

Ministry to Non-industrialized Peoples: A Selected Bibliography

The non-industrialized peoples of the world are survivalists and marvelously adaptive and creative in their pursuit of life. They also are unreached and therefore in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For those committed to bringing the Word to them, creative strategies and adaptations are required. This article is designed to clarify the task and list the resources available to reach the world's non-urbanized and marginalised peoples.

by Douglas J. Hayward

One fundamental prerequisite of scientific inquiry is the need to establish clear boundaries and unambiguous identities for that which one is studying. If one can clearly delineate a particular subject matter (i.e., a horse, an amoeba, a fern) then one can proceed to describe the peculiarities associated with the growth, development and character of that subject matter. The progress, then, of science has been marked by increasingly sophisticated taxonomies developed and adapted to meet the needs of increasingly complex societal needs.

Among the classificatory systems developed by the Western world has been the attempt to group people and societies into recognizable and useful sets and subsets. The methods and terms for establishing such subsets have served the social, economic and political systems and aspirations of the Western world much to the dismay of people who have been so identified, or by later historians and scholars who raise serious objections to these imposed classifications. The following are some of the more outstanding terms used to identify the kinds of people which need to be reached with the Gospel.

Socio-political Categories

Tribesmen or Tribals:

A vague term referring to a group of people with a shared sense of ancestry, a shared culture, and a political organization below that of a monarchy. (It is vague because the term tribe is a Western designation that groups people together according to Western

standards whereas the people of that culture may identify themselves by quite different ones.)

Natives or Native-people:

A term generally used to refer to the original inhabitants of a region or to a place of one's origins, but all too often used pejoratively to refer to persons who are not "civilized."

Indigenous Peoples:

As used in the politically correct context of today's world this term refers to those individuals who are descendants of the earliest populations of a given area but who do not now control the national government with whom they share the land.

Folk Cultures:

A term invented by Robert Redfield that refers to those people and cultures (usually tribal, rural or peasant types) whose life ways are dominated by what he called Little Tradition beliefs and traits in contrast to Great Tradition beliefs and traits that are held by the urbanized or dominant culture peoples.

Socio-economic Categories

Peasants:

A vague designation for people who live in or used to live in ranked societies and whose cultures were/are marked by pre-industrial or pre-capitalist economics.

Nomads or Pastoralists:

A term designating the predominance of animal husbandry as the economic mainstay of a culture, and of the necessity for people to move with their livestock to open and available range lands to which they have access but not ownership.

So what do all of these people have in common? They have been thrust out to the margins of contemporary political and economic developments.

They are the people without wealth, power or privilege. But they are survivalists and marvelously adaptive and creative in their pursuit of life. They are also a people in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and for those committed to bringing that Word to them, equally creative strategies and adaptations are required. This is the goal of this article dedicated to reaching today's non-urbanized and marginalised peoples. What follows, then, is a brief selection of readings that will serve to introduce readers to the problems and prospects of ministry among such people groups.

Hunting and Gathering Cultures

Anthropologists have used a variety of terms to refer to people who live without relying upon food grown through extensive agricultural endeavors. Foremost among the terms used has been hunter and gatherers, or foragers. The defining characteristics of such cultures, though, has been a much debated issue in anthropology. Typologies of foraging cultures have been attempted on the basis of modes of production, social organization, or patterns of consumption. These typologies have likewise served the theoretical perspectives of the anthropological community which in turn has significantly impacted the kinds of data and the use of it that researchers have sought to find in foraging cultures. As such, E. Durkheim,

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building upon an evolutionary approach, believed that Aboriginal foragers represented the earliest stages of the evolution of culture and concluded that their totemic beliefs were evidence of the origins of religion (see: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*). Later generations of anthropologists would seek to demonstrate the beauty and sufficiency of foraging cultures (Lee 1968; 1979; 1984; Dentan 1968; Nance 1977) while others would focus on issues of conflict and adaptation (McKnight 1986; Shostak 1981).

These theoretical and typological interests within the anthropological community have more than a passing interest for missionaries inasmuch as they create a climate within which missionaries must serve. For instance, anthropologists have often suggested that hunters and gatherers can only live successfully in isolation from other cultures and are doomed to destruction if they come in contact with other ways of life. As an example of this approach Lauristan Sharp did research in the 1930s among the Yir Yoront aborigines in Australia and concluded that the defining characteristic of that people was their social organization based upon myth and totem. In 1952 he published an article entitled "Steel axes for stone age Australians" in which he predicted that Yir Yoront culture was disintegrating because of the thoughtless introduction of steel axes by missionaries and careless outsiders. This much reproduced article has been used by anthropologists and professors of anthropology for years to condemn missionaries for destroying culture, and has even been used by missionary anthropologists to heap guilt upon its own missionary community. In a recent follow-up study, though, John Taylor demonstrates that Sharp was wrong and that the Yir Yoront culture continues to survive, having adapted to Christianity in a process of alterations to their myths and the addition and adaptation of selected rituals that have in

turn allowed Yir Yoront social organization to adapt and stabilize within the context of culture contact and change.

Without focusing too much on these theoretical issues the following basic bibliography are some suggestions intended to prepare missionaries for a ministry among hunting and gathering peoples. A few general and theoretical books and articles on foragers include Bicchieri (1972), Ingold (1987; 1988), Riche (1982), Sahlins (1972) and Service (1979).

Of course outstanding ethnographies on particular groups of hunters and gatherers would include works on the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, the Australian aborigines, the Pygmies of Central Africa, the Inuit of North America, Subarctic hunters, the Native American Plains Indians, the Philippine Negritos and the Semang.

Books that specifically address the problems of doing ministry among hunters and gatherers are fairly scarce but would include at least the two chapters on "Bands" in Hiebert and Meneses (1995) and Swain and Rose (1988). Other books and articles that address the complexity of religion and faith among foraging culture include: Gualtieri (1984), Harris (1990), Ridington (1987 a,b), Stevens (1994) and Tanner (1979).

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- Harris, John 1990 *One Blood: 200 Years of Aboriginal Encounter with Christianity: A Story of Hope*. Sutherland, Australia: Albatross Books.
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Pastoral-Nomadic Cultures

In spite of many outstanding anthropological studies of pastoral-nomads anthropologists are sharply divided on what constitutes the defining elements of a pastoral-nomadic way of life. An anthropological understanding of pastoral nomadism requires an extensive investigation of the impact of environment including climate, seasonality, vegetation, and water sources along with an understanding of animal behavior and livestock management within the context of security needs, social organization, relations with surrounding peoples and access to markets or alternative resources. For the most part these concerns have not been the object of missionary interest, nevertheless, they do provide important clues for understanding cultural values and the potential responses of such people to innovation and change. As an introductory guide to the nature of such societies I recommend the following representative examples of anthropological studies that have sought to explore and/or describe pastoral-nomadic cultures: Barth (1961), Bates (1973), Evans-Pritchard (1940), Flores-Ochoa (1979), Lewis (1961) and Spencer (1965).

From a missiologistical perspective, I do not know of one book that specifically addresses ministry issues among pastoral nomads, in spite of the unique difficulties associated with ministry to such peoples. As such, readers

interested in studying or preparing for ministry among pastoral-nomads will have to content themselves with reading either from the biographical accounts of people who had a ministry among such people such as Campbell (1944), or by reading the historical accounts of ministry among pastoral-nomads such as Steele (1981). In a few cases missionaries working with pastoral-nomads have given us extensive case-studies of their ministry in order to focus on a particular issue in missions such as that presented by Donovan (1982) and Priest (1990), who examine the issues of contextualizing theology among the Maasai, a pastoral people. Arensen, a Wycliffe missionary working among the Murle of Sudan, provides a theoretically oriented case study through an analysis of the language and stories of that particular pastoral people (1992).

Bibliography on Pastoral-Nomads

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Tribal Societies

Given the fact that tribal societies have been the special focus of both anthropological inquiry and missionary endeavors, the anthropological and missiologistical literature on tribal societies is enormous. As an introduction to this vast body of literature I recommend that a new reader begin with general introductory works on culture, particularly those written from a Christian perspective such as Grunlan and Mayers (1979), Hiebert (1983), Kraft (1996), and Luzbetak (1993).

More advanced readers will want to follow up on such introductory material with readings in the ethnographies of particular people groups of which there are hundreds to choose from. One starting point for such readings would be to search through the 10 volumes of the *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (Levinson 1991) in which more than 1500 cultures are highlighted (according to geography) and a basic bibliography of readings on each group is listed (see also: Hayward 1997).

Readers interested in ministry issues among tribals will want to read up on those volumes that deal with such special topics as understanding tribal belief systems as addressed by missiologists such as: Van Rheenen (1991), Burnett (1988) and Hiebert (1985; 1995), or on the problems associated with culture change and native rights issues as addressed by: Lingenfelter (1992; 1996), Sanneh (1989), Whiteman (1985) and others (see especially the April 1996 issue of *Missiology* that addresses

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the issue of Missionaries, Anthropologists and Human Rights). Advanced readers may also want to explore specific case studies of missionary activity among tribal peoples or selected ethnic groups such as: Conley (1976), Tippett (1967), Anderson (1977), Nkurunziza (1989) and many others.

Bibliography on Tribal Cultures

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Peasant Societies

Anthropological writings on peasant societies are frequently ideological in nature either in support of, or attacking the economic theories of Marxism, or they are highly technical in an attempt to more sharply define the characteristics of so called peasant societies. Anthropological research into peasant cultures has highlighted the difficulty of isolating and defining the distinct factors and distinctive behaviors of people as they seek to adapt to the complexities of their life circumstances. These complexities include environmental features, such as water and soil, access to land, weather patterns, insects and diseases, availability of transportation, accessibility to markets, political structures, labor resources and population density, social stratification, and degrees of risk and reward (see especially Cancian 1972; Geertz 1963; Halperin 1977; Shanin 1987). Of particular interest to missiologists will be the concern of development anthropologists who

question the direction and future well-being of marginalised societies in the face of development strategies (see especially: Bodley 1982; 1994; 1996).

The complexities of a peasant way of life have far reaching consequences for missionaries for, in the process of proclaiming new life in Christ, they will either become advocates for a social status quo, or they will become advocates for change, but change to what? While Hiebert (1995) is the only missiologist/anthropologists that I know who has sought to address the broad range of issues associated with peasant communities, several authors have sought to address the issues of poverty and development including: Olasky (1988) and Yamamori (1995). There are, on the other hand, some outstanding regional case studies such as: Annis (1987), Cook (1985), Luke and Carman (1968), Mariz (1994), Syrjanen (1984) and Willem (1967) from which interested readers can draw helpful insights for ministry.

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