples with active witness already occurring among eight.

Nigeria- Churches planted and ministries developed in over 100 peoples.

India- (More than 60 percent of the population of least reached peoples are located in India.) Churches and ministries established in 200 peoples (over last 25 years), in 50 (last five years); West Bengal—600 hundred prayer groups praying in unity and churches established in 12 people groups, statewide networks in Orissa, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra.

Bangladesh - "tens of thousands of believers in hundreds of villages," are reported.

Mongolia-Several thousand Halh Mongols have come to Christ, with

efforts to reach several other peoples underway.

West Africa - According to one survey, only a handful of unreached peoples are now without any Christian presence.

Turkic Peoples - A movement to Christ among Bulgarian Turks; churches established among Kazakhs, Karakaspaks, Uzbeks and other Central Asian peoples.

Middle East - Several thousand Iranians have come to Christ, continuing church growth in Iraq since the Persian Gulf War.

Latin America - Adopt-A-People consultations have been held in seven countries: Brazil has adopted 200 peoples for mission engagement. Costa Rica has begun work in eight peoples and is forming teams for 17 more.

What Needs To Be Done?

1. Researchers need to come to agreement on the list of 2,500 unreached peoples.

2. Production of 1,000 or more people profiles needs to be done and published.

3. Effective mobilization of praying churches and cell groups focused on these peoples needs to come into place.

4. The need to identify "strategic coordinators" (one or more per people) to gather information and coordinate prayer and ministry activities.

5. Encourage formation of additional ministry task forces or partnerships and prayer networks covering all unreached peoples.

6. Pray down repressive political regimes which hinder free mission activity.

7. Help strengthen small groups of

believers through training, literature production, micro-enterprise development and financial support where the church is tiny and fragile.

8. More heavily engage and utilize tentmakers and other creative access ministries.

9. Be willing to sacrifice our lives for the unreached of the world.

10. Realize the world is a big, complicated and messy place. We need to intervention of God to realize His sovereign purpose. It is His work, we are His junior partners.

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