



# The World Inquiry

*Listening to the Heartbeat of God's People*

Rick Wood

For several years from the late 1980s to the end of the year 2000, thousands of faithful believers spared no effort in attempting to reach the goal of "A Church for Every People and the Gospel for Every Person." This vision was the driving force behind the AD2000 Movement. As a result of this movement, hundreds of people groups were reached for the first time and every unreached people group over 10,000 in population was selected by mission agencies for outreach. Tremendous progress was achieved.

But then the year 2000 came to a close, the AD2000 office closed its doors and everyone began asking the same questions. "Now what?" "Where do we go from here?" "What should our goals for the future be?" The mission movement seemed to be adrift with no clear direction and goals.

Luis Bush, the director of the AD2000 Movement, took note of this and launched the Evangelizing Our World Inquiry or *The World Inquiry*, for short, in the fall of 2001. A survey was developed with six basic questions.

- I. What are the major external challenges facing the Church regarding evangelization in your city or country?
- II. What are the major obstacles to world evangelization internal to the Church?
- III. What do you believe God is calling His people to do in world evangelization over the next 25 years?
- IV. What would be a suitable phrase (watchword) to capture the essence of world evangelization to serve as a unifying paradigm for the next 25 years?

*Rick Wood is the Communications Director for the World Inquiry.*

- V. How important are the following for Global Evangelical Structures to provide to local believers to enhance world evangelization efforts?
- VI. You made a decision to trust (place your faith in) Jesus Christ as your Savior because of?

Each question has several possible choices provided from which each participant can choose or add his own.

The goal of the World Inquiry is to get Christian leaders together in hundreds of cities around the world and to listen to what God is saying through the leaders of His Church. Thus far over 5,000 Christian leaders in 600 cities in 66 countries have participated. A remarkable accomplishment in just a year and a half.

During the first week of May, 2003, 132 delegates met in Seoul, Korea for a mid-course assessment of the results of the World Inquiry. Some of these results are presented in this issue of *Mission Frontiers*.

But what does this mean to you and to the Church as a whole? What difference is the World Inquiry making and where is it headed. And how can you be involved? Let's examine these questions.

## The Power of the Inquiry Process

From the very first World Inquiry meeting of Christian leaders in September of 2001, something remarkable became evident. The very process of leaders gathering together to wrestle with specific external and internal challenges to the Church and the future of World Evangelization has had a tremendous catalytic effect.



The World Inquiry is not just a means to gather

information, it is a process by which the dreams and visions in the hearts of God's people have taken on flesh and bone and begun to walk. Even after the survey forms have been completed, leaders often-times have remained for hours to continue the process of discussion, dreaming and planning. So far 42 major new initiatives have been birthed in China, India, Africa, Mongolia and various other regional and religious spheres out of the World Inquiry process. See the full list at [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org).

The leaders participating in the World Inquiry events were often so excited by the process itself that they took it upon themselves to organize World Inquiry events in the major cities of their country or region.

The fact that the World Inquiry has had events in over 500 cities in 66 countries is not a result of great organizational expertise and effort. It is simply the result of people catching the vision for the process itself and volunteering their time and resources to host these events. Essentially the World Inquiry process has flourished because of the volunteered efforts of hundreds of people in various avenues of ministry.

Surprisingly, there are no large donors or foundations supporting the efforts of the World Inquiry. The World Inquiry is a virtual organization of volunteers with no central office. The vision for the World Inquiry process itself is what carries it forward.

What this all means is that almost anyone with a little training can organize and host a World Inquiry event. It also means that this process of inquiry can take on a life of its own after the World Inquiry is officially scheduled to end in the summer of 2004. People all over the world who catch the vision for the potential of the inquiry process itself can continue to organize events for the benefit of their own cities, regions and ministries.

If you would be interested in organizing a World Inquiry event in your city or country you may contact me at <rickwood@xc.org> for more information.

emerged. One wonders how many of these new initiatives will develop over the next year of the World Inquiry and what could occur through an ongoing process of inquiry.

unique needs requiring tailor made solutions. The challenge, however, will be to integrate the myriad of local initiatives into a process of global interaction and cooperation so that the big picture of missions is not overlooked.

---

## ...major mission agencies responsible for the success of missions worldwide have not yet been a part of the World Inquiry.

---

This growing group of World Inquiry event facilitators could also be the foundation for an ongoing process of global interaction by mission leaders around the world.

In a recent issue of *Mission Frontiers*, Ralph Winter and Patrick Johnstone have issued a call to the mission leaders of the world to network together in an effort to provide much needed cooperation, coordination and sharing of insights.

The World Inquiry could provide the basis for this kind of global interaction. Ironically, the major mission agencies responsible for the success of missions worldwide have not yet been a part of the World Inquiry. This needs to change as we move forward. We need mission leaders to catch the vision for this process and take it back to their agencies, associations and the countries where they work. The results of the process so far indicate that it could provide much needed vision and insight to existing mission efforts as well as provide the foundation for launching new efforts.

### The Inquiry Process Leads to New Emerging Mission Initiatives and Leaders

The most exciting aspect of the World Inquiry is not the information that has been collected from the 5,000 participants thus far. A goal of the Inquiry process is to identify and empower a new generation of younger Christian leaders who can lead these new initiatives. Thus far over 200 of these new leaders have been identified. The interaction of leaders getting together to share their visions and dreams has often turned into specific new initiatives. As mentioned, so far 42 exciting new efforts have

### What NOT to Expect from the Results of the World Inquiry.

#### 1. Don't Expect that Most Christian Leaders Are Going to Share Your Vision For Ministry.

For many years now my passion has been to see the Unreached Peoples penetrated with the Gospel. This has been the vision that has been promoted through the U.S. Center, the AD2000 Movement and many other organizations.

The results thus far from the World Inquiry indicates that in most areas of the world this is not the highest priority for many participants. Whether you or I like it or not, no matter how misguided this may be, it is the reality of what people are thinking and we have to deal with it. On the positive side, it gives us a place to start the dialogue on these issues. Even if Unreached Peoples is not the highest priority for many, there may still be a way for our respective visions to intersect so that each can move forward.

#### 2. Don't Expect the Whole World to Agree on Everything.

While there are certainly some common themes coming out of the World Inquiry events, the one thing that also seems clear from the current results is that geography does make a difference in how people answered the various questions. The French speaking Africans, for example, felt that illiteracy was a very formidable challenge in their area. This was not the case in many other areas of the world. As a result, the dreams and visions for evangelization coming out of the World Inquiry are unique to the respective areas of the world from which these leaders come. This is understandable since each area of the world has

### The Outlook for the Future

The May meeting of Christian leaders in Seoul, Korea marks the end of the first phase of the World Inquiry. The complete compendium of this meeting including all of the preliminary results can be viewed on the *Mission Frontiers* website at <www.missionfrontiers.org>. Just go to the latest July-August 2003 issue and click on the link to the World Inquiry Compendium.

Over the next several months the process of World Inquiry leadership meetings and data collection will continue. Once the data collection is complete, the process of analysis and interpretation will begin. The final results will be presented at the next global World Inquiry event scheduled for June 2004, in Seoul Korea.

### What Can You Do?

If you are interested in participating in the World Inquiry, here are some ways that you can help.

1. Volunteer to organize and host a World Inquiry leadership meeting in your city, country, or region.  
If you already have a meeting scheduled where a World Inquiry could be added to the schedule, please contact us for more information <rickwood@xc.org>
2. If you would like to explore with us how the World Inquiry can be expanded to foster global interaction please send an email to <thirdcall@uscwm.org>
3. Pray and Give. The World Inquiry needs whatever help that you can provide. There are no foundations or large donors supporting the World Inquiry. For information on donations contact Bethany Lay at World Help <info@worldhelp.net> 434-525-4657