Editor's Note: Bruce Graham, consulting editor of the IJFM, conducted the following interview with Robert Waymire on July 30, 1984 in Pasadena, California. In the article which follows the interview, Robert Coleman suggests ways in which the technology utilized by the Global Mapping Project can be applied to student missions mobilization.

INTERVIEW OF BOB WAYMIRE BY BRUCE GRAHAM (07/30/84) "THE GLOBAL MAPPING PROJECT: AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB WAYMIRE"

- Q. Bob, many mission leaders would agree that tremendous innovation has taken place in missionary thinking in the past decade. That innovation is often called the "unreached peoples" approach to world evangelization. How does the Global Mapping Project fit into all this?
- A. We need to go back another decade and include the church growth movement in the picture in order to see the crucible from which this project has developed. In my relationship with Overseas Crusades, a "church growth mission," and in my involvement with the U.S. Center for World Mission, which focuses on mission frontiers and Hidden Peoples, I have seen the real need and potential for comprehensive information relating both to the existing Church and the peoples of earth. This kind of information stimulates faith and practical vision for how the Church can finish the task of world evangelization. People are now asking, "Where are the unreached peoples, and how can we find out details about them? We want to 'adopt' one, but we need more information and materials to get our people motivated enough to become involved."

It was from this context that the Global Mapping Project was born. (Located at the Center for World Mission in Pasadena, California, we are a legally autonomous, collaborating agency).

While at OC I traveled widely trying to gather information for the construction of a comprehensive database containing identity and status information on both the Church and the peoples of the earth. I spent considerable time with Patrick Johnstone, David Barrett, Sam Wilson, Joe and Barbara Grimes, and many others reviewing and analyzing what research efforts they were involved in and what data they had. Each was doing significant work, but none of them were putting together a comprehensive database that would support detailed church growth analysis, give a complete picture of missions and identify, locate and "status" the peoples of the earth.

Now, how does the Global Mapping Project fit into all this? Well, we are working in three areas of development. First, we are developing a comprehensive database (we term it the Global Research Database) containing information on both the "harvest fields" and the "harvest force" of the world. Second, we are developing a computerized mapping scheme that interacts with the database. The mapping program is designed to depict the location of and other information about the people groups of the world. Third, we are assisting in the formation of a Global Research Network by helping the national church in various countries to establish indigenous, national research functions and seeing them networked together with other elements within the Body of Christ.

- Q. How do you begin to get a handle on a task this large? And how are you planning to go about accomplishing the project?
- A. First, we must understand that, basically, the resources are available, or potentially so. There have been massive steps forward in computer technology and this has helped to shrink the world.

For the first time, it is possible to have a comprehensive view of the world and its many distinctives at our fingertips with the ability to communicate instantly to the various areas of the world. Computers are revolutionizing much of data management and communication. For the first time, this generation can store and manipulate millions of pieces of data in seconds. Therefore, the technical development is relatively straightforward. Present-day technology provides all that is required, and it is primarily a matter of application. This will take time and money.

We have a task force working in conjunction with Dataserve (an organization of high-tech personnel located at the U.S. Center for World Mission and in the San Francisco Bay Area) on the applications in the areas of the database, mapping/graphics, and network communications. We are also acquiring and preparing maps of people group locations and other essential information for entry into the computer. We are preparing "how to" documentation and publications which describe the contents of the database and the maps. We are making contacts with organizations that have assembled much of the data over the years and have good channels for acquiring contemporary data, and are preparing to bring that information together into the Global Research Database. There is a tremendous amount of data available which needs to be synthesized, organized and publicized.

We are doing all this, but we are ~not~ doing all of this here within the confines of the project headquarters or even within the U.S. The essential element of this project is that we are developing applications that can be utilized by the Body of Christ the world over. We plan on exporting the bulk of the technology applications, and this is inherent in all our designs. Yes, there does need to be a centralized database that brings all of the information into a global/continental relationship and view, but, by and large, the more essential element is the decentralization and networking aspect.

The bulk of the information required for completing the task of world evangelization must come from the various countries of the world. Also, there is where most of it must be applied. The national church in each country must have an accurate picture of itself and its contexts. It is imperative that each country have viable, indigenous national-level research functions. In some places, for some time to come, much of the research will be accomplished from the outside by outsiders. But in the majority of countries this is not the case.

And when you ask, "How do you expect to accomplish this task?", I must reply, "In the power of the Holy Spirit and with His guidance." This project was born in response to the command, "(You) go and make disciples of all nations....lo, I am with you", and He will do it.

- Q. What role does the Global Mapping staff in Pasadena have in establishing these national research functions?
- A. As time permits, we are making contact with national church leaders in various countries. In countries where the national church agrees to the need for a new (or another) research effort, we work under the following general guidelines: The Global Mapping Project will furnish 1) the technology, 2) the training, and 3) information/information 2) the training, and 3) information and the information link. The nationals are to furnish 1) the personnel, 2) the facilities, and 3) the hardware. We may assist, or urge others to assist, in each of these, but it must be their primary responsibility. It is important that the function be, or become, indigenous.

In some countries there are already functioning national research efforts. We provide the same to them as appropriate. Differences of hardware and, to some degree, software are making less and less of an impact on networking. This has greatly aided the feasibility of this whole effort.

Q. How does the Global Mapping Project differ from and complement what is already being done by other researchers, either Western or non-Western? How are you seeking to avoid unnecessary duplication?

A. There are some definite, essential distinctives in the Global Mapping Project. (By the way, as you've probably detected by now, the "Global Mapping Project" is really not a label that describes the whole project we've been discussing. I've been told that the project should be labeled something more descriptive, like "Global Information Network," but I think that would be a little presumptive until it becomes more developed. I don't know; maybe "Global Mapping Project" is presumptive too!)

One distinctive is that we are wanting to establish a comprehensive global database which contains detailed information on all the people groups of the world, the countries of the world, the Church in broadest terms, and missions in specific terms. Other researchers have very significant contributions to make, but none of them is synthesizing all of this information into a comprehensive, disciplined database with the purpose of providing it to the Church at large via electronic and other media.

Another distinctive is computerized mapping. This is probably much more significant than most people are aware. When it comes to motivating, training and mobilizing the Body of Christ to disciple the nations, effective communication comes to the forefront, and graphics communicates best. How often have you seen missionaries and mission leaders using a map to try to communicate? Patrick Johnstone, a prolific map maker, bears testimony to this. We humans function in a graphic environment.

Someone might say, "Well, anybody can make a map." But can they make them automatically to express the contents of a complex database and communicate them across thousands of miles in seconds? Or update and change them with minimal cost of finances and personnel? Yes, computerized mapping will play a significant part in the future in strategy development, evaluation, and resource mobilization.

Q. How do you plan to make this information available to interested people?

A. Information will be available in a variety of media: electronic, the Research Databook--a publication for which there will be periodic updates, other special reports, diskettes, and of course, maps. Anyone with a phone, a simple computer and a modem can be a user. The Global Research Database has security features for treating classified information. Most of the data is stored in general classifications and categories rather independent of the various definitions which exist today (for the purpose of classifying people groups, for instance). For the main part we will provide the identity and status of the groups and leave the definitions such as "reached", "unreached", and "hidden" up to the various users.

Q. What guidelines have you established for the solicitation and collection of relevant information?

A. We are publishing a Research Data Guide and companion Forms. The guide describes the database structure and fields in such a manner that anyone can construct a database compatible with the Global Research Database. It also includes helps for map-making and computer hardware selection. We've also included a section on the "purposes and uses of research". The forms correlate with the guide so that the data gathered/entered will be in the same format and easy to enter into the computer.

Providing technology and technical assistance is an important aspect of this total project. The database and mapping software will be made available to users the world over with little or no cost. Technical assistance will be provided for getting the various network stations, using a variety of hardware, "speaking" to one another.

In addition, we will provide training in research methods as they relate to the database. Missionaries heading for the field would do well to spend six months here doing research on the field to which they are going, become better informed and equipped for their future, and leave the data in the database for those coming after. Missionaries or others doing post-graduate work will find excellent opportunities for viable projects with great significance for world evangelization.

We have some people involved in this now, but the opportunities are tremendous. Many more could receive training in new technology, i.e., computerized mapping or telecommunications, and others could focus more on case studies. With the other training/research institutes here at the U.S. Center, such as Zwemer (Muslims), Institutes for Hindu, Tribal, Latin American, Native American, Chinese, and Japanese Studies, what better place can you think of for getting relevant, strategic training? I can't remember who it was who said, "Facts are the fuel that lights the heart of the missionary", but it is true. One who has a genuine burden for reaching the unreached wants to be informed and equipped.

- Q. There are some, especially Third World leaders, who feel that research, statistical analysis, and use of computer technology is more of a Western approach to mission than what is really needed. How would you respond to this attitude?
- A. My experience with Third World mission and national church leaders is that they are very open and uncritical regarding fact-gathering, and also are very responsive to the idea of establishing indigenous research functions. During a recent trip to Asia I witnessed an overwhelming response on the part of leaders to the need for readily-available information that would enable them to accurately see themselves. In three countries (Korea, Indonesia and Singapore) there was a positive response to the idea of establishing national research functions, and these are now in process. Two other countries, Japan and Hong Kong, already have national level research efforts, and we are cooperating with and assisting them in research and technology.

It is true that many Third World leaders want to be independent of the West, but usually this means being independent of Western domination of ideas and methods, not independent of assistance. Some will sacrifice the assistance to eliminate the risk of domination. By and large, I've found they are eager to cooperate and receive assistance where it helps them live up to their dreams and responsibilities. Most have a high view of the Body of Christ and are not that separatistic or independent. Also, they have a keen interest in obtaining the technology. Most are eager to obtain an accurate picture of themselves and their context.

Q. What have you been able to accomplish so far?

A. The project is now about a year old. The development phase is scheduled to take three years (mid to late 1986), at the end of which the focus will be on operationalizing the information updating process and expanding the network. By 1995 I envision that the majority of nations will have indigenous research functions cooperating in the global network.

We've seen some good progress this first year. First, we've offered a computerized color mapping demonstration that was really exciting. Second, we've obtained the World Databank II put out by the federal government. This has all of the national boundaries of the world, plus other geographic features. Third, we have the 1984 Ethnologue tape on computer, and we're interacting with it on a regular basis. Fourth, we've established a good relationship with the National Geographic Society and have traded data with them. We've also made contact with several large map stores and organizations in the U.S. and Europe. Fifth, we've seen some good progress in the development of very sophisticated mapping software, and we've acquired quite a bit of the basic hardware needed.

Sixth, we've tied in with the computer at the U.S. Center for World Mission, which has new, large disk storage, and we're making good progress in the new database structuring. Seventh, we've amassed over 1600 good profiles on people groups and now have most of them computerized. Finally, we've experienced excellent interest and cooperation by many agencies and denominations, both in the U.S. and abroad. We are in contact with several organizations, like MARC, Wycliffe/SIL, Gospel Recordings, and WEC, on a regular basis, and they have responded favorably to the establishment of indigenous research functions.

- Q. How do you envision that mission agencies will benefit from this project? And how might they help you?
- A. Agencies can do several things. First, they can become familiar with the philosophy and intent of the project and give their recommendations for how to make it more relevant. Next, they can let us know what specific information that they need and in what form. We are beginning to make contact with them towards this end. We've been waiting to get certain foundation stones in place before making much contact, and now the time has come to do so.

Agencies can supply us with their annual reports that reflect the number of related churches, members, missionaries, and so on. They can supply additional information they have in the area of special studies by their staff/missionaries regarding various people groups and countries. Maps reflecting people group locations and the work going on among them would also be welcomed. They can also take advantage of the technology being developed in the area of computerized mapping and graphics. The day should not be too far off when many agencies will be putting maps into their own computers, using software developed by this project. The equipment isn't all that expensive. When several agencies are doing this and we are all networked together, the validity and usefulness of the database/information will greatly increase.

Agencies can furnish experienced missionaries for a determined period to assist in data screening and management. We would love to have veteran missionaries manning the area or continent desks, supervising research for different parts of the world. We would also welcome agencies to send some of their people here to do case studies in cooperation with us. They can benefit from the direct contact with the database and also with other important researchers in this area. The studies

they produce will then become part of a larger context and the results available to a very wide user audience.

We would also want to make arrangements, by mutual agreement, for field research by missionaries. Also, missionaries can be most instrumental in encouraging and nurturing indigenous research functions.

Q. What can the younger generation of student leaders do to work with you?

A. As I mentioned earlier, those heading for the field could certainly benefit by some direct contact with us here. Others can prepare case studies wherever they are and share these with us. Many students have a good technical orientation with computers and telecommunications; we would like to assist this group in finding strategic opportunities for ministry. In fact, we could use some of them here and now. The new generation needs to take initiative in developing new horizons, and they also need to be able to benefit from what's gone on before.

Many students will be involved in research projects as part of their Masters or Doctoral programs. We could assist them in their efforts, and they could provide valuable information for the Global Database, which would provide maximum exposure and potential use of their efforts. This would also help tremendously in bridging generations and in helping to eliminate the gaps of the past. To a significant degree this project is for them, the "harvest force" of the future.