



Why the hostility?

I had the splendid privilege in May 2014 of participating in the 13th WEA Mission Commission Global Consultation in Turkey. The fellowship was delightful, and the spiritual and intellectual stimulation over faith issues and strategic topics rich.

Each plenary was discussed by the delegates seated in twenty-nine or so table groups. A scribe was selected at each table to record its comments and then upload them to the WEA conference site. I served as scribe for my table.

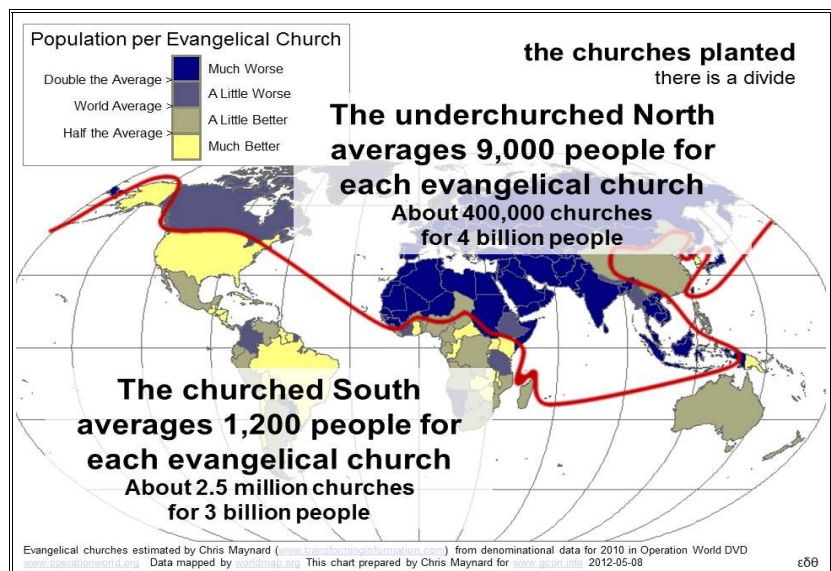
The third plenary session was a presentation by Chris Maynard and Larry Kraft entitled “The Status of Church Planting Worldwide.” Using data from the Operation World and Joshua Project databases, Chris and Larry presented a snapshot of the current missionary sending capacities and projected needs for assistance in church planting for every country in the world. There was a clear message that the continued growth of the Church worldwide needed to include the active participation of churches in Africa and Latin America, and that a simultaneous focus on unreached people groups must be strong.

There were some surprises from the data (e.g. many of us had no idea just how strong a contribution the church in China was positioned to make), but many of the “bottom line” recommendations were actually challenges from the past which just needed to be taken more seriously. Our table considered the presentation to be very well done, and I uploaded the words articulated by my table-mates, “excellent” and “brilliant.”

Imagine my surprise, then, to read that some other tables made fundamentally critical comments:

“We do not agree with this statistical approach. It is not helpful for understanding the complexities of the situations.” It could even be said that there was some hostility behind one table's reaction: “Are we back in the last century? Are we making the assumption that we can fix this? Where is God?” I think I even noted a subtle bias against the enthusiastic embracing of the message through the way table comments were summarized. For example, the verbatim submission by one table as a pair of questions, “We have some questions regarding the categories? It looks like whole historical denominations are excluded?” was recorded not as questions but as a statement: “The data seem to leave out the work done by historical denominations.” (See “Main Concept” Summary: (http://mc.worlddea.org/index.php?option=com_easydiscuss&view=post&id=353&Itemid=483)). Actually, the data did include work by all denominations, historical and otherwise.

Lest my surprise cause me to overreact, it is good to acknowledge that many table scribes did not have English as their first language, and emotion can sometimes appear to be present in a written text even when not intended. Also many, perhaps even most, tables did engage with the data in straightforward ways, drawing in concepts like partnerships, stewardship, and effective mobilization. But why does it seem that some people just like to hate numbers?



Is it because people who work with information are not up-front enough about the assumptions we make in handling our data? Do we not state clearly enough what aspects of our information is flawed? Or is it something about us? Are we arrogant? Do we come across as saying more than our information justifies?

Finally, what do we do when adversarial positioning or hostile reactions to our information work come our way? Solomon tells us that healthy correction is good, and if we accept it, we will be wise (Proverbs 15:31). How can we dialog with our critics so that the good Kingdom messages arising from our information are not ignored?

Can somebody shed some light on this perception of mine? Have you witnessed it as well? What can we do to reduce, or even eliminate this hostility, for heaven's sake?

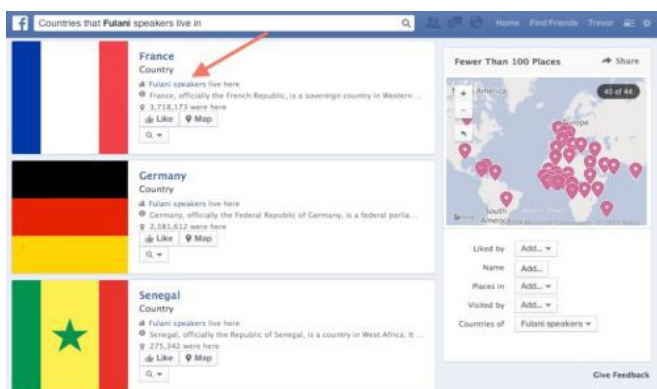
Stephanie Kraft

Mapping the Diaspora with Facebook

In the "Letter from Smyrna to the Global Church" fashioned at the conclusion of the 2014 WEA Mission Commission Global Consultation, we were admonished with these words:

We recognize with sorrow that many areas of the world, especially the Western world, need to have churches renewed by the Spirit, and new churches established.

This is certainly true for Europe, which has one evangelical church for every 9,000 people (4 times more needy of churches than the rest of the world). The steady influx of immigrants has created a multi-ethnic mosaic which can be difficult to understand and describe, let alone effectively touch



The United World Mission has been the driver in a process to harness the resources of Facebook for ministry to the diaspora in Europe and elsewhere. FB's latest innovation, Graph Search, has some remarkable features which can be employed for ministry. UWM affirms, "Given diaspora social media practices, it is feasible to create a virtual social network of UPGs, without ever leaving home. Developing a cultural map, or surveying the land is essentially what missionaries have always done on scouting trips or vision trips. The main difference in a

virtual scouting trip is that the data, which normally takes weeks if not months to gather, can be gathered in minutes by data mining one of the world's largest data sets. Data mining Facebook in order to locate and learn about unreached people groups should be an initial step in diaspora mission strategies."

Would you like to know more? You can contact Mark Szymanski at mksi1957@gmail.com or United World Mission, 205 Regency Executive Park Drive, Suite 430, Charlotte, NC 28217 (Phone 704.357.3355 Fax 704.357.6389) for more information about the use of this methodology.

Reference Data Digest

If you are responsible for the data in a database, you may want to subscribe to "Reference Data Digest". This free on-line newsletter provides you with updates to changes of commonly held reference data tables, like Country Codes and Currency Codes. For instance, in the May 2014 issue you will find information about recent reference data changes, including:

- Updates to the US Postal Service's International Mailing Manual (IMM)
- US FDA's Structured Product Labeling
- ISO 10383 MIC Market Codes
- The European Chemical Agency's List of Disseminated Substances
- Solicitations for comments concerning upcoming revisions to the US NAICS Industry Codes and the US SOC Standard Occupational Classification

- ...changes to a number of other standard code tables as well as administrative notices from code table authorities

Learn more or subscribe at www.referencedatadigest.com.

See you there

As always, we want to minimize the barriers and maximize the opportunities for information workers to actually be with one another. We think face-to-face get-togethers are fruitful and fun.

Here are some venues where someone from our community will be present during the next three months:

IISA (September 2014)

Europe Diaspora Conference (September-October 2014)

VII Brazilian Congress on Missions, Águas de Lindóia, Brazil (October 2014)

Might we see you there? If so, please drop us a note at cmiw@worksmail.net and we'll look for you.

Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: Kannan R.

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

[KR] I am from the southern part of India. I am single, 31 years of age; I have a brother and a sister. I'm a Computer Engineer by profession. My background helped me in being relevant in terms of relating to professionals, normal and religious peoples of different faith and age.

2. [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?**

[KR] I am involved with the India Missions Association (IMA). IMA is the largest Missions / Christian NGOs in the world. I serve IMA as their Research and Communication Director. The IMA is a strategic network that connects nearly 250 missions and churches in India. In terms of effectiveness, it is one of the best-networked. The IMA has consistently been at the forefront, assisting missions to be relevant, to see what should be done for today and tomorrow. The mission profile in India is very complex. Around 1970s, indigenous movements started and today they have grown to significant numbers with different focus and philosophies. Many international groups exist with Indian leadership.



The IMA started in 1977 and has played a major role in India. Under the direction of Dr. K. Rajendran (no family relation, but a mentor) the IMA helped groups define their focus and connect with each other. Now these groups are also discovering how to connect with others around the world. In all of this, research has been very important. I joined the research team in 2004, and we have seen it as our responsibility to provide information to assist groups to know where they have to focus and where to place their priorities. This has been my principle ministry for the past eight years. I also actively assisted in leadership training programs and think-tanks to stimulate mission leadership in the country and around the world.

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

[KR] At present I lead a network in the WEA, Future of Missions, to see the bigger picture of 'how the missions should be' in the light of today's and tomorrow's challenges. Another important taskforce under the WEA, a Missions Mobilization Research Team, was named in which we studied the issues pertinent to current mobilizing of people for missions. I personally performed about thirty interviews for this study and, through our transcription and analysis of the responses, we were able to discover the values behind decisions being made. We were able to "connect the dots" in our understanding regarding "themes" that motivated people toward missions.

I also always feel great about having been a part of “Operation World”. In 2009 I began assisting OW with their India section. I went to England and was with the team for two months. I believe “Operation World” is the most widely read and utilized book in the world for information, prayer and strategic engagement in missions. They are not only focused on the past, not only on the current situations, but they are concerned with the future as well, sharing challenges and prayer requests. Through this assignment I was in touch with more than a hundred Indian leaders from churches, missions and theological institutions around India, exchanging communication and verifying data. I was enriched by this experience in exposure to major leadership, cross-cultural living abroad, and making several long-term relationships.

I have also been involved in the Ethnê movement, Tentmakers International, and others. In India, I’m part of some significant networks, which have given me great joy and enabled me to understand different attempts to bring the Gospel meaningfully as global bodies.

4. [CMIW] **What dreams do you have for your next ten years of ministry?** [KR] In India now there is an emergent and growing middle class – now three-hundred-fifty million people strong and due to increase. There are youth – the greatest portion of the population is younger than thirty years of age. Trade is increasing. There is also a huge Indian diaspora. There are nearly five hundred cities in India. Around 75% are literate. These are the major evangelistic challenges in India right now. By and large, mission organizations and churches need to explore newer ways of doing missions to affect the total nation by giving concentrated attention to all of these areas. My dream is to make sure this is happening. I want to help find a way for theological institutions, mission agencies, churches and individuals to create something that will effectively bring us to a tipping point in India. There are small missional efforts happening here and there, but they have yet to become a movement.

My other dream is to help create leaders who will be able to address contemporary challenges, who can listen and contribute, who can take bold original actions with willing global partners both from the global South and the North. We need a wide spectrum of newer leaders who are open to new ideas, methodologies, able to work under the local leadership and able to relate to any sort of challenge and initiate real change. We need to develop modern day missionaries placed in different sections of society such as Arts, Business, Community, Dedia (an new made-up word to fit alphabetical order of Media), Education, Family, Government and Humanitarian services. I would love to help place people into these kinds of situations, as I perceive that as the meaningful way forward.

I’m also interested to see more dialog with theological, missiological and other Christ-minded institutions to create new types of training to place missional Christians, who believe that their mission is to fulfill the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, in positions of influence regarding people’s thinking towards Christ. I would love to see a more relevant curriculum offered in our theological schools so our graduates will be more effective people to cope with global trends.

Finally, I’m passionate about starting JClubs, contemporary regular gathering of Jesus followers, as a new way of looking at ecclesiology to enhance growth of Jesus followers. JClubs are where Jesus followers will meet, discuss and apply Christ’s teachings in their life and others’ and eventually transform communities and workplaces within India and abroad as new movements in the contemporary world.

5. [CMIW] **Is there some way you’d be willing to help the CMIW community?** [KR] I would definitely like to help, especially if my efforts can contribute to the building up of new, effective leaders for the church in India and the world.

Information from the Word

Proverbs 11:1 says, *“The Lord detests the use of dishonest scales, but delights in accurate weights.”* (NLT). What scales and weights do we use in our information work? How carefully do we take in data? How faithfully do we execute our analyses? Does the Lord detest or delight in our practices? This proverb tells us that this matters very much to God. Remember to check your “scales” and “weights” before you publish your next report!

Final Details:

- This bulletin is produced by the Community of Mission Information Workers Task Force comprised of Larry Kraft, Stephanie Kraft and Chris Maynard. Please send any suggestions of issues to discuss or any other ideas to cmiw@worksmail.net.
- Editorial team: Stephanie and Chris; layout and distribution: Larry.