

Unreached

Defining “Unreached”: A Short History

by Dave Datema

The concept of seeing the world as people groups is arguably the most significant thought innovation in twentieth century missiology. From roughly 1970–2000, it enjoyed almost universal acceptance. While the concept remains a dominant one, it has since lost its shine. In the first place, the initial decades of excitement with the new idea has worn off as the low-hanging fruit was picked and it became clear that “finishing the task” would bring immense challenges. As the year 2000 has come and gone, this early optimism has faded. In the second place, issues of identity, especially in urban contexts, have challenged the veracity of the people group concept. It is argued that while people group thinking fits the rural domain, it falls short in the urban one, and a new framework for mission is needed. Thus, we have witnessed in recent years continued criticisms of the homogeneous unit principle, calls to move into a “fourth era” of missions which have been variously defined, and concerns about how the percentage criteria used in our definitions force us to look at the world. The purpose of this paper is to review the development of unreached peoples definitions and to ask whether or not they are still serving the frontier mission community well. Specifically, it deals with both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of these definitions.

This final issue of percentage criteria was the impetus for the research that follows. It all began with two charts in Patrick Johnstone’s *The Future of the Global Church*. The first chart was a listing of countries defined as “<2% evangelical and <5% Christian” and the other was another listing of countries defined as “<2% evangelical but >5% Christian.”¹ The striking difference in the two lists, based on a simple tweak of the percentage criteria, caused me to wonder what was behind the percentages presently used and the untold stories they might reveal. The other issues mentioned above are illustrative of the present missiological conversation, which deserve attention, but are not dealt with directly herein. I will look at the historical development of different understandings of what an unreached people is and then go a step further

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Figure 1. The Evolution of Definitions for Unreached Peoples through 1983

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
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 <i>there is no appreciable (recognized) church body effectively communicating the message within the unit itself.</i> "
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 and Dayton 1978, 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 more pleased to talk about the presence of a church allowing people to be <i>incorporated</i> , or the absence of a church leaving people <i>unincorporable</i> 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: the first published definition of hidden peoples)
7	Edinburgh Convening Committee 1979. "Hidden Peoples: Those cultural and linguistic subgroups, urban or rural, for whom there is as yet no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people."
8	Wagner and 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 and 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 <i>hidden peoples</i>)
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, February 24, 1982. Agreement to use the Edinburgh 1980 definition (#7 above) for all three phrases, <i>hidden peoples</i> , <i>frontier peoples</i> , and <i>unreached peoples</i> . (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 March 16, 1982. 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. Same as number 12 except that the SWG voted to replace, "able," by the phrase, "with the spiritual resources."
14	LCWE/Chicago July 9 (further revision of numbers 12 and 13 by second mail poll). Unreached Peoples: "A people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians <i>with adequate numbers and resources</i> to evangelize this people group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance." (Note: new phrase italicized) ³

and ask whether or not they are still serving the frontier mission community well. I will specifically deal with both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of these definitions.

My personal interest in the topic has been nurtured by spending the last seventeen years as a member of Frontier Ventures (formerly the US Center for World Mission). Although I sat under Ralph Winter, one of the main architects of people group thinking, I realized that I and many others had accepted unreached people group definitions without questioning them. And the reason this matters is that our entire understanding of “the unfinished task,” and the billions of dollars spent pursuing it, are based on these definitions. It also matters because each generation inherently questions the settled opinions of the previous one. Forty years have passed since Lausanne ’74 and the emergence of people group thinking. As the leadership of mission communities transition to new generations, scrutiny will be leveled at these definitions. I trust this research is an example of such scrutiny that conveys deep respect and admiration for past conclusions.

Here is one example of why this discussion is an important one. Which country in each of the following pairs do you consider most “unreached”?

- Algeria or Slovenia
- Palestine or Poland
- Jordan or Austria
- Mali or France

Based on an even rudimentary knowledge of these countries, most people are likely to pick the first country in each pair. North Africa and the Middle East must be more unreached than Europe, right? But the answer is not that clear cut and depends entirely on how “unreached” is defined.

The Dilemma of UPG Definitions

In 1983, Ralph Winter described the evolution of definitions for unreached peoples. I reproduce it here at some

But how do we know when we’ve reached “the tipping point”—when a body of believers is able to evangelize its own people group?

length because of the wealth of insight it contains. Any emphases or notations are those of Winter (see Figure 1, page 46).

This final 1982 definition hinges on the assumption that if there are believers within an unreached people group, they don’t have the capacity to evangelize⁴ the rest of their people group without outside assistance.⁵ Perhaps there is as yet no Bible translation. Perhaps the number of believers is infinitesimally small. Just before he died in 2009, Ralph Winter co-authored an article with Bruce Koch (for the 4th edition of the Perspectives reader) that sought to explain again the definition of an “unreached people.” Instead of the July 1982 phrasing which talked about “an indigenous community of believing Christians” (see #14 above), Winter and Koch substituted the words “a viable indigenous church planting movement” and then proceeded to define these terms in this manner:

What is needed in every people group is for the gospel to begin moving throughout the group with such compelling, life-giving power that the resulting churches can themselves finish spreading the gospel to every person... The *essential missionary task* is to establish a *viable indigenous church planting movement* that carries the potential to renew whole extended families and transform whole societies. It is *viable* in that it can grow on its own, *indigenous* meaning that it is not seen as foreign, and a *church planting movement* that continues to reproduce intergenerational fellowships that are able to evangelize the rest of the people group. Many refer to this achievement of an indigenous church planting movement as a *missiological breakthrough*.⁶ (italics theirs)

But how do we know when we’ve reached “the tipping point”—that point whereby a body of believers is able to evangelize its own people group?

We don’t. It happens and goes unnoticed. At some point, we realize that it has indeed happened, but we never really know when we’ve reached the tipping point unless the group is quite small. We can only see it in hindsight, perhaps years later. The dilemma this presents is that *if the very definition of reached/unreached hinges on this one thing happening, and if we don’t know if and when that one thing has happened, then we really don’t know if the group is reached or unreached*. This, in turn, means that we have no simple way of measuring progress for mobilization purposes.

While this may not be a huge issue on the field, it becomes a major issue at home. By its very nature, mobilization demands the translation of complex field realities into simple and clear slogans in order to rouse those who at first can only grasp basic concepts. In order to galvanize support and inspire commitment, the plight of the unreached must be presented with black and white clarity. The cookies have to be placed on a lower shelf. Someone, somewhere has to draw a line between reached and unreached. In this paper we will be looking at how those decisions have been made over the last forty years and what might be learned moving forward.

The Early Players

While Winter’s overview is helpful in showing the basic evolution of thought regarding the unreached peoples definition, one soon recognizes the difficulty missiologists had in coming to agreement, an agreement that eluded them until 1982 at the “Chicago consensus.” There were two main schools of thought influencing this discussion in the early years. On the one hand was C. Peter Wagner, Chairman of the

Strategy Working Group (SWG) of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE)⁷ along with Ed Dayton, Director of the Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center (MARC) of World Vision. Together they represented what is called the "Lausanne Tradition" in this paper. On the other was Ralph Winter and his fledgling US Center for World Mission (USCWM), advocating what is called the "Edinburgh Tradition" in this paper.⁸ Before getting to their specific thinking, it will be instructive to understand the organizations they represented and the context in which they worked.⁹

Fuller Seminary's School of World Mission

The story of Fuller's School of World Mission is well known and will not be reconstructed here. It is sufficient to remind the reader that it began with the coming of Dr. Donald McGavran with his Institute of Church Growth in 1965. Joining McGavran that first year was Alan Tippett, and others soon followed: Ralph Winter (1966), J. Edwin Orr (1966), Charles Kraft (1969), Arthur Glasser (1970) and C. Peter Wagner (1971). Under McGavran's leadership and direction, the SWM faculty took a positive approach to missions and were published widely. Within a relatively brief amount of time, the SWM was considered by some to be the most influential school of world mission in America.

The World Congress on Evangelism and the Beginning of MARC

A global meeting of significant consequence was the World Congress on Evangelism, held in Berlin October 26–November 4, 1966:

Billy Graham, Carl Henry and other American Protestant Evangelicals desired to provide a forum for the growing Evangelical Protestant movement worldwide. The congress was intended as a spiritual successor of the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. At

the meeting, many Evangelical leaders were in touch with each other for the first time. The meeting was overwhelmingly American planned, led and financed, and was sponsored by *Christianity Today* magazine, with heavy support from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The reports and papers at the congress helped to illustrate the shift of Christianity's center of gravity from Europe and North America to Africa, Asia and Latin America. The 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland was a successor to this conference.¹⁰

Of note at this conference were Donald McGavran from Fuller's School of World Mission (SWM) as well as Bob Pierce and Ted Engstrom, President



and Executive Vice President of World Vision, respectively. Engstrom presented an article for the "Missions and Technology" discussion group at the Congress. In the article he advocated for the use of the new technology of the day—computers.

Can you possibly imagine the benefit to the many branches of the Christian Church if all available information about any one country were stored in a computer?¹¹

He went on to say,

Using our World Vision IBM Model 360/30 computer, a pilot project is now being started to test the validity of this concept. Information about various individuals serving in the mission

task is being cataloged and put in electronic storage. A pilot country will be selected and a test will be run on the gathering and exchange of information among the denominations, societies and groups working in this country.... The ways in which proper use of computerized information can speed the message of the Gospel world-wide are beyond imagination.¹²

He then outlined the need for communicating this research.

Good research and good planning will take place only when we have established an effective communications network throughout the Christian world.¹³

In these words one can see the seeds of the Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center (MARC), begun that same year. In the second volume of the proceedings of the Congress was the report from this "Missions and Technology" discussion group,

Delegates attending the discussion of missions and technology pointed to the need for research into means and methods of evangelism, marshaling of missionary information, and continuous analysis of the results of evangelism if the Christian outreach is to reach maximum effectiveness in our time.... Ted Engstrom (USA) of World Vision International gave the background of his interest in technology and missions, calling for a concentration on means and methods in evangelism. D. A. McGavran (USA) protested the fact that much missionary information is sealed in compartments, tucked away in annual reports, and appealed for ways to share this knowledge with the world. "We need ways of finding out how and where the Church is growing," McGavran said.¹⁴

MARC and Fuller's School of World Mission

The previous synopsis discloses the close working relationship between Fuller Seminary's SWM and World Vision's MARC. McGavran began the SWM in 1965 while MARC was established in 1966 as a division of World Vision International. Ed Dayton, its first Director,

was a Fuller graduate and had studied under SWM professors. Because of this collegiality and the close proximity (9 miles) between Fuller Seminary (Pasadena) and the then-headquarters of World Vision (Monrovia), MARC and Fuller's SWM had a large influence during the 70s and 80s on unreached peoples research. Of special note is the work of McGavran and Dayton. According to Wagner and Dayton,

Since its founding in 1966, . . . MARC centered its philosophy of world evangelization around the people group. The analysis that was done jointly by Donald McGavran and Ed Dayton, at the School of World Mission at Fuller Seminary, indicated that the country-by-country approach to mission was no longer viable. . . . McGavran and Dayton worked through an analysis of needed world evangelization, based on McGavran's earlier insight gained from people movements. . . . As the analysis continued, it was obvious that the basic unit of evangelization was not a country, nor the individual, but a vast variety of subgroups.¹⁵

Ralph Winter and the US Center for World Mission

Again, this story is better known and will only be mentioned very briefly. Winter's role on the SWM faculty made him an intimate witness to all that is described above. However, Winter was ultimately unable to persuade the Fuller faculty and board to create new structures to address what they all acknowledged to be the huge imbalance between mission resources and personnel and the completely unreached people groups. Unable to fulfill his more activist tendencies, in 1976 he reluctantly left his professorial role at Fuller's SWM to found the US Center for World Mission (just 3 miles away in Pasadena). Boosted by his presentation at Lausanne in 1974, Winter became a significant voice in mission circles and the Center became in the years that followed a third organization of profound influence in mobilization toward unreached peoples.

For most Congress-goers, this attractive booklet was surely the first time they had ever seen a list of unreached peoples.

With the addition in 1976 of the US Center for World Mission, there were three organizations in close proximity, each with unique yet parallel and complimentary purposes, creating a rich environment for dialogue and debate. It is remarkable that established names within American evangelicalism such as Fuller, McGavran, Pierce, Engstrom, Tippett, Winter, Wagner, Kraft, Glasser, and others were concentrated in such a small geographical space, which some called "Pasarovia."¹⁶ Their influence on the mission world, especially between 1970 and 1990, was immense.¹⁷

Evaluation of Unreached Peoples Definitions (1974–1982)

The Lausanne Tradition

While the "Lausanne Tradition" refers to a very broad constituency and effort, the purpose of this paper is not to give an overview of the whole movement, but just to underscore the role the Strategy Working Group played in the early years of debate regarding unreached peoples.

ICOWE 1974 and the Unreached Peoples Directory

This story took off with the planning for the International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE)—a direct follow up of the Berlin Congress—which was to be held in Lausanne, Switzerland in July 1974. Directors Don Hoke and Paul Little asked the Fuller SWM, which in turn asked MARC, to do a study on unreached peoples as part of the broader survey of the status of Christianity around the world in preparation for the Congress. Edward Pentecost was the Research Coordinator for this project, which resulted in the *Unreached Peoples Directory*, handed out at the Congress. Ed Dayton, Fuller SWM Dean Arthur Glasser and Ralph Winter rounded

out the team that worked on the project. Glasser was the main author of the questionnaire that became the instrument for collecting data.¹⁸ The *Directory* was an attractive booklet that introduced Congress-goers to the world of unreached peoples. For most, it was surely the first time they had ever seen a list of unreached peoples. The questionnaire had been sent to 2,200 people and 500 responses were received, creating a list of 413 unreached people groups, which were then sorted by group name, country, language, religion, group type, population and attitude toward Christianity. It first defined a people as a homogenous unit, quoting McGavran,

The homogeneous unit is simply a section of society in which all the members have some characteristic in common. Thus a homogeneous unit . . . might be a political unit or subunit, the characteristic in common being that all the members lie within certain geographic confines. . . . The homogeneous unit may be a segment of society whose common characteristic is a culture or a language.¹⁹

It went on to say,

the distinguishing characteristics may include race, tribe, caste, class, language, education, occupation, age, geography, and religion, or some combination of these. Usually only one or two of these features are the unique ones that identify a particular group.²⁰

The *Directory* also clearly explained the importance of segmenting apparent peoples down to the appropriate level, encouraging people to see

that many ethnic, linguistic or tribal peoples may be subdivided into distinct homogeneous groups. If we do not see those subdivisions, we may mistakenly try to approach the group as a single, unified people and fail to see that different approaches are needed for different segments.²¹

The *Directory* then formulated its own tentative definition for unreached peoples (#3 in Winter's list above).²²

The First Use of a Percentage Criterion
As noted previously, David Barrett was the first to apply a percentage criterion (20%) to a people group in order to suggest change in group identity, but he did not use it as a criterion for determining "reachedness." In fact, as we'll see later, he would have been against it.²³ Unfortunately, there is no indication where Barrett's use of the 20 percent criterion came from. What is clear is that Barrett was fully aware of the imprecise nature of the 20% criterion, saying that

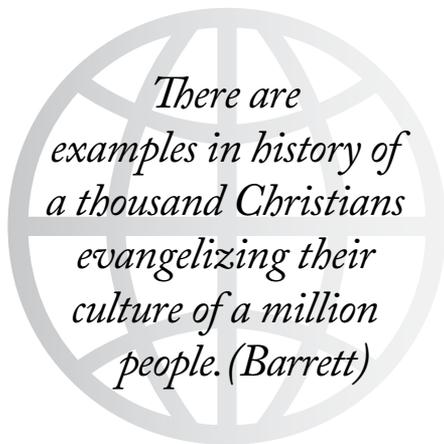
even a church as small as 0.1% of a people can be a significantly evangelizing church; there are plenty of examples in history of a thousand Christians evangelizing their group or culture of a million people.²⁴

The *Unreached Peoples Directory* was not only the first broadly distributed list of unreached peoples, it was also the first broadly distributed list to use 20% Christian as a criterion. The idea here was that once a people group contained a specified percentage of believers, they would be more likely to hit the tipping point, having obtained the critical mass needed to evangelize their own people. These percentages were borrowed from social science research and lacked precision. One irony is that *while these percentages are admittedly somewhat arbitrary and without empirical precision, they nonetheless have had a massive impact on how we think about the unfinished task today.* Here is how the *Directory* described its use of the 20% criterion:

For those who prefer a single criterion for deciding if a people is unreached, several researchers have suggested that 20 percent is a reasonable dividing point. In other words, a group of people could be classified as unreached if less than 20 percent of the population claimed or was considered to be Christian. This 20 percent figure is used because of the view of

at least some sociologists and missions researchers that a people has a minority group attitude until that people reaches 15 to 20 percent of the population of the region in which it resides. Above the 20 percent point, group members are more likely to feel secure in their self-identity and able to reach out to others in communicating ideas. This is not always true but the 20 percent figure gives a practical measure which has some recognized basis.²⁵

Because Edward Pentecost was the ICOWE Research Coordinator responsible for the *Directory*, and because of his close association with MARC and Fuller,²⁶ it is no surprise that the 20% criterion was also adopted later by the Strategy Working Group



(SWG), chaired by C. Peter Wagner.²⁷ In the case of both Pentecost and Wagner/Dayton, we know that the source for the 20 percent criterion was from the sociologist Everett Rogers and his book *Diffusion of Innovations*.²⁸

Everett Rogers and Diffusion of Innovations
This landmark book was first published in 1962 with new editions in 1971, 1983, 1995 and 2003.²⁹ The different editions of the same book reveal ambiguity about the viability of such a percentage to predict the diffusion of an innovation within a particular social context. In the 1962 edition, he mentioned a percentage only once, saying, "after an innovation is adopted by 10 to 20 percent of an audience, it *may* be

impossible to halt its further speed"³⁰ (emphasis mine), but this sentence was removed from the 1971 volume. In the last two editions (1995, 2003) he mentioned another percentage range,

such peer influence usually makes the diffusion curve take off somewhere between 5 and 20 percent of cumulative adoption (the exact percentage varies from innovation to innovation, and with the network structure of the system). Once this takeoff is achieved, little additional promotion of the innovation is needed, as further diffusion is self-generated by the innovation's own social momentum.³¹

Obviously, Rogers, over forty years, remained quite ambivalent about the ability to precisely predict a tipping point for any innovation. He identified five categories of variables that determine the rate of adoption of innovations. These categories contained more than a dozen sub-variables, all of which affect rate of adoption.³² It is much easier to understand and appreciate Rogers' ambiguity with the recognition that these variables might vary from people group to people group. *The simple truth is that there is no reason to believe that any percentage of believers in a people group (be they evangelized, professing Christians or practicing Christians) will guarantee hitting the tipping point within a people group. A corollary of this is that there is no reason to believe that a specific percentage that hits the tipping point in one people group will do the same for another.*

In the 1995 edition of Rogers' book, he began discussion of the concept of critical mass and expanded it in the 2003 edition. He defined critical mass as

the point at which enough individuals in a system have adopted an innovation so that the innovation's further rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining,³³

but no attempt was made to promote a different percentage range. This is clearly akin to the concepts of mis-siological breakthrough and viability described above and the present-day frontier mission community could

learn much from Rogers' work.³⁴ However, Rogers mentioned two vastly different percentage ranges for a "tipping point" in diffusion of innovations: 10 to 20 percent and 5 to 20 percent. Surely the fact that such ambiguity emerged after forty years of continuous study covering over 5000 diffusion publications and studies should prevent us from putting too much faith in any given percentage as a criterion for unreached peoples lists. Or if we do, we should not use it to decide whether a group is reached or not. As we have seen, *there is no empirical basis to believe that any percentage can predict a tipping point in a given unreached people group.* Such percentages remain essential to signify comparative need, but they are clearly less useful in predicting diffusion or missiological breakthrough.

The Demise of the Percentage

To get back to our story: Wagner, the chairman of the newly-formed SWG, teamed up with MARC, directed by Ed Dayton, to once again publish an unreached peoples list, which took the form of the *Unreached Peoples* book series from 1979–1984.³⁵ In *Unreached Peoples '80*, Wagner and Dayton admitted that there was significant pushback to the 20 percent criterion used in *Unreached Peoples '79*, conceding that it was on the "high side." They then introduced 10 to 20 percent as the new criterion, saying

the critical point is reached when about 10 to 20 percent of the people are practicing Christians. From one point of view, the number is somewhat arbitrary. But from another, it reflects a degree of realism. More research is needed, and as new information is available we may well decide to alter the figure accordingly.³⁶

In *Unreached Peoples '81*, they gave a much longer treatment of Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory. They said clearly,

Why was the figure 20 percent chosen as a dividing line between unreached and reached peoples? In

Such percentages remain essential to signify comparative need, but they are clearly less useful in predicting diffusion or missiological breakthrough.

no way is it more than an educated guess. It comes from an attempted application of sociological diffusion of innovation theory.³⁷

They went on, and explained that the 20% figure occurs at the point when "middle adopters" are added on to the "early adopters" toward a given innovative idea.

By the time 10 to 20 percent of the persons of a group accept a new idea, enough momentum may well have been built up so that subsequent increases of acceptance will be rapid.³⁸

Yet they also accepted that

a given people could legitimately be considered reached with substantially fewer than 20 percent of its members practicing Christians.³⁹

Another new feature in the 1981 edition was the designation of categories of unreached peoples as follows:

Hidden People: No known Christians within the group.

Initially reached: Less than 1 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.⁴⁰

Strikingly, there was no mention of any percentage at all in *Unreached Peoples '82*.⁴¹ *Unreached Peoples '83* had this to say about the 20 percent issue,

The definition of an "unreached people group" as one being less than 20% practicing Christian was at times misleading. This definition, which had been based on sociological theory (see *Unreached Peoples '81*), in one sense was so broad that people had difficulty believing that there were any reached people groups. In

responding to this criticism, the Lausanne Strategy Working Group at its March 1982 meeting agreed to a modification of a definition worked out at the Edinburgh '80 Congress.⁴²

However, even though the new 1982 definition did not include a percentage, the 20% criterion remained in use for the purposes of creating lists of unreached people groups. Without some type of quantifiable criterion, there was no way to distinguish a reached group from an unreached one. In all the post-1982 lists published in the *Unreached Peoples Series*, the 20% criterion remained in use. The point here is that even though the new official definition didn't mention a percentage criterion, such a criterion had to be, and continued to be, used.

The Edinburgh Tradition

It was an overstatement to use the title "Edinburgh Tradition" to describe an opposite view of Lausanne's unreached people definition. Winter called it thus in an attempt to take the attention off of himself, yet surely he had more to do with this stream than the single Consultation at Edinburgh, important as it was. In order to integrate Winter's thinking with the timeline of the Lausanne definition of unreached peoples, we will go back to his work in the 1970s and work forward.

Hidden Peoples

Two years after the Lausanne Congress, Ralph Winter conceived of the project that necessitated his leaving his position at Fuller's SWM and secured the Pasadena campus, establishing in 1976 both the US Center for World Mission and William Carey International University. One of the main themes in this period for Winter was that of the sodality, the very thing he was attempting to create in founding the USCWM.⁴³ He gave credit

to those already mentioned above as being the main promoters of unreached peoples and followed their work closely. Yet right out of the gate, Winter had qualms about the phrase "unreached peoples," stating nakedly, "I am convinced that the terminology *reached/unreached* is not very helpful."⁴⁴

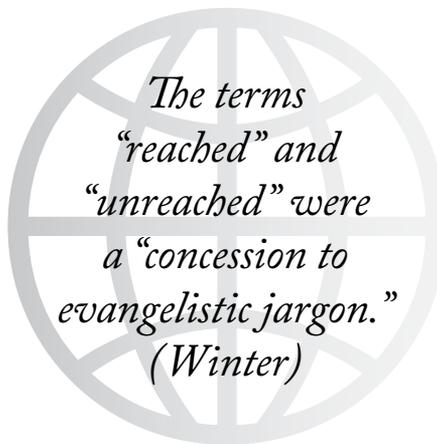
I was on the ground floor when the early thinking was developed for bypassed peoples, and felt that "unreached" was a bad choice due to its previous and current use with the phrase "unreached people" (meaning individuals unconverted) which is actually a distinctly different concept from the need of a group within which there is not yet a viable indigenous evangelizing church movement. Furthermore, and even more importantly, I felt that the World Vision office assisting with the Lausanne Congress unwisely defined what an unreached people was (in the early stages, "less than 20% Christian").⁴⁵

In Winter's mind, the terms "reached" and "unreached" were a "concession to evangelistic jargon" and were tainted by their use among American evangelicals, who "conceive of regeneration as an event, either taking place or not taking place, just as a woman cannot be *partially* pregnant."⁴⁶ The use of reached/unreached for people groups implied that they were either saved or not, and did not fit the wide spectrum of actual faith/belief/practice that existed in any given group. The words created a stark "in or out" categorization that became meaningless when attempting to understand the status of groups. In this way of thinking, a group could not be considered unreached unless there were absolutely no believers present.

Another issue for Winter was that the Lausanne definition of 20% *practicing* Christians prioritized quantity of Christians over quality of church life. "By this definition the presence or the absence of a culturally relevant congregation is ignored."⁴⁷ He did not like the switch made in *Unreached Peoples*'⁷⁹

from "professing Christians" to "practicing Christians" nor the use of 20% (see endnote 28). Instead, he suggested that

it is much more important to stress the presence or the absence of some aspect of the church in its organized form than to try to grapple with statistics that ultimately rest upon the presence or absence of the gospel in an individual's heart. It is not only easier to verify the existence of the visible church, it is also strategically very important in missionary activity for church planting to exist as a tangible goal. We know that where there is no determined stress upon founding an organized fellowship of worshipping believers, a great deal of evangelism fails to produce long term results, fails to start a beachhead that will grow by



itself. Thus, 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* instead of *unreached*. I feel it would be better to try to observe, not whether people are "saved" or not or somehow "reached" or not, but first whether an individual has been incorporated in a believing fellowship or not, and secondly, if a person is not incorporated, does he have the opportunity *within his cultural tradition* to be so incorporated.⁴⁸

Winter said,

being reluctant to launch a counter definition for the same phrase, I proposed another concept under

another label—*hidden peoples*, a phrase suggested by a member of our staff, Robert Coleman.⁴⁹

The first use of this new phrase and definition occurred in an address given at the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC) in December 1977, later published in 1978 as the booklet *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*.⁵⁰ He first stated simply that hidden peoples were "the people of the world who cannot be drawn by E-1 methods into any existing, organized Christian fellowship," or alternatively, "those E-2 and E-3 groups within which there is no culturally relevant church."⁵¹ Because of the need to refine what was meant by a "group," the definition ended up like this:

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 is a Hidden People.⁵²

This definition was unique in that it was 100% Winter, whereas the definition was soon to be nuanced by others.

For Winter then, there were three aspects to hidden peoples. First, he defined them in terms of the type of evangelism needed to reach them, which was the main emphasis of his ICOWE 1974 presentation. Second, he defined them in terms of the presence or absence of a culturally relevant church. Third, he defined them in terms of their primary affinity.⁵³ Thus for Winter we can surmise a three-fold test that determined whether or not a group was hidden.

1. Does the people group require E-2 or E-3 evangelism?
2. Does the people group need a culturally relevant church?
3. Does the people group consist of a cohesive, primary affinity/identity within which there are no barriers of understanding or acceptance?

If the answer is "yes" to all three questions, you have yourself a "hidden people."

Edinburgh 1980

Winter and other mission leaders spearheaded E'80, the Edinburgh 1980 World Consultation on Frontier Missions, which met in October, a few short months after Lausanne's Global Consultation on World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand.⁵⁴ By 1980, Winter's thinking on unreached peoples had coalesced to the extent that most of what he presented there remains foundational for those who follow the Edinburgh trail today, and is preserved in various articles of the *Perspectives Reader*.

The convening committee created a new definition for hidden peoples, tweaking Winter's definition with his permission as follows:

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.⁵⁵

This was the first definition to include the word "indigenous." In Winter's address at the Consultation, he contrasted the unreached peoples definition with the E'80 hidden peoples definition, saying that the former was a "predictive" definition designed to be on the "safe side" (meaning that once a group was 20% practicing Christian, it was safe for cross-cultural efforts to subside). By contrast, the hidden peoples definition "asks not how much is done, but how little" and considers when a fellowship of believers could "conceivably handle the remaining task, not when it can safely handle the job."⁵⁶ He went on to say that "it might be possible to say that a Hidden People Group is simply a 'definitely Unreached' People Group."⁵⁷ The Consultation also equated hidden peoples with "frontier peoples."

Another theme at Edinburgh was Winter's concept of people group segmentation, using the schema of MegaspHERE/Macrosphere/Minisphere/Microsphere to identify the sub-cultures that exist as layers or strata within a people group. Winter noted,

Whenever a megaspHERE has within it evangelistically significant sub-communities, we then need another

They accepted the "presence-or-absence-of-the-church" definition and convened a meeting of mission executives to endorse the change. (Winter)

term. I have chosen macrosphere for the immediate constituent groups, should there be any within a megaspHERE.

The same process continued to the mini and micro spheres when necessary. Stated differently,

whenever we discover that a people group is internally too diverse for a single breakthrough to be sufficient, we must then employ the term macrosphere and pursue the details of the missiologically important minispheres which are within it.⁵⁸

Winter felt that hidden peoples were generally not found at the microsphere level because differences there were not great enough to require additional evangelistic efforts.

Finally, Winter also introduced the P-scale. Just as the E-scale measured the cultural distance between an evangelist and the people (s)he is reaching, the P-scale denoted "how far away (culturally) the individuals in a people group are from the culturally nearest, settled, congregational tradition."⁵⁹ He then used the E and P scales to distinguish between evangelism (E0-E1 work in P0-P1 settings), regular missions (E2-E3 work in P0-P1 settings) and frontier missions (E2-E3 work in P2-P3 settings).⁶⁰ As a result, frontier missions was described as "the activity intended to accomplish the Pauline kind of missiological breakthrough to a Hidden People Group."⁶¹ Winter noted the apparent dissonance in definitions:

Thus, as a result of this October, 1980, meeting, the basic concept here expressed, whatever the label (*hidden* or *frontier*), went to the ends of the earth with all of the various mission agency and youth delegates who went back to their home countries. Meanwhile, the *unreached peoples* phrase, employing the new 20-percent ("practicing") definition,

was now reinforced worldwide in the same year at the Pattaya Conference of the Lausanne tradition.⁶²

The Chicago Consensus

Over the next year this dissonance would begin to move toward consensus. Again, according to Winter,

Early in 1982, Ed Dayton approached me with the thought that if we would accept their term "unreached peoples" and give up "hidden" they would accept our "presence-or-absence-of-the-church" definition and would convene a suitably representative meeting of mission executives to endorse that change.⁶³

First was the definition for people group in general:

A people group is a significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another⁶⁴ because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc., or combinations of these. For evangelistic purposes it is the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.⁶⁵

The second sentence of the people group definition actually came from Winter,

Equally important in my eyes at the same meeting the group endorsed a definition I suggested (actually worked out on the plane going to the meeting) for the kind of people group we were trying to reach: "the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance" and these words were duly added to the already existing but somewhat indefinite Lausanne SWG wording.⁶⁶

This concept of barriers of understanding or acceptance was a crucial

aspect of Winter's understanding of unreached people groups, and was the main conceptual impulse that led him to recast it under "hidden peoples" and later "unimax peoples." Though this sentence wasn't part of the "unreached people group" definition per se, it was highly significant in that it revealed the methodology for how those groups were to be found.

Then came the new definition for unreached people group:

An unreached people group is 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.

True to form, Winter never accepted this later modification and kept to the original one, "a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group," still used in the present *Perspectives* Reader.

Summary

Perhaps the perspective of the Lausanne Tradition can best be summarized by the definitions given after the Chicago consensus in *Unreached Peoples '84*,

People Group: a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another. From the viewpoint of evangelization this is the largest possible group within which the gospel can spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

Primary Group: the *ethnolinguistic* preference which defines a person's identity and indicates one's primary loyalty.

Secondary Group: a *sociological* grouping which is to some degree subject to personal choice and allows for considerable mobility. Regional and generational groups, caste and class divisions are representative.

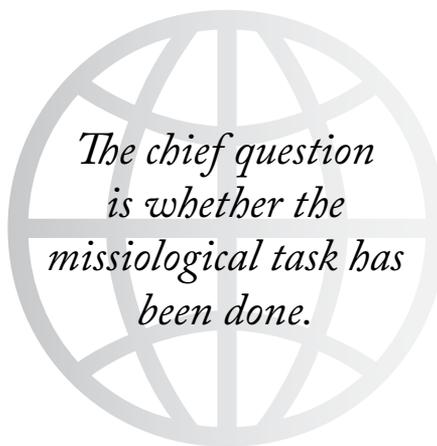
Tertiary Group: casual associations of people which are usually temporary

and the result of circumstances rather than personal choice such as high-rise dwellers, drug addicts, occupational groupings and professionals.

Unreached People Group: 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. Also referred to as "hidden people group" or "frontier people group."

Reached People Group: a people group with adequate indigenous believers and resources to evangelize this group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.⁶⁷

Let me close this section by wrapping up Winter's view of unreached peoples



definitions using his own words from the spring of 1983.

1. "Underlying all these definitions . . . is the concern for evangelistic outreach to function in such a way that people (individuals) have a 'valid opportunity' to find God in Jesus Christ."⁶⁸
2. "Reaching peoples is thus merely the process whereby the realistically valid opportunity is created."⁶⁹
3. "The crucial question . . . is whether 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, I believe, whether the indigenous community possesses 'adequate numbers and resources' is not the crucial point . . . The chief question would seem to be whether the missiological task has been done."⁷⁰

4. Commenting on what the "missiological task" would be: "It should mean at least a handful of believers who had 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."⁷¹
5. "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."⁷²
6. "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 . . . '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."⁷³ He notes, "Unreachedness is thus not defined on the basis of whether there are any Christians, or whether there are any missionaries working among them. It is

defined on the basis of whether or not in that culture there is a viable, culturally relevant, witnessing church movement.”⁷⁴

Here Winter clearly showed: 1) his concern for every individual; 2) the understanding that people groups are the container wherein those individuals are best reached; 3) his surprisingly broad idea of what the missiological task requires; 4) his reticence to make a big deal out of missionaries leaving; 5) his clear preference for qualitative measures over quantitative ones; and 6) his preference for the presence of a viable, indigenous church movement rather than the presence of Christians or missionaries.

This overview of the years between 1974–1982 portray a period bristling with missiological insight and ambition. Clearly these years were a unique flourishing of mission thought and practice. One stands in awe of those who attempted to understand the new reality of people group thinking, navigate through the flood of new research data, and attempt helpful definitions of the mission task. Perhaps the best summary of what these men were motivated by comes from Wagner and Dayton,

When we think of a people we try to think of them the way God sees them, to understand them *in terms of reaching them* with the gospel. We are attempting to define the world *in terms of world evangelization* (emphasis theirs).⁷⁵

In fairness to them, the literature shows that they were quick to emphasize the limits of their research and definitions. They never claimed, for instance, that the percentages were anything more than a helpful way to clarify the task.

While much of the discussion centered on a qualitative definition (“no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group”), the quantitative definition was also highlighted (20% professing or practicing Christian). Those involved with the Chicago 1982 definition apparently

The Chicago definition was a remarkable achievement in that the qualitative portion has remained unchanged and relatively unchallenged.

felt no need to include a quantitative part of the definition. Perhaps this was because they were all well aware of the 20% criterion that remained in use. It turns out that the Chicago consensus was a remarkable achievement in that the qualitative part of the definition remained unchanged and relatively unchallenged to this day. While it may be impossible to know exactly when it happens, the idea of an indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize their own people group remains the gold standard.

Evaluation of Unreached Peoples Definitions (1982–1990) Unimax Peoples (Edinburgh Tradition continued)

Before the ink was dry from the March 1982 consensus definition, and in that very same year, Winter introduced “unimax peoples” at the September gathering of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA), in which he was invited as a keynote speaker. There he said,

Various mission thinkers have been groping toward a definition of people group. For me, a significant point concerns the potential such groups have for rapid, nearly automatic, internal communication. Since this is the trait that is so significant to missionary communicators, this is undoubtedly the reason such an entity has been highlighted in the Bible all along.

For want of a better word I have decided to call such a group a Unimax People, that is, a group unified in communication, maximum in size. While this definition does not apparently employ Biblical language, I believe it describes an entity important to the Bible, reflecting the Bible’s missionary concern for relentless and rapid evangelism as its reason for importance. In other words, what is

crucial about a Unimax People is the size of the group, not just the unified condition of the group.⁷⁶

Winter went on to employ the people group segmentation idea previously mentioned.

In this series of mega, macro, mini, micro, it is the next to the smallest unit, the minisphere, that should, I believe, be considered the mission relevant, Biblically important Unimax People. The macro is one notch too large to be sufficiently unified, while the micro is unnecessarily small, being part of a larger, still unified group.

We can say, using this terminology, that the distinctive breakthrough activity of a mission is not complete if it has merely penetrated a mega or macrosphere, and if there are still minispheres or what I have called Unimax Peoples still unpenetrated. On the other hand, the unique and distinctive breakthrough activity of a mission agency (as compared to the work of evangelism) may, in fact, be over long before all the tiny microspheres within a Unimax People have been penetrated.⁷⁷

Later, it became obvious that Winter felt the term “unreached peoples” began to be used as a synonym for larger ethnolinguistic groups instead of the subgroups the 1982 definition intended (or he intended!). The reason for this was that the 1982 definition did not deal at all with segmentation level, leaving it up to individual interpretation as to where people group lines were drawn. It focused on what happens within a people group, without giving any specific definition to what the confines of a people group were. Winter and Koch clarify,

The term “unreached peoples” is used widely today to refer to ethnolinguistic peoples, which are based on other criteria and would normally be larger in size than groups as defined in the 1982

definition. To avoid confusion and help clarify the missiological task before us, we can use the term unimax peoples to distinguish the kind of people group intended by the 1982 definition.⁷⁸

They rightly asked,

What if an ethnolinguistic people is actually a cluster of unimax peoples, and while one of them is experiencing a church planting explosion, other groups in the cluster have little or nothing happening within them?⁷⁹

They differentiated between the different levels of segmentation by highlighting blocs of peoples, ethnolinguistic peoples, sociopeoples and unimax peoples.

Blocs of peoples are a limited number of summary categories into which we can place peoples in order to analyze them.

An *ethnolinguistic people* is an ethnic group distinguished by its self-identity with traditions of common descent, history, customs and language.

A *sociopeople* is a relatively small association of peers who have an affinity for one another based upon a shared interest, activity or occupation.

A *unimax*⁸⁰ *people* is the *maximum* sized group sufficiently *unified* to be the target of a single people movement to Christ, where "unified" refers to the fact that there are no significant barriers of either understanding or acceptance to stop the spread of the gospel.⁸¹

In other words, Winter wanted to find the largest pockets of cohesiveness within a people that could be captured by a single people movement. The difficulty of this definition was that making a list of unimax peoples could only be done by those with "boots on the ground." Only by entering a people and understanding the complexity of ethnicity, identity, social structure, etc., could a person identify the spheres and know what the barriers were and ultimately how many people movements would actually be needed. Not satisfied with identification of ethnolinguistic affinity, it pushed to find where and why the gospel was being

hindered *within* a given ethnolinguistic group. Here are Winter and Koch again,

Beware of taking ethnolinguistic lists too seriously, however. They are a good place to begin strategizing church planting efforts, but cross-cultural workers should be prepared for surprising discoveries when confronted by the cultural realities on the field.⁸²

A good example of the need for this approach is the Somali people group, an ethnolinguistic people group of 14 million who speak the same language but are splintered into six main genealogical clans, numerous sub-clans and extended family networks.

The fact that Somalis share a common ethnicity, culture, language, and religion might seem to be an excellent



basis for a cohesive polity, but in reality the Somali people are divided by clan affiliations, the most important component of their identity.⁸³

The segmentation inherent in Somali culture is evidenced by an Arab Bedouin proverb:

My full brother and I against my half-brother, my brother and I against my father, my father's household against my uncle's household, our two households (my uncle's and mine) against the rest of the immediate kin, the immediate kin against nonimmediate members of my clan, my clan against other clans, and, finally, my nation and I against the world.⁸⁴

Obviously, one people movement within one extended family network

is unlikely to reach, in turn, all the sub-clans and main clans. So even within the affinity of language and culture there are many barriers that prevent the gospel spreading from one clan to another. The concept of unimax peoples recognized this reality and I believe still warrants a wider hearing. It seems that many if not most mission strategists were content with the level of ethnolinguistic segmentation, while Winter continued to emphasize a "no-people-group-left-behind" approach.

There will never be a complete list of unimax peoples because the task stated above is never done and is always yielding new insights. However, we can hope that as more of this essential work is done, our lists will become more and more accurate.

Winter and Koch maintained that the unimax approach

has more to do with finishing, not in the sense that there is nothing left to do, but in the sense that the essential first step for the gospel to flourish within a people has been accomplished. The unimax approach to peoples can help us press on toward closure—our corporate finishing of what is completable about Christ's mission mandate. The value of the unimax approach lies in the way it identifies the boundaries hindering the flow of the gospel, while at the same time firing the ambitions of dedicated Christians to pursue the evangelization of every peoples cut off by prejudicial boundaries, leaving no smaller group sealed off within a larger group.⁸⁵

One can see consistency in Winter's emphases during this period. His main concern was missiological breakthrough—seeing a viable, indigenous witness get started within a people. He felt that only the unimax people approach would prevent some people segments or groups getting lost in the shuffle. He and others felt that the post-1982 era had led to a hijacking of the 1982 definition to mean something (ethnolinguistic peoples)

that was never intended. And although Winter and Koch spent much time dissecting people groups as they groped for clarity in definition, they at the same time were very aware of the limitations of their task:

Another reason to be cautious when applying people group thinking is the reality that powerful forces such as urbanization, migration, assimilation, and globalization are changing the composition and identity of people groups all the time. The complexities of the world's peoples cannot be neatly reduced to distinct, non-overlapping, bounded sets of individuals with permanent impermeable boundaries. Members of any community have complex relationships and may have multiple identities and allegiances. Those identities and allegiances are subject to change over time.

People group thinking is a strategic awareness that is of particular value when individuals have a strong group identity and their everyday life is strongly determined by a specific shared culture.⁸⁶

The David Barrett Factor

As if the debate covered thus far were not enough to sort through, it was generally a debate within what David Barrett called the "Unreached Peoples Program." These were missiologists who, while disagreeing about percentages and precise definitions, were nonetheless on the same page in their focus on identifying peoples on the basis of evangelism strategy. But there were others concerned with world evangelization that looked at the task from a broader perspective. This difference, along with the fact that this stream also published widely, has made our present situation even more complex. Enter David Barrett, the 1982 publication of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, and yet another twist on thinking about unreached peoples.

It should seem odd to finally mention Barrett this far in to this discussion. By all accounts, Barrett is the father of modern religious demography and when

Schreck and Barrett began by noting the "global way" and "particularistic way" of looking at the world, each requiring a different research design.

it comes to research on people groups, his work remains the foundation of the three major people group databases in use today. Barrett's work, therefore, has significantly informed the thinking of both the Lausanne and Edinburgh traditions, and they are indebted to him. His first major work was his PhD dissertation, published as *Schism and Renewal in Africa* (1968). It contained an exhaustive analysis of independent renewal movements in Africa and included a first-of-its-kind fold-out people group map of Africa. Barrett then spent the next fourteen years researching the rest of the world. In the same year as the Chicago Consensus (1982), Barrett published the *World Christian Encyclopedia* to the adulation of both religious and secular peers. One cannot scan Barrett's reference-like works without being impressed by the immense amount of data and analysis related to Christianity around the globe.

Even more significantly for our discussion, in 1985 Barrett left his base in Nairobi to work for the Foreign (now International) Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Virginia.⁸⁷ This was an unlikely marriage between an ordained Anglican priest and a denomination known for its strong conservative stances on American social issues as well as its exclusive perspective on the need for all non-evangelicals to be saved. Nonetheless, the partnership was formidable, bringing together Barrett's unquestioned research pedigree and the FMB's reputation as North America's largest mission board. Thus two heavyweights joined forces, raising the tide for all ships in the North American mission enterprise.

In 1987, Barrett added his perspective on the debate regarding people group segmentation with the publication of

the seventh and final Unreached Peoples Series book, entitled *Unreached Peoples: Clarifying the Task*.⁸⁸ Schreck and Barrett began by noting the "global way" and "particularistic way" of looking at the world, each essential yet requiring a different research design. The former approach looked at ethnolinguistic peoples (identifying the central ethnicity and mother tongue) while the latter looked at "sociologically defined people groups."⁸⁹

Schreck and Barrett then listed ten subgroups within the sociological definition. I have included an example of each for clarity (see Figure 2, page 58).

The authors noted that

the next worldwide total of all such sociologically defined people groups in existence today is probably huge... one should not attempt to total such groupings per country on a worldwide scale to list exhaustively all unreached people groups, since the resulting totals will mean little or nothing.

Instead, the focus on sociological groups was considered "a method of ministry... regarded as a major breakthrough."⁹¹

In their evaluation of the particularist approach (that of Fuller's SWM, MARC, Winter, etc.), Schreck and Barrett said, "there has been a significant amount of controversy and confusion associated with this approach over the last ten years."⁹² They showed general support for this approach, acknowledging that ethnicity is not the only way human beings form themselves into groups, and that church planting among sociologically defined groups is legitimate. They spoke to the "perceived contradiction" between the two approaches:

Instead, there is a difference in the foci of the research efforts, and this difference is best described in terms of

Figure 2. Sociological Subgroups (Schreck and Barrett)

Group	Example
Sociolinguistic groups	English-speakers in Guadalajara
Sociogeographical groups	Japanese in Sydney
Sociopolitical groups	Hmong refugee women in Thailand
Socioreligious groups	Sikhs in Toronto
Socioeducational groups	Chinese students in Australia
Socioeconomic groups (poor)	Slum dwellers in Madras
Socioeconomic groups (elites)	Copacabana apartment dwellers in Brazil
Sociomedical groups	Lepers of central Thailand
Sociodeviant groups	Deviant youth in Taipei
Socio-occupational groups	Jeepney drivers in Manila ⁹⁰

complementarity. Ethnicity is a suitable unit of analysis for peoples, allowing the formation of a global research design, but it is not suitable for a particularistic research design which aims at developing ministry strategies for specific people groups. Both research designs, however, have a place in the overall effort of world evangelization.⁹³

Schreck and Barrett noted that while the focus of the global approach was "to see the extent to which the gospel has traveled to all peoples," the focus of the particularistic approach was to "indicate where a people group is on the path away from or toward Christ."⁹⁴ Schreck and Barrett's volume attempted to clear the confusion that had resulted from the juxtaposition of Barrett's work (the global approach) with the work emanating largely from Pasadena, with Fuller's SWM, MARC and Winter's USCWM (the particularistic approach). They posited that:

there has been a general failure to recognize that we are dealing with two different ways of looking at this entire scene. These are motivated by

different but complementary purposes. . . . Both approaches are valid. Both approaches are needed for the task of world evangelization. The former speaks most clearly to the question, "How have we done?" The second speaks most clearly to the question, "What should we be doing?"⁹⁵

Summary

Winter twice coined new phrases ("hidden peoples" in 1977 and "unimax peoples" in 1982) in order to challenge prevailing sentiment. While the hidden peoples phrase suffered the loss of the word "hidden," the actual definition was approved by a significant constituency of mission leaders in 1982. But his attempt with unimax peoples wasn't as successful. Today few have ever heard of it outside the *Perspectives* course. However, Winter's viewpoint lives on in the Joshua Project people group list, which takes a unimax approach to listing peoples in South Asia, where the layers of identity are more complex. To my way of thinking, the unimax approach is needed wherever "barriers of understanding

or acceptance" appear *within* ethnic or language groupings.

Surely one of the main reasons for the failure of the unimax approach was that it exponentially increased the complexity involved. In fact, the sociological segmentation of people groups, mentioned as early as 1974 in the *Unreached Peoples Directory*, had always been an irritant for missiologists and the average church member alike.⁹⁶ It was hard enough for people to transition from nations/countries to ethnolinguistic peoples, but to have to then move several strata down into macro/mini/micro etc., was more than the average person can handle.

Missiologically, Winter's focus was needed to inform mission strategy. To not take into account these segmented peoples was to leave parts of God's mosaic outside the pale of the Kingdom. Complex though it was, it was necessary. Winter was right to insist that the level of ethnolinguistic categorization was not enough.

However, *practically*, unimax theory is still a bit too complex for the average believer and creates a mobilization dilemma. We count down the list only to add more people groups to the list as we become aware of them! How is progress measured when groups are added not subtracted?!

Evaluation of Unreached Peoples Definitions (1990–2000)

The Reduction of the Percentage
From 1982–1992, unreached peoples lists continued to include the 20 percent criterion to measure whether the group was reached or not. But the viability of this long-standing criterion was under increasing scrutiny. As people group research became more sophisticated and the need for better and more nuanced categorization became acute, the twenty percent criterion was re-evaluated and eventually changed. Part of the reason for this was simply that the weaknesses of the twenty percent criterion were now

more widely understood and prevailing sentiment led to its demise. The other part of the reason for the change stems from cooperative efforts triggered by a new massive wave of unreached peoples mobilization that took place in the 1990s.

AD 2000 and Beyond

The impetus for the change in the percentage criteria was the surge of mobilization effort in the decade leading up to the year 2000. With renewed vigor to complete the task of world evangelization by 2000, the AD2000 and Beyond Movement was established under the capable leadership of Luis Bush to galvanize support to finish the task.

In October, 1992, Luis Bush, international director of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, called together a small meeting of key unreached peoples researchers. The concern was that much of the research on unreached peoples was being carried on independently and there was little real sharing of information. Out of a genuine spirit of cooperation and interest in jointly producing a definitive list of peoples, including the unreached, the Peoples Information Network (PIN) was born. The eventual steering committee of this newly formed research cooperation was coordinated by Ron Rowland (Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe—SIL) and chaired by Luis Bush. Other members included John Gilbert (Foreign Mission Board—Southern Baptist Convention—FMB—SBC), Kaleb Jansen (Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse—AAPC, now replaced by Keith Butler) and Pete Holzmann (Paraclete Mission Group).⁹⁷

Together, they agreed to create a list out of the several represented by those key leaders. A lowest common denominator list was put forth consisting of 1,685 (later updated to 1,739) unreached peoples, all with a population over 10,000. It was the beginning of a key collaborative effort that continues to this day. The effort, dubbed “Joshua Project 2000,” had the goal to see at minimum:

- a pioneer church-planting movement

The impetus for the change in the percentage criteria was the surge of mobilization effort in the decade leading up to the year 2000.

- resulting in 100 or more Christians in one or more reproducing churches
- within every ethnolinguistic people of over 10,000 individuals
- by December 31, 2000.⁹⁸

One notes the interesting use of “100 or more Christians” as well as the use of ethnolinguistic peoples as a base definition. Such changes were exactly what concerned Winter and why he had introduced the concept of unimax peoples.

The Patrick Johnstone Factor

Someone who had a definitive role in establishing the new criteria for unreached peoples definitions was Patrick Johnstone. Like Barrett, Johnstone moved from England to Africa, where his research skills were first applied to mission work. While Barrett was engaged as a full-time researcher, Johnstone did his research initially as an addendum to a full-time evangelistic role. And whereas Barrett sought to publish for a largely academic crowd, Johnstone published to mobilize prayer for the world. These differences aside, both men can be regarded as “fathers” of sorts of people group research.

Johnstone published the first version of *Operation World* in 1965, although only about 30 countries were covered. With two editions in the 1970s, it was fully global in coverage. Now in its seventh edition, *Operation World* has sold over 2.5 million copies worldwide. In 1980 Johnstone joined the leadership team of WEC International, serving in research and strategy. It was during these years that he became involved with Lausanne’s Strategy Working Group and the Unreached Peoples track of AD2000. With his decades of research behind him as well as a broad understanding of mission realities afforded by inclusion in

these networks, Johnstone was well positioned to play a leading role in unreached peoples definitions.⁹⁹

The 2 and 5 Percent Criteria

Finally, in 1995, a change emerged in percentage criteria that has endured to this day.

In 1995, in order to bring greater clarity to the issue, a committee of Patrick Johnstone (then Editor of *Operation World*), John Gilbert (then IMB Global Research Office Director), Ron Rowland (SIL/Ethnologue researcher), Frank Jansen (then Adopt-A-People Clearinghouse Director) and Luis Bush (then AD2000 & Beyond Movement Director) decided on the Joshua Project definition of “unreached.” The criteria for unreached on the Joshua Project list are:

less than or equal to 2% Evangelical—AND—less than or equal to 5% Christian Adherent.

Both conditions must be met to be considered unreached.¹⁰⁰

Once again, the figures seemed somewhat arbitrary. Noted American sociologist Robert Bellah was quoted in support of the choice of 2% Evangelical as a legitimate criterion, but it is uncertain whether Bellah’s viewpoint was known at the time the criterion was set:

I think we should not underestimate the significance of the small group of people who have a new vision of a just and gentle world. In Japan a very small minority of Protestant Christians introduced ethics into politics and had an impact beyond all proportion to their numbers. They were central in beginning the women’s movement, labor unions, socialist parties, and virtually every reform movement. The quality of a culture may be changed when two percent of its people have a new vision.¹⁰¹

While Bellah knew a lot about Japan and was most certainly an eminent sociologist, this statement alone does not justify the widespread use of 2% Evangelical as an established criterion. His statement represents a general observation from a particular case and not the conclusion of more comprehensive research. I have been unable to find any other research or study to back up the choice of 2% Evangelical as a criterion. Interestingly, Johnstone in a later work concedes that

many sociologists take 20% as the point at which a population segment begins to impact the worldview of the wider society.¹⁰²

The 5% Christian Adherent criterion, suggested by Johnstone, fares little better in terms of giving us confidence as to its origin. Again, there is no research to justify its use. What we have instead are reasons for why it seems helpful.

The 5% Adherent criterion was included in the definition of unreached to differentiate between a people group in Afghanistan with 0% Evangelicals and 0% Christian Adherents with no Christian heritage, no access to a Bible, no church, no Christian broadcasts, training, literature, etc. compared to a people group in say Western Europe that may have only a few true Christ-followers but a high number of Christian Adherents with a Christian heritage and access to Bibles, fellowship, broadcasts, training, literature etc.

Certainly individuals within these two groups are equally lost, yet one people group is considered unreached while the other would be considered in need of renewal and evangelism. The 5% Christian Adherent criterion helps define the spiritual "environment" (for lack of a better word) of a particular people group.

Patrick Johnstone makes the following observation,

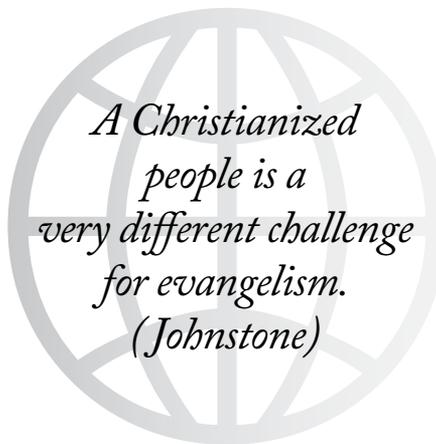
We cannot avoid the fact that a Christianized people is a very different challenge for evangelism than a non-Christian people. They may need

a personal meeting with Jesus just as much and be equally darkened in their understanding of the Gospel, but you insult them and prejudice your outreach if this is not taken into consideration. Hence my plea that both criteria be retained.¹⁰³

A more practical reason for the 5% Christian Adherent is given by Todd Johnson:

One reason that the percent Christian was lowered to 5% was that most of the least evangelized (50% or less by Barrett's method) were less than 5% Christian. So this made the initial JP list closer to that of Barrett's World A peoples.¹⁰⁴

What these criteria lacked in empirical support they made up for by practically



providing a "line" to differentiate peoples into reached and unreached categories. While the debate might never end as to what the exact percentage should be, it has served the frontier mission community well over the past twenty years by focusing attention on the least reached peoples. And it should not surprise us that the 2 and 5 percent criteria were not based on empirical studies, since our earlier discussion on diffusion studies has shown clearly that there simply is no empirical proof that a single percentage can be relied upon to predict breakthrough for innovation. Thus, the best that can be done was in fact done—researchers gathered together and sought God for a wise approach to interpreting and presenting the data.

The 2 and 5 percent criteria were generally accepted with one solitary and critical exception—the International Mission Board (IMB). Their reaction was mixed. Under Barrett's influence, they had consistently used the 20% criterion. But Barrett left in 1993 and the new criteria (2 and 5 percent) came out in 1995. According to Dale Hadaway,

in the summer of 1997, the IMB was using the twenty-percent figure in their statistics . . . within a year the percentage was lowered to twelve percent. The following year the first version of the Church Planting Progress Indicator (CPPI) was unveiled by the IMB, featuring a precipitous drop in what had been considered the measure of "reachedness." Two-percent evangelical believers became the new statistical benchmark for the IMB and most other mission agencies. Suddenly the goal posts had been moved.¹⁰⁵

While the IMB eventually adopted the 2% Evangelical criterion, they never did adopt the 5% Christian Adherent criterion, opting for a more exclusive view of salvation in terms of evangelical faith. This remains one of the key differences between the Joshua Project list and the IMB list. The quest for a "definitive" listing of peoples has proved elusive.

The Three People Group Lists

Thus, by the early 2000s, there were three distinct people group lists that informed the broader mission enterprise. The three lists are the World Christian Database,¹⁰⁶ the Joshua Project list¹⁰⁷ and IMB's Church Planting Progress Indicators (CPPI).¹⁰⁸

A brief interlude is necessary here to explain the relationship between the MARC lists which began in 1974 (and then from 1979–1984, and again in 1987) and those that followed. Todd Johnson is Barrett's successor and he was also heavily involved in all described here. According to him,

MARC collected data on peoples from all over the world but did not try to create a comprehensive list. Barrett

had collected extensive data on African peoples in the 1960s and early 1970s. He then created the first comprehensive list of peoples shortly after completing the World Christian Encyclopedia (1981). He was working with that list (not MARCs) for Clarifying the Task. I joined Barrett in 1989 and helped to edit the list. The IMB broke off with their own version of the list in 1993 when Barrett left. Joshua Project created a third version in 1996. People group lists today are derived from Barrett's initial work...¹⁰⁹

The MARC list was thus subsumed into Barrett's list when Barrett edited the last *Unreached Peoples Series* book called "Clarifying the Task" (1987).

The fact that there are three distinct lists of ostensibly the same thing (unreached peoples) can be understood by looking at the three different audiences for whom these lists were compiled. A parallel example would be the lists of spiritual gifts in three different places in the New Testament (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4). In each case, Paul was addressing a particular audience with particular needs, and thus the lists are different even though he is

addressing the same topic. Likewise, the three people group lists address similar yet different issues and therefore are different. Would it have been better if Paul had used exactly the same list of gifts in all his letters? Perhaps, but the very fact that he didn't do so is instructive. Apparently, an exhaustive and absolutely consistent list isn't necessary for God's people to understand and use them. In a similar vein, those who manage the lists appreciate the accountability and corroboration generated by the existence and maintenance of the different lists. Figure 3 below compares and contrasts the three lists.¹¹⁰

Figure 4, at the top of page 62, is a table showing how the three lists measure people groups.¹¹¹

One major issue with these lists has been the number put forth for unreached people groups. See Figure 5, the chart at the top of page 63.

As Figure 5 indicates, the JP and IMB lists are the most similar in what they are measuring. The biggest single difference is how list managers segment people groups. South Asia has proved formidable in this regard, creating com-

plexity with the additional layers of caste and religion in forming primary identity. The reason the JP and IMB numbers are different is because they differ in how they prioritize the different layers (language, caste, tribe, religion, etc.) in determining identity. One list may primarily look to religion as a prioritizing factor, while another may prioritize caste.

Summary

As the need for clarity in mobilization became acute in the evangelical push to reach the unreached by the year 2000, the 2 and 5 percent criteria were born. One result of the AD2000 and Beyond movement was the increase in collaboration and unity in the body of Christ. But even then, the ideals and passion to see "a church for every people by the year 2000" were balanced by continuing theological and methodological differences. Concerning the actual percentages themselves, it seemed the only research-based criterion for establishing any kind of tipping point came from Everett Rogers and the use of a broad percentage range, as explained above. The 2% and 5% criteria were not based on empirical

Figure 3. A Comparison of Global People Group Lists

	World Christian Database	CPPI (IMB - Southern Baptist)	Joshua Project
People Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Globally ethnolinguistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside South Asia ethnolinguistic South Asia mixture of language and caste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outside South Asia ethnolinguistic South Asia by caste
Unreached Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 50% evangelized* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 2% Evangelical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 2% Evangelical and Less than 5% Christian Adherent
Unreached Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census and academic reports Denominational reports <i>Ethnologue</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily IMB field staff Regional and national researchers <i>Ethnologue</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional and national researchers Networks, individuals, other data sets <i>Ethnologue</i>
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds groups when documented in published research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds groups once verified by field staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes worst case, adds all potential groups, removes if verified as not existing

*This database speaks in terms of "least evangelized peoples."

Figure 4. Varying the Definition of a People Varies the Resulting Lists.

Peoples Defined By	Resulting List	Examples	Totals
Language	Linguistic peoples	<i>The Ethnologue: Languages of the World</i>	~10,900
Language / Dialect Ethnicity	Ethnolinguistic peoples	PeopleGroups.org / CPPI <i>World Christian Encyclopedia</i> Operation World peoples lists	~ 11,500 ~ 13,000
Language / Dialect Ethnicity Religion Caste / Community Culture	Ethnic peoples	Joshua Project / Frontier Ventures	~ 16,300
Language / Dialect Ethnicity Religion Caste / Community Culture Education Ideology Politics Historical enmity Customs Behavior	Unimax peoples	Original USCWM / Ralph Winter estimates	~ 24,000

research but were a way to highlight relative need, which remains critical.

Another concern with quantitative criteria was the tendency to exclude the qualitative criteria. This was especially likely when the only definition given for UPG was “less than 2% evangelical.” This led to the potential danger of overlooking qualitative criteria, such as that which Winter prioritized:

Unreachedness is thus not defined on the basis of whether there are any Christians, or whether there are any missionaries working among them. It is defined on the basis of whether or not in that culture there is a viable, culturally relevant, witnessing church movement.¹¹²

In other words, the quantitative criteria alone left the door open for western-style churches since indigeneity was not emphasized. If all we’re looking for is a certain number of “evangelicals,” we may miss the mark. Qualitative criteria need to remain.

Evaluation of Unreached Peoples Definitions (2000–Present)

Since the year 2000, there have been no changes in unreached peoples definitions. The 1982 definition (variously interpreted) with the 1995 addition of percentage criterion is still in use today. However, there were changes in categorization of people groups.

Unengaged, Unreached People Groups

During this period a new word was added to the normal “unreached people group” phrase, yielding the “UUPG,” the unengaged, unreached people group. This emphasis can trace its beginnings to a global gathering of evangelists in Amsterdam in 2000 and the infamous “Table 71.” But that is another story that will not be told here. Suffice it to say that the emphasis on unengaged was a logical next step. While it’s helpful to have a list of unreached people groups, it is another step forward to further segment

that list to determine which groups have been “engaged” and which ones remain “unengaged.” This initiative is alive and well today due to the relentless efforts of Paul Eshleman and the Finishing the Task network. Following the IMB, FTT acknowledges four essential elements that constitute effective engagement:

1. Apostolic effort in residence
2. Commitment to work in the local language and culture
3. Commitment to long-term ministry
4. Sowing in a manner consistent with the goal of seeing a church planting movement (CPM) emerge¹¹³

Calls for Change

Having looked at definitions and the criteria for determining who is unreached, let’s look at some of the interesting dilemmas they create. Let’s go back to the pairs of countries mentioned earlier:

- Algeria or Slovenia
- Palestine or Poland

Figure 5. Unreached Peoples Totals (2015)

List Source	Number of Unreached Peoples (How Derived)
Joshua Project	6,571 (<=2% Evangelical, <=5% Christian Adherent)
IMB (Southern Baptist)	6,827 (<=2% Evangelical)
World Christian Database	4,219 (<50% evangelized)

- Jordan or Austria
- Mali or France

Each pair of countries is the same percentage Evangelical. It just so happens that the countries mentioned first are also less than 5% Christian Adherent, while the countries mentioned second are more than 5% Christian Adherent. Is it really okay to call the former countries “unreached” and the latter countries “reached” just because of their Christian past? Some feel that people groups in Europe with a Christian past are definitely less unreached since there are evangelists within E-0/E-1 distance from them. Although they may be equally lost, they have greater access to the gospel and Christian literature, the Bible, etc. Others feel that any Christian history among these peoples are mere relics of a dead tradition, and that as long as they fit the criteria for unreached they should be listed as such, regardless of the weak, flailing Christian influence around them.

There is no room for smug complacency about “Europe’s Christian heritage”—and “Christian” majority.... If we take as the criterion for being evangelized that a population should be more than 2% evangelical, there is no country bordering the Mediterranean that comes even close to that figure, even

including evangelical Catholics. In fact, only 16 of Europe’s 47 countries do.¹¹⁴

The Joshua Project Progress Scale shown below (Figure 6) gives the breakdown of people groups based on these criteria. The first countries mentioned above in each pair are red and unreached, whereas the second in each pair are yellow and reached.

The present criteria emphasize never-reached peoples over once-reached ones. Interestingly, of the thirty countries with the smallest percentage of Evangelical Christians in the world, thirteen are Muslim, eleven are Catholic, four are Orthodox, one is Buddhist and one Jewish.¹¹⁵

Back to 20 Percent?

Robin Dale Hadaway, Professor of Missions at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, believes that the less-than-or-equal-to 2% Evangelical criterion needs to be changed. A Southern Baptist missionary with field experience in both red and yellow peoples, he feels that 2% Evangelical is simply not enough to bring about a tipping point. He also regrets the movement of workers from yellow peoples or nations to red ones (e.g. from Europe to Asia) because of the present criteria.¹¹⁶

Figure 6. The Joshua Project Progress Scale

Category	Label	% Evangelical	% Christian Adherent	People Groups
Red	Unreached	<=2%	<=5%	6,571
Yellow	Formative / Nominal	<=2%	>5%	2,717
Green	Established / Significant	>2%		6,864

To bolster his claim, he found one source indicating a larger percentage for a tipping point:

Scientists at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute have found that when just 10 percent of the population holds an unshakable belief, their belief will always be adopted by the majority of the society. The scientists, who are members of the Social Cognitive Networks Academic Research Center (SCNARC) at Rensselaer, used computational and analytical methods to discover the tipping point where a minority belief becomes the majority opinion. The finding has implications for the study and influence of societal interactions ranging from the spread of innovations to the movement of political ideals. “When the number of committed opinion holders is below 10 percent, there is no visible progress in the spread of ideas. It would literally take the amount of time comparable to the age of the universe for this size group to reach the majority,” says SCNARC Director Boleslaw Szymanski, the Claire and Roland Schmitt Distinguished Professor at Rensselaer. “Once that number grows above 10 percent, the idea spreads like flame.”¹¹⁷

The study, entitled “Social Consensus Through the Influence of Committed Minorities,” found that

the prevailing majority opinion in a population can be rapidly reversed by a small fraction *p* of randomly distributed *committed* agents who consistently proselytize the opposing opinion and are immune to influence. Specifically, we show that when the committed fraction grows beyond a critical value $P_c \approx 10\%$, there is a dramatic decrease in the time T_c taken

for the entire population to adopt the committed opinion.¹¹⁸

They conclude,

we have demonstrated here the existence of a *tipping point* at which the initial majority opinion of a network switches quickly to that of a consistent and inflexible minority.¹¹⁹

However, there are caveats with their approach. First, they say that their model

is well suited to understanding how opinions, perceptions, or behaviors of individuals are altered through social interactions specifically in situations where the cost associated with changing one’s opinion is low, such as in the pre-release buzz for a movie, or where changes in state are not deliberate or calculated but unconscious.¹²⁰

Certainly, most missionaries would not equate allegiance to Jesus in a Muslim or Hindu context as one in which the cost associated with changing one’s opinion is low! Neither would they be satisfied with believers whose decisions were unconscious. The model of this particular study tested the influence of committed agents on those who held opinions but were open to other views. Another caution is that the study seems to assume that the many variables in a given innovation mentioned by Rogers are static in every place at all times. But this is Rogers’ main point and reason why a given percentage can never work across the board—there are simply too many variables that affect the rate of adoption. The study doesn’t appear to acknowledge these variables.

Hadaway continues,

If a ten-percent threshold replaced the two-percent benchmark for depicting “lostness” and “reachness” on

evangelical maps, however, at least it would give a more reliable indicator of what is really happening on the ground. The evangelization maps of Latin America and Africa would turn from green (reached) to yellow and red (unreached).¹²¹

His solution then is to

Immediately raise the two-percent evangelical population threshold back to twenty percent or at least ten percent. I believe exiting a people group that is more than two-percent evangelical is the historical equivalent of the United States declaring victory in the Vietnam War, only to see the country fall three years later.¹²²

But what does this look like in actual numbers? The chart below, in Figure 7, depicts numbers of “unreached peoples” if we were to change the criteria.¹²³

The dark gray column represents our present criteria. As you can see, if the Christian Adherent criterion is taken away, the number of unreached peoples goes up significantly by 2000 (comparing the first and fifth columns). This is simply accomplished by adding the peoples represented in countries like Slovenia, Poland, Austria and France that have a population of Christian Adherents greater than 5%.

One can see what happens when the criteria is taken up to 5, 10 or 20% Evangelical (columns two, three and four)—the number of unreached peoples rises considerably; for example, the 10% Evangelical criterion would double the present number of unreached people groups. If the mission community went back to using the 20% criterion, 85% of all people

groups would be unreached! According to Bill Morrison, a researcher with Joshua Project who has spent countless hours combing over people group data,

If everyone is Least-Reached then maybe it’s not a very useful concept. I’m doubtful it’s possible to well-justify ANY cutoff figure in terms of “all groups below this figure have not achieved a meaningful breakthrough and groups above have achieved breakthrough.” There are too many variables involved and we are unable to accurately measure those variables.¹²⁴

According to Bruce Koch,

Winter never liked the percentage thresholds as a criterion because in the many, many groups with less than a few hundred people (almost 1200 with a population under 500!), 2% amounts to a handful of people, whereas in large groups it can mean hundreds of thousands or even millions. Are we really going to say that we will not call the Turks reached until 1.2 million of them (2%) associate themselves with evangelical churches? Or 12 million (20%)?!¹²⁵

Such an exercise reveals the astounding power of these criteria. How different the task can seem based on how it is viewed! But it should also give us pause. Would we really want to double the present number of unreached peoples? What would it do to morale? How would it affect the concept of progress? Would it further undermine frontier mission vision and effort, already in decline? Here are some helpful observations from those who manage the Joshua Project list,

Joshua Project is definitely not advocating that missionaries leave a people group when an arbitrary % Evangelical

Figure 7. Total UPGs According to Various Criteria

	<2% E	<5% E	<10% E	<20% E	<2% E, <5% CA	<2% E, >5% CA	<2% E, >50% CA
UPGs	8,121	10,130	12,059	13,730	5,944	2,018	1,278
UPG % of Total 16,238	50%	62%	74%	85%	37%	12%	8%

figure is reached. Missionaries should stay on-site as long as needed regardless of percentages. Their role might change from pioneer church planting to disciple making, administrative support, leadership development, etc. all leading to saturation church planting by indigenous manpower. The time for missionaries to exit would seem to be when there is enough momentum and resources within the indigenous church to reach the rest of the people group without outside assistance. This exit point will be very different depending on the local situation.

The role of FV/Joshua Project seems to be to encourage “beginning the task” without suggesting that 2% is a finish line or withdrawal point. At the same time, we need to better promote rigorous discipleship and saturation church planting.

The term “unreached” is rather unfortunate as it implies an on/off or yes/no toggle, suggesting only two options: zero happening (unreached) or no need to send missionaries at all (reached). When a toggle is the measurement, there can easily be a focus on countdowns and checking groups off a list when they cross some threshold. A better term might be “least-reached” implying a scale or progression.¹²⁶

Summary

This more recent debate reinforces the fact that we are dealing with “messy-ology.” Field realities are messy and don’t translate easily into mobilization slogans without significant loss. Those who manage these lists have in most cases dedicated their entire lives to the constant perusal of peoples and their state of evangelization, however defined. They are more aware of the inconsistencies and incongruencies that are part of their discipline than those of us who see them less clearly. The bottom line reality, repeated earlier in this paper, is that without quantifiable criteria, regardless of their supposed subjectivity or reliability, there is no possible way to count unreached people groups. Surely it is better to have a number in this sense than to

T*he bottom line reality is that without quantifiable criteria there is no possible way to count unreached people groups.*

have none at all. As I write, researchers are scouring the world, even at the village level, to ascertain the breaking in of the Kingdom. These efforts are to be praised. May God continue to grant grace and wisdom to their efforts.

A Way Forward

Finally, some general conclusions are given here as a result of the foregoing discussion.

1. The 2 and 5% criterion for unreached peoples is not perfect, but it has the advantage of having twenty years of constant use. Changing the percentages at this point creates more problems than it solves. Wise handling of the lists, and the assumptions behind them, will prevent presumption and promote mature reflection on the overall health of any given people group.
2. Deep questions remain concerning the relationship of Evangelicals and those of Catholic/Orthodox traditions. Are missiologists involved in this dialogue, or just theologians? Better relationships here could significantly advance the move of the gospel among people groups with a non-Evangelical Christian heritage.
3. Should an unreached people in a historically non-Christian environment always be prioritized above an unreached people with a Christian background in the distant past? Perhaps not. Any missionary in either group is on the same team, bringing the Bread of Life to hungry souls. Sometimes certain fields are ripe and others are not. Sometimes God guides us to a specific place, for reasons that may not meet the requirements of human reason. If the Spirit moves
4. We need to continue to present being reached as a process not a point-in-time. The present criteria, and any that may come in the future, can create lopsided/distorted views of people group realities.
5. We need to recognize that identifying a “tipping point,” that moment when an indigenous body of believers becomes viable and able to evangelize its own people, is ultimately dependent on the Holy Spirit. Sociologists do not concern themselves with supernatural phenomena when they attempt to describe social change, but we do. And the Holy Spirit is surely able to use any percentage he wishes as a tipping point. We should remember that there were 7 million Jews in Jesus’ day (2 million in Palestine and 5 million Diaspora), and the 120 gathered in the upper room represented .000017% of the Jewish nation! In a matter of a few days after Pentecost, they had grown by thousands and this movement was later accused of turning the world upside down. This reality is too often overlooked by missiologists.
6. We need to recognize that different percentages will motivate different ministries for different purposes. It is perfectly legitimate

in mysterious ways, we should be careful in forecasting exactly what he is up to. Jesus made forays into different geographical areas for reasons that were primarily spiritual, not rational. Likewise, Paul was guided by the Spirit and was sometimes led in ways contrary to his natural way of thinking. E-2 or E-3 distance should not be the *only* consideration in prioritization, even if it should (rightly) be the first.

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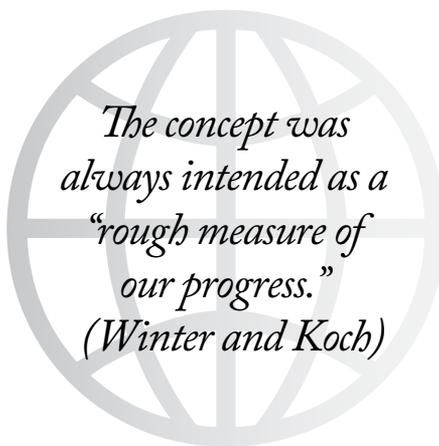
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for some ministries to keep the present criteria. Alternatively, it is also legitimate for other ministries to focus on different criteria. There is much to do in seeing the Kingdom find expression in new people groups. Everyone can have a seat at the table and fulfill God’s calling for the particular focus of their ministries. The people group data is available and can be sliced many ways, and should be. The primary blessing of people group data is that it is there for the body of Christ. Anyone can go on the Joshua Project site,¹²⁷ put in percentages to sort the list by, and see what pops up.

7. We need to be aware of the limitations of our numbers, which reflect a very basic sense of reality but lack precision. This will always be the case when complex field realities are necessarily simplified for purposes of quantification and also mobilization. We must beware of “managerial missiology” and the tendency to reduce the incomprehensible reality of God’s activity in this world to manageable strategies. There is absolutely nothing about the work of the Holy Spirit that is ours to manage apart from our own obedience to Him. But we can humbly present what we do know in order to fan into flame God’s heart for all peoples in every believer. The concept of people groups was always intended as a “rough measure of our progress toward completing the entire task.”¹²⁸
8. The biggest single problem in reaching the unreached is not a matter of definitions or percentage criteria, but of what Eugene Peterson calls a “long obedience in the same direction.” Not the strident obedience of a soldier under command, but the loving obedience of sons and daughters who walk daily in intimacy with their Father and come to know and share His

heart of extravagant love for the lost. Not the obedience motivated by numbers and the thrill of being the generation that gets it done, but the obedience motivated by a deep and abiding joy in living out God’s call among the nations.

It has been said that “a mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew.” Attempts to clear up the mist of what exactly is meant by “unreached” has and continues to be elusive. All three lists of unreached peoples are grounded in decades of specific research methodologies and tried convictions (including theological ones), which are not likely to be set aside for the practical purpose of simplicity, as helpful as that would



be for mobilization. The two poles of the tension we are dealing with are the complexity of people group identity (reality on the field) on the one hand and the simplicity needed for mobilization (reality back at home on the sending base) on the other. This tension exists in all disciplines and the answer lies in effective communication from one side to the other. This takes persons who can understand the complexity and yet present it in simple and meaningful ways. It takes persons who live in both worlds and can translate from one to the other. This is not an impossible task. The expertise and abilities exist within the mission community. We owe it to ourselves and the unreached peoples we desire to serve to make

these concepts more accessible to the church. It is my hope that this article will inspire others more qualified and experienced than I to do just that. **IJFM**

Endnotes

¹ Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: Global Mapping International, 2011), 165.

² Winter’s quotation of Barrett is a bit misleading because when Barrett wrote in 1968 the concept of unreached people groups was nascent. While Barrett did note significant changes within a people when more than 20% became Christian adherents, he in no way was making any conscious statement about 20% or less as a criterion for being “unreached.” I am indebted to Gina Zurlo of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity for her insight into Barrett’s thinking.

³ Ralph D. Winter, “Unreached Peoples: The Development of the Concept,” in *Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1984), 36–37.

⁴ It is important to note that “evangelization” to some means proclamation only, while to others it means proclamation and response. The former emphasizes a person or group’s *exposure* to and *awareness* of the Gospel, while the latter emphasizes *positive response* to the Gospel (“Go and *make disciples . . .*”). Since Revelation (5:9 and 7:9) predicts and promises that some from every tribe, tongue and nation will find their place in the heavenly assembly, this author assumes the latter meaning throughout the paper.

⁵ Our focus at Frontier Ventures (formerly the US Center for World Mission) has historically been and remains that of working alongside others in the frontier mission movement to bring about that “tipping point” whereby a body of believers is able to evangelize its own people group.

⁶ Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, “Finishing The Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th ed., eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 538.

⁷ The LCWE was established in January 1975 to implement the ethos and vision of the International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE), July 16–25, 1974. It consisted of the international body, seven regional committees, an executive

committee and four working groups: theology and education, intercession, communication, and strategy. The first meeting of the Strategy Working Group was in 1977.

⁸ The phrases “Lausanne Tradition” and “Edinburgh Tradition” as descriptive monikers originated with Winter.

⁹ Of course, none of what is recorded here occurred in a vacuum. William Carey’s *Enquiry* reignited concern for the heathen and a steady stream of research and promotion toward that end can be seen to the present day. Twentieth century antecedents worth mention would be W. Cameron Townsend’s focus on tribal peoples in Central America and J. Waskom Pickett’s research on mass movements in India in the 1930s; Donald McGavran’s continued work about people movements in the 1950s; and the research in Africa of David Barrett and Patrick Johnstone in the 1960s.

¹⁰ “Billy Graham Center, Archives: World Congress on Evangelism, 1966,” Wheaton College, Billy Graham Center, last modified Oct 25, 2006, accessed October 13, 2015, <http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/berlin66.htm>.

¹¹ Ted Engstrom, “The Use of Technology: A Vital Tool That Will Help,” in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task, Volume I, World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin 1966, Official Reference Volumes, Papers and Reports*, eds. Carl F. H. Henry and W. Stanley Mooneyham (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1967), 316.

¹² *Ibid.*, 317.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 318.

¹⁴ David A. Hubbard, “Missions and Technology,” in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task, Volume II, World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin 1966, Official Reference Volumes, Papers and Reports*, eds. Carl F. H. Henry and W. Stanley Mooneyham (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1967), 525–526.

¹⁵ C. Peter Wagner and Edward Dayton, eds., *Unreached Peoples ’81: The Challenge of the Church’s Unfinished Business* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Company, 1981), 24.

¹⁶ Another significant name to mention is W. Stanley Mooneyham, the Vice President of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and the Coordinating Director for the Berlin Congress. When Pierce began to have health issues, Mooneyham took over as World Vision President in 1969, a position he held until 1982. Engstrom became Executive VP of World Vision in 1963 and followed Mooneyham as President from 1982–1984.

¹⁷ This influence was not without its critics, such as Latin American missiologists C. Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar. Padilla wrote a critique of the homogenous unit principle (1982), stating it had no biblical basis as a church planting strategy. For his part, Escobar lashed out against the “managerial missiology” coming out of Pasadena (1999), citing the tendency to turn the mission enterprise into something that can be managed with measurement-based analysis, goal-setting and strategic planning.

¹⁸ Greg H. Parsons, *Lausanne ’74: Ralph D. Winter’s Writings, with Responses* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 134.

¹⁹ Edward R. Dayton, *Unreached Peoples Directory* (International Congress on World Evangelization, 1974), 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² It should be noted that in the back of the Directory, the questionnaire used for the research is included and gives its own slightly different definitions: “*Homogeneous unit* (people or group): A recognizable segment of society having some characteristic(s) in common. The uniting element(s) may be linguistic, ethnic, geographic, socio-economic, political, religious, or any other. . . . *Unreached/unevangelized people*: Those homogeneous units which have not received or responded to the Gospel. Thus unresponsiveness may be due to lack of opportunity, lack of understanding, or because they have not received sufficient information about the Gospel message within their own language, cultural frame of reference and communication channels to make Christianity a viable option. For the purpose of this questionnaire, and for the International Congress on World Evangelization for which this initial study is made, we consider that a people is unreached/unevangelized when less than 20% are professing Christians,” 112.

²³ David Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968), 137. Barrett also uses the 20% criterion in his *World Christian Encyclopedia*, “the only people groups who can correctly be called unreached are the one thousand or so whose populations are each less than 20% evangelized,” in David B. Barrett, ed., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World AD 1900–2000* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982), 19. Note that Barrett differed

from most other researchers represented in this paper in that he measured evangelization as proclamation only, whereas others measure it as proclamation and response. See endnote 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Dayton, *Unreached Peoples Directory*, 26.

²⁶ Pentecost did a master’s thesis at Fuller with Winter as Mentor and Glasser and Wagner on the Examining Committee. The paper was published in 1974 as the book *Reaching the Unreached: An Introductory Study on Developing an Overall Strategy for World Evangelization*.

²⁷ Their definition is “An unreached people is a group that is less than 20 percent practicing Christian,” in C. Peter Wagner and Edward R. Dayton, eds., *Unreached Peoples ’79: The Challenge of the Church’s Unfinished Business* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co, 1978), 24. While Barrett and Wagner/Dayton both used the 20 percent criterion, they had two very different things in mind. Barrett was thinking of “adherents” (professing Christians) and Wagner/Dayton had in mind “practicing Christians.” In fact, Wagner and Dayton used the percentage of “professing Christians” in their people group list in the back of the book (257) even though their definition above was “practicing Christian.” One surmises that they changed their definition to “practicing Christian” but their research still reflected the professing Christian data that had been used in the 1974 *Directory*. In the *Unreached Peoples ’80* edition, they correct this contradiction. They say, “It is important to note that this figure is the estimated percentage of *practicing* Christians within the group. If the group was listed in *Unreached Peoples ’79*, the figure recorded here will most likely be different, because that volume recorded the percentage of *professing* Christians (or adherents), which most often will be a higher number,” in C. Peter Wagner and Edward R. Dayton, eds., *Unreached Peoples ’80: The Challenge of the Church’s Unfinished Business* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co, 1980), 210. Ralph Winter called this movement from “professing” to “practicing” a “fatal” change. He says, “In my own biased recollection, the change to ‘practicing Christians’ was almost instantly criticized . . . when the new 20-percent definition came out, I remember calling my friend Peter Wagner, who was the chairman of the Strategy Working Group, and saying, ‘This is a great mistake. Almost all groups everywhere are now classified as unreached!’ But it was too late. The Strategy Working Group was an international committee, and

everyone had gone home," in Ralph Winter, "Unreached Peoples: The Development of the Concept," 31.

²⁸ Edward C. Pentecost, *Reaching the Unreached: An Introductory Study on Developing an Overall Strategy for World Evangelization* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974). Pentecost not only cites Rogers in his use of the 20%, but also incorporates Roger's concepts of communication channels (70), the four stages of the innovation-decision process (71) and the use of indicators to measure social change (79–120). This is the only attempt I know of in which diffusion of innovation theory is seriously considered as a method of studying gospel diffusion in an unreached people group.

²⁹ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1962). Rogers defines diffusion as "the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (2003, 5), while an innovation is "an idea, practice or object that is perceived as new" (12). Pentecost, Wagner, Dayton and others obviously saw the potential for such research to inform the frontier missionary task. Based on thousands of empirical studies, Rogers claims, "no other field of behavior science research represents more effort by more scholars in more disciplines in more nations" (2003, xviii). Because this research includes many cross-cultural studies, it brims with relevant guidelines and principles for mission theorist and practitioner alike.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 1962, 219.

³¹ Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 360.

³² *Ibid.*, 221–222.

³³ *Ibid.*, 343.

³⁴ Research using Rogers' model could be done on individual people groups and then compared with others. We could determine our own variables or indicators that affect rate of adoption that spring specifically from the context of gospel planting among unreached people groups. Principles and/or best practices could be compared, contrasted and new theories put forth.

³⁵ According to Wagner, "From its very inception the Strategy Working Group established a functional relationship with the MARC (Missions Advanced Research and Communication) Center of World Vision International. MARC pioneered research into unreached peoples and challenged the 1974 Lausanne meeting with the preliminary results. Its office facilities,

computer capability, competent staff, and accumulated expertise in the field qualifies it as the central research agency worldwide for unreached peoples" in Wagner and Dayton, *Unreached Peoples* '79, 8. Each volume in the series contains a list of unreached people groups (1979: 666 upg; 1980: 1,982 upg; 1981: 2,914 upg; 1982: 3,265 upg; 1983: 3,690 upg; 1984: 3,815 upg). The original *Unreached Peoples Directory* had a list of 413 groups. Note that there is a four-year gap between the initial directory published for ICOWE in 1974 and this series. The reason for this is that it took time to organize the LCWE (1975) and SWG (1977) after the Congress. Though MARC had already helped produce the unreached peoples directory for the Lausanne 1974 Congress, they had done so with funding from Lausanne. The final and seventh book of the series (*Unreached Peoples: Clarifying the Task*) was co-published in 1987 by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention as the seventh book of the Unreached Peoples series and the third book of the FMB's *AD2000 Series*. It was edited by Harley Schreck and David Barrett. None of these lists were comprehensive.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁷ C. Peter Wagner and Edward R. Dayton, eds., *Unreached Peoples '81: The Challenge of the Church's Unfinished Business With Special Section on the Peoples of Asia* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co, 1981), 28.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 28–29. Wagner and Dayton also show a helpful correlation between the growth of an innovation over time as early, middle and late adopters are added on, with the Evangelism scale (E-1, E-2, E-3), a Christian Nurture scale (N-1, N-2, N-3) and a Service scale (S-1, S-2, S-3). They thus show how E-2 and E-3 evangelism is prominent at the beginning of a movement but then transitions to E-1 and N-1 work of practicing Christians.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 27. The reference to hidden peoples was an attempt by Wagner and Dayton to incorporate Winter's alternative to "unreached," described later in this paper. Unfortunately, they reduced it to a meaning Winter did not intend. However, a few pages later (32) they define hidden groups as "people groups among which there is no viable church," closer to Winter's intent.

⁴¹ C. Peter Wagner and Edward Dayton, eds., *Unreached Peoples '82: The Challenge of the Church's Unfinished Business, Focus on Urban Peoples* (Elgin, IL, David

C. Cook Publishing Company, 1982). One wonders if this omission had anything to do with the fact that with *Unreached Peoples '82* Samuel Wilson would begin to replace C. Peter Wagner as co-editor. Was the 20 percent emphasis largely that of Wagner?

⁴² Edward R. Dayton and Samuel Wilson, eds., *Unreached Peoples '83: The Refugees Among Us* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1983), 33. As a result, in the 1983 annual the definitions of "Hidden People Group" and "Frontier People" were the same: "unreached people group" (499). There was now one definition. Here is a final interesting fact observed: the members of the Strategy Working Group identified in the 1983 annual represent an almost wholesale change from the previous group. Wagner stepped off as Chairman at this point with Dayton taking over. Only one other existing member continued on with Dayton as Chairman.

⁴³ When Winter's missiological output is observed side by side with his labors in purchasing the USCWM properties and founding a sodality community, it is remarkable to realize that in the midst of all his thinking and writing, the campus was in a constant state of fiscal jeopardy. This may be one reason why he tended to write articles, not books. He had at least two full-time roles as a missiologist and organizational leader.

⁴⁴ Ralph D. Winter, *Penetrating the Last Frontiers* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1978), 39.

⁴⁵ Ralph D. Winter, *Frontiers in Mission: Discovering and Surmounting Barriers to the Missio Dei* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2008), 133.

⁴⁶ Winter, *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*, 40.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Winter, "Unreached Peoples: The Development of the Concept," 32.

⁵⁰ This pamphlet was reprinted in *Unreached Peoples '79*. However, the parts of the pamphlet critical of the SWG definition is nowhere to be seen. Did Winter cut out this section (the bulk of his critique presented above comes from this section), not wanting to create undue tension?

⁵¹ Winter, *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*, 40–41.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 42.

⁵³ This issue of affinity was an important one, as people struggled to know how deep people group segmentation should run. Were "nurses in St. Louis" or "professional hockey players" (these were in the early lists) distinct people groups? While Winter and

Koch in the *Finishing the Task* article deal with this by distinguishing such segments as “Sociopeoples,” the idea persists today with talk of the handicapped as unreached people groups. While we would normally see groups with a common disability as a sociopeople, the case of the deaf is unique because they speak a unique language.

⁵⁴ “While Pattaya ’80 took unreached peoples *seriously*, Edinburgh ’80 was devoted to them *exclusively*,” in Warren Webster, “New Directions for Western Missions” in *Unreached Peoples ’84: The Future of World Evangelization*, Edward Dayton and Samuel Wilson, eds. (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1984), 134. Winter had a unique penchant for setting up alternatives to the status quo, be it definitions, institutions or in this case consultations, while maintaining congenial relationships with those with whom he disagreed. This gave him platforms for his personal thinking yet also kept him on the edge of the inside.

⁵⁵ Ralph D. Winter, “Frontier Mission Perspectives” in *Seeds of Promise: World Consultation on Frontier Missions, Edinburgh ’80*, ed. Allan Starling (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 61.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 63. Winter concedes that “the reality of human diversity is, of course, immeasurably more complex than these four levels imply. One can easily imagine cases where there are far more than four levels.”

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 63–65, 79. Winter’s presentation included helpful diagrams that graphically portrayed the interrelationships between three different megaspheres (and the sub-spheres within them) along with the type of evangelism needed from one sphere to another.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁶² Winter, “Unreached People: The Development of the Concept,” 33.

⁶³ Winter, *Frontiers in Mission: Discovering and Surmounting Barriers to the Missio Dei*, 134.

⁶⁴ According to Wagner and Dayton, this sentence up to this point is word-for-word the same definition defined by the Strategy Working Group (SWG) of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) in its first meeting in 1977, “after a lengthy period of research and discussion,” with the exception that the word “sociological” was taken out of the original phrase “large sociological grouping,” in Wagner and Dayton, *Unreached Peoples ’81*, 23. However,

in the *Unreached Peoples ’79* edition, the same definition is given with an added phrase, “because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc., or combinations of these” (23). It could be that the definition was shortened for the sake of brevity. Whatever the case, the longer version reappears as part of the 1982 Chicago definition.

⁶⁵ Winter and Koch, “Finishing The Task,” 536.

⁶⁶ Winter, *Frontiers in Mission: Discovering and Surmounting Barriers to the Missio Dei*, 134.

⁶⁷ Dayton and Wilson, *Unreached Peoples ’84*, 129.

⁶⁸ Winter, in *Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge*, 37–38.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 39–40.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁷⁵ Wagner and Dayton, *Unreached Peoples ’79*, 23.

⁷⁶ Ralph Winter, “Facing the Frontiers,” *Mission Frontiers*, (Oct–Nov 1982), 13, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/facing-the-frontiers>.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Winter and Koch, “Finishing the Task,” 535. This article remains definitive for Winter’s views on various aspects of people group thinking.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 539.

⁸⁰ Winter noted elsewhere, “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 that is in itself an efficient missionary target in the sense we would like an unreached people to be,” in Ralph Winter, “Unreached Peoples: What Are They and Where Are They?” in *Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1984), 50–51.

⁸¹ Winter and Koch, “Finishing the Task,” 534–535.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 537.

⁸³ Seth Kaplan, “Somalia’s Complex Clan Dynamics,” *Fragile States Resource Center*, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://www.fragilestates.org/2012/01/10/somalias-complex-clan-dynamics/>.

⁸⁴ “Somalia – Clans,” *GlobalSecurity*, last modified April 8, 2015, accessed April 20, 2015, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/somalia/clans.htm>.

⁸⁵ Winter and Koch, “Finishing the Task,” 536.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁸⁷ Barrett served the FMB until 1993, when he began working as an independent researcher under the World Evangelization Research Center, also located in Richmond, and its successor, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (established in 2003 by Todd Johnson at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, in South Hamilton, Mass.). He died in 2011. Along with another “DB,” David Bosch, Barrett and Bosch are arguably the most significant continental, Protestant missiologists of the latter half of the 20th century.

⁸⁸ Harley Schreck and David Barrett, *Unreached Peoples: Clarifying the Task* (Monrovia, CA: MARC and Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishing Co., 1987). The *Unreached Peoples* series, published each year between 1979 and 1984, then on hiatus until 1987, was in some ways the authoritative source for many regarding unreached people groups. The seventh book was a partnership between MARC and the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention as the seventh book of the *Unreached Peoples* series and the third book of the FMB’s *AD2000* series.

⁸⁹ In the registry of peoples found within the book, several changes are noted from the previous annuals. There is only one listing of peoples by country. Both ethnolinguistic and sociologically-defined people groups are listed, with the latter presented in boldface type. Finally, the criteria for inclusion in the list is “only peoples among whom church members number less than 20 percent of the population” (15) or “people groups for whom it has been reported that there is less than 20% of the population who have any affiliation with a Christian church,” (215). This reflects Barrett’s preference to count professing Christians as opposed to practicing Christians, which had been the definition proposed by Wagner and Dayton. Thus the *Unreached Peoples* series (if you include the 1974 Directory) evolved from professing Christians to practicing Christians and then back to professing Christians. The power of editorship!

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 18–24.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 41–42.

⁹⁶ In Harvie Conn's edited work cited several times in this paper, *Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge*, there is a chapter by James Reapsome that is basically a list of quotes from a "Who's Who" list of Western mission leaders of that time complaining about "sociological segmentation." Warren Webster sums it up this way: "The use of sociological definitions of people groups tends to cloud and confuse the picture when employed on a global scale," 67.

⁹⁷ Dan Scribner, "Joshua Project Step 1: Identifying the Peoples Where Church Planting Is Most Needed," *Mission Frontiers* (Nov–Dec, 1995), <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/joshua-project-step-1-identifying-the-peoples-where-church-planting-is-most>.

⁹⁸ "Joshua Project 2000," AD2000 and Beyond, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.ad2000.org/joshovr.htm>.

⁹⁹ "Author: A Brief Biography of Patrick Johnstone," The Future of the Global Church (GMI), accessed January 29, 2016, <http://www.thefutureoftheglobalchurch.org/about/author/>.

¹⁰⁰ "Why Include Adherents when Defining Unreached?" Joshua Project, accessed April 20, 2015, <https://joshuaproject.net/assets/media/articles/why-include-adherents-when-defining-unreached.pdf>. A Christian Adherent is simply anyone who self-identifies as a Christian of any kind.

¹⁰¹ Sam Keen and Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion: The Sacred and the Political in American Life," *Psychology Today* (January 1976), 64.

¹⁰² Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church* (Colorado Springs, CO: Global Mapping International, 2011), 224.

¹⁰³ "Why Include Adherents when Defining Unreached?" Joshua Project, accessed April 20, 2015, <https://joshuaproject.net/assets/media/articles/why-include-adherents-when-defining-unreached.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ Todd Johnson, email message to author, February 10, 2016.

¹⁰⁵ Robin Dale Hadaway, "A Course Correction in Missions: Rethinking the Two Percent Threshold," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 57, no. 1 (2014): 22.

¹⁰⁶ See <http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/>.

¹⁰⁷ See <http://joshuaproject.net>.

¹⁰⁸ See <http://peoplegroups.org>.

¹⁰⁹ Todd Johnson, email message to author, February 8, 2016.

¹¹⁰ This chart taken from "Global People Group Lists: An Overview," Joshua

Project, accessed November 23, 2015, http://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/global_peoples_list_comparison.

¹¹¹ Adapted from "How Many People Groups Are There?" Joshua Project, accessed November 23, 2015, http://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/how_many_people_groups_are_there.

¹¹² Winter, "Unreached Peoples: What Are They and Where Are They?" 47.

¹¹³ "Frequently asked Questions," Finishing the Task, accessed January 29, 2016, <http://finishingthetask.com/faq.html>.

¹¹⁴ Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church*, 189.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹¹⁶ Hadaway, "A Course Correction in Missions."

¹¹⁷ Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, "Minority Rules: Scientists Discover Tipping Point for the Spread of Ideas," Association for Computing Machinery, last modified July 26, 2011, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://cacm.acm.org/careers/115120-minority-rules-scientists-discover-tipping-point-for-the-spread-of-ideas/fulltext>.

¹¹⁸ J. Xie, S. Sreenivasan, G. Korniss, W. Zhang, C. Lim, B. Szymanski, "Social Consensus through the Influence of Committed Minorities," *Physical Review E* 84, 011130, 2011, 1.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²¹ Hadaway, "A Course Correction in Missions," 24.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 28.

¹²³ This chart used Joshua Project numbers. Note that once we put in figures that are 5% Evangelical or greater, the 5% Christian Adherent criteria becomes irrelevant, because Evangelicals are Christian Adherents.

¹²⁴ Bill Morrison, email message to author, February 8, 2016.

¹²⁵ Bruce Koch, email message to author, April 13, 2015.

¹²⁶ Dan Scribner, Bill Morrison, Duane Fraser, email message to author, April 8, 2015.

¹²⁷ <http://legacy.joshuaproject.net/people-selector.php>.

¹²⁸ Winter and Koch, "Finishing the Task," 534.

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