



**More Than Interesting:
 Thoughts on Research Reporting and Usage**

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As the developer of some online discipleship material (www.syncx.org), I have had to break with my life-long, finely tuned ability to write with clear, linear logic. It does not work on the web.

I can post a magnificent linear-logic article on the SYNC web site, but it is a waste of time. If readers are not given opportunities to jump somewhere after every few lines, they lose interest and quit reading. To connect with them, I have to forget linear thought and learn leapfrog thought.

But let me not join the large segment of my generation who bemoan the technological age and the way it has produced a generation that gets insufferably bored with sequential logic. That would imply that God and gospel communication are tied more to one style of thought arrangement than another, which would mean gospel communication cannot change with the times in order to hold the interest of a new generation, which would mean God is going out of date, which would be blasphemy or at least much closer to blasphemy than any of us want to get. (Did you follow my careful logical string of ideas in this paragraph?)

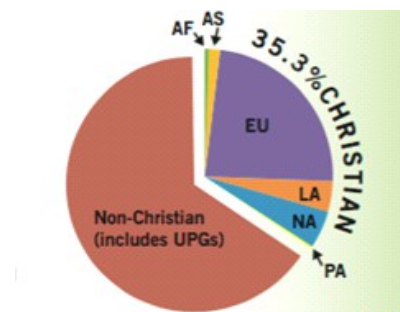
But why go into all this about thought organization styles in a research newsletter? Because researchers write reports, and nearly all those reports are presented as logically structured thought and argument. We were trained to believe that our job as researchers is to produce good data and present it coherently. It is someone else's job to make it interesting. No researcher gets a Ph.D. for an infographic.

The flip side of that truth is that most people who are interested by an infographic are not interested in wading into a dissertation on the same topic. That is what led GMI to start “missiographics”—mission infographics to present key research data and concepts in ways that would interest ordinary mission supporters and leaders. (That service is being carried on by Missio Nexus, which is where the URL www.missiographics.org now takes you.)

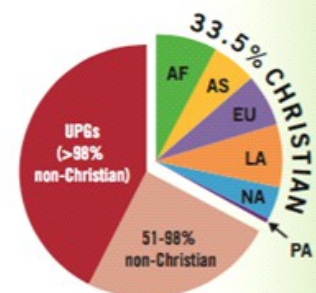
I was heavily involved in conceiving, drafting, and editing many of these missiographics, including the final one GMI did. https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/missio-graphics/Volume+5/missiographic_percent_christian.pdf. Let us take that one as an illustration of GMI's goals and the process for producing all the others.

First, there has to be a clear and interesting focus, possibly one specific fact or statistic, for each graphic. In this case the fact is that the Christian percentage of world population was slightly lower in 2015 than in 1900 in spite of all the mission done in the interval. Second, important aspects of the issue must be brought out in an interesting way. Graphics open a world of possibilities. Thank you, technology, for the ability to do things like these two pie charts that were difficult to impossible in the old days of print!

These charts are only a small detail in one section of this infographic, but look at their bombshell message. The church was mostly European in



WORLD – 1900



WORLD – 2015

1900, but in 2015 the continental slices are almost all the same. We are a globally balanced Church! That changes everything.

A third aspect of every GMI missiographic was that the detailed data behind the graphic has to be available by “footnote” links so the graphic itself is not too text-heavy. The whole thing also has to work graphically—colors, fonts, section arrangement, etc.—an incredible range of things for editors to debate as the time of publication approaches.

All those features will make the final product interesting, but mission research reporting has to be more than interesting. It has to be significant and actionable. Most of us are already well trained to think in these terms. In GMI’s case, all the missiographics included “Action Points” for praise, prayer, and other ways to respond to God in light of the message.

I am not suggesting that every research report should be turned into an infographic or that every researcher should learn infographic skills. However, every one of us should develop the habit of looking at our research reports and asking ourselves, “How interesting is this? Will it get and hold people’s attention long enough to become more than interesting?” Our impact is severely compromised if readers do not stay interested long enough to grasp our well-founded and logically explained conclusions.

What is happening in Brazil?

by Larry Kraft

At the Fourth COMIBAM (IV Congreso Misionero Iberoamericano) in Bogotá in August 2017, I learned that there is lots of good research happening in Brazil, and elsewhere in the world by Brazilians. At the congress, a few of us sat around to talk about our current work. Here’s what I learned from some talented information workers there (left to right):

Levi de Carvalho is the Coordinator of Research for COMIBAM. He is a Brazilian living and working in Spain as a University Lecturer. At the Congress he presented his research on the work of Latino missionaries abroad. His work covered three spheres of evaluation: asking missionaries themselves about their lives and work, asking church leaders in their receiving countries how effective and well-received they are, and finally asking those who send them to comment on the whole process. His work is vital for the ongoing work of training Ibero-American missionaries.

Alisson Gomes de Medeiros: Alisson works with Missão JUVEP in João Pessoa, Paraíba. He is doing research on Quilombos, which are the communities of descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves that existed in Brazil until the abolition of slavery. He is cataloging their locations and documenting which have been reached and which are currently unreached with a gospel presence. Alisson also does analyses of demographic data of the whole of the country in order to track overall growth.



Myself (grateful to be at this table with these friends!)

Ademir Menezes and his wife Ester are missionaries with WEC. Ademir is the Administrative Coordinator of Research for the AMTB (Association of Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missions). He does research on river communities in the Amazon region. Ademir and his team called Project Frontiers have just completed the whole state of Amazonas. There they mapped approximately 7000

villages, 6000 of which they discovered have no resident church. He is now working with a number of research initiatives in other states.

Márcio Shmidel is a missionary with WEC. He works cooperatively with the VOCARE Movement as well as with the Association of Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missions in the areas of mobilization and

partnerships. VOCARE is a young adult ministry which uses research extensively to help young men and women to discover and explore their calling (vocation) in Christ.

Felipe Fulanetto is a young Nazarene Pastor in the city of Campinas, in the state of São Paulo. He served as a missionary in Paraguay and Peru in the areas of church planting and renewal. Now back in Brazil, he is involved with the VOCARE Movement, researching the patterns, motivations and vocational barriers that young adults face there. He has also just completed an updated analysis of the reach of Brazilian cross-cultural missionaries (i.e. the countries to which they have been deployed, with whom they are affiliated, etc.). *Editor's note: You can read more about Felipe and his wife Jéssika in this month's "Who's Who" feature interview.*

Ronaldo Lidório: Ronaldo is a missionary with WEC and currently serves as the General Coordinator of Research for the AMTB (Association of Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missions). He and his wife Rossana were once active church planters and Bible translators in Ghana. He currently does anthropological research on indigenous tribes of Brazil and has developed an anthropological training tool to help new workers to better understand culture. He is well respected throughout Brazil and abroad for his theological and missiological insights as well as for his field experience and practical wisdom.

And this is not all that is happening. Teams and individuals with various other organizations (e.g. Sepal, Conectar, and others) are investigating issues and providing information to scores of churches and agencies that want to make wise decisions about ministry effectiveness and strategic planning.

Perhaps the aspect of information work in Brazil that thrills me most is the demonstration of unity that exists between churches, denominations and agencies. They are willing to work together well to get the insights needed to mobilize the church effectively. "Parabéns" to my co-collaborators in Christ!



**Registrations are now Open for the
Lausanne International Researchers' Conference!**

Please consider this your invitation to the 8th Lausanne International Researchers' Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, 30 April through 4 May 2018.

The theme of this gathering is "Research that Guides Kingdom Impact". Its purpose is to connect influencers and ideas as they relate to church research for global mission. It is designed to serve you, especially if you are:

- An early-career researcher with a passion to learn new research methods, and share findings;
- A leader in a mission agency keen to understand and act strategically on research results;
- A Christian researcher with important findings to disseminate;
- A member of a denominational Research Department;
- A Christian involved in research wanting to meet others who do the same.

This event is being supported by The Lausanne Movement, The Movement of African National Initiatives (MANI), the WEA-MC Community of Mission Information Workers, and OC International. It is open to all who wish to see:

- The Gospel for Every Person,
- An Evangelical Church for every People,
- Christlike leaders for every church, and
- Kingdom impact in every sphere of Society.

Visit this site for full details: www.globalcmiw.org/lirn

Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: Felipe Fulanetto

1. [CMIW] **Please tell us about yourself and your family.** [FF] My name is Felipe Fulanetto, and I was born in the city of Campinas in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. I am twenty-six years old, I have a BA in Theology and a Master's degree in Missiology. My father is in the process of becoming a pastor in the Nazarene Church, my mother works in the field of biomedicine, and my brother is a physician in therapeutic radiology. When I was fifteen I had a real encounter with the Lord Jesus where I experienced an abrupt change in direction on the road from death to life. Since then I have



dedicated myself to the max to whatever God might want for me. At the age of eighteen I began seminary studies, and at twenty I was sent as a pastor and missionary of the Nazarene Church to Peru and Paraguay to work in ministries of church planting and renewal. When I returned home for furlough, I met the lovely person who would become my wife. Jéssika is from the state of Goiás, Brazil, and has a degree in law. She has the dream of using her profession and talents for the Kingdom. We are both passionate about the Lord and about His mission in the world. We are also excited about what God has prepared for us as we journey together in His call upon our lives.

2. [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?** [FF] I am currently working full-time as an Assistant Pastor of the Nazarene Church of Campinas. In this role I fulfill all the normal pastoral functions (preaching, pastoral visits, discipleship, counselling, etc.). In addition, I fill my time with other missions commitments, such as my roles as Missions and Church Researcher for the Association of Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missions and in the VOCARE Movement of the Martureo Center for Mission Reflection. (Editor's note: The Greek word μαρτυρέω or martureó means to bear witness, to testify)

3. [CMIW] **What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?** [FF] My greatest satisfaction in ministry has come from seeing people give their lives to the Lord. Nothing compares to witnessing a shattered family become reunited and restored, or a young person who feels lost in the world find meaning for his or her life. A number of conversions that occurred while I was working abroad, as well as in my current pastoral ministry, have encouraged me to keep moving forward to fully realize God's call upon my life. I find it so invigorating to see Him at work. An example of such is the Peruvian couple Jéssica and Humberto who live in the region of the Chachani volcano and who gave their lives to the Lord. They quickly became leaders in their community. Another example is the young Paraguayan woman named Natalia who, two months before I met her, tried to kill herself by cutting her wrists with glass. Upon hearing the Gospel message, she and her family were completely restored. And finally I could also site the example of sixteen-year-old Jorge, a young Paraguayan who had a real encounter with Christ alone in his home. A week later he came to me and asked to be discipled. The miracles we witness in the field help us understand that it is God who accomplishes His ministry, and not we.

It is for this reason that that, for me, working in missions research has a single purpose: to glorify the name of the Lord through lives transformed by the power of the Gospel. I understand church or missions research to be a process of consilience or convergence with the Mission of God (Missio Dei).

That is, the work of a missionary researcher is to seek to discern what God has done and is doing in order to also understand how we might cooperate with Him and thus glorify His name among the nations. In this vein, I believe that the two most significant contributions that I have been able to make in the area of research have been to, 1) systematically conduct research within the VOCARE Movement, which is a movement to promote vocational awakening among young people. Through this research I attempted to uncover the causes, influences and barriers young adults face as they forge their life paths, and 2) update past research that had been done on the Brazilian missions force. Here we mapped where and how many Brazilian cross-cultural missionaries are working, and we raised practical questions about how the Brazilian missions movement is developing.

4. [CMIW] **What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?** [FF] I have learned that missionary life is a paradox between uncertainty and faith, the improbable and the true, the desired and the real. Thus only God knows the future. I do, however, dream and desire that in the next ten years I will grow in my faith in the Lord and serve Him in the best way possible. I hope to improve in my knowledge and abilities to do research, within and outside of Brazil. I yearn to see a generation committed to giving continuity to current research and to see a research center organized and functioning in our country. I also hope to complete my doctorate and specialize in Brazilian missiology. To that end I hope to continue publishing new books (I have a whole list in my dreams). Finally, I hope to be re-sent to the field, but this time with my dear wife (and any children God may give us?).

5. [CMIW] **Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?** [FF] I feel like a young apprentice who has more to learn than to contribute. But I also believe I could be of some help with regard to questions concerning Brazilian research, such as in the area of clarifying call and cross-cultural missions. I might also be able to help foreign researchers find their way in doing ministry in Brazil, where and how to begin their work here. Finally, I believe I could be of assistance in contributing written materials, such as texts and scientific articles.

Information from the Word

Paul writes at the end of Colossians, *“And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea”* (4:16). Paul did not just sit back and hope his letter would reach others that needed to receive it. He intentionally planned and gave instructions for spreading important writings. While mission information clearly is not on the same level as Scripture, how can we apply Paul's example in circulating mission information to those who need it? Similarly, how can you apply Stan Nussbaum's suggestions in our opening article?

Final Details:

- This bulletin is produced by the Community of Mission Information Workers Task Force comprised of Larry Kraft, Stephanie Kraft, Chris Maynard & Nelson Jennings. Please send any suggestions of issues to discuss or any other ideas to ["info@globalcmiw.org"](mailto:info@globalcmiw.org).
- Back issues can be found at: www.globalcmiw.org.