

The Remaining Peoples with no Chance to Hear about Jesus

In 1974, while preparing his speech for the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, Dr. Ralph Winter realized that thousands of people groups were being completely overlooked by mission agencies and churches around the world. Due to the great success of outreach in places like Korea, sub-Saharan Africa, and island and jungle tribes, some were in fact insisting that missionaries were no longer needed. Others were insisting that missionaries should only partner with and serve the national churches, assuming that national churches were everywhere.

At Lausanne, Ralph Winter explained that an estimated 17,000 people groups had no churches of their own, and never yet had a missionary work among their people group. Winter expected the mission world to be as shocked as he was. Instead agencies responded with disbelief and even resistance, and churches showed no understanding. This awareness had changed Winter, but he realized that churches and agencies would continue to overlook these “hidden” people groups unless they were impressed with the same knowledge. So, Winter resigned from the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary and dedicated the rest of his life to clarifying and mobilizing for what he called the “frontier mission” task: going where no missionary has gone before.

« Forty years ago, in 1978, Ralph Winter put his statistics into a pie chart titled *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*. »

Forty years ago, in 1978, Ralph Winter put his statistics into a pie chart titled *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*, and Roberta wrote the story of the cause in *I Will Do a New Thing* (originally published as *Once More Around Jericho*). The purpose of this chart (shown on page 7) was to clarify which people in the world had no chance of learning about Jesus from someone in their own people group. He divided the world into areas by population. Each pie section shows how far the gospel has penetrated in that area of the world by showing which people are “Active Christians” able to share the gospel with others, and those that still need to hear. Some of the lost are nominal Christians or non-believers able to hear the gospel from the believers in their own culture. But other “culturally-distant” non-believers are beyond the evangelistic outreach of existing believers, because they live in people groups with very different languages, cultures and identity. (See the Key to the colors.)

As tens of thousands of people clearly understood the problem, they pressured their churches and mission agencies for new efforts to these overlooked people groups. Some decided to go themselves, and even founded new agencies for this purpose. Eventually, a great global effort developed to tabulate and reach every Unreached People Group (UPG).

Look at pages 8 and 9 which update the pie chart to 2018. The *good news* is that amazing progress has been made in many areas, especially in China. Movements have also been started in many people groups still considered UPGs because they have not yet passed 2% Evangelical. The *bad news* is that NO discernible progress is being made in well over half of the UPGs. Why? As Winter discovered, people don’t go until the task is clear.

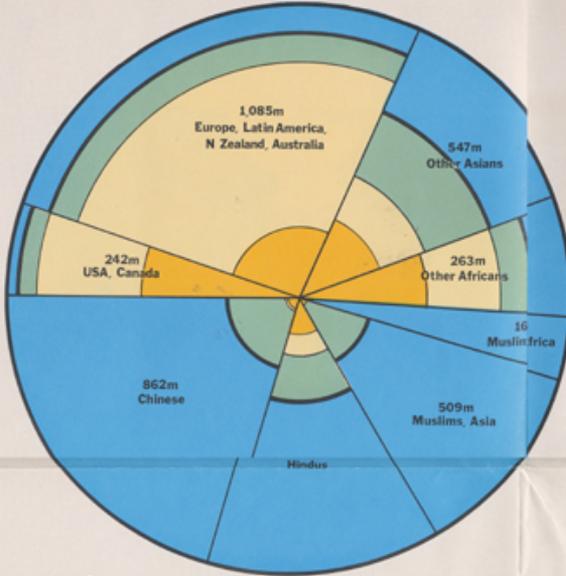
BY **REBECCA LEWIS**

This article is an abridgment of the article by R.W. Lewis entitled “Clarifying the Frontier Mission Task” published in the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 35:4 (Oct-Dec 2018.) Pie charts copyright: R W Lewis and Chris Maynard, used with permission.

Rebecca Lewis has spent 40 years with her husband and family working to see the gift of God’s blessing for families reach the most overlooked peoples on earth.

PENETRATING THE LAST FRONTIERS

m = 1 million



The World in Missionary Perspective

- **Active Christians**
These people definitely possess a genuine personal faith and are capable of winning others to that faith. They do need Christian nurture, and many missionaries are involved in this task.
- **Inactive Christians**
These people are culturally within the Christian tradition but hardly qualify as committed Christians. They need "revival." Most evangelize and assist effort (at least one report has it so!) is focused on this group.
- **Culturally-near Non-Christians**
These are those whose cultural tradition and social sphere have already been penetrated by the Christian faith. For these people there are already active, culturally near at hand, some Christian congregation or denomination where they can readily fit in linguistically and socially. National Christians are evangelizing these people.
- **Culturally-distant Non-Christians**
These are individuals and groups of people who, whether geographically near or far from Christian outreach, are sufficiently different linguistically, socially, economically, or culturally so that they are simply not realistic candidates for membership in existing Christian churches. In the book of Acts the "heathen persons" were Greeks and did not fit well into the Jewish synagogue Paul visited. The church as we know it was not truly born until Greeks and other Romans were able to join their own churches.

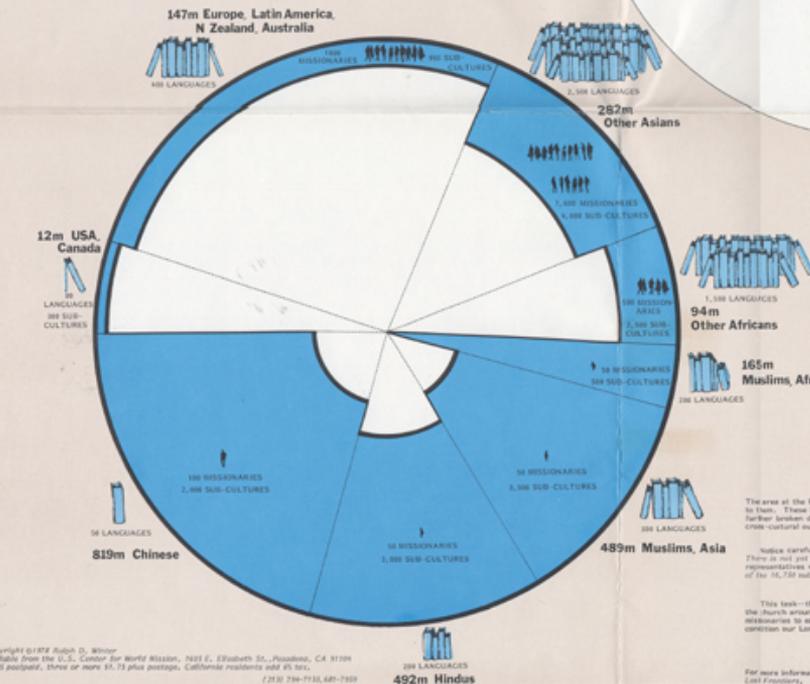
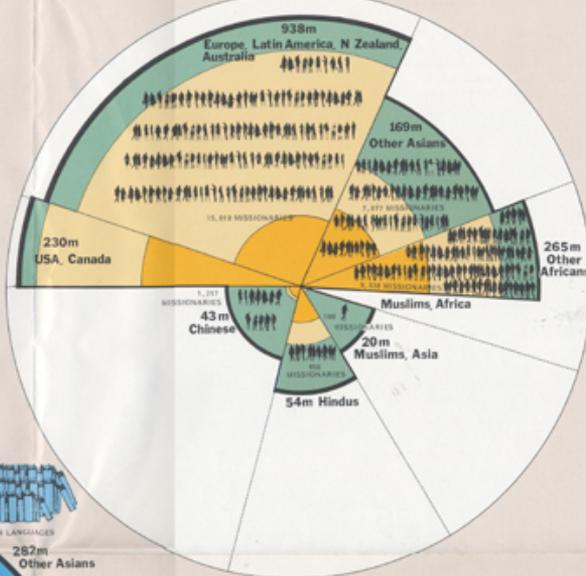
The Extent of Present Christian Penetration

At the right is shown the degree to which each of the eight pieces of pie has been penetrated by the gospel. Active and inactive Christians plus the non-Christians within their cultural reach constitute almost one-half of the world's population, or 1,719 million people. These three groups, whether or not they are Christians, at least have a church established within their culture.

The people figures in each pie sector, representing the North American Protestant Missionary Force, give you an idea of the number of workers in each section of the world. The U.S.A. and Canada are shown to have no such workers only because they are the "home" countries represented on this chart, and full-time Christian workers working within their own cultures are not considered part of the missionary force.

Note how many more missionaries are here than in the pie below. Please do not let this suggest that there are too many missionaries here! The USCMB does not suggest that missionaries be uprooted and moved elsewhere, nor that present efforts are too much, but it does urge more new effort at the frontiers below.

- 100 Protestant missionaries from the USA and Canada
- 50 languages



WORLD STATISTICS, MID-1978, IN MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVE
(population given in millions)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	POPULATION	CHRISTIAN	NON-CHRISTIAN	POP. * TOTAL	CHURCHES	N.A. FOREIGN MISSIONARIES	DIVERSITY OF CULTURE	LANGUAGES	POP. / LANG.
WESTERN WORLD	69	144	17	161	242	—	—	86	300
EUROPE, LAT. AM. & AUSTRALIA	55	688	185	1,065	15,018	1,000	680	950	1,100
NON-WESTERN WORLD	1,150	100	1,050	2,200	1,000	100	1,000	1,000	2,200
CHINA	1,150	100	1,050	2,200	1,000	100	1,000	1,000	2,200
MUSLIM, ASIAN	11	35	30	490	500	100	50	1,000	1,000
AFRICA	—	—	—	285	245	—	50	200	500
OTHER ASIAN	48	48	188	284	247	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
OTHER AFRICAN	45	84	45	174	103	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
TOTAL	219	1,880	1,167	3,047	15,766	2,000	1,680	16,750	16,750
					1,000*			1,000*	1,000*
					1%	8%	9%	9%	9%

* Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.
** Most have an additional 20 million Muslims in the Western World

The Task Remaining

The area of the left shows the peoples of the world that still have no church or significant mission work reaching out to them. These large blocks of people speak over 1,300 mutually unintelligible languages (see column 8) and are further broken down into approximately 10,000 subcultures (see column 9), each of which requires a specialized cross-cultural outreach and its own indigenous church.

Notice carefully that the church cannot normally "grow" into these areas by ordinary evangelistic growth programs. There is not yet a church there to grow. These areas of the world which already have churches must specifically send representatives who will take the time to penetrate these languages and cultures in order to plant a new church in each of the 10,000 subcultures which still have no church. Only then can the newly planted churches begin to grow.

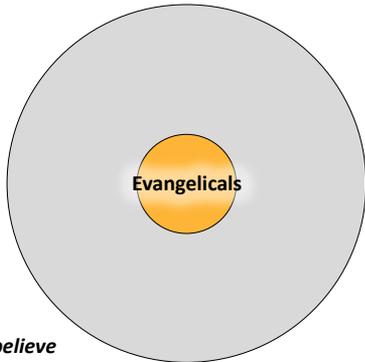
This task—the planting of churches for the first time among the peoples of the left—must be the highest priority of the church around the world. Only when the worldwide church deliberately penetrates these last frontiers by sending missionaries to each of them will we be able to confidently say that "every tribe, tongue, and nation has heard"—the covenant our Lord has placed upon his return (Mark 16:7).

Copyright ©1978 Ralph D. Winter
Available from the U.S. Center for World Mission, 903 E. Elizabeth St., Pasadena, CA 91109
\$3.95 postpaid, three or more \$1.75 plus postage, California residents add 6% tax.
(213) 799-7155, 681-7100

For more information on penetrating the last frontiers, write for the booklet and the film, each entitled *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*.

« The *bad* news is that NO discernible progress is being made in well over half of the UPGs. »
 Why? People don't go until the task is clear.

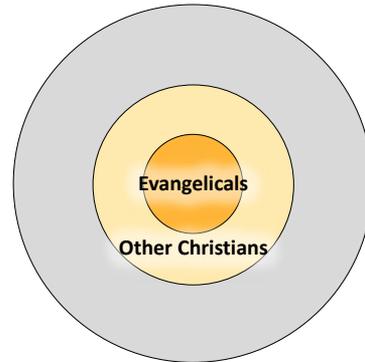
The People of the World



Nearly 10% of the world's population is now evangelical believers.

Evangelicals believe the "evangel" or Good News brings salvation through faith in Jesus.

People of the World Who Identify as Christians

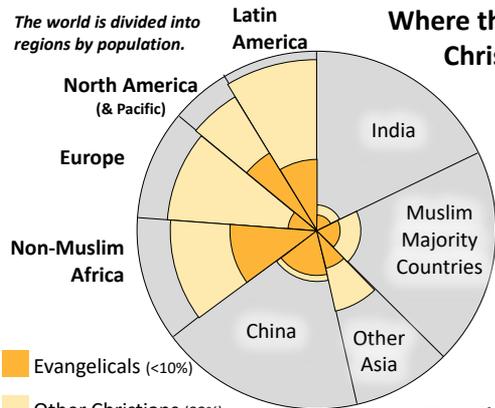


About 33% of the world's population identify themselves as Christians

« Each pie section shows how far the gospel has penetrated in that area of the world by showing which people are "Active Christians" able to share the gospel with others, and those that still need to hear. »

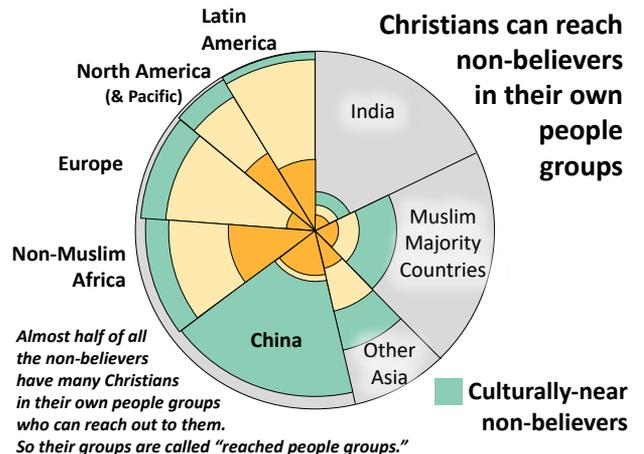
The world is divided into regions by population.

Where the world's Christians live



Most Christians live in the Americas, Europe, or sub-Saharan Africa.

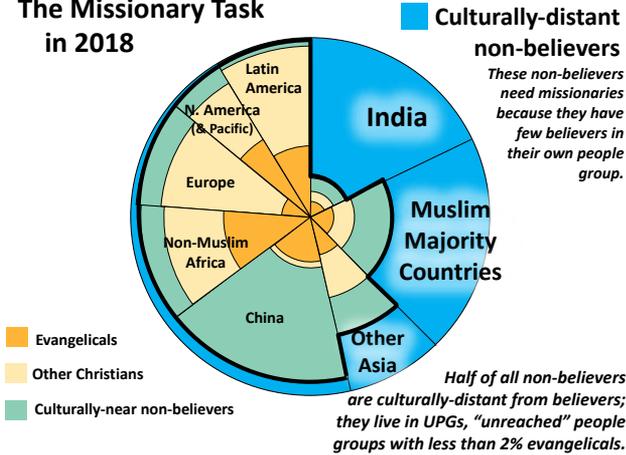
Christians can reach non-believers in their own people groups



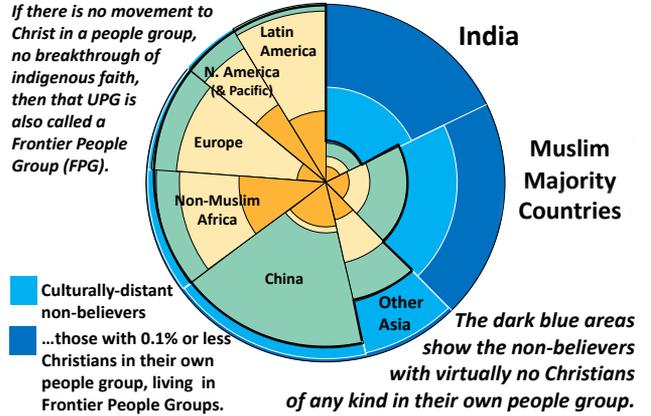
Almost half of all the non-believers have many Christians in their own people groups who can reach out to them. So their groups are called "reached people groups."

« The purpose of the pie chart presentations, is to show which non-believers can be reached by Christians in their own people group, and which non-believers need help from believers in other cultures. »

The Missionary Task in 2018

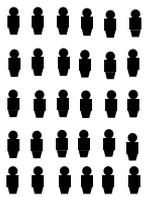


The Remaining Frontier Mission Task

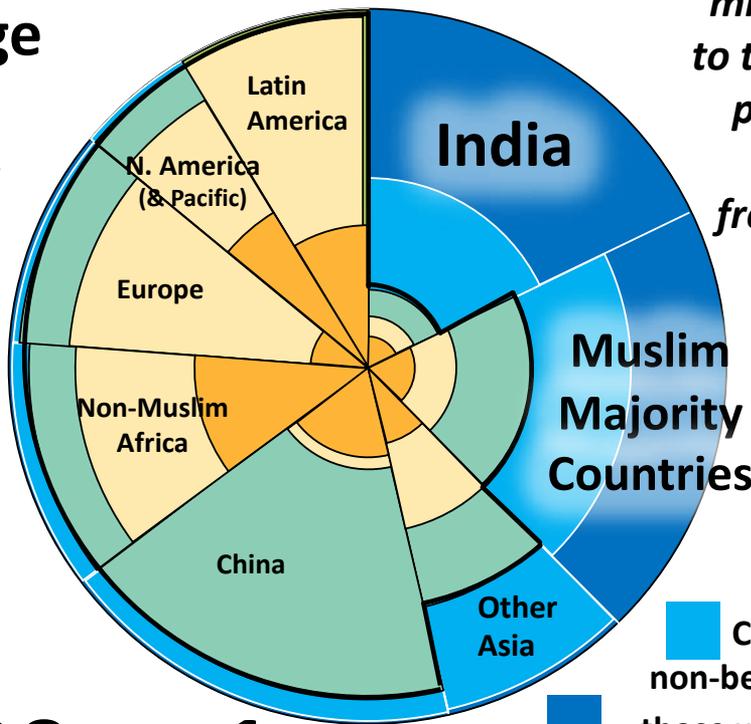


The Mobilization Challenge

For every 30 missionaries that go to the "reached" people groups of the world...



30 to 1



...roughly ONE missionary goes to the unreached people groups, including the frontier groups.



One fourth of the world's population lives in these Frontier People Groups, still waiting to hear that Jesus came to save them also.



Notice on the pie charts shown on pages 8 and 9, almost half of all the non-believers can now be reached by Evangelicals in their own people group! More than half of the population of non-believers in the world are still in Unreached People Groups, groups with less than 2% Evangelicals. But significant progress is being made in a number of these groups. If we separate out the non-believers that still have almost no believers among them, one fourth of the world's population is left.

To highlight these most overlooked people groups, let us call them “Frontier People Groups” (FPGs)—people groups still requiring “frontier mission” efforts because no breakthrough or indigenous movement to Christ has happened yet. Many factors are obscuring the needs of these remaining people groups. I have detailed some of these in my Jan-Mar *IJFM* article *Losing Sight of the Frontier Mission Task: What's Gone Wrong with the Demographics?* (*IJFM* 35:1).

One fourth of the world's population lives in these Frontier People Groups, still waiting to hear that Jesus came to save them also. Some FPGs have had workers for decades, but with little progress. However by some reports less than 1% of the global missionary force is going to FPGs.

Why is so little progress in Frontier People Groups?

Some reasons are mostly out of our control:

1) Places

FPGs tend to be isolated from gospel witness, in places difficult to access politically or geographically. (See page 22 which show that almost 3/4ths of the population of people in FPGs is in South Asia.)

2) Religions

Most FPGs are members of large religious blocs—like Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism—that provide a global identity and view Christianity as an opposing religion allied with Western political powers. (See the “donuts” on page 22 that show that around 90% of the FPGs are either Muslim or Hindu.)

3) Fears

Many FPGs may be aware of and respect Jesus, but see Jesus as the savior of just the Christians, not of the whole world. They fear that putting their trust in Jesus will bring shame and ostracism on their family and community.

4) Diaspora

FPGs tend to stay in their homelands. Less than 3% of the total population of FPGs are in diaspora groups. And those who come to faith elsewhere may be shunned as traitors to their people group or become secret believers with respect to their families.

Other reasons for lack of progress among Frontier People Groups are under our control:

5) Lack of clarity regarding Frontier People Groups

Efforts to mobilize for UPGs do not make clear which people groups are still waiting to hear about Jesus for the first time and which have strong movements underway or churches simply needing renewal.

6) Lack of clarity about the Frontier Mission Task

Clarity has also been lost about how to prepare pioneer workers to start Jesus movements in groups untouched by the gospel. Especially in multi-cultural mega cities, “church planting” strategies have shifted from establishing the first community of believing families in a specific people group to starting Western-style (meeting- and program-based) churches that aggregate strangers from many people groups. These rarely result in movements.

7) The shift from pioneering to partnership

Wherever the Church *is* established, even if it is in just a small, westernized portion of the population, local believers seek partnership with global churches to help reach their own people group. As a result, churches often bypass agencies and partner with believers in UPGs as a popular church-to-church “mission” strategy. However, such partnership strategies automatically direct mission workers to people groups with believers and churches, and away from FPGs.

8) The shift from long- to short-term workers

Mission dollars and interest have shifted from long-term workers to short-term teams, which rarely learn the local language well or go to people groups or areas where there are no Christians. Short-term trips have risen exponentially since 2000, but very few participants return to work long-term among FPGs. Even “career” missionaries today rarely stay more than 5–10 years. This is hardly long enough to effectively establish work among FPGs.

9) The shift from implanting the gospel to extracting believers

In most of mission history, missionaries have sought to learn the language of a people group and clearly communicate the gospel to them so that families among them come to faith. New believers in tribal areas have not been removed to other Christian tribal groups—no matter how evil the tribe, even if some were martyred. But when faced with people living in people groups that are modern or aligned with global religions, believers are often encouraged to flee their families and persecution and join another people group that is already Christian. The result is that no progress of the gospel is made among the original people group. The gospel is not implanted; instead, the believers are extracted.

The purpose of the pie chart presentations, like the chart called Penetrating the Last Frontiers, is to show which non-believers can be reached by Christians in their own people group, and which non-believers need help from believers in other cultures. The non-believers in the blue areas need witnesses to come to them from other people groups. The darker blue areas on the 2018 charts are the non-believers in Frontier People Groups, where there are less than 0.1% indigenous Christians and no known movement to Christ. These are the areas that need the most help. To identify these Frontier People Groups clearly, Joshua Project has produced a number of maps and lists, with profiles for each people group. Some of these can be seen on the following pages. To download the 2018 Pie Charts for use in your churches and groups, go to www.missionfrontiers.org. Also available on this site is a narrated version of the pie chart presentation.

Making progress in Frontier People Groups will require both knowing who they are and returning to biblical and historical mission practice for implanting the gospel into people groups with few or no believers. 