THE FRAGMENTATION OF MISSION INTO 4,000 FREESTANDING, STANDALONE MONOLITHS

■ Providing the backdrop for understanding the complexities in cooperation for world evangelization is the extraordinary splintering of world Christianity. Can the reader see a way through the morass of independent monoliths to a world where all peoples have an opportunity to know the Savior?

By David B. Barrett

This article endeavors to see and present one aspect of the big picture in Christian missions. It focuses in on a bird's-eye view of the whole of Christian history and the status of global Christianity today.

The reader should understand that our approach in this instance is not missiology but missiography. In other words, this is not a normative analysis posited within Christian theology. Instead it is a descriptive analysis, describing reality as it actually is. Our research is in fact based upon a number of approaches or disciplines. Certainly, it starts from the Christian Scriptures and from Christ's Great Commission in particular. Then it becomes based on data, facts, phenomena, realities, objective research, scientific study, statistics, numeracy, logic, common sense, rational discussion, and many similar approaches.

A progression of five diagrams

Our findings are here then shown on a series of five standardized and stylized diagrams in which the background depicts the timeline for the whole course of Christian history from Christ's Cross, Resurrection, and Great Commission in AD 33 up to the present and on a few months to AD 2000. This timeline has recurred several times earlier in our lengthy series of 50 global diagrams over the last ten years. This history is first depicted in Global Diagrams 1 and 5, and is fully explained and expounded in Global Diagrams 29-32 in *Our globe and how to reach it* (New Hope, 1990). All those diagrams look at the same panorama from over to the lefthand side of Global Diagram 47.

The timeline in the diagrams below is as it appears to the outside observer—namely, to a person unfamiliar with the structures of global Christianity. He could be a secularist, marxist, atheist, agnostic, or a member of one of the great world religions such as a Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jew, Baha'i, or an Asian New-Religionist, or from any of the other 30 major world religions. We can imagine this outside observer standing in the middle at the bottom in the year 2000. Because the distances are immense, he trains his binoculars on the phenomenon we call Christianity, and he sees it hazily as Diagram 1 below. He then fine tunes his focus and it becomes clearer as Diagram 2. Intrigued, he zooms his lenses and sees it as Diagram 3. Again, he zeroes in on 33 gigantic monoliths and sees it as Diagram 4. Lastly, as he observes he begins to see some order emerging and finally Global Diagram 47 appears in view. The whole sequence is similar to fractals. At first you see it as a single,

colossal entity. But the closer you get, the more you see an ever-increasing intricately-complex pattern to the whole mass of images.

We now need to examine what our observer sees in more detail.

The primal monolith (Diagram 1)

Firstly, the observer perceives Christianity as a massive rectangle in the far distance, shrouded in haze. The first impression that any newcomer or outsider has of global Christianity is almost inevitably that of a colossal monolith—a towering block of stone of almost incomprehensible proportions. Like the massive monoliths in the science-fiction films *2001: a Space Odyssey* and *2010: Odyssey Two* (with their sequel *2061: Odyssey Three*), its smooth, polished outer surface gives no clue as to what wonders lie within.

From many points of view, the image of a monolith is a correct representation of the Christian religion and the Christian faith. It represents the
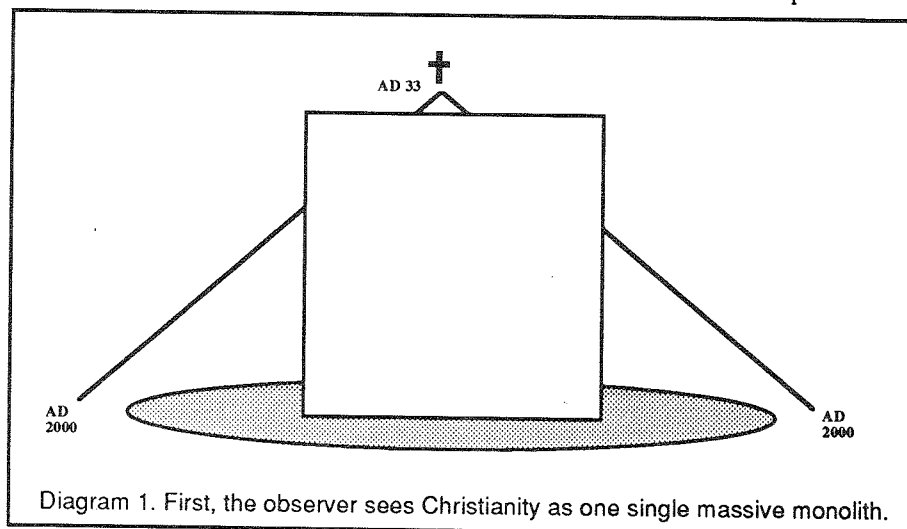

Diagram 1. First, the observer sees Christianity as one single massive monolith.

enormous size and strength of Christianity. It represents the Church built on the rock of Peter's confession. And, of course, the image is a recurrent biblical theme as the prophet Isaiah declared (as reported in 1 Peter 2:6): "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious". The reference would have been to the massive cornerstones found on the Temple site in Jerusalem, the longest of which still measures 38 feet 9 inches. The dwellers of the world are invited to "Come to him, to that living stone" (2:4), this being *lithos*, a cut and dressed stone (56 references in the Greek New Testament). Elsewhere the image changes to the Body of Christ. The emphasis is on the monolithic unity of God's people in the world.

Differentiation emerges (Diagram 2)
Secondly, our observer fine tunes his binoculars to see in greater detail. As he focuses in for a closer look, however, the monolith suddenly resolves itself into a vast number of smaller monoliths. This is the phenomenon that we refer to as the fragmentation of global Christianity. In place of a single monolith we now find that there appear to be something like 154,000 separate monoliths and micromonoliths— separate and distinct Christian denominations, agencies, and organizations. There are so many of them that the observer almost loses sight of the Cross. Christian history also disappears out of sight. The picture visible today is transformed into a vast, confused, fragmented mass of independent, autonomous, monolithic organizations.

The metaphor of monoliths is very apt. In general use, a monolith is defined as "a single large block, usually of stone, with unity of structure or purpose, of unyielding quality or character" (*Webster's*). A micromonolith is one with very small dimensions. A megamonolith is an enormous monolith or grouping of them with measurements in the millions.

Describing the average monolith
Some 4,000 of these monoliths today are foreign mission agencies. We can depict the average or median or typical such agency as follows.

The average mission monolith has 70 missionaries. This reminds us of Jesus' first organized band of 70 evangelists

sent out to preach the Good News to symbolically the world's 70 Gentile nations (Luke 10; compare the Table of the Nations, in Genesis 10). In the 1990s, this median agency works in 5 countries and has control over the following numerical assets: the 70 foreign missionaries (men and women, including wives), 10 home staff, 2 computers, and a budget of $2 million p.a. Its missionaries generate each year evangelistic work as follows (using the new categories enumerated and expounded in *AD 2000 Global Monitor*, No. 15, January 1992, pages 2-4): 409,000 missionary presence-hours per year, 102,000 missionary witness-hours p.a., and 12,800 missionary evangelism-hours p.a., offering 1.3 million disciple-opportunities p.a. to those they are in touch with.

Positive and negative aspects of monoliths
There is a very positive side to this multiplicity of monoliths, especially to the 4,000 mission agencies. All of them share and hold in common with all other monoliths the following: faith in Christ as Lord, the power of the Holy Spirit, Holy Scripture, the Four Gospels, the Good News, the Great Commission, commitment to global missions, and much more. In addition, each monolith shares with a number of others membership in the same single denomination, in the same tradition, and in the same ecclesiastico-cultural bloc. So far, so good.

Again, diversity by itself is clearly to be welcomed as likely to appeal to the whole range of the world's cultures and peoples. Nobody is advocating

uniformity.

These monoliths however live in uneasy coexistence. Even in 1992, when every mission agency has immediate global telephonic communications, the vast majority of the monoliths never communicate with each other except for the dozen or so closest to them. There is either very limited fellowship and contact with other nearby monoliths, or none at all.

Monoliths are freestanding, standalone (Diagram 3)
Thirdly, our observer decides to look more closely at the dominant structures. Zooming in closer, he adjusts his binoculars to filter out the smaller monoliths so that he can study the larger monoliths and understand what is going on. First, he is startled to find that there are over 150 very large monoliths each spending over $10 million on the Decade of Evangelization from 1991-2000. Second, he notices that not only Christian history but also the Cross itself has now been crowded out and is no longer visible. Third, and most important of all, he notices something new that was not evident before. The vast majority of the monoliths are *freestanding* and *standalone*. "Freestanding" is defined in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* as "standing alone and on its own foundation free of architectural or supporting frame or attachment"; *Webster's New World Dictionary* puts it as "resting on its own support, without attachment or added support". Such a monolith doesn't require any support from others. It doesn't lean on any
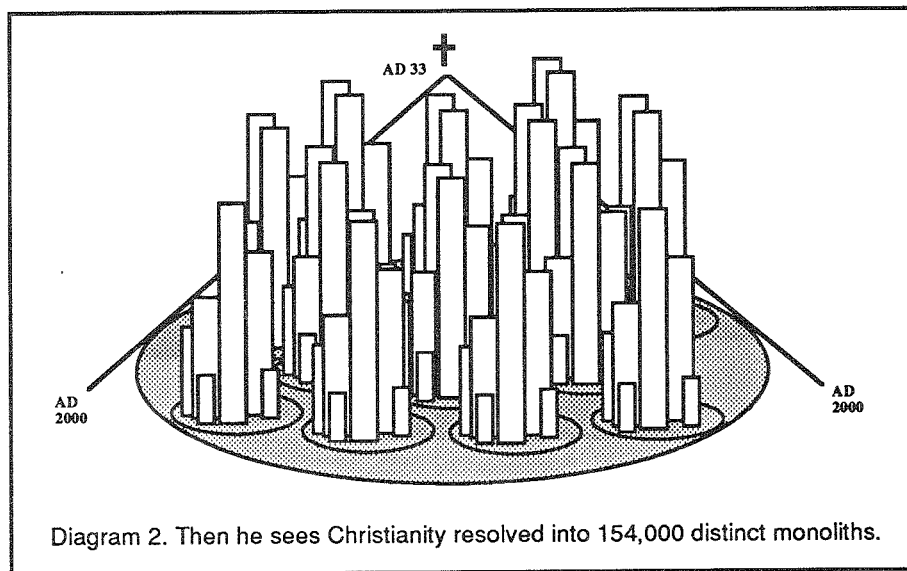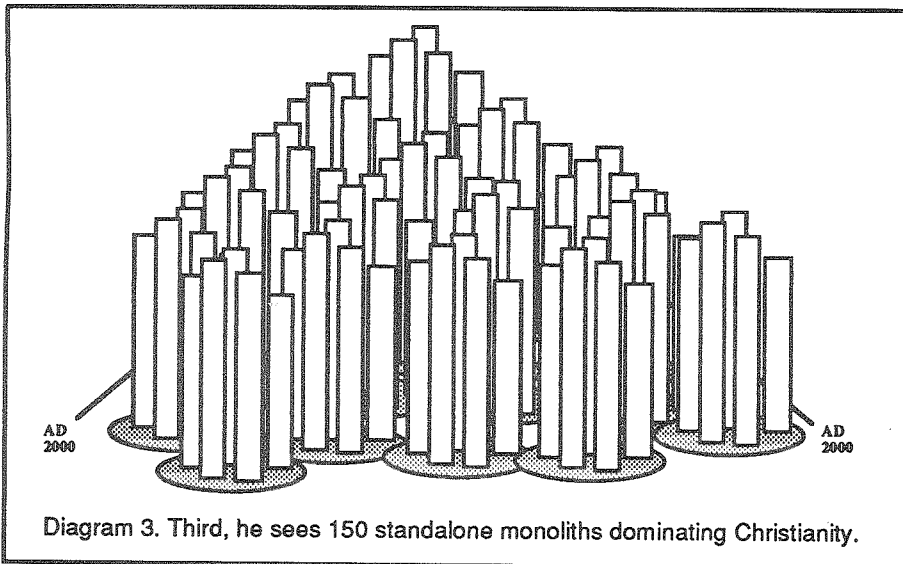

Diagram 2. Then he sees Christianity resolved into 154,000 distinct monoliths.

Diagram 3. Third, he sees 150 standalone monoliths dominating Christianity.

other, nor is it visibly connected except at ground level. "Standalone" conveys the additional meaning that the monolith doesn't need anything the other freestanding monoliths have either. When the author recently asked a leading missiologist what connection there was between his own mission monolith and another monolithic headquarters of identical theology across the street, he was told "None whatever except the sewage system." This just about sums up an intolerable situation.

We need now to document further that this is how things work with mission agencies today.

Monolithic characteristics
The justification for comparing the mass of Christian organizations to monoliths rests on the remarkable degree to which most of them operate independently, autonomously, and without reference to most of the rest, and in fact in ignorance of what the other monoliths exist for and are doing. A mitigating factor is that most monoliths have individuals in touch with their opposite numbers in nearby monoliths; but this has negligible effect on the overall isolation of monoliths. While some are accountable to a larger nearby monolith such as a denomination, most are accountable to no other monolith at all. After examining in detail the *modus vivendi* of a large number of mission agencies, we have drawn up the following list of 50 things that most of them control and do separately. Here it is.

A monolithic foreign mission agency operates its—
- own administration
- own agenda
- own archives
- own budget
- own computer network
- own computers
- own currency policies
- own decision-making
- own discipline
- own dogmas
- own emphases
- own field structure
- own finances
- own financial policies
- own flow-charts
- own funds
- own fund-raising
- own goals
- own headquarters
- own history
- own identity
- own ideology
- own information base
- own initials or acronym
- own headquarters staff
- own hierarchy
- own jargon
- own legal documents
- own legal identity
- own library
- own literature
- own magazines
- own methods
- own missionaries
- own name and title
- own personnel
- own plant
- own premises
- own priorities
- own processes
- own programs
- own propaganda
- own publications
- own publicity
- own regional terminology
- own salary scales
- own staff in home country
- own standards
- own supporting churches
- own training

"Own regional terminology" exemplifies the problem. Agencies divide the world up in a multitude of different typologies of continents and regions, arrived at on clearly understood historical grounds. This means that terms like "Africa" and "Asia" have many different and contradictory meanings from one agency to the next. The author's lengthy attempts since 1952 to get agencies to follow the logical United Nations terminology have never borne fruit.

While many of these characteristics of monoliths might well be influenced or affected by larger denominational policies, on the whole the above list is operated by the average agency autonomously and independently. It acts as it sees best. From the standpoint of all the other monoliths, it is in practice a standalone monolith.

The 33 largest monoliths of all (Diagram 4) Fourthly, our observer realizes that the monoliths are grouped into a pattern of 12 global megamonoliths of enormous size. Make no mistake: many mission monoliths are immense. The global diagram later in this article outlines the existence of 78 global monoliths, mega-agencies defined as each spending over US$100 million on missions during the Decade of Evangelization. And of these, 33 are giga-agencies each spending over $100 million a year and planning to spend over $1 billion each during the decade.

As the outside observer scans the scene, he observes that these 33 immense monoliths between them are producing over 85% of all world evangelization activity in the 1990s. Again, we notice denominational ties, but on the whole these 33 are fully standalone, unaccountable to the rest of the 33 or even to more than one of them. (A full description of each of the 33 and the 78 is given in *Seven hundred plans to evangelize the world*, New Hope, 1988).

Diagram 4. Then he perceives 12 global megamonoliths with 33 huge monoliths.
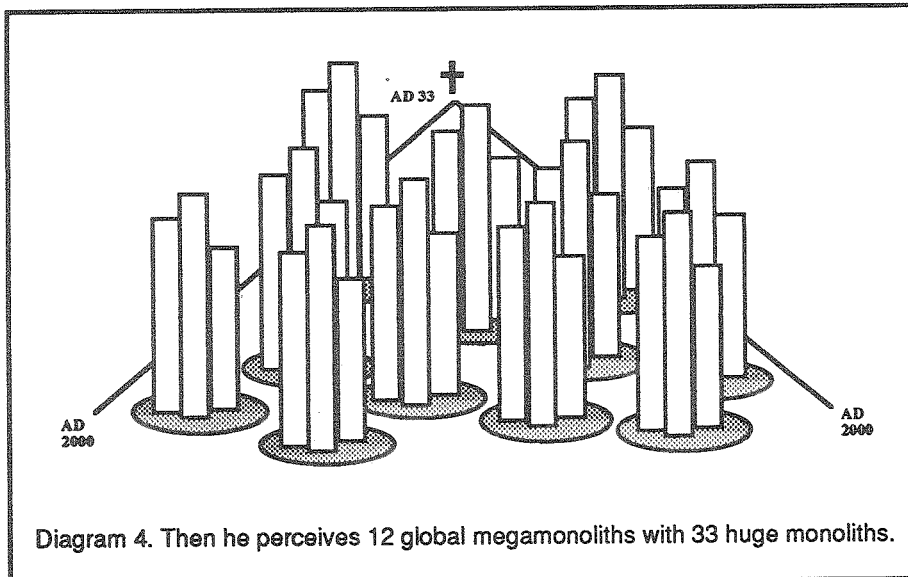
Classifying the monoliths (Global Diagram 47)
Fifthly and lastly, our observer with his binoculars finally perceives the whole structure of organized Christianity and sees how the top 80 global monoliths can be classified into families and traditions. The global diagram (on page 39 opposite) sets out all the descriptive data, together with an overall classification.

A slightly different approach to understanding these monoliths is to imagine oneself as the outside observer first encountering the Christian world from afar as a single monolithic entity, then walking closer to see the view resolve itself into 7 distinct blocs, then into 80 major global monoliths, then into 23,500 denominations, and so on.

The time is ripe now to do a systematic, objective, descriptive analysis of the whole phenomenon. Global Diagram 47 attempts to do this. The monoliths are there analyzed into the 7 ecclesiastico-cultural blocs (the shaded ovals), 12 global mega-monoliths, and 37 of the top 80 global monoliths. Each of these entities is then described by 10 descriptors in the 10 columns of the statistical table.

Monolithic thinking
One would think that with so many global monoliths determined to evangelize the world, at least some of them would succeed. Unfortunately this has not yet happened. Let's examine how these monoliths are thinking in order to determine the reasons for their failure to achieve their goal of global closure.

The rationale of a mission monolith
To understand how a monolith functions, we need to understand its rationale. Call it mission agency A, with a goal to reach the whole world in some sense with the gospel.

The essence of monolithic thinking goes as follows. God loves His world of human beings. God has a plan to save them. God does this through committed believers, especially foreign missionaries. To function effectively, such workers need an organization. (Now it becomes personal). "God clearly called us, agency A, into existence in the year 1800 (or 1850, or 1950, etc) to do just this. He has since called X missionaries and Y staff to join us in A. That call has been confirmed in many ways, especially in our home constituency of Z supporting churches with W thousands of members. They raise and entrust to us a sizable budget of $F million every year. God's plan must be implemented. No one is indispensable, but in His wisdom God has called us to see it implemented. We've been guided and blessed throughout our history. God's work is our work. Our work is God's work. Our work must go on; in practice it is indispensable. We are now, as best we know, doing exactly what God wants us to do. Any criticism of our work is criticism of God's work. We know there are many other mission agencies with God's call; we welcome them because the global task is too big for one organization. The responsibility for

seeing that world evangelization reaches closure and for reaching the final frontiers does not therefore lie solely on our shoulders; all agencies must share it."

Monolithic computerization
One can get a clue as to what may have gone wrong by examining current use of computers. On the positive side, internal Christian networking is increasing rapidly due to the meteoric spread of computers. In 1990, 44% of all the Christian monoliths (which together owned or operated 54 million general-purpose computers) had extensive internal computer networks each within itself. One monolith in Washington, D.C. has installed 600 in its new headquarters building alone. Another nearby has 300; and so on. But on the negative side, only 8% of these monoliths were doing computer networking *with any other monoliths*.

This leads to an ironic situation. The author of this article has been involved with computers since he worked with the world's first massive computer in 1948 on research in aerodynamics for the British Scientific Civil Service. As a foreign missionary then and over the 44 subsequent years, he has worked to harness the full capabilities of computers for Christ's world mission. Yet when he publishes complex computer data analyses of world evangelization today, there are always a handful of agency executives to complain that "Computers appear to be now replacing the Bible." Yet these same agencies install vast computer equipment solely for internal use in the standalone mode.

Use of computers today by mission monoliths is in the early stages. They are used mainly to do routine work faster and cheaper (correspondence, address lists, records, accounts, bookkeeping, stock-keeping, publicity). So far there is hardly any computerized decision-making, relational databasing, research factor analyses, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, modelling, sophisticated statistical analysis of field data, and so on. Without state-of-the-art applications, state-of-the-art hardware and software are an unnecessary extravagance.

Monolithic self-promotion
Many other similar problems have surfaced recently. The bigger the

When outside observers first encounter the Christian world (World C), from afar they perceive it as a colossal single monolithic entity. As they get closer, the view resolves itself into 7 distinct blocs. Closer still, some 80 major worldwide organizations appear. Closer yet, the observers become overwhelmed by a vast number of separate and distinct organizations—23,500 denominations, 21,000 agencies, 99,000 major institutions. These all appear as a forest of huge free-standing skyscrapers.

Our metaphor for these entities is *monoliths*. In general use, a monolith is defined as "a single large block, usually of stone, with unity of structure or purpose, of unyielding quality or character" (*Webster's*). A megamonolith is an enormous monolith with measurements in the millions.

In our application, the table and minidiagram below portray a panorama of global Christianity as it has evolved from AD 33 up to the present and on to AD 2000. The picture today is of a vast, confused, fragmented mass of independent, autonomous, standalone, monolithic organizations.

The table documents 6 separate measures of each monolith's magnitude (columns 5-10). Each monolith has its own distinct and separate name, title, purpose, goals, personnel, premises, plant, program, priorities, budget, turf, differentia, memberships, inclusivities and exclusivities. At least 80% of all the 154,000 monoliths of all sizes have little or nothing to do with all the rest. Several of the biggest—Numbers 10,11,12,5a,6a, and large parts of 1a and 2b—consider themselves to be the only true church and write off all the rest as nothing to do with Christ or his Commission.

The last 3 columns of the table illustrate the degree to which each monolith is attempting global outreach and mission. They also provide a summary and an update for our monthly coverage "New Global Plans" on page 2.

Ref 1	Begun 2	GLOBAL MEGAMONOLITH 3 / global monolith 4	Christians millions 5	Size 6	Computers millions 7	Related Global Plans total 8	mega 9	giga 10
		A. MAINLINE CHRISTIAN GLOBAL MONOLITHS AND MEGAMONOLITHS						
1.	AD 33	**ORTHODOX**	179.5	5	0.8	28	0	0
1a.	1961	Great & Holy Council of the Orthodox Church	140.5	4	0.7	27	0	0
1b.	1965	Oriental Orthodox Churches Conference	33.0	3	0.1	1	0	0
2.	AD 50	**ROMAN CATHOLIC**	962.6	7	19.1	117	17	8
2a.	1523	Society of Jesus (SJ)	260.0	6	2.2	5	1	1
2b.	1588	Sacred Congregation for Bishops	820.8	7	10.2	55	7	2
2c.	1622	Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples	115.0	6	4.0	20	1	1
2d.	1862	Sacred Congregation for the Eastern Churches	10.6	3	0.2	2	0	0
3.	AD 61	**ANGLICAN**	53.8	5	5.2	32	0	0
3a.	1968	Anglican Consultative Council (ACC)	53.0	4	5.1	1	0	0
4.	AD 690	**PROTESTANT**	324.2	7	21.4	490	44	16
4a.	1844	Seventh-day Adventists (SDA)	16.0	6	0.7	4	2	1
4b.	1845	Southern Baptist Convention (FMB)	29.0	6	5.6	10	3	2
4c.	1875	World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)	59.0	5	5.0	25	0	0
4d.	1876	World Methodist Council (WMC)	42.0	5	4.2	12	1	0
4e.	1905	Baptist World Alliance (BWA)	47.0	4	6.5	15	0	0
4f.	1947	Lutheran World Federation (LWF)	76.0	4	3.7	10	1	0
4g.	1957	Council of Christian World Communions*	1,480.0	6	39.0	1	0	0
5.	AD 1549	**THIRD-WORLD INDIGENOUS**	143.8	4	0.8	3	0	0
5a.	1920	Indigenous Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches	120.0	4	0.3	1	0	0
5b.	1978	Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC)	13.0	2	0.0	2	0	0
6.	AD 1724	**CATHOLIC (NON-ROMAN) (Old/Reformed Catholic)**	3.8	6	0.3	4	1	1
6a.	1863	New Apostolic Church (NAC)	1.8	6	0.2	1	1	1
6b.	1871	Old Catholic Bishops Conference (IOCBC)*	7.6	4	0.2	2	0	0
7.	AD 1738	**EVANGELICAL**	295.0	7	16.5	111	45	15
7a.	1846	World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF)*	104.0	5	1.6	5	1	0
7b.	1948	International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC)*	5.1	5	0.1	4	0	0
7c.	1974	Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE)*	2.6	5	0.3	19	1	0
7d.	1987	International Conf of Evangelical Bible Societies (ICEBS)*	32.0	4	2.5	1	0	0
7e.	1988	Third World Missions Association (TWMA)*	48.0	5	0.2	4	2	0
7f.	1989	AD 2000 Movement (GCOWE)*	5.0	4	1.0	10	1	0
8.	AD 1783	**PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC**	372.6	7	12.3	89	20	10
8a.	1947	World Conference of Pentecostal Churches* (WCPC)	55.0	3	6.1	30	7	3
8b.	1972	Catholic Charismatic Renewal (ICCRO)*	72.1	4	2.5	2	2	2
8c.	1987	Evangelization 2000/New Evangelization 2000*	962.6	6	18.0	10	5	4
8d.	1987	Intl Charismatic Consultation for World Evan (ICCOWE)*	305.0	5	7.5	1	1	0
9.	AD 1855	**ECUMENICAL/CONCILIAR**	460.0	6	10.7	80	2	1
9a.	1946	United Bible Societies (UBS)*	1,560.0	6	9.0	6	2	1
9b.	1948	World Council of Churches (WCC)*	404.0	5	9.5	12	2	0
		GLOBAL TOTALS FOR 9 MAINLINE MEGAMONOLITHS	1,597.0	7	49.0	935	75	30
		B. MARGINAL OR QUASI-CHRISTIAN GLOBAL MONOLITHS AND MEGAMONOLITHS						
10.	AD 1566	**MARGINAL CHRISTIAN**	3.7	6	1.5	2	0	0
10a.	1778	Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)	0.3	4	0.1	0	0	0
10b.	1879	Church of Christ, Scientist	1.4	5	0.6	0	0	0
10c.	1900	International Association for Liberal Christianity (IALC)	1.3	5	0.3	0	0	0
10d.	1914	International New Thought Alliance (INTA)	0.2	4	0.1	0	0	0
10e.	1948	International Association of Religious Science Churches	0.1	4	0.0	0	0	0
11.	AD 1830	**MORMON**	7.9	7	2.4	2	1	1
11a.	1830	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	7.2	6	2.2	1	1	1
12.	AD 1870	**WITNESSES (Jehovah's Christian Witnesses)**	12.9	7	1.4	4	2	2
12a.	1870	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (WTBTS)	12.5	6	1.4	4	2	2
		GLOBAL TOTALS FOR ALL 12 MEGAMONOLITHS	1,623.8	7	54.0	950	78	33

KEY TO TABLE ON LEFT
(For fuller details, background, and interpretation see Table 8, *Our globe and how to reach it*, 1990). Key to the 10 columns:

1. *Reference number*. These are as assigned to the 7 major ecclesiastico-cultural blocs (shown on minidiagram as ellipses), 12 megamonoliths, and the 37 major global monoliths.

2. *Begun*. Year monolith originated. Monoliths are listed chronologically under each megamonolith also listed chronologically.

3. *GLOBAL MEGAMONOLITH*. Short adjectival form of name covering a vast grouping of global monoliths of like tradition/ecclesiology/churchmanship.

4. *Global monolith*. A selection of the 37 most significant of the 80 global monoliths, each being a large worldwide Christian church/denomination/agency/organization operating separately from other monoliths. Those with asterisk (*) also belong to, or operate in a sphere of, a second chronologically-earlier megamonolith, or to 2 or even 3 earlier ones.

5. *Christians*. World total of constituency, i.e. affiliated church members (in millions, in 1990) represented by, or related to each monolith. Note monolith totals for columns 5-10 do not add up to megamonolith totals because the former are only a selection, or overlap with others.

6. *Size*. General order of magnitude of total current 10-year resources of personnel and finances actually deployed today to operate each monolith or megamonolith. Code: 0=negligible, 1=minimal, 2=limited (10 worker-years), 3=modest ($10,000-$100,000 a year), 4=sizeable ($100,000-$10 million), 5=massive ($10 million-$100 million), 6=gigantic ($100 million-$500 million a year), 7=mammoth (over 1 million worker-years, or over $500 million a year).

7. *Computers*. Estimate in millions of the numbers of distinct general-purpose computers owned and operated by each monolith.

8-10. *Global plans*. Totals of distinct global plans for world evangelization sponsored by or directly related to each monolith; column 8, all global plans large and small, past and present; column 9, global megaplans (over $100 million each) current today; column 10, global gigaplans ($1 billion or more each) current today. (Source: Global Diagram 22).
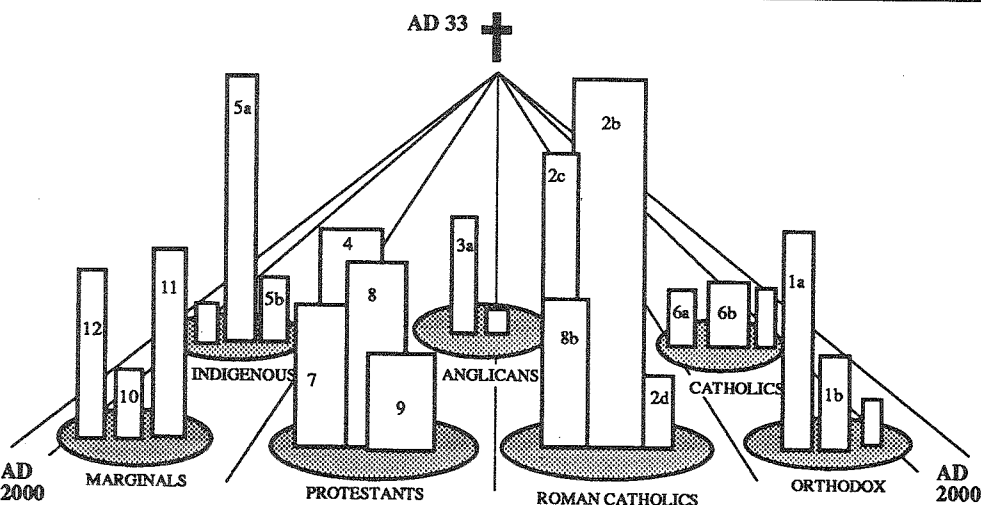
KEY TO MINIDIAGRAM ON LEFT
Triangle. The background depicts the timeline for the whole course of Christian history from Christ's Cross, Resurrection and Great Commission in AD 33 up to AD 2000. (See Global Diagrams 29-32 for a view of the same panorama from over on the left).

Vertical pillars. Each pillar represents a global monolith, namely a large Christian denomination/agency operating in stand-alone mode. The diagram shows only 22 monoliths; expanded diagrams show the top 80, also the 4,000 lesser monoliths.

Ellipses. These shaded ovals represent the 7 major ecclesiastico-cultural blocs into which Christians have crystallized today after 20 centuries of history.

Numbers. The figures on monoliths refer to reference numbers in the table, column 1.

Grouping of pillars. A grouping of monoliths close together is termed a megamonolith, usually coterminous with a single bloc. Exceptions: the Protestant bloc consists of 4 overlapping megamonoliths (4,7,8,9); the Marginal bloc consists of 3 totally isolated and unrelated ones (10,11,12).

AD 33

AD 2000 MARGINALS PROTESTANTS ROMAN CATHOLICS ORTHODOX AD 2000

INDIGENOUS ANGLICANS CATHOLICS

monolith, the greater the apparent temptation to blow one's own trumpet. Most of the global monoliths, and most of the global megamonoliths also, can be easily documented to have taken this position in print many times recently: "We're right. Most of the other monoliths are wrong or have missed the boat." Several of the biggest—on the diagram, Numbers 10, 11, 12, 5a, 6a, and large parts of 1a, and 2b—consider themselves to be the only true church and write off all the rest as little or nothing to do with Christ or his Commission. This is a bewildering situation when one remembers that we have documented countless printed statements on the part of all these monoliths specifically claiming to be Christians following Jesus Christ as Lord and expounding his Great Commission. (This is in fact our definition of a mission monolith). Most monoliths are evidently not prepared to listen, dialogue, admit that they might be in the wrong on such matters, or change their positions vis-a-vis the rest of the monoliths.

Monolithic minimizing and maximizing
Can one be more specific on this monolithic thinking? Yes. Nowadays charges and countercharges of doctrinal heresy seem to have taken second place to charges of methodological incompetence. A frequent charge is that this other distant monolith or that is guilty of triumphalism, especially if the monolith in question publishes detailed statistics of church growth each year. Some monoliths minimize resources (regarding the total Christian resources available for world evangelization as equal to only their own contribution). Other unfortunate monoliths who carefully report their own massive statistical operations then find themselves branded as maximizing their own significance. A majority of all these monoliths, incredibly, regard a majority of the rest of the monoliths as part of the Target, that is as legitimate targets for sheep-stealing or proselytization. It is easy to document the continuous denunciation of some monoliths by others on a whole variety of similar dubious charges.

Every monolith also seems to genuinely think that it is on the cutting edge of the Christian world mission, the final frontier, the place where the definitive action is. Many of the one

thousand missionary magazines today are sprinkled with self-congratulatory assessments, remarks, comments, and the like. Many publish as readers' letters only those from supporters which support similar sentiments.

It is remarkable that very few monoliths seem to be engaged in any form of rigorous self-examination. Most react violently to any form of criticism or adverse comment. Outside independent monitoring or analysis is particularly anathema.

Most staggering is the fact that 80% of the monoliths, with the 250 current global plans to evangelize the world that they promote, are each trying to win the world by themselves even as they are ignoring or even denouncing the rest. This is as senseless as if scientists of a small European research laboratory tried to close the globe's huge ozone hole in the stratosphere by themselves without collaborating with other scientists across the world working on the same problem.

Monolithic missiology
What is wrong with the monolithic mentality, from the missiological perspective, seems to be the monolith's mode of autonomy in matters where synergistic cooperation between multiple agencies is essential. This involves (a) an agency's view of what constitutes the legitimate targets of mission; (b) relatively inflated views of their agency's own importance and significance; and (c) the idea that one agency can in practice effectively plan and win the world by itself (though this is scarcely ever expressed as crudely or as absolutely).

The shortcomings of this variety of tunnel vision include: Looking at the world from scratch, and an amateur approach (by the secular world's standards) to tackling the world's most complex human problems. In particular, the targets, target selection, and target selection methodologies of many agencies overlap and duplicate endlessly.

The basic monolithic fallacy
At the heart of the monolithic syndrome is, in many cases, a theological fallacy. It arises as follows. Over the years a large mission agency finds the younger churches in its mission fields becoming increasingly stronger. Reluctant to relocate its

personnel in less rewarding non-Christian lands, the mission develops a theology to justify continuing to send its missionaries to work among those heavily-Christian populations. This becomes a clearcut dichotomy of "saved versus lost". The mission then holds that the only distinction is between true believers (committed Christians, the saved) and all the rest (the lost). This type of theology then claims that the lost (all who are not committed Christians) are all equally situated in their lostness. Whether they are lapsed churchgoers in Europe or Tantric Buddhists in Tibet, all are equally lost and so are equally legitimate targets for foreign missions.

The fallacy here is that no account is taken of how many opportunities to become disciples people have had. This is a fundamental mistake. There is obviously a major difference between lapsed Anglicans in Britain who have sat through several thousand evangelistic sermons but have now renounced Christianity, and Buddhists in Nepal who have never met a Christian nor heard of Jesus Christ. By contrast, we emphatically affirm the difference: the former are "evangelized non-Christians" (located in our World B), the latter are "unevangelized non-Christians" (located in our World A). We maintain that the latter should be the primary beneficiaries of the foreign missions enterprise. The former are primarily the responsibility of local churches in their own vicinities.

The argument is certainly not over whether or not disciple-making is essential. Of course it is. The crucial part of the fallacy is ignoring how much or how many "disciple-opportunities" (invitations or offers or opportunities to accept Christ and become his disciples) persons have had. Let's take the USA as an illustration. Each year it generates 280 such offers of all varieties per capita (*AD 2000 Global Monitor*, No. 15, page 4). Firstly, 21.5 billion new disciple-opportunities a year are addressed to, and absorbed by, the 75 million Pentecostals/Charismatics in the USA. They receive them but they don't need them because they are already disciples. Secondly, the 32 million non-Christians in North America also receive the average 280 per capita per year (and continue to reject them). They do not need them either, because they have all already

received multiple opportunities previously. Why saturate them with 279 times more than is our definition for becoming adequately evangelized? With very limited "offers" to spend (certainly none to squander), when does the church say "Enough is enough"?

The basic monolithic fallacy arises, in our view, out of an elementary methodological error. All churches nowadays routinely enumerate, measure, and count baptisms, church membership, church starts, and so on. But 99% of all monoliths fail to enumerate evangelization, witness, evangelism, or the many varieties of Christian outreach they are engaged in. Hence those activities fail to be regarded as achievements or stepping stones towards goals. So the activities themselves are repeated and duplicated endlessly.

The current monolithic legacy
On the global scene, the world of all Christians, World C, gets an average of 272.9 disciple-opportunities per capita per year. World B (evangelized non-Christians) gets 6.5 per capita per year. But World A (the unevangelized) gets only 0.16 per capita per year. While it would be unjust to hold monolithic thinking wholly responsible for this gross imbalance, objective analysis points in this direction.

Conclusion
Christian missions throughout history have had notable achievements and inspiring successes largely because of the dedication of ordinary Christians. Problems such as the 20th-century monolithic syndrome have not prevented overall achievement. One must also credit the 40 million Christian martyrs over the last 20 centuries whose impact on evangelization has been profound. Nevertheless it should be possible for us to negotiate ways in which the monoliths could support each other's endeavors and synergistically make a far greater impact on world evangelization. ■

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