



**“Correct Me If I’m Wrong”**  
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Community of Mission Information Workers*  
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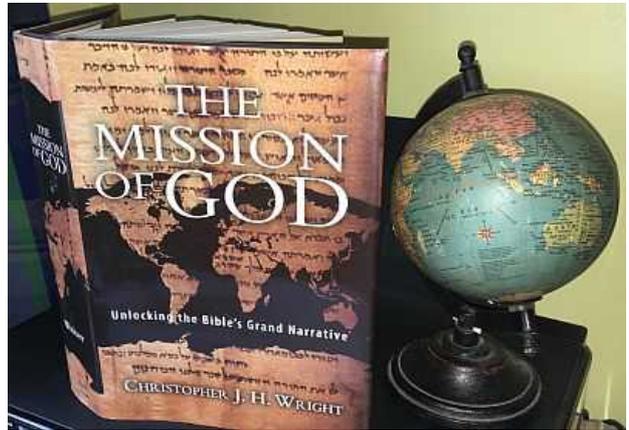
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**The World, the Word, and Research**  
*by Chris Maynard*

Much of this bulletin is about engaging with theology and missiology. Each of us has an understanding about God (theology) and about mission (missiology). And these shape the sort of research that we do – and even the questions that we ask. Steve Spaulding writes in the article “What Exactly are We After?” that “researchers could play a major role in helping to steer the future course of the church’s missional activities.” In that case do we need to check our own assumptions and turn to the Bible afresh? What are our basic assumptions about God, the Church and the world?

In his article, “Toward a Biblical Understanding of Finishing the Task”, Michael T. Cooper questions the way we talk about “Finishing the Task”, a common phrase in mission research, and he goes back to the Bible to find answers.

In my own quest for better understanding of the task I have found Christopher J H Wright’s book **The Mission of God** to be very helpful. Chris himself was teaching a course called “The Biblical Basis of Mission”, but the more he taught the course, the more he wanted to rename it to “The Missional Basis of the Bible” as he found that the Bible is all about mission. Within a few pages of his book he points out the Bible itself exists only because God has a mission which involves human beings. So the very existence of the Bible testifies to the “Mission of God”. Chris’ book (with over 500 pages) is a comprehensive look at what the Bible says about God’s purposes in the Earth. There are other books on this subject, but I can recommend this one.



Finally, we recently learned about TearFund’s LIGHT Wheel Toolkit. This is worth looking at if you are thinking of different ways to measure change:

[https://learn.tearfund.org/~media/files/tilz/impact\\_and\\_evaluation/2016-tearfund-light-wheel-intro-en.pdf?la=en](https://learn.tearfund.org/~media/files/tilz/impact_and_evaluation/2016-tearfund-light-wheel-intro-en.pdf?la=en)

Follow us into this investigation of the place of research in our understanding of the objectives, the roles, and the relationships that reflect God’s great purposes for this world that He loves.

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**What exactly are we after?**  
*by Steve Spaulding*

I am not exactly a researcher, but maybe an outsider’s view can be useful. It seems to me that the global mission research community tends to be drawn to the most popular or compelling mission voices of the time. I have watched mission research goals move from evangelism, to translation, to church-planting, toward ‘saturation church planting’ and more recently toward issues like human rights and more holistic ministries. Just look at the popularity in the 1980’s of Waymire and Wagner’s **Church Growth Survey Handbook**. Now it seems to be almost completely out of use. The terminology, expectations and standards have all shifted in other directions.

So I’m left with the question, “What exactly are we after?” As an evangelical, my primary answer needs to come from revelation. I believe that Scripture lays out a specific end-point, which is not planting the last church or even (in the words of Christ) going to all the nations and giving them “the gospel of the kingdom.” I find that many, these days, are motivated by Matthew 24:14, but it seems that most of them

see “the gospel of the kingdom” as no more than the gospel of salvation which we as evangelicals have preached for at least a century.

Let’s begin at the end. Revelation 21’s last paragraph speaks of a future scene, in which:

*...the nations will walk by [the City of God’s] light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it... The **glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.** (Rev 21:24-27)*

If this is a picture of our future together then it must have been an integral part of Paul’s mission, for he was the Apostle to the Gentiles, the nations. And here is Paul’s own benediction in his letter to the Romans:

*Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, **so that all nations might believe and obey him** ... (Rom 16:25-26)*

Paul had a vision of the glory of the gospel which went far beyond what he saw in his brilliant career. It is part of the strategic envelope of the whole letter. It is the “obedience of faith,” and in those closing words above he links it specifically to obedience of the ethne.

Now, back to Christ’s words in Matthew 28:18-20:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them to obey** everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Jesus was telling his followers to go global and disciple nations...teaching them full obedience to Christ. Going back still further in time, when Jacob blesses his sons, he comes to Judah (Christ’s forefather) and gives this history-shaping prophecy:

*The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs, and **the obedience of the nations is his.** (Gen 49:10)*

These are only examples. It is ever clearer to me now that “what we are precisely after” is nothing less than obedient nations. I believe ‘obedient nations’ encompasses pretty much everything we’ve been involved with, including all those more limited calls for us to ‘finish the task.’

What if a small handful of you, my researcher friends, will recast your research task to point the Body of Christ to the many ways in which whole peoples, whole nations can and must be taught obedience to Christ? This is not just to plant the last church, adopt the last orphan or stand up for justice in faraway corners. Each of these must lead together to kings, queens and presidents being eager to have their nations disciplined, ready for that awesome day when they will march, with all their glory and splendor, into the city of God. Until then, we all have work to do.

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## Toward a Biblical Understanding of Finishing the Task

by Michael T. Cooper

In today’s world, there are 196 nations depending on how you divide a couple of countries. According to the Joshua Project, there are more than 16,300 cultural-ethno-linguistic people distinct in religion, caste, and/or culture. These 16,300 are sometimes double counted because one people group could be in two or more countries. Taking this into consideration, the Joshua Project estimates that there are 9,800 distinct people groups in the world today. An estimated 7,000 are still considered unreached and nearly 20 percent of these groups are considered unengaged by any attempt to reach them with the gospel. This article suggests that a clear understanding of three biblical texts will add in motivating modern missionary efforts to focus attention on fulfilling the Great Commission. After all, it is not so much a task that needs to be accomplished as it is the recognition that God is being deprived of worship by more than 1,300 distinct ethnic populations. Find the full article in the January 2018 issue of the online journal *Global Missiology* at <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/2079>.



## Missions Mapping E-mail Groups

by Loren Muehlius

Five years ago an e-mail group was started for Christians interested in missions who also worked with mapping or were interested in mapping. The range of participants in the group include students, recent graduates, educators, people in secular work, and people working with missions organizations. Currently there are over 100 members in the group. Most are in the U.S. but some are in Europe and other continents.

Some topics which have come up include types of mapping software, how can mapping skills be used in missions, and mission organizations that use mapping. This link, <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/christian-gis-list>, can access the group, however, since it is a closed group, you will need to ask to join it. If you would like to join it, e-mail [lorenmapper@gmail.com](mailto:lorenmapper@gmail.com).

Some members of the group are more active in Facebook, so recently a Facebook group was started. You can find it at, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1989770011305588/>. This also is a closed group, so you will need to ask to join it.

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## PROGRESS.BIBLE Launches New Product: SNAPSHOT

by Sally Folkins and Tammy Schutt

Who knows what the global state of Bible translation is? Statistics can often be confusing. Is everyone counting the same thing? In the same way? Are the numbers reliable?

In 2014, several Bible translation partners came together to consider how to create a single source for information on the global state of Bible translation. As a result, an information service called progress.Bible (pronounced progress\_dot\_Bible) was created. Currently, data is gathered from over 250 Bible translation/publishing organizations showing the intersection of language and Scripture. Progress.Bible is accepted by large and small Bible translation organizations as the authoritative source on the status of translation and translation need.



SNAPSHOT was created to show a high-level summary of current Bible translation statistics, including translation in progress and the remaining needs. It also includes the number of completed Scriptures: Bibles, Testaments, Scripture selections and stories.

SNAPSHOT is distributed monthly at no cost. The only qualification for a subscription is that you have a role in a recognized Great Commission organization. As a subscriber, you can share and publish information from SNAPSHOT, with attribution to progress.Bible as the information source.

If you'd like to request a sample of SNAPSHOT, email [progress-Bible@sil.org](mailto:progress-Bible@sil.org).

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## Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: Atola Longkumer

1. [CMIW] **Please tell us about yourself and your family.** [AL] An indigenous/tribal Naga Baptist from Nagaland, a state in the northeast region of India of the Indo-Myanmar borders, I am currently teaching Religions and Missions at the South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), Bangalore, India. I am married to Rev. Khayaipam Khamrang, who is serving as a pastor of the Tangkhul Baptist Church, Bangalore. We have a daughter, who is in college.

2. [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?** [AL] Teaching theological students and a bit of writing for theological resources. I participate, although minimally, as a pastor's spouse in a migrant community congregation (such as leading weekly Bible study for young women and an occasional resource person for seminars). I also serve as a book review editor for the journal *Mission Studies* (Brill).

3. [CMIW] **What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?** [AL] As a Naga Christian, I have had opportunity to serve in mainland India among diverse cultures and languages and Christian denominations, training cross-cultural theological

students who are primarily trained for pastoral ministries. I have taught students from CSI, CNI, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Orthodox, Baptist, Pentecostal churches, who are serving as pastors, chaplains, evangelists and teachers across India and Myanmar. This gives me joy as well as hope.

From a global perspective, it has been the opportunity to contribute in ways such as writing theological resources, networking, and mentoring emerging mission students through forums such as the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute (GETI) in 2013 and 2018.

Participating at the CWME (Council for World Mission and Evangelism) and TTL (Together Towards Life) at different points (Manila, Matanzas and Arusha) have also given me much to be grateful for.

Additionally, coordinating a North East India mission conference hosted by the Council of Baptist Church North East India (CBCNEI) for the TTL also remains a high point of joy in knowing that what I learn from a global opportunity, I have been able to bring to my local church context.

As a theological educator, I have had opportunities to participate and lecture at theological colleges in Myanmar.

In a minimal way, I also participate in the Lausanne Global Analysis (LGA) by way of identifying and connecting writers with relevant topics.

**4. [CMIW] What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry? [AL]** I have a lot of dreams, yet my constant prayer is “Thy will be done, Lord” acknowledging God has the ultimate call upon life. I do dream of serving God’s people through theological education either through mentoring or writing theological resources that will contribute to the need of theological resources in some contexts in the Majority world.

If there is a specific dream, then it is to participate in education that is Christ-centred and interprets the Judea-Christian core value of loving the neighbour with compassion. I hope to participate in the emerging need of theological education in Asian contexts – that is, a theological education which is evangelical, tuned to the need of ecumenical relationships and a theological education that engages the socio-cultural and political contexts of the region with the good news of the gospel that is fullness of life for all.

**5. [CMIW] Is there some way you’d be willing to help the CMIW community? [AL]** I would be willing to contribute to any theological education and missional projects that engage the multiple contexts of Asia – such as indigenous people, multi-faith, gender, generation Christian discipleship and church/mission partnership.

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### Information from the Word

*“Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man” (1 Samuel 2:26). There are parallel biblical examples, most obviously that of Jesus (“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man”, Luke 2:52). While led by the Spirit’s revelatory inspiration, how did biblical writers make such assessments, particularly of non-physical traits? Today, how can imperfect, contextually-characterized mission researchers measure spiritual and qualitative “growth” in individuals, groups, and societies?*

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#### 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](http://www.globalcmiw.org).