

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The explosion of the Christian church in the Global South in the last century has great implications for missions and missionary movements. With David Livingstone and William Carey no longer fitting the profile of the average missionary in the present global church, the so-called younger churches of the Global South have now become sending churches. At the first Latin American Missionary Congress held in Curitiba, Brazil, in 1976, the 500 delegates affirmed: “We recognize that mission cannot be an isolated department of the life of the church, rather it is an essential part of its essence, because ‘the church is a missionary church or it is no church at all.’”¹ At COMIBAM (the Ibero-American Missionary Congress) in São Paulo in 1987, Luis Bush declared, “From a mission field, Latin America has become a mission force.”² With over 5000 transcultural missionaries presently serving in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East among other places, the Brazilian evangelical church has emerged—along with the broader church in Latin America—as a formidable example of missions sending from the majority world. In light of this historic development, my object in this study is to tell part of the story of Brazilian evangelical missions by focusing on Brazilian efforts in the Arab-Muslim world.

1.1 Need for and Purpose of this Study

Since Brazilian evangelical missions efforts toward the Arab world began after 1976 and in earnest since the early 1990s, there has been little scholarly reflection on the experiences of Brazilian transcultural workers or missions organizations. While Latin American mission work in the broader Muslim world has been studied in a general manner, a dedicated scholarly work on Brazilian evangelical missions in the Arab-

¹ Cited in Daniel Salinas, “The Great Commission in Latin America,” in Martin Klauber and Scott Manetsch, *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2008), 147.

² Cited in Oswaldo Prado, “A New Way of Sending Missionaries: Lessons from Brazil,” *Missiology: An International Review* 33:1 (2005), 52.

Muslim world has yet to be published. Hence, I am convinced that the present study will be a much-needed contribution to mission scholarship that will also have implications for mission practice as well. In short, the purpose of this study is to describe the transcultural mission work of Brazilian evangelical missionaries in the Arab-Muslim world.

1.2 Definitions

Before proceeding, it will be helpful to define some important terms that will be used throughout the study. First, I define evangelical or evangelicalism as a movement within Protestant Christianity that is minimally founded on the following presuppositions: biblicism or the commitment to the authority of Scripture; crucicentrism, an emphasis on Christ's atoning work at the cross; conversionism, the conviction that one must be converted through saving faith because of Christ's atoning work; and activism, the resulting commitment to evangelism, missions, and Christian service.³ As I will show in chapter two, Brazilian evangelicalism is generally broader than that of North America or Europe and, like the rest of Latin America, the terms "evangelical" and "Protestant" are typically used synonymously.

Second, what is mission? Following the consensus of evangelical missiology, I am persuaded that Christian mission flows from the mission of God (*missio Dei*) as "God is the one who initiates and sustains mission."⁴ Hence, I understand mission to be all that the church does to promote the Kingdom of God, while missions is the specific work of the church and its missionaries to make disciples of all nations through evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and related ministries.⁵

³ This has been best articulated in David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

⁴ See A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 17.

⁵ See Moreau, Corwin, and McGee, *Introducing World Missions*, 17.

Third, majority world missions refers to missions movements and efforts from the non-Western world. Sometimes called third-world, two-thirds world, or even emerging missions movements, in recent years, “majority world missions” has become the more commonly accepted expression among scholars to describe this phenomenon within the global church.

Fourth, though much of chapter two is devoted to what it means to be Brazilian, I define Brazilian as a member of an affinity bloc of the cultures that make up the country of Brazil. With some 291 ethnic or cultural groups, the Brazilian mosaic is composed of indigenous, Portuguese, African, European, and Asian peoples, as well as some cultures that have resulted from the intermarrying of these peoples. While a great deal of cultural diversity exists, a degree of cultural cohesiveness can also be observed. Similarly, I define Arab as a member of the affinity bloc of Arabic-speaking peoples that reside in the twenty-two Arab states of North Africa and the Middle East.⁶

Finally, I will use the terms “missionary” and “transcultural worker” interchangeably, though admittedly the former still has a rather colonial connotation to it. As this study will show, the work of missionaries or transcultural workers is generally to engage in missions, as defined above, within another culture.

1.3 Research Questions and Limitations

In light of the overall aim to tell part of the Brazilian evangelical missions story by focusing on Brazilian transcultural workers and missions agencies serving in the Arab world, several research questions must be posed. First, historically, how did Brazil go from being a mission field to being a country that sends out evangelical missionaries?

⁶ My paradigm for regarding Brazil and the Arab world as affinity blocs is based on the thought of Patrick Johnstone. See Johnstone, “Look at the Fields: Survey of the Task,” in J. Dudley Woodberry, ed., *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues Among Muslims* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008), 14-17.

Second, culturally speaking, what does it mean to be a Brazilian evangelical missionary in an Arab context? That is, aware of their own “Brazilianness,” how do Brazilian workers describe their adaptation to Arab culture? Third, what are the characteristic mission practices of Brazilian workers, teams, and Brazilian missions organizations? How do Brazilians describe their strengths and weaknesses in mission in the Arab world? Finally, how are Brazilians thinking theologically about mission? Also, how is this Brazilian missiology relevant to transcultural mission work in the Arab-Muslim world?

This study is also bound by certain limits. In terms of chronology, my study focuses on Brazilian evangelical missions efforts following the Curitiba meeting of 1976, although most of the development has taken place since the early 1990s. Though some background on the history of the Brazilian church and its mission efforts has been offered for the sake of context, the focus of the study begins with 1976. Second, I have chosen to focus only on Brazilian evangelical missions instead of Latin American missions in general. This decision was made in order to bring focus to the study, because Brazil is unique as a Portuguese-speaking country in South America, and because Brazil is the oldest and largest Latin American missions-sending country. Third, in focusing only on evangelical churches and missions from Brazil, I have not addressed the transcultural efforts of Brazilian Roman Catholic missionaries. Finally, I have focused the study on Brazilian missions in the Arab world. Specifically, that refers to Brazilian efforts within the twenty-two Arabic speaking countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is important for at least three reasons. First, there is value in telling the story of Brazilian evangelical mission work in the Arab world so that the global

church might be aware of, recognize, and appreciate the work of this emerging missions movement. Second, as the global church—including the older sending churches of North America and Europe—reflects on Brazilian efforts in mission, there will certainly be lessons that can be learned. Finally, this study offers a framework for self-reflection for Brazilian transcultural workers and mission leaders to contemplate the Brazilian experience in mission, to identify apparent strengths and weaknesses, and to move forward as an evangelical missions movement in places such as the Arab world.

1.5 Locating Myself as a Researcher

For me, this study began very personally over fifteen years ago in a North African *souk* (market). At the time, I was serving as a transcultural worker in the region and I was hosting Julio (not his real name), who was in the process of moving his family from Latin America to join our work in North Africa. While visiting the *souk* one day to buy gifts for his family, I was struck by how the shop owner largely ignored me (even though I was translating for Julio) and wanted to communicate directly with him. It was only after a half hour that he could be convinced that Julio was not North African. Standing there in the *souk* that day, I first became curious about the Latin-Arab connection, including the implications it might have for mission. Since that time, I have observed and admired the work of many Latin American and Brazilian evangelical missionaries serving in the Arab world. At times, I even found myself jealous of these friends whose “look” allowed them to blend in so well and who seemed to have far fewer barriers adapting to Arab culture than I did as a North American.

While part of my appreciation for Brazilian transcultural workers is due to differences between my culture and theirs and how that impacts ministry in the Arab

context, I also feel a sense of commonality with them. First, in terms of faith presuppositions, I would also identify myself as an evangelical as I have generally defined it in this chapter. Second, having spent over ten years living among and ministering to Arabs, I can intimately relate to the process of language acquisition, cultural adaptation, ministering in another culture, and generally living and functioning in the Arab world. Hence, the reader should be aware of the spiritual (evangelical) and experiential (transcultural work among Arabs) perspectives that I bring to this work.

1.6 Literature Survey

Before elaborating further on the methodology employed to carry out this study, it would be helpful to survey the current literature related to our subject. In recent years, much scholarly attention has been given to the southward shift of global Christianity. The three most significant voices in the discussion have been Andrew F. Walls (*The Missionary Movement in Christian History; The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History; Mission in the 21st Century*),⁷ Phillip Jenkins (*The Next Christendom* and *The New Faces of Christianity*),⁸ and Lamin Sanneh (*Whose Religion is Christianity?, The Changing Face of Christianity, Disciples of All Nations*).⁹ Miriam Adeney has also offered a winsome look at the global church in her recent work *Kingdom Without Borders: The Untold Story of Global Christianity*.¹⁰ Aside from these authors?

⁷ See Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996); *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002); and *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008).

⁸ See Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁹ See Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of all Nations: Pillars of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

¹⁰ See Miriam Adeney, *Kingdom Without Borders: The Untold Story of Global Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2009).

monographs, Global South issues have been addressed by Dana Robert¹¹ and Todd Johnson,¹² while the phenomenon has certainly been the impetus behind the recently launched *Journal of World Christianity*.¹³

The impact of Global South Christianity on missions has been treated by numerous authors and researchers including Mark Laing,¹⁴ and the two-thirds world church research group which met at the Lausanne Conference in Thailand in 2004.¹⁵ For nearly three decades, the most significant research on majority world missions has been done by Lawrence Keyes (*The Last Age of Missions*) and Larry Pate (*From Every People*).¹⁶ Also, the recently released 2009 edition of Winter and Hawthorne's *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* contains a prominent section on majority world missions. While well-known mission scholars such as Winter, Patrick Johnstone, Bill Taylor and others offer helpful contributions,¹⁷ the reader benefits mostly from hearing directly from non-Western mission leaders and scholars that include Beram Kumar (Asia), Timothy Olonade (Africa), Bertil Ekström (Brazil), Chul Ho Han (Korea), K. Rajendran (India), Enoch Wan (China), Berting Fernando

¹¹ See Dana L. Robert, "Shifting Southward: Global Christianity Since 1945," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24:2 (April 2000), 50-58.

¹² See Todd Johnson and Sandra S. K. Lee, "From Western Christianity to Global Christianity," in Ralph D. Winter and Stephen C. Hawthorne, eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (4th ed., Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 387-92; also Johnson, "World Christian Trends, Update 2007," *Lausanne World Pulse* (website), <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/766/08-2007?pg=all> (accessed Jan. 12, 2009).

¹³ The journal is published uniquely on-line at: <http://www.journalofworldchristianity.org> (accessed January 12, 2009).

¹⁴ See Mark Laing, "The Changing Face of Mission: Implications for the Southern Shift in Christianity," *Missiology: An International Review* 34:2 (2006), 165-77.

¹⁵ See David Ruiz, "The Two-Thirds World Church," Lausanne Occasional Paper 44. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005, http://www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP44_IG15.pdf (accessed April 7, 2008).

¹⁶ See Lawrence Keyes, *The Last Age of Missions: A Study of Third World Missionary Societies* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1983); and Larry Pate, *From Every People* (Monrovia, CA: Marc, 1989). Aside from these individual works, Keyes and Pate have collaborated on the following relevant scholarly articles: "Emerging Missions in a Global Church," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10:4 (October 1986), 156-61; "Two-Thirds World Missions: The Next 100 years," *Missiology: An International Review* 21:2 (April 1993), 188-206.

¹⁷ See Bill Taylor, "Global Partnership: Now is the Time," Yvonne Wood Huneycutt, "New Pioneers Leading the Way in the Final Era," Patrick Johnstone, "Expecting a Harvest," Todd Johnson and Sandra S. K. Lee, "From Western Christendom to Global Christianity," and Ralph Winter, "Are We Ready for Tomorrow's Kingdom," in Winter and Hawthorne (4th ed.), 376-94.

(Philippines), Carlos Scott (Latin America), and David Ruiz (Latin America).¹⁸

Though less scholarly and more practically oriented, Ben Naja's recent book *Releasing Workers of the Eleventh Hour* is a single volume dedicated to the issue of majority world missions.¹⁹ Within the context of missions to the Muslim world, Greg Livingstone has also recently written an article on the vital role of Global South missionaries in this effort.²⁰ Similar to the Lausanne Movement, which has discussed the majority world missions and published its findings, COMIBAM has continued to hold regular conferences in Latin America since 1987, has served as a resource for missionaries from the region, and has generated much helpful data on the Latin American missions movement.²¹ Finally, the subject of majority world missions was the main theme at the Evangelical Missiological Society annual meeting in Denver, Colorado in September, 2008, and its monograph, *Missions from the Majority World: Progress, Challenges, and Case Studies*, was recently released.²²

Among Latin American theologians and missiologists, much helpful scholarship has come from Peruvian theologian Samuel Escobar (*The New Global Mission, Changing Tides: Latin America & World Mission Today*), representing the

¹⁸ See Beram Kumar, "No Longer Emerging," and various authors, "Majority World Sending," in Winter and Hawthorne (4th ed.), 369-76.

¹⁹ See Ben Naja, *Releasing Workers of the Eleventh Hour: The Global South and the Remaining Task* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2007).

²⁰ See Greg Livingstone, "Laborers from the Global South: Partnering in the Task," in Woodberry, *From Seed to Fruit*, 51-66. Also within Woodberry, *From Seed to Fruit*, two other authors raise similar points: Patrick Johnstone, "Look at the Fields: Survey of the Task," 6, and Jeff Liverman, "Unplowed Ground: Engaging the Unreached," 29

²¹ See COMIBAM: *Intercional Cooperación Misionera Iberoamericana* (web site) www.comibam.org; and W. Douglas Smith, "COMIBAM: Takeoff Toward AD 2007," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 15:1 (1998), 53-55.

²² See Enoch Wan and Michael Pocock, eds., *Missions from the Majority World: Progress, Challenges, and Case Studies* (Evangelical Missiological Series 17) (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009). One of the papers given was by Howard Brandt of Serving in Mission (SIM) who has labored for years supporting what he refers to as "emerging mission movements." Brandt's blog on the issues can be found at: <http://www.sim.org/index.php/content/sharing-the-vision-emerging-mission-network>. A similar effort in the Anglican tradition is Faith2Share: <http://www.faith2share.net>.

influential thought of the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL).²³ In *Changing Tides*,²⁴ Escobar has succinctly narrated the key points in Latin American mission history and begun to articulate an evangelical theology of mission from a Latino perspective. Escobar and others also contributed papers on Latin American mission theology and praxis at the Iguassu Dialogue that met in Brazil in 1999—later published as *Global Missiology for the 21st Century*.²⁵ Regarding sending Latin American missionaries in general to the Arab world, Pedro Carrasco offered a brief study in 1994,²⁶ while Federico Bertuzzi edited the short work *Latinos en El Mundo Islámico (Latinos in the Muslim World)* in 1990.²⁷

In Brazil, there is a developing literature of both a practical and scholarly nature addressing many aspects of Brazilian evangelical missions. Bertil Ekström, executive director of the World Evangelical Alliance and key participant in the Lausanne Movement, has authored numerous strategic, practical, and scholarly works.²⁸ Valdir Steuernegal, a missiologist in the Lutheran tradition, minister at large for World Vision, and also an active participant in Lausanne, has been a leader for the

²³ See Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, Ill: Intervarsity, 2003); *Changing Tides: Latin America & World Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002); “Missions from the Margins to the Margins: Two Case Studies from Latin America,” *Missiology: An International Review* 26.1 (1998), 87-95; and “Missions New World Order,” *Christianity Today*, November 14, 1994, 48-52.

²⁴ With some changes and modifications, *Changing Tides* is a translation of Escobar’s *Una Decada en Tiempo de Mision* (Quito: Ediciones Comunidad, 1987).

²⁵ See William D. Taylor, ed., *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

²⁶ See Pedro Carrasco, “Training Latins for the Muslim World,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 11.1 (1994), 1-4.

²⁷ This was later translated into Portuguese as Federico Bertuzzi, *Latinos No Mundo Muçulmano* (São Paulo: Sepal, 1993).

²⁸ Ekström was a respondent to Howard Brandt in Ruiz, ed., “The Two-Thirds World Church”; see also Ekström, “Brazilian Sending,” in Winter and Hawthorne (4th ed.), 371-72; and “The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries,” in William Taylor, ed., *Too Valuable to Lose: Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997), 183-93. His relevant works in Portuguese include *Éspiritu de Comibam* (Brazil: Comibam, 2006); and *Modelos Missionários Brasileiros Para ó XXI* (Brazil: AMTB, 1998).

past two decades in missiological reflection.²⁹ The Associação de Professores de Missões no Brasil (Association of Brazilian Mission Professors) began meeting in 1983 and has published the journal *Capacitando* since the late 1990s.³⁰ Oswaldo Prado, a Presbyterian pastor and mission leader has also published works that have charted the narrative of evangelical missions from Brazil and provided vision for the movement.³¹ Ted Limpic, a North American missionary and researcher for COMIBAM, has generated a great deal of statistical work on missions from Brazil and Latin America.³² He has also contributed a helpful article on missionary attrition among Brazilians in Bill Taylor's work *Too Valuable to Lose*.³³ Also in Taylor's work, missiologist Margaretha Adiwardana has offered some helpful reflection on the pre-field training of Brazilian missionaries.³⁴ In a dissertation completed in 2005, Donald Finley, a long-time Baptist missionary in Brazil, proposed a contextualized model for training Brazilians in mission.³⁵ On the subject of tentmaking, strategist Robson Ramos wrote in 1998 advocating a tentmaking model for Brazilian missionaries,³⁶ while more recently, João Mordomo has advanced the Business as Mission paradigm for Brazilian cross-cultural workers.³⁷

²⁹ See Valdir Steuernagel, *Missionary Obedience and Historical Practice: In Search for Models* (ABU Editoria, 1993); and "The Theology of Mission in Its Relation to Social Responsibility within the Lausanne Movement," (Th.D. Dissertation, Chicago: Lutheran School of Theology, 1988).

³⁰ See *Associação de Professores de Missões no Brasil* (web site) <http://www.apmb.org.br/index.html> (accessed January 22, 2009).

³¹ See Oswaldo Prado, "A New Way of Sending Missionaries: Lessons from Brazil," *Missiology: An International Review* 33:1 (2005), 48-60; and "The Brazil Model," *AD 2000* (web site) <http://www.ad2000.org/gcove95/prado.html> (accessed January 16, 2009).

³² For Limpic's statistical work, see *COMIBAM* (website) <http://www.comibam.org/transpar/index.htm> (accessed January 22, 2009).

³³ See Ted Limpic, "Brazilian Missionaries: How Long Are They Staying?" in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 143-54.

³⁴ See Margaretha Adiwardana, "Formal and Non-Formal Pre-Field Training: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 207-215.

³⁵ See Donald K. Finley, "Contextualized Training for Missionaries: A Brazilian Model," (PhD diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2005).

³⁶ See Robson Ramos, "Tentmaking and Missions: Reflections on the Brazilian Case," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 15:1 (1998), 47-52.

³⁷ See João Mordomo, "Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force," in Tom Steffen and Mike Barnett, eds., *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered* (Evangelical Missiological Series 14) (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006), 219-39.

This scholarship provides an excellent point of departure for the present study. The literature suggests that the Brazilian missionary movement is young, eager, and energetic, and, with the expected twentieth and twenty-first century post-colonial backlash, it is continually struggling to find its identity. Transcultural missionary training in the Brazilian evangelical churches and theological seminaries is still in its early stages and despite its enthusiasm and commitment, the church has not fully developed the necessary support structures needed to sustain a long-term missions movement (i.e., missionary care, financial support, “tentmaking” training).³⁸ Again, a scholarly work on Brazilian missions in the Arab world has yet to be published; thus, the present work should help to fill some important gaps within the literature.

1.7 Method of Study

As this is a study in missiology—a discipline that relies on numerous disciplines as conversation partners—my research methodology is varied. In chapter 2, my purpose is to locate historically Brazilian evangelical missions work in the Arab world; thus I have taken a historical approach that included rigorous interaction with the literature from Brazilian, Latin American, North American, and European scholars.

After some reflection, it seemed best to approach the qualitative aspect of this study—particularly the discussions in chapter 3 and 4—as a collective case study.

Though a phenomenological approach was considered, that path would have been preferred if I were only studying a single mission team or organization experiencing the phenomenon of Arab world mission within a more focused period of time.³⁹

However, my research aims were best facilitated through a case study—“research [that] involves the study of an in issue explored through one or more cases within a

³⁸ See Salinas, “The Great Commission in Latin America,” in Klauber and Manetsch, 140; and Guillermo Cook, “Protestant Mission and Evangelization,” in Guillermo Cook, ed., *New Face of the Church in Latin America* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 49.

³⁹ See John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), 57-58.

bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context).”⁴⁰ In this respect, my issue is the phenomenon of Brazilian evangelical missions in the Arab-Muslim world. By pursuing a collective case study, “the one issue or concern is again selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue,” which also results in more compelling conclusions.⁴¹

Creswell adds, “Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (i.e., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes.”⁴² Thus, in this collective case study, I examined Brazilian evangelical missions in the Arab-Muslim world context from 1976 to the present. This was accomplished by listening to many voices—those of Brazilian transcultural workers and mission leaders—and also interacting with the relevant published reflections of Brazilian and Latin American missiologists and theologians. By reporting on the themes that emerged from the research questions—how Brazilians describe their cultural experience in the Arab world and how Brazilians approach mission—a general description of Brazilian evangelical missions to Arabs has been offered.

Finally, in chapter 5, my aim is to summarize key aspects of Brazilian theology of mission. This has been pursued primarily through a rigorous interaction with the works of Brazilian and Latin American theologians in conversation with the observed practice of Brazilian evangelical workers serving in the Arab world.

⁴⁰ See Creswell, 73.

⁴¹ See Creswell, 74. See also R.K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Method* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2003).

⁴² See Creswell, 73.

1.7.1 Participants

The qualitative aspect of this study has been based on the input of forty-five Brazilian transcultural workers and ten mission leaders. Before describing the methods of data collection, let us offer a brief description of the participants. I have given a breakdown of the survey pool of Brazilian workers and mission leaders in tables in Appendices A and C respectively.

In terms of ministry, forty-two of the forty-five Brazilian workers continue to serve among Arabs. Of the three that are not, two are presently serving as pastors in Brazil and are involved in missions mobilization, while the other is planting churches in North America. Thirty-six participants are serving in Arab countries, three are serving among Arabs in of Brazil, while six have ministered to Arabs in both Arab countries and in Brazil. The survey pool also revealed a significant array of ministry experience: one had been serving for more than twenty years; one for fifteen to twenty years; six for ten to fifteen years; thirteen for five to ten years; fifteen for three to five years; eight for less than two years; and one gave no indication.

Demographically, eleven participants are single woman, three are single men, while there was another single participant who did not indicate his or her gender. Thirteen are married women, twelve are married men, while five other marrieds responded who did not indicate their gender. Of the marrieds, seven married couples were interviewed together.

Of the ten mission leaders that were surveyed, the participants are involved in different aspects of missions training, mobilization, and leadership. One is the dean of a theological seminary, another is an instructor in a missions training institute, while another is a part-time instructor, missiologist, and author. One participant is a pastor and leader of a small missions organization, while another is a missions pastor and

former leader of a missions agency. The remaining five participants are directors of missions agencies that send Brazilian workers to the Arab-Muslim world.

Two of these leaders were also included in the sample of Brazilian transcultural workers because they were missionaries in the Arab world before assuming their present roles.

Demographically, three of the participants are North American missionaries (two men and one woman) that are involved in training and mobilizing Brazilians for transcultural mission work. The remaining seven participants are Brazilian, including four married men, one single man, and one man and one woman who did not indicate their marital status.

1.7.2 Data Collection

As I began to develop survey questions for the transcultural workers and mission leaders survey (see Appendices B and D respectively), my research values could best be described as social constructivist. That is, the questions were “broad and general so that the participants [could] construct the meaning of a situation . . . the more open ended the questioning the better.”⁴³ I was especially encouraged to proceed in this manner by an African colleague in missiology and by a Brazilian transcultural worker with significant training in the social sciences—both of whom gave feedback to the initial survey drafts. Hence, nearly every question included a comments section so that maximum understanding could be given to the “meaning that the participants hold about the problem.”⁴⁴ In both the transcultural workers and mission leaders surveys, open-ended questions were developed that dealt with Brazilian cultural adaption in the Arab world, approaches to mission, and missionary life and health. The two surveys also welcomed a broader perspective on Brazilian missions from

⁴³ See Creswell, 20-21.

⁴⁴ See Creswell, 39.

those who have gone as missionaries and from those who send and offer support.

While far more data was generated that could be addressed in the study, I was able to focus on the most prominent themes that emerged.

Once the two surveys were approved by the university's Institutional Review Board, they were uploaded into an on-line survey program.⁴⁵ To invite the maximum amount of participation, the surveys were published in both English and Portuguese.⁴⁶ Also, to protect the anonymity of Brazilian workers—most of whom are serving in contexts that do not welcome traditional Christian missions—the workers survey was encrypted and participants were sent a password to enter the site. While safeguarding their anonymity, I assigned a number to each participant in order to track and analyze their responses. While anonymity was not promised to or requested by the mission leaders; I also assigned a number to each mission leader respondent. This was especially helpful when their identity was not clear.

How was data collected from the Brazilian missionaries? The workers survey was placed on-line in February, 2009, and remained available until July, 2010. Beginning in February, 2009, I sent approximately forty emails to Brazilian workers via trusted intermediaries—Brazilian mission leaders and other missionaries—inviting them to participate by linking to the survey site.⁴⁷ This effort yielded only fourteen responses—nine surveys that were answered in Portuguese, two in English, and three included English and Portuguese responses.⁴⁸ I quickly learned that for reasons of security and culture, this method of surveying would not be the most

⁴⁵ See *SurveyMonkey* (web site) <http://www.surveymonkey.com>.

⁴⁶ Valuable insights on constructing a web-based questionnaire were gleaned from Don A. Dillman, Robert D. Tortora, and Dennis Bowker, "Principles for Constructing Web Surveys," unpublished paper from Dillman's University of Washington personal web page: <http://survey.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papers/websurveyppr.pdf> (last accessed October 31, 2010).

⁴⁷ See Creswell, 118 -25 on building rapport with participants.

⁴⁸ The Portuguese responses were translated in English by a third-party, qualified translator, Cristina Boersma (MA, Liberty University). See Appendix A: Brazilian Workers Survey Pool, respondents 1-7, 14-17, 19, 22.

productive form; so I began to prepare for three trips to the field in order to conduct interviews with those who did not respond to the on-line surveys as well as to meet others, and to make observations.⁴⁹ Hence, my sampling strategy moved from being convenient toward a combination or mixed strategy that was also opportunistic.⁵⁰

In July, 2009, I spent ten days in Brazil and went through the survey in interview form with seven Brazilian missionaries—six that are continuing to minister to Arabs in Brazil and one who is now serving as a missions pastor.⁵¹ Two interviews were done in English with fluent English speakers, while the other five were done through translation. In addition to interviewing the six participants who are working with Arabs in Brazil, I was able to spend several days observing their ministries first-hand—activities that included personal witness, a community dinner, a Muslim ministry training seminar, an evangelistic Bible study, and a worship service. Finally, after returning home from Brazil, I conducted one more survey in English over Skype with one worker was sick during the time of my visit.⁵²

In October, 2009, I spent one week visiting ten Brazilian workers in their ministry context in a Middle Eastern country. Because of language barriers, I met the group one day for a meal at someone's home and during this time, each worker filled out a hard copy of the survey in Portuguese. Afterward, through translation, I invited them to comment further on any thoughts that were triggered by the survey. Upon my return to the United States, the responses were translated into English by a trusted third-party translator and they were entered into the on-line database.⁵³ In addition to these surveys, I spent one entire day with a Brazilian worker observing his sports

⁴⁹ See Creswell, 129-43.

⁵⁰ See Miles and Huberman's framework cited in Creswell, 127.

⁵¹ See Appendix A: Brazilian Workers Survey Pool, respondents 8-13, 18.

⁵² See Appendix A: Brazilian Workers Survey Pool, respondent 21.

⁵³ I am indebted to Barbard Hubbard (MA cand., Liberty University) for her translations. See Appendix A: Brazilian Workers Survey Pool, respondents 23-32.

outreach. Finally, I visited with another worker (who did not complete the survey) on site at her place of ministry—a cultural center for the handicapped.

Also in October, 2009, I interviewed one former worker, who is presently serving as a church planter in the United States, during his participation at a conference at my university. This interview was conducted in English.⁵⁴

In January, 2010, I spent a week in another Middle Eastern country and conducted twelve interviews with Brazilian workers. Nine of the interviews (including two married couples) were done in English, while the other three (including one married couple) were done through the help of a translator.⁵⁵ The only ministry activity that I observed was a mission team meeting, which included Brazilians and Arab Christians worshipping together and planning for ministry outreaches.

How was data collected from Brazilian mission leaders? Like the workers survey, the mission leaders survey was placed on-line in February, 2009, and remained available until July, 2010. I sent email invitations to participate in the survey to the leaders of forty missions organizations listed in the COMIBAM network and to fifteen missiologists listed on the web site of the Associação de Professores de Missões no Brasil (Association of Brazilian Mission Professors). These initiatives yielded only six responses—two that answered in English, while the other four responded in Portuguese.⁵⁶ During my trip to Brazil in July, 2009, I was able to meet with two of these respondents (Silas Tostes and Daniel Calze), visit the headquarters of their missions organizations (Missão Antioquia and PMI Brazil respectively), and talk with them in more depth about their efforts in the Arab-Muslim world.

⁵⁴ See Appendix A: Brazilian Workers Survey Pool, respondent 33.

⁵⁵ See Appendix A: Brazilian Workers Survey Pool, respondents 34-45.

⁵⁶ The Portuguese responses were translated in English by a third-party, qualified translator, Cristina Boersma (MA, Liberty University). See Appendix C: Brazilian Mission Leaders Survey Pool, respondents 1-4, 6, 8.

The remaining four surveys with mission leaders—those that did not respond to the on-line survey—were done through personal interviews. During my trip to Brazil, I interviewed João Mordomo of CCI Brasil, spent three days observing a CCI-sponsored Muslim ministry training, and visited the CCI headquarters in Curitiba. Similarly, I interviewed Robson Ramos, a missiologist who is presently involved in church planting in Southern Brazil, and spent three days observing his ministry.⁵⁷ Upon returning to the United States, I interviewed Timothy Halls of PMI USA by phone and Marcos Amado, former director of PM International, over Skype.⁵⁸ Apart from my interaction with Daniel Calze, which was facilitated by translation, each interview with the mission leaders was conducted in English. It should be noted that the mission leaders survey had an overall lower response rate because several leaders declined to participate; they indicated their grasp on Brazilian mission work in the Arab-Muslim world was not sufficient enough to comment.

In light of cultural and security concerns, I felt that it would be most ethical to refrain from recording the interviews with both Brazilian workers and mission leaders.⁵⁹ Instead, I chose to take copious notes at each interview and then entered the survey responses into the on-line database at the earliest opportunity.⁶⁰ While the collective responses of those who responded on-line and through interviews have been stored in the on-line database, I have also catalogued an English-only version of the workers and mission leaders survey responses in Appendices B and D respectively.

⁵⁷ See Appendix C: Brazilian Mission Leaders Survey Pool, respondents 5, 7.

⁵⁸ See Appendix C: Brazilian Mission Leaders Survey Pool, respondents 9-10.

⁵⁹ See Creswell, 141-42.

⁶⁰ See Creswell, 142-43.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

Once the data was properly stored and translated into English, I spent several months reading and re-reading the survey responses and reflecting on my own field observations in order to classify and interpret the data.⁶¹ Following Van Manen, my main approach in the qualitative aspect of the study was theme analysis—a means of structuring the experiences and finding meaning in them.⁶² This provided a foundation to make naturalistic generalizations about Brazilian evangelical missions in the broad areas of cultural adaptation among Arabs and mission practice, and to some extent, theology of mission.⁶³

Hence, the data on Brazilian cultural adaptation (chapter 3) was classified according to the seven cultural themes in question—an interaction that also included rigorous interaction with cultural and missiological literature. Similarly, the data on mission practice (chapter 4) was also classified according to the themes that emerged. This included the areas that Brazilians described as strengths and weaknesses in their mission efforts.⁶⁴ Also, the data on mission practice from chapter 4 was also used to confirm and support the theological themes from the literature that were presented in chapter 5. Finally, these themes were organized into tables at the end of each section in chapters 3 and 4. A total of sixteen tables, corresponding to the complete data in Appendices B and D, were used to represent the themes.

1.7.4 Validation

How has this study found “credibility” and “confirmability?”⁶⁵ Following Creswell, I have endeavored to validate my findings through four strategies. First, the accumulated and analyzed data from the Brazilian workers and mission leaders

⁶¹ See Creswell, 150-52.

⁶² See Max Van Manen, *Research Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 78-79.

⁶³ See Creswell, 163.

⁶⁴ See Creswell, 148, 156-57.

⁶⁵ See Creswell, 202-203.

surveys offered a “thick” description of Brazilian evangelical mission work among Arabs. Also, the themes that emerged have been confirmed internally through the repeated input of many Brazilian voices.⁶⁶

Second, validation has occurred through triangulation—a “process [that] involves corroborating evidence from different sources.”⁶⁷ These multiple sources included the survey results, interview notes, corroborating cultural and missiological literature, as well as my own perspectives as a researcher with a background in transcultural mission in the Arab world.⁶⁸

Third, some findings have found confirmation through peer review. First, as portions of this study were read as papers at conferences in 2009 and 2010, the feedback of colleagues in the discipline of missiology allowed for peer review.⁶⁹ Second, the input of a qualitative research specialist outside of missiology has also served as a welcomed set of fresh eyes for this study.

Finally, this study has benefited from member checking.⁷⁰ At least one mission leader has provided written feedback on my initial rough drafts of the study. The same manuscript was circulated to others who, at the time of writing, have not responded formally. In a less formal manner, during my later trips and interviews,

⁶⁶ See Creswell, 209.

⁶⁷ See Creswell, 208.

⁶⁸ See Creswell, 206, 208.

⁶⁹ See Creswell, 208. The first paper (from chapter 2) was “North American Revivals and the Beginning of Evangelical Mission in Brazil,” Liberty University History Conference, April 16-18, 2009, and was published as Edward L. Smither, “The Impact of Evangelical Revivals on Global Mission: The Case of North American Evangelicals in Brazil in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31:1 (October 2010) http://www.ve.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/340/pdf_19 (accessed October 27, 2010). A second paper (from chapter 3) was “Bridging the ‘Excluded Middle’: The Relevance of the Spiritual Worldview of Brazilian Missionaries Serving Among Folk Muslims,” presented at the Evangelical Missiological Society Southeast Regional Meeting, Greenville, SC, March 19-20, 2010. Finally, at the time of writing, I am preparing to present (from chapter 5), “Missão Integral Applied: Brazilian Models of Holistic Mission in the Arab-Muslim World,” at the Evangelical Theological Society national meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 17, 2010.

⁷⁰ See Creswell, 208.

several mission leaders and veteran missionaries have offered some rich commentary on some of my preliminary findings, which has helped in interpreting the data.

1.7.5 Summary

In summary, the study has been broken down according to the following chapters. In chapter 1 (the present chapter), the need for and purpose of the study has been laid out, a literature survey has been given, and the research method and procedures have been described.

In chapter 2, the purpose is to locate historically Brazilian evangelical missions work in the Arab world. Through rigorous interaction with the literature from Brazilian, Latin American, North American, and European scholars, this has been accomplished by examining the historical narrative of how Brazil went from being a nineteenth-century mission field to a missions sending nation in the twentieth century. In attempting to identify the characteristics of Brazilian evangelicalism, which helps to explain the Brazilian church's missionary convictions, I have argued that evangelical awakenings in North America served as an impetus for missions sending to Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The chapter concludes with a brief historical narrative of missions sending from Brazil in the twentieth century.

In chapter 3, we have posed the general question, what does it mean, culturally speaking, to be a Brazilian evangelical missionary in the Arab world? Forty-five past and present Brazilian evangelical workers were invited to comment and reflect upon their own "Brazilianness" and how they have adapted in the Arab world. The perspectives of ten Brazilian mission leaders were also included. In this study, I have treated Brazil as an affinity bloc of cultures in which there is clear diversity as well as some elements of cohesiveness. I have approached the Arab world in the same way.

Hence, the framework for discussing Brazilians in the Arab world has been to reflect upon two affinity blocs and to ask members of one group (Brazilians) to share their collective experiences living in a second group (the Arab world) specifically regarding seven aspects of culture that have clear missiological implications. They include: race, economics, time, communication, family, relationships, and spiritual worldview. After first consulting the appropriate cultural and missiological literature and then listening to the experiences of Brazilian missionaries and mission leaders, it has become evident, culturally speaking, that Brazilians are not Arabs and that Brazilians must surely work to adapt culturally. However, it also appears that there is generally less cultural distance between the Brazilians surveyed and their Arab contexts than what is normally experienced by Western missionaries in the Arab world.

In chapter 4, we have asked, practically speaking, how are Brazilian evangelicals approaching mission in the Arab-Muslim world? Valuing the collective input of many voices, I have posed this question to individual Brazilians and teams, as well as to Brazilian evangelical missions organizations that are working in the Arab world. While a number of themes (strategies and practices) emerged, it seems that Brazilians are especially concerned about humanitarian work and personal evangelism and would regard these areas as strengths of their movement. On the other hand, Brazilian workers and mission leaders also identified the most apparent challenges in their work among Arab-Muslims. They included: a lack of Brazilian local church support for missionaries, deficiencies in language learning, lack of financial support, and difficulties faced by Brazilian women in Arab contexts. For each apparent difficulty, I proposed some solutions based largely on the input of Brazilian voices.

In chapter 5, we have inquired, how do Brazilians think theologically about mission? Also, how is this Brazilian missiology relevant to transcultural mission work in the Arab-Muslim world? While I have approached this question largely by surveying the literature from Latin American and Brazilian theologians, I have also looked for missiological themes in the thoughts of Brazilian evangelical workers and through observing their concrete mission practices. From this, four theological themes have emerged that are also descriptive of Brazilian missions. They include: that mission is holistic (*missão integral*); that mission is church-centered; that authentic mission originates from “below” or from a posture of vulnerability; and that one’s missiology must be undergirded by an awareness of the spiritual world.

Finally, in a brief concluding chapter, I summarize the general findings of the study. While this work has begun to answer some questions about Brazilian missions in the Arab world, it has also raised other questions for research, which are briefly discussed.