



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

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Looking Back, Looking Forward by the Editorial Team

A Decade of CMIW

In the middle of 2021 it will be 10 years since we published the [FIRST](#) “Correct Me If I’m Wrong,” the bulletin that you are reading now. We are grateful that God has enabled us to publish once a quarter, every quarter so far. We have been blessed by your responses and your contributions. And God has given growth in our

readership. We now have about 640 subscribers to the English edition, 120 to the Portuguese, and 20 to the Spanish edition.

How Did You Find Us?

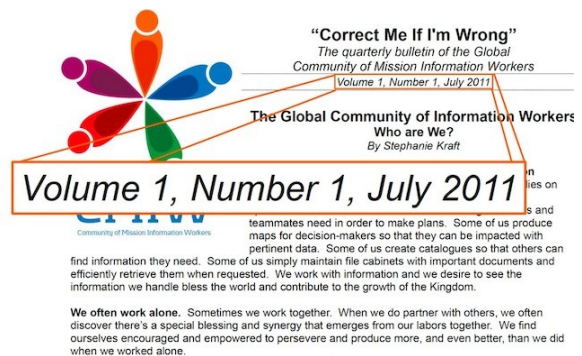
Do you have something to say about CMIW? If so, please do write and tell us. Maybe you could describe your first encounter with our community, how it happened and how it felt. Or maybe tell us about some connection you have made or ideas that you have gained. We are interested ourselves as the facilitation and editorial teams. Sometimes we don’t get enough feedback and we wonder if what we have done has been as useful as we hoped. We may want to publish some of what you write to us as part of our 10-year celebration, so let us know if you DO NOT want it published, or if you are happy to see it published but ANONYMOUSLY.

More Languages?

It has always been an ambition of ours to serve beyond the English-speaking community. We have been working in Spanish and Portuguese for over two years, and we are keen to add French and/or Chinese to be able to include more of our fellow information workers around the world. Ideally, we are looking for a fluent French or Chinese writer who is already at work in mission information in some way and in touch with other French- or Chinese-speaking information workers. They will need good English as well because the CMIW editorial team works in English. The initial tasks will be to make an experimental translation of an existing bulletin and to consider how we can build a subscription list for the new language edition.

A Celebration Conference!

We are also planning to host a virtual mini-conference for Mission Information Workers to celebrate our first decade. You may remember the MIW conference that took place in Arlington Texas in 2016 and the themes that were developed there. We invite you to send us ideas for our upcoming on-line gathering. Our thinking is at an early stage.



How can mission research better serve local leaders’ agendas?

by Stan Nussbaum

Recent discussion in the new Motus Dei forum on new Christian movements flagged the problem that so few members of the movements were participating in the research network. So far, it is mostly white male outsiders like me. One wrote:

I am in touch with a number of movements that may . . . want to understand and be better

equipped to do research. I don't think any of them would be interested in the sort of movement research that helps the wider world know how many movements there are or what their characteristics may be, though two groups of leaders did agree to participate in a project or two like that in the past.

My sense from reading the threads here is that the sort of research being proposed . . . is about the internal needs of movements for their own growth and health.

The discussion brought back memories of my 24 years at Global Mapping International (GMI) and our constant struggle to explain our ministry, because “mission research” meant such different things to different groups. I offer the following typology of “mission research” in the hope that it may help CMIW readers explain themselves as well as promote greater attention to a crucial but neglected type of mission research.

Let us classify mission research by the gaps that are driving it. For simplicity, I mention only four common types:

1. A gap in a local leader's or organization's discernment of what to do next;
2. A gap in a strategic database;
3. A gap in the academic literature;
4. A gap on a donor's checklist.

Gap 1 is the neglected gap mentioned earlier. Gap 2 is UPGs (unreached people groups), language mapping, etc. that GMI was initially designed to serve. Gap 3 is the academic world. Gap 4 is evaluative research, increasingly common.

The critical problem in the mission research community today is that the four types of research are siloed. Western strategists and mobilizers see that Gap 2 gets addressed. Western academics take care of Gap 3. Western donors demand attention to Gap 4. But the “local leaders” are out of sync with the West on all three points:

- Their mobilization is based more on social networks than geography;
- They want short useful case studies instead of bulletproof dissertations on niche topics;
- They want evaluation that rings true to local realities, not evaluation in terms of a foreigner's categories.

Why don't local leaders promote research that addresses Gap 1 themselves? Because it is an unknown type of “mission research.” What they know of research that addresses Gaps 2, 3, and 4 does not serve them. Can those of us involved in mission information work help these local leaders imagine research for Gap 1??

I am starting a couple of attempts at that, one of which is for [experimental research that local leaders help design themselves](#). The other is a possible micro-research project in four African countries, focusing on research topics updated monthly by a handful of leaders in each country.

There are also encouraging signs that Silo 3 is reaching out toward Silo 1. For example, the mission statement of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies includes, “responding to *issues identified by the church* [my italics] with timely, strategic and rigorous research.” I am less optimistic about the other two siloes but would be happy to be proved wrong there. Let's see how we can spur each other on toward more “Gap 1” research.



Stan is third from the right in this photo of some of the members of the OC International Global Research Team, one of Stan's many IW associations.

The *Great Commission Research Journal* and Mission Information Workers

By David Dunaetz



[The Great Commission Research Journal](#) is an academic, peer-reviewed journal focusing on understanding better how to carry out Jesus' Great Commission. Published twice a year, it presents articles containing original research that are relevant to the disciple making ministries of churches and parachurch ministries. It occupies a unique niche in the academic literature, combining practical theology (ministry-focused theology) with research on effective evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.

Pure motives and a biblical theology do not necessarily lead to effective methodologies. Rigorous research marked by a healthy skepticism in light of human proclivities can help us better understand how to be more effective in our ministries. This research may be qualitative (characterized by more subjective approaches to data collection concerning broad topics) or quantitative (using more objective approaches on narrower topics). It may also focus on extending a theory (or theology) to a new domain where it has not yet been applied.

The *Great Commission Research Journal* has been publishing research on effective ministry for 30 years, previously under the title *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth*. In light of the legitimate critiques of the Church Growth movement, the journal adopted its current title in 2008. It has published articles written by a large range of authors including Donald McGavran, George Hunter, Elmer Towns, Peter Wagner, Thom Rainer, Charles Van Engen, Gary McIntosh, J.D. Payne, Ed Stetzer, Warren Bird, and Jay Moon.

Any original, high-quality research relevant to fulfilling the Great Commission can be submitted to the journal. This research may focus on evangelism, church planting, church growth, spiritual formation, church renewal, worship, or missions.

The journal is published by the Great Commission Research Network (GCRN, GreatCommissionResearch.net), comprised of professors, church consultants, pastors, and missionaries concerned about the Great Commission. The GCRN meets for an annual conference immediately preceding the church planting conference Exponential in Orlando, Florida. The next conference is scheduled for October 18-19, 2021.

The *Great Commission Research Journal* would be an excellent publishing outlet for members of the Global Community of Mission Information Workers, many of whom are involved in research. Little research has been published on how Christians, churches, and unreached people groups are counted. What methods are used? How do methods differ, both in approach and results? These are important questions. Answers to these questions, however partial they may be, would be useful to all of us concerned about fulfilling the Great Commission.

Please contact David Dunaetz (ddunaetz@apu.edu) for any questions or to submit an article.

Here are some recent articles that you might find interesting:

Dunaetz, D. R. (2020). [Church-based research](#): Challenges and opportunities. *Great Commission Research Journal*, 12(1), 1-17.

Hussey, I. (2016). [The big news on small churches](#): Re-evaluating the contribution of small churches to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. *Great Commission Research Journal*, 7(2), 172-183.

Moon, J. (2020). [Alternative models for churches and church plants](#): When tithes and offerings are not enough. *Great Commission Research Journal*, 12(1), 19-42.

Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: **Loren Muehlius**



1) [CMIW] Please tell us about yourself.

I became a believer as a child, so I had great exposure to the Bible, Christianity, and missions. Having been accepted to college at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, I needed to choose a major. Looking through their list of options, I noticed Cartography which, after a visit to a dictionary, I discovered was the exciting science of making maps. I chose that as my major. My first job was using a computer to make maps with a regional planning agency in Wisconsin.

After five years at the planning agency, having heard missionary speakers growing up and being involved in missions at my church, I felt God wanted me to pursue that direction. I went to Columbia International University for a one- year Bible program, thinking God would guide me overseas as a missionary. However, He didn't guide me in that direction, and I ended up back in Wisconsin. I heard about an organization called Global Mapping Project (later Global Mapping International - GMI). As part of their research, they used computers to make maps for missions. This fit my background very well. God guided me there in 1986, and I worked with them until they closed at the end of June 2017.

2) [CMIW] What is your current ministry?

After GMI closed I began to work with the mission organization LightSys Technology Services (www.lightsys.org). We seek to help organizations and individuals fulfill the Great Commission by assisting with IT and computer technology. My role is to be a resource person for mapping. This can involve making maps, helping people associated with missions learn mapping software, and finding data and doing quality control on it. Sometimes it involves answering questions about mapping. I often answer mapping questions involving data or statistics.

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

The greatest satisfaction I have had is training and supporting others doing mapping work for missions. It is great to see others making maps and doing data analysis with them! Some of this training has been through giving workshops in various places around the world, and some at the GMI or LightSys office. In 1989 I enjoyed creating maps for a missions atlas which looked at many facets of missions, entitled Target Earth (missioninfobank.org). I appreciated the opportunity to help with maps for the Operation World book and electronic versions. Later it was great to help with the creation of an electronic version of Patrick Johnson's, The Future of Global Church. Over the years I have been blessed with great co-workers and others with whom I have worked on projects. Some have been promoted to heaven, but most are still around.

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

It would be great to see more people involved with mapping in missions and to see more mission organizations understand the value of mapping. I hope to be able to continue helping people with mapping. Getting older, I won't be able to work forever, so I hope to share what I've learned with others. I have been a part of an email group of mapping people who are interested in missions. It would be great to see this group grow in numbers and influence. A person from the group began a website, ChristGeoSpatial.com to let people know we exist, show the value of mapping to missions, and to encourage networking.

I would like to learn more about creating internet map services and making stories with maps.

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

A website, Mission Infobank, www.missioninfobank.org, has many maps and other free resources which can be helpful to missions. Many are older, but often these still have value.

I am happy to serve as a mapping resource person or point to others who may be able to help. It is great that a number of mission organizations have a person or team doing mapping.

Information from the Word

“Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs.” Moving from east to west, Dr. Luke meticulously identifies the various diaspora Jews gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost, all of whom miraculously heard in their own languages Jesus’s Galilean followers proclaiming “the mighty works of God” (Acts 2:5-11). Without reporting his research within an isolated silo, Luke spoke of both particular people and God’s larger redemptive story. How do you convey both detailed research results and their connection to God’s multifaceted, worldwide mission?

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, 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 www.globalcmiw.org.