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The State of Church Giving through 2008

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World Vision for Global At-Scale Goals,
But Will Denominations Resist Jesus Christ
And Not Spend \$1 to \$26 Per Member
to Reach The Unreached
When Jesus Says, “You Feed Them”?**

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by John and Sylvia Ronsvalle
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When Jesus Says, “You Feed Them”?*

[35] Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and it is getting late. [36] Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy themselves some food.”

[37] But Jesus replied, “You feed them.”

“With what?” they asked. “It would take a small fortune to buy food for all this crowd!”

[38] “How much food do you have?” he asked. “Go and find out.”

They came back and reported, “We have five loaves of bread and two fish.”

[39] Then Jesus told the crowd to sit down in groups on the green grass. [40] So they sat in groups of fifty or a hundred. [41] Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and asked God’s blessing on the food. Breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples to give to the people. [42] They all ate as much as they wanted, [43] and they picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. [44] Five thousand men had eaten from those five loaves!

— Mark 6:35-44, New Living Translation

The miracle of the loaves and fishes is often recounted as proof of God intervening through Jesus Christ in the natural order of this world. There are other important aspects of this event, in addition to its spectacular nature. Jesus’ interaction with the disciples is evidence of the training these future church leaders received. Jesus took the opportunity of a crowd of hungry thousands to demonstrate to the disciples the new thinking and action that he wanted them to have.

From this perspective, the verses in the passage in Mark, recounted as well in Matthew, Luke, and John, yield an outline that can also assist in considering contemporary church behavior. In the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus led the disciples through a series of steps toward a new order of operating. It may be good to consider these steps in an attempt to refresh the contemporary church's approach to giving and service.

The steps evident in the miracle story recounted in Mark 6:35-44 will be considered in more depth later in this chapter, but may be summarized as follows:

Agenda. The disciples assumed what the agenda was, and announced it to Jesus [vv. 35-36].

Responsibility. Jesus not only stated God's alternative agenda but also reduced it to the simplest terms—three clear words, informing the disciples of their responsibility to implement God's agenda rather than their own [v. 37a].

Focus. The apostles resisted taking responsibility for acting on Jesus' agenda, because they were focused on their own practical limitations [v. 37b].

Research. Jesus directed the disciples to start refocusing their attention by understanding and locating the available resources [v. 38].

Planning. Jesus implemented a plan to serve the whole crowd, not just some of those present, in an orderly fashion [vv. 39-40].

Commitment. Jesus committed the available resources to God's agenda [v. 41a].

Obedience. Jesus directed the disciples to act on God's agenda through the distribution of the food to the entire crowd [v. 41b].

Stewardship. The disciples were not to be wasteful with the surplus resulting from God's extravagant largesse [vv. 42-44].

Miracle. The disciples did research, cooperated in the implementation of the planning, were obedient in the distribution, and God acted, resulting in a miracle. The disciples were included as agents in Jesus' solution, which exceeded their own limitations. The disciples saw not only God's miraculous intervention, but also participated through their own active role in implementing God's plan.

Using this outline, the current behavior and activities of the church in the United States can be considered.

Agenda. The disciples had heard Jesus preach to the crowd all day. Matthew placed the feeding of the five thousand right after Jesus learned about the beheading of John the Baptist. Retreating to a quiet place, Jesus and the disciples were met by a crowd. "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick" (Matt. 14:14, NIV).

The day was ending when the disciples announced that the people should be sent away, to get some food. The suggestion was practical. Perhaps the disciples even saw their concern for the people as compassionate.

The difficulty was that the disciples assumed what the agenda should be, unaware that it was defined by their limited worldview.

The disciples were included as agents in Jesus' solution, which exceeded their own limitations.

In the 21st century, the historically Christian church in the United States spans the theological spectrum, from mainline Protestant to Catholic, from evangelical Protestant to Orthodox, from Fundamentalist to Anabaptist to Baptist. Yet the numbers in earlier chapters of this volume suggest that many of these very different traditions have some important factors in common. Membership is shrinking as a percent of U.S. population, giving as a percent of income is declining, and congregations are focusing more of member donations internally rather than on the larger mission of the church.

These giving and member numbers correspond to findings from the *Faith Communities Today, American Congregations 2008* survey. From 2005 to 2008, fewer respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the congregation is “spiritually vital and live” (2005: 42%; 2008: 35%), agreed that there had been “worship attendance growth in the past five years” (2005: 46%; 2008: 38%); and strongly agreed that the congregation had a “clear mission and purpose” (2005: 41%; 2008: 36%).¹

Do these negative trends indicate that church members are rejecting Jesus’ agenda, or are church members having trouble with agendas of church leaders who, like the first disciples, are limiting the agenda to their own worldviews?

Big buildings, like the \$115 million structure being built by First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, create national news.²

Some congregations are emphasizing multi-site campuses, using video to project one teaching pastor for many meeting sites. There were 300 multi-site churches in the year 2000, and 3,000 in 2009.³ One entrepreneurial company is promoting hologram technology, so that the pastor can appear in 3-D in front of the congregation.⁴ The cost of hologram technology used to be in the millions of dollars, but as of 2008 was in the range of \$300,000-\$400,000.⁵

However, both bigness and technology are just tools. The negative trends noted in the giving, membership, and confidence numbers suggest that these tools are not producing an agenda that is engaging members.

Richard Stearns described in his book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, how he resisted becoming president of World Vision U.S. Once he was in that position, his international trips changed his perspective on global need, and on the church in the U.S. He wrote, “Ours was a good church, a faithful church in so many ways, but a church whose leaders, both pastoral and lay, had perhaps lost the sense of urgency for God’s kingdom advancing across our world. ‘Missions’ had become just one more program, not a nonnegotiable commitment. This has always been a problem with God’s people; we tend to drift away from God’s bold vision, replacing it with a safer, tamer vision of our own.”⁶

David Platt accepted a call to a megachurch in Birmingham, Alabama, and found, “We were settling for a Christianity that revolves around catering to ourselves when the central message of Christianity is actually about abandoning ourselves.”⁷

Those outside, as well as inside, the church wonder what is the agenda of the church that results in congregations behaving the way they do. Two representatives of the Center for Transforming Mission, Tacoma, WA, wrote of asking gang members

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in jail in a Latin American country what they should say to church leaders going to a conference on gang outreach. The answers were reported as follows:

Frequently we have seen growth in the physical structure of many churches, leaders with a competitive attitude choosing, it seems, to compete with other churches while abandoning the needs that exist in prisons, neighborhoods, slums, and rehabilitation centers. The priority of these churches always seems to be focused on the comfort of their respective members so they can feel like VIPs; thus, they have lost, or perhaps just forgotten, the vision of Jesus Christ, who said, 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations....' We don't want to criticize just for the sake of being critical, but [we do want] to stand for the *truth* that while churches are constructing huge sanctuaries, there are children dying of hunger, gang members killing one another, and prisoners suffering greatly—while Christians comfort themselves in their big churches.⁸

Various church leaders have offered explanations of what influences the agenda of the church in the U.S. A perspective of international church leader and missionary Lesslie Newbigin was summarized in a January 2010 *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* article: "In modern states, when the pursuit of happiness by the greatest number of citizens is the aim, such a teleology has replaced the ancient wisdom that the true end of man is to glorify God: it offers only a this-worldly hope and so constitutes a vast change of outlook."⁹

If the church's original agenda was to glorify God, but has shifted with that of the culture to making people happy, this shift will influence how the church approaches Jesus' directives.

In reflecting on the role of the Catholic Church in 21st century U.S., Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, returned to the early Christian views expressed in *On the City of God*: "Augustine's hermeneutical key is well known. He distinguishes sharply between the City of Man (a collectivity based upon self-love) and the City of God (a collectivity whose foundation is the shared love of God)."¹⁰ Cardinal George noted, "In the United States, individualism is so closely associated with creativity and personal freedom that the Gospel's injunction to surrender oneself to Christ and to others in order to be free has become largely incomprehensible."¹¹

Another view is that the problem with agenda may be that churches in the U.S. are no longer actually Christian, but rather reflect a near-Christian theology. Kenda Creasy Dean reviewed the findings of Christian Smith and Melinda Denton's 2005 report on the National Study of Youth and Religion. According to Kenda Creasy Dean, Smith and Denton found that many churches now preach what they labeled "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" that promotes "divinely underwritten personal happiness and interpersonal niceness."¹²

The early disciples' agenda was to send people away so they could find food for themselves. Some observe that the current agenda of the church in the U.S. is to make people happy.

Responsibility. In Mark 6:36, the first disciples once again are recorded as telling Jesus how to run the kingdom of God (see also, for additional instances, Matthew 17:24-27, Mark 8:31-33, John 11:7-8, John 13:6-10). The disciples were filtering Jesus' teachings through their familiar worldview, and imposing their expectations on Jesus' agenda. Jesus wanted them to stand on an entirely different

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platform and begin to view the agenda through his eyes. To open their minds and hearts, in Mark 6:37, Jesus confronts the disciples with their personal responsibility for the hungry thousands before them with three simple words: “You feed them.”

What issues facing the church in the U.S. in the first decade of the 21st century might be the equivalent of the hungry thousands confronting the disciples? Who are those people that the church would rather make go away, but about whom Jesus is saying, “You feed them”?

In *The State of Church Giving through 2006*, a theory of global triage highlighted two needs in particular. One was the number of “unreached” people groups with no access to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The second was the children under age five who die daily around the globe from preventable poverty conditions.¹³

The definition of “unreached people groups” is somewhat fluid, as can be seen from a report on the death of missiologist Ralph Winter, who focused great energy encouraging Christians to focus on global evangelization: “The phrase ‘unreached peoples’ was first defined by Winter as a people group that had less than a certain percentage of Christians. Later, it was redefined as a group of people with their own distinct culture or language that does not have a viable indigenous evangelizing church movement.”¹⁴

A recent count of unreached people groups put the number over 6,800, located largely in Africa and Asia.¹⁵ Instead of thousands of hungry individuals, the church in the U.S. is faced with thousands of individual people groups who have never heard the name of Jesus, and have no practical opportunity to do so.

Yet the church in the U.S. talks more about this need than acts on it. Jerry Rankin and Ed Stetzer, both of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), wrote about the responsibility that congregations have for global evangelism.

Many pastors do not understand the responsibility of the local church in God’s mission. Neither do they embrace the fact that members have been called as the people of God to declare His salvation to the ends of the earth. Many are depriving their church of the very thing that would stimulate growth and a healthy, vital congregation because they see missions as secondary and something that competes with local programs for budget resources.... Is it wrong to want to minister effectively to the people that God has brought together into a local congregation? Certainly God wants us to be the body of Christ, ministering to the needs of people in our community and reaching the lost where we live. But that doesn’t exempt us from the responsibility of taking the gospel to the nations. If a church does not have a plan to “make disciples of *all nations*,” then they are shirking their responsibility for the mission of God¹⁶ [emphasis in original].

One may assume that denominations, or a set of communions, have the same responsibility for making disciples of all nations that would obtain for congregations.

Discussion about global evangelism is also ongoing in the Roman Catholic Church. Noting some church members develop “excuses” not to pursue global evangelism, Cardinal George referred to the 1965 Vatican II document *Ad Gentes*—“To the Nations.”¹⁷ He wrote, “The emphasis on the mission *ad gentes*, however, is vitally necessary, for today some question the value of this kind of missionary activity and the Church’s right to engage in it. They ask whether the goal of conversion is appropriate and whether it is necessary.” Citing Paul VI and John Paul II, he wrote,

Who are those people that the church would rather make go away, but about whom Jesus is saying, “You feed them”?

“the Church ‘proposes’ and does not ‘impose’ the Gospel to persons who are free to accept or reject it...for every single person has the right to hear the truth of the Gospel. It is not enough, as some would suggest, to limit one’s missionary service to promoting human development and helping people preserve their own religious traditions. Confident proclamation of salvation in Christ flows from conviction that he truly holds the answer to deepest human longings.”

Cardinal George also summarized the view of John Paul II expressed in *Redemptoris missio* as follows:

...that salvation in Christ is concretely offered to every person, and that it is accessible by virtue of the grace won by the sacrifice of Christ and communicated by the Holy Spirit, which relates a person mysteriously to the Church. The person in whose heart grace is secretly at work must cooperate freely with this grace in order to attain salvation. This assurance that grace is offered to all does not dispense Christians from the missionary mandate, for the grace has a name that all should come to know and love. The faith we have received lays upon us an obligation and stirs up a desire to bear witness to God and to Jesus Christ, without whom no one is saved...Lack of missionary fervor may, in fact, reveal a deeper problem, a crisis of faith in Jesus Christ.¹⁸

While some may wonder whether it is the church’s responsibility to evangelize other nations, others may not be sure it is appropriate for the church to directly address physical needs. Yet, in this age of instant global communication, the church is also faced with the reality of children dying from preventable poverty conditions. If one turns off television news or infomercials, photos and pleas for help appear on Internet sites. As noted in chapter 6 of this volume, the estimate for 2008 was that 8.8 million children under the age of five were dying annually,¹⁹ with two-thirds of those deaths preventable through low-cost interventions.²⁰

Through the Bible, Jesus is able to confront the church in the U.S. with the responsibility for these people in need. In Matthew 28, Jesus clearly directs, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” Using a more inductive approach in Matthew 25, Jesus declares that those who did not feed/clothe/help Jesus in the form of the hungry and hurting will not be accepted into Heaven. Rather than a works-theology, it is more likely that Jesus is stating that faith will lead to action, and if an individual is not taking action, then the individual probably does not have saving faith.²¹

Jesus taught, through the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), and the announcement of the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor (Mark 12:29-31), as well as through the miracles that healed and fed so many people, that the good news of God revealed through Jesus Christ has a physical as well as a spiritual component. While Jesus was in his corporeal body, he took responsibility for the feeding and healing directly. At the same time, he was training his disciples to take responsibility when they came to be his corporate body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12 cf.).

Two distinct parts of the body of Christ recently acknowledged this responsibility. A news report quoted His Holiness Benedict XVI’s reflections on the December 26, 2009, feast of St. Stephen, on the church’s first martyr who, “...was also the church’s first deacon who gave special service to the poor. His example shows that love for

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the poor is a privileged way to live the Gospel and witness it credibly to the world, he said.”²²

Traditionally less hierarchical than the Roman Catholic Church, the Assemblies of God is a Pentecostal communion. At its 2009 General Council, the Assemblies of God added a “fourth reason for being” to their mission statement. “The resolution on the ‘fourth reason for being’...adds ministering with compassion to three other key Assemblies goals—evangelizing the world, worshiping God and enhancing the spiritual growth of believers.”²³

In theory, the broad spectrum of the denominations in the U.S. recognize Biblical mandates of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ in both word and deed. As part of the corporate body of Christ today, the church in the U.S. claims fealty to the Jesus Christ who tells the disciples, “You feed them.” Yet does the church of today understand those words any better than did the first disciples?

Focus. The disciples’ response to Jesus’ direction, “You feed them,” bordered on the disrespectful. One might charitably attribute their comments to shock. Nevertheless, the response was a disparaging challenge to Jesus’ leadership: “With what?”

Today, many churches are engaged in some elements of meeting global word and deed need. However, few if any denominational church structures have invested themselves in solving, rather than coping with, unreached people groups and the deaths of millions of children. The giving patterns in earlier chapters of this volume indicate that the priority in most congregations is increasingly within the walls of that congregation, not in increasing outreach for either word and/or deed action. Given the level of giving—an average of two cents of each dollar given to a congregation being spent on denominational overseas missions—it is reasonable to assume that congregations and denominations in the U.S. have no more expectation of reaching all the unreached people groups and preventing child deaths than the first disciples had of feeding five thousand hungry men, as well as women and children.

The expectation of not solving the problems of unreached people and preventable child deaths may be evident in the emphasis, in many congregations, on local missions over global missions. Both types of outreach are vital to the health of the church. However, the discussion in this chapter assumes that the plight of the unreached in other countries, with no possible access to the good news of Jesus Christ, and the children who are dying from preventable poverty conditions, again in other countries, require urgent and immediate attention from church leaders, in keeping with Jesus’ direction. Therefore, it is vital to understand what the numbers labeled “missions” mean, in light of the fact that missions can refer to local church growth outreach, as well as domestic and international mission. For example, as models of increased missions funding, this series has talked about congregations that give a large percent to missions. One such church, mentioned in two past editions, is Cornerstone in Simi Valley, California, which is known for giving half its budget to missions. Correspondence beginning in August 2009 led, in the Spring of 2010, to the more detailed information that the congregation directs over \$1 million a year specifically for international missions, which “represents approximately 15%” of the congregation’s total expenditures.²⁴

However, few if any denominational church structures have invested themselves in solving, rather than coping with, unreached people groups and the deaths of millions of children.

The many Protestant groups giving special attention to world evangelization have not solved the problem of unreached people groups, although world evangelization has been a stated priority of many of those groups for over a century. The approach of many Protestant groups concerned about unreached people groups is to organize conferences that take years to plan and implement. A page in the August 2010 *Christianity Today* issue summarized four conferences to be held in 2010, to commemorate the 1910 Edinburgh missions conference whose watchword was “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” Although the fact that the goal had not been reached one hundred years later might give pause, the conferences were described as “celebrating” that earlier event.²⁵

In late October 2009, another group of church leaders gathered in Cleveland, TN, in what was referred to as the Finish Line summit.²⁶ Part of the “Billion Souls” campaign, church and organizational leaders from around the world gathered to discuss global evangelization as part of the Finish Line strategy.²⁷

A single denomination that has highlighted the need to “reach the unreached” is the Southern Baptist Convention, operating the Web site “unreachedpeople.org” in addition to emphasizing the topic through the SBC International Mission Board (IMB).

A review of the five conferences found that the focus did not generally include clear setting of goals.

Only the SBC set a specific number of 3,000 additional missionaries needed to engage every unreached people group. The Southern Baptist Executive Committee also publicized the cost related to those missionaries as \$200 million a year.²⁸

As a result of the Finish Line summit, the participating groups targeted 160 of the 6,800+ unreached people groups. The Church of God (Cleveland, TN) World Missions office was focusing on 70 of the 160, and had made contact with 19 of the 70 by June 2010.²⁹

The Lausanne 2010 Conference is scheduled to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, in October 2010. Organizers expressed the hope that it will result in “decisive action.”³⁰

The Tokyo 2010 Conference Web site indicated that the conference opted not to set a timeframe.³¹

Taking years to plan conferences has not had a measurable impact on the number of unreached people groups. The Joshua Project focuses its efforts on research and information dissemination about these groups. The Joshua Project noted on its Web site: “After almost twenty centuries, about 28 percent of the world’s population is still unreached.... Trends show us that if we continue to do things as we are doing them, the unreached will still be at least 23% of the world by 2050.”³²

Kent Parks, the international director of Mission to Unreached Peoples, recently explored a variety of misconceptions about efforts to reach the unreached, including: because people hear about the existence of unreached groups, they assume the need is being adequately addressed; or that the task of reaching the unreached needs now to be carried out by national Christians, when in fact there is still a need for the West to be actively involved. Kent Parks wrote that these and other misconceptions

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contribute to the slow progress projected by Joshua Project, noting, “All of these issues combined create a powerful deterrent to steps forward. A renewed energy, and call for sacrificial, long-term work among these who continue to be ignored by the global body of Christ is critical for avoiding the projections of little progress in reaching the Least Evangelized Peoples.”³³

While those primarily concerned with global evangelization focus on conferences, church leaders concerned about preventing child deaths focus on government. Consider the cooperative effort to impact the agenda of the September 2009 G-20, which was to be held in Pittsburgh, PA. “More than 25 Christian, Jewish, and Islamic leaders from the United States will be gathering Tuesday as part of an effort to press leaders of the world’s largest national economies to fulfill their promises to help people who have suffered from the global economic recession.”³⁴ The Christian religious leaders included representatives of the National Baptist Convention, USA, one of the largest African-American denominations, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., and the Roman Catholic Church.³⁵

Regardless of Jesus’ direction of “You feed them,” the potential giving of church members, discussed in chapter 6 of this volume, has not received the same level of cooperative and public attention from denominational leaders as has holding governments accountable. On a practical level, cooperative efforts through government are not generally venues in which activities can be done in Jesus’ name, in contrast to the possibilities that accompany mobilizing increased giving from church members.

The focus of the contemporary church, as it was of the first disciples, seems to be on managing the problem rather than directly solving it.

Consider The United Methodist Church. One regional church structure, called a conference, has introduced a Dashboard system to count numbers, including attendance and payment of denominational apportionments.³⁶ Another United Methodist conference is tracking the payment of apportionments, the congregations’ assigned contribution to the denomination’s unified budget, and publishing them in the church conference newspaper.³⁷

There is a defense to be made for tracking numbers, and William Willimon, bishop of the conference using the Dashboard, made it eloquently, to counter resistance from pastors in his area:

[Denomination founder John] Wesley frequently cites numerical growth as indicative of spiritual vitality... I can’t speak for other church families. But in the Wesleyan family, studied obliviousness to results, deploying pastors without regard to their fruitfulness, pastors shrinking churches, pastors keeping house among the older folks left there by the work of a previous generation of pastors, and churches having a grand old time loving one another and praising God without inviting, seeking and saving those outside the church, do not make for faithfulness.³⁸

A focus on numbers as an integral part of a vital denominational vision is certainly necessary. However, absent such a vision, the numbers become part of a cycle of institutional maintenance. Absent a larger goal to achieve a common vision, a focus on numbers may increase the denomination’s enforcement role with congregations and even regional structures. The United Methodist Judicial Council found one

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conference out of order that had altered the apportionments system, leading to a decline of payments over several years. A report of the Judicial Council's findings stated, "Payment in full of these apportionments 'is the first benevolent responsibility of the church,' the decision said."³⁹

Pastors, as well as denominational officials, may find organizational maintenance taxing. Psychologist and author Larry Crabb wrote, "I've recently been asking pastors how they feel about their work. The most common response is 'bored.' Second is 'empty.' One pastor of a thriving church put it this way: 'The church pretty much runs itself now, like a well-oiled machine. I still have to handle a few glitches, meet with people, and keep casting vision. And I do enjoy preaching. But I'm not sure my sermons really do the kind of good I became a pastor to see happen. I'm mostly bored.'"⁴⁰

The tracking of numbers may be necessary as a way to evaluate whether churches are active, but as a focus such tracking is not sufficient to produce a healthy church excited about its options. That comment may appear strange in a volume that spent seven chapters on the detailed discussion of numbers. Yet, the numbers must be placed in a larger context of an overall goal to make sense. The numbers are used as indicators, as a thermometer of the church's condition, and an evaluator of how it is acting on its potential. Part of that evaluation can help to provide accountability toward a larger purpose, as suggested by William Willimon's comment.

For example, the numbers in chapter 1 indicate that 14 cents of each dollar given to the church is spent on Benevolences, down from 21 cents in 1968. However, as noted in chapter 6, on average only two cents of each dollar given to the church is spent on denominational overseas missions. Those numbers suggest that the denominational, as well as congregational, focus is not on overseas missions as a function of Jesus' agenda.

This focus may be a spiritual problem. There may, in addition, be an element of what is termed "inattentional blindness."

A well-known experiment by Chris Chabris and Dan Simons asked subjects to watch a short video and count the number of basketball passes by students in white t-shirts, while ignoring the passes made by students in black t-shirts. Routinely, about half the subjects do not notice that halfway through the video, a person dressed as a gorilla walks into view from the right, and after a chest-thumping gesture, exits to the left. The subjects who missed the gorilla were often surprised to learn about its presence. "This error of perception results from a lack of attention to an unexpected object, so it goes by the scientific name 'inattentional blindness.'" This condition is accompanied by the "...illusion of attention. We are aware of the unexpected objects we do notice, not the ones we have missed." The authors point out in *The Invisible Gorilla* that the illusion of attention has real world consequences. For example, "Driving a car and having a conversation on a cell phone, despite being well-practiced and seemingly effortless tasks, both draw upon the mind's limited stock of attention resources. They require multitasking, and despite what you may have heard or may think, the more attention-demanding tasks your brain does, the worse it does each one."⁴¹

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It is possible, therefore, it is not because of an intentional choice stemming from a spiritual failure that denominational officials emphasize institutional maintenance activities with greater energy than they challenge congregations in innovative ways to increase mission outreach. Rather, the question should be asked, to what degree do denominational officials assume they can balance both institutional operations and missions, and not see the imbalance that actually favors institutional maintenance?

The condition of inattentive blindness does not excuse but may help to explain the circumstances that shocked two different national church leaders.

Ralph Winter spent his life researching the issue of the least evangelized, and organizing efforts to mobilize church resources to engage these people groups. He described what he observed in these terms: “A malady so widespread that it deserves a special name . . . let us call it people blindness, that is, blindness to the existence of separate peoples within countries . . .”⁴²

The other is Richard Stearns who, when he became president of World Vision U.S., was confronted with the African AIDS crisis in his travels. He wrote: “Twelve million orphans, and no one noticed? But what sickened me most was this question: where was the Church? Indeed, where *were* the followers of Jesus Christ in the midst of perhaps the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time? Surely the church should have been caring for these ‘orphans and widows in their distress’ (James 1:27). Shouldn’t the pulpits across America have flamed with exhortations to rush to the front lines of compassion?”⁴³

Understanding a condition like inattentive blindness may help develop strategies to counter its debilitating effects, as the church ignores issues close to Jesus’ heart in pursuit of the second-best agenda.

Another illusion that Chabris and Simons talk about is the “illusion of confidence.” People assume a certain level of competence based on a limited understanding. However, the less competent a person is in a field, for example chess, the more overconfident that individual tends to be. Quoting another study by Justin Kruger and David Dunning, Chabris and Simons comment: “Teaching people who did worst on a logical reasoning task to perform the task better significantly (although not completely) reduced their overconfidence.”⁴⁴

Applying this idea in another realm, denominational officials are individuals who have chosen to serve through church structures. One may reasonably assume that most of these officials made this career choice out of personal conviction, and that they are familiar with and committed to the teachings of Jesus as a basis for that choice. However, this very familiarity may give them a false sense of their own abilities to understand the implications of Jesus’ primary agenda. When they are faced with the demands of the institutional structure and all the pastors and church members dependent on them, they may be overconfident in their abilities to balance those demands with the need to lead church members into deeper commitment to Jesus’ goals. It is possible that their confidence in being familiar with what Jesus says blinds them to the fact that the choices they make, which emphasize organizational structure, no more reflect Jesus’ agenda than did the first disciples’ idea to send away the hungry crowd. The practical maintenance of denominational structures as the

Understanding a condition like inattentive blindness may help develop strategies to counter its debilitating effects, as the church ignores issues close to Jesus’ heart in pursuit of the second-best agenda.

primary focus may be assumed to be, but may not, in fact, be, the best way to help the church to grow and thrive.

Current research may thus be putting a name on the concept that Jesus was identifying when he said, “You cannot serve both God and money” (Luke 16:13, NIV). Similar to the way a driver believes, through the ‘illusion of attention,’ that he can both drive safely and talk on the phone, denominational and congregational leaders and members believe they can focus on having enough money to secure their operations and faithfully implement Jesus’ agenda of the Great Commission in the context of the Great Commandment. The lukewarm nature of the church in the U.S. may be a testimony to the reality that such balancing is not producing either healthy church structures or faithful disciples.

Various church leaders have commented on what may be termed the lukewarm state of the church in the U.S. Previous editions in this series have presented those comments.⁴⁵ Table 44 presents additional comments from church leaders.

Aware of their own limitations, the response of the first disciples to the hungry crowd of thousands was to manage the situation, rather than solve it. The same temptation exists for current denominational and congregational leaders.

Larry Crabb contrasted what he was striving to understand of God’s agenda with what he observed in congregations: “The more I pray for revival, the more an obvious truth is becoming obvious. Unless the Spirit shows us what most delights (and offends) the Father when we get together, we will come up with all sorts of ideas and hopes and ways of doing things like worship and preaching and small groups that will have one devilish thing in common, one devilish thing that we will regard as angelic: *manageability*. We’ll pull it off, we’ll make something happen, and we’ll call it church.”⁵⁵

David Platt serves a church that counts thousands of members. He observed a similar pressure to define the agenda of the church by focusing on current limitations: “This is where I am most convicted as a pastor of a church in the United State of America. I am part of a system that has created a whole host of means and methods, plans and strategies for doing church that require little if any power from God. And it’s not just pastors who are involved in this charade. I am concerned that all of us—pastors and church members in our culture—have blindly embraced an American dream mentality that emphasizes our abilities and exalts our names in the ways we do church.”⁵⁶

Jerry Rankin and Ed Stetzer of the Southern Baptist Convention are comfortable in discussing church dynamics within the Ephesians 6 concept of spiritual warfare. They, too, observe pressure to manage rather than solve the challenges before the church, and described it as follows: “The devil would love for us to be overwhelmed by the commands of Jesus in Scripture and begin to downsize them to what we feel we can reasonably do. God’s people are called to engage all nations now. We are born again with the weighty responsibility of every man, woman, and child in the world upon us. God invites us to join His work fully understanding without Him we can do nothing.”⁵⁷

The first disciples, focused on their own limitations, responded to Jesus’ direction of “You feed them” with protests that underscored the overwhelming magnitude

Aware of their own limitations, the response of the first disciples to the hungry crowd of thousands was to manage the situation, rather than solve it. The same temptation exists for current denominational and congregational leaders.

Table 44: Church Leaders Comment on the Lukewarm Church in the U.S.

<p>[On reading Rev. 3:15-18] “As I studied these verses, I could not help but make application to the modern Church. We, too, are comfortable, wealthy, and self-sufficient. We, too, blindly believe that we are prosperous because we are God’s ‘favorites.’ And our deeds are every bit as ‘lukewarm’ as those of the Laodicean assembly.” Richard Stearns, president, World Vision U.S.⁴⁶</p>
<p>“I remember sitting in a church service a few years ago that felt especially annoying, troubling, disconnecting me from my hunger to know God, to hear His laughter, to imitate His Son, to dance with the Spirit. I wrote a sentence to myself in the space reserved in the bulletin for sermon notes. I recall my exact words: ‘I think I might have to give up Christianity in order to follow Christ.’ I should have written ‘churchianity,’ the version of Christianity I was hearing described in the sermon. I’ve never wanted to give up the real thing; I just wanted to find it.” Larry Crabb, psychologist and author⁴⁷</p>
<p>“And this is where we need to pause. Because we are starting to redefine Christianity. We are giving into the dangerous temptation to take the Jesus of the Bible and twist him into a version of Jesus we are more comfortable with.... “And the danger now is that when we gather in our church buildings to sing and lift up our hands in worship, we may not actually be worshiping the Jesus of the Bible. Instead we may be worshiping ourselves.” David Platt, pastor and author⁴⁸</p>
<p>“Many people sit, soak, and eventually sour in local churches, underchallenged because of the lie. Satan presents a ‘hall pass’ to everyday Christians, excusing them from the real mission of God. He convinces them that the call to missions or ministry is exclusive territory reserved for God’s best. Our churches are structured in a way that perpetuates the lie. The pastor is the CEO, the church staff is special assistants in charge of customer service, and church attendees are the customers. At best, our responsibility is to pay going out the door, leave a nice tip for missions around Christmas, and convince our friends this is a great place to do business. The pastor ranks have actually propagated the lie that feeds their own sense of self-importance. They appear as highly skilled, trained, answer men and are admired each week by hundreds if not thousands of parishioners. The customers come, bring their friends, and an ‘expert’ tells them about Jesus. We create environments that feed the lie, ‘You need something, you come, and we’ll take care of it.’ ” Jerry Rankin, president emeritus, SBC IMB, and Ed Stetzer, SBC LifeWay Research⁴⁹</p>
<p>“A significant part of Christianity in the United States is actually only tenuously Christian in any sense that it is seriously connected to the actual historical Christian tradition, but has rather substantially morphed into ... Christian Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.” Christian Smith and Melinda Denton, The National Study of Youth and Religion researchers, quoted by Kenda Creasy Dean, Princeton Theological Seminary⁵⁰</p>
<p>“As we pursue these industrial models of ministry, industry thrives, but ministry is weakened. One of the ironies we’re beginning to see is that...even the world wants the church to be the church. It is the church that doesn’t want to be the church. That’s the core problem.” Warren Cole Smith, journalist and author⁵¹</p>
<p>“Our churches need a baptism of fire. Our churches have become so self-centered and so into their own programs that we’re forgetting missions. We don’t support missions like we used to...We need revival. Our churches are dead.” Franklin Graham, president and CEO, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan’s Purse⁵²</p>
<p>[In response to the interview question, “What is the problem with churches in the U.S.?”] “We’ve failed to take seriously the questions: What did Jesus want of us? What did he tell us to do?” Gordon Cosby, retired pastor of Church of the Savior, Washington, DC⁵³</p>
<p>[In response to a letter from his parents, suggesting he stay in the U.S. to focus on youth ministry] “Does it sound harsh so to speak? Surely those who know the great passionate heart of Jehovah must deny their own loves to share in the expression of His. Consider the call from the Throne above, ‘Go ye,’ and from round about, ‘Come over and help us,’ and even the call from the damned souls below, ‘Send Lazarus to my brothers, that they come not to this place.’ Impelled, then, by these voices, I dare not stay at home while Quichuas perish. So what if the well-fed church in the homeland needs stirring? They have the Scriptures, Moses, and the Prophets, and a whole lot more. Their condemnation is written on their bank books and in the dust on their Bible covers. American believers have sold their lives to the service of Mammon, and God has His rightful way of dealing with those who succumb to the spirit of Laodicea.” Jim Elliot, August 8, 1950, five-and-a half years before he died a martyr on the mission field⁵⁴</p>

of the situation. Jesus was not content to let them be defined by their limitations and manage the situation by sending the hungry people away. It is no more likely that Jesus is satisfied with the church in the U.S. choosing to be preoccupied with organizational maintenance at the expense of global needs.

Research. Jesus had to take the disciples' attention off their own limitations. Ignoring the challenge inherent in the disciples' rather rude response—"With what? It would take a small fortune to buy food for all this crowd!"—Jesus redirected their attention. Jesus told them to research the available resources: "How much do you have? Go and find out."

The research would not define the solution. As John 6:6 notes, Jesus "...already had in mind what he was going to do" (NIV). Rather, this question is consistent with a pattern in Jesus' teaching. On occasion, Jesus took mud (John 9:6) and spit (Mark 7:33, 8:23), basic physical elements available to anyone and, beginning with those elements, produced miracles. Once again, as they faced a crowd of hungry thousands, Jesus was emphasizing to the disciples to start with what they had, and expect God to make up the difference.

Like starting with mud or spit, in the hands of the Great Physician an understanding of "filthy lucre" (1 Tim. 3:3, Titus 1:11, KJV) can be a setting event to heal the blindness of the body of Christ in the U.S. to the spiritual and physical needs around the globe. Today the church in the U.S. can research what resources are available, recognizing how much God will also need to be involved in order to solve the overwhelming needs.

Understanding what is available is only a first step. But it is an important step.

The first seven chapters in this volume point out at least two key pieces of information.

First, per member giving as a percent of income has trended downward since the 1960s. Further, congregations are keeping a larger portion of the dollars donated to them for internal operations, and spending less on the larger mission of the church. These spending patterns have been accompanied by a decline in church membership as a percent of U.S. population. These numbers only describe trends, but the trends are of such a protracted nature that they need to be taken seriously.

Second, there is great untapped potential among church members. Even if church member giving only recovered to levels of income given in the 1960s, there would be additional billions of dollars for the work of the church. As discussed in chapter 6, if giving increased to a congregationwide average of ten percent, there would be tens of billions of additional dollars available for the work of the church. If church members chose to be as dedicated as foreign-born residents are in sending remittances to other countries, the potentially available additional dollars would be approximately \$389 billion.

The church in the U.S. is doing considerably better than the first disciples, in terms of the available starting resources to address the problem of the spiritually and physically hungry. However, as evident in John 6:8, the young boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish was willing to give them to Jesus. The research demonstrates the billions of dollars available to the church in the U.S. It may be a

Once again, as they faced a crowd of hungry thousands, Jesus was emphasizing to the disciples to start with what they had, and expect God to make up the difference.

far greater challenge to find those denominational leaders in the church in the U.S. to organize an effort to mobilize church members in the U.S. to give even some additional billions to Jesus to address the global word and deed need present in the 21st century.

The fact that the next step in the outline is “planning” may highlight a direction to pursue.

Planning. The Gospel of John tends to identify specifics that are left vague in the other Gospels. For example, it is John who identifies Judas Iscariot as the one who complained about the cost of perfume poured over Jesus (compare John 12:4 with Matt. 26:8). It is in John’s Gospel that not only is Peter named as the one who cut off the high priest’s servant’s ear, but also that the servant’s name was Malchus (compare John 18:10 with Luke 22:50).

So it is that the Gospel of John names Andrew as the disciple who presents to Jesus the young boy with five small barley loaves and two fish (John 6:8-9). The research has produced a starting point of the fish and loaves. The next step Jesus outlines is a comprehensive plan that will provide the framework for the need to be met. Jesus told the crowd to sit down in groups.

Note that Jesus did not make a plan to feed the people in shifts: some now, some later. Jesus did not opt to feed the people who were near at hand and grieve over, but essentially ignore, those farther away. Jesus saw all the hungry people and created a framework to address the entire need at once.

The sheer magnitude of the 6,000+ unreached people groups, and the thousands of children under five dying daily, fosters empathy with the poor disciples who now busied themselves in turning the massive crowd into neat groups of 50 to 100. But the disciples, according to Luke 9:15, did as Jesus directed and the crowd sat down.

Church members might be willing to increase giving if there were a comprehensive plan that made sense to them. As Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby note, “If people are not following a vision, the problem may not lie with the people. For a vision to move people, the people must be convinced the vision is from almighty God and is not merely the dream of an ambitious leader. When people sense they are part of something God is doing, there is no limit to what they will be willing to do in response.”⁵⁸

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow surveyed church members in the U.S. about their congregations’ mission outreach. He found, “Nationally, 76 percent of church members report that an offering has been taken at their congregation within the past year to ‘raise money for an overseas hunger or relief program’ (76 percent also say they personally gave money in the last year for international relief or hunger projects).”⁵⁹ In the survey, Wuthnow also found, “The evidence indicates that supporting missionaries continues to be an activity that engages a large majority of American congregations. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of U.S. church members say their congregation has supported a missionary working in another country during the past year.”⁶⁰

Church members, apparently, are aware of and support the international outreach of their congregations. One might assume that there is a basis for denominations

Jesus saw all the hungry people and created a framework to address the entire need at once.

to believe there would be broad church member support for an accessible and comprehensive plan to reach the unreached people groups and/or prevent more children under the age of five from dying from preventable causes.

There are a variety of ideas about reaching unreached people groups. An innovative plan using the latest technology may be found at <godrev.jesus.net>. The effort is sort of a Billy-Graham-Crusades-gone-cyber approach. The goal is to have a simple presentation of the gospel in a major language used on the Internet, with an available prayer. When someone clicks that he or she has prayed the prayer, a real-time map posts a dot. The goal is to add 35 additional languages to the ten or so currently in operation, to have a gospel presentation available to most anyone who has access to the Internet.⁶¹

Unfortunately, many of the unreached people groups may be in rural areas without access to the Internet. In that case, individuals going to the remote areas are a necessary part of reaching the people in the 6,000+ unreached groups. The Southern Baptist Convention has talked about a plan to accomplish this task. Further exploration of this denomination's activities is presented below in a follow-up to a case study begun in *The State of Church Giving through 2007*.

In the concept of global triage, unreached people groups is considered one of two categories that merits priority attention from the church in the U.S. The other category is reducing the number of children under five who are dying around the globe from preventable poverty conditions.

As can be seen from the two maps in Figure 22, there is a certain degree of overlap between the presence of least-evangelized people groups and a high incidence of under-five child deaths. However, there are other areas that have large numbers of self-identified Christians and a high incidence of child deaths. That issue is discussed in further detail below.

The top map, from the Joshua Project, outlines the areas with the highest concentration of unreached people groups.⁶²

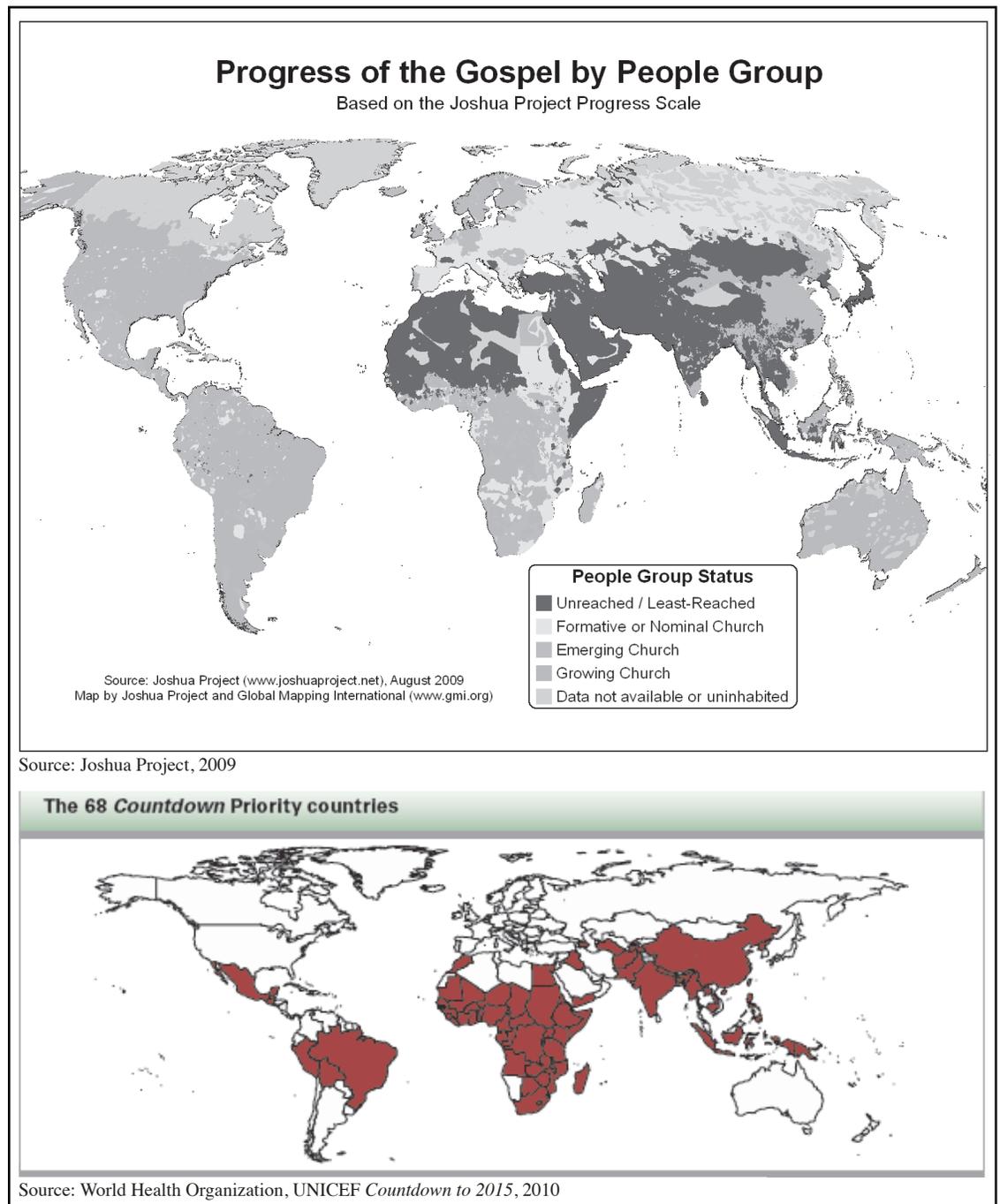
The lower map, from the publication *Countdown to 2015*, highlights "...the 68 countries where more than 95% of all maternal and child deaths occur." Of these countries, 49 need special attention to reduce child deaths sufficiently to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 target by the year 2015.⁶³

The MDGs are a set of objectives adopted by many governments in the world, to improve the conditions of the world's poorest citizens by the year 2015.⁶⁴ MDG 4 is to reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

There is a large gap between where the world should be in reducing these child deaths, and where it was in the year 2008. Although the goal for 2008 was a reduction to 41 under-5 child deaths per 1,000 live births, the actual 2008 number was 65, well behind the goal.

If all were on track, the world would have helped the countries with high child deaths be 82% toward achieving MDG 4, with 18% farther to go by 2015. Instead, based on an analysis of the annual *State of the World's Children* data, the world has only provided assistance so these countries are on average about 42% toward the

Figure 22: Location Maps: Unreached People Groups and Countries with High Rates of Under-5 Child Deaths

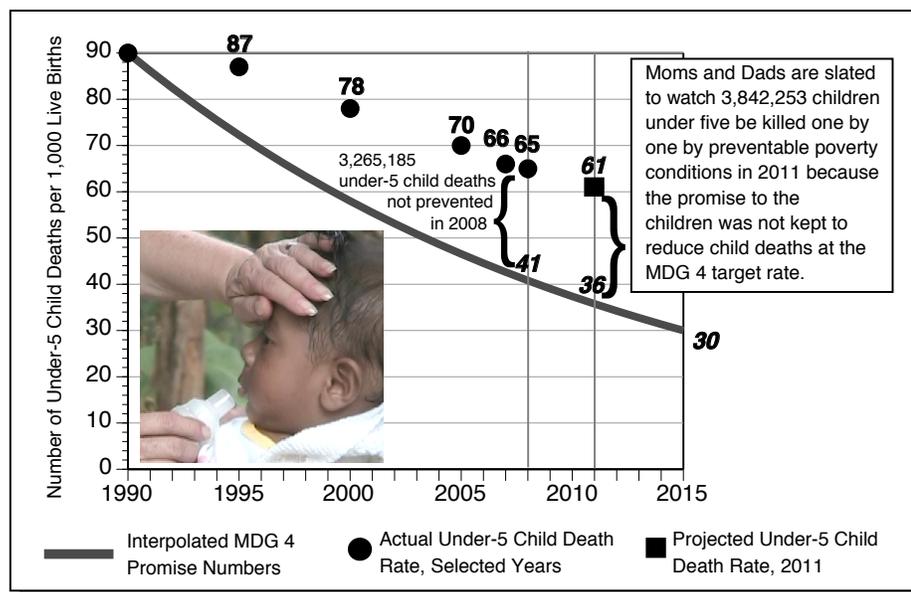


MDG 4 target, with 58% in reduction of child deaths still to go before 2015. In 2008, because of this lack of progress, 3,265,185 children under the age of five died who would not have died if the world had kept its promises, as discussed in *The State of Church Giving through 2006* (p.113).

If this rate continues, in 2011 there will be mothers and fathers helplessly watching an estimated 3,482,253 children under the age of five die from preventable causes, who would not have died had the world kept its promise to the children to reduce child deaths at a rate to achieve the goal by 2015, as indicated in Figure 23.

The church has learned from Scripture that God cares for the children. When Jesus was on earth, he repeatedly talked about the importance of children in the Kingdom of God (e.g., Matthew 18:10 and 19:14, Mark 9:37 and 10:14, Luke 18:16).

Figure 23: Exponential Interpolation of MDG 4 Under-5 Child Deaths Per 1,000 Live Births, Based on Actual 1990 and Goal 2015 Data; Actual Data, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2007, and 2008; Projected 2011 Data



Source: empty tomb, inc. analysis, UNICEF data

empty tomb, inc., 2010

We also know from the Bible that we as the church are to help the weak and helpless (e.g., Psalm 41:1, Psalm 82:3-4, James 1:27).

So the church has the stated charge of helping children. The lack of progress in meeting MDG 4 suggests a need for special intervention.

The *Countdown 2015* report Overview notes, “The 2010 Countdown Decade Report concludes that achieving MDGs 4 and 5 is still possible by the deadline year 2015, but only a dramatic acceleration of political

commitment and financial investment can make it happen.”⁶⁵ The report itself concludes: “*Countdown* partners must work together now to increase their efforts and resources, focusing not just on one intervention or cause but on developing a functional continuum of basic services that save lives and improve health for millions of women, newborns and children. There is still time. This report shows that, by investing our attention and financial resources, so much more is possible.”⁶⁶

In Mark 6, the crowd of 5,000 increasingly hungry men plus women and children milling about was a mob. “Then Jesus told the crowd to sit down on the green grass. So they sat in groups of fifty or a hundred.” (v. 39-40). The plan provided a framework to approach what seemed like an overwhelming problem to the disciples.

Planning could also help to make the overwhelming task of reducing child deaths more approachable. If church members were to be challenged to solve, rather than cope with, the killing of children by preventable diseases, part of such a plan ought to inform those church members how much it would cost to help stop, in Jesus’ name, under-5 child deaths.

The results presented in Tables 45 and 46 provide dollar-cost estimates for the causes of under-5 deaths in each of the 68 countries included in the tables.⁶⁷ The model suggests the type of information that can be developed to foster initiatives to eliminate conditions that result in needless child deaths. This model updates the initial version presented in the previous edition in this series.

Two valuable sources of information served as the basis of the analysis. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) annual *State of the World’s Children* report provides detailed information on the quality of life factors, including the number of under-5 child deaths by country.⁶⁸

The second source was the *Countdown to 2015 Decade Report (2000-2010)* mentioned previously.⁶⁹ This report provided, for 68 countries, a percentage enumeration for eight “Causes of under-5 deaths,” one of which was the summary category, “Neonatal.” Additionally, detail data for seven “Causes of neonatal deaths” was provided. The number of under-5 child deaths in these 68 countries accounted for 95% of the under-5 child deaths in the world.

This model, a first approximation for estimating country-specific costs to prevent child deaths, was based on the assumption that the cost of the disease remedies was equal for each disease. A second working assumption was that the cost of a package of disease remedies per child was the same across the different countries. While this model can be refined by disease-specific and country-specific pricing factors including rate of progress, this first approximation may be useful for exploring how to address, and mobilize for meeting, specific country goals.

In Table 45, a summed dollar figure for all Neonatal causes is presented.

Table 46 presents the Neonatal detail.

The absence of an active and comprehensive plan to address child deaths in these countries, or even reach the unreached people groups—a task clearly and solely in the purview of the church—might suggest that denominational and congregational leaders lack the ability to strategize and plan in order to meet major goals.

In chapter 5 of this volume, Figure 17 presents the value of new religious construction in the U.S. For the ten-year 1999 through 2008 period, the current dollar value of that construction was \$78.9 billion. The average annual expenditure was \$7.89 billion. In chapter 6, Table 26 details estimated mission costs. A generous estimate for global evangelization costs is an additional \$1 billion a year. The estimate to prevent two-thirds of the under-five global child deaths is \$5 billion a year. Therefore, the cost for global evangelization and preventing child deaths totals \$6 billion a year. Denominational leaders would only have had to organize and mobilize to raise 76% of the value of new religious construction during 1999 through 2008, in order to impact global evangelization and child-death reduction efforts.

However, no building project, whether at the local or national level, has been undertaken in the haphazard manner that church leaders have brought to solving child deaths and getting the gospel to the least evangelized.

The value of planning is not lost on people who are familiar with success in the business world. When business leaders turn their attention to global need, they plan for success in that arena as well. Bill and Melinda Gates, through their foundation, have impacted the approach taken to solving needs. The foundation’s commitment to vaccines in 2010 provides an example.

Bill and Melinda Gates announced, on January 29, 2010, at the Davos World Economic Forum, that their foundation, also funded with donations from Warren Buffett, would make an additional \$10 billion commitment to vaccines over the

Denominational leaders would only have had to organize and mobilize to raise 76% of the value of new religious construction during 1999 through 2008, in order to impact global evangelization and child-death reduction efforts.

Table 45: Country-Specific Dollar-Cost Estimates for Causes of Under-5 Child Deaths, 68 Countries

Nation	Under-5 Mortality Rank	Annual no. of Under-5 Deaths (000s) 2008	Country Total as % of Total Annual No. of Under-5 Deaths (000s) 2008	Country Total \$ Need, Based on \$5 Billion Total Estimate
Africa: 44 Nations		4,447	50.74%	\$2,537,083,524
1 Angola	2	165	1.88%	94,135,098
2 Benin	23	39	0.45%	22,250,114
3 Botswana	83	1	0.01%	570,516
4 Burkina Faso	11	117	1.34%	66,750,342
5 Burundi	12	45	0.51%	25,673,209
6 Cameroon	19	89	1.02%	50,775,901
7 Central African Republic	10	26	0.30%	14,833,409
8 Chad	3	99	1.13%	56,481,059
9 Congo	22	16	0.18%	9,128,252
10 Côte d'Ivoire	25	79	0.90%	45,070,744
11 Democratic Rep. of the Congo	5	554	6.32%	316,065,723
12 Djibouti	39	2	0.02%	1,141,031
13 Egypt	97	45	0.51%	25,673,209
14 Equatorial Guinea	14	3	0.03%	1,711,547
15 Eritrea	56	10	0.11%	5,705,157
16 Ethiopia	27	321	3.66%	183,135,555
17 Gabon	46	3	0.03%	1,711,547
18 Gambia	30	6	0.07%	3,423,094
19 Ghana	47	55	0.63%	31,378,366
20 Guinea	16	54	0.62%	30,807,850
21 Guinea-Bissau	6	12	0.14%	6,846,189
22 Kenya	21	189	2.16%	107,827,476
23 Lesotho	45	5	0.06%	2,852,579
24 Liberia	17	20	0.23%	11,410,315
25 Madagascar	30	71	0.81%	40,506,618
26 Malawi	34	56	0.64%	31,948,882
27 Mali	7	100	1.14%	57,051,575
28 Mauritania	24	12	0.14%	6,846,189
29 Morocco	72	24	0.27%	13,692,378
30 Mozambique	20	110	1.26%	62,756,732
31 Niger	13	121	1.38%	69,032,405
32 Nigeria	9	1,077	12.29%	614,445,459
33 Rwanda	26	41	0.47%	23,391,146
34 Senegal	29	49	0.56%	27,955,272
35 Sierra Leone	7	43	0.49%	24,532,177
36 Somalia	4	76	0.87%	43,359,197
37 South Africa	52	73	0.83%	41,647,649
38 Sudan	27	138	1.57%	78,731,173
39 Swaziland	43	3	0.03%	1,711,547
40 Togo	35	20	0.23%	11,410,315
41 Uganda	18	190	2.17%	108,397,992
42 United Republic of Tanzania	33	175	2.00%	99,840,256
43 Zambia	14	77	0.88%	43,929,712
44 Zimbabwe	38	36	0.41%	20,538,567

Details in the above table may not compute to the numbers shown due to rounding.

Sources: empty tomb, inc. analysis, UNICEF data

empty tomb, inc., 2010

“You Feed Them”

	Pneumonia	Diarrhea	Measles	Malaria	HIV/AIDS	Injuries	Other	Neonatal (Total)
Africa	\$362,283,204	\$436,815,381	\$16,898,676	\$406,789,137	\$108,489,274	\$54,136,239	\$403,725,468	\$756,846,189
1	16,944,318	23,533,775	941,351	7,530,808	1,882,702	2,824,053	20,709,722	20,709,722
2	3,115,016	2,892,515	0	5,117,526	222,501	445,002	4,005,021	6,230,032
3	39,936	39,936	0	5,705	0	28,526	165,450	290,963
4	11,347,558	12,682,565	0	13,350,068	667,503	2,002,510	12,682,565	14,685,075
5	3,850,981	5,904,838	256,732	2,310,589	513,464	1,026,928	4,877,910	6,675,034
6	8,124,144	8,124,144	507,759	9,647,421	2,538,795	1,015,518	8,631,903	12,693,975
7	2,521,680	2,521,680	0	2,076,677	1,038,339	148,334	2,521,680	4,153,355
8	9,601,780	11,861,022	0	10,731,401	1,694,432	564,811	9,601,780	12,425,833
9	1,277,955	1,277,955	0	2,190,780	456,413	91,283	1,369,238	2,555,911
10	4,957,782	5,859,197	0	9,464,856	1,802,830	450,707	5,859,197	16,676,175
11	50,570,516	56,891,830	3,160,657	53,731,173	3,160,657	6,321,314	50,570,516	91,659,060
12	182,565	205,386	0	0	68,462	22,821	216,796	433,592
13	1,797,125	1,283,660	0	0	0	1,283,660	5,904,838	15,660,657
14	171,155	154,039	154,039	479,233	51,346	17,115	188,270	496,349
15	969,877	1,198,083	114,103	0	228,206	285,258	1,198,083	1,711,547
16	21,976,267	40,289,822	0	12,819,489	5,494,067	5,494,067	29,301,689	69,591,511
17	136,924	102,693	17,115	496,349	171,155	17,115	171,155	616,157
18	376,540	445,002	34,231	787,312	34,231	102,693	479,233	1,129,621
19	2,510,269	2,824,053	627,567	8,158,375	941,351	627,567	2,824,053	12,865,130
20	3,696,942	4,005,021	924,236	7,393,884	616,157	308,079	4,005,021	9,550,434
21	1,095,390	1,300,776	136,924	1,232,314	136,924	136,924	1,163,852	1,643,085
22	16,174,121	21,565,495	1,078,275	11,861,022	5,391,374	3,234,824	20,487,220	29,113,419
23	313,784	256,732	0	0	484,938	57,052	370,835	1,369,238
24	1,597,444	1,939,754	228,206	1,825,650	342,309	114,103	1,825,650	3,651,301
25	7,696,257	8,911,456	0	1,620,265	0	810,132	8,101,324	13,772,250
26	3,514,377	3,514,377	0	5,431,310	4,472,843	638,978	4,792,332	9,904,153
27	7,987,220	10,839,799	0	11,980,831	570,516	1,141,031	8,557,736	15,974,441
28	1,026,928	1,026,928	0	890,005	68,462	136,924	1,026,928	2,670,014
29	1,232,314	1,643,085	0	0	0	410,771	1,643,085	8,763,122
30	8,158,375	6,903,241	0	8,158,375	8,785,942	1,255,135	8,785,942	21,337,289
31	13,116,157	13,806,481	0	12,425,833	690,324	1,380,648	13,116,157	15,187,129
32	92,166,819	110,600,183	0	122,889,092	18,433,364	6,144,455	92,166,819	172,044,728
33	3,274,760	5,146,052	233,911	1,403,469	233,911	935,646	4,210,406	7,952,990
34	3,634,185	3,913,738	838,658	5,311,502	559,105	559,105	4,193,291	9,225,240
35	3,925,148	4,906,435	1,226,609	3,189,183	490,644	735,965	4,415,792	5,642,401
36	7,371,063	9,105,431	2,167,960	2,601,552	0	867,184	7,371,063	13,874,943
37	2,498,859	3,748,288	0	0	19,157,919	832,953	3,748,288	12,077,818
38	7,873,117	7,873,117	0	19,682,793	1,574,623	2,361,935	10,235,052	29,917,846
39	154,039	136,924	0	0	838,658	17,115	188,270	376,540
40	1,141,031	1,255,135	0	2,966,682	684,619	228,206	1,255,135	3,993,610
41	13,007,759	17,343,679	2,167,960	23,847,558	5,419,900	4,335,920	16,259,699	26,015,518
42	12,979,233	10,982,428	0	15,974,441	8,985,623	2,995,208	13,977,636	33,945,687
43	5,710,863	6,150,160	439,297	6,589,457	5,271,565	1,317,891	7,468,051	11,421,725
44	2,464,628	1,848,471	1,643,085	616,157	4,313,099	410,771	3,080,785	6,161,570

Table 45: Country-Specific Dollar-Cost Estimates for Causes of Under-5 Child Deaths, 68 Countries (continued)

Nation	Under-5 Mortality Rank	Annual no. of under-5 deaths (000s) 2008	Country Total as % of Total Annual No. of Under-5 Deaths (000s) 2007	Country Total \$s Need, Based on \$5 Billion Total Estimate
Asia: 17 Nations				
1 Afghanistan	1	311	3.55%	177,430,397
2 Azerbaijan	72	6	0.07%	3,423,094
3 Bangladesh	58	183	2.09%	104,404,382
4 Cambodia	41	32	0.37%	18,256,504
5 China	102	365	4.16%	208,238,247
6 Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	57	18	0.21%	10,269,283
7 India	49	1,830	20.88%	1,044,043,816
8 Indonesia	66	173	1.97%	98,699,224
9 Iraq	64	41	0.47%	23,391,146
10 Lao People's Dem. Republic	54	10	0.11%	5,705,157
11 Myanmar	35	98	1.12%	55,910,543
12 Nepal	60	37	0.42%	21,109,083
13 Pakistan	42	465	5.31%	265,289,822
14 Philippines	81	73	0.83%	41,647,649
15 Tajikistan	53	12	0.14%	6,846,189
16 Turkmenistan	61	5	0.06%	2,852,579
17 Yemen	49	57	0.65%	32,519,398
Latin America/Caribbean: 6 Nations				
1 Bolivia	58	14	0.16%	7,987,220
2 Brazil	100	67	0.76%	38,224,555
3 Guatemala	77	15	0.17%	8,557,736
4 Haiti	48	19	0.22%	10,839,799
5 Mexico	112	36	0.41%	20,538,567
6 Peru	96	15	0.17%	8,557,736
Oceania: 1 Nation				
1 Papua New Guinea	49	14	0.16%	\$7,987,220
Total for 68 Nations		8,343	95.20%	\$4,759,812,871

next decade. The reasons for doing so are relevant, for their decision demonstrates how strategic planning can impact the overwhelming need facing so many around the globe:

“ ‘Vaccines are a miracle,’ added Melinda Gates. ‘With just a few doses they can prevent deadly diseases for a lifetime. We’ve made vaccines our priority at the Gates Foundation because we’ve seen firsthand their incredible impact on children’s lives.’

“The couple told delegates at Davos that they used a model developed by a consortium at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the United States to project the potential impact of vaccines on childhood deaths over the next decade.

“ ‘By significantly scaling up the delivery of life-saving vaccines in developing countries to 90 percent coverage—including new vaccines to prevent severe diarrhea and pneumonia—the model suggests that we could prevent the deaths of some 7.6 million children under 5 from 2010-2019.’ ”⁷⁰

“Gates warned against the risk of governments diverting foreign aid for health toward climate change, arguing that health should stay a top priority—not least because better health leads to a lower birth rate.

“You Feed Them”

	Pneumonia	Diarrhea	Measles	Malaria	HIV/AIDS	Injuries	Other	Neonatal (Total)
Asia	\$280,054,770	\$259,641,716	\$45,259,014	\$4,701,050	\$11,210,634	\$86,102,236	\$329,238,932	\$1,099,971,474
1	40,808,991	49,680,511	1,774,304	0	0	7,097,216	40,808,991	35,486,079
2	581,926	376,540	0	0	0	68,462	616,157	1,711,547
3	11,484,482	10,440,438	1,044,044	2,088,088	0	2,088,088	12,528,526	64,730,717
4	4,746,691	1,277,955	182,565	182,565	0	547,695	4,929,256	6,389,776
5	31,235,737	6,247,147	0	0	0	20,823,825	33,318,120	116,613,419
6	1,745,778	1,129,621	0	0	0	205,386	1,848,471	5,237,335
7	114,844,820	114,844,820	41,761,753	0	10,440,438	31,321,314	156,606,572	574,224,099
8	17,765,860	14,804,884	0	986,992	0	1,973,984	17,765,860	45,401,643
9	3,274,760	2,573,026	0	0	0	1,169,557	3,274,760	13,099,042
10	1,483,341	399,361	171,155	0	0	171,155	1,540,393	1,939,754
11	6,709,265	6,709,265	0	1,118,211	559,105	12,300,319	6,709,265	22,364,217
12	2,110,908	2,955,272	0	0	211,091	422,182	2,321,999	12,876,540
13	29,181,880	37,140,575	0	0	0	5,305,796	29,181,880	161,826,791
14	7,913,053	2,915,335	0	0	0	1,665,906	10,411,912	18,741,442
15	1,369,238	1,300,776	0	0	0	205,386	1,574,623	2,464,628
16	570,516	342,309	0	0	0	85,577	599,042	1,255,135
17	4,227,522	6,503,880	325,194	325,194	0	650,388	5,203,104	15,609,311
LA/C	\$10,856,915	\$8,358,056	\$0	\$108,398	\$884,299	\$4,689,639	\$27,989,503	\$42,104,062
1	1,277,955	1,198,083	0	0	0	239,617	1,677,316	3,674,121
2	3,057,964	1,911,228	0	0	0	1,528,982	12,614,103	19,112,277
3	1,454,815	1,625,970	0	0	256,732	427,887	2,139,434	2,652,898
4	1,951,164	2,167,960	0	108,398	541,990	216,796	2,059,562	3,793,930
5	2,259,242	1,026,928	0	0	0	1,848,471	7,188,498	8,420,812
6	855,774	427,887	0	0	85,577	427,887	2,310,589	4,450,023
Ocen.								
1	\$1,597,444	\$399,361	\$159,744	\$559,105	\$239,617	\$239,617	\$1,837,061	\$3,035,144
Total	\$654,792,332	\$705,214,514	\$62,317,435	\$412,157,691	\$120,823,825	\$145,167,732	\$762,790,963	\$1,901,956,869

“Curbing the globe’s population growth is critical for tackling global warming.”⁷¹

“But the Foundation’s money cannot do this alone. According to Gates, additional funding from pharmaceutical companies is needed to bring these new vaccinations to market, and a strong commitment from governments is essential to ensuring that foreign aid funding for health is not diverted to something else like climate change.”⁷²

What can be observed from these few paragraphs? The possibilities are stated in visionary terms. The plan is comprehensive and at a scale with the need. It incorporates the best research techniques available. It has a clear understanding of the challenges involved in implementing the goal of delivering the vaccines to where they are needed. There is a clear statement of how others can be involved.

The world is benefiting from the personal convictions of three extremely wealthy people who happen to be concerned about the needs of others.

The church has defined convictions based on her visionary leader, Jesus Christ. The church has a network of colleges and universities that could focus on problem solving to achieve goals identified by Jesus’ directions. The church has a broad network that rivals the largest business market. Estimates vary about church

The State of Church Giving through 2008

Table 46: Country-Specific Dollar-Cost Estimates Detail for Causes of Neonatal Deaths, 68 Countries

Nation	Country Total Neonatal Need (\$s)	Neonatal Diarrhea (\$s)	Neonatal Other (\$s)	Neonatal Congenital (\$s)	Neonatal Tetanus (\$s)	Neonatal Asphyxia (\$s)	Neonatal Preterm (\$s)	Neonatal Infection (\$s)
Africa: 44 Nations	\$756,846,189	\$17,014,776	\$36,493,382	\$56,513,350	\$17,965,427	\$196,668,188	\$230,210,121	\$205,677,773
1 Angola	20,709,722	414,194	1,035,486	1,449,681	414,194	5,384,528	5,798,722	6,212,916
2 Benin	6,230,032	62,300	249,201	560,703	124,601	1,370,607	2,180,511	1,682,109
3 Botswana	290,963	0	20,367	37,825	2,910	55,283	122,204	52,373
4 Burkina Faso	14,685,075	146,851	587,403	1,027,955	734,254	3,377,567	4,258,672	4,552,373
5 Burundi	6,675,034	133,501	333,752	400,502	133,501	1,935,760	1,735,509	2,002,510
6 Cameroon	12,693,975	253,880	634,699	1,142,458	126,940	3,300,434	4,315,952	3,046,554
7 Central African Republic	4,153,355	83,067	207,668	290,735	41,534	1,079,872	1,246,006	1,204,473
8 Chad	12,425,833	248,517	621,292	621,292	1,118,325	3,603,492	3,106,458	3,106,458
9 Congo	2,555,911	51,118	127,796	255,591	0	587,859	996,805	536,741
10 Côte d'Ivoire	16,676,175	333,524	667,047	1,167,332	166,762	4,002,282	5,336,376	5,002,853
11 Democratic Rep. of the Congo	91,659,060	2,749,772	3,666,362	7,332,725	916,591	20,164,993	30,247,490	27,497,718
12 Djibouti	433,592	8,672	17,344	69,375	4,336	99,726	125,742	108,398
13 Egypt	15,660,657	0	939,639	3,601,951	313,213	1,252,853	8,300,148	1,409,459
14 Equatorial Guinea	496,349	9,927	24,817	49,635	0	129,051	173,722	104,233
15 Eritrea	1,711,547	17,115	119,808	171,155	51,346	393,656	599,042	376,540
16 Ethiopia	69,591,511	1,391,830	3,479,576	3,479,576	2,783,660	20,877,453	16,006,047	21,573,368
17 Gabon	616,157	6,162	24,646	61,616	6,162	141,716	252,624	123,231
18 Gambia	1,129,621	11,296	45,185	79,073	22,592	259,813	384,071	316,294
19 Ghana	12,865,130	128,651	643,257	1,029,210	128,651	3,473,585	3,730,888	3,730,888
20 Guinea	9,550,434	191,009	477,522	573,026	191,009	2,483,113	2,387,608	3,342,652
21 Guinea-Bissau	1,643,085	32,862	82,154	98,585	16,431	410,771	525,787	476,495
22 Kenya	29,113,419	582,268	1,455,671	2,037,939	291,134	8,442,891	8,151,757	7,860,623
23 Lesotho	1,369,238	27,385	68,462	109,539	0	369,694	451,848	342,309
24 Liberia	3,651,301	73,026	182,565	219,078	36,513	949,338	1,168,416	1,058,877
25 Madagascar	13,772,250	275,445	688,613	826,335	137,723	3,580,785	4,544,843	3,718,508
26 Malawi	9,904,153	99,042	495,208	792,332	99,042	2,575,080	3,169,329	2,575,080
27 Mali	15,974,441	479,233	638,978	958,466	319,489	3,833,866	4,632,588	5,111,821
28 Mauritania	2,670,014	53,400	106,801	186,901	53,400	640,803	854,404	774,304
29 Morocco	8,763,122	87,631	350,525	1,226,837	175,262	2,015,518	2,804,199	2,190,780
30 Mozambique	21,337,289	426,746	1,066,864	1,493,610	426,746	5,334,322	6,187,814	6,614,560
31 Niger	15,187,129	303,743	759,356	759,356	1,063,099	3,796,782	4,708,010	3,948,654
32 Nigeria	172,044,728	5,161,342	8,602,236	12,043,131	5,161,342	49,892,971	48,172,524	44,731,629
33 Rwanda	7,952,990	159,060	397,649	556,709	79,530	2,385,897	2,067,777	2,306,367
34 Senegal	9,225,240	92,252	369,010	738,019	184,505	2,121,805	2,859,824	2,767,572
35 Sierra Leone	5,642,401	112,848	225,696	282,120	112,848	1,410,600	1,805,568	1,692,720
36 Somalia	13,874,943	554,998	693,747	1,109,995	1,248,745	3,746,235	3,468,736	3,191,237
37 South Africa	12,077,818	120,778	1,087,004	966,225	120,778	2,777,898	4,951,906	2,174,007
38 Sudan	29,917,846	598,357	1,196,714	2,393,428	299,178	5,385,212	14,061,387	6,282,748
39 Swaziland	376,540	3,765	26,358	41,419	3,765	75,308	139,320	86,604
40 Togo	3,993,610	39,936	199,681	319,489	79,872	958,466	1,277,955	1,118,211
41 Uganda	26,015,518	520,310	1,300,776	1,821,086	260,155	7,284,345	7,804,655	7,024,190
42 United Republic of Tanzania	33,945,687	678,914	1,697,284	2,715,655	339,457	9,844,249	9,504,792	9,165,335
43 Zambia	11,421,725	228,435	571,086	799,521	114,217	3,198,083	3,312,300	3,312,300
44 Zimbabwe	6,161,570	61,616	308,079	616,157	61,616	1,663,624	2,279,781	1,170,698

attendance in the United States, with a low estimate of at least 20% of the U.S. population,⁷³ or over 60 million people, being in a house of worship every weekend. That's a powerful number. The television show that has the largest weekly audience draws "nearly 15 million viewers."⁷⁴ Of course, the annual Christian Christmas-Easter observances usually increase attendance, and might be favorably compared

“You Feed Them”

Nation	Country Total Neonatal Need (\$s)	Neonatal Diarrhea (\$s)	Neonatal Other (\$s)	Neonatal Congenital (\$s)	Neonatal Tetanus (\$s)	Neonatal Asphyxia (\$s)	Neonatal Preterm (\$s)	Neonatal Infection (\$s)
Asia: 17 Nations	\$1,099,971,474	\$27,331,527	\$171,407,519	\$61,988,704	\$15,244,067	\$243,109,767	\$291,274,133	\$287,537,939
1 Afghanistan	35,486,079	709,722	1,774,304	2,838,886	1,419,443	9,226,381	7,806,937	11,710,406
2 Azerbaijan	1,711,547	17,115	136,924	205,386	0	342,309	718,850	308,079
3 Bangladesh	64,730,717	1,294,614	3,236,536	3,236,536	1,294,614	18,124,601	16,829,986	20,066,522
4 Cambodia	6,389,776	127,796	319,489	383,387	63,898	1,853,035	1,980,831	1,725,240
5 China	116,613,419	1,166,134	36,150,160	8,162,939	1,166,134	33,817,891	30,319,489	6,996,805
6 Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	5,237,335	52,373	209,493	576,107	0	1,204,587	2,094,934	1,047,467
7 India	574,224,099	17,226,723	114,844,820	17,226,723	5,742,241	109,102,579	137,813,784	166,524,989
8 Indonesia	45,401,643	454,016	2,270,082	4,994,181	454,016	9,988,361	18,614,674	9,080,329
9 Iraq	13,099,042	130,990	523,962	1,702,875	261,981	2,750,799	5,108,626	2,750,799
10 Lao People's Dem. Republic	1,939,754	19,398	116,385	174,578	155,180	601,324	484,938	368,553
11 Myanmar	22,364,217	670,927	1,118,211	1,118,211	0	6,038,339	7,827,476	5,814,696
12 Nepal	12,876,540	257,531	643,827	772,592	257,531	3,734,197	3,476,666	3,862,962
13 Pakistan	161,826,791	4,854,804	6,473,072	16,182,679	3,236,536	38,838,430	43,693,234	50,166,305
14 Philippines	18,741,442	0	2,623,802	2,623,802	374,829	2,811,216	7,683,991	2,998,631
15 Tajikistan	2,464,628	24,646	123,231	221,817	24,646	640,803	1,010,497	443,633
16 Turkmenistan	1,255,135	12,551	62,757	163,168	12,551	288,681	502,054	238,476
17 Yemen	15,609,311	312,186	780,466	1,404,838	780,466	3,746,235	5,307,166	3,434,048
Latin America/Caribbean: 6 Nations	\$42,104,062	\$74,681	\$5,117,812	\$7,237,220	\$799,293	\$6,921,326	\$14,927,373	\$6,919,443
1 Bolivia	3,674,121	36,741	183,706	330,671	36,741	992,013	1,249,201	845,048
2 Brazil	19,112,277	0	3,440,210	3,631,333	191,123	2,675,719	6,115,929	2,866,842
3 Guatemala	2,652,898	0	106,116	265,290	132,645	344,877	1,485,623	318,348
4 Haiti	3,793,930	37,939	189,696	227,636	265,575	1,062,300	1,176,118	834,665
5 Mexico	8,420,812	0	842,081	1,936,787	84,208	1,178,914	3,031,492	1,431,538
6 Peru	4,450,023	0	356,002	845,504	89,000	667,503	1,869,010	623,003
Oceania: 1 Nation								
1 Papua New Guinea	\$3,035,144	\$60,703	\$182,109	\$242,812	\$91,054	\$910,543	\$880,192	\$698,083
Total for 68 Nations	\$1,901,956,869	\$44,481,686	\$213,200,822	\$125,982,086	\$34,099,840	\$447,609,824	\$537,291,819	\$500,833,238

with the 2010 Super Bowl record, when 106.5 million viewers were estimated for that annual sporting event.⁷⁵

Yet denominational church leaders have not organized their members to solve, rather than cope with, the challenges facing those unreached and those whose children are dying.

The *Countdown to 2015 Decade Report (2000-2010)* lists a set of countries that are making “no progress” toward reducing child deaths.⁷⁶ Table 47 lists 16 of these countries. These 16 countries account for 22% of the under-5 child deaths around the globe.

Table 47 also presents *World Christian Encyclopedia* percent self-identified-Christian data for each country, as of mid-2000.⁷⁷ Finally, the country’s population in 2008 is provided. It may be of interest to note, especially for readers of this volume considering church giving and membership trends in the United States, that ten of the 16 countries listed have populations with a majority identifying themselves as

Table 47: Sixteen Countries Making “No Progress” in Reducing Under-5 Child Deaths, Number of Under-5 Child Deaths, 2008, Percent Christian, Mid-2000, and Country Population, 2008

Country	Number of Under-5 Child Deaths 2008	Percent Christian Mid-2000	Population 2008
Afghanistan	311,000	0.0%	27,208,000
Angola	165,000	94.1%	18,021,000
Burundi	45,000	91.7%	8,074,000
Cameroon	89,000	54.2%	19,088,000
Central African Republic	26,000	67.8%	4,339,000
Chad	99,000	22.8%	10,914,000
Congo	16,000	91.2%	3,615,000
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea	18,000	2.1%	23,819,000
Democratic Republic of the Congo	554,000	95.4%	64,257,000
Kenya	189,000	79.3%	38,765,000
Mauritania	12,000	0.3%	3,215,000
Somalia	76,000	1.4%	8,926,000
South Africa	73,000	83.1%	49,668,000
Sudan	138,000	16.7%	41,348,000
Zambia	77,000	82.4%	12,620,000
Zimbabwe	36,000	67.5%	12,463,000
Total Under-5 Child Deaths	1,924,000		

Christians. The weighted average of the people in these countries identifying themselves as Christians is 84%. The 1.27 million under-five child deaths in these ten countries with Christian majorities account for 66% of the total child deaths in these 16 “no progress” countries. The fact that a country has a large percent Christian population may or may not make it easier for concerned church members from the U.S. to engage in mission activities in that country. The data in Table 47 may serve as a point of discussion regarding possible assumptions about whether there is a relationship between the religion of a country and the level of child

deaths. The table is offered on an exploratory basis, as a point of information.

The church offers faithful service in many quarters. Nicholas D. Kristoff, who has written extensively on the conditions in Sudan for *The New York Times*, wrote a column titled “Who Can Mock This Church?” In that piece, he observed, “The Vatican certainly supports many charitable efforts, and some bishops and cardinals are exemplary, but overwhelmingly it’s at the grass roots that I find the great soul of the Catholic Church.” Describing the work of self-sacrificing priests and nuns in Sudan, he concludes, “And unless we’re willing to endure beatings alongside Father Michael, unless we’re willing to stand up to warlords with Sister Cathy, we have no right to disparage them or their true church.”⁷⁸

Denominations also play a key role in connecting local churches with a larger network, enabling them to meet needs effectively. The United Nations humanitarian chief, Jan Egeland, was quoted in an early 2010 article as stating that the independent responses to the December 2004 Indonesian Tsunami, for example, would have been more helpful supporting church networks rather than engaging in what he termed “untested, chaotic, amateurish, doubled up, overlapping” activities when people’s lives were at stake. Egeland pointed to the strong response of Action by Churches Together (ACT), a network that combines Protestant and Orthodox traditions in emergency relief activities. “Egeland complimented ACT for its professional standard and said churches and church networks such as ACT have a number of strategic qualities, including being grass-roots based and oriented, as well as already being on the ground, close to local parties and players.”⁷⁹

ACT took a step toward more effective planning in 2010 in forming the ACT Alliance. The new organization’s General Secretary John Nduna spoke to a group gathered on March 24, 2010 for the launch of the merger of two global cooperative groups. ACT International was established in 1995 to promote improved coordination among churches and related agencies in responding to humanitarian emergencies and disasters. ACT Development was established in 2007 to encourage cooperation among its members in long-term development and advocacy work. The new ACT Alliance brings together more than 100 members worldwide, with 72% from the global South and 28% from the North. The cooperating groups have 30,000 employees, and combined annual revenues of almost \$1.5 billion. General Secretary Nduna noted, “...crucially, when the emergency is over, and the funds run out, churches continue to be present; they are the organization at the end of the street or village, which remain when all others have gone.”⁸⁰

Ed Stetzer wrote that denominations can be “a valuable tool for the church to use in her mission.” He elaborates: “The best denominations may be understood simply as networked cooperative relationships for mission. But they are not just networked across geography and methodology. They are also networked across time—and a group working across time and generations can accomplish more than a group working for one season.... But where some expect to see age, decay, and obsolescence in denominations, you are more likely to find longevity, maturity, and wisdom.”⁸¹

The church already has the infrastructure in place to make an impact.

The church already has the infrastructure in place to make an impact. For example, the Roman Catholic Caritas Internationalis includes 162 national members, and is headquartered in the Vatican City. Together, the member organizations have 440,000 paid staff, 625,000 volunteers, and a combined worth of US \$5.5 billion.⁸² Although the Catholic Church has thousands of its own initiatives in place, it recognizes that cooperation can lead to more people being helped. In early 2010, a news report highlighted a \$5.9 million grant to the Catholic Medical Mission board to prevent HIV and AIDS from spreading in Southern Sudan. In this project, the Catholic Medical Mission board plans to cooperate with World Vision. The project is an expansion of similar activities already implemented by the board in other countries.⁸³

Yet for all these activities, there is not the comprehensive planning to solve rather than react to problems.

When Bill and Melinda Gates state that they cannot do it alone, they again demonstrate their business acumen by developing a plan to address that situation. The Gates and Warren Buffett developed The Giving Pledge in 2009. The goal was to challenge other billionaires to give a large portion of their fortunes to charity. “Buffett said he and Gates, the Microsoft co-founder, and Gates’ wife Melinda made calls to fellow billionaires on the Forbes 400 list of wealthiest Americans—in many cases, people they had never met—to try to persuade them to join the giving pledge.” By August 2010, 40 billionaires had signed the pledge. “‘We’re off to a terrific start,’ Buffett, co-founder and chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, said...”⁸⁴

Denominational leaders, with the imperative of Jesus’ direction behind them, could show equal creativity on behalf of the poor and hurting around the globe. However, although it is likely that denominational officials are aware of who the

extremely wealthy people are in their tradition, no such movement has surfaced. The church has been ineffective in communicating a vision in which very wealthy people are willing to invest. Consider that, of the 41 largest donations made by living donors in 2009, only two were to explicitly religious groups: Habitat for Humanity and a Jewish community foundation. Two of the 17 donations made to education institutions were to universities with religious ties: Notre Dame and Illinois Wesleyan University. Of the largest gifts, 17, or 41%, went to educational institutions, nine, or 22%, went to donor foundations, and seven, or 17%, to medical institutions.⁸⁵ A review of the Web sites of the nine donor foundations receiving contributions in 2009 found that none described funding priorities that emphasized explicitly religious purposes.

In *The State of Church Giving through 2007*, it was proposed that denominational church leaders could challenge well-to-do Christians to provide matching money to increase missions giving by church members in general.⁸⁶ Table 27 in this volume demonstrates how the cost per church member to reach the unreached and address

**Table 48: Forbes 400 “Rich Listers”
2009, Region of Residence
Summary**

Region of U.S.	Number of Rich Listers	Aggregate Wealth (\$Bil)
Northeast	98	\$307
Midwest	67	\$193
South	108	\$323
West	112	\$408
Subtotal	385	\$1,231
Abroad	15	\$37
Total	400	\$1,268

the prevention of child deaths could be halved by the leadership involvement of wealthy church members.

One might assume that the wealthiest people are inaccessibly located in one secluded area of the country. However, a review of the Forbes 400 “Rich Listers” for 2009⁸⁷ found that their locations were dispersed in a pattern similar to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey regional giving patterns considered in Tables 33-35 in this volume, with the West having the most and the South second. Table 48 locates those listed in the 2009 Forbes 400 list by U.S. region. Fifteen of the individuals on the list live abroad.

Warren Buffett and Bill and Melinda Gates, driven by personal conviction, were willing to call up people, some they said they had not met, to challenge them to give.

Denominational leaders, with a theological construct that places giving in the imperative for faithful living, have not organized a movement to mobilize either their numerous members or the very wealthy to use their God-given financial power to help those in desperate need. While “inattentive blindness” may provide an explanation of why denominational leaders have not applied themselves to developing a practical plan to address these pressing needs, that explanation neither excuses nor solves the problem of a church floundering in the U.S. as evident in giving and membership trends, likely due in large part to a lack of a visionary plan of action.

Considering in depth the challenges faced by one communion to develop such a plan might provide insights that would benefit many.

In *The State of Church Giving through 2007*, a case study of the Southern Baptist Convention was presented.⁸⁸ The following discussion extends that review with developments from the last year.

The SBC lends itself to such a case study analysis because the communion has a clearly stated central purpose. The communion is large enough that it could

take significant initiative as a single entity to accomplish a purpose. Further, the denomination exemplifies a commendable commitment to open communication by publishing data, and exchanging opinions of leaders through various channels including its official organ, Baptist Press. The last year has been a rare demonstration of a denomination in the U.S. willing to discuss whether and how to modify its longstanding unified budget to adapt to the 21st century.

The Southern Baptist Convention was formed on May 8, 1845, in Augusta, Georgia, “for the purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent intention of our constituents by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the denomination for the propagation of the gospel...”⁸⁹ On May 10, 1845, the newly formed SBC “...established the Board of Foreign Missions and established its headquarters in Richmond, Virginia.”⁹⁰

The SBC leadership generally acknowledges the need for some change to occur, in order to continue its original purpose of the propagation of the gospel. Commitment to funding its unified budget, called the Cooperative Program (CP), has been eroding over two decades. In the 1980s, SBC congregations forwarded an average of 10.50% of undesignated receipts through the CP. For FY 2007-2008, the average was 6.082%.⁹¹

The undesignated receipts from the Cooperative Program are sent on to the state conventions, which then send varying percentages on to the national Southern Baptist Convention for division among its entities. At the national level, the International Mission Board, the renamed Board of Foreign Missions, receives half of the funds received by the national SBC.

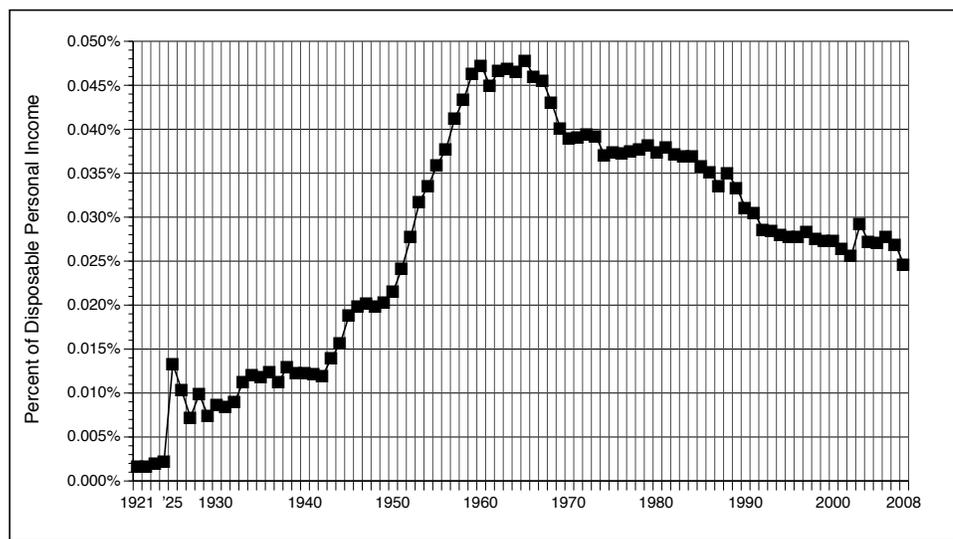
An Indiana pastor summarized the results of the distribution as follows:

As I sat in the convention hall and perused the book of reports at my state convention meeting, I started to do a little mental math based on the proposed budget for 2010... From another perspective, since my church gives 10 percent of its receipts to the Cooperative Program, when I give a dollar to my church, a dime makes it to the Cooperative Program, 3.6 cents goes on to the SBC, and 1.8 cents makes it to the nations through the work of the IMB. So I guess you could say I put in my two cents worth -- almost.

...I cannot accept that less than two cents of my church offering making it to the areas of the world most devoid of a Gospel witness is sufficient. The fault does not lie in the Cooperative Program as a unified funding mechanism. Rather, it lies in the failure of our present system to prioritize distribution of the financial resources to the greatest concentrations of spiritual need. Refusal to face this reality will not serve in the long run to preserve the Cooperative Program. Instead, it will doom it to a slow demise.⁹²

To supplement the Cooperative Program allocation to the Southern Baptist Convention International Mission Board, a traditional Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is sponsored by the SBC Women’s Missionary Union. The Lottie Moon offering is named after an early Baptist missionary. The per member contribution to the Lottie Moon annual Christmas offering actually declined from 2007 to 2008, from \$9.25 to \$8.71. However, the per member contribution had been shrinking as a percent of income since the 1960s. Figure 24, on the following page, shows per member giving as a percent of income to the Lottie Moon annual Christmas offering from 1921 through 2008.⁹³

Figure 24: SBC Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, Per Member Giving as a Percent of U.S. Per Capita Disposable Income, 1921-2008



Source: empty tomb analysis, SBC IMB, U.S. BEA

empty tomb, inc., 2010

The net result of declining support has been a decline in the number of missionaries.⁹⁴

Under the leadership of then Southern Baptist Convention president Johnny Hunt, the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force (GCRTF) was established at the June 23-24, 2009, Louisville, KY, Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, in part to address the negative trends in missions

outreach. What followed was a year of dialogue and exchange of ideas. What is not clear is what was actually accomplished by the June 15, 2010, acceptance of the GCRTF report.

In August 2009, the GCRTF immediately set about its responsibilities by establishing its own Web site, pray4gcr.com, and engaging in meetings with pastors, staff members, denominational employees, and lay SBC entity trustees.⁹⁵

The initial response of others within the Southern Baptist Convention was not always positive. The editor of the national SBC Executive Committee publication, *SBC Life*, wrote an article extolling the virtues of the Cooperative Program unified budget, comparing it to a natural spring that "...bubbles up from the overflow of committed Southern Baptist individuals and churches to fund the cooperative ministries of our convention." Meanwhile, he noted, there may be limits on what should be expected of the SBC: "The ministries and entities of our Convention are led by individuals of broad vision. Many of them can dream up more ministries during a daily quiet time than our churches can fund in a lifetime!"⁹⁶

The Baptist Press, official news arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, announced: "In recognition of the SBC's October emphasis on the Cooperative Program, Baptist Press will provide readers with extra news and information detailing the scope and depth of the Cooperative Program and its impact for the Kingdom. Using vignettes and profiles of churches and individuals, as well as historical and ongoing accounts, our intent is to explain the Cooperative Program not just as a funding channel but as one of the critical ties that bind Southern Baptists in voluntary fellowship for cooperative ministries and missions."⁹⁷ Baptist Press posted 30 articles during October either praising the Cooperative Program and/or questioning the effect of the GCRTF.

When the preliminary GCRTF report included a recommendation to change allocations that would result in less state funding, the state convention directors were given the opportunity to voice their concerns. Articles appeared with titles like, “GCR Report Could Put New Work Conventions ‘Out of Business,’ Mont. Exec. Says”; “Iowa Executive Director, ‘Before Writing Us Off...’”; “‘It Would Devastate Us,’ Ala. Evangelism Director Says”; “GCR Could Trigger Ministry Cuts in Mo.”; “Western Execs Concerned about GCR Report”; “SBC-Va. Leaders Issue Open Letter to GCRTF”; “GCRTF Viewpoint: Kan.-Neb. Exec. Concerned about Proposal”; [Maryland State Convention] “GCRTF Viewpoint: Pill Too Big to Swallow?”; and again Missouri: “Delay GCR til 2011, Mo. Board Urges.”⁹⁸

One state executive offered an alternative plan to making changes to the Cooperative Program as contained in the preliminary GCRTF report. His plan called for stewardship, leadership, and partnership. He proposed that some plan could be developed to be implemented over five to ten years. He underscored his seriousness of purpose with the statement, “Let me speak plainly. We are very interested in supporting this process but not at the price of having our constituents told they ought to devalue our work. We are honor-bound to oppose this maligning of state conventions and, if we must, we will use the means at our disposal to do so. If we do not achieve real partnership, it doesn’t matter how magnificent or inventive our recommendations may be, we will all fail.”⁹⁹

The president of the SBC Executive Committee let his displeasure be known about the recommendations of the GCRTF, one of which was to cut back on the Executive Committee’s budget by one percent to increase the IMB budget by one percent. In a presentation to the Fellowship of State Directors, he stated, “I believe these allocations should not be altered in the absence of an extreme emergency...and I do not view any present circumstance to be at that level of urgency.... This is not in keeping with the evangelistic priority Southern Baptists have long embraced... We should not let either the Lottie Moon offering results or the constant need for more missionaries lead us into a starvation of resources for other Southern Baptist work.”¹⁰⁰

The Southern Baptist Convention is to be credited both for authorizing the GCRTF, and for the open discussion that took place during its consideration. The process may help to highlight what could be termed the effects of “inattentive blindness.” For example, although the SBC believes, in its conservative theology, that those who have never had a presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ are thereby bound for hell, the above comments at the state and national levels could suggest, on a practical level, the fate of the unreached was not perceived as urgent a priority as was the need to preserve the state convention and national structures.

The Baptist Press clearly was promoting the value of the Cooperative Program from October 2009 until the June 2010 convention. To its credit, it also presented the views of those who were deeply committed to goals of the GCRTF. By one informal count, there were 134 articles posted on the Baptist Press Web site, from October 2, 2009 through June 10, 2010, that reported information about the Cooperative Program and/or the GCRTF process. Of those, 79 were either solely promoting the Cooperative Program or critical of the GCRTF, while the other 55 reported news related to, or presented the views of those supportive of, the GCRTF.

...the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force was established in part to address the negative trends in missions outreach.

The leadership employed for the GCRTF was evident, as the president of the SBC brought his considerable pastoral gifts to bear when he challenged members of the convention to “cry out to Jesus.” He was quoted as saying, “I’m so grateful for all that God has done through the years through Southern Baptists, but I believe we’re at a crossroad. I believe we’re at a place where we’re in desperate need of prayer, a desperate need of asking God to touch us again, that we may not only go to the nations but we would be far more effective than we’ve been in the last 50 years in the nation that hosts over 43,000 of our churches and missions.”¹⁰¹

Over the months, the process stayed fairly amicable, which might in part have been due to the commitment of the GCRTF to keep it so. The president of the SBC, Johnny Hunt, declared January 31, 2010, as a day of prayer for the SBC. Several points were included in the call for prayer: “A spirit of repentance,” “A great spiritual awakening across our land,” “A sweet spirit of reconciliation among any Southern Baptists who are at odds with each other,” “Wisdom for the members of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force as they prepare their report in February,” and “Guidance” for SBC entity search committees.¹⁰²

After much dialogue, the GCRTF report, with seven components, was passed at the June 15-16, 2010, Convention Annual Meeting

After much dialogue, the GCRTF report, with seven components, was passed at the June 15-16, 2010, Convention Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, by an estimated 3-to-1 margin, with two amendments that strengthened the stated support for the role of the Cooperative Program.¹⁰³

An overview of the Great Commission Resurgence movement, from the original declaration to the interim report and reactions, was posted by Baptist Press staff at <<http://www.bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=32555>>.

The final April 26, 2010, draft of the GCRTF report, including the components that were submitted to the June 2010 Convention, is available at: <<http://www.pray4gcr.com/reports/penetrating-the-lostness>>.

In the present discussion, the question of interest is whether the effort expended through the GCRTF produced a practical plan with specific goals and timetables, to expand the work of the Southern Baptist Convention in presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person on earth as soon as possible.

This question was asked by Jerry Rankin, then president of the SBC International Mission Board, in a June 21, 2010, posting on “Jerry Rankin Blog” titled, “Did Anything Really Happen?”¹⁰⁴

During the months of dialogue, one state official proposed that it was understandable that Jerry Rankin would want to expand the number of missionaries to reach unreached people groups because, “It is the entity he leads. He wants what is best for the IMB. I do not fault him for that...More resources are needed at every level, the local church, the association, the state convention, the North American Mission Board, and the IMB...We must be careful not to label one field more important than the other.”¹⁰⁵

Rankin, nevertheless, unabashedly continued to champion the right of those who do not have access to the gospel to be reached with the good news of Jesus Christ. In evaluating the results of the GCRTF, Rankin wrote:

Much of our debate centered around concern that Great Commission giving would undercut CP as if we were blind to [the] fact it is already being eroded. I was distraught to hear strong support for deferring these actions in order to study the impact it would have on our programs and entities. It would have been one thing to advocate further study to discover how we could accelerate reaching lostness, but to be more concerned about **OURSELVES** and **OUR PROGRAMS**...! During the next year more than 20 million people among 6,000 unreached people groups will die and go to hell while we act out of concern that we may not be able to continue **our** programs. God help us¹⁰⁶ [emphasis in the original].

The newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Bryant Wright, also reserved judgment as to the implications of the GCRTF vote: “The task force leadership has led the convention in taking a very courageous step, but it is really just a beginning.”¹⁰⁷

One GCRTF recommendation set a goal for “giving no less than \$200-million annually through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions” by 2015.¹⁰⁸ The 2009 Lottie Moon offering received \$148.9 million.¹⁰⁹ At three percent inflation a year, the value of the revised giving goal increase to \$200 million would be cut approximately in half by inflation, and would not expand the International Mission Board’s funding base sufficiently to expand its mission force at a level needed to engage the unreached people groups.

The number of missionaries needed to reach the unreached people groups, and the related cost estimate, came from what might seem to be a surprising source. Given the reservations expressed by the president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee about the GCRTF, it was the Executive Committee, nevertheless, that put out a data call to all SBC entities about their budget needs, and publicized the response from the IMB. In a Baptist Press article, Bob Rodgers, vice president for Cooperative Program & Stewardship with the SBC Executive Committee, wrote about the Executive Committee’s data call. “...the International Mission Board was asked, ‘What additional resources does IMB need to reach all of the unreached people groups?’ IMB’s response was 3,000 more missionaries and additional resources of approximately \$200 million more per year.”¹¹⁰

This \$200 million additional a year figure is in contrast to the GCRTF’s recommendation to increase the Lottie Moon offering goal to a total of \$200 million by 2015, up from about \$149 million in 2009.

No practical plan has been offered to raise this additional \$200 million a year to field the additional 3,000 missionaries. That approach contrasts with the Gates Foundation's specific approach to vaccines discussed above. Where is the leadership within the church, with its clear mandate to share the gospel, to mobilize the few dollars more per member that would be required? As indicated in Table 49, the dollars are less than a nice dinner for two, whether the figure for total or resident membership, or attenders, is used.¹¹¹

Jerry Rankin may be basing his reservations about the accomplishments of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force on experience. Although the

Table 49: SBC Cost Per Member to Fund 3,000 Additional Missionaries, Total Members, Resident Members, and Attenders, 2008

Cost for 3,000 Additional Missionaries: \$200 Million Per Year	Members and Attenders 2008	Additional Cost Per Member Per Year
Total Members	16,228,438	\$12
Resident Members	11,273,945	\$18
Attenders	6,184,317	\$32

International Mission Board announced a specific number of additional missionaries needed in 2007 to engage the unreached people groups around the world, the Southern Baptist Convention as a denomination did not implement a practical plan to fund those missionaries. Although the Southern Baptist Convention leadership publicized the need for 2,800 missionaries in a denominational publication, the need was associated on the same page with increasing unified budget contributions through the Cooperative Program, rather than stating a specific dollar need to fund those missionaries.¹¹²

The problem in sending out the goal number of 2,800 additional missionaries was not a lack of missionaries, as the International Mission Board, for lack of funds, had to delay sending many who were qualified.¹¹³ The problem was not a lack of concern, as a number of IMB Trustees reportedly had tears in their eyes over the fact that they had to suspend sending out more qualified missionaries.¹¹⁴ The problem was not that the goal was not practical, according to the IMB president, Jerry Rankin, who wrote in his blog, “I have often stated the vision that by the end of 2010 we would be unable to identify a people group that did not have access to the gospel. That would not mean our mission task is finished...”¹¹⁵

The difficulty was that from 2007 through 2009 the Southern Baptist Convention leadership did not organize a campaign to raise a specific number of dollars needed to fund the specific number of missionaries needed to accomplish the stated goal of the denomination.

As of May 2010, Jerry Rankin was still promoting the idea that the number of missionaries could be expanded so that “within ten years we will be unable to identify a people group that doesn’t have access to the gospel.”¹¹⁶

Prior to advertising the need for the additional 2,800 missionaries to implement a strategy for completing the task, the International Mission Board had proposed a plan to expand outreach to unreached people groups that would not be limited by funding of the national Southern Baptist Convention. Jerry Rankin wrote about the denominational response to this earlier initiative:

Three years ago the Great Commission Council (SBC entities heads) confronted the International Mission Board for violating the Business and Financial Plan by encouraging churches to adopt people groups and become directly involved in mission strategies overseas. In spite of the fact that no appeal was being made for direct funding to the IMB, it was felt encouraging churches to do missions overseas would undercut what they would otherwise designate to CP. The chairmen of the various entity boards were invited to witness this review. However, most of them were pastors of churches heavily involved in missions and recognized the service IMB was providing was clearly within the parameters of convention policies.

It was also pointed out that many churches received letters of appeal from seminary Development Departments and were recipients of significant designated giving. Almost half of NAMB missionaries were Missions Service corps volunteers who raised their own funds for support. LifeWay was engaged in a campaign at the time called “A Defining Moment” in an attempt to raise \$29 million, much of which was to be used to train pastors in Kenya, print Bibles for China and promote True Love Waits in Africa. Even Guidestone’s appeal to churches to “Adopt an Annuitant” was an expression of direct funding appeals. More recently even the Executive Committee has appealed to churches to underwrite and sponsor conferences overseas as a part of its Global Evangelical Relationship program.

Do churches not also get special appeals from Baptist colleges, children’s homes and other local needs?¹¹⁷

A relevant comment in *The State of Church Giving through 2005* may be of interest, in light of the previous discussion about the possible impact of the “illusion of attention” on denominational officials’ ability to balance priorities between the demands of their institutions and the broader mission outreach of the church: “On an unconscious (or conscious) level, overseas missions might be regarded in the same way as a trained animal, kept in a cage and trotted out at convenient times. Animals, such as elephants, often also provide practical services in the setup and breakdown of a circus, for example, but the animal is given limited freedom to function.”¹¹⁸

As Jerry Rankin asked, “Are we truly obedient in the task or is our obedience not much more than rhetoric?... We proclaim allegiance to the Great Commission, but we are not really engaged in the work.”¹¹⁹

The Southern Baptist Convention is certainly not alone, as denominations and congregations in general are not showing creativity in the areas of completing the task of global evangelization and helping, in Jesus’ name, to stop child deaths. David Platt recounted the experience a friend of his had when going to remote villages that had never heard of Jesus Christ. “Soon thereafter he found himself in another remote village with people who had never heard the gospel. They were warm and hospitable, and they invited him to share a drink with them. One man went into his small shop and reappeared moments later with a classic red Coke can. Immediately, it hit home with my friend. A soft-drink company in Atlanta has done a better job getting brown sugar water to these people than the church of Jesus Christ has done in getting the gospel to them.”¹²⁰

Or consider another development closer to home. Three million iPads were sold in the first 80 days of availability.¹²¹ Starting at \$499, that represented a minimum investment of \$1.5 billion dollars. Those numbers do not include applications or accessories.

Does any denomination have the creativity to raise in a limited number of days the annual cost per member, as indicated in Table 26, ranging from \$3 for Roman Catholics to \$12 for Southern Baptists to \$26 for United Methodists, to support an effort to reach people who have no access to the gospel? The cost per historically Christian church member would be just \$1 per year.

What creative plan has been promoted that would set a short timetable and raise the \$5 billion a year needed for stopping child deaths, again as outlined in Table 26: \$28 per historically Christian church member, \$235 per Evangelical, \$119 per National Council of the Churches of Christ constituent?

To date, it is para-denominational, rather than denominational, groups that are leading the way in setting creative goals.

Wycliffe Bible Translators was not content at the rate of Bible translations. The pace as of 1999 would have meant that the last translation would not be started until 2150. At that point, Vision 2025 was launched, with a goal of \$1.15 billion.¹²² The number of translations has since picked up, and both new strategies and technologies are being applied to the task.¹²³

The Southern Baptist Convention is certainly not alone, as denominations and congregations in general are not showing creativity in the areas of completing the task of global evangelization and helping, in Jesus’ name, to stop child deaths.

World Vision has taken leadership regarding the prevention of child deaths, by launching the Child Health Now campaign on November 16, 2009.¹²⁴ The campaign includes at least three purposes. The campaign will work with local communities, and urge national governments, to improve the health of children in those countries. The second component is World Vision's commitment of a total of \$1.5 billion over the next five years to address child health needs directly as well.¹²⁵ The third component is to use petitions and public pressure to help insure that governments meet the Millennium Development Goal 4 to reduce, by two-thirds, under-5 mortality rates by the year 2015, according to an organizational press release issued at the time of the launch: "The agency aims to ensure that government leaders deliver on their commitments to reduce child mortality by two-thirds by 2015..."¹²⁶

Both para-denominational groups are to be commended for setting comprehensive goals, which include specific funding amounts and specific timeframes, that are on a scale with the need being addressed.

Most church members are still in congregations that are affiliated with denominations. Therefore, denominational leaders have the potential to mobilize a movement to work in concert with para-denominational groups such as Wycliffe Bible Translators or World Vision, or to work through their own networks. The Southern Baptist Convention, for example, has about 45,000 congregations. The denominations in the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) number about the same. If those two groups were willing to coordinate, 90,000 congregations would be focused on funding the needed additional missionaries, either cross-cultural or national, for \$200 million. That works out to \$2,222.22 per congregation. Using a conservative estimate of 100 people per congregation, that goal could be addressed for \$22.22 per person.

There are fewer parishes in the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S., but more total members than either the SBC or the NAE communions. Any grouping could make a difference. Yet, to date, denominational leaders are not leading a drive to finish the task of global evangelization or stop preventable child deaths around the globe.

Jesus has given direction. Perhaps developing a plan could overcome the resistance that seems to be stopping denominational structures from mobilizing to impact these needs. Once such a plan is in place, there will still need to be an acknowledgement that the goal can only be reached with God's assistance.

Commitment. Jesus Christ, fully human and fully God, understood that the resources provided in five loaves and two fish were not enough to feed the hungry crowd. He also understood that the solution was not limited to the resources that the disciples found as a result of their research. Jesus had the plan: having the crowd sit in groups of 50 or 100. The next step was to commit those resources to God, understanding that God would need to act.

Commitment is an important step in the worldview that Jesus wanted the disciples to have.

The church has grown through the commitment of its adherents, as well as their creativity. Francis Cardinal George comments on the different fates of the Roman Empire and the Christian church when Rome fell, generally dated in the late 400s:

Jesus Christ, fully human and fully God, understood that the resources provided in five loaves and two fish were not enough to feed the hungry crowd. He also understood that the solution was not limited to the resources that the disciples found as a result of their research.

...St. Augustine analyzed the impending fall of this Roman Empire, eroded from within by the love of self and pleasure and beset from outside by peoples whom he and other Romans called barbarians.

In the aftermath of the fall of the Western Empire, civilized life in her territories was disrupted. Always missionary in her heart, the Church responded to the new situation with new tools, new translations of scripture, new ways of evangelizing, so effectively converting these barbarian tribes that, within a few hundred years after the fall of Rome, an even greater Europe was again Christian.¹²⁷

Denominational leaders are still showing creativity, but it may not necessarily have to do with the task of mobilizing church members for global evangelization. For example, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and Salem Radio Network hosts planned to use an ambulance and gurneys to deliver petitions with 1.2 million signatures representing opposition to the Federal health care bill.¹²⁸

If denominational leaders applied similar creativity to mobilizing church members to help solve the needs of the unreached, and the children under five who are dying from preventable poverty conditions, they might discover an additional ministry component in the process.

In a news report of their efforts to challenge other very wealthy people to pledge to give large portions of their fortunes away, Melinda Gates was reflective: “There are so many reasons that rich people don’t give, she says: They don’t want to plan for their death; they worry that they’ll need to hire someone to help with the work; they just don’t want to take the time to think about it all.”¹²⁹

Whether it is a will or a bequest, people in general often have difficulty facing their mortality occasioned by planning for their deaths. Giving money now can also create anxiety for the future. Giving money now may heighten an awareness that one day the money will no longer be needed in savings because one day one will no longer be on earth. These “future” questions, so intertwined with personal mortality, have long been in the province of the church. Purpose and meaning are also spiritual concepts. Denominational leaders may find they have a role, not only with the very wealthy but also with the regular-income church members, in helping to free these people from the shackles of mammon.

When Jesus talks of losing one’s life for his sake being a process to finding it (Matt. 16:25, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24; see also John 12:25), he might not be talking only about possible suffering, self-denial, and physical death as a part of discipleship. Jesus may also be suggesting that there is great joy to be had in losing oneself in something so big and wonderful and all encompassing that a whole new perspective is gained. The losing involves being freed from restraints that prevent the individual from seeing that huge wonderful plan that God has designed, and in which each person is designed to have an important role.

In his book, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*, David Platt shares a letter he received from a parishioner that illustrates how pastoral leadership can help people find their life by losing it: “...I have gone from trying to save as much money as I could to trying to find ways to give some of our savings away in addition to regular contributions...Strangely enough this brings me greater

The losing involves being freed from restraints that prevent the individual from seeing that huge wonderful plan that God has designed, and in which each person is designed to have an important role.

joy than I ever experienced with a quarterly 401(k) statement showing a profit. What is wrong with me? It's lunacy!!!... I hope you realize that you may have to live with the knowledge of your actions and their effect on the lives of others for all of eternity. I will be there in eternity to remind you of what you have done."¹³⁰

It is possible that committing one's resources, which for denominational officials would include church structures and the steady income that congregations, to date, still send through channels, would help denominational leaders discover a pastoral leadership role that they may not presently recognize. Mobilizing, rather than managing, church members requires vision-casting, strength of purpose, and a selflessness that raises the sights of church members at all levels. "You feed them" provides an immediate imperative. Denominational leaders need to help their members make sense of that directive.

Such actions will take courage and fresh energy. Jerry Rankin and Ed Stetzer note, "Changing the world is not for the faint of heart. A large, program-driven ministry is a safe and comfortable alternative to missional living. But the bid to maintain our home court with sheer numbers of people and pastors on church campuses is obviously not working."¹³¹

A virologist was asked to evaluate a study that found a relationship between statins and flu survival: " 'If you get yourself to the point where you don't have anything to offer and things are going poorly for the patient, then maybe to try something on a speculative note is appropriate,' he said."¹³²

Current approaches to church growth efforts have been accompanied by the negative membership and giving trends reflected elsewhere in this volume. It may be time for more speculative action, for example emphasizing the basic issues of global evangelization and stopping global child deaths. Denominational leaders may have to step out in faith, in spite of fears about what may happen to church organizational structures and ongoing financial support as a result. Committing church structures and steady streams of income that so many denominational leaders are striving to protect, may be the necessary next step.

Denominational leaders, who have tried so many different theories to grow their churches, may need to sincerely acknowledge their need for help from God to move their church members into increased obedience to the basic mission purpose of the church. Returning to core principles may be what the Great Physician has ordered to restore health to the church.

Obedience. In the event of the loaves and the fish, Jesus involved the disciples in action. They were not allowed to stand back and watch what happened. "Breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples to give to the people" (Mark 6:41b). Did the disciples see mounds of bread and fish piling up in front of Jesus? Or did they reach out their hands to accept what Jesus offered them, with no guarantees there would be more? All we know from the text is that they let Jesus take the resources they had, and then kept receiving those resources back from his hands.

Did the disciples worry about looking ridiculous, taking pieces of five loaves and two fish to the first people, with many others anxiously watching? Did they fear that the 5,000 men would become angry and physically violent if not fed soon,

Committing church structures and steady streams of income that so many denominational leaders are striving to protect, may be the necessary next step.

having organized themselves into groups? One can only imagine. But Jesus built the miracle on the obedience of the disciples, involving them in the distribution of the fish and loaves: “...he kept giving the bread and the fish to the disciples to give to the people.” The process of feeding the people was an ongoing relationship between the disciples and Jesus.

Today, denominational leaders, congregational leaders, and individual members have to make a choice to act on what is being commanded by Jesus in the 21st century: “You feed them.”

As World Vision U.S. president Richard Stearns said, “The real journey of faith requires that our choices, our actions, and everything else in our lives be surrendered to God’s will rather than our own. For the Christian, it is a lifelong process. Belief—that is, faith—is just the beginning. Yes, we must *believe* that Christ loves *us*, but Christ also calls us to *demonstrate* His love to others through the good things that we do, what the Bible calls ‘works.’ Faith without works is no faith at all”¹³³ [emphasis in original].

Stewardship. God through Jesus Christ did not just sustain the hungry crowd until they were strong enough to go and purchase food for themselves. Rather, “They all ate as much as they wanted” [v. 42b].

God’s bounty is not to be taken for granted. The disciples were not to waste God’s provision: “and they picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish” [43].

It is a mistake to believe that God’s abundance evident in the resources available to the church in the U.S. can be mishandled without consequences. Richard Stearns compared God’s perception of a Christian entrusted with resources to the way a person might view a stockbroker: “If you were to put twenty-five thousand dollars in the hands of a stockbroker, how would you feel if you later went to withdraw the money only to find that your broker had used it to buy himself a new car? You would understandably explain to your broker that he had no right to spend your money as he saw fit. As a steward of your money, he should obviously receive a reasonable *commission*, which he could spend on his needs, but you would have expected him to invest your money on *your* behalf.... That’s exactly what God expects of us.”¹³⁴

Speaking of John Paul II’s perspective, Francis Cardinal George wrote, “What is central to John Paul’s interpretation is that freedom and truth belong together from the beginning, that the latter is in fact an essential component of the former. Without correlation to truths rooted in nature and in God, human freedom becomes license or, alternatively, acquiesces in state tyranny. In Augustinian terms, it becomes an improperly directed love, a mere ‘pursuit of happiness’ rather than a structured spiritual activity.”¹³⁵

Jesus had the disciples pick up the extra food. The bounty of God was for a purpose, and not to be thrown away with no afterthought. The resources entrusted to the church in the U.S., provided through God’s grace, are to be cared for in a responsible fashion, so they can be applied as part of God’s plan for a hurting world.

Miracle. Jesus Christ, in his corporeal (physical) body did what might be termed concentrated miracles. He touched a person and the leper was cleansed, the deaf heard, the blind saw, the dead were raised. Jesus spent time with the first disciples,

The process of feeding the people was an ongoing relationship between the disciples and Jesus.

to train them and transform them so they would be able to trust God to do similar tasks, to carry on God's work in the world. Jesus said to the first disciples, "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:11-12, NIV).

However, Jesus' focus was not only on those disciples. In John 17:20, he prays for "those who will believe in me through their message" (NIV). The church today is constituted of those who have believed in the saving work of God through Jesus Christ as a result of the message of the first disciples.

Today, the church in the U.S. is part of the corporate body of Christ. Reports indicate that concentrated miracles still happen, resulting in healings, for example, that cannot be explained in any other way.

In addition, there is great untapped potential for more diffuse miracles as well. The feeding of the thousands need not depend only on five loaves and two fish, but can result from the pooling of many small gifts applied through denominational and organizational structures. Remember the comment of Melinda Gates about vaccines: a miracle. Today, technology provides abilities to heal and feed in a way that would indeed have seemed like a miracle centuries ago. Today, those miracles are often only limited by the level of the church's willingness to distribute them to the crowds of needy people around the globe.

The preaching of the gospel so that every person can make a choice whether to believe can result from teamwork among Christians, whether in the same denomination or in coordination with others. These actions are also miraculous, stemming from the oneness that Jesus prayed for on our behalf, so that the world will know that the Father sent Jesus (John 17:21).

The first disciples still had a lot to learn after the miracle of the fish and loaves. It is in next chapter of Mark that Jesus asks the same disciples, "Are you so dull?" (Mark 7:18, NIV). However, these same disciples were the ones who eventually established the church that today includes the many members in the church in the U.S. Those who claim the name of Jesus are in the same story of which the loaves and fish is an early chapter.

Church leaders and members today do not seem to be more quick than the first disciples in distinguishing God's agenda from their own, in accepting responsibility for the needs that surround them, in focusing on God's priorities, in grasping what research tells them about the resources available, in making plans that set goals at a scale commensurate with the needs, in committing the available resources to God's agenda, in taking the first steps of obedience to meet God in action, or being stewards of the resources that God has so graciously given. However, Jesus is still patiently waiting for his followers to respond to his leadership. Miracles are waiting to happen.

These actions are also miraculous, stemming from the oneness that Jesus prayed for on our behalf, so that the world will know that the Father sent Jesus (John 17:21).

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Next, the percent of the under-5 deaths due to each cause was entered in the spreadsheet row for each of the 68 nations.

Each country's percent of the total number of child deaths was then calculated.

Having calculated a percent of the total under-5 child deaths for each country, that individual percent was used as a multiplier for \$5 billion, which served as a base cost figure for preventing the 8.772 million annual under-5 child deaths. The result was the cost-per-country dollar figure that would be needed to address causes of under-5 mortality in that country. The total calculated cost for the 68 countries was \$4.76 billion, or 95% of the \$5 billion total.

The cost estimate of \$5 billion is the same figure used to develop a cost-per-child death figure cited in chapter 6. The *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* cited a figure of \$52.4 billion that will be needed over the ten years, from 2006 through 2015, to "address the major causes of mortality among children aged < 5 years." The annual average for that estimate was \$5.2 billion a year, thus providing support for the use of \$5 billion for the present purpose.

Once a dollar figure was developed for each country, that dollar figure was multiplied by the percent of each cause of under-5 child deaths within that country. The result was a dollar-cost estimate by country per cause of death for each of the measured categories. Those categories included: Pneumonia; Diarrhea; Measles; Malaria; HIV/AIDS; Injuries; Other; and Neonatal.

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Year	Lottie Moon Christmas Offering \$	SBC Membership	Year	Lottie Moon Christmas Offering \$	SBC Membership	Year	Lottie Moon Christmas Offering \$	Year	Lottie Moon Christmas Offering \$
1921	28,615.78	3,220,000	1945	1,201,962.24	5,866,000	1968	15,159,206.92	1989	80,197,870.78
1922	29,583.67	3,366,000	1946	1,381,048.76	6,079,000	1969	15,297,558.63	1990	79,358,610.87
1923	42,206.37	3,494,000	1947	1,503,010.12	6,271,000	1970	16,220,104.99	1991	81,358,723.00
1924	48,677.00	3,575,000	1948	1,669,683.38	6,489,000	1971	17,833,810.22	1992	80,980,881.11
1925	306,376.21	3,649,000	1949	1,745,682.81	6,761,000	1972	19,664,972.53	1993	82,899,291.40
1926	246,152.84	3,617,000	1950	2,110,019.07	7,080,000	1973	22,232,757.09	1994	85,932,597.88
1927	172,457.36	3,674,000	1951	2,668,051.30	7,373,000	1974	23,234,093.89	1995	89,019,719.75
1928	235,274.31	3,706,000	1952	3,280,372.79	7,634,000	1975	26,169,421.12	1996	93,089,179.27
1929	190,130.81	3,771,000	1953	3,602,554.86	6,999,275	1976	28,763,809.71	1997	100,064,318.10
1930	200,799.84	3,850,000	1954	3,957,821.00	7,246,233	1977	31,938,553.04	1998	101,713,066.69
1931	170,724.87	3,945,000	1955	4,628,691.03	7,517,653	1978	35,919,605.40	1999	105,443,786.95
1932	143,331.24	4,066,000	1956	5,240,745.39	7,725,486	1979	40,597,113.02	2000	113,175,191.96
1933	172,512.86	4,174,000	1957	6,121,585.14	7,952,397	1980	44,700,339.76	2001	113,709,471.17
1934	213,925.81	4,277,000	1958	6,762,448.63	8,221,384	1981	50,784,173.38	2002	115,015,216.49
1935	240,455.12	4,389,000	1959	7,706,847.29	8,413,859	1982	54,077,464.49	2003	136,204,648.17
1936	292,401.57	4,482,000	1960	8,238,471.07	8,631,627	1983	58,025,336.79	2004	133,886,221.58
1937	290,219.74	4,596,000	1961	9,315,754.78	9,978,139	1984	64,775,763.83	2005	137,939,677.59
1938	315,000.40	4,770,000	1962	10,323,591.69	10,192,451	1985	66,862,113.65	2006	150,178,098.06
1939	330,424.70	4,949,000	1963	10,949,857.35	10,395,264	1986	69,412,195.09	2007	150,409,653.86
1940	363,746.30	5,104,000	1964	11,870,649.35	10,601,935	1987	69,912,637.50	2008	141,315,110.24
1941	449,162.48	5,238,000	1965	13,194,357.32	10,770,573	1988	78,787,726.26		
1942	562,609.30	5,367,000	1966	13,760,146.80	10,947,389				
1943	761,269.79	5,493,000	1967	14,664,679.30	11,140,486				
1944	949,844.17	5,668,000							

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