



“Correct Me If I’m Wrong” *The quarterly bulletin of the Global Community of Mission Information Workers*

Volume 11, Number 4, October 2021

As this bulletin begins its *second decade* of e-publication, the CMIW Editorial Team believes there can be value in highlighting themes for some of our editions. The theme of this October 2021 edition is

“The Visualization of Data.”

Please let us know if you find this themed issue helpful and what additional themes you might like developed. <info@globalcmiw.org>

Missiographics

by Michael VanHuis

In 2017, we at Missio Nexus inherited Missiographics (www.missiographics.org) from Global Mapping International (GMI). It was an honor for us to receive these resources and to have the opportunity to steward the previously created content and begin creating new graphics on relevant topics for the Great Commission community.

Missio Nexus believes, as did GMI, that information is essential to inform, instruct, and compel people toward action. We believe that the more creative we can be in displaying information, the broader of an audience we will be able to impact. The more visually alluring the presentation, the more it will draw in each person in a way that they must purposefully consider the information provided.



Our goal is to provide relevant data that is easy to understand and compels people to action. With each Missiographic that is published we seek to give practical points of application or links to ministries and resources so that each person can take a next step. In addition, we believe that both

quantitative and qualitative data are essential. There are situations in which we can let the data speak for itself, but more often the story surrounding the data is what will push people toward action. In 2012 Uldis Leifert said, *‘Infographics’ are a trend. It may eventually fade away, though I don’t see it happening over the next 5 years. But a thing that will stay here forever is the need for data visualization.*

Data gathering and data analysis are easier and more profusive than at any previous time in history. Infographics like Missiographics allow people to see data presented in creative and attainable frameworks. Our axiom is, “knowledge attained demands actions.” We endeavor to provide this type of framework for data presentation because like Leifert we believe that data visualization is here to stay. We not only seek to present data this way through our Missiographics, but also through our research reports that we release on things like compensation, attrition, missionary statistics, and studies on issues affecting CEO’s and churches.

We have a skeletal crew at Missio Nexus and are always seeking partners to journey with us in data collection and analysis. We have an active list of research requests and ideas that would be beneficial for the great commission community. If you would be interested in partnering with us, we would welcome the connection. We are also seeking partners who can translate the current graphics into other languages. We have been able to translate a few into Spanish and would love to see these resources used even more widely by the global missions community. Feel free to email Michael at mvanhuis@missionexus.org.



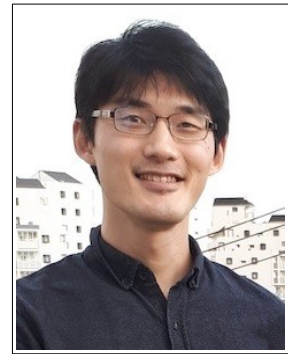
*Michael VanHuis
Missio Nexus*

“Church & Station: Mission Map Visualizing Unreached Areas”

by Hokuto “Joel” Ide

Today Japan has 9500 churches, the result of Catholic (beginning in 1549) and Protestant (beginning in 1859) mission efforts. Every one of its 47 prefectures and big cities have hundreds of churches, yet Christians represent less than 1% of Japan’s total 120 million inhabitants, ranking as [second largest](#) on the Joshua Project’s list of major unreached people groups.

To visualize geographically the gap between “reached” and “unreached”, our news media “Christian Today Japan” started a [data journalism](#) project called “Church & Station.” It’s an online interactive map to help church planters choose their next place to start a new church.

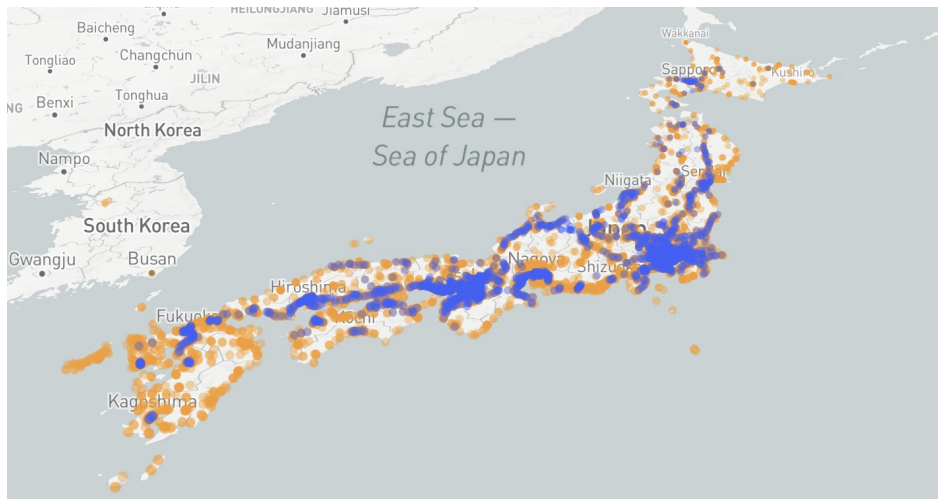


Hokuto “Joel” Ide
Christian Today Japan

But why train stations? God has blessed Japan with a highly developed rail transport system which covers almost all of the populated areas. Church websites usually promote access from nearby train stations for those who seek to visit. Stations are the “[last mile](#)” for seekers to reach those churches.

The Church & Station map represents the stations by bar graphs that have varying heights: the higher the graph, the more passengers that pass through. Also, the bar graphs are either orange or blue. Orange bars represent stations with churches (shown as orange dots) that are in walking distance. Since walking distance may vary depending on health, disability, age, and children to take along, the map has the option to zoom in and out and adjust the scale from 500m to 3km (also shown in miles for users with en-US locale). Blue bars on the map represent stations without any churches around them, highlighting where to plant new ones.

Users get a detailed gradation of “unreached populated areas” for the entire nation of Japan, visualized in [a map](#). You can zoom in, zoom out, slide, rotate, and tilt just like Google Maps. You can share the URL to show the unreached area you see in the map to others – not only to Japanese speakers but also to those who speak English and Korean. The map automatically adjusts its language to the browser. The United States and South Korea are the countries which send the most missionaries to Japan. The map is intended to break down language walls to increase communication between mission strategy developers.

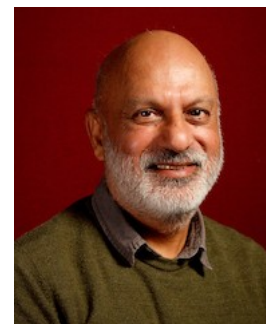


The map is an Open Source software project and also an [Open Data](#) project. Both [frontend source code](#) and [backend with data](#) are published in Github. The project started in December 2019 when I moved from the US to Japan to change my job from software engineer to Editor-in-Chief of Christian Today. Collecting [church geographic data](#) took a whole year, while downloading station [data from MLIT of Japan](#) took only one minute.

There are many reasons not to send church planting missionaries to Japan, prioritizing instead other unreached people groups. The cost per missionary is higher due to expensive housing and food. Japan's 1% Christian population may make reaching the Japanese feel less urgent than spreading the gospel among other unreached people groups with only a 0.01% Christian population. Big tasks can get difficult. The analogy of “[divide-and-conquer algorithm](#)” may apply to Japan, the world's second largest evangelistic challenge. The Church & Station map shows a new way of how Japan can be divided into smaller portions of “some reached areas” and “many other 0% unreached areas.” The map reminds us of Acts 16:9 and calls, “Come over to Japan and help us!”

The Visualization of Qualitative Data: Words

by David Emmanuel Singh



David E. Singh
Oxford Centre for
Mission Studies

Quantitative and qualitative researches are founded on somewhat different philosophical paradigms or epistemologies. Whilst one understands the need for objectivity and the presentation of results by means of precise numbers, graphs and tables leading to useful generalisation for policy or action, on their own such quantifiable measurements are hardly adequate for understanding complex phenomena involving human beings. In such cases a more critical theoretical approach is often needed to allow space for deeper understandings through seeing, hearing and open-ended exchange with people as sources of data or information. Here there is little or no substitute for real human connections or contacts (preferably sustained over a period as, for example, in ethnography). People are not aggregated into numbers and graphs as objects for testing of intellectual positions or theories, but they are treated as thinking and feeling beings who speak and do things one can collect as sources (clearly not without their informed consent).

What complicates such research, and indeed adds a bit of excitement, is that their words and deeds may not always be 'the thing,' because the reality is often determined and shaped by the space they occupy and their circumstances within it. This situation is further complicated by the fact that human beings are different from inanimate objects (such as numbers) in that they have agency and choice to construct narratives or explanations both leading from their backgrounds and in response to the researcher's open-ended questions. Hence, even though the sample size of the research population may be relatively small, a wide variety of in-depth inputs can help enhance validity, especially when the data are soundly processed for key themes and their meanings and referred back to the sources, as for example through supplementary interviews or in focus groups.

Because, by its very nature, such research is detailed and in-depth, researchers need to relate the often-nuanced results to other research in the field to offer relatively cautious generalisations. There is a need therefore to map out carefully the field of enquiry with a view to reviewing published and unpublished research. The primary data from real respondents are generated in words. Even where observations are made during the course of the interviews, ceremonies, rituals or any sort of socio-religious performance, they are noted by the researcher mainly using words. Where focus group discussions are formed for generating another type of data involving individuals engaged in interaction with each other or with the facilitator, the data these yield are also largely in words. The processing of this material may involve manual or technical means/tools and, whilst this process may lead to visual representations of the information from the data, their use in communicating the results or meanings can only be illustrative and not substantive.

There is, therefore, no substitute for words in the actual presentation of the argument, the evidence and the results or conclusions. There is also no substitute for demonstrating the significance or originality of the conclusions with words, because relating one's research with other works in writing is required. All such presentations and demonstrations are best done in simple prose, because any argument in qualitative research requires that the researcher persuade the readers. Such persuasion is achieved not just through a clear presentation of the argument or logic but through sound evidence involving direct voices or words of the real human beings involved and an honest analysis or interpretation of these voices in their own rightful horizons. The researcher here is not a disengaged observer or experimenter; he/she is also a participant who has human emotional connections with the people whose voices he/she conveys or interprets. The value of the research conclusions is not diminished if the researcher demonstrates his/her identification with the respondents; instead, it can be enhanced if presented in writing simply and honestly without hiding the author and the author's own positionality.

One must not forget that writing in words is itself a creative exercise. Excessive visual embellishments can distract rather than serve the author's purpose; they could also undermine the significance of the conclusions and the means adopted to get to them. An illustration, a figure or a picture is a representation of the reality that is further removed from it than are simple persuasive arguments in prose.

Special Profile: Sandro Oliveira

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

I am originally from Brazil, and I grew up in the countryside of São Paulo state, in a city called Ribeirão Preto. I became a believer in 1993, after a difficult few years in one of the most deprived and violent neighbourhoods in the city. However, my life completely changed when I met Christ. Consequently, I wanted to share Jesus with everyone I knew. I was involved in street evangelism, door to door outreach and in the planting of a new church in the city. I remember praying with people on the streets and in their homes and I have seen God moving greatly. It was common to find people with evil spirits who needed deliverance. I grew and learned so much during those times. However, I was not satisfied. I wanted to do more for Christ. One day, when I was reading the Bible, I came across Romans 15:20 where the apostle Paul talks of his goal to preach to those that had never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus before. At that moment, I stopped and bowed down on my knees and told God that I would like to do the same. Well, God does hear our prayers! Not long after, I was invited to attend a missionary conference. There, I heard about the unreached people groups—those groups of people who have no opportunity to hear the gospel because there is no one to share with them. I remember saying to the Lord that I would then make my priority to bring Christ to these peoples.



Sandro Oliveira

Since then, I have been involved in mission. I first started my missionary career serving in Foz do Iguassu, Brazil, where I spent over 10 years being part of a multicultural missionary team reaching out to Arab immigrants. In 2003 I got married to Denise who shares a great passion for the lost. In 2006 we went to the Middle East where we had the privilege to learn Arabic and to engage in outreach to locals. In 2009 we moved to the UK with a view to initiate a church planting movement (CPM) among immigrants and refugees, particularly those from closed countries living there. Not long after, I was invited to lead the Pioneers missionary team in the city. The team grew both in numbers as well as in diversity, and we reached 11 adults and eight children representing eight different nations. I am also an ordained minister and I have been involved in coaching football to children. We have three children.

2) [CMIW] What is your current ministry?

Last year I was invited to take the role of an area leader for the north of the country. Apart from overseeing the Pioneers teams in the area, my goal is to mobilise workers for those places where there is little going on to engage the unreached people groups in the area. On top of that, I continue to participate in evangelism and discipleship of new believers in a multicultural church plant in my city. Moreover, last year I started a master's degree in practical theology which I hope to finish by the end of this year. My area of research is on leadership and mission, which are subjects that I am passionate about and have very practical application in my personal ministry. My studies allowed me to engage in literary and ethnographic research and analysis of reverse mission, as well as the investigation of the challenges for partnership in mission between Christians from the Global North and South.

3) [CMIW] What are the contributions you have made to world missions that have brought you the greatest satisfaction?

Nothing excites me more than seeing people having a personal and transforming encounter with Jesus and growing in their faith, particularly when these people are from those parts of the world where they had never had the opportunity to hear the gospel. Therefore, I am really grateful for the privilege of being involved in the evangelism and discipling of believers who are now making other disciples among their own people. I am also thankful for my years leading people from different nations working together in multicultural teams. I believe the Lord has granted me grace and understanding of the dynamics of multicultural leadership, and I am very satisfied in seeing the people I led experiencing great unity, as well as working together to fulfil the vision God gave them.

4) [CMIW] What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?

My greatest dream is to see a great church planting movement sweeping across the European continent. We know that God is powerfully moving among the unreached in different parts of the world and there are many CPMs happening (see David Garrison's book *A WIND IN THE HOUSE OF ISLAM* for a great overview of what the Lord is doing). I believe we are on the verge of a great movement of God in Europe, too, and I want to be part of what the Lord wants to do in this part of the world.

Also, given my experience on the field leading a multicultural church plant team and my unexpected remarkable achievement in my MA studies, I would like to be involved in the equipping of the church for ministry in the present context of polycentric mission. That may include writing a book and publishing papers in the subject of leadership and mission, with particular reference to ministry in Europe.

5) [CMIW] **Is there some way you'd be willing to help the CMIW community?**

In line with what I said above, I am willing to offer insights and advice to churches and workers seeking to engage in multicultural ministry, particularly to Global South churches ministering in Europe (reverse mission). I am also particularly interested in facilitating the sending of workers from the Global South into Europe. We know that the European continent has become an arduous mission field. Therefore, there is an urgent need for more prayer and workers who will engage in the outreach of both immigrant communities as well as the native Europeans. This being the case, I am available to offer support to churches and organizations interested in missions in this part of the world. On top of that, my recent research into the new missiological phenomenon of reverse mission, as well as my investigation into the challenges Christians from Global North and South face when working in partnership in mission, may be of interest to the CMIW's community.

[CMIW] For an example of Sandro's recent research, see his article "Global South Reverse Mission in Europe: An Examination of the Limiting Factors and Prospects" *Global Missiology* July 2021 (Vol. 18, No. 3), <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/2506>.

Information from the Word

The Bible is replete with parables and metaphors – “visual representations” of people’s relationships with God. The Book of Jeremiah alone uses a ruined loincloth, jars filled with wine, a potter and clay, a broken flask, a branch, and more. As for Jeremiah’s vision of good and bad figs, God explains: “Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans” (24:5); and, “Like the bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten, so will I treat Zedekiah the king of Judah, his officials, the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt” (24:8). How might such biblical imagery guide visual representations of qualitative research results?

For more creative ideas on visually representing data, check out our [Tweet](#) or [Facebook](#) post.

Final Details:

- With the help of God this bulletin is now produced quarterly in English, Portuguese and Spanish.
- The Editorial Team is comprised of Chris Maynard, Duane Frasier, Larry Kraft, Nelson Jennings, Rodrigo Tinoco and Stephanie Kraft.
- Please send any comments, suggestions or ideas to us at info@globalcmiw.org.
- Back issues can be found at globalcmiw.org.