



Understanding the Resistance

In October I wrote about resistance to using numbers in mission. I quoted from community members who told us that **we should not be surprised** when people resist our numbers. We are not the first people to experience this and we will not be the last. This time I want to highlight some things you shared with us about **why people resist the numbers**.

“We don’t use numbers in mission.” Bob Waymire says that using numbers in mission is relatively new and many people still resist it. Some even think that research is unspiritual. Bertil Ekström notices that European Christians often have a stronger

suspicion of statistics. Is this the usual European skepticism? Or is it part of the “post-modern” mindset?

“You use numbers because you don’t have real experience.” David X has learned from his relatives who are farmers. Sometimes “experts” come to them and use numbers to speak about farming. They think, “Maybe you don’t really understand our problems. Is there enough dirt on your boots?” Remember, says David, that we need the numbers and insights we get from them, but we also need people who experience the dirt of farming. And we need to connect the two together. Do the numbers make sense in the real world?

“We smell Bad Data.” Bob, Bertil and David all know of people who have tested numbers and found that they are wrong. This may not be your numbers! In the Cape Town 2010 conference the morning on unreached people groups was not good. Bertil thinks that, because of that experience, some people now react badly every time someone shows them numbers.

“We disagree with your assumptions.” David notes that numbers are associated with “managerial missiology” – a perceived attempt to impose a business form on the work of the Body of Christ. Many Christians resist assumptions that others consider obvious - such as looking for unreached people groups or taking a church planting approach to evangelism. Mark Avery notes that people usually don’t read your well-developed write up. So they don’t listen to your assumptions, but they make their own assumptions about your assumptions.

“Your numbers may not tell the whole story.” Tim Halls notes that using numbers can give a distorted picture of mission and a distorted picture of the people we are counting.

“Data is a threat to us!” Mark Avery comments that the person who comes with real information carries an authority. This is a threat to people who have never really tested what they think they know. They begin to get your message and they don’t like it. They might have to change, and change is uncomfortable.

So I think we have a problem. If someone resists our numbers, it could be for any of the reasons above ... or some other reason! Their response may look the same to us. But we have to deal with it in a different way. It is no good persuading them that your data sources are good if they don’t trust your assumptions. Next quarter I hope to share with you some of our readers’ suggestions for dealing with these issues. It is not too late to send us your own ideas and comments!

Chris Maynard





Fruitful Practices Research Project

by Gene Daniels

The Psalmist declares, "Great are the works of the Lord; they are studied by all who delight in them" (Ps. 111:2, NASB). For the past several years, Fruitful Practice Research has been studying the works of the Lord as more and more churches are being planted in the Muslim world. Our multi-agency team has used an inductive approach to identify the common, most effective practices which result in new churches among Muslims, with the end goal of helping workers learn from those who have cut a path before them.

For the purposes of our research, "Fruitful Practices" are activities and innovations which contribute to establishing new ekklesias among unreached Muslim people groups. (Since there is no general consensus as to what constitutes a "church," the Fruitful Practice Research team has chosen to use the Greek word ekklesia whenever possible in our writing.) This multi-year study has included two major rounds of research, each with two primary components. The quantitative component consisted of two rounds of surveys with members of effective teams from a network of agencies representing several thousand workers in the Muslim world. The qualitative component was in-depth interviews with almost 400 experienced church planters who had seen at least one church started among a Muslim people in a Muslim majority context. The first round of research established the original baseline of our findings, that is a list of 68 specific practices which our data supported as being associated with fruitfulness (www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/26_3_PDFs/26_3FruitfulPracticesList.pdf). The primary goal of the second round of research was to test those findings in a more diverse population. We did this because the first round of research inadvertently over-sampled Western expatriate workers, something we intentionally corrected in the second round of research where 67% of those interviewed were either non-Western expatriate or near-culture church planters. While we do not claim to have captured the whole picture, we do believe our results offer an exceptional breadth of insight into the way the Lord is working in the Muslim world.

Currently we are focused on two different kinds of products from the latest round of research. First, we are producing analytical reports on specific sub-sets of data such as Sub-Saharan Africa (currently available) and all-women workers (available spring 2015). Second, we are producing, in partnership with GMI, a second narratives book, this one entitled *Where There is Now a Church*, available at <http://www.gmi.org/products/books/gmibooks/where-there-now-church>. Like our first, very popular, narrative book, this one tells true stories from our qualitative research about the way new churches have emerged in different settings across the Muslim world. Each narrative shows how various Fruitful Practices look in combination and in a real, field settings. For more information on this project please write to info@fruitfulpractices.org.

See You There

One or more of us will be attending each of these upcoming events:

Blue Med (January)

CAC (February)

"Can We Measure Transformation" (March - A Global Connections one day event in London, UK)

EMDC (April)

If you are attending one of these gatherings and would like to share a meal or just chat over coffee, then please drop us a note at cmiw@worksmail.net.

Maybe you are attending a function in April 2015 or onwards where you expect other information workers will be present. If you would like to meet them face-to-face, please also let us know. We'll feature your event in our next bulletin.

And we certainly hope to see many of you in May at the 7th INTERNATIONAL LAUSANNE RESEARCHERS' CONFERENCE This is really designed for us mission information workers. It is not too late to submit a paper or project. There are more details in our previous bulletin at <http://www.globalcmiw.org/resources/cmiw-bulletin-v4n4-2014-10.pdf>.



Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: Justin Long

1. [CMIW] **Please tell us about yourself and your family.** . [JL] I came to the Lord very early in life, thanks to the influence of my mother, and came to my missions calling as a young adult. I was working with AIMS (www.aims.org) in the late 1980s on a temporary data entry job. One night I was doing a tape backup (those things that used to take 4 hours) and was bored (this being before Facebook, Twitter or Kindles). I started going through the literature filing cabinets and reading about the various agencies that were members of the association. As I was standing there skimming, it was as if the back of the filing cabinet fell away, and I was staring out over a crevice or canyon. There were people there - huge masses of people - and they were staring back at me. Instinctively I knew God was showing me this thing called the "unreached people". As they were looking at me, I realized they wanted to say something, but they couldn't - they were mute. Suddenly the back of the filing cabinet was back, and I was standing there, weeping. I knew without a shadow of a doubt God wanted me to be a

voice for them. But I had no idea what that meant, or really even what the unreached were.

The next several years were a learning experience for me. When my wife and I married in 1995, we were invited to work on the World Christian Encyclopedia with Dr. David Barrett, Todd Johnson and others. We spent four years there, and I became a missions researcher there. I also learned from Dr. Barrett's enormous passion and boldness for the unreached.

After the Encyclopedia project was finished we went on to a number of other projects, culminating in our current role with Act Beyond. Along the way we added four children to our family, who now range in ages from 10 to 16.

2. [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?** [JL] I serve with Act Beyond as a missions researcher and activist for the unreached. I am part of the Ephesus Global Facilitation Team. The role of the Ephesus team is to catalyze teams to start "cascading CPMs" – church-planting movements that start in a people group but then cascade into adjoining people groups, so that whole clusters are reached. We want to take on families of peoples with coordinated strategies. To that end, I'm mainly focused on documenting places where the Gospel has yet to go as well as existing movements (through case studies).

3. [CMIW] **What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?** [JL] My work on the World Christian Encyclopedia was formative for me. I'm pleased with some of the parts I had in that. I had my fingers in most of the tables, graphs, etc. But it really shaped me more than I shaped it. I'm working on several projects - the District Survey (which explores the world's places and populations down to the 100,000 population level) and Cluster Forecasts. But I think what gives me the most satisfaction is my interaction with people via social media, my blog, and my weekly newsletter. I like helping people get practical answers that spark strategic decisions. Basically I want to see people take information and DO something with it.

4. [CMIW] **What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?** [JL] I want to see more peoples more adequately engaged than are now. I want fewer peoples to be 'mute' at the end of 10 years than they are now. I want to see the whole church working together to bring the whole gospel to the whole world. I want there to be fewer unreached peoples to weep over.

5. [CMIW] **Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?** [JL] I make my resources available largely for free, and I'm certainly available to help consult. I do keep my focus pretty narrow as there's only so much any one individual can do, so I try to do my "few things" and not take on additional projects. That said, within the scope of my "few things" I'm open to working with just about

anyone, especially if it results in more peoples being engaged.

CMIW recommends that you visit “The Long Page” at <http://justinlong.org/>. It is well named. There you can begin to engage with Justin and his mission information.

Information from the Word

The whole of Proverbs 8 should be a great encouragement to information workers. In verse 22 wisdom says, *“The Lord formed me from the beginning, before he created anything else”* (NLT). God considers wisdom so important that he decided not even to begin the work of creation without it. If wisdom was essential to God’s work of creation, then how important is she in our work of reconciliation?

Final Details:

- This bulletin is produced by the Community of Mission Information Workers Task Force comprised of Larry Kraft, Stephanie Kraft and Chris Maynard. Please send any suggestions of issues to discuss or any other ideas to [“cmiw@worksmail.net”](mailto:cmiw@worksmail.net).
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