

# Are you finding your way into God's highest call for you?

Ralph D. Winter



Dear Reader,

Are you a student? Are you (or were you) at "Urbana-St. Louis" in December? Or are you just wondering if your life is really in God's hands? Are you finding your way into God's highest call for you?

These are the most important questions for every believer. There's no use talking about being a follower of Christ if we cannot (really) say, "I am doing *My Utmost for His Highest*" (as Oswald Chambers' book title puts it).

However, life is not ideal. We usually have to accept lots of things that are second-best while we work our way into things of higher interest to God. This is especially true for students; they cannot usually "vault" into high effectiveness the day they graduate.

This is even more true for young women, who have to move ahead sensibly as though they will never marry and yet be prepared to tie in, perhaps, with another person who may be going in a different direction. That's our society.

Discovering and doing the will of God is a complexity. Is there a good recipe? Consider these typical options placed before us:

1. Be really "all out" – be a field missionary or a mission-minded pastor.
2. Do a job that is crucial to God's Kingdom, like working on the staff of the William Carey Library, which funnels 80,000 mission books a year into the hands of highly-motivated people.
3. Do a job that is crucial to Kingdom concerns and thereby glorify God, like working to eliminate malaria

and its mammoth and gruesome impact on the peoples of Africa and other regions.

4. Do an honorable job that simply contributes to the workings of society (i.e., not stuff like making Beanie Babies or "dealing" in a casino).

## There Is Another Way

But here is another way of looking at things. You have to work for a living. You have to do something which someone will pay for. Either that or you subsist from the fruits of your own little plot of land – and do little more than save yourself.

Category 1: Most jobs provide goods or services to people (customers) who are willing to pay. This is the primary sphere of "business," where many good things are accomplished by honest, effective activity.

Category 2: However, many jobs are funded "from behind." That is, some foundation, some tax base, or some set of donors is willing to pay you to deal with an urgent problem or provide a service to someone else (who does not pay).

Mission agencies fall into the latter category. Much of what they do blesses people *who can't pay* for the products or services they receive.

Could everything that needs to be done in this world be done with a business approach? Almost. But many highly strategic needs require funding "from behind." You can't make "a business" out of rescuing child prostitutes in Thailand, or by setting up medical clinics in the midst of extreme poverty around the world.

But, you say, what can a mere individual do? Frankly, very little, unless you join a team of others who are already

working together. Choosing that team is as delicate and crucial a question as choosing whom to marry, even if it's not as permanent a decision.

Or you can start a team. This rarely works unless the team-starter has already worked in some existing team, gaining necessary experience and respect. Even then, few new starts succeed. And it takes time – a lot of time – to create a stable, new organization. However, it is both true and startling that setting out to build a team from scratch around some unsolved problem is one of the things that is most urgently needed.

Along this line, how can you sum up the efforts of a hundred families working together in the Frontier Mission Fellowship, the U. S. Center for World Mission, and William Carey International University – in various centers around the USA and in other countries? It's easy: we're working on 24 problems and are challenging 12 "frontiers in mission" which relate to those 24 problems. (See page 24 of this issue of *Mission Frontiers*.) We urgently need full-time help. We also need thousands of people who can give part-time assistance, often right where they already live. (To learn more about this opportunity for part-time assistance, write to [Fran.Patt@uscwm.org](mailto:Fran.Patt@uscwm.org). Also, after March 1 check with [personnel@uscwm.org](mailto:personnel@uscwm.org) about internship programs we offer in 2007-2008.)

The problems needing solutions range from simple to complex, from easy to hard, from small to big.

We need people for whom "making a living" is not their central concern. We need people whose hearts have room for things about which God is concerned on a global level.

You also can take a good look at some of our departments portrayed on page 25. God has given us a multi-million-dollar campus, and many highly-

competent and dedicated families. We have 30 years of growth behind us. Our *Perspectives* course attracts over 8,000 new students a year at 180 sites. We provide 80,000 books a year. This bulletin goes to 80,000 people all over the world (and we certainly need more help staffing it). And we offer more besides.

**Choosing your team is as delicate and crucial a question as choosing whom to marry.**

Ralph D. Winter is the Editor of *Mission Frontiers* and the General Director of the Frontier Mission Fellowship.

Yes, we have lots of things in which you may find deep fulfillment.

But you don't have to join us. There are many other outstanding "teams" you can join, even if they may not (as we do) seek members who cannot come and work full-time.

### Some Ideas to Consider

In any case, your future in the hands of God is neither magical nor simple. Homework is necessary. As one of our *Perspectives* brochures declared years ago, "God cannot lead you on the basis of facts you do not have." Here are some ideas:

1. Be sure you enroll in the *Perspectives* course, for this will empower you as a "World Christian." See pages 6-7 to learn about classes offered in North America in spring 2007.
2. Try out a month with the *Global*

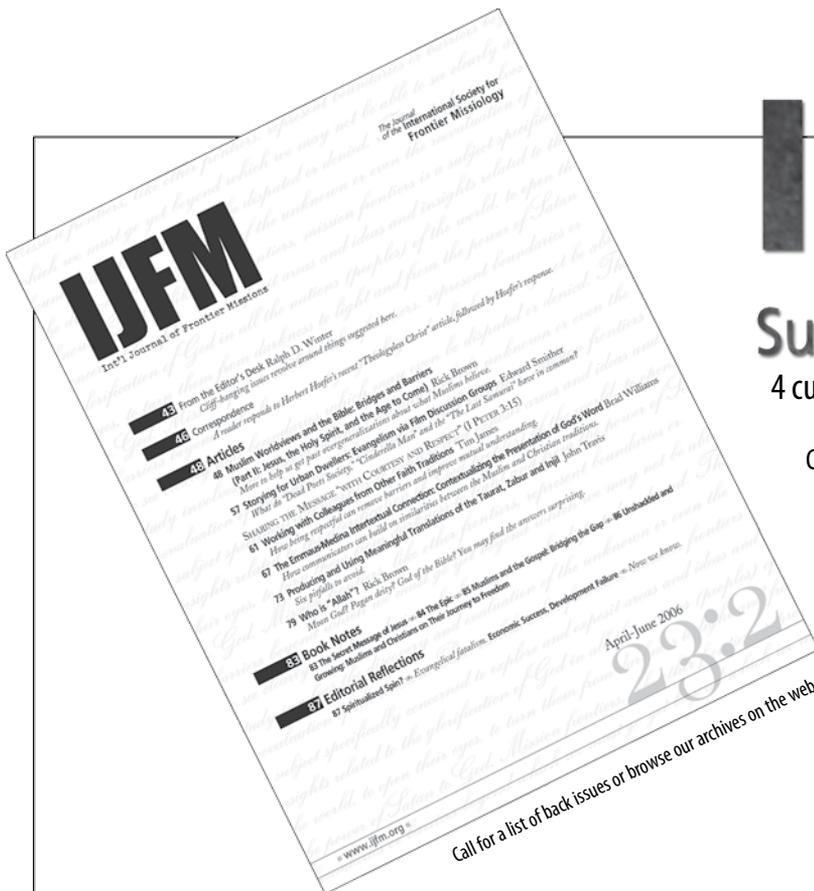
*Prayer Digest*. (Request a sample issue by sending an e-mail request to [subscriptions@global-prayer-digest.org](mailto:subscriptions@global-prayer-digest.org). Or check it out online at [www.global-prayer-digest.org](http://www.global-prayer-digest.org).) The *GPD* can transform you into a *daily* World Christian. Daily awareness is a *big* step forward, for, as we have often repeated, "Nothing that does not occur daily will ever dominate your life."

3. Be alert to regional meetings of *Perspectives* alumni. Get there: these are good occasions to connect with like-minded believers – and maybe discover the person you'll marry!
4. Plan to attend the annual meeting of the *International Society of Frontier Missiology* ([www.ijfm.org/isfm](http://www.ijfm.org/isfm)).
5. Subscribe to the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, which provides far more details about

mission than our *Mission Frontiers* bulletin. Check out [www.ijfm.org](http://www.ijfm.org), and subscribe at [ijfm\\_subscriptions@wciu.edu](mailto:ijfm_subscriptions@wciu.edu).

6. Read other key mission books and periodicals. Peruse [www.missionbooks.org](http://www.missionbooks.org), and check out [www.momentum-mag.org](http://www.momentum-mag.org).
7. Be sure you regularly contribute to the financial support of a missionary or mission mobilizer. (Look at [www.mission-world.com](http://www.mission-world.com) as one good resource.)
8. Carefully read the "Join the World Christian Movement" chapter in the *Perspectives* Reader (pp. 718-723).
9. Most of all, think of missions as a *cause*, not a *career*. Concern yourself with the cause of missions, and your career will take care of itself.

Is that enough to get you started? 🌐



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Topeka Jan. 8 Kristin Swanson 785-537-2770

Wichita - West Jan. 16 Kristin Geri 785-537-2770

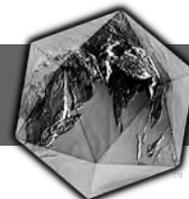
Charles Miller 316-735-1532

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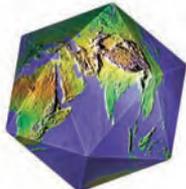
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See [www.perspectives.org](http://www.perspectives.org) for up-to-date listings of classes and regional contacts.



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# URBANA & PERSPECTIVES

## Meant to Go Together

**Yvonne Wood Huneycutt**

**P**eanut butter and jelly, lattes and biscotti, Urbana and *Perspectives*: things that go great together. The *Perspectives* course has enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the Urbana student mission convention since *Perspectives* began. In fact, the whole idea for *Perspectives* grew out of the unexpected and dramatic surge of mission interest among students at Urbana '73.

During the tumultuous 1960s mission interest among students had nosedived, yet the wind of the Holy Spirit began to blow on a new generation. Observers at Urbana '73 were stunned when Billy Graham issued the call for students to commit to world evangelization and thousands stood to their feet. That year 28% of Urbana's participants signed mission commitment cards – four times the response from the previous convention.

Mission leader Ralph Winter pondered: *Could this be the beginning of another Student Volunteer Movement?* The Student Volunteer Movement of the early 20th century swept across college campuses, producing tens of thousands of mission recruits – the largest student mission movement in history. How, Winter wondered, can we encourage and inform this new movement, helping students know how to act on their early commitment? What will sustain their commitment once they return to busy campus life with all its distractions? Winter envisioned a course where students could be

exposed to the current state of the world, God's work to accomplish His purposes in the world, and avenues to discover their roles in the Father's plan. A prototype of *Perspectives* thus emerged in the summer of 1974.

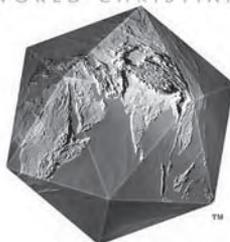
At Urbana '76 an incredible 50% of the students signed cards indicating their willingness to pursue whatever God's purposes were for them in world mission. Ralph and Roberta Winter were at Urbana '76, calling students to face the challenge of unreached peoples. A young man named Steve Hawthorne was also at Urbana '76,

and that Urbana and the follow-up *Perspectives* course changed the direction of his life. Hawthorne and Winter went on to edit the first edition of the *Perspectives* Reader and published it just in time for its debut at Urbana '81.

The *Perspectives* course has been challenging and equipping students ever since. But today *Perspectives* has impacted not only students, but also pastors, laypeople, and others in the U.S. and across the globe. In North America alone more than 80,000 *Perspectives* alumni are now working out their roles in the fulfillment of God's purposes.

Are you a student with a commitment to pursue God's global purposes? Maybe you are not a student, yet you seek a stronger framework for your obedience in mission. Out of the vast array of mission opportunities and agencies, where do you begin? With expectations and pressures from family, friends and finances, how can you keep your commitment alive? *Perspectives* is designed for you – to help you take the next steps. Urbana and *Perspectives*: some things just go together!

## PERSPECTIVES ON THE WORLD CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT



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*Yvonne Huneycutt is a frequent speaker in Perspectives classes, previously coordinating classes for 10 years as director of the Nashville Office of the USCWM. She is now facilitating the global spread of the Perspectives course.*



# God's Patchwork Quilt:

## The Peoples of South Sumatra

L.D. Waterman

Listening and unspoiled, Lake Ranau lies tucked into the southwestern corner of South Sumatra.<sup>1</sup> Seventy miles to the northwest, Mount Dempo soars a majestic 5876 feet above sea level, its verdant tapering slopes whispering the legacy of this dormant volcano.

Yet natural beauty is not the dominant impression on most who have been to this province of Indonesia. Its capital city, Palembang, has been sullied by oil refining, cement manufacture, and fertilizer production. The vast Musi River, flowing from the Bukit Barisan Mountains in the far west through Palembang and eastward to the sea, was once the pride of the ancient Sriwijaya civilization. It is now a murky flow of pollution, with plain wooden houses crowded along its banks. Slash-and-burn farming produces a thick, smoky haze that covers much of the province during each year's dry season – limiting visibility, closing airports, irritating eyes and lungs, and exasperating nations downwind of Sumatra.

Much of South Sumatra is isolated, with only minimal educational opportunities outside the cities, and almost non-existent medical care. Huge mangrove swamps stretch to the east and north of Palembang. To the west lie endless flat miles of tropical forest and plantations. Palembang itself has a reputation for crime, much more than most other Indonesian cities. There's a lot of talk of killing and theft. Spiritually sensitive observers say there's a violent feel to the city: a sense you always need to be on your toes.

Most people wouldn't choose to go to South Sumatra. When people from the outside do arrive there, residents are immediately curious why they have come. This eager curiosity can open the door for building relationships.

### A Patchwork of Peoples

South Sumatra is a patchwork quilt of ethnic groups with many similarities among their diverse languages. Social and economic pressures are weakening ethnic identity among many smaller groups, and intermarriage between ethnic groups is on the increase, especially in Palembang. Yet enmity and suspicion persist between most groups.

The Palembang ethnic group has significant influence throughout the province. Other ethnicities tend to treat the Palembang with respect; perhaps because of their big-city status, or maybe because of their reputation as criminals.

Village life meanders quietly, as do the countless rivers; and both social and spiritual activity generally revolve around the local mosque. Many villages of South Sumatra, regardless of their ethnic affiliation, are so isolated that people over 50 years of age have no awareness that the world holds any belief system other than their own syncretistic brand of Islam.

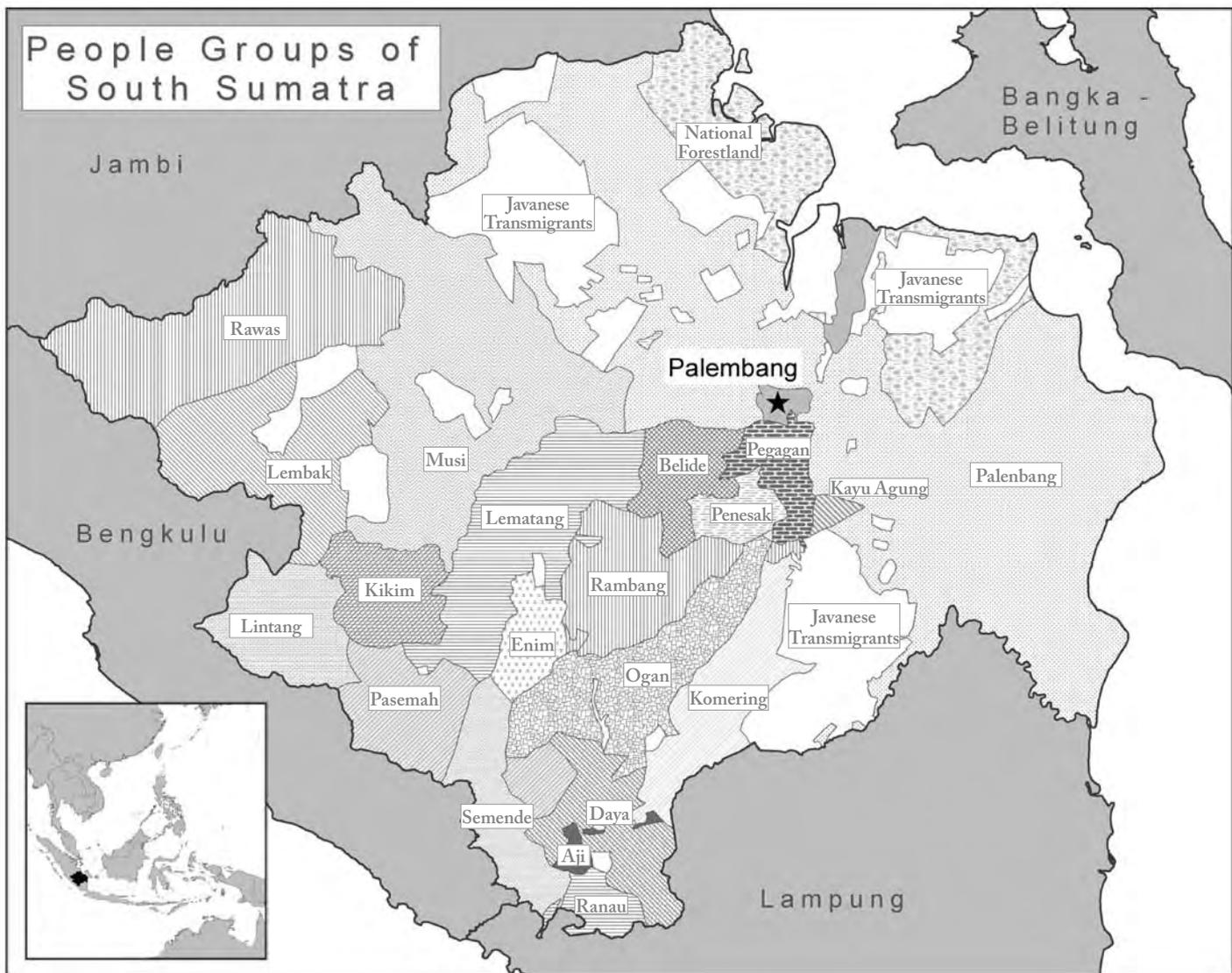
Palembang has seen significant development in recent years, but urban economic advance has not translated into increased openness toward other beliefs. The spiritual attitude of Palembang is generally more hard-line than in the rest of the province, where people struggle to survive amidst poverty. Increased income from oil, mining, and other industries goes mainly to those at the pinnacle of the economic hierarchy.

The indigenous peoples of South Sumatra are now joined by other groups which have migrated to the province. Most notable among these migrants are Chinese Indonesians (known for their business acumen), Bataks from North Sumatra, and Javanese transmigrants. Though the Javanese on the island of Java have numerous Christian churches, more than 99% of the Javanese in South Sumatra remain Muslim.

*(continued on page 12)*

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*L. D. Waterman (a pseudonym) is a leader of church-planting teams with Pioneers, working among Muslims in Southeast Asia. He holds the M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. After 10 years of pastoral ministry in the United States he moved to his present ministry location, where he has served for the past 13 years.*



Cluster	People Group	Population
Musi	Musi	600,000
	Palembang	1,600,000
	Lembak	83,000
Pasemah	Rawas	200,000
	Kikim	80,000
	Lematang	275,000
	Lintang	190,000
	Pasemah	330,000
	Semendo	230,000

Cluster	People Group	Population
Ogan	Belide	75,000
	Enim	100,000
	Ogan	150,000
	Rambang	140,000
	Aji	15,000
	Pegagan	225,000
	Penesak	130,000
Lampung	Komerling	450,000
	Ranau	17,000
	Daya	80,000
	Kayu Agung	20,000
Javanese Transmigrants		1,850,000

A huge social gap divides the local people and “outsiders.” Outsiders generally run the businesses, and a few elite government officials wield power. Most local people have little control over the currents that steer the course of their lives.

Despite these challenges, outsiders to the province often find that indigenous people are positive, friendly, helpful and very curious. Yet beneath the surface lies suspicion of outsiders – a suspicion which newcomers can overcome through building friendships. These friendships happen most naturally when one can become “adopted” into a family, a pattern which opens wide doors of social acceptance.

### The “Giants” in South Sumatra

The unreached groups in this province remain 99-100% Muslim, and numerous obstacles face those who would like to bring the hope of the gospel to them. First is the poor quality of roads and communication by which to gain access to various groups.

Second is the remoteness of many ethnic groups, combined with resistance from provincial and local officials toward outsiders who might influence those under their control. Many government officials are aware that Christianity is a global faith, and they would prefer to maintain the status quo.

Third, the diversity of cultures and languages greatly multiplies the effort needed to see the gospel advance throughout the province. Most groups do not even have Scripture portions or stories in their heart language.

Another barrier is the crucial role of the *shamans*

(traditional healers and persons of spiritual power) and corrupt government officials, both of whom have a large stake in continuing activities contrary to the advance of the gospel. In addition, the relatively high crime rate is a deterrent to many who would consider working in South Sumatra.

At present, the Musi people group seems most closed to the gospel. No churches have been allowed among them, and accusations of “Christianization” (using manipulative means to trick people into converting to Christianity) have prevented significant gospel sowing among them.

Behind these visible challenges to God’s Kingdom lie the invisible powers and principalities entrenched within the soul of South Sumatra. The “Village Cleansing” ceremony, held annually in almost every village of South Sumatra, is scheduled and supervised by the local *shaman*. All the members of a village attend this ceremony, which involves blood sacrifice in the quest for village safety. The ceremony also involves prayer for a fruitful harvest, cleaning the graves of the ancestors, and honoring the spirits who guard the rivers, trees, and other places of power.

Twenty-six sites in the Pasemah highlands feature monolithic statues over 2000 years old, along with eerie tombs and terraced sanctuaries, evidencing long-entrenched spiritual strongholds. One statue features a snake wrapped around a person, while another shows a half-man-half-beast offering a human sacrifice. In the second, two people writhe in fear of their

(continued on page 13)



## Partnerships That Work

Ministries in other parts of Indonesia have demonstrated that the most effective church planting among unreached groups here happens through partnership between expatriates and Indonesians from cultures similar to the focus culture. Each can supply a vital ingredient.

A few Indonesian groups already have a vision and passion for bringing Good News to the peoples of South Sumatra. They intend to obey God’s call by faith, with or without assistance from outside. They don’t look for a handout, or relationships of depen-

dency. But they note a valuable role that can be played by expatriates called to partner with them in proclaiming the Good News.

One field worker describes the partnership potential this way: “The national workers are like the sharp metal point of a spear, and the expatriates are like the long wooden shaft. Both have an essential role to play.” Others agree that partnerships like these show great potential for “finishing the task.” Westerners who come thinking they’re going to do it all themselves usually spend years spinning their wheels. Those who have the patience and humility to become learners and partners find Christ at work through the diversity of his multinational Body. 🌐

looming fate, one in the grip of each of the creature's lichen-encrusted hands.

Local stories connect the strangely shaped megaliths to a legendary figure known as "Bitter Tongue." According to legend, he consulted with a *shaman* to overcome his opponents. The *shaman* gave him power that whatever he spoke was certain to happen, except to make dead things alive again. The legends say that he turned the Ogan King and others to stone, and cursed the people with five curses. One version recounts these curses as sickness, poverty, ignorance, empty religious ritual, and womanizing/divorce. Adults still recount to children the story of Bitter Tongue as a morality tale, and many of South Sumatra's indigenous people continue to believe the stories. The fruit of Bitter Tongue's curse remains with them up to the present. They need to know Him who has broken the curse, that they might have blessing and hope.

### "The Black Hole of Missions"

Many "giants," both visible and invisible, oppress the land. As a result, few workers feel "called" to serve in this province. Of those who do come, few stay long. Disease, lack of infrastructure, family situations and depression are the visible causes, yet the "fingerprints" of spiritual opposition can often be discerned behind these. Almost no one who has gone to the province with Great Commission motives has lasted more than five years. According to Caleb\*, a strategic observer, this part of Sumatra "is the black hole of missions. Anything that's put there just disappears. There's a lot of inertia for Sumatra to remain hopeless. It's going to require a strong force to change that. We need more prayer, workers and effort."

Some workers with a burden for the province live in distant cities like Jakarta, Bandung, or Singapore, but such residency creates the dual challenges of tiring travel and disconnectedness from much of what's happening on the field. So far, no person or group has effectively overcome the "giants" of South Sumatra.

*(continued on page 14)*

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The concern about crime and the pervasive distrust in the province have a wearing effect on the human soul. Fear and superstition remain deeply rooted among the populace, and black magic is commonly practiced in certain areas. Fear of spirits and fear of death constantly haunt the souls of South Sumatra's people. They deeply need the Good News of the One who has overcome death, spirits and fear.

### **A Patchwork of Progress**

*Status.* Most indigenous groups of South Sumatra have no known believers among them. A few groups have a mere handful of believers, and only one group has some small indigenous congregations.

Since the 1960s there has been sporadic outreach among the indigenous peoples, but it has involved only a few workers, and has mainly reached Indonesian immigrants in the area. More recently an increas-

ing number of concerned individuals are taking action, forming a network to focus on this province. A prayer network has been established, and prayer journeys have begun to penetrate the darkness.

At this point not many gospel workers actually live in the province. Relationships among those on-site are generally positive, yet one major strategic gap appears between those using traditional approaches (direct sharing followed by an immediate challenge to believe in Christ) and those using more contextual outreach.

*Churches.* Some churches do exist in South Sumatra, but almost all of their members are outsiders, from other Indonesian ethnic groups. Unfortunately, many of the "Christians" have a reputation for gambling, drunkenness, and lending money at exorbitant interest rates. Some groups hold noisy "religious" ceremonies more closely related to their own cultural traditions than the essence of the gospel.

For the most part, these churches keep busy with their own plans and activities, and have little or no interest in connecting in a meaningful way with the majority groups around them. They find it far more comfortable to stay separated and to avoid any action that might increase persecution (a legitimate fear in this environment). Recently, however, interest in praying for the indigenous majority has been growing among church members.

*A challenge for new believers.* With the exception of the Palembang people, most South Sumatrans are not well versed in Islam. Yet any steps to follow Christ generally meet with family rejection, for in a culture where belonging to a group is paramount, such initiative calls into question a person's core identity. Some believers have been able to reconnect later with their families, especially when grandchildren arrive. Also, a few individuals have come to faith in Christ outside the province, but most have no desire to return for the sake of reaching their own people.

### **Needs and Opportunities in South Sumatra**

South Sumatra has an abundance of *social needs*. Among them are job opportunities, marketable work skills, health education, water purification, and improved farming technologies to increase rice production. Many people have a strongly felt need for education, especially in English and in computers and other technical fields. They also need small businesses, along with economic development that could bring hope. The provincial government has launched significant economic development, especially in the Palembang area, but this push for development does not always translate into conditions conducive to major foreign investment.

Among *spiritually related needs* are translation of

## **Prayer Points**

- ☞ Pray for Palembang, a city gripped by crime and violence.
- ☞ Pray for the Musi people, who presently seem most closed to gospel witness.
- ☞ Pray for God to free the peoples of South Sumatra from the grip of invisible powers and principalities that they might hear and receive the Good News of the One who has overcome death, spirits and fear. Pray for the peoples of South Sumatra to know Him who has broken the curse, that they might have blessing and hope.
- ☞ Pray that concern for the indigenous majority will continue to grow among church members in South Sumatra.
- ☞ Pray for many Indonesian workers to be recruited, empowered, and sent out with training in contextual ministry and strong work platforms.
- ☞ Pray that God will bring workers who are willing to learn, able to build partnerships, and hardy enough to endure the challenges of this province.
- ☞ Pray that we will "see the smoke of God's glory in this place."
- ☞ Ask God how He would have you involved in reaching South Sumatra – through praying, giving, and/or going.

Scripture, discipleship of new believers, leadership training of mature believers, and radio broadcasting as a means of seed-sowing and discipleship. Mobilization of existing Indonesian churches and believers holds significant promise, since their cultural similarity will be a boon in their relationship with both the people and the environment.

South Sumatra also holds *many opportunities*, for those who would take hold of them. An increasing number of Indonesian believers have a vision for contextual ministry, and some groups have begun praying and considering how to partner together so that God's blessing will come to South Sumatra. These individuals and groups would be greatly encouraged by the assistance of those the Lord calls from other parts of the world. Earnest, well-informed prayer can push back the giants and open the way for God's glory to enter. Strategic partnership and giving could advance the work already in process. The need remains for creative, hardy laborers, from many parts of the world.

Those called to move to South Sumatra need viable, self-sustaining work platforms. Creating and developing these platforms would be a very strategic ministry for others within the Body, and could diminish dependence on outside funding.

*Overall, the greatest need* is for all kinds of "hope-bearers" – truly qualified professionals who desire to empower and bless the local people. Indonesian partners from outside the province can play a vital part in accomplishing this goal. Timothy\*, a former seminary professor born in South Sumatra, says, "The most important thing we can do is to recruit national workers, empower them, and send



them out with training in contextual ministry and strong work platforms."

*Three shortages* plague the Lord's work in South Sumatra: a shortage of workers, a shortage of literature, and a shortage of funds. All three of these constitute an opportunity and a challenge for the global church.

### Reaching South Sumatra

Reuben\*, who has spent significant time in the province, says, "People [in South Sumatra] are open to God and his kingdom if they are not presented in traditional [Christian] ways. People will almost always receive prayer and therefore have an opportunity to experience God's power."

South Sumatra needs a breakthrough. Reuben asserts, "I believe that breakthrough has to come through prayer and going." Surely the Lord of the harvest is now calling many to pray for South Sumatra and some to go there. We need workers who are both humble and hardy – willing to learn and build partnerships, and able to endure the challenges of this province. Isaiah wrote, "Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim his praise in the islands" (Is 42:12). Surely the time has come for God's people to make his glory known among the many peoples of the world's sixth-largest island!

As I talked with Arif\* about his life and work in the province, his recurrent rasping cough frequently interrupted his comments. Finally I asked if he'd like a drink of water, and he replied, "No thanks. It's because of the smoke. It reminds me that later we'll see the smoke of God's glory in this place."

South Sumatra waits: a frayed patchwork of peoples desperately in need of hope. Who will make God's glory known here? Who will bring light to this land shrouded in darkness? 🌐

\* All names are pseudonyms.

<sup>1</sup> The province of South Sumatra is, strangely enough, not Sumatra's southernmost province. It lies just north of the province of Lampung, which covers the southern tip of Sumatra, the world's sixth-largest island.

## More Information and Steps to Service

in South Sumatra

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- ✉ Write to [SumSel@pobox.com](mailto:SumSel@pobox.com) to receive a 30-day prayer guide and to register for an electronic newsletter.
- ✉ Go to [www.calebproject.org](http://www.calebproject.org) to purchase the recently published *Ogan Prayer Guide* (30+ pages).

# The State of the Gospel in

2006

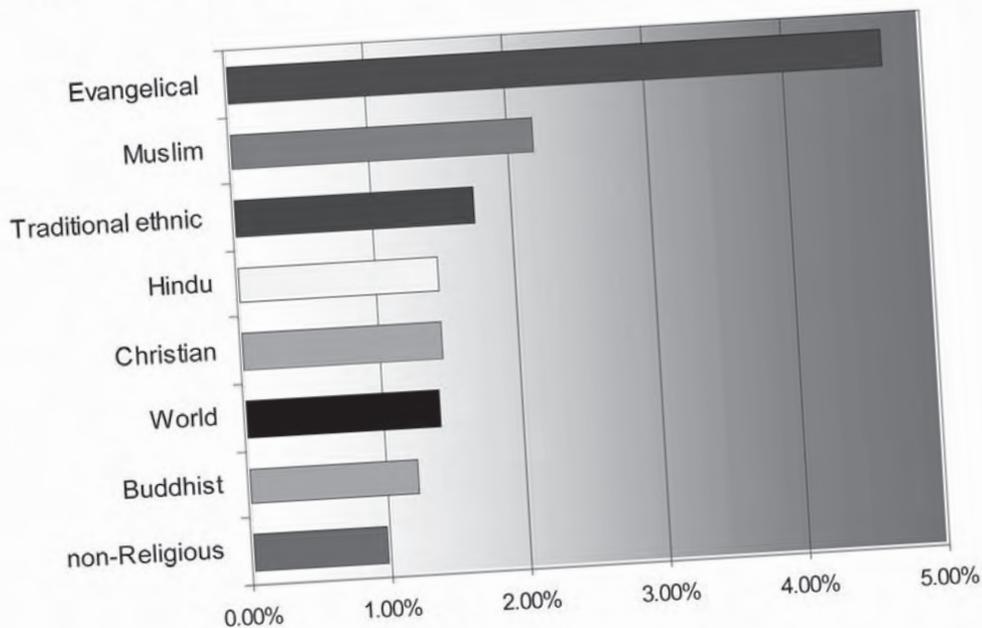
## Jason Mandryk

Jason Mandryk is the co-author of the sixth (2001) edition of the *Operation World* prayer handbook and the director of a team now preparing the seventh edition. What follows are glimpses from a plenary session he presented to the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization's Younger Leaders Gathering in Southeast Asia in September 2006. Justin Long helped to develop this presentation, with data coming from *Operation World*, the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Joshua Project, the U.S. Center for World Mission, and Global Mapping International.

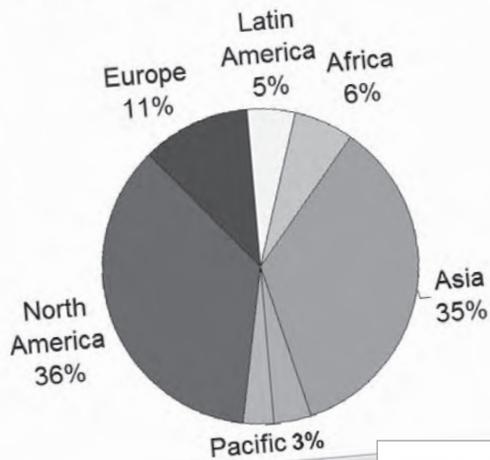
To view and download the full PowerPoint presentation, go to [www.gmi.org/ow](http://www.gmi.org/ow). For descriptive text, go to the November-December 2006 issue of *Momentum* magazine ([www.momentum-mag.org](http://www.momentum-mag.org)).



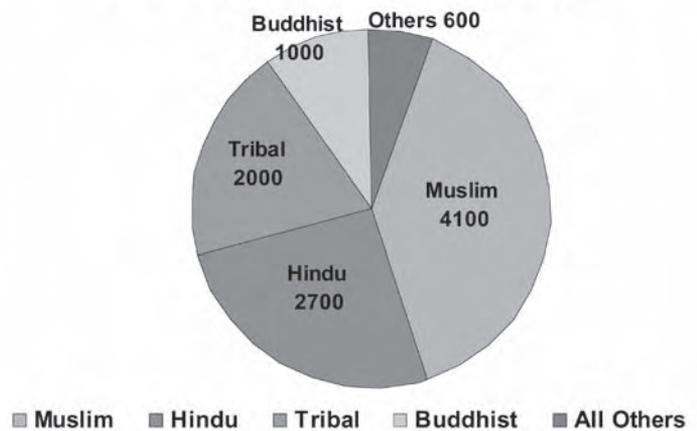
## Annual Growth Rate of World Religions



## CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONARIES WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?



## Unreached People Groups



YLG 2006

## Countries with the Most Unreached Peoples



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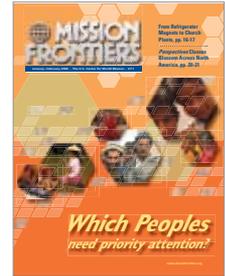


# WHICH PEOPLES NEED PRIORITY ATTENTION?



## Seeking Agreement on the “Core of the Core”

Justin Long



In November 2004, January 2005, and January 2006 three articles on “Which peoples need priority attention?” were published in *Mission Frontiers*. Each was written by a different set of writers, representing different research groups: Dan Scribner for Joshua Project (JP), Todd Johnson and Peter Crossing for the World Christian Database (WCD), and Scott Holste and Jim Haney for the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention. The articles described three different ways of helping decision-makers prioritize the allocation of scarce resources among the many unreached peoples, and presented a list of the people groups each method identified as priority.

Is there a difference in the differences? Is there a value in having multiple lists? Why do we have to make it so complicated? Why can't we have just one list? Why can't we all get along? And by the way, how can these lists make a radical difference in your life and mine?

I see at least two benefits to having different prioritization methods. First, it ensures no single group is likely to be overlooked. By comparing the lists side-by-side, researchers can see discrepancies that need to be investigated. Second, and perhaps more importantly, where the lists agree I believe we can see the “core of the core” or the “neediest” groups. If three different perspectives, using three different ways of prioritizing, agree upon a certain number of groups, you can be sure these groups are the “most in need” in at least three different ways. After all, “a three-fold cord is not easily broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

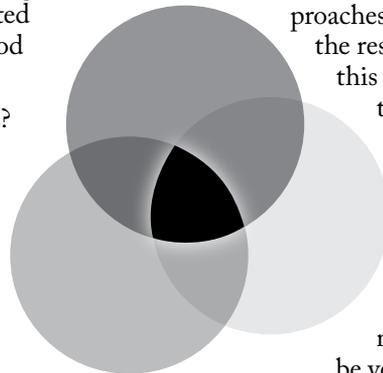
*Justin Long is senior editor of Momentum magazine (www.momentum-mag.org). He was assisted in this article by Scott Peterson, Dan Scribner, and Peter Crossing.*

In order to see this “three-fold cord” in action, the authors of the earlier MF articles, Darrell Dorr (managing editor of *Mission Frontiers*) and I decided to take a first stab at creating a “matched-up” list of the peoples everyone agrees are priority. Scott Peterson, Dan Scribner, and Peter Crossing were very helpful to me. Scott first took the three databases and began to match them, and then the four of us identified problem cases and found matches in most of the cases where there are matches. Because of the different approaches, matching is *not* easy! I'll summarize the respective approaches and tallies later in this article. First, though, let's look at how the lists are different and the same when it comes to methodology.

### Different methods yield different lists

The concept of unreached peoples has been around since the 1970s, and most readers of *Mission Frontiers* will be very familiar with it. In 1982 a group of researchers met at a Lausanne-sponsored conference in Chicago, where they defined a people group as “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church-planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.” By contrast, an ethnolinguistic group is simply a group of people who share common characteristics; usually, the dominant characteristics are location, culture and language, but less frequently caste, socio-political grouping, or religion further complicate the picture.

But different researchers list groups in different ways. These “different ways” are the *methodology* of research: the method that the list uses to *accumulate, group, and prioritize* peoples.



## WHICH PEOPLES NEED PRIORITY ATTENTION?

- We *accumulate* information from academic literature and field sources, both of which are important. Seeking the balance between these two types of sources is a difficult job.
- We *group* peoples, and how we do so determines how many cultural boundaries remain to be crossed (insofar as the list is concerned). A “unimax” group is an attempt to measure the maximum size of a group through whom the gospel can spread, so the method must ask: is language a barrier? Is caste a barrier? Is culture a barrier? If we use these as “lists of the remaining task”, then it’s important to clearly understand our assumptions so if we should ever reach every single one of the groups on a list, we’d be satisfied in knowing that we’ve finished the task (or at least our part of it).
- We *prioritize* peoples because, while we believe every group is a valid target, in reality we have a finite number of missionaries to deploy. Some groups have populations in the millions: do we assign just two workers to them? How do we decide where we put the limited “talents” that we have been given to steward? Different models use different methods. If you are a small agency

or a small team, you’re probably going to pick either just one or a handful of peoples to focus on. Picking the right peoples from a priority list involves matching up your own values with the accumulation, grouping and prioritization methods of the right list.

Go back and look at the three previous *Mission Frontiers* articles in this series, and you can see the various methodologies in action. (You can find those articles by browsing through back issues on the *Mission Frontiers* Website at [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org).)

The IMB list has 11,355 peoples, with each group given a “Global Status of Evangelical Christianity” (GSEC) code on a scale ranging from 0 to 7. Level 0 is the worst off: with no known evangelical Christians or churches, or access to ministry resources. Anything less than “4” is considered unreached, being less than 2% Evangelical. *The primary distinctive of the IMB’s approach is its emphasis on evangelical Christianity and church planting.* A population that is less than 2% evangelical will always be considered unreached by this methodology, no matter how many resources (like radio broadcasting, JESUS

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Film distribution, etc.) or how many non-Evangelical Christians (generally, Catholic or Orthodox) there are.

Joshua Project began as part of the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement. Their list originated from a combination of the lists of the IMB, Wycliffe/SIL, the Adopt-a-People Clearinghouse, and the radio broadcast networks, among others. In the nearly 10 years since its beginning, this list has been refined many times over. Joshua Project is a small team: it has no field researchers but relies on a large, deep network of researchers and workers around the world to contribute and refine

information. The JP list has 15,988 country-specific peoples, with each group receiving a Global Progress rating on a scale ranging from 1 to 4 (with some points between – for example, 2.1, 3.2 or 4.2). Level 1 is considered “unreached”: there are 6,572 groups in this category, representing 2.6 billion people.

*Joshua Project weighs several factors, and its methodology represents a “combination” position between the IMB and the WCD. More than the other lists, the JP list incorporates factors like caste. To be at level 1, a group must have a small percentage of evangelicals (less than 2%, like the IMB) but also a small percentage of total Christians (less than 5%). Level 2 is for those groups where evangelical believers represent less than 2% but Christians (adherents) represent more than 5%.*

The World Christian Database (WCD) is the online database of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, updated to 2005 figures. Unlike the IMB or JP lists (which primarily are lists of peoples and languages, with related religious information), the WCD also contains information on all religions (1900-2050), denominations (1970-2005), countries, provinces, and the larger cities. The peoples data is placed in this larger context. The WCD has 13,093 peoples – more than the IMB, but less than JP. Each people group has an estimate of “% Affiliated Christian” (the percentage of the group that are baptized members of any Christian tradition) as well as information on each of 40 different ministries (church planting, presence of missionaries, media, broadcasting, Scripture, literature, etc.) used to evangelize the group. The combination of these factors is used to measure the percentage of the group’s population that is evangelized, i.e., has access to the Gospel. Then the group is assigned a code – A, B or C – depending on these two percentages. A group that is less than 50% evangelized is automatically assigned to World A. These are the “un evangelized” groups (“un evangelized” which is not exactly synonymous with “unreached”

but largely overlaps). There are 4,174 World A groups, with a total population of 1.4 billion people. *The primary distinctive of the WCD is its emphasis on Christianity as a whole (all traditions, not just evangelicals) and its focus on the activity of evangelization: which groups have ‘not heard’ (World A).*

Database	Total Peoples	Unreached Peoples	Unreached Population
IMB	11,355	6,411	3.6 billion
JP	15,988	6,572	2.6 billion
WCD	13,093	4,174	1.4 billion

On top of these three lists of “unreached peoples,” the authors of the three previous MF articles took on an even more pointed question: how can an agency decide where to invest its “talents”? Therefore, in the three articles the authors further refined their lists and identified the “least-reached” or “highest-priority” peoples.

The IMB researchers looked at their list of unreached peoples and, consistent with their priorities and methodologies, restricted the list to those groups that were not engaged by church-planting teams.

The JP list weighted nine different criteria grouped into four categories, ordered the database by the resulting index, and presented a list using an arbitrary cut-off.

The WCD already has a prioritization method: within World A, peoples are further subdivided by a Targeting code, which is a scale ranging from 1 to 10. Level 1 are those peoples which have the least amount of evangelistic (not just church-planting) effort focused on them and are therefore regarded as the highest priority. We’ll use that prioritization method for this article, although it should be noted that the WCD also allows agencies and other decision-makers to create customized queries for its database based on their particular criteria.

Database	Priority Peoples	Population
IMB	629	562 million
JP	699	928 million
WCD	926	168 million

If we compare the three “priority” lists that resulted, we find that each list has a large number of groups which are unique to it, as well as a number of peoples that each list “shares” with the other lists. At the moment, 22 peoples appear on all three “priority” lists.

## WHICH PEOPLES NEED PRIORITY ATTENTION?

In addition, there are 92 groups that are shared between the IMB and the JP lists, 33 that are shared between the IMB and WCD lists, and 196 that are shared between the JP and WCD lists. I say “at the moment” because this is very much a “first stab” at comparing these lists; the different methods of prioritization make “matching” a difficult task. As a simple example, the WCD tally of priority peoples includes groups less than 100,000 in population, while the IMB priority list does not: thus the WCD has many groups which (simply because of their size) aren’t shared with the IMB, even if these peoples appear on the fuller IMB database of all peoples.

### Using the Lists

So, which of the 22 – or the several hundred where at least two lists agree – should you focus on? How should you create your own lists of prioritized peoples? There are several different methods that are possible, but let me highlight just three scenarios.

*A church mission committee member deciding on criteria for pioneering investments.* You might consider these 22 groups. How can you impact them? Are there any in countries where you have tradition-

ally supported workers or sent short-term teams? Or you can look for groups where two or more lists agree and which are in areas of your special interest. In addition, consider your own values and which priority list best matches them. Are you more interested in churches? You might consider the IMB list. Are you interested in what you can do to support proclamation or pre-evangelism, perhaps by sponsoring specific types of ministry or through short-term teams? You might consider the WCD or JP priority lists.

*A small mission agency attempting to set priorities.* Again, you need to consider your own vision and values. Are you called to a specific area of the world, and are there any peoples on the lists that are in this area? Are you called to a specific language or a specific ministry, or to any peoples on the lists that are in need of those ministries?

*An individual lay Christian seeking a passion for the lost.* Start with the core 22 and find out everything you can about them. Build a short list of prayer points. Use this to intercede for these 22 each day of the month. The last few days of the month you could use for general prayer. Or, if you feel a passion for one particular region of the world, highlight all the groups in that

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## A GOOD PLACE TO START

### Peter Crossing

On 1 July, 2007, just after midnight, 1,850,401,827 people will be unevangelized. Beyond the number, consider that these are not people who have some vague perception of Jesus from Sunday School days, nor people with a token Bible on the shelf, nor people who can flick over worship services on television, nor people who work with Christians and avoid them. These are souls completely removed from any form of Christian witness. This is mission frontier.

The figure of 1.4 billion unevangelized in 2005 is the lowest, the most conservative, of the three estimates given here which range all the way up to the IMB’s 3.6 billion ‘unevangelical’. The point being that in everyone’s terms the priority task is far larger than the 22 people groups on this “core-of-the-core” list. All agree that there are millions

of other souls, just as least-reached, who need our prayerful attention and action. These 22 are not the whole of the core, but they are a good place to start.

Each of the three internally-consistent lists will benefit from the highly technical process of comparing between the lists (please God, send the right people to do this), and in turn this will benefit the users of each list. As new prayer and ministry flow to some of the least-evangelized people groups, other groups will rise up the priority lists for particular ministries. Populations and indicators are constantly changing, but beyond the indicators, God our Savior wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. In this we are united. 🌐

*Peter Crossing is Data Analyst for the World Christian Database.*



(continued from page 21)

particular part of the world and pray for those. I'm sure others will come up with other options, and I'd really like to hear about them.

I hope by now you see the value in having multiple lists. As with any discussion of an important issue, there is wisdom in "many counselors."

Obtaining all the counsel you can, understanding it, coming to grips with it, and meditating on it can help you become more effective in blessing the peoples of the world. But the most important thing is that you select a people group and find some way to bless this people. I, and those who helped me prepare this article, pray that each MF reader will do this, beginning today. 🌐

## THE FRUIT BOWL OF MISSION RESEARCH

**Scott Peterson**

Apples to oranges to bananas? Sometimes, it seems the various people group lists, let alone separate *priority* people group lists, constitute just such a comparison. However, in the fruit bowl that is mission research, we are often simply comparing varieties of apples – Red Delicious to Granny Smith to Macintosh. As Justin Long has so adequately stated the issue, the referenced *Mission Frontiers* articles illustrate how differing goals, interests, and callings shape and distinguish priorities between organizations.

The authors of all three articles acknowledged the ultimate priority or goal as commanded by Christ, to "make disciples" of all of the world's peoples. Various organizations and individuals are called to be obedient to the command by contributing in different ways. Some produce resources and need to know where resources are lacking, be they Scripture translations, audio or video resources, resources for oral communicators, etc. Others focus on seed-sowing or discipleship. Still others focus on church-planting. It is this last category for which the International Mission Board's *Global Status of Evangelical Christianity* is most useful as it attempts to identify the peoples that are engaged by groups with a church-planting strategy and those who are not.

In addition to contrasting priorities between

22 Priority Peoples Appearing on JP, WCD, and IMB Lists

Country	People Group	Language	Population
Afghanistan	Baluch	Balochi, Western	382,000
Afghanistan	Laurowan	Pashayi, Northwest	224,000
Algeria	Tajakant Bedouin	Arabic, Algerian Spoken	1,369,000
Ethiopia	Juba Somali	Maay	353,000
Indonesia	Gayo	Gayo	214,000
Indonesia	Kerinci	Kerinci	365,000
Indonesia	Lembak	Lembak	172,000
Indonesia	Rawas	Rawas	172,000
Iran	Khorasani Turk	Khorasani Turkish	816,000
Iran	Takistani	Takestani	324,000
Libya	Nefusa Berber	Nafusi	156,000
Mali	Moor	Hassaniyya	401,000
Nepal	Kathoriya Tharu	Tharu, Kathoriya	104,000
Pakistan	Kho	Khowar	296,000
Pakistan	Kolai	Shina, Kohistani	387,000
Pakistan	Wanetsi	Waneci	121,000
Pakistan	Western Baluch	Balochi, Western	1,212,000
Saudi Arabia	Bedouin Arab	Arabic, Najdi Spoken	931,000
Turkey	Dimli Kurd	Dimli	1,228,000
Uzbekistan	Crimean Tatar	Crimean Turkish	267,000
Uzbekistan	Kyrgyz	Kirghiz	455,000
Uzbekistan	Turkish	Turkish	150,000

organizations, the articles and accompanying lists can assist in distinguishing various priorities within a single organization. The priority list as presented by my colleagues and supervisors, Scott Holste and Jim Haney, focused on the unengaged, unreached peoples with a population larger than 100,000. However, as their article expressed, the IMB has a primary focus of seeing *all* unengaged, unreached peoples engaged. For the IMB, it is a question of where to begin. We are striving to see the largest of those groups, identified as those with a population of at least 100,000, engaged by 2008. Thus, the list becomes a guide for where to deploy *new* church planters.

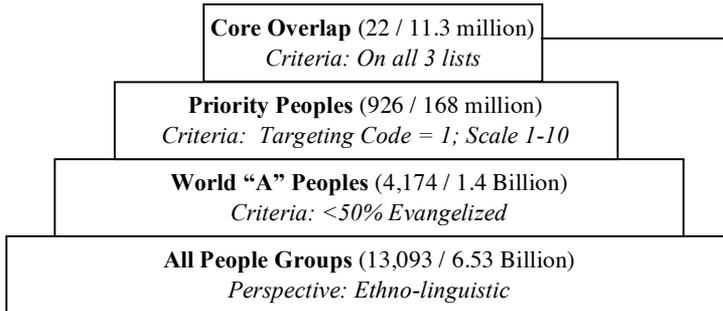
There is much left to be done, and whatever your ministry calling, we pray that God will use you in reaching all peoples. Regardless of your variety of apple, either sweet and juicy or tart and tangy, we all eventually need to reach the core. 🌐

*Scott Peterson is Associate Director of the Global Research Department for the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention.*

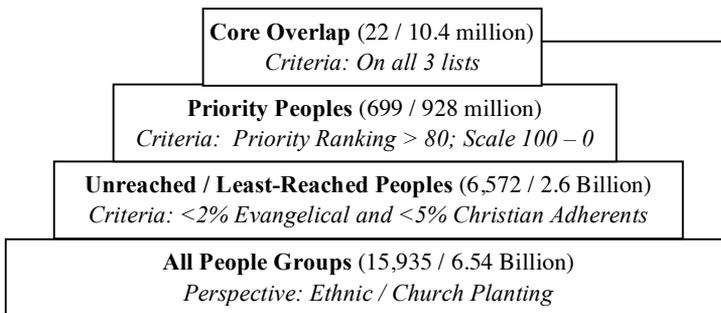
# VISUAL COMPARISON OF "PRIORITY PEOPLES" LISTS

Dan Scribner, Joshua Project

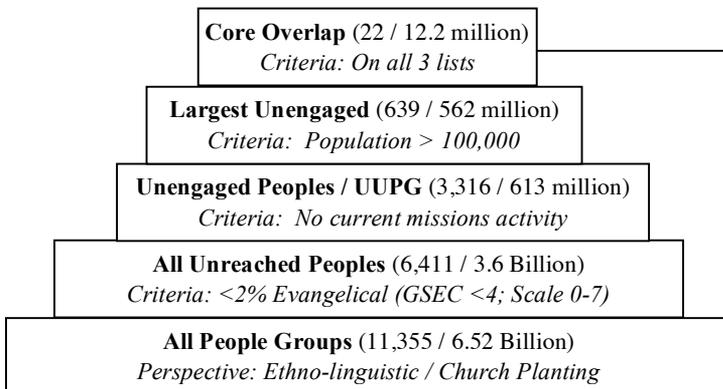
World Christian Database  
www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/



Joshua Project  
www.joshuaproject.net



International Mission Board – SBC  
www.peoplegroups.org



Country	People	Language
Afghanistan	Baluch	Balochi, Western
Afghanistan	Laurowan	Pashayi, Northwest
Algeria	Tajakant Bedouin	Arabic, Algerian Spoken
Ethiopia	Juba Somali	Maay
Indonesia	Gayo	Gayo
Indonesia	Kerinci	Kerinci
Indonesia	Lembak	Lembak
Indonesia	Rawas	Rawas
Iran	Khorasani Turk	Khorasani Turkish
Iran	Takistani	Takestani
Libya	Nefusa Berber	Nefusi
Mali	Moor	Hassaniyya
Nepal	Kathoriya Tharu	Tharu, Kathoriya
Pakistan	Kho	Khowar
Pakistan	Kolai	Shina, Kohistani
Pakistan	Wanetsi	Waneci
Pakistan	Western Baluch	Balochi, Western
Saudi Arabia	Bedouin Arab	Arabic, Najdi Spoken
Turkey	Dimli Kurd	Dimli
Uzbekistan	Crimean Tatar	Crimean Turkish
Uzbekistan	Kyrgyz	Kirghiz
Uzbekistan	Turkish	Turkish

Visual representations are often helpful to understand data relationships. Here is an attempt at a visual comparison of the three lists that Justin Long has helpfully described in this *Mission Frontiers* article. The "pyramids" in the diagram might better be envisioned as concentric circles since each "step" in the pyramid is a subset of the previous level.

- Dan Scribner, Joshua Project

# “Frontiers of Perspective”

Often Addressed in *Mission Frontiers*

In the pages of *Mission Frontiers* you'll frequently see references to the following “frontiers of perspective.” Note that this is an exploratory, growing, dynamic list, and that any one frontier does not supersede or displace the others.

## 1 Unreached Peoples

The U.S. Center for World Mission was founded, in part, on the discovery that many people groups still have no viable, indigenous church community in their midst – and require pioneering, cross-cultural outreach.

## 2 From the Unfinished Task to the Finishable Task

We later realized that, though a large challenge, it is a *relatively small* task to reach all unreached peoples – in view of the enormous global community of Christians and the many churches available to reach each people.

## 3 Failure with Large Blocs and the Offsetting Trend to “Radical Contextualization”

We also began to realize that it's not just how many unreached peoples are left, but also that some large blocs of peoples are superficially touched by gospel witness – and that some “reached” peoples aren't *really* reached.

## 4 Reverse Contextualization – the Re-contextualization of Our Own Traditions

We have also sensed the necessity, before we can successfully contextualize the Bible for others, of acknowledging major philosophical or theological flaws in our own traditions.

## 5 Beyond “Christianity”

We will often need to go *beyond* radical contextualization – to recognize that some people around the world will choose to go beyond current expressions of biblical faith now recognized as “Christianity.”

## 6 The Great Commission and Abraham

Early on we recognized that the Great Commission first appears in Genesis 12, so that missions is clearly the basis of the entire Bible. Thus we will likely read and apply the Bible in radically new ways.

## 7 The Reclaiming of the Gospel of the Kingdom

Latter-day Evangelicals have often substituted a mere “Gospel of salvation” for the full-fledged Gospel of the Kingdom so vividly portrayed in the Bible.

## 8 A Different Type of Missionary Recruitment

A pattern of pre-graduation “enlisting and guiding” is clearly superior to waiting until students have completed university degrees and are weighed down by heavy debt and poor curriculum choices.

## 9 A Trojan Horse in Education?

We can make creative, strategic choices to stem the tide of secularization in public and private schools.

## 10 Needed: a Revolution in Pastoral Training

Training is often focused on the wrong students, the wrong curriculum, or the wrong (degree) packaging.

## 11 The Religion of Science

The Book of Scripture and the “Book” of Creation have each spawned a huge, global community of faith. Our challenge is to bridge the divide between science and religion and to declare the manifest glory of both His Word and His Works.

## 12 The Challenge of the Evil One

An intelligent Evil One hides behind disease pathogens and other scourges often blamed on God. We must vigorously oppose Satan, seek to glorify God, and enlist in the service of the Son of God who “came to destroy the works of the devil.” 🌐

*Are you intrigued to learn more about these frontiers of perspective? If so, you can download Ralph Winter's “Twelve Frontiers of Perspective” at <http://www.missionfrontiers.org>.*



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# 'Outside The Lines' the Latest Addition to Resources for Children

## Nancy Tichy

"Excitement" is an understatement! For more than a decade momentum has been building. A growing number of men and women around the world have been championing mission education for children. Now, in just a three-year span, reality has replaced wishful thinking, and a remarkable new set of tools is on the market.

Last year two children's Bibles with a mission theme were published. The first, *The Global Bible*, serves younger kids, while *Planet Word* is intended for junior and middle schoolers. Both are available from William Carey Library ([www.missionbooks.org](http://www.missionbooks.org)).

Next year Through the Bible Publishers promises a revision of their excellent *DiscipleLand* Sunday school curriculum ([www.discipeland.com](http://www.discipeland.com)), with an even stronger mission component built into every lesson.

This summer Caleb Project (now Initiative360) published two outstanding products. The first is a revision of a previous curriculum, *Kids Around the World – THUMB* peoples (Tribal, Hindu, Unreligious, Muslim, Buddhist). New material has been added to the original collection of six kid-friendly video presentations, this time presented succinctly in CD and DVD formats.

Equally strategic is a new curriculum, *Outside the Lines – Connecting Kids to God's Global Purpose*. Weaving the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement's* main themes into lively lessons for kids from kindergarten through grade eight, a group of volunteer writers from around the country provided the raw material. Caleb Project staff then shaped this material into a valuable addition to their burgeoning list of children's mission curricula. Presented in CD and DVD formats, the material (lesson plans and student materials, music, video clips, activity patterns and directions) can be used concurrently with adult *Perspectives* courses, or adapted to Sunday School or weekly club offerings. *Outside the Lines* is available from Caleb Project at [www.calebproject.org](http://www.calebproject.org).

A variety of children's ministry leaders have field-tested *Outside the Lines* and offer their enthusiastic endorsements. Barb Haron of Centennial Covenant Church in Littleton, Colorado has this to say: "When I asked my 6th-grade Sunday School class what they thought of *Outside the Lines*, they responded, 'It was different from anything we've ever done at church.' It has been exciting to be able to present this material at the verge of those important teenage years, knowing that learning about God's worldview can influence decisions that will impact their lives."

Kathy Noel of Calvary Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania comments, "We were so thrilled to be able to help with the field testing of *Outside the Lines*. Now that we've taught a 'chunk' of the lessons, we're even more excited to use it full-time next year. It is so important to teach our kids to see the Bible as one story with one theme, and this curriculum will be a wonderful tool to help us do that. The lessons were clearly written and age-appropriate, and the learning activities helped the children to be actively engaged in the learning process. We have recommended *Outside the Lines* to several other churches already, and we know that it will have a great impact as the word gets out!" 



*Nancy Tichy is Inland Empire regional representative for the U.S. Center for World Mission and a specialist in mission resources for children. An extensive list of recent resources for teaching missions to kids is available from the author at [ftichy@aol.com](mailto:ftichy@aol.com).*

# How Can We Serve the Latin Missions Movement?

Greg H. Parsons



**A**s I write, I'm in Spain, sitting in the middle of COMIBAM III, a

gathering of 2500 Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking missionaries, mobilizers, trainers, and pastors. Here Latin missionaries and mobilizers are sharing their successes, failures, joys and trials. Researchers are also reporting statistics on 9,265 Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking cross-cultural missionaries (while recognizing that many other Latin workers are off their radar screen because these others aren't connected with sending structures). Of those 9,265 studied here:

- 3092 (33%) work in South America,
- 1495 (16%) work in Europe (548 in Spain and 281 in the United Kingdom),
- 1028 (11%) work in Mexico or Latin America,
- 812 (9%) work in North America, and
- 204 (2%) work in the Caribbean.
- **That totals 6631 missionaries, or 71% of the 9,265 studied.**

Naturally, analysis that divides these workers among continents or large regions is sometimes only marginally helpful – obscuring, for example, those working within unreached tribes in the regions mentioned above. Yet it's clear that more and more Latins are working in unreached people groups, and the conference has featured a clear focus on unreached peoples. (In fact, some have wondered if COMIBAM III has included a disproportionate number of presentations from Latins serving in the Muslim world.) As I turn my attention to the regions where larger numbers of unreached peoples are found, I note these tallies of workers in the COMIBAM statistics:

- 861 (9%) work in Africa,
- 566 (6%) work in Asia, and
- 475 (5%) work in the Middle East.
- **That totals 1902, or 20% of the 9,265 studied.**

All of this reminds us again of (1) the need to recognize how God is working in the Body of Christ to accomplish His global purposes, and (2) the remaining frontiers of the gospel. Those frontiers can include our *own* understanding of the task and the problems that need to be solved.

From what I've been privileged to see in the global missions movement, here are a few reflections for believers from every region:

- Let's recommit ourselves to **pray for the task** before us. (This is why, for example, we at the USCWM are helping to produce *Operation World* in Spanish, after earlier publication attempts broke down amidst much difficulty.) Let's rediscover the good tools we have for prayer, including the *Global Prayer Digest* ([www.global-prayer-digest.org](http://www.global-prayer-digest.org)).
- Let's **gain knowledge about our world**. My favorite professor in seminary used to say that we should be students of the Word and the world! Study your Bible *and* the newspaper (and now the Web!).
- Let's **look beyond the confines of people like us**. This is a potential stumbling block for all of us. When I graduated from seminary in 1982, I noted that many of my white classmates readily assumed they were called to pastor mainly-white churches in suburban settings. Let's not confuse our comfort zones with God's call, no matter where we live and grew up.
- Let's **be strategic in our mission plans, prayers, and outreach**. Many tools can help this. Information is one tool for discernment of strategic priorities, e.g., noting that less than 5% of the 35,000+ Indian missionaries are focused on Hindus in North India. Keep tracking with the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* ([www.ijfm.org](http://www.ijfm.org)) and *Mission Frontiers* ([www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org)).
- Let's **remember that there will always be difficulties**. In Romans 8:17 Paul reminds us that if we are indeed children of God, we are "...heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ". Then he adds the difficult part: "if we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" (NASV). If we become risk-averse, we will unduly hesitate to send workers to the Middle East and other difficult places. 🌐

Rev. Greg Parsons is General Director of the U.S. Center for World Mission.