SOME LESSONS LEARNED IN TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO STRATEGY

■ Once information and data has been gathered, what steps need to be taken to make it useful to mission agencies? Here, the issue is examined from various perspectives in a series of real-life case studies in frontier missions.

By John D. Robb

Introduction

If you have done any camping with family, you know how unsettling it can be walking back to the tent or cabin in darkness without benefit of a flashlight. You don't know whether you'll step on a coiled rattler or get your foot chomped by a cocked bear trap. With a flashlight, all that changes. You can see clearly which way to go and avoid tripping or going astray.

Missions research performs the same function for the outworking of missions strategy and ministry. It's a lot like a flashlight, which casts light on what our strategy or plan of operation ought to be—whether on the global level or for a particular country or people group. Without the clear intelligence research affords, we will stumble or go astray; our strategies will be ill-conceived and our ministries will miss the mark.

I think we all agree that research for mission is utterly essential. It is the necessary foundation for effective ministry. But most of here don't have to be convinced of this, the problem comes in getting research applied and used within our agencies. How do we get the flashlight into the hands of the one who needs to take those steps--the mission executives who make decisions as well as the grass roots missionaries and national workers? In a short while Ron Iwasko and Don McGilchrist will be sharing their experience with us.

It's a fact that more than 50 percent of research done in the business world stays on the shelf and never affects corporate decision-making. Often because decision-makers and implementers have not been effectively incorporated into the process from the beginning.

Have any of you ever done a research project that never got used? Those of us who have a researcher's mentality can become fascinated with a particular question which we feel is vital for the work of our agency. But if we fail to get our decision-makers and frontline workers to buy into the research process, they are unlikely to use its results.

This was my own experience in doing a church growth research project for a major denomination in Malaysia. The research findings demonstrated that most churches were not growing and some were showing minus growth. The bishop had agreed to the project but the rest of the leaders and pastors did not become involved until the results were presented. Not only did they not implement its findings, but they became hostile and refused to accept the facts. Then they tried to bury the report and me with it!

Some Lessons Being Learned

1. *Get consensus involvement by those who are going to use the findings*, i.e., mission executives, national church leaders and grass roots Christian workers. In the example above I should have designed the research survey so that they were involved from the outset shaping the nature of the project. Better yet, they should have participated in gathering information so they would *own* both the process and its results.

2. *Keep research, strategy development and ministry tied together, ideally in the same hands*. Is not enough just to translate research into strategy, the process must include its outworking in actual ministry. Joshua, the researcher, in Numbers 13 became the great strategist and then led his Israelite troops to occupy Canaan. He was involved in all three phases—research to strategy to the action of the conquest.

Ideally, it ought to be the same in the work of missions. The process of research to strategy to ministry needs to be a seamless garment. The handoff is not too good unless the people who are going to do the frontline ministry are involved or at least represented in the process of researching and strategizing. Although not everyone from the 12 tribes took part in that original research survey of Canaan, each tribe was represented by one person on the team. Both grass roots missionaries as well as mission executives in their offices back home need to be involved in the research and strategy process, if they are to own the results and implement them effectively.

In one African country a group of professional Christian researchers designed and carried out a survey of unreached peoples. They did a superlative job and published their results for the whole church to use. Unfortunately, because national Christian leaders, for the most part, were not involved in the process, they made little use of the research findings. Not until there was serious consultation with leaders and grass roots workers resulting in the formation of ministry networks for these people groups did the research become relevant to there deliberation.

3. *Harness the catalytic power of involving Christian workers in the research process*. The research process has tremendous catalytic power, because through it Christian workers lift up their eyes and look and see the fields that are white for harvest (John 4:35). The motivation and guidance involvement in the research process affords must not be sacrificed by relegating it entirely to a research department or some outside consultants.

Four Case Studies from the Field

Here are four case studies of actual mission efforts, all challenging lessons from frontiers which I think will demonstrate the above observations. Two are people group research projects, and two are countrywide research surveys. The most important conclusion which emerges from these four examples is the importance of carefully networking the project from start to finish with others who share the vision so that the research process, as much as possible, is kept in the hands of those who will develop the strategies and do the ministry.

1. One of the first Southern Baptist non-residential missionaries (NRM) has been focusing his efforts on a large ethnic minority in China. For security reasons, his name and that of the people group will remain anonymous. During the Lausanne II Unreached Peoples Track, he wowed us with this case study. As part of his research effort, he contacted retired missionaries and even a Russian anthropological team that had surveyed his people group. He explored many strategic options to expose this people to ministry: through radio programming, Scripture translation and publication; the supply of Christian teachers for the local universities, along with the provision of Christian foreign students. He researched and discovered ways to get Christian relief and development organizations into the area; the Jesus Film translated and used; business ventures set up; Christian health care professionals in place. He also researched ways to get Christian professionals in the performing arts in for performances and management experts in to give training courses. What he has discovered through research, he has communicated to over 500 churches which have adopted this group for a special prayer focus. The result is that several thousand from this people group have already come to Christ and the church is growing strongly.

Two observations why the NRM approach to research seems to be working so well:

(1)   It keeps research, strategy and, to some extent hands-on ministry tied together in the same person.

(2)   It depends on consulting widely with others, networking the total resources of the Body of Christ on behalf of the people group.

2. The next case study comes from my own experience in giving MARC Unreached Peoples Seminars in different parts of the world. We have undergone an evolution in our thinking about research and strategy at MARC. Originally, MARC pioneered the concept of having a centralized unreached peoples database with a fairly exhaustive store of information. We then moved away from the exhaustive, centralized approach to one of gathering and disseminating only information which could be used by Christian workers to develop mission strategies. Most recently, we have given away our centralized unreached peoples database in favor of helping Christian workers do their own research on the field in order to develop strategies in their context. The result has often been the formation of interdenominational ministry networks which keep research, strategy development and actual ministry together, all reinforcing one another.

Participants in these networks gather periodically to pray together and share what they are learning about the people group they have a common vision to reach. Not all of these networks have continued but some have, and are making a significant impact in the reaching of unreached groups. With the benefit of some simple research techniques and a little coaching, most grass roots Christian workers can uncover the facts they need to get inside the minds and hearts of the group they want to reach, and to minister in a way that scratches where they itch and meets real needs.

One ministry network which has been going for the last five years, focuses on the Hakka people—a group that is traditionally has been thought to be resistant to the Christian message. The Christian workers in that network, all representing different organizations and denominations have done things together they could never have done apart. You will notice they began by praying together once a month, a habit they have stuck to constantly for the last five years. They then researched the culture and ways to contextualize the gospel, particularly to develop a satisfactory substitute for ancestor worship, the main stumbling block keeping Hakka Chinese from accepting Jesus.

Research, led by corporate prayer and in turn fueling prayer and spiritual warfare, is probably the most important lesson from their experience. I have seen the same process operating in a number of countries of the world when research and the communication of those research findings gets connected with the intercession of God's people. Of course, the Adopt-A-People Movement is a prime example. Prayer is the most basic way to apply research findings. Prayer is also a strategy, perhaps the most powerful one, as I sought to demonstrate in my talk to this society last year.

3. The Ghana Evangelism Committee, under the leadership of Ross Campbell, has carried out an impressive research survey of the whole country of Ghana over a five year period, from 1983 to 1987. I have included Ross Campbell's presentation from the Lausanne II Unreached Peoples Track in its entirety because I think its such a valuable model, and has not been published anywhere else.

The key to the success of this project, which has resulted in hundreds of new churches being planted, the formation of indigenous missionary societies, the setting up of evangelism committees, and the targeting of many of the 40 unreached people groups revealed by the research, was the purposeful effort by GEC to involve denominational and parachurch leaders in the planning, and local churches in the implementation of the survey. The leaders and their churches felt included even though they did not always participate up to the expectations of GEC. At the end of the survey, its results were presented and accepted by 550 national Christian leaders during a national congress on evangelism. An adopt-a-people movement has since started among Ghanaian churches with the goal of 1,000 southern churches adopting unreached people groups and towns in partnership with northern congregations.

The research survey has had a major catalytic impact, opening the eyes of the church, and sweeping away popular misconceptions that have hindered Christians from reaching the unreached. Because they were involved in the research and strategizing process, the church leaders have adopted the goal of planting 2,000 new churches in unreached people groups in each of three regions by the year 2000.

4. The final case study comes from "Project Searchlight," an effort by the Nigerian Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) to survey 494 ethnic groups beginning in 1987. The secret of the impact of this survey, which is still in its early stages, has been involving Christians from the area to be surveyed

so that they can later be mobilized into ministry. As you will read, this has happened and there have been many who have turned to Christ especially among the Yoruba. Also, on the basis of the research findings, hundreds of young people, many of which have been on the actual survey teams, have been challenged to become missionaries to those same groups they have researched. Again, the catalytic power of research in the hands of those who will use it is being demonstrated.

Case Study 1.

A Nonresidential Missionary Approach To Research And Networking

(Anonymous)

Three or four years ago, it seemed that very few Christians in the world had ever heard of this ethnic minority in China. There wasn't much prayer directed towards them. They had no Scripture. They had practically no Christian witness at all. A couple of things have happened in the last two years which we are going to call "networking." I hope that in the next few minutes we can see how many different Christians from many parts of the world have been involved in a network to bring the gospel to these folks.

They live in the southern part of China. A nearby province has about 62 million people and around 500,000 Christians. The next province to the north has around 300,000 Christians, and another neighboring province also around 300,000. The latest information from the province of Hunan indicates there are around one million Christians there.

Right in the center of these provinces that have quite a few Christians, is this province. The particular minority nationality within China I am concentrating on is composed of 16 million people. When wefirst did the research, we thought there were maybe around 12,000 total Christians in that province. The most recent information shows there are around 30,000 Christians in that province, of whom about 10,000 are from this people group. So 16 million of whom around 10,000 are Christian. These 10,000 are a bilingual fringe group. Primarily, they are people who have believed because they also speak a little Mandarin or little Cantonese.

Let's look at some of the things that

have happened in the last two years. They are an unreached people. Very few Christians around the world knew who they were, where they were or even that they existed. First thing that happened was a good bit of research was accomplished. Some of that was visits, some of it was networking with other people, some of it was database searching. Each of these approaches was very important. The visits provided some hands-on, face-to-face contacts that allowed other ministry to be done.

Archival research was very critical. We discovered that out of about hundred missionaries who had worked in that area prior to 1949, nine of them were still alive. Several people in their 80's one in their 90's were able to give us contacts in that area, face-to-face hand-offs.

Databasing research is something I am not an expert at, but I networked and found people who were. And it just, to use an American expression, it blew my mind to discover what one could find out through databasing. To give you one specific example, we learned through a source that in the early 1950's when the country of China had first become Communist, they invited a Russian anthropologist team to come in and study the people. With that one bit of information, that some Russians had been in the area in the 1950's, we were able to go to a particular electronic database and eventually come up with the names of who those researchers were. After that had been found out, we went through some other electronic databases and found out where those people were today at specific research institutes in the Soviet Union. After that was possible, we were able to go through some electronic databases of things that had been published and come out with lists of documents, articles, books that those people had published and found that one of them had written articles on the language of these people. Then it was possible to go through a number of Christian agencies, anthropologists and others to find that a Frenchman in Paris had translated a summary of that article into English. Don't ask me why a Frenchman translated a Russian article, but he did. We were able to get our hands on it. That process took a little over two hours, from database to databases. I cannot do that. But there are people who know how to operate these fancy things called computers,

and if you're in North America or Europe, they can produce that kind of information. It took two weeks to get a library loan copy of that particular English summary of the background information on the language of these people.

Another aspect of research was to contact some of these retired missionaries, and through them to track down their personal friends, places they had been and the other information that they had.

The next aspect of this was prayer. As information became available, it was shared with various prayer networks. Yesterday, Glenn Sheppard and some others, talked about prayer networks around the globe. Well, every group that we found that prayed for unreached peoples, we started sending letters to them. Some of you may have gotten letters from someone you had never heard of asking you to pray for a group inSouth China. Hey, keep praying for those folks. The Lord does wonders and works miracles.

A particular organization that I am associated with had an emphasis on prayer for unreached peoples during the week of Pentecost this past spring. This people group was the focus for our own organization, and also for our constituencies, especially in North America. We had a day of prayer and fasting specifically aimed at them.

Those kind of things really do wonders. Within two weeks after that day of prayer and fasting, we had found our first member of this minority outside of China. Before that we'd been looking for 18 months and had not found one of these people outside of China. You can keep praying. He's a party member, pretty tough nut! He's not exactly your typical responsive, ready-to-receive-the-Gospel person! But at least we've located him outside the country. That's something.

Mobilization was the next step. We prepared a brochure about this people. Inoticed in MARC's little set of cards for unreached peoples that they show up. Youth With A Mission publishes an annual prayer directory. Funniest thing, the 16th of February this year, YWAM folks around the world were praying for them. The same month this year them showed up in the global Prayer Digest, and people who pray specifically, systematically through that were also praying for them. We're starting to get people interested. Mobilization, because of that kind of PR, okay.

Scripture is a key item in a group of 16 million people becoming Christian. Through visits and through networking with those that go through the area, we identified specific research institutions within the province where most of these people live, found key people who were decision-makers there, learned what some of the goals werefrom the Chinese government side for research into this particular minority nationality. We've now found a fine couple, both husband and wife PhD's in linguistics from Cornell University in the United States, and an organization that specifically focuses on translating the Scripture has already sent resumes, made contacts. They are in the process of getting their translation couple into a situation where they are going to be authorized, they are going to almost be paid bythe Chinese government to do basic language research on this group.

A specific type of ministry that goes on in that part of China is what I call "itinerants." These folks that go in on tourist visas, spend a week or two or three, they are all kinds. Some of them are very low key, and would not initiate a conversation about Christian subjects unless it was brought up by someone else. We helped some of those folks to go in. There are others that I call the "Rambos." They go in determined to witness to everybody they can until they get arrested, busted and thrown out of the country. Well, whether they are the extreme low key ones or whether they are the Rambos, I am glad they're sharing the Gospel in an area where it hadn't been shared for the last 2,000 years. I don't want them carrying my name when they go in there. And I don't want them to know the names of others who are in there for the long term. But through networking various kinds and types, denominational backgrounds, political persuasions and other kinds of Christians, I have discovered these folks, and I thank the Lord for everyone of them who is in there sharing the Gospel.

There are, for instance, in the tent-making realm five different Christian organizations which now have tentmakers in this province. Some of them are just there because it was an easy place to get into, others are there because they had met someone that gave them the invitation. Others are there very specifically to have a long-term, or some short-term, ministry to this ethnic minority.

Within the province where these people are, there are 12 universities. We can share out among the various tent-making agencies so we don't overlap with our resume. There are 20 technical schools, and we have put out information through people like Ruth Siemans and Global Opportunities and others so there are specifics. This particular province is in the southern part of China where it does not get as cold as it does in most of China. There are over 40 African students in this particular province, some of them from Kenya, and some of them Christian. And we utilize and make contact and network with those that God took to China to get medical degrees. Also we pray that He can use them for witnessing to these particular people.

Rural development. That particular province has a lot of rural poverty. I was in there three weeks ago, had meetings with some of the officials dealing with rural development, and they have given an open door. Because of information that was gathered through research and personal contacts through visits and tentmakers, it is now possible that a Christian organization will begin some major rural development projects. This came about through networking.

Disaster relief. There are some Christian organizations worldwide that have specifically geared up to respond to disasters. I call them the "ambulance chasers." Whenever there's a fire, there they go. Well the Lord can use that and there are people and organizations that are prepared the next time there's a major flood, which there is every two or three years. Some Christians are standing by to go in to perform Christian service and provide a Christian witness at the same time.

Is that Larry Allmon back there? He represents Gospel Recordings which has a specific kind of ministry, cassettes. We are looking, we are talking, we've had correspondence back and forth, how that whole ministry of cassettes can be used to evangelize these folks. Because there is no Scripture yet in their language, it's very likely that cassettes with oral testimonies of those who have believed will be something that will be in use long before written Scripture is in use for those particular people.

There are either five or six separate distinct Christian organizations that are involved in radio projects. There are local Christians. There is a literature delivery agency operating out of Hong Kong. There are radio production facilities that will be taking raw tapes and making radio programs out of them. There is another organization that is funding some of the broadcasts. The radio production has not started yet. It has been very sensitive to locate a lot of the key elements in this and make sure that it will be able to continue for a long period of time and so we are gearing up for the radio.

Since it's a very impoverished area, there are not a lot of the villages in the area that have electricity. And most of the folks are poor. Another agency, a Third World agency, has agreed to provide initially 1,000 portable radios. These are the little single frequency, non-tunable radios, that will only pick up a particular channel, one that is broadcasting out of the Philippines.

Literature. We are equipping the Chinese believers in the area, making sure that the various literature delivery organizations are covering it. They are presently using Chinese literature, but will be gearing up for delivering the Scripture within this other new language.

Diaspora students. There's been a tremendous amount of networking with the various international student organizations: International Students Incorporated, several Christian student ministries in Europe, Christian student ministries that operate inHong Kong and in Japan, and Christian student ministries throughout North America. Although we've not located any of these particular minority people abroad, we have located Han Chinese who have come from that particular province, and some of them have believed and will go back in with a vision and some motivation to share Christ with this particular minority people.

Film. Relationships have been established. The major film production and distribution organization which sends out the "Jesus" Film will have within their set of global priorities to utilize this language. At this point we do not anticipate much projection, big screen, but it will go in by video.

Business, joint ventures. One of the roles that I have as I go into that area is promotion of joint ventures, promotion of businesses. About six weeks ago I went into this area with a group of businessmen from the West Coast of the United States. They sat down with the provincial, technical, coordination center people who had a long list of their needs. As an example, within this province, the government just bought a

shoe factory from Italy. Well, I don't know anything about shoes and I don't speak Italian. But apparently the people who bought the factory don't know much more. And so they were very, very concerned to find someone with expertise to help them get this factory up and running, assure quality control. It would open the way for tentmaking. It could be a six-month contract. It could be as much as an 18-month contract. But as we go in and look for these kinds of situations, it has a multiplier effect.

Agriculture. There is an award which is given out annually throughout southeast Asia. For southeast Asians it is a lot like the Nobel Prize. A fine Filipino Christian won this award for very significant work he had done helping minority tribal people in a sloping agriculture situation. Because of the award that he received, he is well known to the Chinese government, and has been invited to come in and assist in some ag work in this area.

Health care. I am not a doctor. But we have located a number of doctors and health professionals who have gone in and helped that particular provincial government design some programs which will eventually be staffed. For example, there is a fine Indian doctor, who by an odd chance of circumstances, is involved in designing some health care programs.

Discipling, sports, performing arts, leaership training, the full realm of Christian ministries are being projected for these people. No one organization, noone denomination, no one agency, no one person is doing it all. But together through networking these things are occurring or being funded or support being raised for them or the contacts and contracts being established right now. I could talk for a long time about the way networking has helped to bring the Gospel there.

Case study 2.

Reaching The Hakka—A Research/ Ministry Approach

The Hakka have the lowest percentage of Christians of any people group in Taiwan, and have thus come to be called "the resistant people." They are known to have a strong sense of people-consciousness related to their pride of origin in China, and the accurate records of ancestry they have kept since the fourth century when they began

migrating overseas. Since then, they have guarded their identity as a people by refusing intermarriage with other dialect groups. They have operated their own associations, schools, hospitals, and cemeteries wherever they have settled.

Of the 3.5 million overseas Hakka, two million reside in Taiwan. Since the last century when Protestant missionary work began in earnest among the other people groups of Taiwan, the Hakka have never been reached as a people on their own terms. Rather, the language of the dominant ethnic group, the Minnans, including the Minnan translation of the Bible and Minnan hymnals, have been used in ministry to the Hakka. Hakka people who wanted to accept Christ and join the church had to worship in the language of another people. Also, only a handful of missionaries ever bothered to learn Hakka since Minnan was the lingua franca of Taiwan. Consequently, the Hakka church has grown hardly at all, and the Hakka majority have been dubbed "resistant."

In 1986 World Vision Taiwan brought together 160 Christian leaders from throughout the country for a MARC Unreached Peoples Seminar. During that seminar, 15 Christian workers of different organizations decided to form a Hakka ministry network which would bring them together regularly for prayer, research and cooperative ministry.

In the years since the seminar, their numbers have grown to up to 30 Christian workers, who all share the same vision of reaching the Hakka for Christ. The World Hakka Gospel Association, as they now call themselves, represents 15 different denominations and churches. Ninety percent of the members are nationals, mostly Hakka, with one-fifth being Minnan and one-tenth foreign missionaries. Together, they have managed to do much more than they could have done independently. As they have met and prayed together each month, a number of cooperative projects have emerged:

1. They have established a Hakka Research Center (with the support of World Vision Taiwan), to research the traditions of the people and to contextualize ministry to them.

2. Also with the assistance of World Vision, they have established a vocational training program for Hakka women.

3. They have translated portions of

Scripture into Hakka, published and distributed them.

4. They have published two Hakka hymnals using Hakka folk melodies.

5. They have developed an acceptable substitute to ancestor worship, a red scroll of paper on which are inscribed the names of familial ancestors. This serves to remember an d honor the ancestors rather than make them a focus for idolatry as before.

6. In March of this year they took the initiative to arrange a Hakka Cultural Congress, involving both Christian and non-Christian organizations, further broadening their relationships within the Hakka community.

7. They have established 18 new cell groups of believers, all led by Hakka people.

Case study 3.

Researching Unreached Peoples In Ghana

Ross Campbell, National Director
Ghana Evangelism Committee

INTRODUCTION

Location: On the west coast of Africa

Area: 238,533 sq.km.—slightly smaller than the United Kingdom

Population: 14, 090,000 (June 1989)

Peoples: 60 indigenous ethnic groups and approximately 40 non-indigenous groups

Languages: Three major divisions

Traditional homeland—Southern half of Ghana

1. Kwa—5 major sub-groups (66.6%)

    (1) Akan

    (2) Southern Guan

    (3) Central Volta (45.6%)

    (4) Ewe (12.1%)

    (5) Ga/Dangme (8.9%)

2. Gur—3 major sub-groups

    (1) Moore-Guruma

    (2) Grusi

    (3) Nafana

3. Mande

    Northern Kwa—Volta-Camoe group

    Other West African aliens

Religion—Adherents enumerated by Government census

    60+% Christian

    24+% Traditional

    15+% Muslim

Churches (1987) 22,022 local churches—1 church for every 602 people.

Why Is In-country Unreached Peoples Research So Vital To Effective Mission? Because specific facts are needed to effectively focus attention on specific challenges.

1. *Government population statistics for a nation can be misleading.*

For example, according to government census 60+ percent of Ghanaians profess to be Christian as opposed to being an adherent to traditional religion, Islam or having no religion. "Christian practice" (regular church attendance) may be quite a different matter. Through research in Ghana it was discovered that only 11 percent of the population are regular church attenders (i.e. less than 19 percent of "professing Christians" attend church on a regular basis).

2. *National totals and percentages average variations*—from region-to-region and people group to people group—obscuring areas and peoples needing special attention.

For example with 22,022 local churches (in 1987)—a ratio of 1 church for every 602 people—Ghana might be considered well churched or evangelized. However, region-by-region research revealed marked variations from region-to-region. e.g. One church for every 370 people in the Western Region. One church for every 2,690 people in the Upper East Region.

Research also revealed great variations in the ratio of churches to people groups within a region, e.g. Western Region:

Akan peoples 77.1% of population—1 church for every 285 people

Ewe peoples 3.1% of population—1 church for every 1,435 people

Ga/Dangme 1.5% of population—1 church for every 1,270 people

Northern people groups 18.3% of population—1 church for every 231,100 people

3. *In-depth research is needed to expose blind spots*

Often we do not see a thing because we don't expect to see it. Our worldview doesn't include other people groups.

In Ghana it is generally accepted that the northern half of the country with its many people groups is less evangelized than the southern area. Most denominations regard the area as a mission field. Research bore this out. Through research it was discovered that in 1987 the south had 94 percent of Ghana's 22,022 churches. However, through more in-depth research into ratios of churches to people groups, it was discovered that Northern and alien peoples in Southern Ghana had much fewer churches to people than their fellow tribesmen in the north, e.g. one church for 483,100 Northern and alien people in the Ashanti Region compared with one church for every 2,880 people in the Upper East Region.

4. *In-depth research is also needed to sweep away popular misconceptions.*

A popular misconception amongst southern Ghanaians is that all peoples living in the North are Muslims. In-depth research into religious profession and practice revealed that 62 percent of all Muslims lived in the south and that the Central Region—the home of Christianity in Ghana and region with the lowest percentage of Northern peoples—had more mosques than the two Upper Regions.

Central Region-400+, Upper West-134 and Upper East-110

5. *In-depth research can also expose false assumptions.*

Southern Christians have assumed that Northern peoples migrating to the south will learn a southern language, respond to the southern style evangelism and assimilate into southern language churches. Research on ethnic composition of churches in the south has proven this to be a false assumption. Northern peoples have refused to respond to a message that depends upon giving up their culture for a southern culture.

Other false assumptions common amongst southern Christians include the belief that all Northern peoples are the same and all speak Hausa (a West African trade language). Consequently where attempts have been made to plant churches amongst Northern peoples in the south a church is established to serve all northern groups and either the Hausa or English languages used. Research has revealed that such churches have not grown or multiplied in ten, twenty and more years.

One man pioneering mono-ethnic northern churches using the mother tongue of the target group has in four months planted five mono-ethnic churches in Accra, the capital. As a result a vision has birthed for 2,000 mono-ethnic northern people group churches in Southern Ghana by the year 2000. At the time of survey (1986-87) there were only six churches for northern peoples in the south.

Summary—In-depth country research on unreached peoples is an essential pre-requisite for the discipling of all people groups in a country. Specific facts are needed if the Body of Christ is to be mobilized, every unreached people targeted, effective strategies developed and every people group reached.

UNREACHED PEOPLE RESEARCH IN GHANA

1. *The Sponsor*

The Ghana Evangelism Committee, an indigenous, interdenominational, service agency. The Committee came into existence in 1974 to introduce the New Life For All movement into the churches of Ghana. Since its formation the Committee has developed a clear commitment to see the Great Commission fulfilled in Ghana and beyond, through the mobilization of the Body of Christ.

G.E.C.'s concern is that the Body of Christ in Ghana ought to be working directly at the discipling of the whole nation, including all people groups, in response to the command of the Head of the Church -- the risen Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).

G.E.C. believes this will be most effectively accomplished when the churches of Ghana are committed to the goal of an active witnessing church for every village, every town, every neighborhood and every ethnic community of 300-1,000 people in the nation. This means at least one group of believers sharing Christ within each and every community in the country. Thus everyone is given a reasonable opportunity to accept or reject Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Also everyone who responds will have a church to attend where he can be discipled.

G.E.C's role is to be a catalyst through researching "the task" and the dissemination of information in seminars and publications; through orientation of leaders and local churches on ways and means to grow, plant churches and reach the unreached; and through pioneering new programmes and strategies geared to the growth and multiplication of churches—especially amongst the unreached.

2. *Background to the research*

In 1975 the Committee launched the New Life For All movement in all major non-Pentecostal denominations. From 1975-82 the emphasis was on awakening pastors, leaders and

members of local congregations to the fact that they can have new life in Jesus and that they have a responsibility to share this new life with those with whom they came in daily contact. As a result many congregations experienced spiritual renewal and significant church growth. In 1983 G.E.C. moved on to emphasize a more aggressive approach to evangelistic outreach. Eight specialized evangelistic activities were introduced to the churches together with the challenge of church growth, church planting and "unreached peoples" brought into sharper focus. As a result in 1983 the majority of churches involved experienced unprecedented growth, 125 new churches were planted, 180 churches completed "unreached peoples" surveys and eight churches were planted cross-culturally in the south.

From 1984 onwards G.E.C.'s objectives included:

Imparting vision for "hidden and unreached peoples" by: involving local churches in community surveys designed to locate such people and discover their distinctives (Refer to Appendix I).

Encouraging local churches to select one or more "hidden or unreached peoples" groups as their special targets for prayer, concern and outreach.

Establishing a research department to process data on "hidden or unreached peoples."

Preparation of directory on ethnolinguistic groups to be found in Ghana. A 320-page book entitled *Peoples, Languages and Religion in Northern Ghana* was published June 1986.

The purpose of the research was stated (in 1984) to be:

Awaken Akan, Ewe and Ga/Dangme speaking churches to the existence of "hidden unreached peoples" within their ministry areas.

Develop a special concern amongst existing churches for the reaching of unreached people groups and

Provide information to local churches on: unreached ethnolinguistic groups; churches and missions working amongst them; literature, cassettes, Scriptures etc. available in their language, details of churches planted amongst them and how planted.

The research was to be a catalyst for a missionary thrust from existing churches to the many unreached peoples groups still to be found in Ghana.

3. Development

From the program initiated in 1983 to focus the attention of local churches in "hidden and unreached peoples" G.E.C. has moved on to develop and complete an in-depth research program. G.E.C. has surveyed the ethnolinguistic composition of every town or village of 50 or more people in the nation and every Christian group meeting for worship Sunday-by-Sunday.

In 1985 the first survey of a whole Region as completed. The tenth and final Region was completed in December 1987.

4. *The objectives of the research*

a) Find out how far the church has come toward the goal of an active witnessing church in every village, town, neighborhood and minority ethnic community in the region and nation.

b) Find out the number of existing churches, where they are located, whom they are for and how fast they are growing and multiplying.

c) Identify the villages, towns, neighborhoods and minority communities still to be evangelized.

d) Find out the rate of church planting within the church as a whole, each denomination and particular people groups.

e) Discover the facts that will help in setting definite and realistic goals for church planting, aiming at active, witnessing churches in every community and people group.

f) Identify the factors which are contributing to the rapid growth and multiplication of churches within particular denominations, areas and people groups.

5. *How the research was conducted*

By Regions. The survey was conducted region-by-region. A pilot survey was completed in the Brong Ahafo Region in 1985. In 1986 Surveys were completed for Eastern, Ashanti and Greater Accra Regions. In 1987 Western, Central, Volta, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions were completed. The Brong Ahafo Region was resurveyed in 1988.

By Field Work. Ghana Evangelism Committee staff visited virtually every town and village of 50 or more people. Thousands of kilometers were covered by car, motorbike, push bike, canoe and by foot to complete a survey on every church and locality.

By completing the following surveys:

A *Church Survey* questionnaire was drawn up and the active cooperation of all major denominations sought. Questionnaires were distributed through denominational offices to local churches. Each local congregation was requested to complete the questionnaire by taking an actual count of attendance at a normal forenoon Sunday service. However, in practice very few surveys were completed prior to the field visit by G.E.C. staff. The prior circulation was nevertheless considered valuable as it served as an introduction to and an authorization of the survey. Probably 90 percent of all surveys were completed by G.E.C. staff and helpers in the field. (Refer to Appendix II for sample Church survey form).

A *Locality Survey* was prepared for every locality (with a population of 50 or more) listed in the 1984 Government census schedule. These forms were allotted to staff and helpers for completion at time of field survey. (Refer to Appendix III for sample survey form.)

These two surveys together with the 1984 Government Population Census figures provide the basic data used in compiling each Regional Survey and the National Survey.

A determined effort was made to secure a completed "church survey" from each and every congregation meeting regularly on Sunday mornings. Every "church survey" completed and returned by a church was scrutinized and referred back to church leaders where incomplete, or attendance figures appeared to be an estimate or inaccurate.

6. *How the research data was and is being disseminated*

a) Before commencing field work in each region, national heads of denominations were informed of survey time table (i.e. period for field work, date for formation of Congress Planning Committee and date for Regional Congress) and requested to provide a letter of endorsement and introduction to regional, district and local congregational leaders of their respective denominations.

b) Copies of the time table and letters of endorsement are then circulated to all church leaders in the region together with individual church survey forms.

c) Regional denominational and parachurch leaders are co-opted on to a Regional Congress Planning Committee and charged with the responsibility to see a full turnout of all their subordi-

nates at a five-day Regional Congress. In the Congress the completed or published survey is introduced and each afternoon each denomination meets under the chairmanship of its Regional Head to work through an agenda based on the survey; plans are developed and goals set.

d) Subsequent to the Regional Congresses individual seminars are conducted for denominations, local districts, parachurch groups etc.

e) The major challenges of the survey are also incorporated into annual reports to: Church synods, presbytery meetings etc., pastors' conferences; and a quarterly news sheet circulated to 10,000 key Christian leaders.

f) In June 1989 the Regional Surveys were published as a National Survey and presented to 550 National Executive leaders of churches, missions and parachurch ministries in a four-day National Consultation on the Evangelization of the Nation by AD 2000.

7. *The value of the research*
It has:

a) Opened eyes to the real state of the church and the unfinished task, sweeping away the fog of years of promotional reporting.

b) Swept away popular misconceptions e.g.

• that Ghana is a Christian country—only 11.27 percent attend church regularly, varying regionally from 15 percent in the South to 2.7 percent in the North.

• that we have too many or enough churches—14,700 unchurched towns and villages.

• that Northerners are Muslims—more mosques and Muslims in the south than north.

• that Northern Christians in the South will attend southern churches.

c) Highlighted the challenge of the unfinished task —

• 7 million nominal Christians.

• 15,000 unchurched towns, villages and ethnic communities.

• 2 millon unreached Northern and alien peoples in Southern Ghana—defined by urban town, or village location.

• 3 million unreached Northern and alien peoples in Northern Ghana—defined by people group and location of their towns and villages.

• 2 million Muslims and 3 million adherents of Traditional Religion.

8. *Resulting impact of information*
It has resulted in:

a) The restructuring of denominational districts and leadership.

b) The appointment of denominational evangelism coordinators.

c) The setting up of evangelism committees, task forces etc.

d) New church planting movements within denominations.

e) The formation and growth of indigenous missionary societies.

f) An urban missionary movement to reach unreached peoples.

g) Targeting of specific unreached peoples.

h) More objective goal setting etc.

i) A definite focus on hidden, unreached and resistant peoples.

j) The development of "closure" thinking and planning.

9. *The ongoing process of research and dissemination*

a) Quarterly publication "The Task."

b) Review of denominational goals in annual church synods, conferences etc.

c) Preparation of a directory of churches, missions and parachurch groups.

d) Updating and a complete resurvey, region-by-region: five-year cycle.

10. *Some lessons to be noted:*

a) The importance of looking at the total picture and not just parts (i.e. of surveying every town, village and population center and every church for people group composition).

b) The importance of clear limited objectives for research.

c) The importance of collecting first hand, factual data by specially trained field workers.

d) The dissemination of information in a variety of formats to all levels of church leadership—the executive decision maker to the grass roots lay activist.

e) The motivating power of well presented factual information.

f) That computers are helpful but not necessary. The quality of the raw data is the crucial thing. It is better to spend limited financial resources on gathering reliable information than on a computer. G.E.C. physically surveyed over 22,000 churches and over 25,000 towns and villages and compiled the information manually. A computer was

purchased after surveys were completed.

g) That Third World countries have the capability to complete an in-depth research project. The Ghana Evangelism Committee launched its in-depth research in 1983 in the midst of political upheaval, economic collapse, famine and acute shortages of basic consumer items (e.g. petrol, printing paper, replacement parts). Only limited funding was received from outside the country—less than one third of what was promised by overseas agencies. A strong motivating vision and a spirit of faith and sacrifice amongst a committed core of nationals are the essentials—not U.S. dollars and sophisticated computers.

CONCLUSION
Today, largely as a result of in-depth research, the Body of Christ in Ghana is mobilizing herself to saturate the whole country and every people group with communities of believers incarnating Jesus Christ. That Christ, in all His love and concern for every man, woman and child—regardless of tribe, class or education—might be accessible to all by AD 2000. That Ghana be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

APPENDIX
I. (a) Survey form for "Survey of non-indigenous/unreached people groups"—used by local congregations in 1983.

I. (b) "Information on Target Group"—used by local congregations in 1983.

II. "Church Survey Form"—used by G.E.C. in Region-by-Region National Survey 1986-1988. Completed for 22,000+ churches.

III. "Locality Survey Form"—completed by G.E.C. for every population cluster of 50 or more people. 1986-88—25,000+ localities.

Books of Reference:
Samples of 10 Regional Surveys
National Church Survey —Facing the unfinished task of the Church in Ghana
Peoples, Languages and Religion in Northern Ghana
All published by Ghana Evangelism Committee, Box 8699, Accra North, Ghana, West Africa

Facsimile of survey form.

SURVEY OF NON-INDIGENOUS/UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

AREA SURVEYED: Town/Village _____

If survey doesn't cover whole town/village, describe accurately area of survey (attach map if necessary)

_____

_____

Notes on Survey

1)   In taking census include only adults (i.e. 15 years and over). It may be expected that children will roughly be equal to the number of adults.

2)   Abbreviations:

Ref/No.	= language number from Map of Ghana Languages
R.C.	= Roman Catholic
Prot.	= Christian Council and mainline Pentecostal churches
A.I.C.	= African Independent Church members i.e. Spiritual churches
Trad.	= Traditional beliefs, or those with no religious affiliation

3)   Instructions: In entering religious affiliation distinguish between nominal affiliation and active participation by giving figures for both. Enter active participants in brackets ( ) i.e. those who attended church during the last 2 weeks.

ETHNIC GROUP	REF. NO.	MUSLIM	RC	PROT	AIC	TRAD	TOTAL

Completed by: _____   Date: _____

Church: _____

Facsimile of survey form.

INFORMATION ON TARGET GROUP

1.   Name of Group _____

2.   Where do they live _____

3.   Their approximate population (in your ministry area) _____

4.   First language _____ Second _____ Third _____

5.   Identifying characteristics _____

_____

_____

6.   Present religion of majority _____

7.   How many can read: Own language _____

                            English language _____

                            Twi language _____

8.   Do they have Scriptures or other literature in own language? _____

_____

9.   What do they see as their spiritual, physical and emotional needs? _____

_____

10.   What church/mission works with this people in homeland? _____

_____

11.   What further steps do you plan to reach this group? _____

_____

_____

Facsimile of survey form.

CHURCH SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (NORTHERN REGION)

The purpose of this survey is to help describe a total picture of life in all churches in the Region today. Would you, therefore, carefully answer the questions below:

1. CHURCH

    (a) Name of Church ....

    (b) Location of Church ....

    (c) Year established as a congregation (i.e. officially organized and began to meet regularly for Sunday worship) .... Date ....

2. CHURCH LEADER (Local) (circle whichever applies)

    Full-time/part-time

3. LANGUAGE(s) in which Sunday worship service is conducted:

    Prime language .... Translated into (if at all)...........................

4. WHERE DOES YOUR CHURCH MEET?

    ( ) Church's own building? If church meets in its own building is it:

    >   ( ) (a) A permanent structure?
    >   ( ) (b) A temporary shelter?

    ( ) Rented premises: theatre/public hall/other (specify) ....
    ( ) School building?
    ( ) Residential house/compound
    ( ) Under tree
    ( ) Other (specify) ....

5. SUNDAY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

    Church attendance figures ideally should be an actual count which reflects attendance on a normal Sunday. Attendance on special occasions would not reflect a normal church attendance. The attendance for individual congregations will not be published. Exaggerated figures defeat the objectives of the survey:

    >   (i) All males   15 years and over ....
    >   (ii) All females 15 years and over ....
    >   (iii) All children 14 years and over ....
    >   Total attendance ....

    Of the above total attendance approximately what number speak:

    (a) A Northern Ghana language or a language of another African country ....
    (b) An Akan language (Twi/Fanti) as their mother language ....
    (c) Ewe ....
    (d) Ga or Adangme ....

    Date of Sunday on which census taken ....

    Completed by ....Status ....

Facsimile of survey form.

LOCALITY SURVEY

REGION _____ LOCAL COUNCIL _____

1.   <u>Name</u> of village/town/area _____ E/A No. _____

(or popular spelling if different)

Other names _____

2.   <u>Location</u>: Reference to other known town and (if helpful) draw a map on reverse side of the form. (Only necessary for localities not on census map).

_____

_____

3.   <u>Age</u> of village/town:

(   ) 1-5 years   (   ) 6-10 years   (   ) 11 and over years.

4.   <u>Population</u>: As per 1984 census _____

If no census figure available – your estimate _____

Basis of calculation _____ compounds X average compounds size _____

_____

*   5.   <u>Ethnolinguistic breakdown</u>: Give approximate percent (%) for main tribal groups

_____

*   6.   <u>Languages spoken</u>:

Primary _____ Trade _____ Other _____

Vernacular taught in schools _____

What percent (%) of population 15 years and over can read and write at least one of the above languages? _____%

7.   <u>Educational facilities</u>:

(   ) Primary School (   ) Middle School (   ) Muslim School

What percent (%) of children under 15 years attend school _____%

8.   <u>Religion</u>:

a) What is the predominant religion of the people? _____

What percent (%) profess their religion? _____%

What percentage of the people practice more than one religion simultaneously? _____%

Give details _____

Facsimile of survey form.

   b) Give number of roofed mosques _____ Approximate year of establishment _____

*   Give number of public Muslim prayer places _____

9.   Evangelism:

Has there been some form of Christian witness among the people in the past 5 years ( ) Yes ( ) No.
If so, which church or mission?

_____

Currently is any church, mission or group planning or attempting to evangelize this group of people?

( ) Yes ( ) No. If so, give details.

_____
_____

* 10.   Additional Comments: Write below "No churches" if there are none.
If there are list all churches.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Organization/Status _____

Address: _____

*   NOTE

    (1)   Questions *5, *6, *8(b) and *10 to be filled for every locality. If the answer is nil for
mosques -- write nil -- to show that the questions has been answered.

    (2)   The remaining questions should be completed if possible but are not mandatory. The return of
the form should not be delayed because of them.

Case study 4.
Stories And Lessons From
The Nigeria Survey

Niyi Gbade
Research Coordinator
Nigerian Evangelical Missions
Association

Background Of NEMA And The Survey
The Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) was formed in 1982 as an association of indigenous missionary bodies under the auspices of the Nigeria Evangelical Fellowship. One of the objectives of NEMA was to gather information on the status of Christianity and evangelization in Nigeria and other countries where Nigeria should be sending missionaries. This information was then to be shared with the member missions and other evangelical bodies who could use it to plan and carry out evangelism and missions in the area.

The first project undertaken by NEMA towards fulfilling this objective is the Searchlight Project. This is a survey of every Local Government Area (LGA) in Nigeria. An LGA typically has a population between 50,000 and 400,000. There are over 300 such administrative divisions in Nigeria and they provide a convenient focus for our work. When all the LGA's in a particular state have been surveyed, we hope to be able to publish a booklet with the results for that state for the convenience of those with interest in working there.

Progress So Far
This project started in earnest over a year ago, and we had hoped to be able work faster. At times lack of funds slowed us down, but we thank God for His faithfulness in meeting most of our minimal needs in this area. Our main problem has been manpower, since we were not able to hire researchers but have had to depend on volunteer labor. Some of the NEMA member missions have released research staff to us who have worked faithfully as zonal supervisors in charge of the work in one or more states, but there are not enough of them to cover all the zones. In many cases they have been able to recruit the help of Christian members of the Nigerian Youth Service Corps—NYSC (a government project very close to the American Peace Corps or the British Voluntary Service Organization—VSO) to do the surveys in many of the zones. In other zones brethren have offered to help. Some of these, unfortunately, have disappointed us. Zonal supervisors

have not had enough funds or time to travel regularly to all their Area to encourage their researchers. However, about 900 people have probably been involved in the project on a part-time basis so far.

Our strategy is to involve Christians within an area with the survey. We found this to be a useful method as we turn to these same Christians later, mobilizing them for the evangelization of their area. It is working. In one particular effort to survey the peoples of Asa Local Government Area, the youth groups from two different churches, who were involved with the initial pilot surveys went back to their churches and mobilized them for evangelism in this area. It resulted in many converts. One influential convert was disowned by his family and was seriously persecuted. He lost his property but kept his faith. It is believed that churches would eventually emerge from this outreach. The people in this area are all Yoruba, with no adequate witness of the gospel.

Another problem we have had to cope with is non-cooperation from Christian groups. Many denominations and groups particularly in the south, are not willing to release information to us about their work. This causes delays.

This part of the write-up will not be complete if mention is not made of the complex social structure of Nigeria. Very few countries in the world have this kind of society. It is like a jigsaw puzzle. This makes me believe that if the task of surveying Nigeria is possible, it is also possible to survey other Third World nations. The Ethnologue identifies about 494 different language groupings in Nigeria. Each of these groups are in their own cultural island. The economic, social and political problems in the country could be traced mainly to the complex diversity of language and culture of the people. Presently the Survey plan for Nigeria has been going on at an uneven pace in most of Nigeria's 21 states. The surveys of about 65 Areas in 12 states and the Federal Capital Territory have been completed so far (April 1989). Some of the people groups encountered in this survey are Hausa (various groups), Fulani, Gwandara, Maguzawa, Kanuri, and Yoruba (various groups) to mention a few. As more reports come in we intend analyzing so that we can get the unreached people profile for Nigeria. At present this is not possible as people groups mix together and spill over one another other's original geographical areas. We feel it is important

to publish present results in the best format possible to immediately stimulate interest in evangelism and missions in the needy areas which the survey has revealed so far. We have so far published 48 area profiles.

Summary Of Present Findings
With no state completely surveyed, it may be too soon to try to identify overall trends and needs. We plan to draw an unreached people map of Nigeria. This is difficult now as the people live across frontiers of mapped out areas. However, several patterns seem to be emerging and we will try to comment briefly on them here:

1. *The Unreached Northern Peoples*
The vast majority of the peoples of the far northern states (Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, northern Bauchi, Borno) with the exception of some Middle Belt peoples living on their southern edges, are Muslims. The people groups living in the far northern states are mainly Hausa (various groups) Fulani Gobir, Kanuri, Maguzawa, Dyerma, Dukkawa. Most of them have a strong Muslim culture and are hostile to Christianity.

Within the past five years, most of the towns and cities of these people have seen an influx of southern, often Pentecostal Christians. These southerners are mainly Yoruba and Ibo ethnolinguistic families. Their leaders are usually Yoruba, Ibo or Bendelites from the South. They have zeal for reaching the Muslim peoples in the north, but almost without exception have been able to attract only fellow-southerners (nominal Christians) who are working or trading in the area, into their groups. They have been quite unable to break through the language, cultural and religious barriers to meaningful ministry to the indigenes. They do not understand or admire Hausa/Fulani or Kanuri culture, and their own culture is likewise in many respects abhorrent to the Northerners. Older, more established denominations like the Anglicans and Baptists often find themselves in the same position. In many northern towns, where the above people groups are found, most of the Christian activities are in English or Ibo and Yoruba. This is not to say that it is bad to have ministry to southern peoples living in the north. Such ministry is crucial to support these people in their faith in a hostile environment. But it is quite a different matter than evangelizing the northern peoples.

Perhaps some means should be

found of educating Christian peoples from the south doing gospel work in the north in the principles of cross-cultural ministry in Muslim culture. Teaching practical means of doing evangelism and church planting in an environment where land for church buildings is unobtainable, open air preaching and visiting in homes are not allowed, Christian religious knowledge is not taught in schools, and converts are severely persecuted. Strategies generally must differ widely from what is usually done in the south.

The situation in most of these areas at present is that if for any reason all the non-indigenes of these areas are forced to leave the areas, there would be very few churches there. Until there are indigenous churches in these areas, ministering in the context of the local culture, Christianity really has not gained a foothold among these peoples. Despite the Christian presence there, they are unreached. In most of these areas also, Christians are few in the rural areas since migrants cluster in the towns.

This is not to say that there are no indigenous Christian peoples in the far north. There are, and they have even recently formed an association (Tarayyar Masihiyawa) to make their existence known and to work for the upholding of their rights and heritage. Several thousand people have joined. The membership is restricted to Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri Christians. (*Today's Challenge*, Number 5, 1988, pp 27-28 by Danjuma Byang and Grace Abdu.)

2. *Semi-Christian Cults*
The survey is revealing the extent of Christo-pagan groups whose doctrines are not regarded as Biblical by the majority of Christians. It is interesting to note, for example, that the Jehovah's Witnesses are the largest group in Ikorodu-Lagos State, and that the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star has branches in many towns in the north. This is a trend worth watching as the more survey results come in.

3. *Small People Groups*
It is likely that many Nigerians and others are not aware of the variety of small peoples groups especially in the Middle Belt and other parts of Nigeria. Places like Gongola State are a real patchwork. Many of these peoples have been Christianized (they have a form of Christian culture) and will need re-evangelization. Most of the remaining ones are pagans being influenced by Islam. A concentrated effort to win

them to Christ needs to be made immediately. This should be begun with more research on these groups.

For example the Danche people:
Location:
    Plateau State—Near Jos Town
Population:
    800 to 1000
Muslims:
    50% (nominal)
Animists:
    50%
Christians:
    20 (new converts)
Language:
    Danche and Hausa (All bilingual)

4. *Evangelized cities amidst unevangelized rural areas*
Asa region in Kwara State is a good example of unevangelized rural areas close to a city. Ilorin city is about 20 kilometers to the first Asa village. While Ilorin has over 80 denominations, Asa has only five with less than 300 church membership.

Tackling The Problem Of Mobilization
One of the most important next steps in information gathering is the dissemination of such information to fulfill the need for the former. This could be a difficult task if there is no strategy for executing it.

The Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) has set up a Mobilization Committee to recruit the church for the final task of world evangelization. Part of the committee's task includes:

1. Publishing some of the "Searchlight" research findings.

2. Organizing Missions Awareness conferences and seminars (during which research reports are publicized).

APPENDIX A

Principle Of The Nigerian Survey Taken From Searchlight Manual

The Goal of Our Research
The goal of our work is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by reaching the unreached and reviving the church. Research identifies those people groups who are without adequate preaching of the gospel and suggests methods that might be effective for bringing the gospel to them. It allows us to lay plans

that will succeed in bringing people groups to Christ. It is the vital first step to complete obedience to the Great Commission. Research should also revive the church, first by waking it out of slumber with the news of all that is yet to be done, and secondly by breaking the hearts of Christians as we *look* at the white harvest fields and begin to feel the way Jesus does about it. This should motivate us to prayer and obedience, the great signs of revival.

By research, then, we hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus and the establishment of righteousness and justice for all the suffering people of the earth. He said He would not come until the gospel had been preached to all the nations (peoples). We take Him seriously by actually seeking to finish the task.

More specifically, we should aim at identifying all the regions with people groups who are not adequately evangelized. We want to know the languages the people peak, what may have hindered them from coming to Christ before now, what Christians are near them and might be used as a harvest force to bring them in. We also want to know something about the religious and spiritual climate of our country by states and districts. We are drawing a spiritual portrait, trying to see our world as God sees it. This makes the church's research effort vital to the fulfillment of the final harvest.

The Task
Missionary research is *spiritual warfare*. Satan has held sway in many of the places we will go to for thousands of years and he is not about to give up his secrets or give the Kingdom of God the advantage of strategic information. He will try to stop you with fear, illness or other circumstances. He will try to make those who have the information uncooperative. He will try to hinder you with lack of funds. He will attack you with doubt and discouragement. Research is not for the timid, but it can be successfully done by the meek. It is not at all easy, but it is altogether possible done in the power of God through the Holy Spirit and for His Kingdom. All the plans in the world will fail without that power, but that is the very power we have.

Missionary research is *information gathering*. Information can be gathered from the following sources, among others:
1) Church Statistics: If you have

good rapport with church or denominational leaders, you can ask for copies of their reports and lists of churches, etc.

2) Official Government Publications: Most State and Local Governments put out some publications about their states or areas. These can often be obtained through the ministries of Tourism or Information. Survey Departments have maps for sale. School Boards and Ministries of Education have information on the number, types and sizes of schools in a given area.

3) Universities and Libraries: Departments of Social Studies, Geography, Anthropology, Linguistics, Political Science and Religion may have copies of theses, projects and books about various groups and areas, or the spread of Christianity or Islam. These often contain some research on current status and size of Christianity in the area. History Departments might have something similar.
Look for books about various ethnic groups in your area. These may give maps locating the group which would be useful to your survey. Enclose the bibliographic information on any such books that you come across, in your report.

4) Media: Take notes on newspaper articles or TV or Radio programs having to do with the kind of information you are gathering.

5) Interviews: Ask people who know more about a situation to give their view of it. For example, you could ask a church member how many people attend mass at his church each Sunday and whether they have their own priest or pastor. Certain questions on your forms should require this type of information gathering because we want to find out something about the people's felt needs. Always ask questions tactfully and try to build some personal relationship with the person you ask. It is often good to ask the same question of several different people so as not to get just one person's view.

6) Often you can find things out by just watching. Attend a church on Sunday and count the people, note the number of churches in a village, etc. Estimate the population of an area by counting the houses. Do a house-to-house survey to determine the average number of people in a house.

Missionary research includes *strategy considerations*. For example, you must decide how to divide up the work if more than one of you is doing the research in a particular area or people group. Set deadlines for yourselves for various phases of the work. Meet periodically to share your findings and support each other in prayer. You must also make some decisions about financing the project if necessary. Where will the money come from for the necessary transportation costs, postage, photocopying and the purchase of pamphlets, maps and brochures?

Another strategy consideration has to do with *security*. How much should we say to those we meet about the project? What we are doing is not illegal, but be wise because information and information gathering is a sensitive issue in most countries of the world. Those we meet may be afraid that the information will be used against them.

The Researcher
What kind of person do you have to be to be successful at this task? These are the qualities of a good researcher:

1) A burning heart of dedication to Jesus and His call: Are you in this to please people, satisfy your ego, get some excitement, or to please the King of Kings and help be an answer to the prayer, "Thy kingdom come"? You need to be a thorough disciple of the Lord who traveled a lot without an expense account, who wept over Jerusalem and had compassion on the helpless crowds. You can never be disappointed in your work for the Lord if you do it for Him, to Him, in His power, with your eyes steadfastly on Him throughout.

2) A strong prayer life: You must be a prayer warrior for the spiritual battles that lie ahead. If you have not been one before, you can start now. Set aside a certain time each day for intercession for this project. Pray also for other concerns of God's program in the world. Withstand the attacks of Satan on your work and turn them into blessings instead.

3) Faith: Settle it in your mind, by talking to the Lord, whether this project is right, is accomplishable, and is for you to be involved in. Then, if it is, claim God's promises and hold on to the shield of faith despite all attacks.

4) Boldness joined with wisdom: Be brave enough to go for the information even at some risk. Be like Caleb and Joshua or the men who went to Jericho -- and they came back safely. But don't act foolishly in the name of boldness. Let God convince you to take risks, then take them.

5) A team spirit: Be ready to make this work a real team effort. Don't be content to just gather information academically. Stir each other up and encourage each other spiritually. Sacrifice for each other. Bear with each other. Spend time together and you will be amply rewarded for the effort you have put in. You need each other, because gathering this information takes a variety of skills and personalities. Your report will be more balanced and accurate if you work on it together.

6) Openness to hear the call and catch the vision: You are not in this research by accident. It is the people who do the research who should catch the vision for action first. We are the people who will know what has to be done! Merely gathering information will leave you in greater condemnation if you **know** your Lord's will and don't do it (Luke 12:47). It may very well be that God will call you to meet some of the needs you discover. Are you listening for the call? The call might be to mobilize the Church through the dissemination of information.

Twenty-nine Hindrances to Research and Survey in a Developing Nation
(With suggestions for overcoming some of these hindrances)

A. *Developmental and Economic Hindrances*
1. Lack of Finances (eliminates one kind of solution for many other problems)

Suggestion: Missionary organizations should devote a reasonable percentage of income to research information and dissemination.

2. A poor economic situation means that few people can financially afford to work in the project at their own expense.

3. Lack of Equipment: Sometimes equipment could be bought if there was money. Some kinds of useful equipment may just not be available, or there may be nobody competent to maintain them in the country where the research is being done.

Suggestion: The Church in the developed world could provide needed expertise and equipment.

4. Lack of Technology: Some kinds of useful equipment may be useless in a developing country because the technological infrastructure necessary to operate them does not exist. For example, the national telephone network may not be capable of handling computer communication, so computer networking is impossible.

Suggestion: Keep technological acquisition as simple and relevant as possible.

5. Lack of manpower: Some developing countries do not have enough trained manpower for national priorities, let alone churches. Religious organizations cannot pay what governments do, and few trained professionals or educated people have the zeal to work for a Christian project unpaid.

Suggestion: Where paid or supported workers are lacking, volunteers should be recruited.

6. Lack of training: There are few people who understand the why, how and what of research.

Suggestion: Principles of Research should be taught in our Bible Schools.

7. Physical inaccessibility: Because transportation facilities and infrastructure such as good roads, air, train or boat service, etc. are not well developed, many areas are difficult to reach, e.g. the Koma people on the Eastern border of

Nigeria.

Suggestion: Explorations should be organized by the church.

8. General distance communication problems: telephone, telegram, telex service may be non-existent or very unreliable. Two-way radios may be forbidden or severely restricted. The mail service may be slow and not very secure. And physical travel to take messages is time-consuming and expensive.Suggestion: The use of area coordinators and research councils could reduce effectively the problems caused by lack of a good communication network.

B. *Political Hindrances*

9. Government refusal to release information: some governments will not release census-type information to citizens.

Suggestion: Exhaust all legal methods of information retrieval.

10. Political factionalism may make people unwilling to release information which they feel could be used against them politically.

Suggestion: Use trusted Christians that belong to the ruling factions as a go-between.

11. Incorrect information: People may give false information which they feel will help them politically.

12. Political instability: Frequent changes in government can frustrate research efforts.

13. Unavailability of maps: for example, most of the available detailed survey maps for Nigeria were drawn in the period 1957 to 1963.

Suggestion: Draw simple maps that you can improve upon later. Don't get too professional if you don't have the resources. Mapping is a very expensive exercise.

14. Inadequate information: The government itself may not have been able to gather basic information about its citizens.

Suggestion: Search for write-ups or

publications done by international organizations like WHO, UNESCO, UN, aid groups around the world, etc.

15. Suspicion of the political motives of the research.

Suggestion: Stress the religious and academic reasons for your survey.

16. War disrupts every aspect of research.

Suggestion: Go underground (Be secretive about your research project. All surveys and research in war zones are risky.)

C. *Social Hindrances*

17. Language Barriers: In many countries, numerous languages are spoken and the researcher may not be able to communicate on the grass-roots level with local people.

Suggestion: Recruit and train local indigenes.

18. Cultural taboos: A people group may not be willing to give information about themselves to outsiders. There may even be penalties for any of its members who do so.

19. Ethnic sectionalism: If the researcher is from a different ethnic group, he may not get the cooperation of the people in information gathering.

Suggestion: Recruit researchers from within Christians in the groups to be surveyed.

20. Migration of People: Keeping track of nomadic people can be frustrating.

Suggestion: Like most migrant birds, nomadic people usually have migrating patterns. Study this pattern and develop a strategy for the survey.

21. Cross-Cultural Communication Barriers: The researcher may misunderstand the information given to him by people of another culture.

Suggestion: In researching an area we need to understand how to handle different cultures that confront us.

22. Corruption: Some people with information, especially official gov-

ernment information, may not be willing to release it unless bribed.

D. *Religious Hindrances*

23. Lack of Awareness in the churches: Churches have never used research information to plan heir strategy and do not see the need of it.

Suggestion: There is a need to show how vital research information is to the task before the Church.

24. Lack of Church Support: Since research is a spiritual exercise the Church needs to pray along.

Suggestion: Church groups could create prayer cells across the nation.

25. Hostility of Competing Cults or Religions: This means that the research may need to be kept relatively secret to prevent sabotage of the project.

26. Lack of Unity in the Church: Denominations are interested only in the progress of their own denomination and do not care what is happening to Christianity as a whole.

Suggestion: Mission Awareness programs should be carried out in the churches with emphasis on the nature of the corporate task of the church worldwide.

27. Lack of Trust Between Churches: Churches don't want to give information about themselves lest it be used by other churches to plan a strategy to "steal" their members.

28. Theological Differences on Research.

E. *Administrative Hindrances*

29. Lack of Good Research Strategy: A well-meant research project will be doomed to fail without effective strategy and proper goals.

Suggestion: Join the "network" of researchers around the world and learn how others are doing theirs.