



## STRATUS

Radical (radical.net) is excited to announce a new project aimed at serving the church in its efforts to take the gospel to unreached people groups (UPGs). Under the direction of David Platt, and in collaboration with organizations across the globe, Radical has initiated a new data migration project called STRATUS (Strategy for Unreached Synergy).

STRATUS brings together three crucial data sets: (1) existing Joshua Project data, (2) the UNDP (hdr.undp.org) Human Development Index, and (3) a Barrier Index. Merging this data highlights the underlying factors that have contributed to the unreached state of a people group. The combined index helps to provide a better explanation of why certain UPGs are still hard to reach. In turn it could greatly influence strategy and mobilization.

For many churches and mission organizations, the vast list of approximately 7,000 UPGs can be overwhelming, and knowing how best to apply resources to the list can be daunting. Our hope is that STRATUS will provide clarity by adding qualitative data to the existing list, thus adding a “z-coordinate,” or third dimension, which will in turn produce contours revealing peaks and valleys for even greater strategic engagement.

In short, a triage mechanism for UPGs is created by identifying the intersection points of physical needs, spiritual needs and the barriers that exist in reaching these people. This new endeavor is aimed to promote the equitable distribution of resources including prayer, mobilization, and finance to areas currently with little or no access to the gospel.

When approaching the vast landscape of unreached people groups, areas are often selected based on their perceived return on investment (ROI). The result is that hard-to-reach places get sidelined in favor of areas with greater ROIs. As an unintended consequence, the gospel-rich areas get richer while the gospel-poor areas get poorer. In order to address this disparity, the STRATUS index will recalibrate the existing missional ROI scale by weighting ROI based on the “Barrier Index”.



The creation of the Barrier Index is a joint venture underway in partnership with California Baptist University. It will become a new way to more informed strategy and sharper approaches to overcome the obstacles for engagement.

Expected outcomes of the new STRATUS index:

1. Promote biblical compassion for the physical suffering of unreached people groups;
2. Recalibrate the missional ROI scale by creating a weighted ROI for unreached people groups;
3. Create a triage mechanism for unreached people groups;
4. Create a new user interface through contour mapping that displays the barriers and physical needs of unreached people groups;
5. Add qualitative data to existing unreached people group data;
6. Promote the equitable distribution of resources amongst the world’s unreached;
7. Address the reasons why unreached people groups remain unreached;

8. Create an optimization tool for engaging unreached people groups;
9. Merge spiritual and physical needs data;
10. Create a product of reverse engineering directly from the field;
11. Add a “z-coordinate” to existing UPG data.

For more information on the Stratus Index please contact: [stratus@radical.net](mailto:stratus@radical.net).

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## **In Search of Other Bulletins for Mission Information Workers**

by Rev. J. Nelson Jennings, PhD  
Mission Pastor, Consultant, International Liaison  
Onnuri Church, Seoul

As stated in its inaugural July 2011 issue, the quarterly bulletin “Correct Me If I’m Wrong” aims to encourage, equip, and multiply the worldwide community of mission information workers. Rather than producing mission research results, the bulletin focuses on the mission research process and on the people who gather, analyze, and disseminate mission information for use in world evangelization.

On the one hand, as any Internet search of “Christian mission(s) information” or “Christian mission(s) research” will demonstrate, just among English-language materials there is no shortage of readily available mission information and research results. Printed journals, books, and newsletters expand the scope of available materials and information. What is difficult to find, however, are regular (quarterly, semi-annual, annual, or otherwise) newsletters or journals that focus on the process and people involved with mission information work per se.



Indeed, there appear to be no other periodicals produced out of the broad landscape of English-language, evangelical mission organizations, networks, and publications with a purpose similar to that of “Correct Me If I’m Wrong.”

Representative examples of potential candidates among evangelical missions networks include the India Missions Association ([www.imaindia.org](http://www.imaindia.org)), Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association ([nemanigeriamissions.org](http://nemanigeriamissions.org)), (the North American) Missio Nexus ([missionexus.org](http://missionexus.org)), and Philippines Missions Association ([www.philippinemissionsassociation.org](http://www.philippinemissionsassociation.org)). The Global Church Planting Network ([www.gcpn.info](http://www.gcpn.info)) lists research resources, but like the other networks mentioned here does not produce an ongoing publication for mission information workers.

Inserv ([www.inserv.org.za](http://www.inserv.org.za)), based in South Africa, majors on mission research, including through producing material about the how, what, and why of research and particular projects. The Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary ([gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/](http://gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/)) has published since 2014 a semi-annual newsletter, “The Inquiry”; and, just this month (October 2019) the Center has initiated a weekly blog by the same name as well. Both of these regular publications publicize the Center’s research projects as well as interact with other religious projects and data. The IMB ([www.imb.org](http://www.imb.org)), Operation World ([www.operationworld.org](http://www.operationworld.org)), and Joshua Project ([joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net)) are also among the evangelical world’s leading producers of missions resources. A periodical specifically for mission information workers, however, is not connected with these or other similar organizations.

As one non-English example, the Korea Research Institute for Mission ([krim.org](http://krim.org)) regularly publishes results from mission research projects. As a non-Evangelical example, for over 50 years “The Cara Report” ([cara.georgetown.edu/publication/the-cara-report/](http://cara.georgetown.edu/publication/the-cara-report/)) has been producing social science research for Catholics, including through providing tools for conducting research in various local contexts. Even so, a periodical specifically for mission information workers is not part of these ministries.

Correct me if I’m wrong, but it appears that there is ample space for additional publications to support missions information work, in English as well as in many other languages. May God continue to supply all the needs of mission information workers and of Christian missions as a whole.



## Harvest Information System - HIS

by Chris Maynard

I have just taken up the responsibility of “Registrar” for the “Harvest Information System” (HISregistries.org) and thought I should write a short article for this bulletin mainly to encourage your prayers. I didn’t want to duplicate what we have said before, so I searched back copies of this bulletin for references ... and I found none. What an omission! But this fairly reflects the hidden nature of “HIS”. Its origins are lost in the mists of time somewhere in the last century and its workings obscure, but it provides a key part of the framework that is shared by important data sources such as Operation World, Joshua Project and the World Christian Database.

You can see HIS as the data standards agency for the mission world. We cannot share data unless we know we are talking about the same thing. HIS provides guidance for those who want to share data in the missions world about (for example) people groups, languages or religions. There is a fair amount of interaction with secular standards bodies. Sometimes, through HIS, the mission world endorses an external standard, and in one case at least, the external world recognises that we have the best standard.

You can see HIS as an expression of our unity as organizations such as SIL, IMB, LightSys and GRN work together, not for their own benefit, but for the wider agenda of God’s mission.

Fundamentally HIS exists to enable and encourage the sharing of data widely among us. Please pray for us in this back room of Mission Information Work.

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### See You There!

As usual, we are on the lookout for places to meet up.  
This quarter there will be at least one of us at:

- Asia Missions Association in Thailand, November
- WEA General Assembly in Indonesia, November

If you are going to be there too, please let us know at [info@globalcmiw.org](mailto:info@globalcmiw.org). We'll put you in touch with other information worker(s) and we can share a meal or a coffee together. Where are you going in February 2020 or later? Let us know and we will put it in the next bulletin.

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### Who's Who in Missions Information

Special Profile: **Sara Hewitt**, D.Miss. [SH]

Field missionary and member of the One Challenge Global Research Team

1) [CMIW] **Please tell us about yourself (and your family, if you would like).**

[SH] I grew up in the north central region of the US, a small town with a population of about 700 people. It was during my first year of university that I became a believer in Christ.

After graduation I ended up in a number of jobs that gave me opportunities to get to know people from all over the world--really my first contact with people who were different than me. I worked in the Philippines, in Manila for six years. In the early 1990s my home church in the US asked me to consider moving to Eastern Europe. I have to admit that I said no for about a year, and even when the Lord showed me this was the providential time to make a move, I struggled. Well, this month marks 25 years that I have lived in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Learning the language of the place I live and work has been very important to me, philosophically, strategically and personally. After my spiritual conversion, I'd have to say that learning Tagalog and then Bulgarian have been the most significant transformational experiences in my life.



## 2) [CMIW] **What is your current ministry?**

[SH] In Bulgaria I am involved in research, networking, and just a few months ago started an agricultural project with Roma believers--something very new for me and my Bulgarian coworker. We also publish a Bulgarian-language newsletter for pastors, church planters, and small group leaders on topics related to evangelism, discipleship, and leadership in our context. Since January this year I have begun to work part time with Global Research Team of One Challenge, my sending organization.

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

[SH] Coming to Bulgaria in the mid-1990s, I hoped to become involved in church planting and training church planters, which was my area of experience. But in order to know where there are no churches, you have to know where there are churches, and no one really knew. Under the communist government, no one kept lists of churches--except the secret police, most likely. They had a strategy of divide and conquer, and it worked. Pastors of different denominations didn't share information with one another. Bulgaria has more than 5000 cities and villages, and in the 1990s very few churches had a permanent place where they met. I joined an effort to do a country survey and eventually became the coordinator of the project. The results we published and presentations I did made people aware of other believers outside of their own denominations, but it also showed the great need for more churches. After the spiritual revival in the early 1990s, some people assumed that the entire country was close to being reached, when in fact Protestant believers were only about 1% of the population and there were thousands of smaller cities and villages, even entire municipalities, where there were no known believers. I think our research also convinced Bulgarian believers that reaching the entire country was the task before the Bulgarian church, not just a ministry for missionaries from other countries.

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

[SH] Here in Bulgaria, we hope that our agricultural project would become self-supporting and become at least partially worker-owned. I would like to spend more time with research projects and collaborating with other researchers.

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

[SH] It's probably fair to say that qualitative research methods, especially in the area of grounded theory, is almost an obsession with me! We can learn a lot from numbers, but many significant questions can only be studied and described using words. I would be excited if I could make some kind of contribution in this area.

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## Information from the Word

The Lord looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth (Psalm 102:19) God's perspective on our world is broad and profound. Our perception is limited. What strategies can you use to improve your grasp of this world and its need for transformation? Add another dimension to your data? Share your raw data for additional comment? Invite a second set of eyes to code for textual analysis? Ask someone from another discipline to collaborate on a project? May God show us the steps we can take to deepen our understanding of the world that he loves so much.

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### Final Details:

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