

## STRATEGY CORNER

*The DAWN idea and the unreached peoples movement had been running in parallel streams. That is, until 'Table 71' burst on the scene and solemnized the union of these potent forces.*

# 'Table 71' creates most significant missiological advance since 1974

by Steve Steele and Jim Montgomery

**T**otally unaware they were even going to meet at Amsterdam 2000, the participants of 'Table 71' have produced, in our opinion, the most significant missiological advance since the original Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974.

For they brought together in marriage the two most profound concepts for completion of the Great Commission that emerged from that historic 1974 gathering. More about Table 71 to follow, but first take a look at the historical setting.

### **Ralph Winter opened our eyes**

One major milestone achieved at Lausanne was the brilliant presentation of Ralph Winter that opened our eyes to the vast number of still unreached people groups (UPG's) of the world. People group thinking since then has become the heart of much planning and action toward the completion of the Great Commission in our time.

The U. S. Center for World Mission, the Adopt a People Movement, the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, the Joshua Project, the massive promotion and

prayer for the 10-40 window and a host of other initiatives focusing on unreached peoples have all been major thrusts flowing out of Lausanne '74.

The other profound concept emerging from this 1974 gathering actually received no more attention than one line on page 1424 of *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, the huge compendium of papers and responses presented at the International Congress.

In "The Philippines National Strategy Group Report," the 57 delegates to the Congress in line three of their report committed themselves to "Establish a local congregation in every barrio (neighborhood) in the country."

### **The DAWN flame spreads**

Returning to the Philippines, national leaders fleshed this out to mean they would increase from 5,000 churches in 1974 to 50,000 by the end of AD 2000. What became known as the DAWN (Disciple A Whole Nation) 2000 Philippines Movement, last year celebrated the accomplishment of this goal, and in the process set a

new goal to plant another 50,000 in the following ten years.

*One milestone was the presentation that opened our eyes to the vast number of unreached people groups.*

Now the flame of the DAWN Movement, fanned internationally by Dawn Ministries in Colorado Springs, for a growing majority has become the generally accepted strategy for completing the task of the Great Commission in our time.

Well over 60 nations have held DAWN Congresses where goals have been set—and in many cases already reached or exceeded—to plant more than three million new churches. In addition, projects in India and China in aggregate envision more millions of churches. In about an eight-year period beginning in 1992 the national Church in 14 Latin America nations planted 87,500 new churches and Church leaders of the whole region in 1998 set a goal of 500,000 new churches by 2010. Church-plant-

## STRATEGY CORNER

ing projects are even underway in all but a couple of the Arab nations!

### TABLE 71 MEMBERS

**Steve Douglass**, Campus Crusade for Christ  
**Ted M. Olsen**, Dawn Ministries  
**Mike Steele**, Dawn Ministries  
**Larry Cox**, Southern Baptist IMB  
**Steve Evans**, Southern Baptist IMB  
**David Garrison**, Southern Baptist IMB  
**Avery Willis**, Southern Baptist IMB  
**Nils Becker**, Jesus Film  
**Dan Grether**, Mission Spokane  
**David Payne**, SEED CO.  
**Bob Creson**, Summer Inst. of Linguistics  
**Wayne Johnson**, Table 71  
**Robert Varney**, Table 71  
**Terry Sparks**, Walk Through the Bible  
**Roy Peterson**, WYCLIFFE  
**Mark Anderson**, YWAM  
**Steve Cochrane**, YWAM  
**David Hamilton**, YWAM

The DAWN idea—which generically is referred to as Saturation Church Planting (SCP)—and the unreached peoples movement have been running in parallel streams. That is, until ‘Table 71’ burst on the scene and solemnized the union of these potent forces. The conceptual marriage of these two could well loft world evangelization to a whole new level of understanding and effectiveness.

### Mission leaders ponder our failure

This is how the “Table 71” group came into being. Everyone in the Strategy Coordinators Task Group

of the Amsterdam 2000 conference was seated around numbered tables. The leaders that “just happened” to sit at table 71—hence their name—included Steve Douglas, newly appointed president of Campus Crusade; Mark Anderson of YWAM; Bruce Wilkenson of Walk Through the Bible; Avery Willis with the Southern Baptists; Mike Steele of Dawn Ministries; Roy Peterson, President of Wycliff; David Garrison of the Southern Baptist’s IMB and Dan Grether of Mission Spokane.

Their assignment at table 71 was to discuss the question, “How do we reach the rest of the UPG’s of the world?”

Two questions quickly emerged as they began their discussion: “Why hasn’t the job been done in the last 2,000 years?” and “What do we need to do differently to make sure the job gets done

now?” In the process of finding answers, they not only came to a watershed missiological conclusion but actually formed a continuing Task Force to see the new concepts carried out.

### Facing inadequate, misleading data

Several things surfaced relating to why the job is still unfinished. For one thing, though a great amount of research had been done in recent years, that data was still far from adequate.

For example, they had been given a list from the Joshua Project that

enumerated 253 UPG’s in the world that contained at least 10,000 in each that still had not been “adopted.” When this information had been shared in the whole assembly, the delegation from India sent up a collective gasp. For by their reckoning, there are around 4,635 people groups in their land alone, but the vast majority of Christians come from only about 130 to 135 of them.

Others at the table suggested from their knowledge that many of the groups listed were in fact language groups, not UPGs. Some of these language groups had been resourced with tools for evangelism and church planting. They knew of other unreached groups that were not on the list. (Incidentally, they had been told ahead of time that the list did need some further work before it would be complete and accurate.)

### Redefining terms was necessary

Another major concern they identified was simply the definition of “adopted.” Their collective impression was that this was a very elastic term. For instance, a local church in America with very good intentions could indicate it was adopting a certain people group on the list. They may have then

### *The other profound concept emerged from the Philippines strategy group.*

generated interest in their congregation through promotion, prayer, preaching or even a visit by a church member to the group.

This group gets checked off the unreached or unadopted list, but it

## STRATEGY CORNER

may be decades before anyone in the country is actually addressing

***They asked, 'why hasn't the job been done in 2000 years?'***

them. Furthermore, there might be a vast gulf between a group being adopted and a really significant strategy developed and implemented for *discipling* the group.

An example of this also came from India. They were told about the unreached Ahir (Yadav) people numbering something like 57 million scattered throughout 14 states. Even if an adoption were to result in a few churches planted, it would be the barest of beginnings in a harvest field of this magnitude.

### **An integrating process formed**

When they got to the question of what needed to be done differently, Table 71 came to several significant conclusions.

In the first place, it became obvious that there needed to be a change in the definition of when a people group could be checked off the "unreached" or "unadopted" list. It had to be more than a congregation or another institution merely agreeing to "adopt" a group. There had to be strong, verifiable evidence that a process was in place that could ultimately lead not merely to the "entering" of that group, but to the "discipling" of that group.

**This called for the completion of four different steps, steps that saw the marriage of the initial "adoption" and the commitment to saturation church planting (SCP.)** The steps identified were:

1. There are identified Christian-worker networks targeting that group.
2. There are churches being planted.
3. There is mobilization of indigenous church planters and Christian workers taking place.
4. There is a self-sustaining, flourishing, reproducing church-plant-

### **WHEN IS A PEOPLE GROUP 'REACHED'?**

Table 71 concluded that all four of the following must be happening before a people group could be checked off the list of the 'Unreached':

1. There are identified Christian-worker networks targeting that group.
2. There are churches being planted.
3. There is mobilization of indigenous church planters and Christian workers taking place.
4. There is a self-sustaining, flourishing, reproducing church-planting movement that no longer needs outside help.

ing movement that no longer needs outside help.

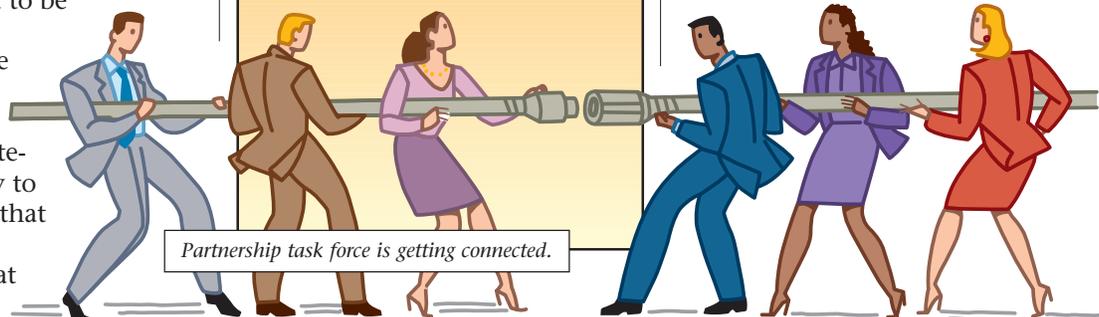
This is the missiological breakthrough we refer to as the most significant since 1974. But a deeper look into their thinking is needed.

They concluded that this four-step process removed the problem of the many different definitions of "unreached" and what it meant to "adopt" an UPG. In fact, they decided not to use these terms anymore at all, for no group can be totally reached until the Lord returns. There is no definition in the Bible for "completion" of the task.

But a "process" can be completed. As soon as step four is accomplished, indigenous church-planting movements continue the task until the day of the Lord. There is no arbitrary percentage figure for missiologists to wrangle over concerning the number of converts needed to say the people group has been "reached."

The four-step process, however, can be clearly defined. The point of completion of the process can be pinpointed. The indigenous church is now capable of continuing the multiplication of converts, disciples and congregations indefinitely.

A significant corollary they insisted on was that the process should



## STRATEGY CORNER

not be entered upon in any UPG unless there were an indigenous partner from the beginning. This would overcome the situations where an outside mission force entered a group but at some point had to leave, got kicked out or otherwise had to abandon the work with nothing left to follow through. Table 71 efforts would function as servants to the local leaders.

### Partnership task force is formed

They saw, however, that merely redefining the task could end up being only a dynamic intellectual

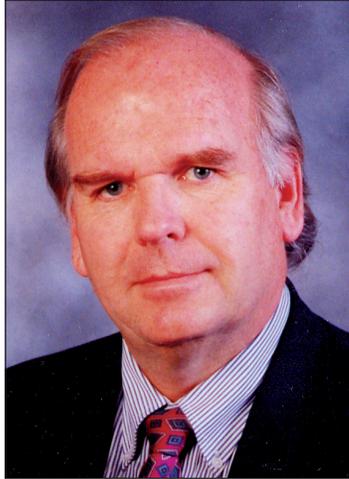
***There had to be a change in when a people group could be considered "adopted."***

exercise with no significance in the real world. These heads or top-level leaders of organizations saw they were in a position to implement what they were discussing. Why not form a task force of member bodies to implement this new understanding of the task of the Great Commission?

They did.

In subsequent meetings, priorities were set and work begun. It was determined, for example, that rather than take on the whole world of the unadopted they would select a prototype for a case study. With that in mind, they settled on India.

This is a nation so large and with so many UPG's that a success story here would open doors for the rest



*Ted Olsen is taking a leading role in the Table 71 Effort*

of the world. Furthermore, there were already a number of very able indigenous mission societies that could be partnered with. With Dawn missionary Ted Olsen taking a leading role in this effort, we are thankful to have some part in this breakthrough endeavor. At this point, further research is being carried out in India to establish a definitive list of UPG's, to find out what models are working, to see where the greatest needs are and who can meet them, to begin serving the indigenous partners and to mobilize both foreign and indigenous churches to participate.

### Exponential growth already happening

It is also true that in India the idea of exponential church multiplication has already caught on with many top leaders. These have

proven models where growth takes place from a handful of congregations to hundreds and thousands within months or a very few years.

Having been involved from the inside both with the UPG and SCP

***Table 71 efforts would function as servants to the local leaders.***

streams that have flowed out of Lausanne 1974, it is our conclusion that the concepts and action steps of Table 71 truly bring us to a whole new level of insight in how to work most directly towards the completion of the Great Commission in our time.

It is making sure that all the UPG's are identified and entered with a process that culminates in a continuing multiplication of churches and congregations unto the return of the Lord.

When the partnerships of Table 71 agencies and indigenous Indian mission societies have demonstrated the viability of this model, we will truly be on the way to "hastening the day of the Lord" (II Peter 3:12). 

### DAWN vs. Dawn—an important distinction

We've found that sometimes our readers are confused about the difference between DAWN the movement and Dawn the organization.

Throughout our magazine, DAWN in upper case letters refers to a whole-nation *strategy* developed by the Church of that nation for saturating every community with congregations of believers.

Dawn Ministries or Dawn, in lower case letters, is a small *agency* of full-time men and women headquartered in Colorado Springs, USA, which serves the DAWN movement worldwide.