

# QUANTIFYING THE GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF EVANGELISM AND EVANGELIZATION

■ Though complex, the measuring and monitoring of both evangelism and evangelization are essential in achieving balance in mission—the state in which every people receives a fair share of the global mission force. Paradoxically, the future of mission could be in the hands of only 18 agencies.

By David B. Barrett

In this article, we tackle the toughest nut of all, if we want to measure or monitor frontier mission—how to quantify all the varieties of evangelization, including the organized activity—individual or collective—that we term evangelism. What follows is an exploratory attempt to define the boundaries and to stake out the territory. We solicit the reader's assistance or feedback on this subject, especially if it is mathematical or methodological.

This essay constructs, compiles, and then interprets two new global diagrams in our 10-year ongoing series of 49 diagrams to date. The first, Global Diagram 48 deals with the quantifying of evangelization as an overall concept, under which we have identified and described 300 different dimensions and 700 different verbal facets. (These are all listed in *AD 2000 Global Monitor*, No. 16, page 3).

The second, Global Diagram 49, then extends the analysis to the measurement of evangelism itself, the actual giving of opportunities to people to become Christ's disciples.

## I. QUANTIFYING EVANGELIZATION

### *Global Diagram 48*

Evangelization is contact with Christ. It is being faced with or confronted with the person and work of the Savior. It is being given an opportunity to follow Christ, to become his disciple. Ultimately, therefore, what the quantification of evangelization boils down to (at the human level) is—measuring the various modes of contact that persons or populations have had with evangelizers, that is with Christian believers and all their

varieties of influences. In short, it means enumerating the duration, quality, and intensity of all conversations and awarenesses resulting from this contact with Christians, Christianity, Christ and the gospel.

Quantifying evangelization results from monitoring the interactions of 3 quite separate and distinct categories of people or roles. First there are the activities of *Christian evangelizers* themselves, proclaiming the Good News in season and out of season. These activities can be measured as "witness-hours", or "evangelism-hours", the number of man-hours or woman-hours spent on varieties of evangelizing. (The exact definitions of all neologisms used here are given at the top of Global Diagram 48). Second, this witness results in them functioning as *Christian opportunity-givers* (a sub-role or sub-variety of evangelizers), who give to others numbers of clear, unambiguous, specific opportunities or offers or invitations to become Christ's disciples; these events or occasions can be termed "disciple-opportunities". Third, the recipients of these occasions then become *opportunity-receivers*. These are all those who willingly or unwillingly find themselves faced with these opportunities to become Christ's disciples, whether knowingly or unwittingly, as well as whether for the first time, second time, or even multiple times. Note carefully that we are not at this point measuring their *response* (which may range from hostility and rejection to acceptance, conversion, and baptism). Measuring response is a separate subject and needs its own separate quantification; we have

explored this earlier in Global Diagrams 14, 19, 24, 46, et alia.

### *How long does it take to evangelize a person?*

To understand the process and this terminology better, consider 7 cases in the New Testament where Jesus, the master Evangelizer, gives 7 individuals each one single, individual, personal "disciple-opportunity". In descending order of brevity, here they are, with the biblical reference and the amount of time that each encounter took, or takes to read: (a) Nicodemus (John 3:1-21; perhaps an hour or two); (b) Herod (Luke 23:7-12; about an hour); (c) the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:7-29; probably under an hour); (d) Pontius Pilate (John 18:28-19:16; 3 brief interviews—probably half an hour or so); (e) Blind Bartimeus (Mark 10:46-52; about 20 minutes); (f) the Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-22; 40 seconds); and (g) Matthew the Tax-Gatherer (Matthew 9:9; "Follow me"—1 second). Here we see Jesus contacting and then evangelizing 7 persons in an hour or less each (under one "witness-hour"), creating and then giving them 7 disciple-opportunities, and watching as the 7 each receives his or her opportunity or offer or invitation and then reacts to it.

How much time is enough to make such a contact into an adequate "disciple-opportunity"? This list of 7 brief biblical narratives suggests 15 minutes each may often be enough, everything else being in place. Generalizing to the whole world, across 20 centuries and up to 1992, and being very conservative we could say that one whole hour is needed. During this hour,

on average some 6,000 words will be spoken, and heard. To be even more on the safe side, we could elaborate on this to say that before we would consider an individual to have become “adequately” evangelized, he or she needs to have received at least one clearly-focused evangelism-hour producing one disciple-opportunity, or a variety of other more general evangelizing activities producing up to 10 disciple-opportunities or offers or invitations. Note also that although individuals can avoid contact with Christ, once confronted by Christ he evangelizes them whether they want to be evangelized or not.

#### *Seven varieties of offering disciple-opportunities*

In the Palestinian ministry of Jesus, we note 5 main modes or types of contact through words producing disciple-opportunities. These can be catalogued as follows:

(1) *hidden words* (his private hopes and prayers): his intercessory words and plans to extend the Good News to those around him; (2) *visual words* (what people saw of his person, his life, his lifestyle, his deeds, his actions): everything implied in the Incarnation of the Word of God; (3) *personal words* (personal evangelism): face-to-face meetings with an individual, with conversation, the spoken word, shared words, dialogue, challenge; (4) *proclaimed words* (public proclamation): Jesus’ face-to-face preaching and teaching of the proclaimed word to groups, crowds, even multitudes; and (5) *written words*: use of the written Word of God, in this case Jesus’ use of scrolls of the Old Testament (later to become hand-copied scriptures). Two millennia later, disciples of Jesus can add 2 additional modes: (6) *printed words*: print media, apologetics, and other literature, tracts, magazines, books; and (7) *electronic words*: electronic media, broadcasting, radio/TV, also via cassettes, CD-ROM, and computers. We will shortly quantify these 7 modes of evangelization. But first we will discuss how to enumerate hours spent on evangelizing in general.

#### *Three levels of evangelizing activity (Table 1, columns 3-5)*

Let us now sharpen enumeration by defining exactly all the terms involved.

In Jesus’ ministry, he evangelized at 3 levels: (A) by his presence (who he was and what he did each day), (B) by his witness—mainly unstructured situations as occasion arose (such as that before Pilate), and (C) by his evangelism—structured preaching, proclamation, and teaching (such as the Sermon on the Mount, or his parables). In the same way, we can recognize that these 3 synonyms of the term “evangelization” represent for us as disciples 3 different levels of evangelizing activity: our *Christian presence*, our *witness*, and our *evangelism*. These 3 will then enable us to measure by means of hours and words. The best way to understand all these neologisms is to keep them constantly before us as a series of definitions, as is done at the top of Global Diagram 48.

#### *Quantifying hours spent by evangelizers (columns 3-5)*

With these definitions, we can now enumerate the situation of a people, an ethnic group, a language community, a city, a country, or any other population. We therefore ask: How many hours or minutes of evangelizing contact with Christianity, Christ, and the gospel has this population had? And, how many such hours does this population have each day, and how many per capita per year? To understand our method and our results, study Table 1 as you read on below.

Let’s assume the average Christian’s conscious day is 16 hours (during the day’s other 8 hours we’re all asleep). That’s 5,840 waking hours a year (p.a., per annum). In these, the normal Christian is expected to live as a disciple of Jesus, in 3 modes: to be firstly, (1) a *Christian presence*, incarnating his Lord and Master, actively in contact with people (we call the time he spends “presence-hours” to represent the widest form of witnessing and evangelizing); secondly as a Great Commission Christian to be (2) a *martys* (a witness to Jesus and his Resurrection, spending active “witness-hours”); and thirdly to be (3) an *evangelizer* or an evangelist, actively spreading the Good News and passing on the gospel of Christ (“evangelism-hours”). Note that, as we are defining them, evangelism-hours are also included in witness-hours (evangelism being a specific form of witness), and both form part of the

presence-hours category.

Let’s assume next that the average Christian’s actively witnessing day (witness by life and by word) is 4 hours in contact with other people, and his actively evangelistic day is 30 minutes. The 5,840 waking presence-hours thus include 1,460 active witness-hours a year, and both include 182 evangelism-hours a year.

Now let’s quantify this for the entire Christian world. There are 1.8 billion Christians across the globe. Together they spend 10.5 trillion presence-hours a year (see Table 1, column 3, row 3 under “Christians”, also the bottom 2 rows). Dividing by the total world population of 5.3 billion, this becomes 1,980 Christian presence-hours expended per inhabitant of the globe per year (5.4 presence-hours a day). Dividing instead by the world’s 3.5 billion non-Christians, this is 3,000 presence-hours per non-Christian per year. Dividing instead by the 1,254 million unevangelized, this is 8,380 presence-hours per World A inhabitant per year. This should be enough to ensure evangelizing the world! Like the global supply of food and water, it’s entirely adequate—if it’s properly shared and distributed.

Let’s sharpen our definitions by talking next about our globe’s 530 million active, committed, Great Commission Christians. They put in 775 billion Great Commission “witness-hours” a year (see Table 1, column 4) which is 146 per global inhabitant a year (0.4 hours a day), or 221 Great Commission witness-hours per non-Christian per year. Specifically on evangelism, these Great Commission Christians each do 182 evangelism-hours a year which totals to 96.5 billion evangelism-hours a year (column 5). This can also be stated as 18.2 evangelism-hours per global inhabitant a year.

An even sharper approach ensues when we consider full-time Christian workers, who number 4.2 million today (see Table 1, row 4). As full-time evangelizers they put in 766 million evangelism-hours a year. This is 8.7 evangelism-minutes per global inhabitant a year.

Finally, let’s consider the world’s 285,000 foreign missionaries. They put in 1.7 billion presence-hours per year which is 0.48 presence-hours per



non-Christian per year. Further, they also engage in 416 million witness-hours per year which is 0.12 witness-hours per non-Christian per year (7.1 minutes of contact each year, 1.2 seconds every day, or 8.3 seconds a week). Lastly, they do 52 million active evangelism-hours per year.

To see what this means for a country, consider the world's most-evangelized country, the United States of America with its 170 million church members. These produce 993 billion presence-hours p.a., which is 3,970 hours per USA inhabitant p.a. This includes 1,200 Great Commission witness-hours per USA inhabitant p.a. And the USA also produces the remarkable number of 124 evangelism-hours per capita each year (7 times the global average). This means that the average USA Christian continues year after year to be saturated with 124 additional disciple-opportunities which (because he is already a disciple) he does not need. It's exactly analogous to wasted food.

#### *Quantifying hours received by those being evangelized (column 7)*

Now comes a staggering increase in order of magnitude. We can illustrate it from the Argentina Crusade of November 13-17, 1991. For it, evangelist Billy Graham preached the gospel for some 10 hours—that is, he expended 10 of our "evangelism-hours". But for 5 nights his words were received by a radio/TV audience of 70 million each night throughout Latin America. So his 10 evangelism-hours instantly became 700 million "hearer-hours". Admittedly, this is an unusually massive case. In Table 1, column 6 gives the much lower average media factor we use to compute column 7 for all such evangelism in general (= column 5 x column 6).

#### *Quantifying words disseminated (columns 8-9)*

Words mean power and action. The city of Washington D.C. is known to produce every day 100 billion official words—spoken, written, telegraphed, faxed, broadcast, or published. That's 36 trillion words p.a. In the same way we can assess the huge effect of evangelization by measuring its output of words.

We return therefore to enumerating words, as a refinement of hours. This results in a somewhat different way of

quantifying the amount of evangelization by counting the number of "witness-words" (our blanket term for all person-words spoken by Christian disciples in both witness and evangelism) and "evangelism-words". These are words heard or received by the target individual or population and which then proceed to evangelize them. The totals depend particularly on the different communication modes employed. Table 1 in Global Diagram 48 lists the 7 varieties of words (modes of contact) and the 3 levels of evangelizing activity, and then tabulates the number of copies of the various media, number of standardized pages or broadcasts or showings involved, number of words involved, and the equivalent number of "hearer-hours" through which these words reach their targets.

#### *Quantifying offers made (column 10)*

The final column of Table 1 refers to the related number of disciple-opportunities. This gives the number of persons who have had an offer of discipleship made to them. It is derived by dividing column 9 by the average number of words required for a disciple-opportunity, earlier defined as 6,000. (By definition, the numbers are similar in size to those in column 7). A brief illustration is: evangelist Billy Graham preaches for only 10 hours (10 "evangelism-hours"), but the 70 million who hear him actually get 4.2 trillion evangelism-words. Altogether these offer the audiences some 700 million disciple-opportunities.

#### *e as a measure of extent of opportunity*

The extent to which a people or population has received adequate disciple-opportunities can be easily enumerated as  $e$ =total all disciple-opportunities received per capita, per year. Allowance has to be made, of course, for uneven distribution and the probability that many persons in the population will have had not one but multiple opportunities. But it's a beginning in precise enumerating and accounting. This  $e$ , it should be noted, is a similar variable to our 27-year-old scale of demographic evangelization,  $E\%$ , in which  $E$ =the number of individuals in the population who have each received at least one disciple-opportunity and so have become adequately evangelized and are

now aware of Christianity, Christ, and the gospel (expressed as a percentage of the population).

#### *Summary: "human rights" must include the gospel*

This diagram and its table allow us to make some general observations.

As Christians we affirm the whole range of the human rights of every individual, every people, and every population on Earth. In a plentiful world, everyone has the right to a fair share of food, water, shelter, clothing, energy, electricity, health, literacy, literature, education, money, and also to their spiritual counterparts—salvation in Christ, the Good News, the gospel, scriptures, missions, literature, broadcasts, churches, evangelism, witness, witness-hours, witness-words, evangelism-hours, evangelism-words, disciple-opportunities. Everyone has the fundamental, inalienable, basic right to at least one chance to become a disciple—an absolute minimum of one definitive evangelism-hour and one disciple-opportunity, perhaps 10 times that number as an immediate practical target toward the eventual goal of a fair share, and then an ongoing right to the average global individual share of 62 evangelism-hours and 95 disciple-opportunities a year per capita.

The basic problem is the same as with world hunger and starvation—the supply is vastly more than adequate but distribution is criminally inadequate. Current distribution of the benefits of Christianity, Christ, and the gospel is uneven, unfair, unplanned, chaotic, counterproductive. Over a billion Christians in World C get everything Christianity has to offer and 95% of all its tangible benefits; over a billion non-Christians in World A get nothing. Yet we as missionary-minded Christians continue to direct 92% of all our evangelizing activity at other Christians. Who will fight to change this?

## II. QUANTIFYING EVANGELISM

### *Global Diagram 49*

The first part of this article has developed the quantification of evangelization, defining the term as consisting of *presence*, *witness*, and *evangelism*. Now in this second part we will zero in for a closer look at the third



component, evangelism. By expanding the last column in Global Diagram 48 we are able to produce the detailed analysis by Worlds A, B, and C that is presented here in Global Diagram 49.

With this second diagram opposite, our series of 49 global diagrams arrives at the heart of the problem confronting world evangelization today—unequal distribution. In a nutshell, this problem has two aspects, the first satisfactory, the second unsatisfactory. These are: (1) The church worldwide is evangelizing—spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ—far and wide, creating every day the startlingly high total of over one billion offers or opportunities for others to become Christ's disciples. But, (2) 99.7% of all of this evangelistic effort is directed only at people who have already been evangelized earlier, including 91.8% at people who are Christians and so already are disciples.

The second diagram shows the distribution of all this effort among the 3 worlds of our mission trichotomy, Worlds A, B, and C. Table 1 shows the relevant figures, all given per day (per diem, p.d.). Some figures are surprisingly high. This analysis into 3 worlds (columns 5-13) reveals the following trends.

#### *World A: local evangelists predominate*

Far and away the largest percentage of daily offers in the unevangelized world is contributed by local evangelists (such as Palestinian free-lance evangelists across the Arabian peninsula). Such evangelists are responsible for some 40% of all 3.5 million disciple-opportunities each day in World A (see columns 5 and 7). Second in size comes circulation of complete Bibles. These give World A dwellers opportunities at the rate of nearly one million a day (column 5). This is much more effective than circulation there of scripture selections, portions, or even of New Testaments; it is also far more effective than any other forms of literature.

#### *World B: scripture circulation works best*

Column 10 shows that scripture circulation again is the largest single evangelistic mode in evangelizing World B peoples (48%). Personal evangelism by Christians themselves has become almost as significant (41%).

Local evangelists are still very important but have fallen to under 6%.

#### *World C: personal evangelism tops the list*

Column 13 shows that in the Christian world by far the largest generator of offers comes through personal evangelism (67%). By contrast, professional circulation of complete Bibles has dropped in effectiveness to only 7%. So once again we see that the key to winning the world for Christ lies not with full-time professional workers but with ordinary lay disciples. Proper training and equipping of the laity for this task are therefore paramount.

How should one assess these findings? Let's return to our earlier illustration. There is a close parallel with the problem of world hunger today. Enough food is produced every day to feed the whole world. Yet 1.8 billion persons across the globe are undernourished, 950 million go hungry every night, and 400 million live on the verge of starvation. Agencies distributing food cannot supply every need but must reach a balance involving need, priorities, adequate supply, equal opportunity, fair shares. And the already well-fed should not be allowed to divert such supplies to their own use.

Likewise, our diagram (in Table 1's final 2 lines) shows that the average Christian in World C receives every day 360 times more invitations than an unevangelized non-Christian in World A. This is clearly an unbalanced situation. Proper balance must mean that at least as much attention is given to the individual in World A as in Worlds B or C.

What is a "fair share" for the inhabitants of World A? Numerically, it should be over one fifth of the global whole, since the 1.2 billion unevangelized amount today to some 22% of the globe. This would be some 304 million offers a day given to World A—87 times as large as its present share—resulting on average in one offer being made every 4 days for every individual in World A.

But it is not only a question of fair shares or equal distribution of evangelism across the globe. There is the question of why most persons in World C should be getting primary evangelism at all. To serve 3 parallel

but different types of analysis, our definition of World C takes 3 alternate forms: (1) all persons or *individuals* who individually are Christian disciples; or (2) all ethnolinguistic *peoples* whose populations are each over 60% Christians and 95% evangelized; or (3) all *countries* over 60% Christians and 95% evangelized. Whichever of the 3 definitions we find most helpful in understanding, it is obvious that persons in World C both are heavily evangelized already and also are mostly Christian disciples already. Why therefore are they still being continuously deluged with 1,269 million opportunities/invitations/offers to become disciples every day?

A personal illustration may help. Every week I find myself, as an ordinary Christian disciple, sitting in services or meetings large or small (or listening on radio or television) in which for an hour or so I hear a preacher explaining the gospel and inviting his audience to accept Jesus Christ as Lord. If his audience is 100 persons, then, in our terminology, he has produced one evangelism-hour and 100 disciple-opportunities. But I am a disciple already; I belong to World C. I do not need such additional offers (I need to be told how to be a better disciple, but that's not the issue here). This overlap in resources may be trivial in my case, but it assumes enormous importance when it escalates to its present level of one billion such redundant "wasted" offers every day, as it has done and as it continues to do.

Any serious solution to this problem will depend on deliberate attempts by agencies to increase the abysmally small figures in column 6, the percentage of each variety of evangelism which actually gets to World A. In particular, agencies could be challenged to zero in each on one specific low percentage in that column and could determine to double it, treble it, or even quadruple it within the next 12 months.

There are 18 such percentages in that column in the diagram. So it only needs 18 mission agencies to take action, and then this entire situation—stagnant over the last 100 years—could at last begin to be transformed. ■

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