

ETHNOSCAN: A NEW SERIES OF 2,000 GLOBAL PEOPLE PROFILES

■ Mission agencies and churches searching for definitive sources on unreached peoples have often faced a bewildering array of contradictory information. A new approach to the problem promises to untie the Gordian knot.

By David B. Barrett

In this issue of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, we are happy to announce and describe a completely new approach to the subject of publishing accurate and detailed information on the least-evangelized peoples of the Earth. After these introductory paragraphs, we give in back-to-back form the first five of a series of single-sheet two-page descriptions of the unevangelized and unreached ethnolinguistic peoples as they exist today. The series is being called: Ethnoscan. Its profiles are numbered and ranked by degree of evangelization or degree of reachedness, beginning with the world's least-evangelized. Also, the first 210 or so will present profiles on least-evangelized megapeoples, defining the latter word as those peoples whose population by the year 2000 is set to be each greater than one million. Then we'll follow with peoples numbering between 500,000 and one million, then those from 100,000 to 500,000, and lastly those under 100,000. So throughout we have two ordering principles to this series: (a) degree of evangelization, from least-evangelized to more-evangelized, and (b) size of their Millennial population, from over a million downwards.

Profile No. 1, therefore, introduces the Qashqa'i of Iran. This people has the misfortune to be the least evangelized megapeople in the world. They have no Christians, no churches, no missions, no scriptures, nor any other evangelizing influences. This is followed here by No. 2 the Beja of the Sudan, No. 3 the Dimili Kurds of Turkey, No. 6 the Komerings of Indonesia, and No. 10 the Turkmen of Iran.

We are well aware that a number of other "lists" or listings of allegedly unreached peoples have been published

from time to time, some of which have claimed as sources the names of the editor and various board members of this *Journal* but without their permission. Unfortunately those lists have all been published prematurely, and on close examination are found to be riddled with hundreds of careless errors of fact. Many of the peoples listed prove to have over 95% of their members already as baptized Christians in widely-recognized Christian churches based on the Lordship of Christ. I say "unfortunately" because such errors become dangerously deceptive when they lead unsuspecting missionaries and mission agencies into attempting to begin work among these peoples imagining that they will be the very first pioneers. Many such errors have resulted in missionaries actually arriving on the field fully kitted out only to discover that almost all of the people group they have come to target have already been baptized as Christians by some other church or mission! Good news, and bad news!

The compiling of accurate and detailed information about unevangelized peoples is so complex that the process cannot be artificially speeded up. Painstaking, careful research employing the full range of scholars and scholarship is the only way to uncover hitherto unknown data and information on this important subject. The present new series of global people profiles is the only listing we are responsible for and for which we are prepared to be accountable to the wider Christian public (which is what publishing is all about).

New features in this series. What new features does this series contain to justify its launching? The reader is invited to read these five profiles for

himself or herself and to see how useful any of these features are likely to be to him and to his agency. But, for convenience, here is a note of some 20 such features.

1. *A single sheet of paper.* Each profile consists of one single sheet of standard 8 1/2" by 11" size, printed on both sides. Each can readily be photocopied, enlarged, reduced, faxed, mailed, airmailed, bulk mailed, folded in one's pocket, and so on. This compactness and lightness are vital when one realizes that we will need physically to lift and carry around a series of 2,000 such sheets if we are to help the churches and mission agencies comprehend the totality and the vastness of the unfinished task of world evangelization.

2. *A reproducible and publishable series.* These profiles can be put together and reproduced in a variety of ways. Any reader or any mission agency who is interested in cooperating with us to produce and circulate this series is invited to write stating how they plan to do it. In addition, we expect to be publishing these profiles in permanent form as a series of easy-to-use and easy-to-carry user-friendly atlases.

3. *A solidly databased series.* The series is based on, and backed up by a fully-researched and computerized system, the World Evangelization Database. This guarantees consistency and eliminates contradictory data anywhere within the series. This database incorporates the United Nations Demographic Database, which gives for each country in the world, for the period AD 1950-2025, and for a range of 50 variables, one single figure for each past or present situation. (Future statistics are also given, but using seven separate future fertility scenarios). No

vagueness, no phoney "ranges of possible figures". Detailed, exact statistics, backed up by a whole range of secular and religious research centers.

4. *Statistics of current Christians.* For each profile, the reader needs to know exactly what is going on already on the Christian scene. So each profile gives exact information on the present number of Christians belonging to this people, the total of church members, and the denominations around them in the country they belong to. To this we add percentage size for all other significant non-Christian religions present among this people (Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Baha'is, et alia).

5. *Each profile describes one people within one country.* Thousands of ethnolinguistic peoples live in several countries each, divided into segments by artificial political frontiers. The sociopolitical context in which each segment lives is different. The only way to describe such a situation globally is to define our basic unit as a people-within-one-country. Thus of the world's 16.9 million Azerbaijanis, 6 million live mainly in their own nation Azerbaijan, where their language Azeri has recently changed from Cyrillic to Latin script. Some 330,000 more live nearby in Russia, which has forced Azerbaijanis to use Cyrillic script for 70 years. Nine million more live in Iran, where Azeri is written in Persian script. And 1.2 million live in Iraq, using Arabic script. All live under different political tyrannies or situations of chaos. Result? Completely different background contexts. Our series, and our database, resolve this by providing separate computerized data, and a separate profile, for each Azerbaijani segment. Likewise for all other multi-national peoples.

6. *A photograph.* Now let's look at the actual profiles and the five examples shown here. Each attempts to give a human face to its formidable amount of hard data by starting on the front page with a photo of a representative member of that people, or a local crowd (or sometimes a religious building).

7. *A short narrative text.* The front page then goes on to describe its people in a text laid out under 8 standard heads: location, history, identity, language, political situation, customs, religion, Christianity.

8. *A locating map.* Each profile shows the geographical location of its people within their country in a standard form on its map, in relation to all surrounding cities and countries.

9. *Quick overview of the people.* A standard box on each's front page gives the population at exactly mid-1990 (midnight on June 30, 1990) and in mid-2000; main religions; and the status of Christianity in a couple of words or so (e.g. "No Christians").

10. *A standardized Worlds A/B/C globe.* Each profile features our standard globe showing the status of evangelization of that people's individuals—the extent to which they have heard the gospel, are aware of Christianity, Christ, and the gospel, have been presented with the Christian message, and have had clear opportunity to become disciples of Christ. The standard globe is partitioned into the three Worlds A, B, and C, with the percentage of the people in each world shown.

11. *Country statistics.* At the top of each profile's second page, we give some 40 standard statistical indicators describing the country, as a brief sketch of the sociopolitical context. New measures include metro dwellers, megametro dwellers, major causes of death, and computers. There is also a unique panel of six widely-used major monitoring indexes along which that country is evaluated. These are: Human Suffering Index (HSI), Human Freedom Index (HFI), Human Development Index (HDI), Status of Women Index (SWI), Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), and Evangelization Index (E).

12. *People's statistics.* Next is a box which describes and enumerates the people's language(s), alternate names, autoglossonym (what they call their own mother tongue), minipeoples (this is a unique first attempt at enumerating people groups within each larger ethnolinguistic people), population, chief cities and towns, religions, and details of the status of Christianity—persons evangelized, the unevangelized, scriptures, "Jesus" Film, broadcasting, mission agencies at work so far, and denominations if any.

13. *Miniglossary.* A smaller box at center right contains exact definitions of five terms widely used in this series, and what they mean for persons who may not be familiar with them.

14. *Ministry options.* A list now follows of the ten leading ministry options possible, by means of which a particular people might begin to be reached straightaway. There is plenty of scope here for the imagination of any Christian worker, pastor, residential missionary, nonresidential missionary, tentmaker, or even a Christian visiting temporarily as a tourist.

15. *Prayer topics.* This short section answers questions like: How can we pray? What should we pray for? It ties directly into the ministry options, so prayer becomes focused and strategic. These could provide pinpoint help to both individuals and study or prayer groups in churches at home or abroad.

16. *Bibliography.* We attempt here to give a short reading list on each people. We need to remember that unevangelized megapeoples are far from being uncivilized or illiterate. Many have had highly developed cultures and vast literatures for centuries. Many too have their own nuclear physicists, computer scientists, surgeons, TV producers, even astronauts. For every book we list there are probably a hundred others in print, though not of course in English. The bibliography therefore acts as a key for the reader to open the door to access this vast literature.

17. *Master copies at no cost.* As the series progresses, we expect to provide master copies (camera-ready) at no cost to any mission agencies and organizations (though not at present to individuals) who are prepared to use and to distribute them.

18. *A box for agencies to add logo and address.* At the end, we provide a blank rectangle in which an agency that wishes to use and distribute the profiles can overprint its logo, name, and address (by adding these to the master copies). Interested agencies, who would be responsible for their own print runs and mailings, are invited to write on their official letterhead with a definite proposal to: The Director, Global Desk, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230, U.S.A. (Tel: (804)353-0151 Ext. 348).

19. *Date of publication.* Each profile has, in the bottom right-hand corner of its second page, a date (month and year; "8/92" means August 1992). This states when the profile was finalized and allows for later revisions as necessary.

20. *Compilers.* The bottom line on the second page gives the name and address of the research center producing these profiles. Let us work with you to find the best ways to pass on the Pearl of Great Price, the Good News of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to all these peoples about whom we are writing! ■

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