



The State of the Unfinished Task

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The following is excerpted from Paul Eshleman's plenary address at Tokyo 2010.

The Assumptions Behind The Ten Elements

I want to talk to you today about ten elements which I think outline the global evangelization priorities for the Church. As leaders, we need to know where the Great Commission is not being fulfilled. First, let me give you five assumptions behind these priorities.

- The focus of these priorities will be towards seeing a disciple-making breakthrough in every people group of the world. Evangelism is not enough. "Teaching others to observe all that Jesus has commanded" must be an ongoing process.
- These priorities concentrate on where the Church is *not*. They don't try to address every mission that the Church is called to do. The purpose of addressing these priorities is to accelerate the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel where it has not yet been proclaimed, i.e., those people groups, language groups and geographic locations that have not yet heard the message, where the Church has not yet been established.
- This presentation assumes that every part of the world is called to go to every part of the world. No country is exempt from sending, and no country is exempt from receiving.
- We have not lived out our faith as we should. Every believer should be a humble reflection of Jesus. Our message is hollow if our lives do not back up the words we speak. The Holy Spirit is still the source of our power. And we need to be sure we are living lives that are holy and pure.

- We haven't loved one another and worked together enough. God has given each person and organization unique gifts and callings. We should honor those callings. But all of us, I believe, can give some percentage of our time and resources to help with the priorities of the whole Body of Christ. If we know what the priorities are, we can "stimulate one another to love and good deeds" — to do what hasn't been done thus far.

The Ten Elements

Over the last several years, I have been meeting with a number of groups to talk about Global Evangelization Priorities.... Let's move now to the top five priorities.

Number 5 – Church Planting And Presence

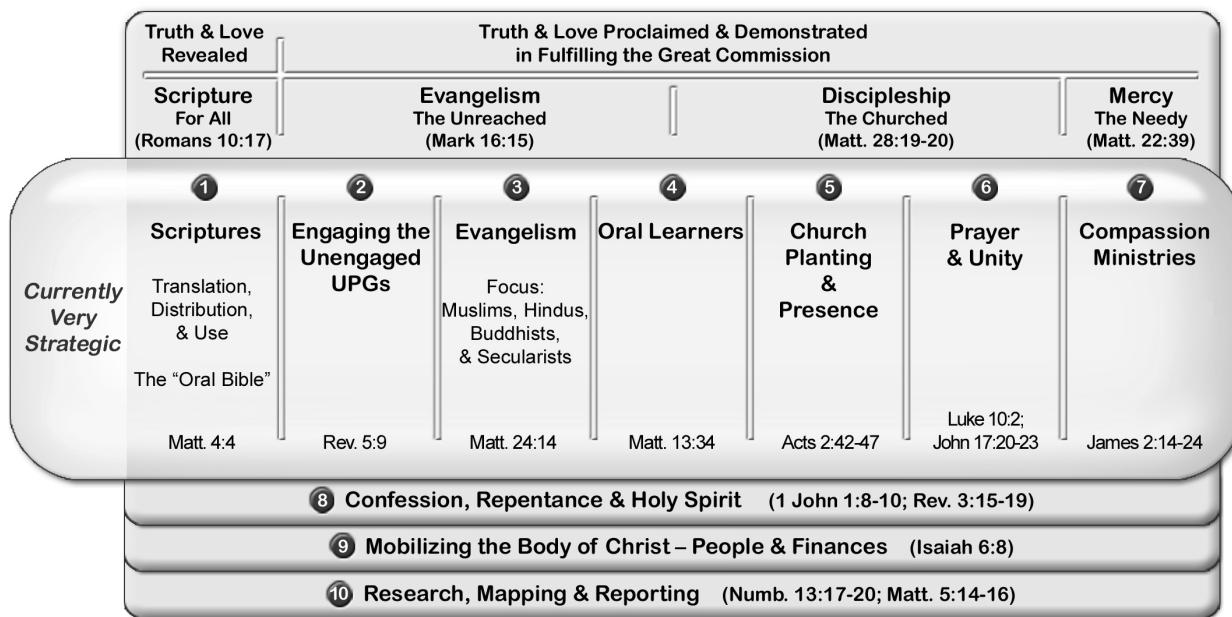
Number 5 on our list is Church Planting and Presence. It has always been the plan of God that people would be brought to maturity in Christ through the fellowship of a local church. If one billion people come into the Kingdom during the next decade, we will need millions of new house churches to care for these converts....

Number 4 – Reaching Oral Learners

I believe the subject of orality or reaching oral learners is one of the breakthrough ideas that is just starting to gain momentum. Two-thirds of people worldwide are oral learners. That is, they prefer to learn through proverbs, music, poetry and especially stories. As mission leaders, we must rethink how we are delivering our evangelism, discipleship and church-planting strategies.

Paul Eshleman is the founder of the JESUS Film Project and director of the "Finishing the Task" network.

Essential Elements of the Great Commission



Number 3 – Increasing Evangelization, With A Focus On Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus

We have to keep on making evangelism a priority. In many of our ministries, we have stopped asking people to receive Christ. Yet Jesus was very clear, “Except you repent, you will perish.”

We need more intentional demonstration of love and prayer for the largest religious blocs throughout the world: Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. If you add the folk Chinese of China, the total population of the three groups is 3.5 billion people – over half of the world’s population.

Number 2 – Engaging The Unengaged People Groups

As of a few years ago there were 639 unengaged, unreached ethno-linguistic people groups with populations over 100,000 that were still beyond the reach of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; they numbered 535 million people. In recent years, over 470 of these groups have been engaged by over 4,000 full- and part-time workers.

At present, there remain about 3,500 people groups (of all population sizes) that are still unengaged; the total population of these groups is over 350 million. These groups don’t represent a large percentage of the world’s population, but they have been waiting 2,000 years for the gospel. The need is to recruit at least one full-time worker for every 50,000 people in each group.

Number 1 – Scripture Translation

Scripture translation is the #1 priority throughout the world because it’s impossible to do ministry without a Biblical foundation. But here is the tragedy: 2,252 language groups have not one verse of Scripture, and no one is working on translations for these groups.

So, what are we going to do to change this? – Launch the OralStory Bible. Pioneer missionaries in these people groups are going back to the methods of communicating Scripture as they existed before the invention of the printing press. At that point, people remembered perhaps 50-60 stories they heard as the Scriptures were read from hand-copied scrolls. Since most people could not read, stained-glass windows reminded them of the key tenets of the faith. With this understanding, they made their decisions to follow Christ.

The same thing is happening today through story-telling the Scriptures. It is a breakthrough strategy that makes the Scripture available to all. Every Christian leader should be recruiting OralStory Bible teams. As people become more literate, they can look forward to a written Bible. We need to recruit and send out 4,000 OralStory Bible teams immediately. ☽