



“Correct Me If I'm Wrong”

*The quarterly bulletin of the Global
Community of Mission Information Workers*

Volume 5, Number 4, October 2015

Letters to Young Researchers

Welcome to our bulletin's newest feature: **“Letters to Young Researchers”**. Because our vision statement ends with the affirmation that we are committed to reproducing and multiplying in the younger generations (see www.globalcmiw.org/vision.html) we've decided to invite some experienced men and women who have been involved in missions information work to share their hearts and counsel, especially as it relates to motivating and affirming younger folks.

Our first letter comes from Rev Dr Darrell Jackson.

“Allow God to bless and extend your natural curiosity!” This is the best advice I have for any researcher, experienced or newly qualified, supporting and serving global mission. Before I expand on this, I'd like to say a little about my own research experience in the context of Christian mission and ministry.

I trained in the UK in the late 1980s, serving as a local pastor into the early 1990s. The kind of questions I had about my neighbours and the young people I worked with were not readily answered by my textbooks. They were questions best answered by the kind of research that people like Peter Brierley (former Director of Christian Research Association) was carrying out.

Later, I served as the national mission adviser for the Baptist Denomination in the UK. My consultancy and training role lacked an adequate research foundation and I developed a more robust procedure for our denominational census. This done, I introduced processes of community and neighbourhood audits to our consultancy programmes.

A three-year term as the Executive Researcher for the Conference of European Churches, ending in 2007, was focused on the research of good practice regarding mission and evangelism in Europe.

Throughout this twenty year period of ministry I leant heavily upon my natural curiosity to learn more about God's world, its people, and our calling to engage it with the Gospel. A personal obsession with finding out more about all this “stuff” is the primary qualification for a mission researcher. It's this that continues to drive my research interest in global diaspora and patterns of migration. It's also why I remain committed to supporting mission researchers through my role with the Lausanne International Researchers' Network.

A second piece of advice I would pass on is to keep one simple question at the heart of all your research activity. For the last twenty years or so, everything I have done in mission has been directed towards helping congregations and agencies answer one question (with several parts):

- “What is God calling you (as a congregation, agency, or group of believers) to be and to do at this time and in this place?”
- Every spreadsheet, every database, every set of field notes should provide a researcher of mission with an answer to this basic question. Some have called this active listening, others prayerful listening. I've tried to develop a practice of what I call prophetic listening. I come from a part of the Baptist tradition that was touched by charismatic renewal where “speaking prophetically” was acclaimed as a valuable spiritual gift. I've learned that research might indeed enable and equip others to speak prophetically but if that is so then I'm convinced that we, as researchers, need to cultivate the spiritual gift of prophetic listening.
- Prophets were the individuals in the life of the nation of Israel who tried to understand their times



and their context and, out of this understanding, to speak on behalf of God into the life of the royal court and the nation. Consequently, they were not always popular! A third “best piece of advice” I want to pass on is this: “Don’t expect others to share your curiosity, or your concern with what it might be telling you.” The prophets were not always popular and neither are researchers. A researcher’s calling is not to seek popularity but to speak faithfully.

My own journey in research has taken so many unexpected and surprising turns. Over the last ten years or so I have become particularly concerned to understand the rapidly changing nature of global and regional realities. To this end, as an Advisory Board member of Lausanne Global Analysis and a co-editor of VISTA (focused on mission in Europe) I find that my natural curiosity about our world and our missionary engagement with it continues to be blessed and extended by God’s Spirit. Today, as a theological educator and researcher, I pray that what I am now writing about is at least as useful and valuable for strategic advances in mission as was my earlier calling to research.

Summing this all up? Stay curious! Listen before speaking! Expect disinterest! Be a blessing!

Yours in the fellowship of blessed curiosity!

Darrell

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Let's Keep Collaborating: A Report on Ethnê in India

by Samuel Kebreab

Ethnê 2015 Consultation was held in Hyderabad, India from September 7 to 11 with the theme “Collaborating for Making Disciples of All Ethnê”. It was hosted by the Indian Mission Association. It was held in the Ashirwad Global Learning Center. An estimate of 250 people attended the meeting. About 100 were from the hosting country, while the rest were from across the world.



The opening ceremony was impressive, with songs and worship styles presented by different people groups and tribes from the Indian sub-continent. It makes one appreciate the rich cultural and linguistic diversity the sub-continent has. From Tuesday to Thursday, morning till evening, the program of the day was divided into Bible studies, plenary presentations, network reports and working groups, the day interspersed by worship and prayers for the UPGs while an ongoing 24 hours prayer for UPGs was held in another room throughout the event.

The theme of the event, which was “Collaborating for Making Disciples of All Ethnê”, was given emphasis throughout the event by highlighting the need for it through the giving of information on the remaining task at the global as well as regional level and how DMM strategy, facilitating the rapid multiplication of disciples and churches, is contributing to address to the task remaining. Thus, there is a need for regional DMM training hubs (given the term “Ephesus Hubs”) geared to create cascading Ephesus Movements throughout the most-neglected families of the UPGs in this generation (the Ephesus Vision, which is based on Acts 19:10, has the desire to see the “Book of Acts” happen among every UPG, city, nation and region).



One of the highlights of the event, perhaps which made the Ethnê meeting very meaningful, was the dedication of a newly published book “The Mega Least Reached People Groups of India” which is a condensed and updated version of “Unreached Mega Peoples of India” published by the India Mission Association in

1999. The “Mega Least Reached People Group of India” book, also published by the Indian Mission

Association is an Ethnê 2015 special edition and it came out from the publishing house right in the middle of the Ethnê event. In the preface of the book, it says, "This special edition is published to commemorate the hosting of this Conference that focuses on reaching the Least Reached People Groups....This book is going out with our hope that Christians worldwide will pray for the people of India and especially the hundred Mega people groups that has been portrayed.." in the book.

The closing ceremony consisted of an exhortation to obey in taking the gospel to all ethnê and it ended by taking the Holy Communion together.

All in all the consultation provided an opportunity to hear and celebrate the wonderful deeds God is doing in reaching the different ethnês, and it provided a challenge to continue obeying God for the task is far from finished.

Dr. Samuel Kabreab is a trained physician who also works with Cityteam as Researcher for sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, Samuel works with MANI (Movement for African National Initiatives) as the coordinator for the Horn of Africa. You can read more about his life, ministry and family in our [October 2014 CMIW Bulletin](#).

See You There

There will be one or more representatives of our community at the NEI (Near East Initiative) Consultation this month. If you'll be there as well and would like to share a meal or just chat over coffee, please drop us a note at CMIW@worksmail.net. We'll make a face-to-face get-together happen.

Perhaps you'll be attending a function in 2016 where you suspect other MIWs (mission information workers) may be present. If you'd like to meet them face-to-face, please also let us know. We'll feature your event in our January 2016 bulletin.

Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: John Stark

1. [CMIW] **Please tell us about yourself and your family.**

[JS] My wife, Dr. Janie P. Stark, was born in California and I in Missouri. Both my wife and I have PhDs in Applied Linguistics from the University of Ilorin in Nigeria. We have no children. We worked with SIL for 25 years in Nigeria and served as project advisers for a cluster project which focused on three languages simultaneously and produced three New Testaments, one for each of these languages.

2. [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?** [JS] After 14 years with SIL, I have moved into the role of Global Strategy Director with T4Global, a mission focused on evangelism, discipleship and development for the world's oral learners.

3. [CMIW] **What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?** [JS] To date, it would have to be the completion of the three New Testaments in Nigeria. But even more than the completion of the books, we were able to leave in place a mother tongue translation team that is going forward with the complete translation of the whole Bible for each of the three languages.

Also, as the language project developed, I found that tracking things like budget categories, and income streams, and where the money went, gave us something to reflect upon against my intuition. For example, it felt like we had a lot of book sales, but when we looked at the end of the month there wasn't any real book income. These kinds of tangible analyses became useful. The translations occurred side-by-side, in the same room, at the same time. By looking at management numbers, we discovered that staff performance was enhanced by setting translation goals in shorter cycles (what will we accomplish this week?). We didn't do formal surveys, but as we interfaced with multiple denominations we found that insights they contributed, like what churches were active in the area, were pertinent pieces of the Bible translation project.



4. [CMIW] **What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?** [JS] I hope to help remove the language barriers that exist between the truth that God wants to convey and the people that God loves.

5. [CMIW] **Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?** [JS] There is a system called Outcome Mapping that provides a systematic approach to gathering impact evidence. It is not the only approach, but with Outcome Mapping you end up with verifiable narratives that can be sorted and resorted for common threads. It moves beyond intuition to evidence-based input for decisions, even though it is not numeric. I am not yet an expert, but I think it is something anyone interested in missions metrics should explore.

Information from the Word

1 Samuel 11:5-7: *“Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, ‘What is wrong with everyone? Why are they weeping?’ Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said. When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him”*

Only when Saul received this specific information did the Holy Spirit come so powerfully upon him. Read the whole passage and consider: What are the different roles in the story? Most likely the bearers of information did not anticipate the turn-around their words would effect through Saul. Do we invite and recognize the work of the Holy Spirit as we pass on information to God's chosen agents of change?.

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".
- Back issues can be found at: www.globalcmiw.org.
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