

A Missional Meditation upon a Spell Check
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My friends and colleagues know that one of my passions is writing. Like any writer seeking for excellence, I use the “spell check” function in my word processing programs – whether I want to or not! Spell check can either bless you or bug you! Mine continually catches words that I already know are correctly spelled but spell check “thinks” I have it wrong!

For example, consider the spell check of the words “unreached” and “*unreached peoples*.”

I’ve been writing and teaching about the strategic missions challenges of unreached people groups for years. Thankfully, I had the privilege of teaming with others in the early 1990s to research and publish much of the strategy and focus on unreached peoples for our denominational World Missions ministry. Those developed into broader resolutions and measures that were brought to our International Executive Council and eventually entered into the current record of the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) *General Assembly Minutes* as the official-operational prayer, adoption, evangelization strategies towards unreached people groups for our global movement.

So, here is a list of five results I get (getting it now with red underlines in the text!!) when I input/type the word “unreached.” I’ll connect a “missional meditation” on each one:

1. “*undetached*” [unattached] – Unreached, unengaged people are lost, “*undetached*” [unattached] from God and His people. Paul reminded a formerly unreached people group in Ephesus that before their attachment to God, they had been, “...separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2.12).
2. “*unleashed*” – The Psalmist asked (Psalms 1.2), “Why do the heathen [nations] rage?” Across our world, a global rage has been *unleashed* among earth’s peoples. Angry, searching, on the move, anxious – much [not all] of their fury, hatred, and despair is fueled by sinister, unseen enemies of Christ’s kingdom. They need the hope of the gospel! As the gospel of Jesus Christ enters an unreached people group, reconciliation and peace is the end result! Ephesians 2.14-18 indicates that Jesus Christ, “...is our peace,” and has “put to death hostility.”
3. “*unsearched*” – Unlike Luke 15 where a shepherd, a housewife, and a father were searching for “that which was lost,” many unreached peoples remain *unsearched*. It has been said that the only thing worse than being lost is – being *lost with no one searching for you*. May that NOT be our indictment at the judgment seat of Christ (i.e. that they were lost and we were not searching)!
4. “*unrelated*” – No matter where I go on this earth, I know I have a physical family (in Tennessee, Georgia, Arizona, California, Texas, and Florida) and a global spiritual family. I rejoice in Paul’s encouragement to the Ephesians – that they have a “family in

heaven and on earth” (Ephesians 3.15) and God’s redeemed people, “...are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and *members of God’s household...*”(Ephesians 2.19)! Think of unreached people groups as yet *unrelated* future relatives who are still without a Christian global family. In the words of the old gospel song, when we get to heaven, “Will the circle be unbroken?”

5. “*untreated*” – God’s word is full of the grief, burdens, and laments of His people (especially the Old Testament prophets) as they cry out for justice and “Shalom.” One of the Bible’s most poignant is the section between Jeremiah 8.20 – 9.1 where “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” Seeing the wounded and dying yet *untreated*, Jeremiah cries out, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?”

May the Summer of 2012 not come to an end without our own personal recommitment to go to the ends of the earth – or across our community – to find unreached people groups to make sure they are no longer *undetached* [unattached], *unleashed*, *unsearched*, *unrelated*, and *untreated*.

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