



“Correct Me If I'm Wrong”

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Community of Mission Information Workers*

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The LIRC8

The Eighth Lausanne International Researchers' Conference is now history. Many commented that it was a positive learning experience. Some even said it was transformational-- a life event that impacts everything that follows. For those who were not present, a brief summary with a few photos can be found at:

<http://www.ocresearch.info/?q=content/gathering-together-propel-kingdom-forward-through-research>

Here is the text of the LIRC8 presentation given by Dr. Donald K. Smith, founder of Daystar University. Perhaps like ours, your heart will burn with excitement for what research can do for world mission.

The LIRC8 Planning Committee

Research, Beyond Demographics

Only after fifteen years in missions did we recognize that research is the most fundamental of human tools and powerful beyond our understanding. It utilizes our God-given intelligence, a part of His image in us. So we attempted in Daystar Communications to concentrate on research, and training to utilize the results of research.

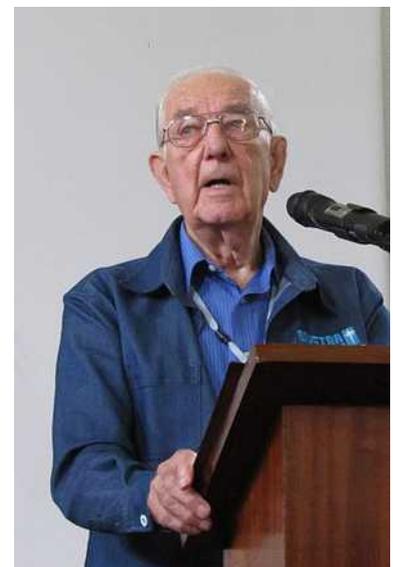
During the period 1967 to 1985, at Daystar we conducted an estimated 75 research projects. Very few of these were ever reported in professional journals or missionary gatherings. Some were focused on a local situation, some groups requested confidentiality of the findings, others found the findings too disturbing to their existing approaches. Perhaps most frequently, we simply did not have the time to prepare the material for broader audiences. But dozens, perhaps hundreds, of learners learned how to use research and to utilize the results for increased effectiveness.

We were not primarily counting who knows Jesus, and who does not, nor where each kind of people lives. That is foundational, but does not lead us out of unconscious bondage to our own culture patterns as the standard. Neither does it lead to creative, Spirit-driven proclamation. It does tell us where to aim, but not how to hit the target, i.e., how to do effective mission. That has been our passion.

Our research has been driven by a compulsion to create understanding of the Gospel. How to create understanding despite inadequate proclamation, despite cultural barriers and common stereotypes. Research that would provide a foundation for truly Christian leadership of the Church. We simply wanted everyone to know and love Jesus!

As we shared findings, common principles became apparent. We gradually recognized the need for Christian workers and Christians generally, as a matter of fact, to know and apply these principles of proclamation. Workshops with many differing cultural groups in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America not only confirmed their relevance but contributed to our own understanding of their applicational breadth through insights of workshop participants. Library research often verified individual principles through the work of both Christian and secular scholars.

Thus four elements - problem-oriented field research, student contributions, scholarly research, and deepening Biblical study of communication - combine to develop teaching in how to create understanding of God-given Truth. The first intensive training within this emerging model was in 1971,



the six-week International Institute of Christian Communication, held in what is now Harare, Zimbabwe. The second IICC was held near Nairobi, Kenya in 1972. Growth from the initial 35 participants from 20 nations to 70 from 35 nations, then to a small residential campus in Nairobi that became the foundation of Daystar University with a current enrollment of over 5,000 students, reflects the original enthusiastic acceptance of the principles published in 1992 as *Creating Understanding*.

Those principles were a direct development from original field research, learning from scholarly research, and field application by leaders who were also learners. In retrospect, it seems a clear example of the value of genuine research to verify the known and learn the unknown. A problem leads to research leads to a possible solution, verified by practice, confirmed by evaluative research that discovers unanticipated problems which leads to new research... and the cybernetic cycle continues – hopefully toward constantly improving communication of the Gospel.

Ironically, research applied to mission has been largely forgotten at the very institution that originated for the application of those principles. The purpose in developing those principles was to increase effectiveness in proclamation and discipling of the nations. The goal of our research was developing and implementing effective strategy for mission in every context. That purpose has been largely submerged in constructing buildings and academic programs to serve national needs.

In His mercy, there are, however, hundreds of students at Daystar that are there to learn of Jesus, not only academic disciplines that will give them a job. But the sharp edge of research to increase effectiveness of proclamation and discipleship has been dulled. This institution is by no means the only one following that disappointing path. Research in mission has seldom been well done, and seldom acted upon.

Before very long, my pilgrimage here will be transformed, from seeing through a glass darkly to seeing Him face to face. What have I been taught that is helpful to colleagues? Through many fortunate (though often very difficult) circumstances, our Lord has pushed us across boundaries – racial, cultural, political, denominational, professional, and academic. As a result, we cannot comfortably be fitted into any single category. However, the one category that covers all is Missionary – jack-of-all-trades, and Mastered only by One.

In every category or place of service, we have learned to learn. Doing that in a systematic and verifiable way is, in a word, research. It can be the most powerful human tool we have been given to go beyond demographics to the fundamental issues of comprehension, motivation, and choice.

Donald K. Smith
Founder, Daystar University



Letter to Young Researchers

by Jeanie Curryer

I am writing this one week before I retire after 45 years of involvement in missions, over 30 of which were focused primarily on research. Before becoming a researcher, I was an English teacher at Faith Academy outside of Manila, not the most likely background for an information worker. Nevertheless, in 1985 at the prompting of the president of my mission, I was assigned to a new ministry in research. After a few weeks of training in church growth research at our headquarters, I returned to Manila and found myself suddenly involved in a survey focused on locating every church in Metro Manila, which at that time was comprised of four cities and 13 municipalities with a total

population over eight million.

The Disciple A Whole Nation (DAWN) saturation church planting movement was underway, and many denominations were heavily engaged in starting new churches in support of the goal of seeing a church in every barangay (village or neighborhood) or a total of 50,000 churches in the Philippines by the year 2,000. My agency was fully involved in supporting this movement, but two pressing questions nagged at us. How can the Philippine Church monitor the progress they're making toward this goal if we don't know which barangays do and don't have churches? And, how do we go about answering this question? The 1985 Metro Manila Church Survey was our first attempt to address this dilemma.

We had never done this kind of research before and didn't really know what we were doing. We determined that the only way to get this information was to take a list of known churches and drive through every section of Metro Manila, updating our list and noting church locations on city maps. It took us 18 months to complete. At the end we were able to develop a packet of information, a list of churches and maps with church locations and church-to-population ratios for each city and municipality in Metro Manila to assist pastors and church planters in deciding where to direct their efforts.

Besides getting a crash course in doing church location studies, I learned two primary principles in doing this kind of research. The first was to test commonly held assumptions, especially when they lead to decisions as to how to use kingdom personnel and resources. In this case, most denominational and church leaders in Metro Manila thought that the city didn't really need more churches and so were assigning new church planters to the provincial areas. Instead, results from the survey showed that Metro Manila was one of the least-churched regions in the country.

The second insight came one afternoon as I was studying a map of Metro Manila that depicted church-to-population ratios for all the barangays. The darker parts of the map indicated the least-churched sections, the lighter shaded areas the most-churched. I sensed the Lord urgently saying to me, "Jeanie, do you see what I see?" I looked more closely at the darkest areas clustered around Manila Bay. I knew that these barangays were made up of neighborhoods densely populated by the urban poor. Then I noticed that many of the lighter parts of the map were south and east of the city where new subdivisions were being built to accommodate the influx of the growing middle class.

Suddenly, I realized what the Lord was saying to me. Most of the new church plants were focused on the middle class migration to the suburbs while the urban poor were being neglected, the very neighborhoods that most desperately needed more churches. This realization led to the second principle I learned. Often the results of our research will yield prophetic messages that urgently need to be passed on to denominational and other church leaders. Consequently, our responsibility as researchers is not only to do the research and analysis, but to then pray and wait on the Lord to discern what insights He most wants passed on to the church.

In doing this initial study we learned the basics of carrying out church location research. In the next few years we surveyed other major cities and gradually learned how to track the Philippine church's progress toward the DAWN goal. In 1989 we were finally ready to survey the whole country, and three years later it was completed. We were able for the first time to give Philippine church leaders a clear picture of where the Protestant churches were located and which parts of the country were the most unchurched.

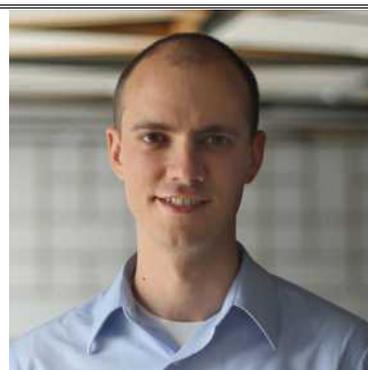
Not surprisingly we learned that doing research on a national scale takes careful planning and requires dealing with numerous logistical issues. What did surprise me, though it shouldn't have, was the intense spiritual warfare that increased as we approached completion of the survey. Doing this kind of research, especially on a large scale, turns the searchlight on dark, unchurched areas and provides clear vision for church leaders in directing their efforts. Satan, of course, doesn't like this and fights back. Through this we learned how vital it is to cover all aspects of our research with strong intercessory prayer.

In working on these two church location surveys over a period of six years, one overarching lesson stands out. Any research that sparks fresh vision in the church and aids its leaders in reaching those who sit in darkness comes straight from God's heart for the nations. In the years following, it was this one primary insight that fueled in me a passion to encourage others to engage in missions research. What a privilege it has been to serve as their champion for the past 30 years.

Metrics in Missions – A Summary of Best Practices

by David W.

Leadership in a missions organization is not an easy task. Leaders are responsible for the management of the money that is donated to their organization, making sure that it is used to promote the mission of God throughout the world. Perhaps more importantly, leaders are also responsible for the staff members whom they oversee, providing vision, advice, direction, accountability, resources, care for physical and spiritual health, and more. These staff members are spread across the globe,



making communication and relationships difficult. Often staff are volunteers who have raised their own support and have been sent by their local church, and they may not welcome much direction from their organization's leadership, seeing themselves as accountable primarily to God and their local church and not to their organization.

In addition to being a difficult task, leadership in missions is also a serious task. One of the most common metaphors used for leadership in the New Testament is the metaphor of a steward. A steward is someone who has been entrusted by his master to manage a portion of the master's resources (1 Corinthians 4.1-2). He/she is responsible to promote the master's goals and agenda, and the steward and the master both know that there will come a time when the steward will need to give an account for their time as a manager (Luke 19.15).

Recently the leadership of my organization, Encompass World Partners, was wrestling with the above issues—As stewards of God's resources, how do we lead well? Leaders in Encompass were aware of the fact that many organizations use metrics—numerical measures of ministry activity and progress—in their quest to lead well, and they were also aware of the fact that Encompass probably uses metrics much less than most other North American organizations. However, some voiced concerns with this strategy, pointing out that metrics are most often used in the business world and may be a poor fit in missions.

With these questions in mind, Encompass leadership asked me to research best practices regarding the use of reports and metrics in church planting. I was asked to read and summarize the research literature available on this topic and to interview leaders from several other organizations regarding their experience using metrics. This report was presented to Encompass leadership at the end of 2017 and can be found at the following URL:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1UWHegMwUIMQE7SbQoJ4dVZTcrd5T5Axc>.

Readers of the CMIW Bulletin may be interested to learn how other missions leaders use metrics within their organizations, what challenges they have encountered, and what they have found to be most effective. I also present an extensive research literature summary, drawing on information from over two dozen publications, and readers wanting to know more about the how and why of metrics in missions are invited to read the report and turn to its bibliography:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1L1hWbKiprn-7PkkIGzXwlutNPJy4bDP1>.

I found this topic to be both fascinating and practical, and I hope that my research can be helpful to others as well.

See You There!

Would you enjoy a face-to-face chat with a live MIW? If you plan to attend one of the following, please let us know via <info@globalcmiw.org> so that we can find each other:

- EMS & ISFM conference, Dallas, October 12-14
- GACX Global Forum, Denver CO, October 9-11

Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: Tena Stone

1. [CMIW] **Please tell us about yourself and your family.** [TS] I live in the beautiful mountains of northern Georgia in the US with my husband Vince. We have 5 children (including those who have married into our family) and 2 grandchildren. I work as a remote employee who travels often.

2. [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?** [TS] I work as the Director of Research and Training for OneHope an international ministry focused on scripture engagement for children and youth. This year OneHope will reach over 100 million children and youth with books, apps, films and other programs that are scripture rich and contextualized to their culture, language and age. OneHope is



an organization that highly values research within a strong culture of design and innovation. It is a joy to work there.

3. [CMIW] **What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?** [TS] The work we do at OneHope is highly collaborative so I really don't have contributions that I have achieved on my own but in tandem with a lot of really talented, dedicated people. Some of my favorite projects have centered around the research of church plants both in rural North America and across Francophone Africa. We also have a growing body of research around digital initiatives including the Bible App for Kids and online training for children's ministry leaders.

4. [CMIW] **What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?** [TS] I am at the stage in my life where developing the next generation is very important to me. Encouraging and when appropriate mentoring the younger generation who are passionate about ministry and mission is very rewarding. Since I became a grandparent I also have a real interest in the spiritual formation of young children. A lot of research happens around teenagers and young adults I would love to conduct more research in the area of faith development in preschool and pre-adolescence. A global study that looked at this area among different cultures would be very exciting!

5. [CMIW] **Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?** [TS] I would welcome the opportunity to serve or collaborate. Any research we do is also open source including methodology and instruments.

Information from the Word

The Gospel accounts are full of Jesus noticing and caring for people that others overlooked and even dismissed. Just a few examples from Mark are Jesus healing the bleeding woman who touched his garment (5:25-34), Jesus insisting that children be brought to him (10:13-16), and Jesus healing blind Bartimaeus (10:46-52). Spirit-led research should give us fresh eyes to see and care for people that otherwise could get overlooked or even dismissed. Do you and others with whom you serve experience new, research-enabled spiritual eyes through which to see people in need of gospel ministry?

This Bulletin is Now in Three Languages!



Due to the fine collaborative efforts of Duane Frasier of Joshua Project and Rodrigo Tinoco of Conectar à Videira, we are very pleased to announce that (if all has gone as we hoped) this July bulletin is going out in three languages - Spanish, Portuguese and English. If, with the help of God, we can keep this going, then in future we will ask God to add other major languages. If you would like to help, please let us know.



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