

AGWM Missiology UPG Working Group

DEFINING “UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS” AND DEVELOPING AN AGWM STRATEGY FOR RESPONSE

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Introduction to the Issue of Unreached People Groups

In 1974 Ralph Winter's plenary session at the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization on cross-cultural evangelism as the highest priority unleashed a firestorm in mission circles with an impact that continues to redefine mission today. Building on insights from Donald McGavran, a colleague of Winter's at Fuller Theological Seminary, he proposed a rather simple idea that has immense implications for the practice of Christian world mission. He argued that in socio-cultural settings where there are no Christians or churches, or very few, it means that to bear witness in that circumstance requires, by definition, a cross-cultural effort. This means that believers from outside that social setting must come and do the labor-intensive work of learning how to "pick the lock" of that culture and plant the church of Jesus Christ. He used contemporary data to show that it is not geographic proximity alone between Christians and non-Christian neighbors that matters, but rather cultural proximity. He showed how it is quite possible for Christians from one ethnic background to live next to non-Christians of another ethnic group and be incapable of or uninterested in sharing the gospel in a relevant and intelligible way. He originally called these groups that did not have the gospel "Hidden Peoples," estimating there were some 16,750 such distinct groups in the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, and Tribal worlds.

These concepts, propagated by the U. S. Center for World Mission, which McGavran founded in 1976, led to a shift in thinking about missions from people as discrete individuals to peoples as ethnolinguistic groups. The fecundity of these ideas can be seen in the many different groups, organizations, and initiatives¹ that they have spawned over the last four decades, new thrusts in Christian demographic mapping of the status of Christianity among every ethnolinguistic group in the world, and a host of new missions dedicated solely to planting churches among unreached peoples.

As with any new set of concepts, these were not without controversy. There were definitional tensions, corollary ideas that sprung up that were outside of the original notions and not in keeping with them, and strains with missions that had long history and broad commitments in a range of activities outside of the narrow one of pioneering among unreached groups.

Leadership in AGWM was aware of these concepts from the beginning; Brother Hogan was one of the responders to Winter at the plenary in Lausanne. Hogan reminded the participants that the Spirit can do things that human agency cannot manufacture. Later he invited people like Winter and Art Glasser to share at the School of Missions. However, on the whole, AGWM did not embrace this new stream in missiology for any

¹Examples of various organizations include: the Frontier Fellowship, Global Prayer Digest, The Society for Frontier Mission and the International Journal of Frontier Mission, the Adopt-a-People program, and the AD 2000 Movement and Beyond with its goals to plant a church among every people by the year 2000.

one of its emphases or as an intentional strategy during the rest of Hogan's tenure up to the present. The call of the Spirit in the lives of individual believers and not the demographic challenge of unreached peoples has continued to be the primary determinant of placement for new personnel.

In recent years, it has been the specific call of the Spirit to people to work among unreached peoples that has led to a number of voices inside of AGWM desiring the development of a more intentional strategy that grapples with the demographic realities of many peoples and places with few or no Christians and churches. The newly formed Missiology Group was asked by Executive Director, Greg Mundis, to look at the issue of unreached people groups in terms of how they are defined, which naturally leads to a discussion of how AGWM can respond to the challenge presented by this information.

After a brief review of the history of the origins of the concepts that make up unreached people group missiology, we look at definitions that have now become standard in the Evangelical missions world. The next section develops the rationale for a response to the challenge presented by unreached people groups and sketches out what that could look like. We examine a series of issues that will need to be considered if such a response is made and conclude by suggesting areas for further research and consideration on this subject.

A Brief History of Unreached People Group Thinking

The idea of unreached peoples did not start in a vacuum. There was a confluence of ideas from several streams that coalesced to form a set of interrelated concepts that make up what is now known as frontier mission missiology. Bosch notes that traditionally Christian mission was seen as taking the gospel to non-Christian people (1991:1). This kind of ethos, of taking the gospel to places where Christ is not known, has characterized the modern missions era and has been accompanied by efforts to catalogue spiritual need. Examples of this include William Carey's survey work, Hudson Taylor's observation of the untouched inland of China with the production of a survey of every province by the 1880s, Broomhall's 1887 book on the evangelization of the world, the production for the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 of a document with a call to reach the peoples of the non-Christian world, and the foundation of World Evangelization Crusade in 1913 by C. T. Studd with the express purpose of focusing on the remaining unevangelized peoples. The decade of the 1920s and 1930s saw further survey work to find what were called unreached people, unevangelized tribes, and remaining unevangelized peoples (RUPs) (Johnson, 2001:85):

The publication of *The Bridges of God* by McGavran in 1955 brought a whole new set of terminology regarding people movements to the fore. By the mid-1960s survey research in Africa was listing various tribes at different stages of being reached and Mission Advanced Research and Communication (MARC) was founded to provide technical support to the church to build momentum for world evangelization and the modern idea of people groups was born. (Johnson, 2001:85-86).

In the 1960s David Barrett began his work on what would become the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and Patrick Johnstone produced his first *Operation World* in

1972. By the time of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974, the conveners of the congress had made an important distinction among concepts. They chose to separate the terms unreached people and unevangelized people rather than having them be synonymous (Hesselgrave, 1988:52-53). By the time of the Congress MARC had prepared an Unreached Peoples Directory consisting of 424 unreached people groups to which Winter wrote the introduction (1988:53).

What we see here is a concern, generated by the Holy Spirit, to continually move from the borders of faith to nonfaith. With the growth of the church in the world, there was a concomitant refinement of populations without the gospel from the nation-state and broad civilizational level down to tribes and tongues. While demographic information pointed researchers to the idea of peoples, it was Winter's insight from the work of McGavran that cemented this idea and gave it a conceptual basis. McGavran's idea, formed in the crucible of the social enclaves created by caste diversity in India, argued that if you have someone from a particular group in a conglomerate urban church, this person can serve as a bridge of God back to that people. Once you break into this group, people can come to faith quickly and you disciple to the fringes; this being the idea of a people movement.

Listen to Winter's own reflection on this and the insight that went beyond McGavran's work:

McGavran came to believe that cultural factors were even more important than language ones in Christian work, his experience in India among caste I began to realize that if it is true that even minor cultural differences can separate people and keep them from going to the same congregation, etc., then this fact has horrendous implications for the existing mission movement. ... Missions find it hard to take seriously cultural differences within a country. They do not expect nor seek to have two or more different forms of Christianity; the form that develops in their first major beachhead tends to be considered good enough for all the other groups. It meant that precisely those hermetically-sealed pockets of people around the world that had not yet had any kind of a penetration constituted by themselves the major remaining frontier of Christian mission (Winter, 2003:77-78).

Thus it was that Winter's first formulation of the need for pioneer penetration of groups without near-neighbor witness was to call them Hidden Peoples, veiled not geographically but culturally from the message of the gospel. It was around the nexus of peoples in their group-ness and the need to bring the gospel to them that a number of key supporting concepts grew up.

While these are powerful ideas, they required refinement in definition in order to be put into practice. In the next section we will look at key definitions that have been hammered out in the years following the 1974 Lausanne meeting.

A Review of Standard Definitions

A great deal of unavoidable confusion has come about because of the need to draw upon common terminology that has a conventional meaning among Christians in order to

develop a technical use in missiology. In addition to this, an unintended consequence of the success of these concepts in mobilizing mission vision and action has been the co-opting of these terms for use in ways that are far different from their original intent. Each of these ideas was contested and has a history of how a final definition was agreed upon. In this section we will focus only on the final definitions and some of the rationale for them.

People group

Both at the conceptualization and demographic level there was a need to define precisely what is meant by the term “people.” The big choices were between sociological groups and ethnolinguistic groups, and this had great implication for enumerating the remaining groups that need the gospel. In a 1982 meeting in Chicago the Lausanne Strategy Working Group and the EFMA met to standardize a terminology. While there were many variations the final version is:

A people group is a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation etc. or combinations of these. From the viewpoint of evangelization this is the largest possible group within which the gospel can spread as a viable, indigenous church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.

The decision to use an ethnolinguistic definition has made it possible to do demographic work on the status of the Christian movement among all of the groups in the world. However, it has also created some confusion because it has made it seem that the point is to count how many ethnic groups there are. The actual point is that you cannot know how many groups there are because it is not diversity but the largest group in which evangelism can be pursued without encountering barriers of acceptance or understanding. Winter coined the term Unimax which is the MAXimum sized group sufficiently UNified to be reached by a single indigenous church planting movement. So it is quite possible that multiple ethnic groups can be unified into a bloc or cluster where a single church movement can reach them.

Unreached People Group

An unreached people is, therefore, a people group among whom there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize the rest of its members without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.

Reached People Group

A reached people group has adequate indigenous believers and resources to evangelize their own group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.

Note that these definitions were hammered out conceptually; yet to be of use, they had to be operationalized in order to provide some way of measuring, counting, and comparing.

Over time and much discussion, the number that came to represent the break point between groups that were reached and those considered unreached was that 2 percent of the group's population was Evangelical. This decision had a sociological base, because when 2 percent or more of a population holds to a particular view or position it can have a broader influence in the total society and grow more rapidly. The decision was also reached to make a distinction between groups that had more or less than 5 percent of any form of the Christian faith. These boundaries between reached/unreached became associated with the 10/40 window, which covered the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist blocs, while leaving Europe, with similarly low numbers of Evangelicals in the Formative/Nominal church status.

Stage	Level	Level Description
Unreached / Least-Reached	<u>1.1</u>	<u>Few, if any, known Evangelicals. Professing Christians <=5%.</u>
	<u>1.2</u>	<u>Evangelicals >0.01%, but <=2%. Professing Christians <=5%.</u>
Formative / Nominal Church	<u>2.1</u>	<u>Few, if any, known Evangelicals. Professing Christians >5%.</u>
	<u>2.2</u>	<u>Evangelicals > 0.01%, but <= 2%. Professing Christians > 5%.</u>
Established / Significant Church	<u>3.1</u>	<u>Evangelicals >2%, but <=5%.</u>
	<u>3.2</u>	<u>Evangelicals >5%.</u>

Unengaged People Group

An unengaged people group is one that has no active church planting underway. According to the [IMB Global Research Office](#) “A people group is engaged when a church planting strategy, consistent with evangelical faith and practice, is under implementation. In this respect, a people group is not engaged when it has been merely adopted, is the object of focused prayer, or is part of an advocacy strategy.” At least four essential elements constitute effective engagement:

1. apostolic effort in residence
2. commitment to work in the local language and culture
3. commitment to long-term ministry
4. sowing in a manner consistent with the goal of seeing a church-planting movement (CPM) emerge

Missiological breakthrough

Missiological breakthrough is not defined by the presence of just anything someone may call a church; rather, a true breakthrough has occurred when at least a minimal (corresponding to the previous chart), yet sufficiently developed indigenous Christian tradition, is established that is considered capable of evangelizing its own people without E2 or E3 help. A barely viable church must be understood as a minimal goal. Nothing

here should imply that any such church anywhere should be considered totally independent of the world family of Christians, nor that it cannot both minister through and profit from continued cross-cultural contacts and expatriate help. All it means is that the missiological breakthrough has been made. This would seem to require at least a cluster of indigenous evangelizing congregations and a significant part of the Bible translated by the people themselves. (Definition by Ralph Winter)

How Should AGWM Respond to the Challenge of Unreached People Groups?

In answer to the question “what is the definition of unreached people group?” we want to suggest to AGWM that the definitions that have become standard for the mission world be accepted by our organization. This means that the key issue is not “how to define” but rather “how to respond” to these definitions and the resulting databases of information on the status of Christianity in the various ethnolinguistic peoples of the world. We would suggest that our guiding question for philosophy and strategy in terms of deployment and activity should be, “In light of these definitions, how should we as AGWM be strategically engaging the task of missions?” This can be expanded in a series of sub-questions as follows:

- Among what ethnolinguistic peoples is the church not planted and how will we address this need?
- To what extent and for what purpose do we deploy missionaries to “reached people groups”?
- How do we focalize our existing mission labors to aim them at the greater needs of unreached people groups? How do we reframe our existing mission labors in order to attain a maximal impact on unreached people groups through and with our national church partners?

Rationale for the acceptance of standard definitions

There are a number of reasons why we would encourage AGWM to accept standard definitions instead of devising something specific to our own agency. When taken together the following points provide a compelling rationale, we feel, for accepting and using these definitions and crafting a systemic agency response to them.

1. These definitions are the result of a great deal of work on the part of multiple people and institutions and behind them lay a great deal of argument and discussion that finally brought them to their present form. It was not an arbitrary process nor was it the work of a single individual or organization.
2. There is now wide acceptance and use of these definitions and the resulting database. A peoples perspective is now a part of the common conception of mission in the latter part of the twentieth century. This means that our constituent churches have been exposed to these terms, and in many cases are well versed in them and are using them to inform their own thinking about missions in the local church and missions programs. The widespread use of

these definitions also means that the national churches inside of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship are aware of them and use them as well.

3. In light of their widespread use, for AGWM to develop its own definitions creates confusion among those we relate to domestically and internationally and also makes it appear that AGWM is lagging behind in current thinking. Potential candidates, thinking that we are not involved with unreached people will go with other agencies.
4. It is better for AGWM to develop a proactive response collectively to the challenges presented by the unreached people group demographic than to develop its own definitions because the latter course makes us appear reactive and defensive. A positive response, generated through prayer, study of Scripture and the sense of the leading of the Spirit keeps us related to the broader world of mission while affirming key distinctives in our missiological values.

The argument for crafting a unique AGWM response to the challenge of unreached peoples

The missiology that has grown out of the concept of unreached peoples has clarified the demographic challenge of major blocs of people that have little or no access to the gospel. This is the unfinished task that confronts us as a mission. The question then becomes how will AGWM respond? We want to advocate here that an AGWM response needs to be systemic in nature rather than merely making UPGs one piece of a broader strategy. But before we do that, it would be good to contrast some of the different options available to us as a mission agency and critique them.

We identify three positions that AGWM could consider as it engages with frontier mission missiology and the demographic of the unreached peoples. The first model is that which we at AGWM presently practice and have for decades: trusting that the Holy Spirit is leading individuals through a missions call to these unreached people groups. Such an approach is not hostile to UPGs but is somewhat of a laissez faire solution on the part of the sending agency, trusting that those hearing God's call have been provided adequate information about urgent unreached peoples of the world and that candidates have accurately heard the voice of the Lord.² Through this method the focus of AGWM is formed by the sum of the individual's private call into missions. In other words, the "call" of AGWM and, therefore, the AG depends on the individual's call. There is indication that this has been an effective working model: in some instances, such as in South Korea, Latin America, or some places in Africa fewer missionaries today appear to be hearing a call to these more Christian lands than in the past. However, we must ask, is this sufficient? Is calling also connected with information distribution about UPGs, adequate team building and training, and a verbalized focus by the Church to reach the unreached? Should AGWM, as an agency, be sensing a call, and if so, what is it?

²It should be noted that the call usually comes through and with information that has been supplied by the church, and reading news and books concerning other places in the world. It is the voice of the Lord in response to information given.

A second model would be to compartmentalize UPGs as another emphasis or interest within our broader mission vision. In this way a segment of the missionary body would concentrate primarily on UPG vision and needs, while the rest work with a broader spectrum of missionary activities. This bifurcation of the missionary body and strategy has the possibility of leading toward competition between missionaries, and creating confusion, disappointment, and disillusionment in a constituency that is increasingly aware of unreached peoples. It can lead to the appearance that AGWM does not have a vision or a focus for the urgent fields of the world. The result is a lack of trust in the competency of the agency to respond to current challenges. Approaches that silo off UPG work as a specialty interest take what is central to the heart of our mission agency—bringing the gospel where it has not yet been heard—and relegates it to a secondary role. We would suggest that this is clearly an inadequate response.

A third option, which we are advocating, is to accept the definitions and embrace the mission challenge they represent within the framework of our Pentecostal missiology and historical commitments. The key words that we are using to describe this response are “systemic” and “priority.” In a moment we will lay out in more detail what we mean by a systemic and priority response to the challenge of unreached people groups. But first we want to explain what it is not, and then provide positively the rationale for why we feel such a response is so critical at this time.

A systemic and priority response to the challenge of unreached peoples is not a knee-jerk reaction that rejects certain types of mission activity in favor of certain geographic locations. It is not massive redeployment of current missionaries, nor is it radical cutting of support of some missionaries in order to have a church planting focus among unreached peoples. We are not calling for an International Mission Board restructuring around UPGs that moves away from relationships and partnerships with national churches to operate unilaterally, nor are we advocating a move towards a Board that assigns places of ministry to called missionaries.

Positively, a systemic response must be birthed and guided by the Spirit as He breaks our hearts for a world that has no near-neighbor witness and blends collective resources together with those of our partnering national churches to the challenge of an unreached world.

Here are some reasons that UPGs call us to a systemic response as a mission.

First, because it is unambiguously part of God’s redemptive mission: beginning from Genesis 12:3 “...all the families of the earth will be blessed,” the prophetic vision of the nations streaming to worship Yahweh in Zion and continuing to the five Commissions in the New Testament that mandate us to disciple, preach, and go as the Father sent Jesus to the uttermost parts of the earth among the *ethne*, finally ending in the magnificent vision in Revelation 5:9 and 7:9 where John ransacks his lexicon to show that no one is missed—with representatives from every tribe and tongue and people and nation standing in worship before the throne! God’s glory among the *ethne* is clearly a part of the mandate left to God’s missional people!

Second, the prophetic voice of the database of the world's peoples is clear. We know where the Church is not, we know where there are the fewest or no Christians, and we cannot "unknow" this information. We cannot stand before the judgment seat of Christ and plead ignorance, and we will be hard pressed to explain how knowing this we did not pour prayer, resources, and people into the world of the unreached.

Third, our understanding of the Pentecostal experience demands it. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of harvest. Acts 1:8 serves as our watchword—for when the Spirit comes we receive power to be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth. We, as Pentecostals, need to tread carefully lest our assertion of being led by the Spirit does not end up to be mere rhetoric in the face of all the places we have manifestly not gone. It is inconceivable that the Holy Spirit, who loves all people and is not willing that any should perish, would not be calling laborers into the harvest fields of the least-reached. The imbalance, as we perceive it, in the world today reflects more our inability to hear, and our hardness of heart, than God the Father, Son, and Spirit overlooking millions of people who have no one in their sociocultural setting to tell them the story of salvation.

Finally, our self-understanding as a Pentecostal movement requires such a response. AGWM is a direct result of the Pentecostal revival at the turn of the twentieth century. A passion to evangelize those who had never heard the gospel was integral to the Pentecostal outpouring. Early Pentecostals saw in their experience a renewal of the apostolic church and as the Assemblies of God was formed in 1914 they committed themselves to the greatest evangelization the world had ever seen. In 1921 the General Council of the Assemblies of God affirmed and clarified the extension of the original vision when they declared:

The Foreign Missions Department will be guided by the following; the Pauline example will be followed so far as possible, by seeking neglected regions where the Gospel has not been preached, lest we build on another's foundation.

From such statements, we would argue that if our Pentecostal forefathers in mission were standing with us today they would be deeply stirred by the challenge of massive populations without gospel witness and they would understand their empowering experience as expressly equipping them to be God's ambassadors to such peoples. Were they to find AGWM's *primary* focus, in practice, restricted to working with existing Christian communities, the early Pentecostal brothers would be deeply troubled.

A systemic response by AGWM directs our attentions to our theological and missiological roots, it extends our tradition, guides our precedent of adapting missional practice under the guidance of the Spirit to current situations, and informs the notion of partnership with national churches. A systemic response builds upon and does not denigrate in any way the mission commitments and historical strengths of our missiology; rather, it challenges us to a reordering at the spiritual DNA, at the deepest level, of all our team. Such a response is driven by our understanding of Scripture, the challenge of the demographic, the call of the Spirit of harvest and a rekindling of our understanding of the fullness of the Spirit.

We believe that this is a watershed moment for Assemblies of God World Missions and pray that once again the mission agency will act as a catalyst and leader in the renewal of the broader USA movement by calling our pastors and churches back to God's redemptive purposes to every tribe and tongue as a Spirit filled people.

What a systemic and priority response could look like in our mission

In this section we want to sketch out in broad brushstrokes what a systemic and priority response could look like in AGWM. We are advocating that AGWM accept and use the standard concepts and their operationalized definitions for UPGs and then craft a unique response that grows from our missions convictions and a sense of the leading of the Spirit. We summarize under four points some of the aspects that would be involved in a systemic and priority response to UPGs.

1. Pioneer church planting among the unreached.
 - a. Any ethnolinguistic people with 1 percent or less Evangelical Christian becomes the top priority for developing and deploying new church planting teams. Within this category those having no Bible, no Christian media, no Christians or church movements would be top priority.
 - b. Peoples that are more than 1 percent Evangelical but are in the framework of the Joshua Project definition of less than 2 percent Evangelical and with less than 5 percent of any form of the Christian faith would be the next priority for church planting teams.
 - c. In people groups that are more than 2 percent Evangelical but have geographic areas that are untouched or sociological subgroups that are not being engaged with the gospel, AGWM would send workers as catalysts to partner with local Christians empowering church planting efforts where they are needed.
2. In people groups with strong national churches, we would seek to refocus all cross-cultural workers to invest themselves in an apostolic function, instilling vision and calling forth workers from among developed churches to send church-planters among UPGs. All current staff working "with the church" have the vital role to function apostolically: in mission mobilization, theological education, all forms of training, and implanting apostolic DNA into church movements. Thus current missionaries in these situations will be encouraged to intentionally labor to cast vision where there is none, whatever their task. AGWM will seek to avoid assigning missionaries to areas of redundancy, supplying experts in areas that the existing church is not doing or unable to do. We are not advocating the practice of generic redeployment, but rather keep veteran workers in their area of expertise and revision them to help church movements focus on the unreached. Voluntary redeployment will happen as vision for pioneer work is cast.
3. Each region of the world would need to assess the UPG needs, the national churches with whom they are partnering and their health and capacity to reach out

to UPGs of the nation, and begin deploying new missionaries specifically to key tasks, both as pioneers and as partners. This would involve training, casting vision, and implementing a new team concept that are capable of tackling the tough task of UPGs.

4. It means communicating with the stateside constituency that we are committed to this not as one of many things that we do, but as the core of our being as a Pentecostal mission agency. Our four pillars and the goal of a fully indigenous church feed this one grand purpose of laboring to bring the gospel to those who have the least access in our world.

Implementing these ideas would put us on a trajectory that would, over time, change the places, peoples, and kinds of work of our AGWM missionary term. At present approximately 65 percent of our full time workers live in countries where the church is larger than 2 percent. As information about the challenge of UPGs is shared, we believe that the collective call to the unreached inside of AGWM and the personal call of the Holy Spirit to new workers will lead them to pioneer church planting and apostolic function among the existing church. This could lead very naturally to a placement that looks something like this:

Fifty percent of our missionaries would be directly living and working among people groups that are less than 1 percent Evangelical, 25 percent among people groups that are less than 2 percent Evangelical, and 20 percent where the existing church is over 2 percent Evangelical in apostolic function. 5 percent would work in service roles based out of the United States. This is in essence a gradual reversal of current placement to having 70 percent of our workers among the unreached and 25 percent working with more robust church movements.

Notice what we are advocating here as an AGWM response is based in accepted definitions in frontier mission missiology, but moves beyond them at significant points. As we noted above, the 2 percent Evangelical figure as the breakpoint between reached/unreached had to do with the ability of a social movement to have influence in its society. A second arbitrary decision in operationalizing the concepts was the distinction drawn between people groups with less or more than 5 percent of any form of Christianity. We believe that these parameters obscure critical points in solid missions practice. This is why we have kept the 2 percent level as a helpful guideline, ignored the 5 percent presence of Christian faith boundary, and added the need to plant the church among the overlooked sociological subgroups and among those geographically removed from access to the gospel.

What this means is that the entire 10/40 Window, which includes much of Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast and East Asia, 20 countries in Europe, the 7.9 percent of Latin America that is still in classic UPG status and the nearly 500 ethnolinguistic groups that are still less than 2 percent Evangelical are the focus for pioneer work. Second, for those working with the church it provides a unifying single task to shape all labor so that Christians in every church movement are being prepared to take the gospel to the unreached. Third, the Assemblies of God churches of the U. S. can embrace a unified

vision as a community, understanding that AGWM functions as their agency to accomplish a specific, God-given task. Finally, it puts our mission in line with the priorities of many WAGF missions networks and sending agencies who are beginning to focus on unreached people groups.

A rubric for ministry

In a systemic and priority response the collective call of AGWM to unreached peoples takes on increased importance in shaping those who come as new workers. This is a vision of missionary labor that has one purpose that is accomplished through team effort requiring a multiplicity of giftings and with a constant monitoring and sensitivity to shift roles as a national church is planted and develops. Personal vision is not eliminated but is shaped around the larger vision of God's glory among all the tribes and tongues of the world. This means that the status of the Christian movement among a people, the presence or absence of vital churches and church movements, is a critical issue in discerning the missionary role. The following rubric for ministry sketches out broadly the primary kinds of missionary ministry needed starting with where there are the least Christians to where there are lots of Great Commissions Christians present.

- People groups where there are no known Christians or only a handful, no known or few fellowships of local believers, no Scripture translation, little or no media in the local language, unengaged or minimally engaged. Needed: pioneer church planting teams.
- People groups that are less than 1 percent Evangelical but have Scripture, media, church movements, but where the Christian faith is a tiny minority. Needed: pioneer church planting teams, helping the church develop context sensitivity where it tends toward being isolated from the non-Christian society, those who can train emerging leaders, those who can help strengthen the newly forming church to carry on its mission to its own people and others.
- People groups less than 2 percent Evangelical but over 1 percent. Needed: church planters who can work with local Christians, helping the church develop context sensitivity where it tends toward being isolated from the non-Christian society, training for leaders, training for cross-cultural mission by the church, assistance to the national church in developing a full-orbed ministry to their society.
- People groups with greater than 2 percent Evangelical. Needed: missionaries that can partner with national and indigenous churches, working in an apostolic function role to catalyze these church movements toward church planting work among their own people and particularly sociological subgroups that are overlooked, and to send missionaries to unreached people groups in their own countries and beyond. In such situations it is particularly important for the mission team to be seeking out things that the existing church is doing poorly or cannot do, rather than helping in areas that local Christians can already do.

An important and realistic note to make here is that as the church is planted and church movements emerge, they are often not interested in other people groups that may be culturally different but geographically near. Church planting teams, and those working in apostolic function with the existing church, should always have the goal of helping the believers to do their own cross-cultural sending. Our first option is always to work with the existing believers to see them take on this mission task, but where the national church is unwilling or unable to collaborate we will maintain our calling as a mission sodality to take the gospel to people groups that have not heard.

Conclusion

We believe that a systemic response to unreached peoples is the call of the Spirit to our mission in this hour, but that does not mean implementing it will be easy. The next section focuses on a series of critical issues that will need to be addressed if a systemic response is pursued.

Issues for AGWM in Moving Toward a Priority Response to the UPG Challenge

If AGWM puts the unreached world at the center of its collective vision and heart there are going to be numerous issues to navigate. A systemic response means change at a number of key points in an organization that has a 100-year history. There will need to be great wisdom and a sense of the guidance of the Spirit to walk through a directed change process with our team of over 2,700 missionaries in 253 countries and territories. In this section we want to identify some of the more substantive issues in order to provide both awareness and some initial conceptual tools for use in the future.

1. How do we frame our work among the reached and where the church exists? ***Alan Johnson***

Theologically and missiologically it is not difficult to focus on the unreached, but organizationally to make a shift in the way we practice mission when approximately 65 percent of our existing team works in places that are over 2 percent Evangelical Christian will require some effort. Developing new church planting teams composed of primarily new people among UPGs is a relatively simple task, at the same time, reframing the self-understanding of our existing team and refocusing missionary effort is a highly complex task. These complexities include a strategic process element, and emotive and missiological components.

The Strategic Process Element—Get New Workers Do Not Move Old Ones

If we are going to see the majority of our cross-cultural workers laboring as teams among groups that are less than 1 percent evangelical Christian, it is important to see this as a process and not a sudden disruption. Developing new church planting teams should be done by directing the new candidates and recruiting new workers, rather than trying to redeploy unwilling veteran workers, unless the Spirit calls them to this work. We are already seeing the successful reassignment of veteran workers in some areas because leadership has cast the vision of new church planting and they are volunteering based on their sense of the calling of the Spirit.

Once the vision is cast from AGWM on the strategic importance of what is being done by our missionaries, there must be accountability and reporting procedures to communicate that this is actually happening on the field level. These systemic changes are robust concepts that show how the role of cross-cultural workers is changing as national churches mature and this needs to be hammered home to our constituent churches at the macro AGWM level and by itinerating individual missionaries.

The Emotive Component—Validate

In my experience, the greatest organizational hurdle for missions to embrace the challenge of unreached peoples is that those who are working in non-UPGs feel completely devalued and invalidated. In some cases they are told that they are not “real” missionaries like those church planting among an unreached group. In a recent meeting in the Asia Pacific region the leadership team was meeting with 30 workers with a representation across the region. One of the presentations was on the unreached peoples of the region. We looked at data showing that, considering only groups larger than 500,000, there are 450 million people in Asia Pacific with less than 1 percent Christian in Buddhist and Muslim groups. We found that those ministering among the few million people in the nominal Christian islands where there is a long history of Christianity had a very strong emotional reaction against this idea of an unreached people focus. One person made a passionate presentation saying that he believed in the “God of one.” His point centered on ministering to one child in one of the islands. Unfortunately he did not make a good case for explaining how that related to 450 million “ones” that have very limited access to the gospel.

How are we going to make UPGs a priority and at the same time make our entire current team feel that they are doing important work? I believe that we have to seek theological/missiological and practical ways to validate the importance of all of our missionaries. Biblically, the diversity of gifts in the body of Christ means that not all will do the same work. Missiologically, our understanding of indigenous church means that there are many things that need to be done in order to strengthen the partner church along the lines of the “selfs.” On the practical side we need to celebrate throughout our system all the labors of our missionary team and not simply those who are front-line church planters.

In the past, cross-cultural workers in slow response UPG areas have often felt invalidated or insignificant in environments where others were working in places with fantastic growth. Such laborers have to encourage themselves on the basis of Scripture and the Holy Spirit’s call and promises to them. If UPGs become central to AGWM there will be a shift as those working among the highly successful church will be tempted to feel invalidated, and the process of encouragement is still the same—going back to Scripture and hearing the voice of the Spirit.

The Missiological Element—Refocus

I believe that all cross-cultural workers in their own ministry environment can minister with strategic significance to see the gospel proclaimed among unreached. A systemic response to UPGs means that the entire mission team needs to be refocused in both their self-understanding and ministry goals. Some have found the idea of apostolic

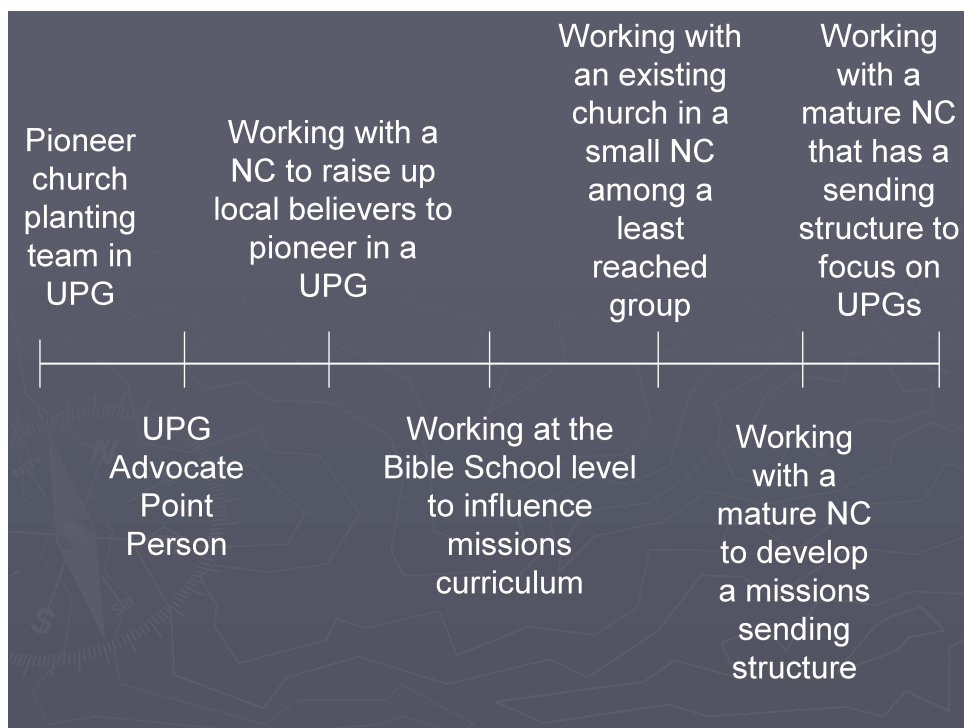
function helpful as a template for missionary self-understanding and for showing how those working with the church can and are participating in strategic ways to take the gospel to unreached peoples.

Apostolic function is functioning in an apostolic fashion, embracing individually and corporately the vision of performing the Pauline task of missiological breakthrough whether by doing it themselves, doing it in conjunction with a national church movement, or equipping a national church movement to do it on their own. Apostolic function does not mean that everyone has the same giftings, but rather, as a heuristic, it shapes the identity of the entire team. The team's work has apostolic goals and values while at the same time the individual members are operating in their variety of gifts.

The Seven Frontiers continuum below illustrates nicely how cross-cultural workers laboring anywhere along this continuum are involved in the task of insuring that the gospel is proclaimed to people groups that lack access.

1. Providing pastoral care, nurture and support to build up Great Commission Christians
2. Non-practicing Christians
3. Nominal Christians
4. Heavily evangelized non-Christians
5. Partially evangelized non-Christians
6. Unreached non-Christians
7. Untargeted non-Christians [I'm assuming the numbering sequence is intentional?]

I have also developed a chart to show a range of missionary ministry that is all UPG focused to illustrate how apostolic function would work in various settings. At the far left of the diagram the missionary is working where the church does not exist or is small, and the far right the missionary is working where the church is strong. (NC is national church)



Dick Brogden notes that validity for those not directly involved in pioneering comes from a correct understanding of apostolic function. If one of our missionaries is called and assigned to teach in a Bible School in El Salvador – he does so with the central intent of raising up El Salvadorians to do CP among UPGs in teams. If one of our missionaries is called and assigned to work among University students in Argentina for instance, he does so with the chief aim of building awareness for the lost, modeling a missional lifestyle and mentoring students to become givers and supporters of those who go, and/or missionaries on church planting teams working among UPGs.

Refocusing the existing mission team requires training and re-training. The new focus will require that we be willing to spend the time, energy, and money to equip new workers to engage in church planting and to retrain veterans to fill the task of encouragers and facilitators to new workers. The goal would be to create a new climate among the AGWM mission team that would focus more on cooperation and the bigger goal of getting the gospel to those without access, rather than competing for what is seen as a limited pie of funding for their own ministries.

2. The role of the Holy Spirit and calling—Alan Johnson

If reframing our work where the church already exists is the biggest issue in the process of developing a system response to UPGs, the issue of the role of the Holy Spirit in calling and missionary placement is a close second. As a Pentecostal mission it has always been our belief and practice that the Holy Spirit guides the entire process of mission and as Spirit of harvest, sovereignly places workers in the fields of labor. One of the biggest objections that I have personally heard in the past from Pentecostals to embracing unreached people group missiology is that it mechanizes mission and takes the work of the Spirit out.

This perception was not part of unreached people missiology itself, but unfortunately came as part of the mobilizing hype of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement in the 1990s, which asked mission organizations to commit to targeting UPGs based on lists they were producing. It is important to disassociate this practice from the notion of unreached people groups itself. The idea of UPGs does not demand any particular kind of mobilization, and a Pentecostal mission certainly is going to tackle the issue of addressing them in a way that forefronts listening to the Holy Spirit rather than random choosing from lists. Having said that, it is also important to note that our understanding of the leading of the Holy Spirit does not also entail being anti-information. Knowing about the demographic challenge of the unreached world allows the Spirit to speak as He will; in other words, familiarity with the database of the unreached does not inhibit in any way our ability to follow the guidance of the Spirit.

The first step here is to clarify why the calling of the Spirit is an issue if AGWM pursues UPGs as a priority in the future. The broader arena is that of missionary placement. If the primary factor in personnel placement is personal calling, then the potential exists for AGWM as an agency to be at the mercy of the individual's sense of personal guidance.

We want to suggest that even now in our current system with its emphasis on subjective calling, we already have in place a number of other factors that will mesh very well with a focus on UPGs. So rather than moving away from calling, we see a UPG focus retaining the centrality of call and employing refining criteria some of which we currently use and some that will be added to the process.

Already we have in place a sense of collective vision that puts some constraints on personal calling. Some of this collective vision is related to our missiological principles where the principle supersedes subjective guidance. Dick Brogden illustrates in this way:

If a candidate comes to us and says, "The Holy Spirit has clearly called me to be an AGWM missionary to Canada." We would either say, "No He didn't, we don't send missionaries to Canada," or "God Bless you Brother, we don't send missionaries to Canada, why don't you go talk to our PAOC brothers across the border." Second, if a candidate comes to us and says, "God has called me to go to Kenya and start a business so I can pay KAG pastors as the people of Kenya are too poor to be expected to tithe (or some other idea against our missiology) we would say, "You may or may not be called to Kenya, but we don't do that, so if you go to Kenya with AGWM, please know you will not be allowed to follow that call, it probably is not of the Holy Spirit."

Collective vision about priorities is often hammered out at the agency, field, or team level and is used to shape the direction of those who join with us. In such cases a person with a call that is far outside of the collective vision is not rejected for the vision but is encouraged to seek out another organization in which to pursue it.

There are two new or lesser used filters what would also need to be drawn upon for a UPG focus. The first is the role of information in calling. Research, like that of DeLonn

Rance on missionary calling in the El Salvadoran context, has shown the importance of information about the broader world. We believe that if AGWM were to simply forefront specific information and opportunities for the unreached world, that the Spirit would use that information to call people to serve among the unreached. I have personally met many younger people who feel called to a certain place that has lots of Christians. Usually it is somewhere they have been for a short-term trip. If such people have no knowledge of the unreached world I think that they should be given materials on UPGs and encouraged to pray through them first and listen to what the Spirit says to their heart. The connection between short-term missions trips and a calling must also be considered since many UPGs exist in places that are hard to reach, expensive, dangerous, and ministry work must be kept underground. Therefore many of our short-term teams go to Christianized lands. How can we help communicate the vision into places where they cannot go without extensive training and long-term commitment?

The second has to do with combating redundancy through intentionality on the part of area directors and team leadership to train and shape the work of team members. In my work on apostolic function I developed this point in some detail:

Crossing geographic/cultural boundaries and in essence functioning as a local Christian, is, from the perspective of apostolic function, redundant work. I need to repeat here that I am not saying this is a bad thing, or that it is not a valuable contribution. Local Christians are often very thankful that missionaries do tasks they do not want to do, or are getting done for free. I also am not implying that the Holy Spirit would never call and equip people to serve in such a way. With all of those caveats in place, what I am saying is that from the perspective of apostolic function, there is a unique role to be played by cross-cultural workers who see their primary identity and function tied to planting churches and church movements that have apostolic spiritual DNA that transcends doing what local Christians can do. Note that planting the church includes a variety of activities and gifts to do so, such as pre-evangelism work, compassion ministries, language and computer centers, coffee houses and so on. The point in apostolic function is that in every ministry expression are the seeds that will develop into a disciplined people who form a community of faith. Ultimately, determining whether work is redundant is an issue that the *primary participants in the mission* (which would include the sending agency, the worker and team and the local churches and leadership of the receiving body) need to ascertain through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If a person's calling is confirmed by all these parties as being important to that body and they sense the leading of the Holy Spirit in this matter, it is not an issue. However, the vision of apostolic function and the role of passing on that kind of spiritual reproductive material to the receiving church will never have a negative impact on a church movement. It is a stance that will continually challenge the cross-cultural worker to evaluate his or her labor and maintain a humble posture of seeking the Spirit's guidance about when that spiritual DNA is rooted and to step back and let local people take the lead at a given point.

In summary, a UPG focus means that we keep calling central to placement and ministry assignment, while providing information about the need, having missiological and collective vision constraints, and leadership monitoring of redundancy combined with

training and encouragement to work in apostolic function.

3. Partnering with World Assemblies of God Fellowship churches to reach unreached people groups.

Introduction-Alan Johnson

A systemic response to the challenge of unreached peoples on the part of AGWM does not imply that we pursue this labor independent of existing Assemblies of God fellowships around the world. There are two common mistakes that surface in discussions about unreached peoples. The first is for any mission agency to act as if they are the answer and move unilaterally to pursue their goals. Although traditionally we have tended to talk about indigeneity embracing three selfs—governance, support, and propagation of the gospel—the notion of coming full cycle to sending cross-cultural workers of their own has always been inherent in our concept. From our own missiology we would expect that church movements begin to reach out beyond their own cultural and geographic borders, and that it would be a natural and apostolic missionary role to help in that process. The second error is to move in the opposite direction and assert that it is now the role of the church movements started by AGWM to reach UPGs while we ourselves continue to work primarily with the church. Such a position is again not true to our own missiological values as it concerns the call of God. God is still calling people from every place to take the gospel to those who have never heard. To deny our own people the ability to follow God's call and only relegate them to working among established churches is to impoverish the faith of our youth.

The World Assemblies of God Fellowship was originally founded around the vision of mission. Today there is a functioning missions commission in WAGF that promotes the goals of every Assemblies of God General Council having a mission sending structure, having a primary sending focus on unreached people, and cooperating with local Assemblies of God movements as they send. Majority world newer missions have fully embraced unreached peoples and Pentecostal Mission networks like PEM (Pentecostal European Mission) have explicit goals to take the gospel to UPGs inside and outside of Europe. We feel that AG church movements and such networks would be thrilled to have AGWM personnel actively engaged with them at every level in pursuing these goals.

In the remainder of this section Wang Yi Heng explores some of the ways that we can partner with national churches in the task of reaching UPGs.

The Role of Partnership and with National Churches in Frontier Missions-Wang Yi Heng

No people group should have to wait a lifetime to hear the gospel. This has happened for too many generations. The Assemblies of God World Mission board from its beginnings has had a burning desire to reach the unreached and bring a closure to the Great Commission. Like the apostolic passion of Paul, may we “preach the gospel even to the regions beyond” (2 Cor. 10: 16) and he “aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was *already* named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation (Rom. 15: 20). This document is a brief description and overview of the potential for

partnerships to be forged so that UPGs have access to the gospel and the church is planted where it often has never been before. Functional, effective partnerships are needed to facilitate reaching the remaining 6,000+ unreached people groups. Exact values, visions, goals with action plans can be laid out by leadership teams in regions and local contexts as leaders show the way in prayer and the power of the Spirit.

Definitions

One definition of Christian partnership is: “an association of two or more Christian autonomous bodies who have formed a trusting relationship and fulfill agreed upon expectations by sharing complementary strengths and resources to reach their mutual goal” (Kraakevik, 1992: 7). Another more concise one is: “using mutual gifts to accomplish tasks” (Taylor, 1994: 4). Partnership is about getting the right spiritually gifted leaders, teams, and resources to the right location so that UPGs are reached with the gospel of Christ. When involved in partnerships biblical principles of the indigenous church need to be followed. Partnership is not just a shifting of money from one location to support nationals in another location. Mutual respect, mutual equality, trust, control, evaluation, contracts of cooperation, and accountability must be given from both sides of the partnership for maximized effectiveness.

A Biblical Model

Partnership in ministry is found throughout the New Testament. The book of Philippians is a good model for partnership between the missionary and a national church to spread the gospel. The Greek word *koinonia* is used for the word “fellowship” in this book. It means a close relationship for a common purpose. In Philippians 1:5 Paul discusses their partnership in advancing the gospel. Though a prisoner, Paul in 1:12-13 says this persecution has opened doors to preach in the palace of Caesar. The biblical partnership was forged in belief in a savior for all people (2:5-11). It was also a partnership of encouragement and joy (2:12-19). Chapter 3 verses 1-16 record a common vision. Complementary strengths were shared (1:2-1,11; 2:4-8; 3:20-21; 4:21). It was also a partnership of shared resources, including finances and prayer (1:9-10; 2:12-19; 4:5-7, 10-17). Though they shared finances it was a relationship of love, joy, and trust. It was a partnership also forged in suffering (3:10). To reach the nations does cost something to the partners (Kraakevik, 1992: 6-15). Healthy, respectful, functional partnerships are biblical, as no one group has all the resources to get evangelization of all UPGs done in this generation.

What are some practical benefits of partnership?

Resources and expertise that our mission does not have can be borrowed from another mission or church.

1. Different types of risks, such as failure to plant a viable church, can be reduced if resources from partnerships are shared.
2. New laborers, prayer warriors, and financial resources may arise due to partnerships.

3. Sometimes less investment leads to greater return in partnerships (Taylor, 1994: 36 and 19).
4. Coordination to know where UPGs are, evaluate the level of need (translations of written and oral materials), what foreign or national agencies are already working with them to avoid duplication, closely related ethnic groups, what churches may have adopted this UPG in prayer, and the number of Christians (Bush, 1990: 141-142). There was a count given once of 700 plans to evangelize the nations. Of these plans only 10.5 percent included the concept of cooperating with other groups. The solo approaches of mission boards may be a major reason the Great Commission has not been completed sooner (Kraakevik, 1992: 17 and 109). Where there is little unity, there is a smaller possibility of reaching UPGs.
5. Missionaries from one country can freely enter a country that has UPGs, while others may have difficulties with getting visas (Kraakevik, 1992: 115).
6. Meaningful partnerships can be formed with specialized missions that can provide expertise that AGWM sometimes does not have. Examples would be the Jesus Film Project, Gospel Recordings provides audio recordings in hundreds of languages in a free downloadable from (www.globalrecordings.net). Faith Comes by Hearing (also audio recordings), and appropriate Bible translation organizations, ECT... Joshua Project's Web site and partners can provide the stages and sequence of adopting UPGs, Sunday school and small group curriculum about UPGs, all church training for UPG involvement, and many other resources that can help AGWM not recreate the wheel. UPG information is provided by region, country, and people. See www.joshuaproject.net. This can save time, money, and other resources.

Five Potential Partnership Relations

In order to plant churches among UPGs creative, strategic partnerships need to be forged that create the synergy to reach those who have never heard. Partnerships may need to be forged from among the following categories: AGWM partnership with national General Councils, AGWM partnership with Pentecostal Unions or Church Networks, AGWM partnership with other missions, AGWM partnership with the local churches, and an AG local church partnership with an individual and small group. In some locations creating strategic partnerships with other missions can potentially speed up the time needed to plant churches among particular UPGs. The participation of the entire body of Christ is needed if we are to accomplish this in our generation. These partnerships can take many forms. It may be important to have a contract with a beginning and ending time (that can renewable), shared values, vision, goals with action plans, resources and personnel to be shared, and other necessary items.

Let's examine these five potential partnerships briefly:

1. **AGWM partnership with national General Councils.** Our first point of contact should rightly be to General Councils that represent our like-minded national brethren. A preliminary task at hand is to invite the national brethren to discuss and study the Word of God concerning unreached people groups. In

some places of the world this missiological approach may be new to them. Time is needed to invite leaders to buy-in to this biblical strategy, partner, pray for laborers, strategize, and then send laborers out. General Councils can be sought who facilitate, rather than hinder, the process of reaching unreached people groups. Our foreign missionaries can be catalysts to form partnerships, coach, and encourage our national brethren on as they partner with us in frontier missions. Indigenous partners are available in some parts of the world who can support their own national missionaries, but often what they need is training and partners.

2. AGWM partnership with Pentecostal Unions and house church networks.

In countries where General Councils do not exist there are sometimes growing and vibrant Pentecostal Unions. An example of this would be in Russia. In Creative Access Nations there are often potential partners among house church networks. An example of this would be in China. Both China and Russia have large numbers of UPGs, but potential laborers need encouragement, prayer, and training in order to carry out this task more effectively.

3. AGWM partnership with other missions. In areas where a General Council, Union, or house church network do not exist it may be strategic and effective for AGWM to partner with missionaries from other mission boards. In Restricted Access Nations, this is sometimes necessary. Some missions have loaned missionaries to other mission boards for a specific time to help a team accomplish a specific, mutually agreed upon goal. In an area where there are few national Christians, a strategic partnership with another mission can bring the goal of planting a church among a UPG into a reality within five to ten years. Some specialized missions can be of great help, such as: Gospel Recordings, Faith Comes by Hearing, Heart Sounds International (ethnomusicologists), and the Jesus Film Project. AGUS or Chi Alpha partners can be considered who are working with a similar or the same UPG that AGWM is targeting. AGUS personnel may have expertise among a particular ethnic group. AGWM, after research, may want to bypass a certain UPG because another respected mission is already working among them.

4. AGWM partnership with a local church. This could be done in two ways.

- a. Local churches near a targeted UPG. In some areas, where there are no national church bodies, but there are strong local churches that have a vision for reaching UPGs. These local churches may need training and resources. Identifying and forging partnerships with such churches is essential.
- b. Local churches in the USA (or Chi Alpha groups!) that specifically have a heart for UPG ministry. One local church cannot typically evangelize and disciple a UPG, but they can research the group, pray, give financially, and possibly send some short-term teams for

specific tasks. Local churches in the USA have done this. A few select, flexible, servant-minded local churches in the USA can provide a solid basis for ongoing assistance to the missionary and UPG and lead the way in partnership and cultural sensitivity (Kraakevik, 1992: 62-78).

5. **AGWM and local churches in partnership with individual believers and small groups.** Churches, small groups and individuals in more reached areas can pray, give financially and, if the UPG is in a more open country, go minister to them short term. The models of adopting a people group financially and prayerfully have been used by other churches and missions boards and provide a pattern. Specific ways this can be done are available through Joshua Project. See www.joshuaproject.net.

4. AGWM's relationship to its constituent churches and supporters—Dick Brogden, Alan Johnson

We believe that a priority focus on the peoples of the world that do not have adequate access to the Good News will be welcomed by our whole movement in the USA. Our response to the challenge of the unreached is not dictated because the donors and dollars demand it, but because we are convinced it is mandated by the Scriptures and is the word of the Spirit to us now. Candidly, many of our churches and districts are longing to be lead toward a prioritization of UPGs. Many have lost institutional trust in AGWM for our failure to proactively lead in this direction. Part of this comes from the success of our propagation and explanation of our mission doctrines to pastors and churches, such as indigeneity, and part from our successes in so many places in the world. Pastors who believe in the indigenous church are puzzled by missionary assignments where there are robust national churches with competent local Christians capable of carrying out that task. They are similarly puzzled and disturbed when missionaries are sent from places in the States (such as in the Pacific Northwest) that have fewer Christians and church attendees than the places where they are going to minister. It is some of our constituents understanding of indigeneity and of the Pentecostal impulse to proclaim Christ where He is not known makes them question the placement methodology that they see happening in AGWM.

We believe that accurate information, spread widely through the movement and mission at every level through multiple means and channels with a single focus, will over time bring the new workers who will form church planting teams composed of people with a multiplicity of giftings among the unreached, and renew the vision for mission among our USA churches.

Clarity of terminology is critical to success. If there are mixed or competing messages in our communications it will create confusion. This is one of the greatest advantages for us in embracing the standard definitions of reached and unreached as used in the broader mission world. It provides a baseline standard from which to insure that communications are correctly representing the ideas and issues. I (Alan) have sometimes said, tongue in cheek, that in our AG publications we are theologically orthodox but missiologically heterodox, in that virtually anything goes. Articles that questioned the Trinity for instance

would not get a hearing. But the Pentecostal Evangel has run an advertisement promoting home missions that calls America the third largest unreached nation in the world. This does nothing but cause conceptual confusion.

Similarly in explaining ourselves to the constituency care must be taken to use the concepts correctly and not in a way that readers or listeners can misunderstand. For instance, when we say that 34 percent of our missionaries work in unreached countries it does not help build understanding among our churches. Why? First, unreached applies to ethnolinguistic peoples not countries. You can have a country 25 percent evangelical (not qualifying for unreached) that has seven people groups completely unreached. Further you can have five couples working in Jordan (a country 99 percent Muslim) but all are working with the ethnic minority National Church. They are not working among the unreached, they are not doing Pioneer Church Planting.

Our broader point here is that the focusing power of these concepts cannot be released unless they are used correctly to build vision; then they become a tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit to move people to action. There will always be those who want to co-opt terms in order to advance their own agendas and justify their actions. But just as AGWM would not countenance communications that attempted to redefine indigeneity as “paying national pastors” we should resist all attempts at redefinition by the power of repetitive, clear information.

One of the best ways that this can be accomplished is through the training of our veteran workers to become advocates for unreached peoples as they itinerate through our churches. The closest grassroots level communication we have in the Assemblies of God is via the itinerating missionary force, and if they begin to share the vision with one voice it will have an impact over time.

In the remainder of this section, Dick explores from his perspective a number of areas related to communication that will be impacted by a priority focus on unreached people groups.

- **Mobilization**—In candidate orientation we must prioritize the needs of UPGs. Every RD and AD should walk into mobilization settings with lists of UPGs in their areas, with cities and peoples that desperately need CP teams. New candidates should be presented with the needs of UPGs and should be able to articulate how their ministry will contribute to the larger vision of taking the gospel to those who have least access in the world
- **Presentation of Opportunities**—Connected to the presentation of data and call of the Holy Spirit, when we speak or interview candidates, let us proactively and energetically present the need of CP in teams among UPGs. Let us give the candidates (as well as students, churches, pastors, audiences, givers) the opportunity to hear about this priority and see how the Holy Spirit leads them to respond.
- **Print Communications**—In all missions magazines, UPGs would have a high

profile. Quotes, Pictures, Articles, Features, all must reflect this guiding passion. At a minimum 50 percent of all our writing would reflect some aspect of church planting among the unreached, whether that is testimony, need and prayer request, fund raising, or editorial. Effort must be made to use the standard missiological terms that we adopt and bring them into our popular vocabulary.

- **Video**—Videos need to communicate where the Church is not, not all the places the Church is strong. Videos need to be edgier, younger, contextual, and UPG themed.
- **Social Media**—Appropriating the modern means of communication and bending it toward an UPG focus is crucial to the communication of our message. The way Web pages are designed and presented, the content of Facebook and Twitter, all of it must be shaped toward the challenge of CP among the unreached in Teams.
- **Public Speech**—Missions Conventions, Pastoral Forums, District meetings, Private meetings are all valuable opportunities to cast vision for ministry among unreached people groups. As we cast vision for it, our constituency will respond. Our public presentation of this priority focus will be the most important of all our communication techniques. Our constituency is hungry to be led to prioritizing UPGs, it is something the Holy Spirit is stirring broadly in them and if we lead they will joyously follow.
- **Communiqués**—Letterheads, e-mails, texts, and all other means of communication should have in design and content a priority on the unreached. Every level of our U. S. organization should be conversant with Apostolic Function and how we as an organization are inclined that EVERYTHING we do works toward planting the church among unreached people groups.
- **Advocacy**—We need to move to a decentralized partnership system in the U. S. that does not depend on information from AGWM to churches. Let us develop volunteer advocacy networks that we do not control. We need to have bilateral connections between CP teams on the ground and their Champion networks in the U. S. and beyond. Strategy remains field driven through the Team Leader and his accountability to AGWM leadership, but there is genuine strategic partnerships between a CP team and a supporting network of churches and individuals abroad. Let us lead the relational change as affects missions connection, not be afraid of it or react to it.

5. Exit Strategy—Wang Yi Heng, Alan Johnson, Dick Brogden

Introduction

To this point in our history we have not had an explicit exit strategy value as a part of our missiology. Although the idea of an exit strategy was in Roland Allen's work that influenced early Assemblies of God mission thinkers and policy, it was not picked up in the same way as the notion of indigeneity. A priority focus on UPGs means that the relative emphasis on the missionary role shifts toward pioneer church planting and

building capacity in the emerging church rather than assisting a mature church or performing tasks that local Christians can do. In this section we will examine a number of points related to the idea of exit strategy and then conclude with some tools that help in developing such plans.

Some Clarifications on the Idea of Exit Strategy

It will be helpful to make some clarifications about the idea of exit strategies before going into more detail on what they actually look like.

First, in a sense, the weight we give calling by the Spirit for missionary placement does over time lead to missionary phase-out. For instance, we no longer have large numbers of personnel in either Brazil or South Korea where the church has grown rapidly and to a large size. What we are proposing here is to continue to rely on this guidance and to add to it a set of criteria that will help teams and regions to pray through to determine their ministry approach and placement of personnel. So, just as in the case of calling, so with exit, information does not take the place of the work of the Spirit but provides frameworks in which the guidance of the Spirit is sought.

The controlling factor in developing strategies is indigeneity. What Winter called missiological breakthrough, and what we call the indigenous church are very robust concepts. This is not just a few Christians or churches on their own. Rather, it is a movement that is capable of evangelizing and discipling its own people without any outside assistance. Thus we find that there is a big difference between an indigenous church or a few churches from a church movement that we would call a national church. The notion of indigeneity that AGWM holds to starts at the local church level, but really embraces a national church.

In a people group that has less than 2 percent Evangelical Christian you can have strong single indigenous churches as part of movements that in themselves are not yet fully capable of adequately evangelizing their people on their own. As was mentioned above in the definition section, the 2 percent number was chosen for sociological reasons, because when 2 percent of a group holds a similar value or practice it has the ability to influence the entire group and spread. In the same way a group that is less than 2 percent Evangelical can have strong presence in urban areas, and then have virtually nothing in rural areas. Thailand is an example of this, with 0.3 percent of 62 million Thais being Protestant, there are still 70 percent of the subdistricts that do not have a single known Christian. This will increasingly be an issue in ministry to unreached people because as initial pioneering efforts take place among those groups that have no churches, there will be times when response is slow, or the church becomes isolated. So there is a need for a kind of work that is facilitating others to do the pioneering work, rather than doing it on one's own. The cross-cultural worker needs pioneering skills and sensitivity to cultural context, but will try to equip others to do this work.

It can be seen that an exit strategy does not mean a premature withdrawal that risks truncating the development of the emerging church. However, by the same token, when cross-cultural workers stay too long, it can impede the development of a truly indigenous movement, or it can lead to redundant effort on the part of the missionary who ends up

doing what local believers should be doing.

A Brief Biblical and Missiological Look at Exit Strategy

Passing the baton of leadership needs to start before churches are planted. Exit strategy is defined as planning on the part of the missionary on how to leave an indigenous church and leadership in an empowered state so the local church can reproduce and be healthy. Each team and each missionary should know the goal to which they work. We must start with the end game. The missionary wants to create Holy Spirit dependence by the newly emerging church, and not dependence on the missionary (Allen, *Miss. Methods*, 1962:81).

Different writers on church planting conceive of the stages involved in that process in slightly different ways. Steps in the process include planning, team building, pre-evangelism, winning and discipling converts, and building leadership. An important further step is for the missionary to phase-out from involvement and let the new church run on its own. Tom Steffen sees the missionary phase-out stage exemplified in the work of Paul. It was his desire to preach Christ where he was not already named (Rom. 15:20-23) that continually pushed him forward to the frontiers (1997:508). Steffen notes that Paul and his team left new churches for some of the following reasons:

1. Persecution- involuntary phase-out can cause the church to mature (see Acts 17:8-15).
2. Trips to plant other churches in new regions (Acts 16:9-40; Rom. 15:18-24).

By having pre-planned absences away from new church plants this gave more room for new churches to develop indigenous leadership. Pre-planned absences can be ministry in another place, meetings in other countries, furlough, or other reasons. When possible Paul or team members returned to encourage new churches and wrote epistles to help them grow in their faith (see Acts 15:36 and 18:23). Local Christians must be included in future plans from the beginning, not just the middle or end.

Melvin Hodges also advocated the idea of the missionary's changing roles. "As circumstances change, the Holy Spirit will also change the ministry of missionaries to meet different needs" (Hodges, 1978: 147). A missionary need not fill any role that gifted and trained national can fill. Knowing when to withdraw and change to a new role furthers the development of the national church. Steffen (1997: 22-24) illustrates some of the stages that cross-cultural workers move through:

1. Outsider/Learner
2. Church planter/Teacher
3. Resident advisor
4. Itinerate advisor
5. Absent advisor

In the final section of this paper Dick Brogden has developed a deployment matrix. This is a tool that helps us think about where to send workers, what kind of workers are

needed, and also provides some criteria to use for determining when workers can begin to phase-out.

Areas for Further Research

As we have worked through this material it has become obvious to our group that raising the kinds of questions we have here begs for further research on a number of lines and further discussion to explore the implications of the kind of response we are advocating. Some of the topics that we think will be important in the future are as follows:

The whole issue of training for our current missions team and those who will come on board.

The way in which missions is communicated to our constituency.

Intentional teaching and training on our missiology to our constituent churches.

Administrative changes that would be needed in order to pursue this direction.

Doing further research on how pastors and churches understand the idea of unreached people groups and how it impacts their decision making in missions.

The need for setting some concrete goals in terms of new church planting teams and specific unreached people groups.

Looking at how we, as AGWM, relate to the WAGF and the kinds of goals their mission commission has for majority world sending and how we can participate in that.

Conclusion

When we talk about unreached people groups, it is fundamentally an issue of access to the saving message of the gospel. Increasingly detailed research on the status of the Christian faith among the ethnolinguistic peoples of the world shows us that there is a great divide between those who have resources within their sociocultural setting that will allow them to hear the gospel, and those that do not. For Pentecostal missionaries in the Assemblies of God to talk about unreached peoples is not to broach a new subject or to move away from “the way we do mission.” Rather it is to draw upon the strongest and deepest streams of the vision of our spiritual forefathers who saw their experience of the Spirit empowering them to take Jesus to the world. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that with the kind of information that we now hold in our hand the early Pentecostal pioneers would have led the way, borne any burden, and made any sacrifice necessary to take the gospel to the groups where we know there are no or few Christians.

We believe that we are poised at a great moment in the history of our mission and our movement. Everett Wilson, in his biography of J. Philip Hogan, said that in the 1950s the Division of Foreign Mission was the institutional salvation of the Assemblies of God because it gave the movement something to focus on past themselves. A systemic response that unashamedly prioritizes the unreached of our world could again provide

that kind of call to the entire movement to awake new streams of renewal for the lost near and far. A strong AGWM response to the unreached at this time will also have powerful impact on national churches throughout the World Assemblies of God Fellowship as they begin to send out their own workers.

But most of all we do it because the Bible mandates it and the Spirit is ringing the challenge in our hearts. May God give us wisdom and courage to respond.

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