

# 31 The Call to the World's Least Reached: An MB Mission Response

Ray Harms-Wiebe

## Mission Vision

Proponents of the “Least Reached People Group (LRPG) Movement” consider the primary impetus of global mission to be the yearning to see Christ worshiped and followed among every people group. “The essential missionary task is to establish a viable, indigenous church planting movement that carries the potential to renew whole extended families and transform whole societies. It is viable in that it can grow on its own, indigenous meaning that it is not seen as foreign, and a church planting movement that continues to reproduce intergenerational fellowships that are able to evangelize the rest of the people group.”<sup>1</sup> This is understood to be the primary imperative of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and the essence of God’s purposes for humanity (Rev. 5:9; 7:9).<sup>2</sup> This demographic conceptualization of LRPGs, galvanized at the 1974 Lausanne Congress and disseminated through subsequent conferences and publications, is probably the most significant contribution to missionary strategy from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As of August 2014, the International Mission Board ([www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org)) identifies 11,235 people groups among earth’s 7 billion inhabitants. Of these, 6541 (4 billion people) are LRPGs and 3004 (205 million) are unengaged LRPGs. Unengaged groups are those LRPG where no church planting strategy is being implemented.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the Joshua Project ([www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)) lists 9755 people groups in the world. Of these, 4082 are considered to be unreached (42% of the world’s people groups).<sup>4</sup>

Differences arise due to the classification criteria employed, but the missionary task, whatever the criteria used, remains both engaging and daunting. Because of geographic, linguistic, political, religious, social and spiritual barriers, LRPGs live isolated from the impact of Christian witness and community. It is understood that

for these peoples to hear and understand the message of Jesus, they will most often depend upon the investment of long-term, cross-cultural workers, at least until there is a viable, reproducing, indigenous community of faith among them.

## Theological Foundations

This missiological movement to the least reached finds its theological grounding in the Abrahamic promise. God's promise to Abraham is to bless all the families of the earth through his lineage (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:1-8). The Old Testament prophets foresee a time when all peoples will behold God's glory (Isa. 66:18-19) for "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). In the book of Revelation, each people group will carry its expression of the glory of God to the throne (Rev. 5:9-10; 7:9-10; 21:22-26).

Jesus, who came through the line of Abraham, commissions his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The Greek word for "nations," *ethne*, refers to ethno-linguistic people groups, "the languages and extended families which constitute the peoples of the earth, not modern nation-states."<sup>5</sup> So, the call to L RPGs is understood to come from Jesus himself.

The conversation surrounding L RPGs is often flavored with eschatological overtones. Some evangelical leaders would say, we can be "the generation that brings back the king!"<sup>6</sup> The same word, *ethne*, is employed by Jesus in Matthew 24:24, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." It appears that the final consummation of all things, the second coming of Jesus for his bride, is tethered to the faithfulness of God's people in its witness to all peoples. God has entrusted to his people "a task that can be completed."<sup>7</sup>

Although the Christian Church has grown remarkably over the past 2000 years, with one in eight people actively practicing his or her Christian faith, approximately 40% of the world's population finds itself within communities culturally removed from Christian communities. They do not have a viable, reproducing Christian fellowship within their people group. Religious beliefs are usually disseminated within people groups, but they rarely transfer across cultural boundaries (e.g., from Jews to Gentiles) without intervention. The expansion of the gospel to all people groups, then, requires the contextualization and active proclamation of the gospel from one people group to another.

The message to be proclaimed among all people is the "gospel of the kingdom." This gospel is centred in the person and work of Christ, who through his death and resurrection, triumphed over evil. He offers to his followers the removal of guilt and

shame, liberation from sin and evil powers, healing for the broken and alienated, and meaning and purpose for life. Disciples of Jesus are liberated so that they may live obediently under his lordship and blessing.

For proponents of the LRP movement, the most persuasive display of kingdom reality is the body of Christ incarnated in a people group; that is, a community of faith that lives in God's presence, experiences loving covenant relationships, submits to and shares God's truth, and reaches out to the neighbor with words and acts of love. This community understands the gospel within their context and, as the primary agent of the kingdom, reveals God's glory like no other body.

### **Definition of Terms**

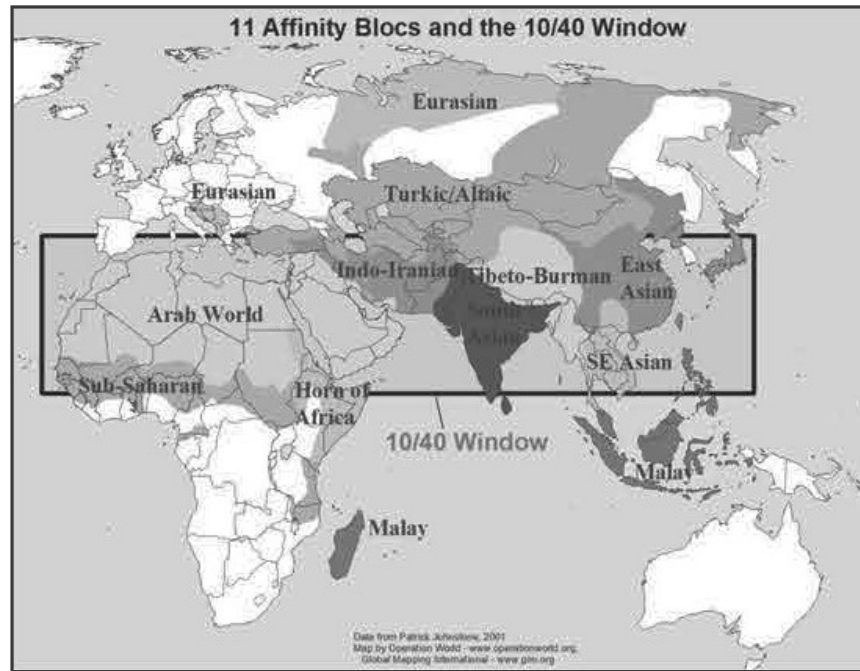
Mission thinkers tend to refer to people groups through five lenses: (1) Majority Religion Blocs, (2) Affinity Blocs, (3) People Clusters, (4) Ethno-linguistic Peoples, and (5) Unimax Peoples.

#### **Majority Religion Blocs**

LRPGs are often grouped along the lines of religious identity. The majority religion blocs of LRPGs are Muslim (22.6%), non-religious (14.8%), Hindu (13.7%), ethno-religious (10%) and Buddhist (6.5%).<sup>8</sup> The ethno-religious can be divided into three categories: (1) literate ethnic such as Taoist, Confucian, Shinto and Sikh, (2) smaller global religions like Judaism and Baha'i, (3) traditional ethnic such as animist, shamanist and spiritist. Most LRPGs live in the Muslim, non-religious, and Hindu majority religion blocs.

#### **Affinity Blocs**

An Affinity Bloc is a macro-region where people groups share language, history, culture, religion and, sometimes, politics, even though one finds in nearly every bloc linguistic minorities that are widely dissimilar from the dominant body. The world's peoples are grouped into 15 blocs. The eleven blocs that comprise the majority of the LRPGs, with percentage of unreached, are the following: Sub-Saharan African (19%), Cushitic (37.5%), Jews (97.2%), Arab World (64.4%), Iranian (91.6%), Turkic (81.7%), South Asian (88.6%), Tibetan-Himalayan (55.7%), East Asian (43.4%), Southeast Asian (73.5%), and Malay (27.3%).<sup>9</sup> These 11 blocs are located in or near the 10/40 window. Most LRPGs in other parts of the world are migrants from these 11 blocs. To recognize them is helpful for broad-based gospel sowing through radio, TV, internet and literature ministry.



### People Clusters

Within the 11 affinity blocs, which comprise the majority of the LRPGs, are 251 people clusters. People clusters are closely related ethno-linguistic peoples, sometimes divided by political or dialectal boundaries, usually numbering more than one million. For example, the Arabic World is made up of the following people clusters: Hassaniya, Maghreb, Libyan, Egyptian, Arabian, Levantine, Sudanese and Yemeni. Within the Turkic World, we find the Turkish, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Uighur and Ural-Siberian people clusters. These smaller groupings are significant for strategic initiatives to reach related peoples.

### Ethno-Linguistic People Groups

An ethno-linguistic people group is “a people distinguished by its self-identity with traditions of common descent, history, customs and language.”<sup>10</sup> So, ethnic identity is rooted in shared community, shared heritage and shared culture, even though sub-divisions according to dialect or cultural distinctives may still exist. This ethno-linguistic model is helpful for evangelism and discipleship when language barriers override comprehension and acceptance barriers. However, when the language barrier is superseded by other acceptance factors, this approach is less appropriate. For example, in many South Asian contexts (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka) the language barrier is not the paramount obstacle to gospel communication.

### **Unimax People Groups**

A *unimax people group* is “the maximum sized group sufficiently unified to be the target of a single people movement to Christ, where ‘unified’ refers to the fact that there are no significant barriers of either understanding or acceptance to stop the spread of the gospel.”<sup>11</sup> In 1982, a broad representation of mission thinkers gathered in Chicago, sponsored by the Lausanne Strategy Working Group and the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, to provide further clarity for the remaining missionary task. The following definitions emerged from this meeting: A *People Group* is “a significantly large 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 . . . it is the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.”<sup>12</sup> A *unimax people group* comes closest to this 1982 definition.

Ideally, usage of the term “people group” would always imply that all members of the given group understand each other linguistically, relationally and culturally. The 1982 Lausanne Strategy Working Group agreed that “for evangelization purposes, a people group is the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.”<sup>13</sup> For example, the *Unimax Nanerige People Group* are part of the *Senoufo Ethno-linguistic People Group* within the larger *Gur People Cluster* (Mossi, Senoufo, Gourma, etc.) that is found within the *Sub-Saharan Affinity Bloc*, comprised of primarily animists and Muslims.

### **Least Reached People Groups (LRPG)**

A LRPG is an ethno-linguistic people group within which there is no viable, reproducing, indigenous community of Jesus followers with adequate resources and critical mass to evangelize their own people group.<sup>14</sup> Although somewhat arbitrary, a LRPG is defined as a people group with a population over 10,000 and under 5% Christian or less than 2% Evangelical.

### **The 10/40 Window**

The 10/40 Window is a rectangular area housing North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia between the latitudes 10 and 40 north of the equator and between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, encompassing the region of greatest concentration of LRPGs. This is also the region where the major non-Christian religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) predominate. Some countries situated on the borders of

the 10/40 Window that possess high numbers of L RPGs are also included, such as the Muslim-dominated nation of Indonesia. 95% of those who have never had an opportunity to hear the gospel in their own language live within the 10/40 Window.<sup>15</sup> “An estimated 4.56 billion individuals residing in approximately 8,625 distinct people groups” are found in this geographical region.<sup>16</sup>

## The MB Mission Response

### Overall Mission Vision

The focus of MB engagement in world mission has been on the least reached since the beginning, when Abraham and Maria Friesen were sent from South Russia (modern Ukraine) to the Telugu of South India in 1889. When the North American Mennonite Brethren Mission Union formed in 1900, the first of four purposes for the new ecclesial organization read as follows: “To bring and to preach through missionaries the gospel to all nations without the gospel of Christ in home and foreign lands.”<sup>17</sup>

The strategic vision pamphlet, *Vision for the Future: Goals for the 90s*, published in 1990 by MB Mission, gives specific reference to the unfinished task. “Until the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ has been brought to all nations and peoples, the missionary task has not been accomplished. Today over 2.2 billion people have not had access to the gospel and live under severe de facto religious restrictions. Thousands of people groups of unique language and cultural identity do not have Christian churches in their midst.”<sup>18</sup> A subsequent MB Mission document published in 1997 called *Global Mission Guidelines: Vision, Priorities and Strategies for Century 21* reiterates this call to the unreached people groups within the 10-40 Window: “Until the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ has been brought to all people groups, the missionary task will be ongoing.”<sup>19</sup>

The *Global Mission Guidelines* document outlined a strategic transition in prayer, finances and personnel from Latin America to Asia, where the majority of the least reached were found among the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist religious blocs. This global re-positioning was motivated by the focus on sending more church planting workers to serve among the L RPGs. In alignment with this strategic adjustment, since 2005, MB Mission has as its strategic vision statement: “holistic church planting that transforms communities among the least reached.”

## Examples of MB Mission to LRPGs

### ***Empowering Mission to the Least Reached: Mission Capacity Building service (MCB)***

MB Mission believes that followers of Jesus from all people groups are called to join Jesus in his mission to the LRPGs. Based on this understanding, the mission agency comes alongside member conferences of the International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB) with its Mission Capacity Building service in the areas of leadership training, community development, and mission sending. The intent is to equip, empower, and release mission workers from all members of the ICOMB family for global mission.

***Telugu People Cluster.*** Abraham and Maria Friesen arrived in south-central India in 1889, working with existing American Baptist mission agencies. A decade later, in 1899, MB Mission initiated its work among the Telugu people cluster of Andhra Pradesh. Today, the India MB Conference numbers between 150-200 thousand members and 965 churches. The Telugu People Cluster, however, numbers 66.5 Million and remains largely unreached (0.01%). Many Muslims from the Urdu People Cluster also live alongside them in Hyderabad and smaller towns. Presently, MB Mission understands its current role to be one of encouraging and equipping this large indigenous church to reach other people groups of Andhra Pradesh, North India, and beyond.

***Bantu People Cluster.*** MB Mission officially began its church planting work among the Bantu peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1943. The church family is now comprised of 110,000 members, 468 congregations, and 1056 cell churches. At the time of writing, 193 ministry students, supported through MB Mission, are enrolled in secondary to graduate levels of study. Through distance education approximately 450 more students are being trained in rural regions, as well as in the new church cluster in Bukavu (eastern Congo).

The DRC MB Conference carries a dynamic missionary vision for church planting and the LR in their home country and beyond. Within the DRC, they are planting churches among the Teke and the Batwa Kiri people groups. Beyond the DRC, they are planting churches in South Africa (Durban) and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).

The Angolan MB Conference is also a child of the DRC churches. Seeds were initially planted as Angolan refugees came to faith at MB medical clinics in the DRC. As Angolan converts returned home in 1980, they began to

form new church communities. The conference now numbers around 12,000 members in 93 congregations. Both the DRC and Angola are resourced through MB Mission's MCB service.

***Khmu People Group.*** In 1990, MB Mission initiated its work among the Khmu, an ethno-linguistic people group numbering approximately 814,000 in four Southeast Asian countries. As of 2013, the Khmu MB Conference numbers about 36 thousand members, 32 churches and 180 house churches. While 8-10% of their population is Evangelical in one of these countries, their people group is between 0.1% - 0.7% Evangelical in three other countries.<sup>20</sup> Other unimax groups within the Khmu people group are also largely unreached (e.g., Keun, Lu, Me, Rok, Nguan).

The Khmu are beginning to plant churches among other ethno-linguistic groups within their people cluster (e.g., seven churches among the Mnong) and neighbouring people clusters like the Mien and Lao. The vision is to see churches planted across the Khmu world and in neighbouring people clusters in Southeast Asia. Workers from North America support the evangelistic efforts of these church planters through prayer and the MCB service.

***Latin American Affinity Bloc.*** The Latin American conferences of the ICOMB family are growing in their mission vision for the L RPGs. The Matthew Training Center in Mexico equips Latino works for mission among the L RPGs in Mexico, Latin America, and beyond. Brazilian missionaries are planting churches among the Mandyak people group of Senegal. Uruguay and Paraguay have sent long term workers to North Africa and North India, respectively. MB Mission offers itself as a resource to the mission leaders of these national churches.

#### ***Going to the Least Reached: Church Planting Service***

***Turkic Affinity Bloc.*** In October of 2008, the MB Mission Board adopted the Turkic world as an Affinity Bloc within which church planting teams would be placed. Over the past five years, three multi-ethnic and multi-national teams have been mobilized to the Turkic world.

***Arabic Affinity Bloc.*** MB Mission supports mass evangelism initiatives (e.g., satellite TV programming, radio, and internet evangelism), discipleship, and church planting in seven countries across the Arabic world.

***Tibetan-Burmese Affinity Bloc.*** MB Mission has workers within the Tibetan-Burmese Affinity Bloc engaged in Scripture translation, evangelism, and discipleship among at least three unimax people groups.

***Sub-Saharan African Affinity Bloc.*** Since 1990, MB Mission has had workers among the Nanerige people of western Burkina Faso. Ministries include Scripture translation, provision of oral Bible teaching tools, evangelism, and church planting.



***Latin American Affinity Bloc.*** In the past, MB workers have translated Scripture for and planted communities of faith among indigenous peoples such as the Lengua, Nivaclé (Chulupí), Ashaninca, Chocó, Wounaan and Embera. MCB work continues in Paraguay and Panama. Church planting is beginning among the Mixtec, a LRPG of approximately 400 thousand in Mexico.

### **Summary**

75% of MB Mission's global missionary force is focused on church planting among LRPGs. 25% of its workers are engaged in MCB work, which also has as its goal the mobilization of missionaries from the ICOMB family to the LRPGs. 25% of the LRPG force is focused on ministry to Muslim people groups. The LRPG Movement has had a tremendous impact on MB Mission's self-understanding and, as a natural consequence, its strategic planning.

## **Some Mission Reflections**

### **Some Cautions**

#### **Metrics**

While recognizing the tremendous benefits of increased awareness of the missionary task, strategic planning across denominational and agency lines, focused energy on the least reached, and global intercession for the LRPGs, we must give attention to our means of measuring success. Do we value the contextualization of the church in human contexts more than the contextualization of the gospel among the LRPGs? What are our metrics in global mission? Quantitative measures (e.g., numbers of converts and gathered fellowships) can become more important than biblical measures such as knowledge of God, faithfulness, holiness, and suffering. The work of the Holy Spirit in history and the fulfillment of the Great Commission cannot be reduced to a mathematical exercise.

#### **Foundations**

Proponents of LRPG strategy should recognize not only the biblical foundation for people group language (*ethne*), but also the influence of social anthropology on their missionary perspectives. In the 1920s, British social anthropology was the first to compare social systems (i.e., families, clans, tribes, and peasant communities) from around the globe, usually focusing on small-scale societies.<sup>21</sup> This scientific endeavour revealed the power and functionality of social systems. Some of the foundational concepts such as the social dynamics of homogeneous groups, social receptivity (or resistance), and the existence of social barriers have social anthropology as their source. The LRPG Movement drew language from this early twentieth century development.

***Reductionism***

At the same time, the focus on L RPGs through social analysis can make one vulnerable to a certain reductionism, where the application of social principles to strategic evangelism and church planting become more important than God (theology), divine guidance, holiness, ecclesiology, spiritual encounter (with opposing spiritual realities), and prayer. The L RPGs are not won for the Lord simply through strategic planning, human ingenuity and hard work. It behooves mission workers to walk in submission to God, asking for the nations (ethne) as their inheritance (Psalm 2:8), yielding themselves fully to his sovereign plan, sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit, ready to cooperate with him, awaiting his empowering and blessing to go to the ends of the earth.

***Objectification of the Other***

Care must also be taken to not only see L RPGs as groups to be identified, categorized and evangelized, but also to see them as people who share a common humanity. On the most profound level of human identity we are one (Gen. 1:26). As followers of Jesus, all ethno-linguistic groups are called to form one new people (society, humanity) for the glory of God (Acts 10:34; Eph. 2:12-20). True conversion to Jesus and incorporation into his body (church planting) will lead to social transformation through the assimilation of a new kingdom identity.<sup>22</sup>

This profound spiritual unity does not demand uniformity, but our shared life in Christ challenges our divisions according to ethnicity, language, social class, and gender, and urges us to allow the Holy Spirit to draw us together into one body (John 17:22-23). Discipleship in Christ should always lead us to understand the new kingdom identity as the primary and eternal identity, not the ethno-linguistic identity. In some parts of Europe and Africa, where ethno-linguistic identity has superseded kingdom identity, brothers and sisters have killed each other in the name of Jesus.

***Intra-People Group Animosity***

We must also remember that ethno-linguistic people groups, usually identified by language and common descent, are often divided by religion, class distinctions, education, politics, ideologies, and enmity between clans or tribes. Neighboring groups often hate and fear each other because of their interrelated histories. Within a people cluster, least reached unimax people groups may resist the movement to Christ in a related unimax group because of inherited enmity. The proclamation of the gospel should bring peace, reconciliation, and healing to these intra-people group relationships (e.g., Egyptian and Maghreb Arabs).

***Global Forces: Migration, Urbanization and Globalization***

Much of the LRPG strategy was originally developed in rural, small-scale societies rooted in shared language, community, and heritage. Forces such as migration, urbanization, and globalization, however, are altering the composition and identity of people groups. People groups are being dispersed around the globe (e.g., Turks in Germany and Austria) at a rate never before seen in human history. As a consequence, the world's peoples often cannot be grouped into distinct, non-overlapping, bounded sets of families with impermeable boundaries. What is the relevance of LRPG thinking in globalized urban contexts? Can there be people group movements in complex urban societies? What do we do where there is a fusion of horizons, where different ethno-linguistic identities are blending to form a new hybrid identity?

Ethno-linguistic people groups, in urban contexts, often live with multiple identities and allegiances which evolve over time. For example, a person may compartmentalize his or her ethnic identity and then identify primarily with middle levels of social organizations; such as networks, associations, or institutions (e.g., religious identity). The same person may also identify with upper levels of social organization like nation-states and transnational organizations. So, the same person has many different cultural frames and loyalties. For global mission, the question is, "What are the primary relationship networks of the people being evangelized?"

At the end of the twentieth century, 51% of the world's population was urbanized with twenty super giants (over ten million inhabitants), seventy-nine super cities (over four million), and 433 megacities (over one million). If current trends continue, by 2100 only ten percent of the world's population will be rural. The twenty-first century will be an urban world:

The cities are even more vital for mission strategy than they were in Paul's day. Pioneer missions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had been characterized by the need to reach unreached peoples—a process within sight of conclusion. The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be characterized by the need for pioneer missions in the great cities of the world—a much more complex and multi-layered kaleidoscope of needs. Mission frontiers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were perceived as rural, but we must switch our thinking to the urban challenge as the frontier of the future.<sup>23</sup>

The world's cities present a formidable challenge to mission and, at the same time, a tremendous opportunity for kingdom growth.

***Triumphalism***

We must be careful in the tone of our language when we begin to postulate that we can bring Jesus back in our generation. In some settings the triumphalist language

can be quite disconcerting. Thankfully, human history and the return of Jesus are in the sovereign hands of the father, not ours.

## **Positive Impetus**

### ***Strategic Planning***

As Ralph Winter argues, the consideration of unimax peoples is possibly the most valuable framework for strategic planning in mission.<sup>24</sup> The geographical distribution of LRPGs does not follow political boundaries in the majority, so strategizing along permeable political lines is usually not very helpful (e.g., Kurds are found in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Azerbaijan). The unimax people grouping offers the largest people group definition without crossing boundaries that hinder the spread of the gospel. It does so without neglecting those smaller groups which may be insulated within a larger group and sealed off because of prejudicial boundaries (e.g., the Bolon and Nanerige peoples are part of the larger Jula people group cluster in Burkina Faso). This strategic focus can be, and has been, the basis for many inter-agency partnerships among the LRPGs.

### ***Intercession***

Planting viable, reproducible, indigenous churches among the LR requires focused intercession, for “we fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12). The LRPG Movement has produced unparalleled resources for global intercession through the publication of *Operation World* and related materials. Through the painstaking work of dedicated mission workers, increasingly accurate data on nations, people groups, religious movements, significant mission challenges, and informed invitations to prayer have been provided for the global church and have encouraged many to pray for not only LRPGs, but whole people clusters and affinity blocs. Many mission workers first felt called by the Lord of the harvest to serve among the LR as they prayed through this mission literature in personal devotional times, student groups, and church families.

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Winter, “Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., 4th Edition (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009), 538. Some of the first proponents of this focus on people groups were Donald Anderson McGavran, through his influential book, *The Bridges of God: A*

*Study in the Strategy of Missions* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), and his protégé, Ralph Winter.

- <sup>2</sup> Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, 7th Edition (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010), 17. This missionary motivation is also espoused by the *Issachar Initiative* ([www.issacharinitiative.org](http://www.issacharinitiative.org)) and *Finishing the Task* ([www.finishingthetask.com](http://www.finishingthetask.com)).
- <sup>3</sup> *International Mission Board*, last modified January 27, 2015, [www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org).
- <sup>4</sup> “Joshua Project,” [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net), accessed January 27, 2015; the most comprehensive people group listings are provided by the International Mission Board, the Joshua Project and the World Christian Database ([www.worldchristiandatabase.org](http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org)).
- <sup>5</sup> Winter, *Perspectives*, 533. See also Wilbert Shenk ed., *Exploring Church Growth* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2010).
- <sup>6</sup> Mandryk, *Operation*, 27.
- <sup>7</sup> Winter, *Perspectives*, 533; Ralph Winter and David Taylor, “Seeking Closure: The Story of a Movement from William Carey to Tokyo 2010,” *Mission Frontiers* 31.5 (September-October, 2009): 19-23.
- <sup>8</sup> Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church: History, Trends and Possibilities* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 168-169.
- <sup>9</sup> Mandryk, *Operation*, 25.
- <sup>10</sup> Mandryk, *Operation*, 958. Ethnicity is commonly understood to be a primary force in the shaping of socio-psychological identity, see Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 62-63.
- <sup>11</sup> Winter, *Perspectives*, 535.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 536.
- <sup>13</sup> 1982 Lausanne Committee Chicago Meeting, as quoted in “What is a People Group?,” [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net), accessed January 27, 2015, [http://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/what\\_is\\_a\\_people\\_group](http://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/what_is_a_people_group).
- <sup>14</sup> Winter, *Perspectives*, 536; Joshua Project ([www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)).
- <sup>15</sup> Johnstone, *Future*, 548.
- <sup>16</sup> “10/40 Window,” [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net), accessed January 27, 2015, [http://joshuaproject.net/help/definitions#10\\_40\\_Window](http://joshuaproject.net/help/definitions#10_40_Window).
- <sup>17</sup> G.W. Peters, *Foundations of Mennonite Brethren Missions* (Hillsboro: Kindred Productions, 1984), 216.

- <sup>18</sup> *Vision for the Future: Goals for the 1990s* (Winnipeg: Mennonite Brethren Missions/Service, 1990), 15.
- <sup>19</sup> *Global Mission Guidelines: Vision, Priorities, and Strategies for Century 21* (Fresno: Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services, 1997), 9.
- <sup>20</sup> “Khmu,” *joshuaproject.net*, accessed January 27, 2015, [http://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/18878](http://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/18878).
- <sup>21</sup> Hiebert, *Gospel*, 89.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-75.
- <sup>23</sup> Johnstone, *Future*, 556.
- <sup>24</sup> Winter, *Perspectives*, 536.

### Recommended Reading

- Conn, Harvie M., ed. *Reaching the Unreached: The Old-New Challenge*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1984.
- Ens, Harold. *Mennonite Brethren in Global Mission: Observations and Reflections, 1966-2006*. Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2010.
- Hiebert, Paul G. *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Johnstone, Patrick. “Affinity Blocs and People Clusters: An Approach Toward Strategic Insight and Mission Partnership.” *Mission Frontiers* 29:2, (March-April 2007): 8-15.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Future of the Global Church: History, Trends and Possibilities*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011.
- Mandryk, Jason. *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010.
- Shenk, Wilbert R. *Changing Frontiers of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999.
- Snodderly, Beth and A. Scott Moreau, eds. *Evangelical and Frontier Mission: Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel*. Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2011.
- Taylor, David. “Discipling All Peoples: Today’s Imperative and the Vision of Tokyo 2010.” *Mission Frontiers*, 31.5 (September-October 2009): 6-12.
- Winter, Ralph and David Taylor. “Seeking Closure: The Story of a Movement from William Carey to Tokyo 2010.” *Mission Frontiers*, 31:5, (September-October 2009): 19-23.

**People Group Movement Websites:**

Finishing the Task ([www.finishingthetask.com](http://www.finishingthetask.com))

The International Mission Board ([www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org))

The Isaachar Initiative ([www.isaacharinitiatve.org](http://www.isaacharinitiatve.org))

The Joshua Project ([www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net))

SIL Ethnologue ([www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com))

World Christian Database ([www.worldchristiandatabase.org](http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org))

**Study Questions**

1. Is the concept and language of “least reached people groups” new to you? List three new insights you have gained from reading this chapter.
2. Given the author’s definition of an LRPG, are there such groups in your area? Who are they? Who is reaching out to them?
3. How might one respond to the affirmation, “Why go to the ends of the earth when we have lots of unsaved people all around us; leave those mission fields to the older and larger mission agencies!”

