



MISSION TO  
*Unreached Peoples*

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# The Unreached Peoples' ADVOCATE

NEWS ON GLOBAL EFFORTS TO REACH THE LEAST REACHED



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Fall 2004

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## Reflections On Tibet

Following are some thoughts from newsletters from one of our workers in Tibet who has spent two years there studying the language and now is beginning to teach there.



# The Unreached Peoples' ADVOCATE

A Newsletter of Mission to Unreached Peoples

News on Global Efforts to Reach the Least Reached

## Director's View



Equal  
Opportunity

David Hupp,  
U.S. Director

2 Peter 3:9 - *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

What is the desire of the Lord? The Word clearly teaches that He does not desire any to perish. He desires everyone to come to repentance. His heart is that all may hear, believe, repent, and accept His salvation. Do all the peoples of the world have an equal opportunity to hear the Good News? Sadly, I don't think we can pretend that it is a world of equal opportunity for all peoples. I may not like that bit of information. I may not think it is fair or even just. I certainly don't understand it. But it is a reality of the world we live in. Some of us are born into environments where Jesus is glorified. Others enter this world in places and families where his name is despised and rejected. Why them, Lord? Why not me?

The men and women who make up the family of Mission to Unreached Peoples are some of those who have seen the needs of unreached peoples and have decided that their responsibility in the face of this need is to go, to serve, to support, and to give of themselves 'so that all may hear.'

Paul put it this way in Romans 10:14, *"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.'"*

At Mission to Unreached Peoples we believe in "Equal Opportunity": we believe that all peoples deserve an equal opportunity to hear, believe, and repent. That's what we're all about - it's what drives us. We also believe in equal opportunity for all members of His church to be the beautiful feet that are bringing good news. However, He has made us and whatever gifts He has given us are beautiful as we work together, not preferring one over the other, but working together in love and appreciation so that all may hear.

There are many different people groups among the Tibetans. Being in Lhasa, I am surrounded by Central Tibetans. Others, who focus on the Kham or Amdo Tibetan groups, live in the Sichuan or Qinghai provinces of China. This allows them closer proximity to teach these groups. Between the three biggest groups of Tibetans, the Kham, the Amdo, and the Central Tibetans, the language varies widely. I can barely understand someone from Amdo!

Right now Lhasa, Tibet is in the throws of SakaDawa. This is the holiest month to Tibetans. It is celebrated once a year to commemorate key events in the life of Buddha. Pilgrims and beggars come from all over Tibet to the 'holy' city of Lhasa to visit important temples and monasteries. During this time, the merit or demerit(sin) of the people is multiplied by a least two and most Tibetans are careful to be on their best behavior! Please continue to lift up the Tibetan people that they might know that there is One who has already delivered them from sin!

On my way back from Thailand to Lhasa, I decided to go overland through Kham country instead of flying. It was a journey I will never forget! The whole thing took 13 days and I traveled by public transportation the entire time. Because it was still winter, many of the roads afforded fabulous views of snow-capped peaks. But the Lord had bigger plans than just an overland trip. What follows is the highlight of my trip.

I arrived in the town called Dege in Western Sichuan. The people here are purely Kham Tibetan and are very strong Buddhists. Dege is home to the old Tibetan printing press and 70% of all the Buddhist scriptures are housed there. It is the heart of Kham culture, if not Tibetan culture at large.

I'd been to Dege no less than five minutes when I heard the voice of an 18 year old Tibetan girl ask if I knew our Father. It turns out she was a young Christian who studied in a bigger city in the Kham area. She was home for New Year holiday and was from a village

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THIS ISSUE

Something to Think About:

***"The central problem of our age is not liberalism or modernism, but the tendency to do the Lord's work in the power of the flesh rather than the Spirit."***

**Francis Schaeffer**

- BUSINESS TENTMAKERS**  
China, Turkic World
- EVANGELISM/CHURCH PLANTERS**  
Asia, Eastern Europe, Turkic World
- CERTIFIED TEACHERS**  
Asia, Eastern Europe, Turkic World
- LANGUAGE STUDENTS**  
China, Turkic World
- MEMBER CARE PERSON**  
Asia, Eastern Europe
- PRAYER PARTNERS**  
Everywhere
- CANDIDATE PERSONNEL MANAGER**  
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# Mission INSIGHTS

## WORLDVIEW: Reaching the 'oral majority'

Oct 7, 2004 By Erich Bridges who is a senior writer at the Southern Baptist International Mission Board whose column appears twice each month in Baptist Press. Reprinted by permission. Copyright © 1999-2004, Southern Baptist Convention.

PATTAYA, Thailand (BP)—Christian leaders from nearly 130 countries recently gathered in Pattaya, Thailand, to consider 31 key issues confronting world evangelization, and learned of one huge challenge that might trump all the others. Is it terrorism? Persecution? Opposition from hostile governments or religions? No. It is this simple fact: Four billion people, about two-thirds of the world's population, are oral learners.

They communicate, learn, perceive reality and embrace core beliefs through orally expressed stories, narratives, songs and proverbs; not through the books, periodicals, outlines and other forms of linear thinking preferred by literate cultures (and churches).

Some oral learners are illiterate because of lack of education. Many others, however, belong to the thousands of oral cultures of the globe. Some may even read a written language, but it isn't the way they prefer to interact with the world and with the Word of God. The latter group, by the way, includes millions of postmoderns in "literate" societies. Even if all the other higher-profile roadblocks suddenly fall away, this one will continue to stymie the Gospel's progress in much of the world unless we cast the unchanging Good News in forms in which the "oral majority" will receive it.

That comes as news to many of us as it did to many of the 1,600 leaders attending the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization's 2004 Forum in Thailand Sept. 29-Oct. 5. They met 30 years after the historic 1974 International Congress in Lausanne, Switzerland, which challenged the "whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world." That watershed event, organized by a committee led by Billy Graham, helped spur the modern missionary movement to evangelize the world's thousands of unreached people groups.

"But in the 30 years since then, we have hit a glass ceiling when we try to communicate the Gospel to the unreached peoples of the world," reported Avery Willis in a plenary session at the Lausanne Forum in Thailand. "Seventy percent of them are oral learners who have never heard or understood the greatest story ever told. "This affects more than the 1.5 billion least-reached people, because 4 billion people in our world can't, don't or won't learn through literate means. These 4 billion people are headed to a Christ-less eternity unless we use culturally appropriate means to evangelize them, disciple them, train leaders and plant reproducing churches."

Willis recently retired as overseas chief for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. He continues to work with the entity in mobilizing Christians to focus on oral cultures. IMB strategists and missionaries have helped pioneer some of the methods, including chronological Bible "storying" and the development of "oral Bibles", now used by many Christian workers to reach oral cultures. Willis and eight other IMB workers participated in a working group of thirty missions leaders at the forum called "Making Disciples of Oral Learners."

"God has opened the eyes of many of us in the past 15 years to see that the primary way to the hearts of the lost is through oral communication strategies," Willis said. Like many "new" mission strategies, oral approaches are really rediscoveries of old methods. Jesus, the Living Word, never wrote a book. He told stories within an oral culture that bears surprising similarities to hundreds of cultures today throughout Asia, Africa, the Arab world and the Americas. Words alone, particularly written words, the currency of the literate world, won't get the Living Word to many of the world's lost peoples. Consider:

— At least 1.5 billion people have never been introduced to reading and writing in any form.

(Continued on next page)

— Up to 85 percent of Muslim women — and 65 percent of Muslim men — are oral learners, ranging from completely non-literate to functionally illiterate. Many Islamic worship leaders in the Middle East and Africa also are exclusively oral communicators, operating by means of a memorized Quran.

— Illiteracy predominates among animistic peoples.

— A high percentage of the thousands of ethnic/linguistic people groups identi-

fied by the International Mission Board as largely or completely unreached are oral communicators.

— Of the 6,809 languages spoken in the world, only 414 had whole-Bible translations available by early 2004, according to Wycliffe Bible Translators. Only 928 had a complete New Testament. About 1,700 more translation projects are under way, but more than 4,000 languages have no translated Scripture at all — not even a portion or fragment. Are the speakers of these languages to go without the Gospel until we get around to them?

— Even in supposedly literate societies, millions are non-literate or functionally illiterate (including up to half the population of the United States). Among young people, the percentage rises even higher. Further, as visually oriented electronic technologies spread globally, many non-literate peoples are moving straight from ancient to modern means of visual/oral communication without ever learning to read and write their own heart language.

From the time of the Gutenberg Bible, Christianity has "walked on literate feet", directly or indirectly requiring literacy of those seeking the Gospel. That

requirement has provided innumerable spiritual and social benefits to societies that embrace literacy. But it continues to fence out other Gospel-hungry cultures and peoples.

"Buta huruf," the Indonesian term for illiteracy, means "blind to letter." Primary oral learners cannot "see" written words and literate missionary methods shut them out. Some 90 percent of the world's Christian workers still use literate communication styles among oral peoples.

The barrier is not in them, but in us. Our challenge is to adapt our methods to effectively reach the lost, not force billions of oral learners to become literate before they can understand the Gospel. That's an unnecessary stumbling block. Let's partner with the many oral learners who already have become followers of Christ and help them multiply their witness to billions of others.

Web sites for orality training and resources:  
[www.ChronologicalBibleStorying.com](http://www.ChronologicalBibleStorying.com)  
[www.fjseries.org](http://www.fjseries.org)  
[www.EpicPartners.org](http://www.EpicPartners.org)  
[www.OralBible.com](http://www.OralBible.com)  
[www.Communication-Strategy.net](http://www.Communication-Strategy.net)

### The Unreached **ADVOCATE** [www.mup.org/AdvocateMain.htm](http://www.mup.org/AdvocateMain.htm) October 15, 2004 / Vol. 7, No. 3

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Mission to Unreached Peoples (MUP) is an interdenominational agency helping people fulfill God's call in evangelism and church planting; often through holistic, creative strategies such as tentmaking and community development.

We would like to hear from you. If you desire more information about MUP or any articles, please contact the editor at the address above.

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### Our Mission

*Our mission is to obey  
 the Great Commission of Jesus Christ by  
 investing our lives, gifts, resources,  
 and vocational skills in God's work  
 throughout Asia and Europe.*



(Continued from page 1)

on the outskirts of Dege. Amazingly, she'd come to Dege that day for the first time in two years and was still waiting for her ride (traffic was bad or she would have left earlier) when my bus pulled in. She felt the Lord wanted her to talk to me. She is the only believer she knows of in the area and was having a hard time for obvious reasons. We spent a few minutes praying for strength and then she went on her way.

These types of divine appointments are reminders that the Lord is building His kingdom among Tibetans in ways that we do not always see. Here in the heart of Tibetan Buddhist culture, the first Tibetan I meet is an on-fire believer!!! Please pray for the Tibetan believers who face persecution from family and have little access to fellowship.

### Prayer and General Fund Response Form

Please send in the following form or respond by email to: [mupinfo@mup.org](mailto:mupinfo@mup.org)

I pledge to pray for Mission to Unreached Peoples ministry \_\_\_\_\_ times per week, and/or for this specific Missionary or People Group/Project: \_\_\_\_\_.

Please count on me as part of the \$5000 in new general fund monthly pledges beginning \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ /month for a minimum of one year.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_