

**The Redrawing of the Global Map in the Post-Cold-War Mission Era:
A Bit of History
A Rationale
A Proposal
(a rough draft! 😊)**

We in the world mission community, in the spirit of John Wesley, William Carey and many others, tend to like maps, globes and their accompanying demographics. Maps and their legends are our window on the world for the purposes of information management, intercession and strategy-making, especially for those of us with unapologetic ‘expansionist ideals’ for the Kingdom of God and the Body of Christ.

So what of the current world cartography scene? We all have watched with amazement as the map-mapping business has boomed in the midst of a world political scene filled with dynamism and revolutions. I suppose the most symbolic of these cartographic shifts is still the infamous balkanization of the Soviet Empire. That fact in itself points out the uniqueness of the 1990’s as the only “Post-Cold-War” period of the 20th Century, ushering in the next millenium with its own hoard of new questions and insecurities.

I just read the other day a famous conservative Hollywood icon reaffirming the notion that there was indeed a Cold War “and WE [presumably the United States and to a lesser degree, the West] WON!” Not so fast, say many in both the West and the Rest. If in fact there may be conclusive evidence to the victory of the West in the Cold War, the conclusions drawn from such a dubious victory for the future are hotly debated at present in both theoretical branches and more so, in the everyday lives of militants and civilians throughout the world.

We in the global mission community (both western and non-western) are compelled to rethink the way we’ve been partitioning the globe in

our innumerable consultations, strategy contributions and networks. I put forward some thoughts for consideration based simply on “the way I’ve been increasingly viewing the world demographically, ethno-linguistically and geo-politically.” This is in quotations, since it reflects a personal bias or paradigm. I would not ask readers to adopt my particular point of departure in redrawing the world map specifically. Rather I would simply ask that we work together as a more cohesive world mission community (tied together by such networks as AD2K, Lausanne, various mission commissions of WEF, WCC, charismatic equivalents and media empires) to develop world and regional maps which better reflect two things:

- current and emerging realities of the global scene (by geo-demographics, ethno-linguistics, religions and socio-economics) and
- our commitment to complete the task of discipling the nations in our time.

First a little background:

- a. One small caveat. The writer was born in Asia, raised in Canada and Latin America and has resided in North America, South America, Europe and Asia with visits to over 30 nations around the world including the Caribbean and Oceania. I hope comments I make concerning any specific continents, regions or 'civilizations' (see Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations...* Simon&Shuster, 96) will not be construed as having any more than a fundamentally 'demographic bias.' I tend to see the world in this kind of a discussion through demographic (population-related) eyes, then through the more complex array of cultural, civilizational, political, religious and socio-economic grids. The geo-demographic is the foundation, from my perspective, especially in today's business of map-making.
- b. One clarification. When I speak of mapping I am not only speaking of physical map-making or maps as the visual tool although this is the primary intent, but also the way we mentally 'view our globe' and specifically the placement of its people.

The regionalization of the world cartographically and geo-politically for the past several decades has fallen mysteriously into a few common patterns:

- Obvious continental fault-lines are utilized where convenient (Africa, South America, North America)
- Island constellations cluster small populations into other regions (Caribbean and Oceania most common)
- The two 'vastest continents' have been split by 'logical' geographic and racial fault-lines (most notably Eurasia and Africa, although the latter not until recently(?))

Where do difficulties lie with this general approach?

1. Inconsistent criteria:

- For example, in the case of the Caribbean, one could suppose that the colonial era left so much disparity in the cultural affiliations that the group of islands could not be easily shunted off to either North

America, South America and certainly not Europe, India or Africa. Island constellations of much more significant size and population like those on the perimeter of East and Southeast Asia have been lumped together with their vast continental neighbors. Never have the Philippines or Indonesia been considered in recent history as members of Oceania, although that would seem more consistent with *some* of their culture and would provide a critical mass to greater legitimize this [Oceania in this case] as a competitive global region or 'continent.'

- Civilizational ties seem to be a criterion in some divides, especially in more recent decades and will likely continue to play a greater role in the Post-Cold-War Era (PCWE). This puts the divide logically between the Arab/Muslim North of Africa and the tentatively black/Christian South of Sub-Sahara. This also deals with the ever-sticky Middle Eastern region, although not conclusively. At a recent world congress of a huge church body, we saw Israel included in the Asia region, likely due to the explosive nature of its identity in the otherwise Arab or staunchly Muslim vicinity.
 - One might imagine that the mere number of sovereign countries within a given territory has played a part in the establishing of certain regions as legitimate. This would appear to be part of the rationale for the two island regions cited, and reflects the power of political representation in global bodies like the U.N. and the difficulty in accommodating smaller populations and nations in global discussions.
2. **Huge disparity in size and type**: again, island constellations of either Pacific or Caribbean are geographically (landmass) and demographically minute and culturally non-complex *in comparison with* almost all of the continents or other continental regions with the exception of Australia. In the case of Australia, given a vast landmass but little population and *relative* cultural non-complexity, there is the most common problem of geographic mass valued over against population mass.
 3. **A persistent bias for the West**. Given the fact that colonizers drew the first semi-accurate world maps and that their progeny

have continued to hone the craft, there has been a clear bias for the West and—to the degree that the “West” is also almost exclusively in the “North”—the North. By now most of us have seen, and chuckled at, the map put out by Aussies and Kiwis of a “corrected cartography” from their paradigm, the South: the world is strangely upside-down and the “South Pole” is *wrongly* placed at the “North.” While astronomically we concede that this could just as well be the “most accurate” layout of the globe, given that “up and down” lose all meaning in the universe outside of our gravitational core, we are still very uncomfortable with any suggestion of leaving behind the way we’ve perceived the world, conveniently with the colonizers still on top and the other people still “down under.”

- *A side-line here; the so-called “South” is a misnomer from all I’ve been able to gather. Those who have coined and used the term especially to reflect global inequities of economic and political power speak of the southern hemisphere being the poor, densely populated, generally colonized and exploited bloc of the geo-political world. The “Southern Hemisphere” is a technical term for the globe which lies below the Equator. For Latin America (Western Hemisphere Spanish/Portuguese-speaking nations), these claims are true of about 2/3rds of the population—they in fact live below the Equator or south of Belem, Brasil. For Africa, the population of the entire continent is split about the same with the Equator running right through the most densely populated parts. But these two continents put together do not fill up either India or China, the two largest countries in Asia. Which brings us to Asia, a “continent” almost completely north of the Equator (with the single significant exception of Indonesia, the world’s fourth most populous nation at 200 million). Asia comprises a huge bulk of the world’s poorest and most exploited, undernourished people(s).*

4. **The recent arrival of the mega-city** (now numbering in the hundreds world-wide), urban semi-autonomous regions (now four in China), urban agglomerations (U.S. Northeastern seaboard,

Great Lakes complex, the southern CA coastline, Germany’s Ruhr, Nile-/Ganges-/Indus-/Yellow-/Yangtze River basins-/mouths, parts of Java, coastal Japan, N. Europe, Brazil’s southeastern coast) and city-states (Singapore, Hong Kong). While we all acknowledge their importance in the present and future global mission enterprise, we’ve still underplayed especially their complexity from a cultural and demographic standpoint, as we’ve mapped the rest of the world. Rare indeed is the city map put out in the non-western world which lays out demographic, ethno-linguistic or socio-economic affinity blocs which are so useful in strategic prayer, unreached people reaching and church planting schemes. These facts remain highly speculative and in the minds of a few local ministry practitioners, who may not see the value in broad knowledge of such specifics, even when the city they’re dealing with numbers several millions. City strategies or emerging strategic efforts at “city-reaching” reflect the degree to which the various layers of the demographic, cultural and sociological soils have been unearthed, displayed and discussed. The greater complexities must be dealt with if we are to say honestly that we are working at completing the task within these megalopolises.

Where has the missions and church community been in relation to this regionalizing of the world?

In recent years and especially with the post WW2 and PCWE political realities, there has been some increasing variety in how we divide up the world of nations, but this has come with some persistent habits as well. Let’s look at a few global bodies’ listings:

Lausanne 1990ff

AD2K:1995?

WEF: 1997

WCC: ??

UN:

CIA:

Britannica:

World Christian Encyclopedia:

I lay out Patrick Johnstone's 9 regions as one of the more popular:

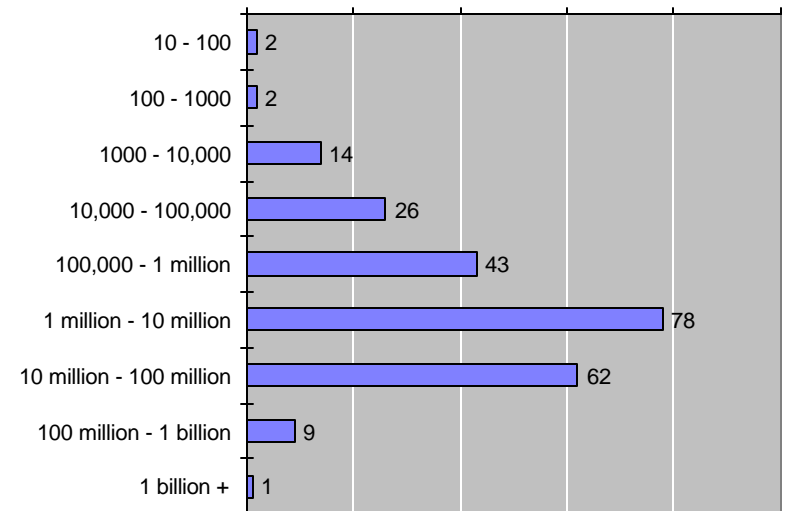
	REGION	#	DESCRIPTION	'95 Pop	Pop %
1	Africa	48	all of sub-saharan	557.9	9.7
2	Asia	26	from Pakistan/Afghanistan to N. Korea and Indonesia	3209.3	55.7
3	Caribbean	29	Including Belize, Fr.Guiana, Gayana, Surinam from the mainland	37.8	.7
4	Eurasia	12	Including former Soviet republics, the Russian Federation, 5 Central Asian Republics and the European republics of Byelarus, Moldova and Ukraine	290.5	5.0
5	Europe	45	Western and Southern, including Cyprus, and most of former non-USSR Eastern, Baltics	514.8	8.9
6	Latin America	18	all from Central and South America, excluding the Caribbean associated four above	455.8	7.9
7	Middle East	24	Including 7 Arab lands of N. Africa—not Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia or Mali, Niger, Chad; all Southwest Asia incl. Turkey up to Afghan./Pak.	378.1	6.6
8	North America	4	Including Greenland and St. Pierre/Miquelon, excluding Mexico, et al	284.8	4.9
9	Pacific	29	Including Australia, N.Z., PNG	28.4	.5
	TOTAL	235		5757.4	100.0

Another aside: "We don't want or need you and will make things very difficult if you come" is the message that is being heard all over the least reached part of the world to evangelical missions and missionaries-not necessarily at the national level exclusively, but it is not a new message and must be taken for what it is: at times a valid critique on the kind of missionaries which have been sent to date (i.e. those who are more attached to a particular civilization than to a cross-cultural message and Person), at other times a completely non-valid resistance to the light of the gospel perpetrated by the mandate of hell. The former deserves attention and reform but certainly not retreat; the latter deserves all-out spiritual assault alongside carefully charted and loving mission

Rationale for a major mapping advance:

1. None of the geo-political world is consistent size-wise or ethno-linguistically. The largest sub-national divisions in India and China (states and provinces) would be the seventh or tenth largest nations in the rest of the world respectively. Or, put another way, Patrick Johnstone's simple bar graph on P. 21 of Operation World, 93 ed., points out the stark variation in country sizes throughout the world (see below). So what's wrong with the above picture? World maps are highly limiting in getting psychological reality in tune with demographic realities, which they seem to portray, given their pictorial usefulness and familiarity.
2. There are various centers of gravity in terms of need, responsiveness, reachedness, spiritual darkness and light, population density and size in global mission mapping—to name a few. Dealing with the world as X number of fields based on the country-by-country approach is as misleading as it is old-fashioned. It is based almost exclusively on the sending culture's need for facility in getting legally into fields, which of itself precludes much of the least reached part of the world from getting its first chance at the gospel. (There might also be the convenience of communication in boiled down simplicity with constituents who share the older colonial-era view of the world)

Countries Grouped by Population Size



3. What's wrong with this picture (P. Johnstone, p.21)? There was a time when the "ends of the earth" were perceived as the island nations of the South Pacific and the dark voodoo practicing tribes of the 'West Indies.' Taking a look at the "total number of peoples" in Asia (1995 Population of 3.2 billion) and the Pacific (1995 Population less than one percent of Asia's), there appear to be 2658 peoples in Asia, 1533 in the Pacific islands—a kind of parity from the perspective of 'people group thinking.' The only problem is:

the average population of a “people” in the Pacific region is 18,500 individuals, or a little more than one seventieth the average size of an Asian people, at 1,200,000 individuals. This is merely for effect, as we know that peoples vary in size as irregularly as nation-states; but the general point sticks. Fortunately the majority of the peoples of the Pacific region have been Christianized to some or great degree while the peoples of Asia remain largely in “World A” or “World B” at best.

4. The 10/40 Window has done much to draw the attention of the world to the least reached corners and pockets of humanity. This has been a Godsend and has had incredibly rapid dissemination and broad acceptance. Even this tool, it can be pointed out, deals fundamentally with the raw geography of the Eastern Hemisphere. When I began to look at the demographic data within the region, I discovered that geographically Asia constituted the eastern half while the Middle East, North Africa and parts of Southern Europe the western half. In terms of population, Asia accounts for three-quarters of the people of the 10/40 Window. In terms of least reached peoples, Asia accounts for three-quarters of the 10/40 Window’s LRP’s. The same applies to the cumulative populations of these LRP’s. So even the 10/40 Window and MARC Publications’ slightly more sophisticated versions of the same, viewed from the geographic perspective, still could focus the eyes of the world more intently on the eastern half of the region.

We may say that we’re aware of the radical demographic differences below the surface, but our treatment of mission fields, target populations, mission resources and much of our research methodology do not bear this out.

Protests?

1. The world of Islam is far and away the dominant civilization and feature of the western half of the 10/40 Window. This is the cradle of Islam’s founding, history and most of its advance. But few laymen in the church realize and many in the mission community easily forget that the majority of the world’s Muslims (not to mention Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Confucianists, Shintoists, etc.) live in the nations of Asia, all in the eastern half of the 10/40 Window, from Afghanistan and Pakistan eastward. The top four Muslim nations of the world are Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, all Asian and generally more Asian in flavor, culture and adaptability than some of the more strident or unstable Middle Eastern and North African streams.
2. Practicality?
3. Feasibility?
4. Popularity?
5. Communicability?
6. End Usefulness?

Some Guidelines?

Some Suggestions:

1. Population totals (*akin to Target Earth layout*)
2. Population density (*Three-dimensional layouts?*)
3. Ethno-linguistic and Cultural diversity (*overlays and coupling of population density/distribution with ethno-linguistic concentrations*)
4. Geo-political sub-divisions
5. Civilizational fault-lines (*Huntington’s nine?*)
6. Religious concentrations (*coupling population maps—Target Earth-style—with general religious blocs at*

minimally the sub-national geo-political level; more precisely at a 'fuzzy-line' level such as with the ethno-linguistic mapping of GMI/SBC/SIL)

7. Reachable groupings (taking geography, cultural affinity, language, religion, political/racial/historical approachability or “gospel precedents” including the dynamic of spiritual mapping, responsiveness/receptivity and other accessibility factors into account)
8. Geographic, topographic, ecological and technological divides and unifiers

Specifically,

- I. I would once and for all absorb the Caribbean and Oceania into the respective, geographically proximate mega-regions or civilizations as has long been the case with Mozambique, the Azores, Philippines, Indonesia, Maldives, New Zealand, Greenland, Iceland, the United Kingdom, —strictly on the basis of size and realistic prioritization in the Great Commission cause. The only ‘problem’ this creates is much longer lists of ‘countries’ for some regions than for others. The problems it moves to resolve are much weightier, specifically drawing greater attention to the huge neglected populations within the borders of the more complex and vast nations of greater Asia, plus Nigeria and other concentrations of people and peoples in Africa and the Middle East.
- II. Secondly, develop a more balkanized and fault-line demarcation for Asia into a number of credible regions or civilizations for the sake of breaking the task into more demanding, conscientious and therefore manageable increments: demanding in greater realism and preciseness and more manageable in offering greater ownership of the individual parts. Starting with South, West, Southeast and Northeast as general mega-regions, we could further develop most of the heavily populated nations and some sub-national divisions into multiple units (usually already drawn).
- III. Thirdly, develop ways to persistently bring out the densely populated countries, sub-national divisions and mega-city complexes, again, simply for the purpose of creating a more level playing field in terms of task complexity and ownership.
- IV. Fourthly, developing three- or even four-way tables of data which constantly keep before us the intersection of such pertinent harvest field or harvest force data as:

- the basic geo-demographic breakdown
- the ethno-linguistic composition
- the religious makeup
- socio-cultural affiliations
- economic strata

...in any given territory/place/division/state/country, etc.

- V. A list of the world's regions? I would likely go with a cross between
- Huntington's nine major civilizations (Western, Latin, African, Islamic, Sinic, Hindu, Orthodox, Buddhist, Japanese) as a general breakdown;
 - a heavily revised Patrick Johnstone listing,
1. absorbing Caribbean nations into the West or Latin America depending on their general direction/bent,
 2. absorbing the Pacific islands, including Australia and New Zealand, either into the West or one of the Asian civilizations, given their ideological, geographic or cultural proximity to these two more than any others. Individual island nations can affiliate with any major civilization (as Australia and New Zealand with the West) if they fit the colonial pattern of comprehensive civilizational adoption). This would be 'stickier' than the Caribbean situation as there seems to be a very small but distinctive Pacific island civilization historically—it is simply not a world-level civilization; and all of these others have questions inherent in their makeup as well. The criteria for civilization is best articulated by Huntington (see his treatment of "Jewish Civilization" given its historic impact versus its current size).
 3. breaking up China, India, Indonesia (with some degree of finality) and possibly Nigeria and a dozen other countries in the 10/40 Window into manageable units, beginning with first-level (and in several cases, second-level) geographic divisions but always working toward manageability and some degree of population- and ethno-linguistic parity in relation to the size and complexity of the unfinished task. Johnstone has done this on a small scale in a number of places (e.g. dealing with the major islands of Indonesia as distinct units, major states of India and then agglomerations of the smallest).
What about China?

4. beginning with the largest and most complex nations, treating them with several tiers of demarcation in order to touch on all the various segmentations of society (e.g. hidden ethnic groups within majority populations; geographically divided homogeneous units, religious blocs; social or caste distinctions within the same ethno-linguistic or geographic arenas) This same approach could slowly be applied to the whole, at least of the Eastern Hemisphere or 10/40 Window.

I envision a touch-screen driven computer mapping program which takes a given civilizational region like the Sino world, offers multiple overlays or color-coded/patterned renditions of the region both geo-politically and decidedly non-country based for the various comparative fields discussed above: religious concentration/blocs, ethno-linguistic concentrations (this is being completed by SBC/GMI/SIL et al—but not yet tied to population concentrations), Christian groupings/concentrations, socio-economic, social, spiritualist inclinations. But this touch-screen approach allows for immediate down-scaling to appropriate population distribution/concentration. In the case of Outer Mongolia or Xinjiang, with a population density of say 2-4 per mi.² the first level of mapping on such fields should suffice for all but the most sophisticated. In the case of Shanghai, one would need to be able to penetrate three or four geo-political levels downward to isolate similar levels of understanding of the harvest field. A side-bar or pull-down menu would be digitally specific to the territory encompassed generally on the screen, or, with lesser difficulty, the geo-political unit in center screen (Province, autonomous region, county, municipality, township, city neighborhood).

The difficulty with world maps to this point, among others, is the persistence of geography and political landscapes and the games these continue to play on our perspective. Question: what if tomorrow India as a union were to be collapsed in a fashion similar to the breakup of the Soviet empire. Suddenly we are confronted with not India but 20 to 50 new nations registering in the U.N., a host of new state names to memorize to keep up with CNN's breaking news, a plethora of new opportunities for mission agencies to "target 35 new fields" *EACH* with about 20 million people on average and EACH with "hundreds of castes and classes to penetrate with the gospel." In actuality, all we have is a step closer to the real situation in global mission and the unfinished task.

The breakup of the USSR was not the answer to that region's economic, political and even human rights needs—at least not so far. Rather, it was a coup d'état for the Kingdom of God in the sense that it brought large population blocs otherwise glibly summed up in the old "Russia" or 'evil empire' now into fuller recognition on a global scale and presented vast new fields for missionary endeavor. I would contend that this was not so much because of Gorbachev's breakthroughs in democratization (which are all very tenuous still) but because of the world's collective awakening to the wide disparity of culture, peoples, languages and longings within that otherwise vast monolith. If John Naisbitt is correct in his forecasting, the world may have 1000 instead of 250 geo-politically sovereign nations in the next half-century. And if we indeed believe the Lord of hosts to be the Lord of the nations, then isn't this a welcome sign for the expansion of the world Christian movement? How else would Tajikistan be as well-known as it is today? And how much further is the missionary task in *that place* today than would have been the case in a Soviet status quo?

If we are hesitant to pray for the "opening up" of various places hitherto closed tight to the gospel (because of the perceived benefits to the national church of isolation, persecution or freedom from the tyranny of overzealous Western efforts and dollars), might we better pray for the breaking up of many hitherto monolithic nation-states or empires which unwittingly conceal the truer nations of the world from our eyes, our intercession and our more strategic and compassionate mission and church efforts?

Ralph Winter has done more than any one individual, it seems, in reeducating us all about the complexity of the unfinished task—in the name of Unreached People Groups, in fact bringing the task much closer to our grasp in the process.

But we're still to deal with maps. They are extremely helpful and are the visual trigger for many brains out there in conceptualizing the unfinished task, motivating prayer and developing strategy.

In this information age, can we not greatly improve the use of maps by, in a way of speaking, bending the geography to fit the realities of population, ethno-linguistics, religion, culture, history and many other useful demographic categories (distributions of youth, children, church-to-population ratios, concentrations of Sunni/Sufi/Shia Muslims, etc, etc.). I think that if we don't, it merely reflects an abiding refusal of us in the "West" to realize that the PCWE is one in which the West is indeed but one of eight or nine major world civilizations and that the religious, cultural, political and economic landscape has forever shifted away from ourselves as *the* modern epicenter.

The map-makers will come back with the well-known proviso, that the technological advances are generally way out ahead of our missiological dreams, but that the glitch is in having or

providing solid, consistent and internationally merge-able data, based upon common criteria. This is a huge consideration but distinct from the thesis here.

A secondary source of frustration for the data-collectors and tabulators is security. This also will indefinitely limit the usefulness of maps for *some* of the neediest unreached areas of the globe. But this too is a dynamic feature and while great caution is necessary in certain *places* and through specific *media*, other *times* can release greater freedom in those same places and media and within the same populations.

One rather daunting but equally exciting feature of our “age” is that time indeed does seem to be moving at us or through us more quickly. The pace of change is certainly on a constantly more vertical upward arch. This can only bode well for those who claim to worship the God who wrote the end of the book and for whom the end of the age is climaxed in triumph. Our redrawing of the map is likely only to increase with time. I think that’s good for business, Kingdom business.