

# ***The Most Utter of the Uttermost***

**By Steve Combs**

When mission leaders have sought to obey the Lord's command to look on the fields (Jn. 4:35), they have categorized people according to their relative exposure to the gospel. This helps with setting priorities in mission strategy. Peoplegroups.org has observed eight categories. They are as follows.

0. "No evangelical Christians or churches. No access to major evangelical print, audio, visual, or human resources."
1. "Less than 2% Evangelical. Some evangelical resources available, but no active church planting within past 2 years."
2. "Less than 2% Evangelical. Initial (localized) church planting within past 2 years."
3. "Less than 2% Evangelical. Widespread church planting within past 2 years."
4. "Greater than or equal to 2% Evangelical."
5. "Greater than or equal to 5% Evangelical."
6. "Greater than or equal to 10% Evangelical."
7. "Unknown."

These categories measure the progress of the gospel among the world's people. This is done by measuring "1. the extent to which a people group is evangelical, 2. accessibility to the gospel, and 3. church planting activity, whether localized or widespread, within the last two years."

## **The Final Frontier**

Of these categories 0 through 3 are considered to be unreached. In each category, less than two percent of the population is born again. In most of them there has been little or no gospel preaching

in the last two or more years. In some of them there are no churches, no Bibles and no missionaries.

Two of these, 0 and 1, are the “Final Frontier” There are 5876 people groups that fall into the Final Frontier category. This amounts to around 1,674,468,441 individual souls. These folks are less than 2 percent born again and they have had no missionary evangelistic efforts in the last 2 years.

Of these last frontier peoples, 3323 are not only unreached, but are also “unengaged.” A people is engaged when “a church planting strategy, consistent with Evangelical faith and practice, is under implementation. (In this respect, a people group is not engaged when it has been merely adopted, is the object of focused prayer, or is part of an advocacy strategy.)” In other words, there is no knowledge that these groups have any one of any denomination attempting to reach them. They are without God, without hope of salvation, and even without hope of hearing the gospel.

### **The Most Utter of the Uttermost**

All of these unreached people groups are among those referred to in Acts 1:8 as “the uttermost part of the earth.” As you may have noticed the categories given here go into ever darker and more desperate circumstances. One is unreached, but has Christian resources and missionaries. Then there are the groups that have missionaries, no resources. Further we find groups with no missionaries and no one attempting to go to them. Finally, we come to the most desperate and destitute of all, the most utter of the uttermost parts of earth.

Who are these? The ethno-linguistic groups, or Biblical nations, that are the most utter are those that are less than 2% saved, in many cases there are NO Christians and no churches, there are no missionaries known to be among them, there are no known mission agencies with a strategy to reach them, and *there are no Bibles*. They have nothing! There are 1269 of these people groups and more than 102 million

individuals!

One example is the Runga people who live in southern Chad and northern Central African Republic. Their population is about 55,900. There are -0- church members. There are no mission agencies attempting to reach them. They have no Bible. Their religion is traditional animist.

Another example is the Nyangatom who live in the Omo River Region of Ethiopia. They have a population of about 6,217. A related people (speaking the same language) is the Donyiro with a population of around 44,842. Both tribes are of a similar condition. Both groups are level 1 (less than 2% saved and no preaching in the last two years). They have no Bible in their own language.

Then there is the Jakun people of Malaysia, with an estimated population of over 23,720. These folks have all the same characteristics as the others, except that there are thought to be about 140 “church members.” (Global 12 Project, Profiles, <http://global12project.com>, October 2006)

## **Conclusion**

There are hundreds of millions in our world who live in Biblical nations, or ethnolinguistic people groups, where there is no preaching of the gospel and no missionaries, a large percentage of which also have no Scripture at all. How can we stand by and not commit ourselves to reach them