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Adventist Church Growth and Mission Since 1863: An Historical–Statistical Analysis¹

At the 1905 General Conference Session the then president, Arthur G. Daniells—a former missionary, and among the most mission minded of all GC presidents—set out what was in effect a strategic vision for world-wide mission. In it, he called the “great Second Advent Movement” to action.²

Who can tell why seven hundred and twenty of our ministers should be located in America among one-twentieth of the world’s population while only two hundred and forty of our ministers are sent forth to work for the other nineteen-twentieths? What good reason can be given for spending annually \$536,302.76 tithes among seventy-five millions, and only \$155,516.57 among fourteen hundred millions of the world’s perishing? We rejoice that we are able to name so many lands in which we have opened missions; but we deeply regret that in many of them our laborers are so few, and our efforts are so feeble. We should materially strengthen our missions in Nyassaland [*sic*], Rhodesia, China, Korea, Ceylon, Turkey, and Egypt. We should not delay longer to enter such lands as the Philippines, Madagascar, Greece, Uganda, and Persia. All that started this movement at the beginning, and has urged it onward to its present position, urges us with increasing emphasis to press on until this gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world for a witness unto all nations. Then, and not till then, will the end come, for which we so earnestly long. (1905:9)

Daniells’s clarion call could still be repeated today about Egypt, Greece, Iran, and Turkey, yet in large part his vision for thriving, dynamic, global Adventist mission has been realized. Nevertheless, 150 years after the Sabbatarian Adventists united as the Seventh-day Adventist Church

with the creation of the General Conference, and over twenty years after the world church established the global mission initiative, the worldwide distribution of Seventh-day Adventists is uneven with large areas that are still effectively unreached. Daniells's call not only could, it needs to be, repeated for the area of the world that represents the greatest challenge to Adventists (indeed, to all Christians): the so-called 10/40 Window.

This article is a statistical overview of Seventh-day Adventist history and especially of its missions. It both brings out successes, which deserve to be celebrated, as well as aspects of Adventist historical statistics that are cause for more concern than celebration. First, the article highlights that the world church has enjoyed fifteen decades of sustained, even extraordinary, growth. Second, however, it shows that key indicators suggest a decline in the denomination's mission project over the last forty years—there has been a decrease both in the numbers of cross-cultural missionaries in long-term service and in the annual giving to world-wide missions by church-members. Third, the article examines Adventist statistics in the 10/40 Window. It shows that the denomination has enjoyed some success since the establishment of global mission strategies in 1990. Yet key metrics suggest that resources committed to the region by the global Seventh-day Adventist Church *qua* Church are not presently proportionate to the challenge still facing Adventist mission in that region. The article concludes by arguing that the reality of the recent history of Adventist mission brings out the urgent need for a renewed commitment to global mission.

Dynamic Global Growth

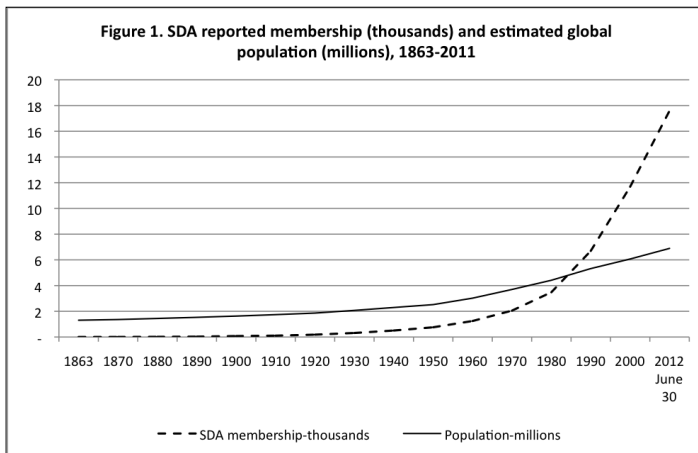
In many ways, the historical statistics of Seventh-day Adventists tell a success story. What once was a North American sect is now a worldwide mission church. Whereas, in the last year of the twentieth century, five of every six Seventh-day Adventists lived in North America, 110 years later, it was 6.6 of every hundred.³ In the half-century 1960-2010, the shift in membership from America, and to a lesser extent Europe and Australasia, to the rest of the world has been even more marked (see G. T. Ng's article in this issue). This reflects the geographical expansion of the denomination but it also reflects a remarkable increase in numbers. Our overall growth since we began with 3,500 members in 1863 has been so great that it is difficult to show in graphical form, for any chart has to show both the tiny beginning membership and today's global church. Table 1, however, brings out the dramatic growth.

Table 1. Reported Seventh-day Adventist Global Membership and Estimated Global Population December 31, 1863 to June 30, 2012

Year	Reported Seventh-day Adventist Global Membership	Estimated Global Population
End 1863	3,500	1,306,000,000
End 1870	5,440	1,360,000,000
End 1880	15,570	1,443,000,000
End 1890	29,711	1,532,000,000
End 1900	75,767	1,628,000,000
End 1910	104,526	1,740,000,000
End 1920	185,450	1,861,000,000
End 1930	314,253	2,070,000,000
End 1940	504,752	2,296,000,000
End 1950	756,812	2,520,000,000
End 1960	1,245,125	3,022,000,000
End 1970	2,051,864	3,698,000,000
End 1980	3,480,518	4,414,000,000
End 1990	6,694,880	5,321,000,000
End 2000	11,687,239	6,067,000,000
End 2010	16,923,239	6,892,000,000
June 30, 2012	17,594,723	7,023,324,899

Table 1 shows not only reported total Adventist membership but also estimated global population.⁴ (All estimates of global population are, of course, just that—estimates, but both here and throughout we are looking for general trends and orders of magnitude, rather than precise data.) It is essential that we consider our own growth in the context of the world’s population. After all, if we were growing by 2.5 percent per annum, but humanity at 3.5 percent, then we would not even be running to stand still—it would be as though we were walking up a down escalator.

What the table does not bring out clearly is that Adventist growth has always been greater than that of the world's population. It is, again, difficult to show in graphic form both Adventist growth and that of the population at large, reflecting two points about the 150 years of official Seventh-day Adventist history. First, the total global population has been measured in billions, whereas the Adventist population was measured first in thousands and now in millions. Second, Adventist membership has grown nearly 1,000 times as much as global population—as table 1 reveals, the world's population has grown since 1863 at around 537 percent, but Adventist membership has grown by 502,700 percent. To combine these sorts of figures in a chart is very difficult. Almost the only way to show the growth in both membership and total population over the denomination's history is to show the former in thousands and the latter in millions, as in figure 1. For our first eighty years, our total membership grew steadily, but remains in the bottom section of the chart—yet since then we are gradually scaling the heights, so to speak.



Now, it is the case that we know, both from close analysis of our statistics and from the results of membership audits (where they have been carried out), that our reported membership is overstated.⁵ Again, however, in the analyses in this article, we are looking at broad trends; so even though we are not certain of our precise membership, we know the broad trend and can measure it against the broad trends in global population at large. And there is good news when we do so.

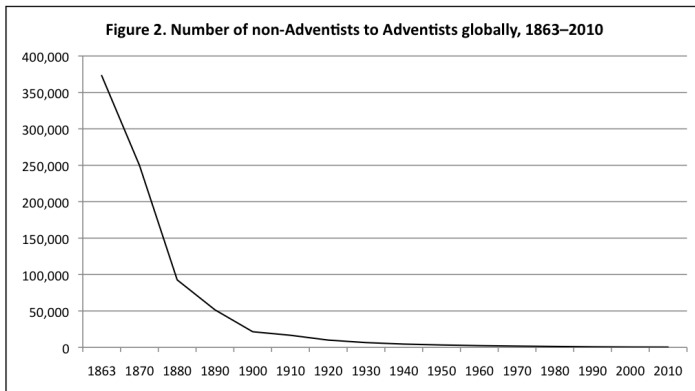
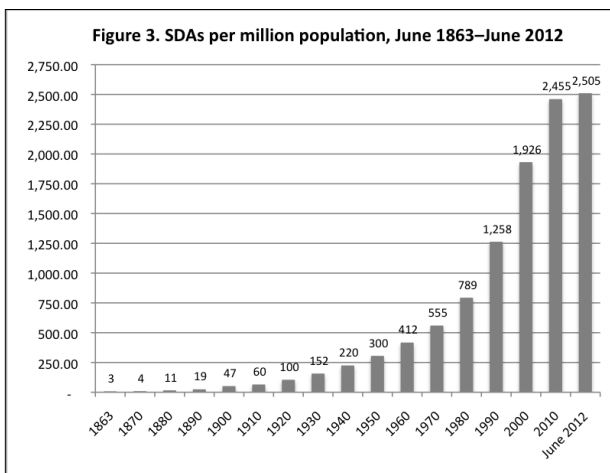
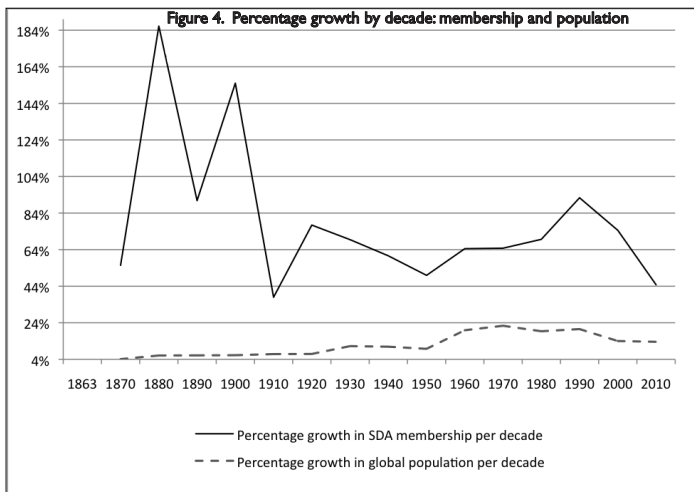


Figure 2, instead of showing net membership and net population, charts the number of non-Adventists to Adventists starting in 1863. This is a more meaningful measurement of how we are doing than net membership. In figure 2, the lower the number, the better from a church growth perspective. Because of its 150 year periodization, the chart does not really show to good effect our growth and the consequent fall in the number of people to every Adventist, because whereas there were around 370,000 people to every SDA in 1863, in 1900 that figure fell below 50,000; at the end of 2010 it was around 407; and as of June 30, the number of people in the world, as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau, to every Seventh-day Adventist, as reported in our membership, fell below 400 to 399.17. Of course, these are only approximations—but the movement is in the right direction.



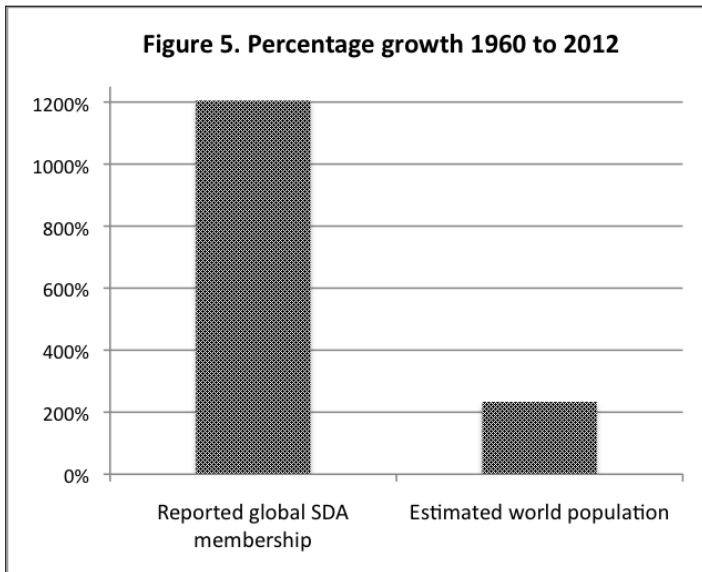
An alternative—and probably a more effective—way of viewing how we stand in relationship to the population of the world is to chart how many Seventh-day Adventists there are for every million people in the world (see figure 3). This time, the higher the number the better (which is what we instinctively look for); also, the growth can be seen more clearly in chart form. Figure 3 shows the increase not merely in our net membership, but also of our numbers in comparison to the general population: rising from around just under 3 Adventists per million in 1863 to a nominal 2,455.5 per million at the end of 2010, and, as of June 30 this year, to just over 2,500 per million. Again, the figures just cited would change a little depending both on our actual membership and on what estimate one uses for the world's population, but the broad trend is clear.

It is even clearer when we look at the percentage growth per decade (see figure 4). This shows that throughout our history our growth rate has been greater than the growth rate of the world's population; indeed, in every decade the former has exceeded the latter considerably. Some readers will note that the *rate* of growth was dramatically higher in our first four decades than ever since, but, of course, it is much easier to have huge rates of growth when starting from a low base. So we would expect to see a decline in our rate of growth as we became bigger. But the encouraging news is that we have *always* grown—and that we are still growing at a greater rate than the population at large. We are not running up a down escalator.



As the numbers of Seventh-day Adventists have swelled, net growth has remained buoyant. Even if we only look at just the last half-century, our growth outpaced that of the world's population at large, even though

the global population's rate of increase rose in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. From the end of 1960 to the end of 2011 the world's population is estimated to have grown from just over 3 billion to just over 7 billion. In the same period, the number of Seventh-day Adventists grew from just under 1.25 million to a reported figure of just over 17 million. Even if some reduction were made to allow for the current overstatement of membership, the contrast in growth rates would still be striking and is shown in figure 5. The world's population probably grew by 233 percent in the approximately 50-year period. The Seventh-day Adventist Church's reported membership grew in the same period by 1,313 percent: nearly ten times as fast.



A Statistical and Spiritual Reality Check

There is much reason, then, or so it seems, to feel satisfied. And yet, is that not the first step into decline? When Nebuchadnezzar, at the height of his power and achievements, declared, "Is this not great Babylon, that I have built . . . by the might of my power . . . ?" (Dan 4:30), it triggered his being brought lower than the lowest slave until he acknowledged God. While we have every right to feel encouraged by the facts of our history of mission, there are also chastening facts on which we would do well to reflect.

First, even encouraging statistics have a sting in the tail. As Gary Krause, director of the Adventist Mission at the General Conference recently observed: "There are more people on earth today who are not Ad-

ventists than there were a hundred years ago” (2012:29). Indeed, at the end of 1863, there were slightly fewer than 1.306 billion people who had yet to hear the Third Angel’s Message. Halfway through 2012, for all our dynamic growth, the equivalent figure is 7.005 billion. It is true that this year, for the first time, the ratio of Adventists to people in the world has (perhaps) just gone below one to every four hundred. Consider, though, that current conservative projections by the United Nations for growth in the world’s population suggest it will increase to 9.3 billion in the year 2050.⁶ This assumes that there will be a rise in diseases and a decline in nutrition, thus moderating the current growth rates in the world’s population. If we take Adventist growth in the eleven decades since 1900, and calculate growth rates per decade, the average (or mean), the median, and the mode are all 164 percent. If time were to last and our church were to grow by 164 percent per decade for the rest of the century, then not until sometime around 2045 would there be more than one Seventh-day Adventist Christian for every one hundred of the world’s people—10,000 for every million. It is quite possible, however, that global population will continue to increase at around its current rate or more, in which case the date Adventists become even 1 percent of the world’s population will be further off. Of course, we realize that not everyone will accept the Third Angel’s Message, but while its adherents do not number even one of every hundred, what chance is there for most people to know enough of the Present Truth to decide whether or not to accept it?

In human terms, then, what hope is there of “finishing the work”? The answer must be “Little” —but then, we have gotten as far as we have, not by human labor alone, but rather by divine blessing of human efforts. The prophet Zechariah was shown in a vision the temple in Jerusalem, the rebuilding had begun but was not yet finished. There seemed no prospect of its completion. Yet God’s message to Zechariah is still his message to us today: “‘Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord of Hosts” (Zech 4:6). And just as God promised in the vision that the temple’s foundations, having been laid, would be finished (4:9), God has promised that “this gospel of the kingdom *shall* be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt 24:14, emphasis supplied).

We know that God works through human instruments. We must, above all, do as Jesus bade us before He ascended to heaven, and be willing to “Go”: to “Go . . . into all the world”; to go to “all nations” (Mark 16:15; Matt 10:16). But we must also, to some degree at least, be calculating in our use and disposition of resources. When Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim good news he instructed them that, in preaching that gospel, they were to “be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matt 10:14).

Reflecting on this text, Ellen White wrote: “We must work in prayer and love, with faith and unwearied patience, hoping all things and believing all things, having the wisdom of the serpent and the meekness of the dove, in order to win souls to Christ.” However, she then went on to declare: “We are not, as a people, sufficiently aroused to the short time in which we have to work, and we do not understand the magnitude of the work for the time. The night soon cometh, in which no man can work.” And, she added, in a striking passage:

I deeply feel the necessity of our making more thorough and earnest efforts to bring the truth before the world. . . . We labor for [souls] indifferently, as though it was not a question of very great importance whether they received or rejected the truth. . . . We hold too much at a distance those who do not believe the truth. We call them and wait for them to come to us to inquire for the truth. (1943:211)

God would have us, then, to be shrewd in how we manage the church and its mission. Are there things we could do, but are not doing, to speed the work given to us by our Lord as his last command? Are we making the best use, as a global denomination, of our collective resources? Or are we, in effect, holding some people groups “too much at a distance”? And are we still as willing, collectively, to “go”?

Areas of Statistical Missional Decline

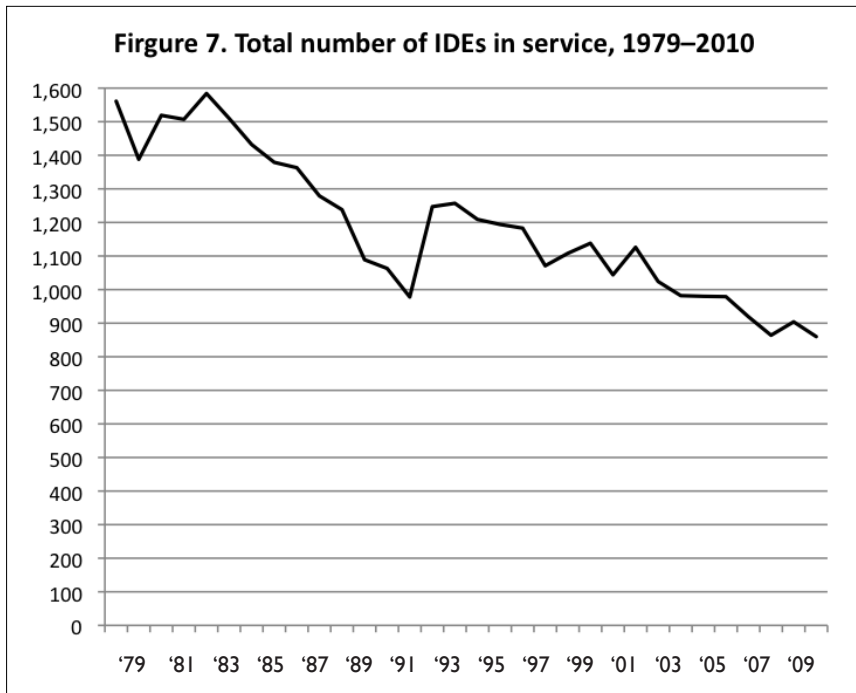
It ought to concern us that the number of men and women serving in the denominational mission program has passed its peak and is currently in decline.

Statistics on the total number of missionaries *in service* each year were not collected until 1979. Up to that point, the missionary statistics collected and reported each year were the number of workers *sent out* to mission fields. Figure 6 shows the decade-by-decade totals of missionaries dispatched by the denomination starting with the 1870s. It is vital to note that these statistics are not just for what today are called “Interdivisional Employees” (IDE)—they include intra-division appointees who were sent to recognized mission fields. Thus, they are indicative of the total Adventist foreign (or cross-cultural) missionary effort.

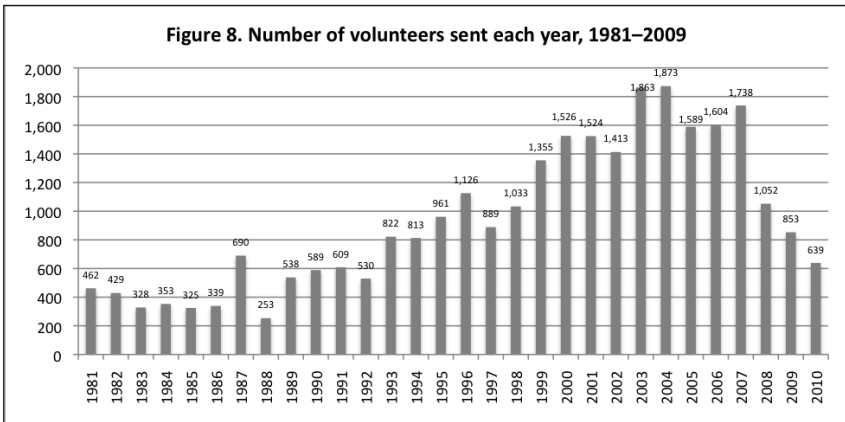


The numbers of missionaries sent each year dipped during the late 1930s and early 1940s because of the Great Depression and World War, but then increased year on year for 25 years. The most missionaries sent out in any year were 473 in 1969, almost matched, the following year by 470 new appointees. The last time over 400 missionaries were sent in a year was 1986.⁷ As figure 6 shows, the decade-by-decade trend peaked in the 1960s, when 3,450 missionaries were sent out, almost matched by 3,421 in the 1970s; but since then, for 30 years, there has been a steady decline.

This is matched by a decline in the numbers of missionaries in service each year; these do *not* include any who took permanent return during the course of the year, but does include those on furlough or annual leave. As noted before, the first year for which we have these figures is 1979. Figure 7 is a chart of total missionaries in the field from 1979 through 2010. It shows that the total number in service peaked in 1983, when there were 1,584 long-term missionaries active; that number has been in decline ever since, with a partial recovery from the mid-1990s through the early 2000s, but a particularly marked decline starting in 2003. This was some years, of course, before the great recession, which thus does not explain the decline in this key statistic.

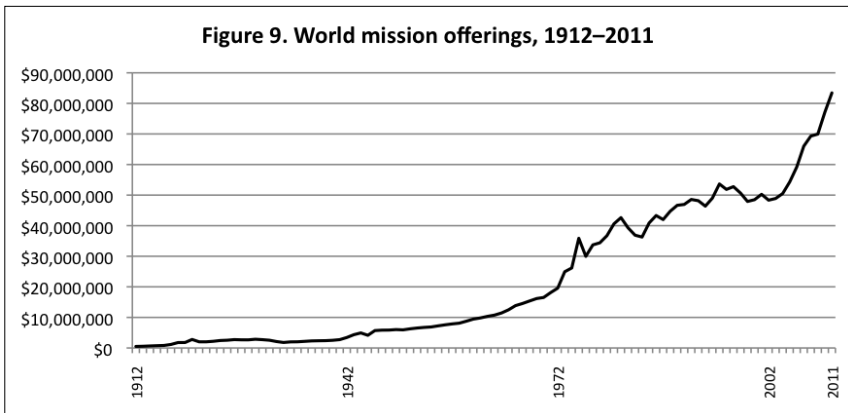


Now, this is not the whole story, of course, for since 1993 the Seventh-day Adventist Church has deployed considerable numbers of global mission pioneers—they are national workers rather than traditional foreign missionaries, but they are taking the gospel to unreached people groups as missionaries would once have done. It is also the case that in the last thirty years a significant feature on the church's missionary landscape has been volunteers; in the last twenty years, in particular, the numbers of volunteers sent out by Adventist Volunteer Service have dramatically increased, and to some extent this makes up for the long-term decline in what today we call IDEs. The expansion in volunteering is illustrated in figure 8, which shows the number of volunteers sent each year from 1981 through 2009.

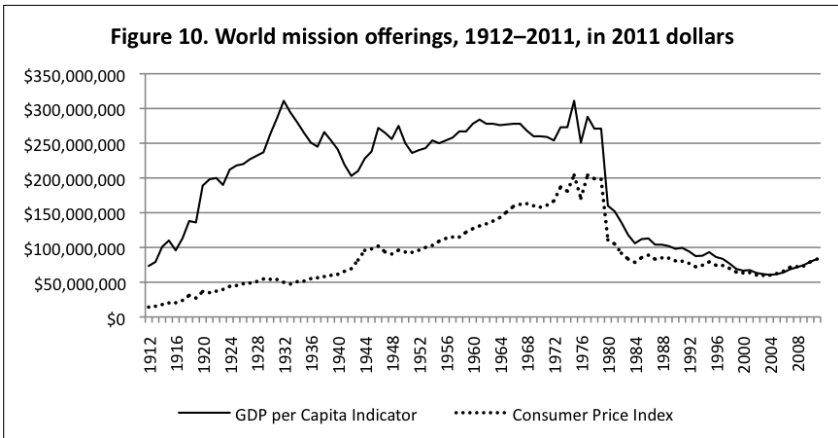


The willingness of hundreds of Adventists, young and old, to volunteer in foreign countries each year bears witness to the interest in mission service among our members—Adventists, it seems, are still willing to “go.” However, two points should be noted. First, while figure 8 shows a recent decline in the annual total of new volunteers, this may be due to faulty reporting. Regardless of this, however, volunteers are, secondly, appointed to one-year terms of service, whereas traditional missionary “appointees” were, and today’s IDEs are, appointed to serve for several years. While there has been little sustained research on average periods of service by long-term missionaries, it is very clear from impressionistic surveys that, in the first century of Adventist mission, it was not uncommon for appointees to serve twenty years or more. This means one might need to send out four or five thousand volunteers to equal the manpower deployment of a thousand IDEs or rather fewer appointees. Thus, while the numbers of volunteers going each year are encouraging, they cannot make up for the fall in the numbers of long-term missionaries—a decline evident, as already noted, in the numbers both of those sent out and those maintained in service.

This ought to be a cause of concern. In Adventist history, it is missionaries who committed long term to the mission field who experienced success. From Fred Westphal, Ferdinand and Ana Stahl, and Leo and Jessie Halliwell in South America, to G. D. Keough in the Middle East, to J. P. Anderson and Harry Miller in China, and many others—our history teaches, I suggest, the importance of the long-term missionary. The decline in the numbers we both send out and have in the field is disquieting.



Also disturbing is the decline in the willingness of our people to give to missions. Figure 9 shows the trend in Adventist mission offerings over the last hundred years.⁸ This indicates that there was a dip in giving in the late 1970s and another in the early 1980s, then a period of virtual stagnation from 1991 through 2003, but sustained increase ever since. Thus far, we might simply say, “Praise the Lord”; and, indeed, the generosity of Seventh-day Adventists and their historical willingness to sacrifice for foreign missions is a large part of the reason for the history of growth outlined earlier. But we know this is not the whole story. First, while the volume of offerings has increased, so has the membership. We need, then, to look at the offering figures per capita. In 1932, at perhaps the height of the Great Depression, the average World Mission Offering per member was \$5.83. It is striking and disconcerting to note, in contrast, that the average amount given per member in 2010 was \$4.81: “\$1.02 lower than in 1932” (Wahlen 2012:28, 29). This is despite the fact that inflation means the value of the 2010 dollars was already less than the 1932 dollars. This brings us to the second point. Figure 9 shows offerings in actual dollar amounts. Yet we know that inflation has been very considerable over much of the twentieth century. What, then, is the *real terms* value of mission offerings?



There are different indices one can use to convert historical dollars to present dollar values. The most familiar is probably the Consumer Price Index, but economists and historians increasingly identify with the GDP per Capita Index, developed by economists at the University of Illinois, as a better indicator of wealth or income (as opposed to expenses).⁹ Figure 10 shows the last century of World Mission offerings converted to 2011 dollars, using both these indices. These show some different peaks and troughs; alarmingly, though, both show that, *in real terms*, the value of world mission offerings peaked in the mid to late 1970s, and then declined year on year for the next 29 years, until a recovery began in 2006 that, thus far, continues; but the real value of last year's mission offering was, depending on the index used, either only 40 percent, or only 29 percent, of the value in 1977. There are, incidentally, five other indicators that economists use in comparing the real value of money across time periods and *all* of them show the same thing: other than a short period of decline during the Great Depression, the value of mission offerings peaked in 1977.¹⁰

Now, as always with statistics, this is not the whole story. Thirty-five years ago there was not the same number of supporting ministries engaged in mission. We know that many people today prefer to give to a variety of self-supporting mission entities rather than to the Church itself. Equally, many prefer project giving, which is facilitated by independent and supporting ministries, unlike the denomination. Even so, the steep decline in giving to the church's official mission program ought to be a cause of concern, for it has been a major source of funding for our work in the mission field. To be sure, money is only one factor in the missiological matrix. As one distinguished ecclesiastical historian writes of the first two centuries of mission after the Protestant Reformation: "Money has

never been a sufficient condition for missionary success; merely a necessary one.”¹¹ However, stable finances are vital for planning and for effective use of resources, and sustained decline in giving to missions must therefore be a cause of concern.

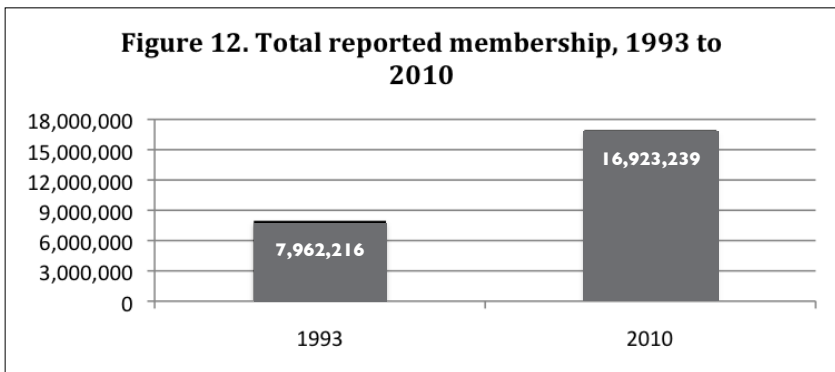
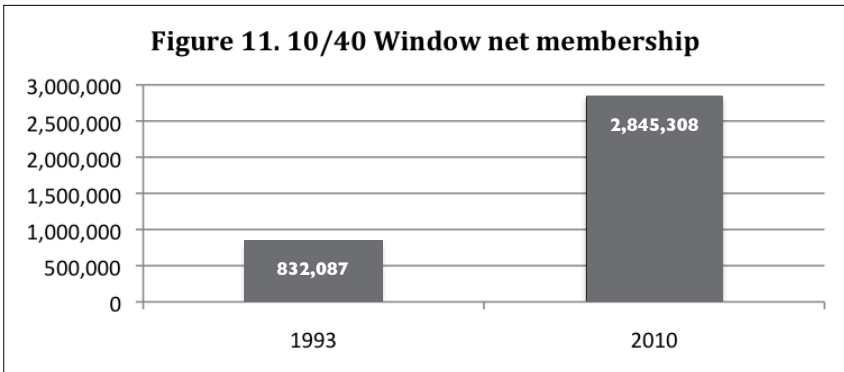
Furthermore, it prompts a number of crucial questions. Is it perhaps the case that the very growth of our denomination in the Global South (documented elsewhere in this issue) causes some members in the Global North to give less to missions? Have members lost confidence in how funds are used by church leaders? Is it perhaps that they simply do not realize how vital a solid funding base is for sustained and successful mission? How conscious are members in prosperous regions of the very real needs in areas like the 10/40 Window (about which I will talk in a moment)? Are we failing to communicate effectively the desperate needs that exist in so many parts of the world? I do not know the answers to these questions, but we need to think more about them.

Adventist Mission in the 10/40 Window

In closing, I want to highlight the challenges that still exist in the mission field, by analyzing Adventist statistics in the countries of the 10/40 Window. Some of these statistics are encouraging; others are rather sobering.

The 10/40 Window concept is now widely familiar. It is not simply defined by latitude, and missiologists debate about what countries should and should not be included. My analysis here uses the list proposed by G. T. Ng in a paper published in 2010 (209),¹² which is almost the same as the Joshua Project’s “Revised List” of 10/40 Window countries.¹³ Rather than being overly concerned with degrees of latitude, it focuses on countries that are unevangelized and that encompass large numbers of “unreached peoples.”¹⁴

It is notable that the term “10/40 Window” emerged around the same time that the Office of Global Mission was established at the General Conference, as part of a new “global strategy for reaching the world’s unreached” and for meeting “the challenge of unentered territories and unreached people groups” (Yost 1989:2). What progress, then, have we made in reaching the world’s unreached peoples since that global strategy was established? How have we done in the 10/40 window, as we understand that term?



The first time separate country statistics were published in the *Annual Statistical Report* was 1993; this is also a significant year for Adventist mission for it was the year Mike Ryan founded the Global Mission Pioneers. In 1993, there were 832,087 Adventists in the nations of the 10/40 Window (fig. 11). At the end of 2010, there were 2,845,308 in those same countries. In the same period, net global membership grew from 7,962,216 to a reported 16,923,239 (fig. 12). That is, in the 10/40 Window there was an increase, over 17 years, of 241.9 percent, in contrast to an increase of just under 97.5 percent elsewhere, with the global church as a whole increasing by just over 112.5 percent (fig. 13). In other words, even if church leaders are no longer sending as many missionaries and even if members are not giving as much to foreign missions, in the 10/40 Window the church has still grown more rapidly than in the rest of the world.

Figure 13. Percentage increases, 10/40 Window vs. rest of the world, 1993 to 2010

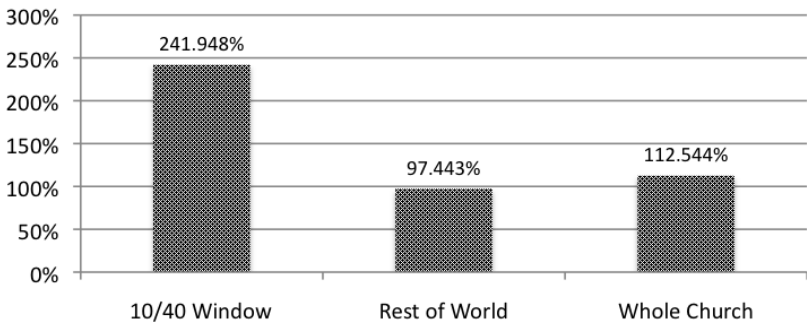
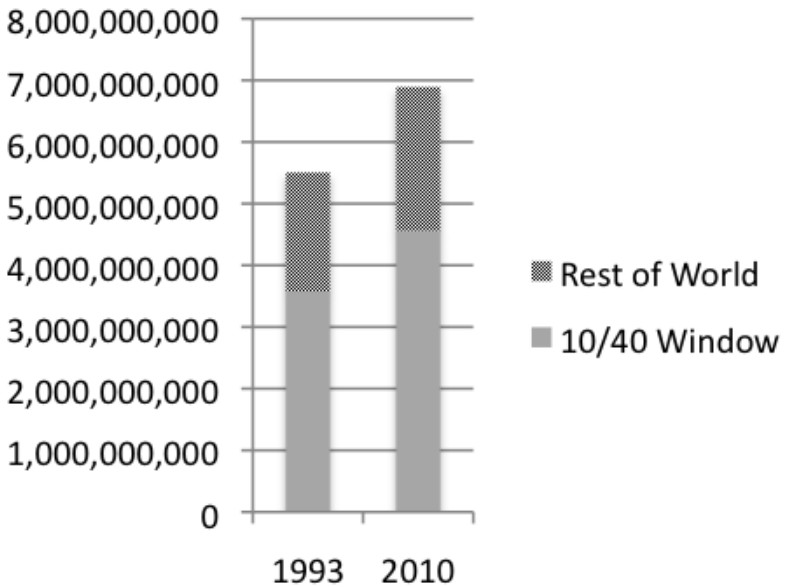
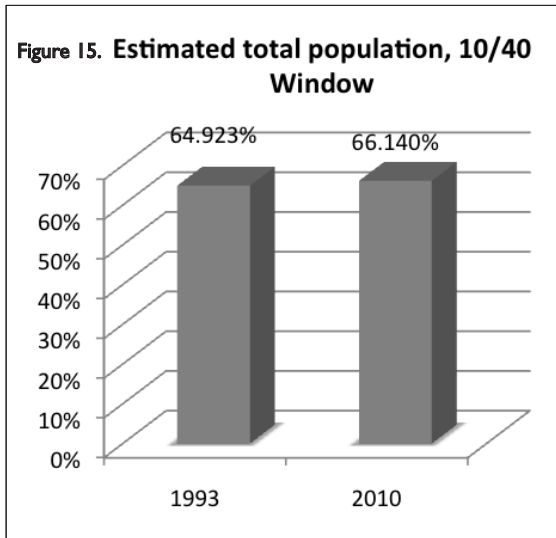
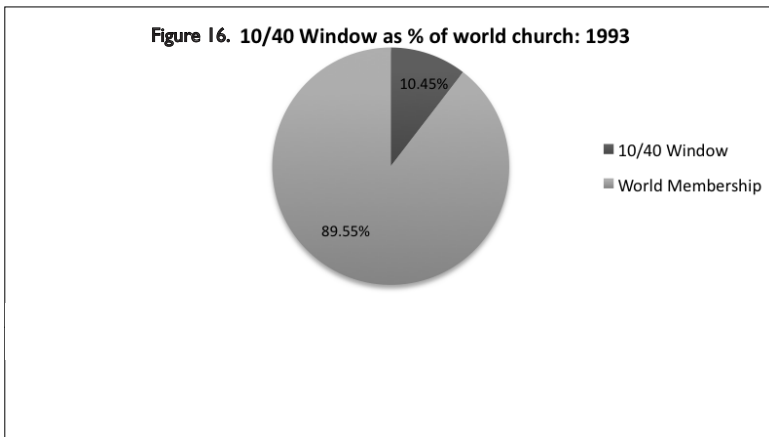


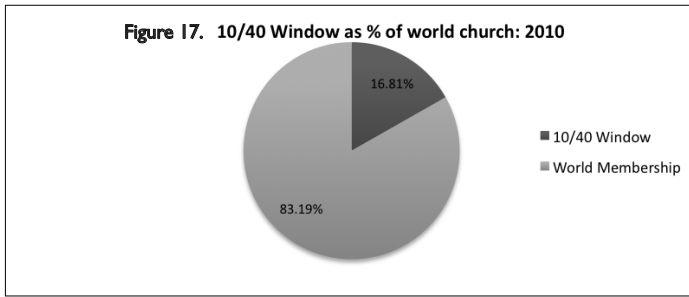
Figure 14. Estimated population, 10/40 Window and rest of the world



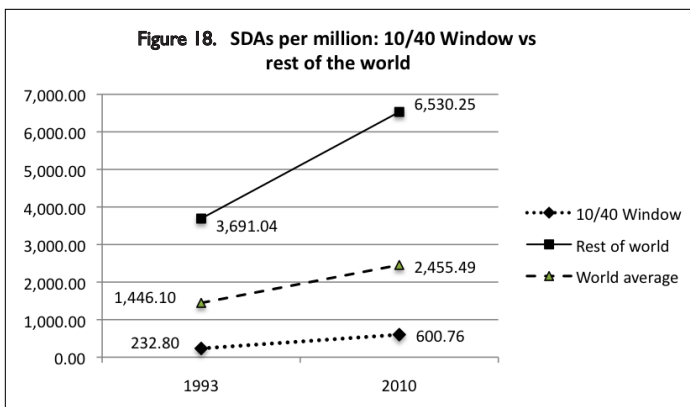


However, net numbers are not the whole story; we have to look at the bigger picture. During those 17 years, as figure 14 illustrates, the population in the nations of the 10/40 Window grew from 3.574 billion to 4.558 billion, a rise in the 10/40 countries' share of global population from just under 65 percent to two-thirds, as illustrated in figure 15.



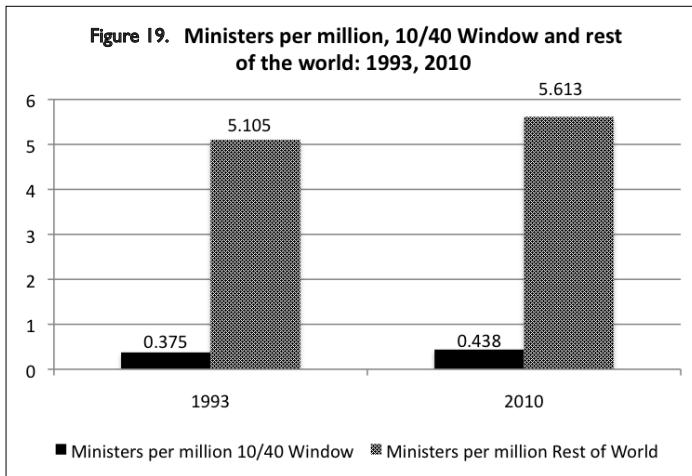


Even though the peoples of the 10/40 Window are decidedly the majority in the world, contrast that with their share of Seventh-day Adventist membership. In 1993, those 832,000 believers in the 10/40 Window were 10.45 percent of the total membership (figure 16). In 2010, the nearly 2.85 million believers were 16.81 percent of the total reported membership, or just over one in six (figure 17). To put it another way, in 1993, almost 90 percent of the world’s Adventists were drawn from 35 percent of the world’s population; at the end of 2010, less than one-third of the world’s populace supplied 5 out of every 6 Seventh-day Adventists. We are not talking here of the Global North and South, since Southern countries are some of the chief strongholds of the denomination, in membership terms. We are not talking now about economic development, or mission heartlands versus new territories, but about evangelized and unevangelized nations and about reached and unreached peoples. The challenge of the 10/40 Window confronts Adventists in the Global North and South alike.



If we compare the number of Adventists per million in the 10/40 Window to the rest of the world, the magnitude of the task that faces us becomes even clearer. And remember, it is this comparison that gives the clearest sense of missional success or failure, more than net membership figures. You will recall that the current global average has just reached 2,500 per million. Figure 18 shows how disproportionately our membership is clustered outside the 10/40 Window and how slowly this is changing. In 1993, when the global average was approaching 1,450 Adventists per million of population, the average in the nations of the 10/40 window was only 232 per million, while in the rest of the world it was nearly 3,700. At the end of 2010, when the global average was 2,455 per million, in the 10/40 window it was only just 600, while in the rest of the world it had risen to a remarkable 6,530 per million. Proportionately, then, our growth in the 10/40 Window is much smaller than outside it. Global Mission is having an effect, but not as much of an effect as is needed.

One final metric suggests that the global Seventh-day Adventist Church might perhaps be able to do more to reach the unreached. If we consider how our resources are distributed, it is no coincidence that though our statistics in the 10/40 Window are heading in the right direction, much remains to be done. Remember that in 1905 A. G. Daniells regretted that three out of four Adventist ministers were “located in America among one-twentieth of the world’s population” which meant that 75 percent of the pastors were serving 5 percent of the world’s population. The ratio today is better, yet the distribution of ministers is still not proportionate. As of 2010, 4,588 out of 26,060 ordained, commissioned, and licensed ministers served in North America—17.6 percent. If we take ordained ministers, the figure is 3,653 out of 17,272 or 21.15 percent.¹⁵ Yet North America has a little less than eight percent of the world’s population and around 6 to 8 percent of the global Adventist population. In other words, at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, just over one in six Adventist ministers, and over one in five ordained ministers (the more experienced section of the pastoral work force) were still located among around one in twelve of the world’s people—and between one in twelve and one in seventeen of the world’s Seventh-day Adventists. Furthermore, whereas there are 70 ministers for every 100,000 members in the 10/40 Window, in the rest of the world the figure is nearly one hundred per hundred thousand. And if we count ministers per million, rather than members, figure 19 shows that the imbalance is more marked. Today there is rather less than half a pastor for every million people in the 10/40 Window, only up by six one hundredths from the figure in 1993. But for all those 17 years there have been over five ministers per million in the rest of the world, and today is approaching 5.7 per million.



Thus, the disproportionate growth outside the 10/40 Window in the 1990s and 2000s reflects a disproportionate distribution of the ministerial work force. Here, too, we see the significance of the decline in long-term missionaries; for it is more ministers that are needed in the 10/40 Window: more dedicated workers not short-term missionaries, if the huge unreached people groups of the 10/40 Window are to hear the gospel. As Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few.” “Therefore, . . . pray . . . the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Matt 9:37; Luke 10:2, emphasis added). But as well as prayer, our church needs collectively to decide that it will both seek more laborers and then allocate them to areas of the world where the bulk of the harvest remains to be gathered.

Conclusion

There are those in our ranks in Western countries who argue that there is no longer need of cross-cultural missionaries, or of giving to missions. Careful consideration of our statistics suggests otherwise. Large parts of the world are now evangelized, including much of southern Africa and Latin America, as well as the traditional heartland of North America. But our success in Brazil, the Caribbean, Zambia, and Zimbabwe must not blind our church members—or blind the church’s leaders—to the reality that, in West Africa and North Africa, in the Middle East and the Far East, in Central Asia and Southern Asia, and much of Southeast Asia, there is still a huge task awaiting us. The burden of that task will continue to fall, to a great degree, on the Global North, which is rich in resources, includ-

ing well-educated and highly skilled human resources—but missionaries must also go out, in ever-greater numbers, from the Global South.

I suggest that this historical/statistical overview indicates that our Church not only still needs men and women willing to “go” and serve in foreign countries; and it not only still needs those of our members who cannot go to give; but it also requires administrators to be committed to sending out missionaries, to maintaining them, and to deploying denominational funds where they are most needed. We also, of course, need to be committed to God and in touch with him. We face enormous odds, but no greater than those faced in the nineteenth century by our pioneers, who dared to believe that the gospel and the Third Angel’s Message *could* be taken into “all the world.” If the “great Second Advent Movement” is to continue to be a dynamic movement, one that goes, as Christ envisaged, “unto the uttermost parts of the earth,” then we not only need the same daring as our pioneers; we also need to have, and to promote among our church members, the same commitment to institutional mission.

Notes

¹This article is based on the author’s report to Annual Council, 2012, but has been revised for publication. The author is grateful to Benjamin Baker, Gina John, and Joshua Marcoe for their assistance in identifying and assembling historical statistics, and to G. T. Ng for comments on an earlier draft. However, the author alone is responsible for the text that appears here. Biblical quotations are all from the King James Version.

²A term favored by James White in the 1860s and 1870s, but given new currency the year of Daniells’s speech by its use in the title of John N. Loughborough’s pioneering history, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* ([Nashville, TN]: Southern Publishing, 1905).

³In 1899, 10,797 of an official total of 64,003 Adventists lived outside North America; in 2009, the figures were 15,199,722 of 16,307,880: see “Summary of Statistics of Conferences and Missions for the Year Ending December 31, 1899,” *General Conference Bulletin*, 3 (1899-1900): 119; *147th Annual Statistical Report—2009*, p. 4.

⁴In this article, unless otherwise stated, estimates of global population come from the Population Reference Bureau: <http://www.prb.org/>

⁵Director of Archives, Statistics, and Research, report to Annual Council, 2011; cf. Mark Kellner, “Adventist Church membership audits planned, revised figures contemplated,” <http://news.adventist.org/archive/articles/2011/10/09/adventist-church-membership-audits-planned-revised-figures-contemplated> (Adventist News Network report, Oct. 9, 2011).

⁶These estimates come not from the Population Reference Bureau, but from the Population Estimates and Projections Section of the Population

Division of the U.N.’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs: see http://esa.un.org/wpp/unpp/panel_population.htm

⁷These figures derive partly from *Annual Statistical Reports*, and partly from reports from the GC Secretariat (in GC Archives, Record Group 21).

⁸Given in US dollars, but as the figures reported each year were already converted into US dollars, there is comparability.

⁹Details can be found at <http://www.measuringworth.com>. The GDP-per-capita-index is preferred for comparative analysis of historical and contemporary incomes by both Niall Ferguson, who holds the Lawrence A. Tisch chair of history at Harvard University and David Reynolds, chair of international history at the University of Cambridge: see Niall Ferguson, *High Financier: The Lives and Time of Siegmund Warburg* (London: Penguin Books, 2011) and David Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

¹⁰All these indices are available from <http://www.measuringworth.com>

¹¹Alec Ryrie, “The Waters of Babylon or a City on a Hill? Loyalty, Dissent and the Dilemmas of Exile in the German and English Reformations,” paper read at the conference “Sister Reformations II/ Schwesterreformation II,” Humboldt University, Berlin, Oct. 13-15, 2012, p. 11.

¹²According to its definition, “The 10/40 Window . . . encompasses the following 65 nations: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, China, Djibouti, East Timor, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Iran Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Western Sahara, and Yemen.”

¹³<http://www.joshuaproject.net/10-40-window.php>

¹⁴A term generally attributed to Ralph D. Winters in a presentation at the 1974 Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization.

¹⁵*148th Annual Statistical Report—2010*, p. 7.

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