



Extending ourselves by Jim Stier

I'm greatly encouraged by the response of YWAM to the challenge of the unreached over the last several years. We have bases and ministries all over the world which have adopted people groups. They have researched and know a lot about these groups. They talk about them. They pray for them. They carry them in their hearts.

Many have launched works amongst these peoples, and YWAM's contribution to the completion of the Great Commission amongst the unreached has become significant. This is a source of great encouragement to me.

However, this is more a time for vigilance than for self-congratulation. Most of our adoptions still seem to be at the level of the conversation my friend and I had recently about fishing. We have some memories. We have some testimonies. We have some warm feelings and expectations. In reality, though, we haven't actually fished yet. It would be a great tragedy if we were to stop here. The fish are still in the river.

Inertia will have a natural tendency to dampen our enthusiasm as we come up against the initial resistance. The early excitement dies down. It's easy to get involved with new projects and forget the people group we adopted; to think that maybe prayer was enough.

Whatever ministry you are in, you must extend it to finally include adopting the unreached and whoever you adopt you must extend the adoption until you attain the Kingdom amongst them.

Recently I was with a group of enthusiastic young workers from Newcastle in Australia. They were full of excitement about what they are doing to reach their generation. It was so good to be with them and see their dynamism.

Then I asked them what plans they were making to extend what they were learning in Australia so that the unreached could profit. They were a bit perplexed at first because they had never really extended their thinking. They had done outreaches, but hadn't thought of those as the beginnings of something permanent. The idea quickly caught their imagination, though. The energy and creativity of the ideas that flowed could only have come from a divine anointing.

In the Leadership Training Schools which I run, we now ask every student to include in their project a projection of how their plans will finally impact the unreached. There is no implication that they should work in the 10/40 instead of fulfilling a vision closer to home. We must do both.



Years ago, at a moment of enormous difficulties in our Brazilian work, God gave me a word that it was too small a thing for us to reach Brazil. He wanted us to take His salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6). This had been the initial vision when we went to Brazil, but had been obscured in the midst of our struggle to survive and win souls in Brazil itself.

It seemed like a heavy burden for God to remind me of our obligations with the ends of the earth when we often didn't know how we were going to eat or pay the bills. We took on the challenge, though, and now there are many Brazilians working amongst the unreached on every continent of the world.

A while ago, I was in a tough tennis match, and was getting pretty badly beaten. A friend who is a very good player watched for a while and then coached me. In my intense desire to survive in the match, I had frozen up a bit and stopped following through on my strokes. As a result, the balls were mostly going out, not hitting the mark, and I was getting massacred.

Let's not make the same mistake in our adoption of people groups. Let's follow through with confidence. We have started well so let's not let anything hinder us in reaching the peoples of the earth with the gospel.

by Jim Stier, Executive Chairman of Youth With A Mission. Reprinted with permission from the June 2000 issue of the International YWAMer.