

A Model for Determining the Most Needy Unreached or Least-Reached Peoples

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Editor's note: *in this Mission Frontiers we return to a cover theme we last addressed almost three years ago: "Which peoples need priority attention?" To do so, we have invited Dan Scribner (director of Joshua Project) to share his perspective. For our following (January–February) issue, we have invited Todd Johnson (director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity) to tackle the same question. Note that we have more good material than print space available, so you'll find supplemental material on both the Mission Frontiers (missionfrontiers.org) and Joshua Project (joshuaproject.net) websites. (This related material explains definitions, the concept of "understanding and acceptance," and Joshua Project itself.) As always, we welcome your comments and questions in response.*

Two thousand years ago the Lord gave us the command to make followers of Christ from among all the ethnic peoples of the world. Significant segments of the world are still considered unreached. In the light of such great need, how do we prioritize need in fulfilling the unfinished task of the Great Commission? Our purpose here is to identify criteria to determine the most needy unreached peoples, to apply these criteria to a database of people groups, and to generate an approximate list of priority unreached peoples. Prioritizing is potentially controversial. Need can be defined in many ways

because an individual's values and beliefs strongly influence his or her priorities. Below is one attempt to recognize the unreached people groups currently most in need of evangelization. There are certainly other valid models and other sets of data that would yield somewhat different results. The data used in this model is available at <http://www.joshuaproject.net/download.php>.

Prioritization Model

The current Joshua Project list shows approximately 6,900 unreached peoples. The model presented here attempts to assign a "score" or priority ranking to each of these people groups. A scoring system from 0 to 100 is used, with 100 indicating the least Christian presence and influence. Scoring points are set in four general areas:

- 1) **Progress of, or response to the Gospel (35% weighting, lower Christian presence = higher score).** See the Joshua Project Progress Scale ("From On/Off to a Scale" on page 9) for details of this measure. This scale is primarily based on % Evangelical and several church-planting progress indicators. This criterion is given the greatest weight because it represents the most important factor in measuring the progress of the Gospel in a culture.
- 2) **Population (25% weighting, larger people group = higher score).** The rationale of this weighting is that the larger a people group, the more likely

Table 1: Criteria and Weighting Point Values

Criteria	Measure	Value	Points	
PROGRESS / RESPONSE	Joshua Project Progress Scale (See adjacent article for details) Only considering:	1.0 (Unknown)	27	
		1.1	35	
		1.2	31	
		2.0 (Unknown)	19	
Maximum Points: 35	Stage 1 – Unreached / Least-Reached	2.1	23	
	Stage 2 – Formative / Nominal Church			
POPULATION	Size – population of the people group	>=1,000,000	25	
		500,000 – 999,999	22	
		100,000 – 499,999	19	
		25,000 – 99,999	16	
		10,000 – 24,999	13	
		5,000 – 9,999	10	
		1 – 4,999	7	
		Null (Unknown)	10	
LOCATION	Country Persecution Index (What is the government / social situation?) Source: Open Doors - http://www.opendoors.org	Worst 1/3	8	
		Middle 1/3	6	
	Country Human Development Index (What is the economic / education environment?) Source: UN - http://hdr.undp.org/default.cfm	Lower 1/3	4	
		Worst 1/3	9	
		Middle 1/3	6	
		Null (Unknown)	6	
Country Percent Evangelical (What is the spiritual environment?) Source: Operation World 2001 Edition	0.0 – 2.0%	8		
	>2.0 – 5.0%	6		
	>5.0 – 10.0%	4		
MINISTRY TOOLS	Bible Translation Status	No Bible portions	6	
		Portions only	4	
		NT only	3	
	Maximum Points: 15	Jesus Film	None	3
		Audio Recordings	None	3
Christian Radio Broadcasting	None	3		

Table 2. Ranking by Country

Country	Count of People Groups (this listing only)	Summation of People Population (this listing only)	Average People Scoring Rank
Yemen	8	18,527,000	90.9
Somalia	4	1,890,000	90.0
Eritrea	4	424,000	88.5
Afghanistan	18	21,180,300	88.3
Uzbekistan	4	1,970,000	88.0
Pakistan	20	26,506,000	87.3
Djibouti	1	57,000	87.0
Turkey	1	1,200,000	87.0
Saudi Arabia	4	19,343,000	86.8
Tajikistan	3	4,218,000	86.7
Syria	2	2,600,000	86.5
Bangladesh	2	17,900,000	86.5
Indonesia	7	20,863,000	86.1
Libya	5	4,025,000	86.0
Iraq	8	2,797,000	85.8
Vietnam	10	3,985,300	85.6
Iran	6	21,348,000	85.5
Tunisia	4	9,161,000	85.5
Algeria	6	5,313,500	85.3
Nepal	12	4,851,183	85.2
Morocco	4	4,754,200	84.8
Egypt	7	3,835,200	84.6
Laos	8	547,300	84.5
India	12	18,055,170	84.5
China	38	126,494,600	84.4
Mauritania	6	2,165,000	84.3
Burma / Myanmar	6	2,017,200	84.0
Bhutan	2	66,900	84.0
Sudan	14	2,164,700	83.4
Guinea	1	2,100,000	83.0
Niger	2	65,000	83.0
Nigeria	1	1,921,000	83.0
Oman	1	1,250,000	83.0
Russia	1	240,000	83.0
Mali	1	100,000	83.0
Totals	233	353,935,553	

it will have an influence on the smaller groups around it. The population weighting in this model will bias the results toward larger groups. Population would be a good criterion to try varying in other iterations of this model.

- 3) **Country location (25% weighting, greater persecution level and less human development and lower national percent evangelical levels = higher score).** This area attempts to measure the political, persecution, economic, educational and spiritual environment of a people group, based on their country of residence.
- 4) **Ministry tool availability (15% weighting, fewer tools = higher score).** This area is weighted least because a ministry tool can be produced but not necessarily available or in use.

Within the criteria areas are various measures, each with value ranges that are assigned point scores. Table 1 outlines the scoring system.

An overall score is generated for each people group by

summing the points from all the criteria. People groups with the highest scores are suggested as the highest priority.

Results

On pages 10-13 is a listing of the 233 highest-scoring people groups. These are all the groups that scored 83 and above using this prioritization method. The 83 scoring level is an arbitrary cutoff point for space reasons. Approximately 354 million individuals live in these 233 priority unreached people groups.

Trends and Observations

Trends by country, region, people cluster and religion emerge when applying this model. Table 2 outlines the rankings by country. It is interesting to note that the highest-scoring countries are located in North Africa, but the countries with the largest numbers of people groups are concentrated in the Middle East and China.

Also of note is that nearly half of the 60 top-ranking people groups are located in the adjacent countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq. (A missionary serving in Pakistan recently visited Joshua Project and claimed that “as Pakistan goes, so goes the Middle East and Muslim world.”) The 10/40 Window is prominent in this prioritization. Of the 233 peoples on this list, 216 live in countries within the 10/40 Window.

Patrick Johnstone has developed the concept of Affinity Blocs and People Clusters. (See the Definitions article on the Joshua Project website.) People Clusters are a way of associating similar people groups. These larger clusters are often the more commonly recognized people names in the missions community. Table 3 shows the prioritization scores across People Clusters.

Interesting trends emerge in Indonesia. While only seven Indonesian groups are in the top 233, there are numerous Indonesia groups scoring between 75 and 82 that do not appear on this list for space reasons. (Complete data is available at www.joshuaproject.net.) While Indonesia ranks somewhat down the list in ranking as a country, the People Cluster ranking in Table 3 would suggest that there are strong pockets of unreached in various areas of Indonesia and other areas of significantly-reached Indonesian peoples. Note the number of People Clusters in Sumatra.

Table 4 lists the religion rankings. Islamic groups dominate the list, followed by Traditional ethnic religions, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Weighting Somewhat Determines Trends

We would encourage other weightings and models to be applied to this data. The weightings in this prioritization model will somewhat pre-determine the trends. For





example:

- People group population size was weighted quite heavily; thus, small groups tend not to appear on the list.
- Countries resistant to Christianity were significantly weighted, so groups in those countries will tend to appear on the list.
- Less-developed and poorer nations were weighted, so again groups in those countries will tend to appear on the list.

Issues and Notes

- Joshua Project numbers do not necessarily “sum to 100”, and priority is given to input from on-the-ground researchers. This can sometimes cause a bit of a data “fruit-salad” effect, but hopefully this reflects reality as much as possible. Different researchers close to the situation may have

Table 4. Ranking by Religion

Primary Religion	Count of People Groups (this listing only)	Summation of People Population (this listing only)	Average People Scoring Rank
Islam	142	193,756,500	86.3
Traditional Ethnic	44	31,203,268	84.3
Hinduism	20	22,456,970	84.7
Buddhism	16	5,168,015	85.1
Zoroastrianism	3	590,000	89.3
Non-religious	3	95,220,000	86.0
Daoism	2	1,929,200	84.5
Unknown	1	3,000,000	85.0
Judaism	1	23,000	83.0
Chinese Folk	1	588,600	87.0
Totals	233	353,935,553	

different perceptions, but even though these may differ, they may be more accurate than those of someone removed from the situation.

- While continually being refined and updated by a network of missions researchers, the Joshua Project ethnic people groups database still has errors, duplicates, older data and data gaps. In the process of developing this prioritization model, several errors were found and corrected as well as duplicates merged. It is very possible that some of the people groups on this list should not be ranked as highly because of significant church-planting movements that Joshua Project is unaware of. We welcome any and all feedback regarding this data and ranking.
- Data on the Joshua Project Website is the latest available and may vary slightly from the data listed in this article.

Table 3. Ranking by People Cluster (scoring 85 and above)

People Cluster	Count of People Groups (this listing only)	Summation of People Population (this listing only)	Average People Scoring Rank
Bedouin, Arabian	4	11,330,000	90.3
Hindko	1	625,000	90.0
Somali	4	1,890,000	90.0
Pathan	5	25,811,000	89.6
Parsee	3	590,000	89.3
Persian	5	8,704,300	89.0
Arab, Yemeni	4	9,984,000	89.0
Aimaq	5	1,088,000	88.8
Tajik	7	9,936,300	88.6
Arab, Libyan	3	3,550,000	88.3
Arab, Arabian	13	21,318,000	88.1
Berber-Shawiya	1	1,700,000	88.0
Munda-Santal	1	756,460	88.0
Melayu of Sumatra	1	800,000	88.0
Kirghiz	1	113,100	87.0
Jawa	1	18,600,000	87.0
Hindi	2	455,800	87.0
Kashmiri	9	1,176,000	86.9
Lampung of Sumatra	2	910,000	86.5
Gypsy	5	3,044,860	86.4
Nepali-Pahari	1	151,000	86.0
Altaic	1	12,666,000	86.0
Tai	9	4,987,300	85.8
Tibetan	4	1,916,600	85.8
Bengali	3	17,913,100	85.7
Baloch	3	4,380,000	85.7
Beja	4	307,700	85.5
Berber-Saharan	6	583,500	85.2
Afar	1	170,000	85.0
Kazakh	1	520,000	85.0
Azerbaijani	4	14,885,000	85.0
Chinese	3	82,873,500	85.0
Pasemah of Sumatra	1	150,000	85.0
Sub-Saharan African	1	1,136,000	85.0
Musi of Sumatra	2	403,000	85.0

A “Unimax Peoples” List?

Hopefully the Joshua Project all peoples database represents another step toward a *unimax* peoples list. A *Unimax* people is defined as “the *maximum sized* group sufficiently *unified* to be the target of a single people movement to Christ, where ‘unified’ refers to the fact that there are no significant barriers of either understanding or acceptance to stop the spread of the gospel” (“Finishing the Task,” *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, Winter / Koch, 1999). While the Joshua Project list goes beyond traditional ethnolinguistic lists and allows religion, caste and various cultural distinctives to define a people group, *Unimax* peoples may involve distinctives (such as education, political and ideological convictions, historical enmity between clans or tribes, customs and behaviors, etc.) that are not considered in the current Joshua Project list of peoples.

Conclusion

This list of priority peoples can serve as a focal point to bring the gospel to some of the most needy people groups in the world. Yet at the same time, existing ministry among people groups not on this list should

not be considered irrelevant or less important. Every individual is of infinite value, whether he or she lives in the most unreached people group or next door. The King of Kings is worthy of worship from every tribe, tongue, nation and people. Scripture promises that there will be some from every people group in heaven before the Throne. As Dr. John Piper has exhorted, let us “demonstrate and spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.”

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From “On/Off” to a Scale

Sociologists have recently researched what percentage of a population needs to be influenced to impact the whole group, and the answer was 2%. Interestingly, this is the same criterion that has often been used to define “unreached”. If a people group is less than 2% Evangelical (see website for definitions), then it has often been considered unreached.

This term “unreached” has been greatly used by God over the past several decades. However, a limitation of the term has been the tendency to suggest a “yes / no” or an “on / off” toggle situation. How much difference is there between a people with 1.9% Evangelical and another with 2.1% Evangelical? The first may be labeled “unreached”, the second “reached” (or possibly, to use a double negative, “not unreached”), yet in reality the two groups are quite similar in status.

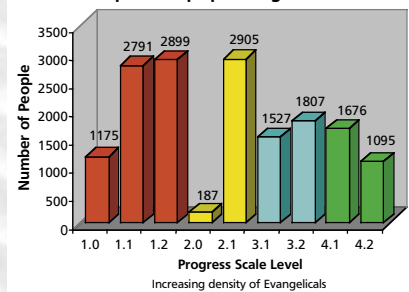
To help address this “on/off” issue, Joshua Project uses the terms “unreached” and “least-reached” interchangeably. The term “least-reached” suggests a scale or progression rather than an “unreached / reached” toggle. To accommodate a range of values, Joshua Project has developed a Progress Scale. This scale highlights the unreached / least-reached as well as those groups with a large percentage of nominal adherents, but few believers.

This progress scale was developed by integrating % Evangelical, % Adherents data, Patrick Johnstone Church Planting Indicators (CPI), IMB-SBC Church Planting Progress Indicators, Morelia Scale, *World Christian Encyclopedia* status and other local progress scales. None of these indicators alone has values for all Joshua Project peoples, but by combining them a standard scale can be generated and applied to all Joshua Project people groups. There are instances where the above progress indicators do not agree and are inconsistent with one another. In these cases the Joshua Project scale takes a middle ground approach and approximates an average across the various indicators.

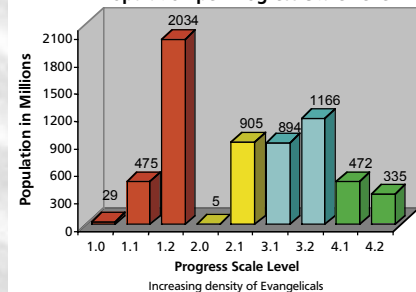
Joshua Project Progress Scale

Level Stage	Level	Level Description	# of People Groups	Population (in millions)
Unreached / Least-Reached	1.0	Status data unavailable. Located where the gospel is not generally available.	1,175	28
	1.1	No known indigenous believers.	2,791	475
	1.2	Evangelicals > 0, but <=2%. Adherents <=5%.	2,899	2034
Formative or Nominal Church	2.0	Status data unavailable. Located where the gospel is generally available.	187	5
	2.1	Evangelicals > 0 but <=2%. Adherents >5%.	2,905	905
Emerging Church	3.1	Evangelicals >2% but <=5%. Probable group of fellowships.	1,527	894
	3.2	Evangelicals >5% and accelerating rate of new fellowships.	1,807	1166
Growing Church	4.1	Evangelicals >10% or one fellowship per 10,000 individuals.	1,676	473
	4.2	Evangelicals >15% or one fellowship per 5,000 individuals.	1,095	335
Totals			16,062	6315

People Groups per Progress Scale Level



Population per Progress Scale Level





The Most Needy Unreached Peoples



Scores 83 and above, sorted by descending Overall Score.
 (Based on the proposed Joshua Project weighting model; other models may produce different results)

Country	People Name	Population	Overall Score	Primary Religion	%Evang	JP Scale	CPI	IMB Status	Prog Score	Popl Score	Locat Score	Tools Score
Somalia	Digil-Rahawiin	1,500,000	97	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	22	15
Iraq	Arab, Bedouin	1,100,000	95	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	20	15
Afghanistan	Farsiwan	830,300	94	Islam		1.1	0		35	22	22	15
Pakistan	Mahsudi, Central Pashto	1,700,000	94	Islam	0.01	1.1	0	0	35	25	22	12
Yemen	Arab, Omani	120,000	94	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	25	15
Afghanistan	Hazara	1,403,000	93	Islam	0.00	1.2	2	2	31	25	22	15
Afghanistan	Tajik	4,200,000	93	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	25	22	15
Uzbekistan	Tajik	1,250,000	93	Islam	0.03	1.2	2	2	31	25	22	15
Yemen	Sanaani, Northern Yemeni	8,600,000	93	Islam	0.01	1.2		1	31	25	25	12
Yemen	Arab, Ta'izz-Adeni	9,084,000	93	Islam		1.2	1	1	31	25	25	12
Eritrea	Beja, Bedawi, Beni-Amir	120,000	92	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	23	15
Yemen	Socotran	130,000	92	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	25	13
Afghanistan	Aimaq, Timuri	104,000	91	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	22	15
Afghanistan	Aimaq, Hazara	162,000	91	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	22	15
Afghanistan	Aimaq, Firozkohi	208,000	91	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	22	15
Afghanistan	Parsee	350,000	91	Zoroastrianism	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	22	15
Pakistan	Kolai, Kohistani-Shina	200,000	91	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	22	15
Saudi Arabia	Arab, Saudi - Najdi	8,250,000	91	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	16	15
Tajikistan	Tajik	4,120,000	91	Islam	0.02	1.2	2	2	31	25	20	15
Uzbekistan	Parsee	190,000	91	Zoroastrianism	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	22	15
Vietnam	Tai Tho	1,292,000	91	Buddhism	0.15	1.2	3		31	25	22	13
Yemen	Arabized Black, Yemeni	210,000	91	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	25	12
Afghanistan	Pashtun, Southern - Afghani	10,300,000	90	Islam		1.2	1	1	31	25	22	12
Nepal	Musahar, Hindu	155,800	90	Hinduism		1.1			35	19	21	15
Pakistan	Hindko, Southern	625,000	90	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	22	22	15
Pakistan	Pathan, Central, Mahsudi	1,721,000	90	Islam		1.2	2		31	25	22	12
Pakistan	Pathan, Southern	12,000,000	90	Islam	0.02	1.2	2	1	31	25	22	12
Yemen	Arab, Hadrami	300,000	90	Islam	1.00	1.2		1	31	19	25	15
Bangladesh	Rohingya, Chittagonian	14,000,000	89	Islam	0.02	1.2			31	25	21	12
Burma/Myanmar	Yangbye, Yangye	1,022,000	89	Buddhism	0.37	1.2	3	1	31	25	18	15
China	Ghao-Xong, Western	1,058,000	89	Traditional Ethnic	0.38	1.2		2	31	25	18	15
China	Tujia	7,353,000	89	Traditional Ethnic	0.41	1.2	2	2	31	25	18	15
China	Han Chinese, Gan	36,554,000	89	Non-religious	1.09	1.2			31	25	18	15
Eritrea	Arab, Saudi, Rashaيدا	34,000	89	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	23	15
India	Ghirath, Hindu	352,860	89	Hinduism		1.1			35	19	20	15
Iraq	Gypsy, Domari, Ghorbati	125,000	89	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	20	15
Libya	Arab, Cyrenaican	1,500,000	89	Islam		1.1	0	1	35	25	14	15
Libya	Arab, Libyan	1,750,000	89	Islam	0.01	1.1	0	2	35	25	14	15
Pakistan	Baloch, Eastern	3,000,000	89	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	22	7
Syria	Arab, Bedouin - Bedawi	1,200,000	89	Islam	0.80	1.2	1	1	31	25	18	15
Tunisia	Jerba	114,000	89	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	20	15
Yemen	Mahra	83,000	89	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	25	13
Afghanistan	Aimaq, Jamshidi	92,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	16	22	15
Afghanistan	Pashayi, Southwest	108,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	22	12
Algeria	Shawiya	1,700,000	88	Islam		1.1	0	1	35	25	18	10
Eritrea	Arab, Hadrami	100,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.2		1	31	19	23	15
India	Korku	756,460	88	Hinduism		1.2		3	31	22	20	15
Indonesia	Lampung Abung	500,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	22	16	15
Indonesia	Jambi	800,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	22	16	15
Iran	Mazanderani, Tabri	3,265,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	16	12
Pakistan	Turvali	60,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	22	15
Pakistan	Arab, Tajiki	141,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	22	12
Pakistan	Indus Kohistani, Galo	259,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	22	12
Pakistan	Kho, Chitrali	450,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	22	12
Somalia	Tunni	36,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	22	15
Somalia	Mushungulu	84,000	88	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	0	35	16	22	15
Afghanistan	Aimaq, Char	210,000	87	Islam		1.2	1		31	19	22	15
Afghanistan	Aimaq, Taimani	416,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	19	22	15
Algeria	Berber, Mozabite	230,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	18	15

CPI = Johnstone Church Progress Indicator IMB Status = International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention status: <http://www.peoplegroups.org>
 JP Scale = Joshua Project Progress Scale: 1.0 = Unreached, Status data unavailable. Located where the gospel is not generally available.
 1.1 = Unreached, very few, if any, known indigenous believers.
 1.2 = Unreached, Evangelicals greater than 0, but less than 2%. Less than 5% Adherents.



The Most Needy Unreached Peoples



Scores 83 and above, sorted by descending Overall Score.
(Based on the proposed Joshua Project weighting model; other models may produce different results)

Country	People Name	Population	Overall Score	Primary Religion	%Evang	JP Scale	CPI	IMB Status	Prog Score	Popl Score	Locat Score	Tools Score
Algeria	Bedouin, Hamyan	1,900,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	25	18	9
China	Salar	113,100	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	18	15
China	Jiarong, Situ	161,600	87	Buddhism	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	18	15
Djibouti	Arab, Omani	57,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	21	15
Egypt	Arab, Libyan	300,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	18	15
Indonesia	Jawa Pesisir Lor	18,600,000	87	Islam	0.02	1.2	3	1	31	25	16	15
Iran	Gypsy, Zott	1,306,000	87	Islam	1.00	1.2	0	1	31	25	16	15
Iraq	Azerbaijani, Azeri Turk	1,475,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	20	7
Laos	Lao Phuan	112,800	87	Traditional Ethnic	0.35	1.2	1	1	31	19	22	15
Nepal	Yakha	31,315	87	Buddhism	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	21	15
Nepal	Tharu	60,000	87	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	21	15
Pakistan	Kachi	1,000,000	87	Hinduism	0.28	1.2	2	3	31	25	22	9
Saudi Arabia	Arab, Saudi - Hijazi	9,750,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	25	16	15
Somalia	Maay	270,000	87	Islam	1.00	1.2	0	1	31	19	22	15
Tunisia	Bedouin, Sahel	2,100,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	25	20	7
Turkey	Dimili Kurdish	1,200,000	87	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	25	12	15
Vietnam	Tai Daeng, Red Tai	100,000	87	Traditional Ethnic	0.35	1.2	0	1	31	19	22	15
Vietnam	Yao, Asian	588,600	87	Chinese Folk	0.55	1.2		3	31	22	22	12
China	Laluo, Mishaba	579,400	86	Traditional Ethnic	0.09	1.2		1	31	22	18	15
China	Lingao	641,700	86	Traditional Ethnic	0.78	1.2	2	1	31	22	18	15
China	She	813,200	86	Daoism	0.12	1.2		3	31	22	18	15
China	Dong, Northern	1,171,000	86	Traditional Ethnic	0.05	1.2	3	2	31	25	18	12
China	Khampa, Eastern	1,245,000	86	Buddhism	0.03	1.2	0	1	31	25	18	12
China	Dong, Southern	1,910,000	86	Traditional Ethnic	0.05	1.2	3	2	31	25	18	12
China	Manchu	12,666,000	86	Non-religious	0.08	1.2	0	2	31	25	18	12
Egypt	Bedouin, Levantine	780,000	86	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	22	18	15
India	Markande	61,160	86	Hinduism		1.1		1	35	16	20	15
Libya	Bedouin, Sanusi	500,000	86	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	22	14	15
Mauritania	Maure, Moor	1,683,000	86	Islam		1.2	2	2	31	25	21	9
Morocco	Moor, Black, Sudani	631,200	86	Islam		1.1	0		35	22	20	9
Morocco	Jebala	1,350,000	86	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	20	6
Nepal	Mahotari Tharu	151,000	86	Traditional Ethnic	0.09	1.2	1	1	31	19	21	15
Nepal	Magar	1,282,068	86	Traditional Ethnic	0.03	1.2	2	1	31	25	21	9
Pakistan	Baltistani Bhotia	500,000	86	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	22	22	7
Sudan	Daju, Dar Fur	150,000	86	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	17	15
Sudan	Fur, Forok	800,000	86	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	22	17	12
Tajikistan	Parsee	50,000	86	Zoroastrianism	0.00	1.1	0		35	16	20	15
Vietnam	So	130,000	86	Buddhism	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	22	10
Afghanistan	Qizilbash, Afshari	10,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	22	15
Afghanistan	Narisati, Arandui	10,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	13	22	15
Afghanistan	Indus Kohistani	29,000	85	Islam		1.1	0		35	16	22	12
Eritrea	Saho	170,000	85	Islam	0.25	1.2	3	1	31	19	23	12
Indonesia	Rawas	150,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	16	15
Indonesia	Lematang	150,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	16	15
Indonesia	Musi Sekayu	253,000	85	Islam	0.01	1.1	0	1	35	19	16	15
Indonesia	Lampung Pubian	410,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	16	15
Iran	Aimaq, Timuri	181,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	16	15
Iran	Khorasani Turk	400,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	16	15
Iran	Gilaki	3,196,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	2	35	25	16	9
Laos	Hani	30,000	85	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	22	12
Nepal	Rai	686,900	85	Hinduism		1			27	22	21	15
Pakistan	Deghwari	10,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	22	15
Pakistan	Bateri	20,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	22	15
Pakistan	Baloch, Western	1,090,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	25	22	7
Pakistan	Ahmadi	3,000,000	85	Unknown		1.1	0		35	25	22	3
Saudi Arabia	Arab, Ta'izz-Adeni	500,000	85	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	22	16	12
Uzbekistan	Karakalpak, Black Hat	520,000	85	Islam	0.07	1.2	2	2	31	22	22	10
Vietnam	Muong	1,136,000	85	Traditional Ethnic	0.02	1.2	3	1	31	25	22	7
Yemen	Hobyot		85	Islam		1.1	0		35	10	25	15

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The Most Needy Unreached Peoples



Scores 83 and above, sorted by descending Overall Score.
(Based on the proposed Joshua Project weighting model; other models may produce different results)

Country	People Name	Population	Overall Score	Primary Religion	%Evang	JP Scale	CPI	IMB Status	Prog Score	Popl Score	Locat Score	Tools Score
Afghanistan	Uzbek, Southern	1,958,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	25	22	6
Algeria	Berber, Gourara	57,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	18	15
Bangladesh	Sylhetti Bengali	3,900,000	84	Islam	0.05	1.2	2	3	31	25	21	7
Bhutan	Kheng	30,400	84	Buddhism	1.00	1.2	1	3	31	16	22	15
Bhutan	Bumthangpa	36,500	84	Buddhism		1.2	1	2	31	16	22	15
China	Tajik, Sarikoli	33,300	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	0	35	16	18	15
China	Lalu, Yangliu	37,900	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.1		0	35	16	18	15
China	Cao Lan	40,300	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.1	0	0	35	16	18	15
China	Baheng, Sanjiang	41,200	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.1		0	35	16	18	15
China	Miao, Luobohe	77,400	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.1		0	35	16	18	15
China	Buriat	98,900	84	Buddhism	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	18	15
China	Tu	199,800	84	Buddhism	0.01	1.1	0	1	35	19	18	12
China	Dongxiang	482,300	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	18	12
Egypt	Siwa	30,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	18	15
Egypt	Beja, Bisharin	64,200	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	18	15
Egypt	Gypsy, Halebi	1,027,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	18	6
Egypt	Berber, Arabized	1,400,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	18	6
India	Loi	36,760	84	Hinduism		1.1			35	16	20	13
India	Kodaga	116,900	84	Hinduism		1.1		1	35	19	20	10
India	Bhar	1,723,450	84	Hinduism		1.1		1	35	25	20	4
India	Koiri	6,489,480	84	Hinduism		1.1			35	25	20	4
Laos	Talieng	26,000	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.12	1.2	1	1	31	16	22	15
Laos	Tai Daeng, Red Tai	30,600	84	Traditional Ethnic	1.14	1.2	0	1	31	16	22	15
Laos	Phunoi	40,100	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.22	1.2	2	0	31	16	22	15
Laos	Tai Kao	50,000	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.2		1	31	16	22	15
Laos	Katang	107,400	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.09	1.2	1	1	31	19	22	12
Laos	Phutai	150,400	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.33	1.2	2	1	31	19	22	12
Mauritania	Imeraguen	10,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	21	15
Mauritania	Duaish, Idaouich	16,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	21	15
Mauritania	Regeibat	106,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	21	9
Mauritania	Bedouin, Delim	120,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	21	9
Mauritania	Trarza, Brakna	230,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	21	9
Morocco	Shluh, Tashelhit	2,750,000	84	Islam		1.1	0	2	35	25	20	4
Nepal	Olangchung Gola	10,000	84	Buddhism	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	21	15
Nepal	Nisi Kham	11,000	84	Hinduism	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	21	15
Nepal	Jogi, Hindu	13,100	84	Hinduism		1.1			35	13	21	15
Pakistan	Garwi, Kohistani	40,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.2	1	1	31	16	22	15
Pakistan	Wanetsi, Waneci	90,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.2		1	31	16	22	15
Pakistan	Gujjars	300,000	84	Hinduism		1.2		1	31	19	22	12
Pakistan	Gujuri Rajasthani	300,000	84	Islam	0.00	1.2	3		31	19	22	12
Saudi Arabia	Arab, Bedouin	843,000	84	Islam		1.2		1	31	22	16	15
Syria	Alawite	1,400,000	84	Islam		1.2		2	31	25	18	10
Vietnam	Tsun-Lao	37,000	84	Buddhism	0.08	1.2	1	1	31	16	22	15
Vietnam	Gay, Nhang, Nyang	47,100	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.34	1.2	2	3	31	16	22	15
Vietnam	Kim Mun	120,000	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.2	2		31	19	22	12
Vietnam	Cham	122,900	84	Islam	0.90	1.2	2	1	31	19	22	12
Vietnam	Highland Yao, Myen	411,700	84	Traditional Ethnic	0.79	1.2	2		31	19	22	12
Afghanistan	Baloch, Western	290,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	22	7
Afghanistan	Turkomani	500,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	22	22	4
Algeria	Berber, Ghardaia	136,500	83	Islam		1.2			31	19	18	15
Algeria	Bedouin, Tajakant	1,290,000	83	Islam	1.00	1.2	0	1	31	25	18	9
Burma/Myanmar	Chaungtha	121,700	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.07	1.2	1	1	31	19	18	15
Burma/Myanmar	Rumai, Palaung	139,000	83	Buddhism	0.92	1.2	3	1	31	19	18	15
Burma/Myanmar	Intha	141,100	83	Buddhism	0.07	1.2	1	1	31	19	18	15
Burma/Myanmar	Golden Palaung, Shwe	150,000	83	Buddhism	0.75	1.2	2	1	31	19	18	15
Burma/Myanmar	Taungyo, Dawe	443,400	83	Buddhism	0.37	1.2	3	1	31	19	18	15
China	Lami	100,400	83	Traditional Ethnic	1.99	1.2			31	19	18	15
China	Miao, Guiyang Northern	108,300	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.92	1.2	3	3	31	19	18	15
China	Hongjin Tai	170,500	83	Traditional Ethnic	1.17	1.2	3	1	31	19	18	15

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The Most Needy Unreached Peoples



Scores 83 and above, sorted by descending Overall Score.
(Based on the proposed Joshua Project weighting model; other models may produce different results)

Country	People Name	Population	Overall Score	Primary Religion	%Evang	JP Scale	CPI	IMB Status	Prog Score	Popl Score	Locat Score	Tools Score
China	Lolopo, Western	193,300	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.05	1.2		1	31	19	18	15
China	Dongnu	233,800	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.00	1.2	3	1	31	19	18	15
China	Giay, Nhang, Nyang	273,700	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.18	1.2	2	1	31	19	18	15
China	Han Chinese, Waxiang	319,500	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.16	1.2			31	19	18	15
China	Bunu	324,500	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.03	1.2	1	2	31	19	18	15
China	Li, Ha	537,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.11	1.2	3	1	31	22	18	12
China	Gelao	565,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.09	1.2	1	1	31	22	18	12
China	Hani	614,500	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.03	1.2	2	3	31	22	18	12
China	Hmu, Southern	645,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.06	1.2		1	31	22	18	12
China	Nosu, Shengzha	1,024,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	1.17	1.2	3	2	31	25	18	9
China	Pingdi	1,116,000	83	Daoism	0.04	1.2	1	2	31	25	18	9
China	Hmu, Northern	1,612,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.12	1.2		2	31	25	18	9
China	Bouyei	3,176,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.16	1.2	2	2	31	25	18	9
China	Zhuang, Southern	4,204,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.14	1.2		3	31	25	18	9
China	Han Chinese, Xiang	46,000,000	83	Non-religious	0.22	1.2	3		31	25	18	9
Egypt	Gypsy, Domari	234,000	83	Islam	0.05	1.2	0	1	31	19	18	15
Guinea	Maninka	2,100,000	83	Islam	0.01	1.1	0	1	35	25	17	6
India	Kandra	666,610	83	Hinduism	0.00	1.1			35	22	20	6
India	Gangakula	1,307,900	83	Hinduism		1.1		1	35	25	20	3
India	Beldar, Hindu	1,741,830	83	Hinduism	0.00	1.1			35	25	20	3
India	Bedar, Hindu	2,267,640	83	Hinduism		1.1			35	25	20	3
India	Megh, Hindu	2,534,120	83	Hinduism		1.1			35	25	20	3
Iran	Azeri, Afsar	13,000,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	25	16	7
Iraq	Surchi	11,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	20	15
Iraq	Bajelan, Shabak	20,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	20	15
Iraq	Gurani, Hawrami	22,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	20	15
Iraq	Herki	22,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	20	15
Iraq	Shikaki	22,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	20	15
Libya	Arabized Black, Libyan	100,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	14	15
Libya	Bedouin, Fezzan	175,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	14	15
Mali	Bozo	100,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	17	12
Morocco	Jew, Maghrebi	23,000	83	Judaism	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	20	15
Nepal	Saam Rai	43,000	83	Hinduism	0.09	1.2	1	3	31	16	21	15
Nepal	Magar, Western	215,000	83	Traditional Ethnic	0.03	1.2	1	2	31	19	21	12
Nepal	Maitili, Tirahutia	2,192,000	83	Hinduism	0.02	1.2	3	2	31	25	21	6
Niger	Tagdal	25,000	83	Islam	0.01	1.1		0	35	16	17	15
Niger	Kanuri, Tumari	40,000	83	Islam	0.01	1.1	0		35	16	17	15
Nigeria	Fulani, Sokoto	1,921,000	83	Islam	0.04	1.2	2	2	31	25	15	12
Oman	Arab, Omani	1,250,000	83	Islam	0.02	1.2	1	1	31	25	12	15
Russia	Ingush, Galgai	240,000	83	Islam	0.01	1.1	0	2	35	19	14	15
Sudan	Sungor, Assangori	35,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Fanya, Awlad Mana	38,200	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Beja, Bisharin	41,200	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Togole, Tegale	55,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Midobi, Tid-n-Aal	64,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Rashaida	68,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Hadendoa, Beja	82,300	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Mima, Mimi	84,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	16	17	15
Sudan	Tama	110,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	19	17	12
Sudan	Massalit	185,000	83	Islam	0.01	1.1	0	1	35	19	17	12
Sudan	Zaghawa, Zoghaua	190,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	3	35	19	17	12
Sudan	Hamer-Banna	262,000	83	Islam	0.01	1.1	0	1	35	19	17	12
Tajikistan	Shughni, Shugnan-Rushan	48,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	16	20	12
Tunisia	Bedouin, Hamama	317,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0		35	19	20	9
Tunisia	Arab, Tunisian	6,630,000	83	Islam		1.2	1	2	31	25	20	7
Uzbekistan	Dungan	10,000	83	Islam	0.00	1.1	0	1	35	13	22	13
Totals	233 Peoples	354,000,000										

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A Model for Determining the Most Needy Unreached or Least-Reached Peoples **Definitions**

Evangelical

Followers of Christ who generally emphasize:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ as the sole source of salvation through faith in Him.
2. Personal faith and conversion with regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
3. A recognition of the inspired Word of God as the only basis for faith and living.
4. Commitment to biblical preaching and evangelism that brings others to faith in Christ.

Evangelicals are defined here as

1. All affiliated Christians (church members, their children, etc.) of denominations that are evangelical in theology as defined above.
2. The proportion of the affiliated Christians in other denominations (that are not wholly evangelical in theology) who would hold evangelical views.
3. The proportion of affiliated Christians in denominations in non-Western nations (where doctrinal positions are less well defined) that would be regarded as Evangelicals by those in the above categories.

(Source: Operation World - Patrick Johnstone)



Christian Adherent

One who claims to be a follower of the Christian religion in any form. This definition is based on the individual's self-confession, not his or her ecclesiology, theology or religious commitment and experience. This includes professing and affiliated adults and also their children (practicing and non-practicing) who reside in a given area or country, or who are of a particular ethno-linguistic or ethno-cultural people in the listing below. This is the broadest possible classification of Christian and includes the six ecclesiological types of Christians: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Other Catholic, Orthodox, Foreign marginal, and Indigenous marginal as defined in Operation World. Christian Adherent numbers include the Evangelicals subset.

(Source: Operation World - Patrick Johnstone)



Unreached

A people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group. Joshua Project uses criteria of less than 2% Evangelical Christian and less than 5% Christian Adherents to define unreached. (Source: Lausanne 1982, USCWM, Joshua Project)

Church Progress Indicator (CPI)

0 to 5 ranking of the progress of church growth among a particular people group. Supporting data may or may not be available. (Source: Patrick Johnstone)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 0 | No known believers |
| 1 | No churches, some believers |
| 2 | One known church |
| 3 | Group of churches |
| 4 | Reproducing church movement |
| 5 | Widespread, disciplined church |

Status of World Evangelization (International Mission Board-SBC Indicator)

The Status of Global Evangelization is a model that describes the progress of the Gospel among the peoples of the world by considering: 1. The extent to which a people group is Evangelical. 2. Accessibility to the Gospel. 3. Church planting activity, whether localized or widespread, within the past 2 years. (Source: www.peoplegroups.org)

- 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 the past 2 years.
- 2 Less than 2 % Evangelical. Initial (localized) church planting within the past 2 years.
- 3 Less than 2% Evangelical. Widespread church planting within the 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

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*A Model for Determining the
Most Needy Unreached or Least-Reached Peoples*
Joshua Project Distinctives



Mission

The mission of Joshua Project is to identify and draw attention to the people groups of the world that have the least exposure to the Gospel and the least Christian presence in their midst. Joshua Project seeks to answer the questions that result from the Great Commission's call to make disciples among every people:

- Who are the ethnic people groups of the world?
- Which people groups still need an initial church-planting movement in their midst?

Accurate, regularly-updated ethnic people group information is critical for understanding the unfinished task of the Great Commission and for effective coordination of mission agency efforts.

History

Joshua Project was birthed within the former AD2000 and Beyond Movement. The original Joshua Project list was a cooperative and globally circulated list of the largest unreached ethno-linguistic people groups and related ministry activity data. The Joshua Project list attempted to provide a clear goal of pioneer church-planting among the largest unreached peoples. Joshua Project has since expanded this list to all peoples regardless of size and moved from a purely ethno-linguistic to an ethnic people focus.

Gather, Integrate and Disperse

Joshua Project compiles people group data to encourage church-planting movements among unreached ethnic people groups. Information is gathered from a worldwide constituency of field workers and their agencies, brought together into a common database, and provided free of charge to the global Church. Joshua Project serves mission agencies, denominations, churches, and individuals around the world that have a heart for pioneer church-planting among the world's least-reached people groups.



Not a perfect set of numbers

Joshua Project numbers do not necessarily "sum to 100" and priority is given to input from on-the-ground researchers. This can sometimes cause a bit of a data "fruit-salad" effect, but hopefully this reflects reality as much as possible. Different researchers close to the situation may have different perceptions, but even though these may differ, they may be more accurate than those of someone removed from the situation.

People Group Relationships

Patrick Johnstone has developed the concept of Affinity Blocs and People Clusters to create a "tree" of people group relationships. Peoples are broadly grouped into 16 blocs with affinities based on language, culture, religion, politics. In nearly every Bloc there are widely dissimilar and unrelated linguistic minorities, but often there is one particular culture that is dominant. Next within each Affinity Bloc are a number of more closely related peoples which, for strategic purposes, may be clustered together. These relationships are often based on a common identity of language and name but sometimes on the basis of culture, religion, economy, or dominance of one group over another. Almost all People Clusters have total populations of over one million. It is likely that each People Cluster will need an international partnership of Christian churches and agencies for the effective evangelization of each constituent people group.



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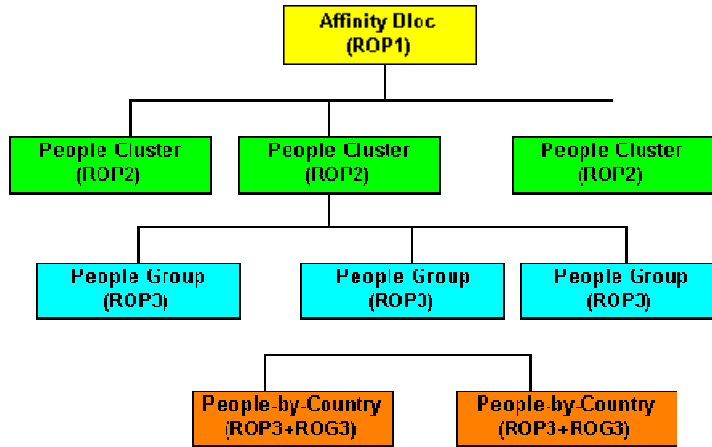
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*A Model for Determining the
Most Needed Unreached or Least-Reached Peoples*
Joshua Project Distinctives

Ethnic Peoples Tree

Current Joshua Project counts:

Affinity Blocs	16
People Clusters	236
People Groups	~10,100
Peoples-by-Country	~15,950



Exposure versus Response

Joshua Project tracks both exposure and response with an emphasis on the latter. Joshua Project highlights Quadrants I and II with a particular focus on those with the lowest response. These would be considered the unreached or least-reached (below the dotted line.)

↑ Increasing Response	<p>Quadrant III Low Exposure High Response (<i>Naga of India</i>)</p>	<p>Quadrant IV High Exposure High Response (<i>South Koreans</i>)</p>
	<p>Quadrant I Low Exposure Low Response (<i>Bedouin Arab</i>)</p>	<p>Quadrant II High Exposure Low Response (<i>Japanese</i>)</p>
	← Unreached / Least-Reached	
	→ Increasing Exposure	



What is A People Group?

The Lausanne 1982 people group definition says "For evangelization purposes, a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance". Joshua Project fully endorses this definition. The Joshua Project list is just a step toward a yet to be defined larger peoples list. A true peoples list would be a *unimax* peoples list. *Unimax* people are defined as "the **maximum sized group sufficiently unified to be the target of a single people movement to Christ, where "unified" refers to the fact that there are no significant barriers of either understanding or acceptance to stop the spread of the gospel.**" ("Finishing the Task," Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, Winter and Koch, 1999)

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Joshua Project Distinctives

Toward Greater Clarity of the Unfinished Task

The 1982 peoples definition began a process of identifying the unreached peoples of the world that is still not complete. Because of the remarkable language research compiled in the last 100 years, the global people group lists of the 1990's were ethno-linguistic, meaning that a people was defined by language. These included the Integrated Strategic Planning Database of the IMB-SBC, the original Joshua Project list, the peoples listed in *Operation World* and the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. These were excellent efforts and have great usefulness as a helpful target for language-oriented ministries.

While language is a key barrier to understanding, in parts of the world factors other than language significantly limit acceptance. Thus for church planting purposes, there is a need to allow factors other than language to determine the boundaries of a people group. (*See Sidebar on Acceptance and Understanding*)

Joshua Project tracks ethnic people groups where, in addition to language, distinctives such as religion, caste and culture can define a people group. In parts of the world where peoples are defined by their language an ethnic peoples list and an ethno-linguistic peoples list are virtually the same. However in places like South Asia, parts of North Africa and China, where religion, caste and culture are more determinative than language in defining a people group, an ethnic peoples list and an ethno-linguistic list can be quite different. For example, in India there are approximately 450 ethno-linguistic people / language groups but at least 2,300 ethnic people groups when caste, religion and other factors are considered.



A Unimax Peoples list?

Unimax peoples may involve distinctives such as education, political and ideological convictions, historical enmity between clans or tribes, customs and behaviors, etc. that are not considered in the current Joshua Project list of ethnic peoples. Thus, while the Joshua Project list offers an increased level of understanding regarding people group church-planting needs, it is not a complete *Unimax* peoples list. There will be barriers of acceptance that will only be determined once workers are on-site. May the Lord grant wisdom and discernment in the move toward better understanding the unfinished task of the Great Commission.

Dates	People Group lists	Characteristics
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Estimated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance
1990's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated Strategic Planning Database ▪ Original Joshua Project list ▪ Operation World peoples lists ▪ World Christian Encyclopedia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ethno-linguistic: (people group = language group) ✓ Addresses barriers of understanding ✓ Outreach oriented around language
Current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joshua Project ▪ Registry of Peoples (ROP) ▪ PeopleGroups.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ethnic: (people group can be defined by language, religion, caste or culture) ✓ Addresses barriers of understanding and begins to address barriers of acceptance ✓ Outreach oriented to church planting
Future Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unimax peoples list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unimax: (people group defined as ethnic above and also including education, political and ideological convictions, historical enmity between clans or tribes, customs and behaviors distinctives. ✓ Fully addresses barriers of understanding and acceptance ✓ Likely known only as workers are on-site

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*A Model for Determining the
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Understanding and Acceptance

By Bill Morrison

Understanding and Acceptance

The 1982 Lausanne Committee Chicago meeting peoples definition again says "For evangelization purposes, a people group is the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."

There are two barriers cited, (1) understanding, and (2) acceptance. The barrier of understanding suggests that language always is important when defining a people group. If for a particular situation the understanding barrier is more important than the acceptance barrier then defining people group by language, perhaps exclusively by language, is appropriate. This seems to be the case in many cultures and situations.

In other situations the acceptance barrier may be as high, or perhaps higher, than the understanding barrier. The reasons for lack of acceptance may include caste, religious tradition, location, common histories and traditions, and other subtle cultural distinctives. In these situations the barrier of acceptance should be considered on an equal footing with the barrier of understanding, and sometimes acceptance is a higher barrier than is the barrier of understanding.



Understandability and Acceptance

Ministry Objective	Situations where understandability is the highest barrier	Situations where acceptance is the highest barrier
Language-based outreaches such as Bible translations, audio and video recordings, radio, TV, Internet, mass evangelism campaigns.	(I) Focus on linguistic groups, not ignoring local ethnic issues	(II) Focus on linguistic groups, not ignoring local ethnic issues
Planting, establishing and growing the Church within its local culture	(III) Focus on linguistic groups, not ignoring local ethnic issues	(IV) Focus on ethnic groups, not ignoring language

A list of people groups as identified by their language supports quadrants I, II, and III. A list of people groups as identified by cultural distinctives in addition to language supports all quadrants, including quadrant IV. It should be recognized that the two lists (one identifying people groups by language, the other identifying people groups by language plus significant cultural distinctives) will be almost identical for situations where the understandability barrier is the highest barrier.

Strengths and Weaknesses



The various people group models based on understanding and/or acceptance have different strengths and serve different purposes. A specific ethno-linguistic list has a very quantifiable criterion - language, and serves as a helpful target for language oriented ministries. An ethnic peoples list considers non-language distinctives, which are harder to quantify. An ethnic peoples list presents a specific church planting target and helps answer the question where has the Gospel not gone?

Both language oriented and church planting oriented peoples lists are important. Joshua Project seeks to support language-based outreaches by tracking ministry tool availability (Bible translation status, Jesus film, audio recordings, radio broadcasting), but we especially seek to support church planting. In the areas of the world where churches don't form readily around language groups we attempt to identify the ethnic groups.