

CHAPTER 4: BRAZILIAN APPROACHES TO MISSION

4.1 Introduction

Building on the historical and intercultural discussions of chapters 2 and 3, let us now pose the question, practically speaking, how are Brazilian evangelicals approaching mission in the Arab-Muslim world? This question will ultimately shed light on how Brazilian evangelicals understand and even define mission. Valuing the collective input of many voices, I have posed this question to individual missionaries and to Brazilian evangelical missions organizations that are working in the Arab world.

Our discussion will be framed by three major questions. First, based on surveys, interviews, and observation, what are the most prominent prominent strategies used by Brazilians missionaries in the Arab world? Second, based largely on missions publications and literature, as well as the data collected from surveys and interviews with mission leaders, what are the philosophies and strategies of six Brazilian missions organizations laboring in the Arab world? Third, after listening to the input of Brazilian missionaries and mission leaders, what are the most apparent strengths and challenges (as described by Brazilians) of Brazilian evangelical efforts in the Arab world? This final question will also capture Brazilian thoughts on moving forward in these areas.

4.2 Ministry Strategies

The results of a survey with forty-five Brazilian missionaries serving in the Arab world showed that their main areas of ministry included evangelism (63.6%), discipleship and teaching (63.6%), humanitarian aid (45.5%), church planting (34.1%), prayer and spiritual warfare ministry (29.5%), and media ministry (2.3%). In addition, some workers added that they were involved in prison ministry, teaching Portuguese, teaching English, distributing the Bible and literature, soccer and sports ministry, children's ministry, orphanage work, Business as Mission, pastoral care,

leadership, administration, and training other Latins in ministry.⁸⁰⁵ In this section, let us explore these prominent forms of ministry, while taking into consideration the perspectives on these areas of service.

We will begin by discussing three areas of ministry—evangelism, discipleship, and church planting—that may be regarded as classic forms of mission work, especially in contexts of political and spiritual openness to the Gospel. After, we will consider how Brazilians are also ministering via humanitarian aid, medical work, business and business as mission, sports ministry, and teaching. On one hand, this second group of ministries has become necessary because most of the Arab-Muslim world is closed to conventional evangelical mission work and so Brazilian workers are required to have a ministry platform in order to access the country. On the other hand, as our upcoming discussion on *missão integral* will show, Brazilians generally regard both categories of ministry (i.e., humanitarian work plus evangelism) as necessarily integrated and of equal value. Hence, in light of this holistic perspective, the following areas of ministry will not be divided into categories such as “front-line” or “hands on” ministry versus “support” or “platform” ministry; rather, it is intentionally integrated.

4.2.1 Evangelism

While most Brazilians surveyed indicated that evangelism was a key part of their ministries, it should be noted that this ministry has occurred largely on a personal or small group level. In part, this is due to the fact that public proclamation is not allowed in most parts of the Arab world. It is also the case because Brazilians seem naturally disposed to personal evangelism because of the relational nature of their culture. After recounting how an Arab friend had come to faith in Christ, one worker shared, “Most of my evangelism has been through building personal relationships.”

⁸⁰⁵ See Appendix B, question 26.

Another added, “I love to build relationships and see people respond to God's love.”⁸⁰⁶

In the context of such friendships, some Brazilian workers reflected a strong conviction for incarnational ministry. For instance, one worker related, “When Arabs seek me, they invite me and open their lives to me, telling me personal things and asking for advice. They say that they feel comfortable with me. In that setting, I can communicate some of Jesus' values through my actions.” A Brazilian woman who had served in North Africa shared: “I learned after leaving North Africa that our housekeeper had believed in Christ. Even though my language ability was limited, she saw something about our faith and was drawn to Christ.” Reflecting on relational ministry, she continued, “I like St. Francis's words, ‘preach the gospel always and use words when necessary.’ Because Muslims are so serious about their religion, I really need to ‘show’ the Gospel. My ministry must be led by serving and humility.” Another worker summarized his journey toward understanding incarnational ministry by relating: “During the past years I’ve come to learn to look at my friends here as people created according to the image of God, people with human value and dignity, and not as ‘contacts’ or people to whom I’m trying to win for a specific faith. To love my friends who are part of the major [Muslim] religion is the basis for sharing the Gospel.”

In light of these values, a number of specific evangelistic strategies can be observed. Though not exhaustive, they certainly offer an idea of how Brazilians are going about proclaiming the Gospel message. First, many Brazilians indicated they often shared their faith in the context of offering hospitality—a strong Arab and Brazilian value. One couple shared that they ministered through “opening the doors of

⁸⁰⁶ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.1.

our home . . . seeking to always be available to our friends, spending time with them and helping them in what is needed.”

Second, in Southern Brazil, in the course of their ministry, some evangelical pastors regularly visit Muslims in the community. One pastor, who planted a bilingual Arabic-Portuguese fellowship shared, “[I] went about ministry through personal relationships. I was known in the community as a pastor and had much freedom to share the Gospel.” His successor similarly shared, “At the moment I am a local church pastor in Southern Brazil, but at heart, I am a missionary. My position as pastor allows me to be recognized as a religious leader here, even among Muslims. So I have the opportunity to go visit Muslims in their shops and in town and to pray for them and even given them a Bible.”

Third, in partnership with some Christian radio and satellite channels that broadcast in the Arab world, some Brazilians have reported being involved in follow-up ministry. That is, they visit Arabs who are corresponding with these media ministries and who have requested to talk with someone personally about the Christian life.⁸⁰⁷

Fourth, in addition to their verbal witness, some Brazilian workers have been involved in distributing the New Testament and Scriptures to those who have expressed interest in the Gospel. One worker indicated that he was able to proclaim Christ “through witnessing as a way of life in the context of the personal relationships . . . I was also able to offer these close friends a New Testament in Arabic.” Another worker reported inviting friends to her home for an evangelistic Bible study of Luke’s Gospel.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁷ Related to me in personal correspondence (ministry prayer letter), April 2009.

⁸⁰⁸ Related to me in personal correspondence (ministry prayer letter), April 2009

Finally, in light of the oral culture of many Arab-Muslim peoples, some Brazilians have approached communicating the Gospel and Scriptures in a storytelling format. One worker shared: “We have been seen people coming to the Lord, others having more interest in the Gospel. We created a series of biblical stories with an evangelistic tone, and they were translated to the local dialect and are now available at a website in the internet. Those stories were chosen in order to address the worldview of the people we serve.” As noted in the previous chapter, many Brazilians naturally relate to Arabs as secondary oral learners.

How have Brazilians been successful in personal evangelism? Some responded to this question by referring to Arabs who have become followers of Christ. One couple ministering in Southern Brazil rejoiced that “one Muslim girl came to faith and was baptized.” While most Brazilians have struggled with the relatively slow response to the Gospel in the Arab-Muslim world, especially when their churches back home have expected more significant results, others have measured their success in simply being faithful to build relationships and share the Gospel. One worker shared: “I can see how strong my relationships with local people have been and I can see the opportunities God has given me. Even though I can't see the fruits now, I am sure someone will reap them in the soon future.” Another worker shared that successful evangelism was “getting to share the Gospel even one time.” Finally, another Brazilian celebrated the process of helping Arab-Muslims understand the Gospel. That is, success in ministry was “[helping] the people to have a better knowledge of the Gospel.”

4.2.2 Discipleship

The Brazilian missionaries surveyed also indicated that discipleship and teaching were key aspects of their ministries. In fact, evangelism and discipleship were tied for

being the most prominent ministries pursued by Brazilians (63.6%). This is probably the case because of the integrative nature of these two ministries in pioneer mission contexts. That is, it would be quite rare for a Brazilian to arrive in an Arab context and find a multitude of believers waiting for discipleship. At the same time, as Brazilian workers are involved in personal evangelism, they certainly would not abandon the relationship once an Arab friend became a follower of Christ; rather, they would begin to focus more on teaching.

Affirming the integrative relationship of evangelism and discipleship, one female Brazilian worker shared, “Well, in a small scale, I can say that in the four years that I’ve been here, I’ve seen the fruit in the lives of two young ladies to whom I’ve invested my life in, as they are walking with the Lord now. . . I have been very much involved in the process of them coming to Christ and in discipling them.”⁸⁰⁹

Another worker in Southern Brazil shared this account of a young man who had come to Christ: “It is a joy to see him growing in Christ and it blesses me when I hear him speak like me and act like me in the faith. Maybe he will be a Paul but I am his Ananias (Acts 9:1-19).”

While discipleship is a key value for most Brazilian workers in the Arab world, the forms of discipleship certainly vary according to context. Though certainly not exhaustive, let us consider a few examples. One couple serving in Southern Brazil meets weekly for a Bible study with two new believers from a Muslim background.⁸¹⁰ Another Brazilian couple working in the Middle East are discipling some Brazilian Christians married to Arab non-Christians. By taking a chronological storying

⁸⁰⁹ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.1.

⁸¹⁰ This was related to me in a personal visit, July 20, 2009.

approach to the Scriptures, they are evangelizing the non-believers while, at the same time, providing useful teaching for the Christians.⁸¹¹

Though most discipleship appears to happen on a one-on-one or small group level, one Brazilian worker reported putting on an intensive two-month long discipleship school for around five believers. While the focus was on biblical studies, he is planning a second cycle in the future to address issues such as Christian marriage, parenting, and inner healing. Finally, this worker also organized the first weekend retreat for members of a house church that he is leading. While the weekend getaway included some teaching, it provided an environment for believers to have fun and strengthen their fellowship.⁸¹²

As they contemplated the future of their ministries, some Brazilian workers emphasized the importance of on-going discipleship. One worker indicated that he was looking forward “to seeing our friends grow spiritually, learning with them so that the ministry can be better developed for future relationships.” One woman shared her passion and desire to teach children: “[I look forward to] developing my ministry here—discipleship with children. I want to see them discover the love of God. It is neat and interesting to learn that with them.”

4.2.3 Church Planting

Just over a third of the Brazilians surveyed related that they were involved in church planting. For many Brazilians, this ministry is quite integrated with evangelism and discipleship. Not unlike discipleship ministry, Brazilian church planting efforts have looked different depending on the context. Let us consider some representative examples of such efforts.

⁸¹¹ Related to me during a visit, October 9, 2009.

⁸¹² Related to me in correspondence (ministry prayer letter) in April 2009 and January 2010.

As alluded to briefly, a Brazilian Baptist pastor spent thirteen years serving in the Southern Brazil city of Foz do Iguacu, which has the largest concentration of Arabs in Brazil, and planted a small Arabic- and Portuguese-speaking church there. Unlike most other contexts in the Arab world, the church exists openly and the planting pastor and the current pastor have been known in the community as respected religious leaders. From this position in the community, they have evangelized, disciplined, and ministered to Arab-Muslims.⁸¹³

On the other hand, due to security and cultural concerns, most Brazilian workers serving in the Arab world have been involved in planting house churches. One Brazilian worker, collaborating with other international workers, reported success in initiating a house church. Comprised entirely of converts from Muslim backgrounds, the group has slowly grown as new believers have been baptized and joined the fellowship. The church has also celebrated the marriage of two of its members. As the family is a cornerstone of Arab culture, strong Christian families could very well serve to invigorate an Arab house church. While this group has grown and has been strengthened through teaching, discipleship, and retreats, the Brazilian worker has continued to invest time in personal evangelism—a ministry that has also become the conviction of church members. Finally, the Brazilian church planter has not been content to think only about ministry in his current context. Instead, he recently he took an exploratory trip to a neighboring country in order to assess the ministry needs there.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹³ I visited Foz do Iguacu July 17-20, 2009 where I interviewed the current pastor who invited me to preach at the Arabic Evangelical Church. On July 21-22, I interviewed the planting pastor in Curitiba where he presently resides and ministers.

⁸¹⁴ Related to me in personal correspondence (ministry prayer letter), April 2008, January and October, 2009.

Another Brazilian family shared that their ministry has contributed to a church planting movement. That is, an initial group was started which has served as a catalyst for spontaneously multiplying groups of believers. The wife related:

My husband, along with other workers, helped to pastor a small group of national believers . . . From this small group has come a crop of dynamic young leaders who have gone on to lead and multiply the church. They have their own vision for reaching their people and are developing a national structure. Through them the church is taking root in this land.

While most Brazilian church plants among Arabs have resulted from some sort of plan, there is at least one development that seems completely spontaneous. The work of a Brazilian Christian businessman took him to a country in the Middle East. Through the course of getting to know his colleagues and clients and by sharing his faith as a way of life, a number of these friends believed in Christ and a group has begun to meet for worship and Bible study. Though the businessman’s schedule makes it difficult to disciple each group member and to prepare adequately for worship meetings (he is praying for someone to come join him in this work), a young church plant still seems to have emerged.⁸¹⁵

Table 4.1 Brazilian Perspectives on Evangelism, Discipleship, and Church Planting

(11) Most of my evangelism has been through building personal relationships.
(36) I love to build relationships and see people respond to God's love.
(25) When Arabs seek me, they invite me and open their lives to me, telling me personal things and asking for advice. They say that they feel comfortable with me. In that setting, I can communicate some of Jesus' values through my actions
(12) I learned after leaving North Africa that our housekeeper had believed in Christ. Even though my language ability was limited, she saw something about our faith and was drawn to Christ.
(12) I like St. Francis's words, “preach the gospel always and use words when necessary.” Because Muslims are so serious about their religion, I really need to ‘show’ the Gospel. My ministry must be led by serving and humility
(3) During the past years I’ve come to learn to look at my friends here as people

⁸¹⁵ This account was related to me in personal conversation by a friend of the businessman—another Brazilian transcultural worker in the Middle East—on October 10, 2009.

<p>created according to the image of God, people with human value and dignity, and not as “contacts” or people to whom I’m trying to win for a specific faith. To love my friends who are part of the major [Muslim] religion is the basis for sharing the Gospel.</p>
<p>(26) Opening the doors of our home. . . Seeking to always be available to our friends, spending time with them and helping them in what is needed</p>
<p>(13) [I] went about ministry through personal relationships. I was known in the community as a pastor and had much freedom to share the Gospel.</p>
<p>(11)At the moment I am a local church pastor in Southern Brazil, but at heart I am a missionary. My position as pastor allows me to be recognized as a religious leader here, even among Muslims. So I have the opportunity to go visit Muslims in their shops and in town and to pray for them and even given them a Bible.</p>
<p>(33) Through witnessing as a way of life in the context of the personal relationships . . . I was also able to offer these close friends a New Testament in Arabic</p>
<p>(22) We have been seen people coming to the Lord, others having more interest in the Gospel. We created a series of biblical stories with an evangelistic tone, and they were translated to the local dialect and are now available at a website in the internet. Those stories were chosen in order to address the worldview of the people we serve.</p>
<p>(9)One Muslim girl came to faith and was baptized.</p>
<p>(6)I can see how strong my relationships with local people have been and I can see the opportunities God has given me. Even though I can't see the fruits now. I am sure someone will reap them in the soon future.</p>
<p>(8)[Successful evangelism is] getting to share the Gospel even one time.</p>
<p>(3)[Successful evangelism is helping] the people to have a better knowledge of the Gospel.</p>
<p>(1) Well, in a small scale, I can say that in the four years that I’ve been here I’ve seen the fruit in the lives of two young ladies to whom I’ve invested my life in, as they are walking with the Lord now. . . I have been very much involved in the process of them coming to Christ and in discipling them.</p>
<p>(11)It is a joy to see him growing in Christ and it blesses me when I hear him speak like me and act like me in the faith. Maybe he will be a Paul but I am his Ananias (Acts 9:1-19)</p>
<p>(26) [We look forward to] seeing our friends grow spiritually, learning with them so that the ministry can be better developed for future relationships.</p>
<p>(23) [I look forward to] developing my ministry here—discipleship with children. I want to see them discover the love of God. It is neat and interesting to learn that with them.</p>
<p>(22) My husband, along with other workers, helped to pastor a small group of national believers . . . From this small group has come a crop of dynamic young leaders who have gone on to lead and multiply the church. They have their own vision for reaching their people and are developing a national structure. Through them the church is taking root in this land.</p>

4.2.4 Humanitarian Work

Nearly half of the Brazilian workers surveyed indicated that they were involved in some form of humanitarian work—a definite strength of Brazilian evangelical

missions. In a number of Arab countries, Brazilians have established or have affiliated with existing Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to care for the needs of the handicapped, women, and refugees.

In one context, a Brazilian worker directs a team of Brazilian, international, and local volunteers at a cultural center for the handicapped that offers classes in language, arts, and crafts while also offering short excursions. The center, which enjoys a positive reputation with the government and community, cares for around fifty regular members who would otherwise be marginalized in a society that does very little for the handicapped. One Brazilian volunteer in the center related that working among the handicapped was a great way to show God's presence, to build genuine friendships, and to respond to the commonly posed question—why are you so different? That is, through tangibly serving and caring for human needs, this volunteer has also been able to communicate verbally her faith in Christ.

The director also added that Brazilian volunteers—especially those who were handicapped themselves—seemed naturally able to relate to Arab members of the center. One reason is that in both Brazil and this particular Arab context, the handicapped are on the fringes of society and receive little help from the government in the way of programs and assistance. Hence, handicapped Brazilian workers can identify with those to whom they are ministering. Second, according to the director, many Brazilian volunteers—handicapped or not—can relate to the center's poorer members who struggle to scrape together enough money to take public transportation to the center for activities. As many Brazilian workers are struggling with financial

challenges, they can certainly identify and empathize with the poor who frequent the center.⁸¹⁶

In another context, a group of Brazilian women, in partnership with other international workers, have started a center for women. After paying a modest annual fee to the center, participants are offered training in languages, computer skills, and arts and crafts. While some develop skills that will help them to find a job or start a small business, others frequent the center to make friends and have their relational needs met. In an otherwise class-based society, it is an interesting phenomenon to see poor and uneducated women attending the same workshops and activities with university-educated professionals. While addressing the social and economic needs of women in their context, the Brazilian workers are also building long-term friendships in which they naturally share the Gospel. The women shared that some of these friends have indeed embraced the Christian faith.⁸¹⁷

Finally, Brazilian missionaries have engaged in humanitarian work by ministering to refugees. One worker, commenting on the general lack of care afforded to displaced peoples in his Arab context, shared, “We are seeing God work more among the minority peoples despite the fact that Arabs can be so racist against them.”⁸¹⁸ Another Brazilian described his service in an existing center for refugees: “We have worked in a humanitarian center for refugees in our country that includes a feeding ministry, teaching crafts, [and] home visits.” He adds that caring for these real needs has led to opportunities for “evangelism and teaching, and training Christian leaders to run the center.” Finally, another Brazilian serving among refugees

⁸¹⁶ These remarks are based on my observations and conversation with the director and staff during a visit to the center on October 12, 2009.

⁸¹⁷ These remarks are based on a follow-up discussion that I had in Brazil with one of the coordinators (also respondent 1 in the workers survey), July 24, 2009.

⁸¹⁸ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.2.

described the holistic nature of his work: “God has opened doors to work with refugees and we have seen people healed and desiring to follow God.”

4.2.5 Medical Work

Quite related to humanitarian aid, some Brazilian workers are caring for the physical needs of Arab peoples through medical work. In one context, two Brazilian women are working as nurses in a historically Protestant hospital in the Middle East. Despite serving in a country that is 94% Muslim, in the hospital they have a great deal of freedom to communicate the Gospel verbally and to pray for patients as they dispense medicine and care for them. One of the women asserted that serving as a nurse allows her the opportunity to show the Gospel in a tangible way—“to be more than to do.” She added that it is difficult to be expelled from a country for showing God’s love to people. That said, this worker related that even though she is able to communicate her faith quite often, particularly to female patients, she is unsure of the outcomes. The cultural constraints on women make follow-up and ongoing discipleship difficult within her context.⁸¹⁹

Another medical strategy that some Brazilian workers are beginning to pursue is known as Community Health Evangelism (CHE). Defined as “a true best practices model for integrating evangelism and discipleship with community based development,” CHE volunteers seek to “raise awareness of need and opportunity, and facilitate a process by which the community itself identifies solutions and begins to work together in an organized way.” The vision of CHE includes the following outcomes:

Health improves, infant mortality decreases, agriculture becomes more productive, jobs are created, water systems, roads, schools and clinics are built, and churches are established or strengthened. All of this is

⁸¹⁹ These remarks were based on my personal conversations with her during a visit, October 9, 2009.

achieved at the initiative of the people. Peace, justice, compassion, and righteousness are witnessed in the community and God is glorified.⁸²⁰

Though this is a new and developing strategy among Brazilians, one worker shared that her priority in ministry was “Community health evangelism and thus getting involved more with the humanitarian needs of the community.”⁸²¹

4.2.6 Business, Business as Mission, and Business Development

An increasing number of Brazilian transcultural workers are accessing the countries of the Arab world through a business platform and ministering from that basis. As noted, the work of one Brazilian businessman took him to the Arab world. Though not sent through a missions organization or church, this Christian businessman nevertheless has had a fruitful witness that has resulted in a house church being started. His biggest challenge has been having the time to invest in discipleship and teaching with the group.

Similarly, another Brazilian Christian was hired by an international company in the Middle East. Though initially reluctant to speak about his faith, he quickly found that Arabs were very relational and it was easy to share the Gospel and even offer a New Testament to friends. He shared, “There were other Brazilian believers there with me and we began a church fellowship among ourselves. We also reached out and shared the Gospel to those with whom we built relationships.”⁸²² That is, the group of international Christians shared their faith on a personal basis but they also enjoyed a collective witness as they invited Arab friends to their small worship gathering.

Though sent by a church and missions agency, Marcos Amado waited until he reached the field and was able to explore the context before he set up a business

⁸²⁰ See *Global CHE Network* (web site) <http://chenetwork.org/whatische.php> (accessed April 14, 2010).

⁸²¹ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.2.

⁸²² All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.2.

exporting carpets. Though his livelihood was not completely dependent on the business, he did find that his ability to negotiate for prices in the wholesale market correlated directly to his ability to speak Arabic. As his command of Arabic improved and as he regularly visited a network of clients, he shared that it was quite natural to communicate the Gospel in the context of relationships even during the workday.⁸²³

More recently, some Brazilian workers have adopted a Business as Mission (BAM) approach. According to Rundle and Johnson, BAM is “the utilization of for-profit businesses as instruments for global mission.”⁸²⁴ Holistic in nature, BAM practitioners endeavor to offer a vibrant Gospel witness by running their business according to biblical principles, to create jobs and wealth, and to see communities transformed. One Brazilian worker has successfully started a consulting business in one Arab country and has managed to land some significant clients. He related, “I have had a successful business here. It is a kingdom business.” That said, in his reflections on BAM and Kingdom Business—mission models that are certainly continuing to develop—he places more value on proclamation in mission. He asserts: “I am challenged to pursue mission through business rather than Business as Mission. I want to do more direct evangelism. What's wrong with a hybrid business that includes good godly business and sharing the Gospel?”

Another Brazilian worker has integrated business with mission by opening a small business development school in one Arab context. As the school operates under the auspices of a registered Christian entity, the worker describes the project as “a

⁸²³ Related to me in personal conversation on Skype, August 4, 2009.

⁸²⁴ See Neal Johnson and Steve Rundle, “Distinctives and Challenges of Business as Mission,” in Steffen and Barnett, *Business as Mission*, 25. For more recent discussions on BAM, see Mats Tunehag, Wayne McGee, and Josie Plummer, eds., “Business as Mission” (Lausanne Occasional Paper 59. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005) http://www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP59_IG30.pdf (accessed April 15, 2010); C. Neal Johnson, *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2010); and Steven L. Rundle and Tom Steffen, *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2003).

Bible school and at the same time, a professional training center.”⁸²⁵ Working from the assumption that evangelism and church planting happen through relationships, and that small business owners are strategically placed people in a community, the worker’s goal is to train and set apart business people who will also be able to serve as evangelists and church planters. This worker and his team are especially burdened for the country’s rural areas. Trainees come to the school for three months where they take classes in business and Bible, and also serve in various capacities within the church. After this period of training, students spend another three months traveling to different parts of the country where they study the possibilities for opening a business. After working on this project for four years, the worker reported, “We have already trained fifty people and seven small companies have already been established around [the country].” In terms of the leadership of the school itself, he added, “At the beginning of this year I was able to pass on the leadership to the locals, and today they lead and I help them.”

4.2.7 Sports Ministry

While sport has often been regarded as an international language that breaks down cultural barriers and promotes friendship, Brazilians, with their excellence in basketball, volleyball, the martial arts, and, of course, soccer (*futebol*), speak this language quite well. Arabs also seem to welcome Brazilian transcultural workers—athletic or not—because Ronaldo, Ronaldino, and Roberto Carlos (Brazilian soccer stars) are household names in the Arab world.⁸²⁶ Brazilian workers serving among Arabs are making the most of this strategic connection and have proven to be innovative in using sports in ministry.

⁸²⁵ Related to me in correspondence (ministry prayer letter) April 8, 2010.

⁸²⁶ While traveling with a Brazilian worker in an Arab country, we were stopped at a police checkpoint. Upon seeing my friend’s Brazilian passport, the policeman immediately began to name his favorite Brazilian soccer players. Apparently, this is an almost daily experience for Brazilians living in the Arab world.

At least a couple of Brazilians are employed as physical trainers and also use that as a platform for ministry. One church planter in Southern Brazil recognized this as a viable strategy, and so he returned to the university and earned a degree in Physical Education. At present, he meets clients daily—many of whom are Arab businessmen. The nature of his work provides an interactive context in which to build relationships and communicate the Gospel.⁸²⁷ Similarly, a female Brazilian worker with significant training and experience is beginning to work in one Arab country as a physical trainer. As physical fitness is becoming more important to many Arab women, this worker's strategy also facilitates personal relationships and opportunities to communicate the Gospel.⁸²⁸

At least one Brazilian worker, a former professional soccer player and coach in Brazil, has been hired by a school in the Middle East to teach Physical Education and to coach the school's soccer teams. Though he co-teaches classes with a national teacher while his language abilities develop, this worker still endeavors to communicate in Arabic with students as much as possible. As I visited with him one day at school, I was impressed with a few elements of his work. First, he seemed quite at home and comfortable in the rather chaotic atmosphere of the school. Second, there was an evident mutual affection between him and his students. As a steady stream of children made the effort to greet their teacher (*ustadh*) throughout the day, he greeted them with warmth and affection. Third, he was able to connect quickly with a new afternoon soccer team as the group quickly responded to his instructions on the field. Fourth, he coaches with excellence. In fact, he has a coaching plan laid out for the entire year. Finally, he concluded each class and practice with a moral lesson that emerged from the practice itself. While each lesson is rooted in a biblical teaching or

⁸²⁷ Related to me (respondent 9) in personal conversation July 19, 2009.

⁸²⁸ Related to me in personal conversation (respondent 30), October 9, 2009.

principle, his presentation is less explicit because of the local constraints against open evangelism. Perhaps the greatest affirmation of this Brazilian worker's ministry comes from a local Arab Christian who remarked: "He coaches with passion. Though he has the challenge of learning the language, he is so good with our people."⁸²⁹

A number of other Brazilian workers have also used soccer as a basis for ministry. One worker reported using soccer as a means of building relationships with Arab university students studying in the United States.⁸³⁰ At least a couple of missionaries in Southern Brazil have organized soccer camps as a way of reaching out to Arab children.⁸³¹ Another Brazilian in the Middle East has begun a soccer outreach that integrates teaching on purity.⁸³² One worker serving in North Africa shared, "I . . . started a soccer ministry that one mission organization in the Muslim world has adopted and is using as a strategy."⁸³³ Thus, it is apparent that soccer outreach is such an important strategy that organizations are working to develop reproducible models.⁸³⁴

Finally, in one Arab context, a team of Brazilian workers has put on a series of soccer camps in some very conservative and restricted villages, including those inhabited by refugees. One worker reported that with a soccer ball and a jersey, they have accessed places where doctors and teachers have never been allowed to enter. After receiving permission to work with the children from tribal leaders, the men have worked with the boys, and their wives have coached the girls. As this group also integrates moral teaching from a biblical foundation in their coaching, each practice

⁸²⁹ These observations were made during a visit with this Brazilian worker, October 10, 2009.

⁸³⁰ Related to me in personal conversation with respondent 18, July 29, 2009.

⁸³¹ Related to me in personal conversation with respondents 9 and 13, July 19 and 21, 2009.

⁸³² Related to me during personal conversation, October 9, 2009.

⁸³³ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.2.

⁸³⁴ A similar effort that has developed in the African context and does not seem connected to the Brazilian strategies is called Ubabalo. See *Ubabolo eAfrica* (web site) <http://www.ubabalo2010.com/> (accessed April 16, 2010).

ends with some group reflection on what was learned during the experience. Apparently, the soccer camps have provided a welcome diversion from the difficulties of daily living for these children and their parents also seem to appreciate the constructive physical activity that their children are receiving. The fact that Arabs like Brazilians and know their soccer players has probably allowed this team of workers access into an otherwise restricted area where Westerners are not welcomed.⁸³⁵

In short, Brazilian missionaries are effectively using sports as a means to overcome barriers of mistrust, to build relationships, and to communicate Christian teaching. One worker concluded, “I think that sports ministry in the Arab world is very important and should continue to be used,” while another added, “I love using sports—something I really enjoy—for ministry.”

4.2.8 Teaching

Some Brazilian missionaries are also getting jobs in Arab contexts as English and Portuguese teachers. Again, while this often provides a platform to access a country not open to Christian missions, teaching also offers an environment in which relationships can be built.

One woman teaches both English and Portuguese to Arab children in Southern Brazil. Regarding her teaching as a tangible way to serve children, she also prays for opportunities to proclaim the Gospel. Hence, she asserts, “I love to minister through my work as a teacher.”⁸³⁶ In another Arab context, one Brazilian worker added, “In my English teaching for teens, I have shared the good news.” Finally, another Brazilian missionary employed as a teacher shared, “I have been used to touch the lives of my students through words of encouragement.”

⁸³⁵ These efforts were related to me during personal conversation, October 9, 2009.

⁸³⁶ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.2.

4.2.9 Training and Mobilization

Some Brazilian missionaries have dedicated part of their ministries to training and mobilizing other Brazilians and Latin Americans for mission in the Arab world.

Marcos Amado, a former missionary in North Africa and past director of PMI, developed a transcultural training course for Brazilians entering the Arab world.⁸³⁷

After serving for over a decade in Southern Brazil, another Brazilian worker has become the missions pastor of another church in Brazil. He related: “Now I am in a ministry of training others. My desire is to train 150 workers for Arab ministry. Already, we have trained fifty Brazilians who are on the field.”⁸³⁸

While some Brazilians are reaching out to Arabs in Southern Brazil, others are also convinced that this is a good place to train Brazilian workers before they move to an Arab country. One Brazilian affirmed, “I believe Southern Brazil with all of our Muslims is a good training ground to send others to the Arab-Muslim world.” Another added: “I am excited about the potential to minister in Southern Brazil. It is a great place to mobilize and train Brazilians for ministry to Arabs for both here and in Arab countries. I want to teach and train the Brazilian church to have a global focus and to have a heart for Arabs.”

In addition to training other Brazilians for Arab-Muslim ministry, some Brazilian workers are also committed to mobilizing others to join them in the work. One Brazilian serving in the Middle East shared: “[I want] to help mobilize Brazilians from my denomination to be well prepared for work here [in the Arab world]. But I also desire to stay here, too.” In considering future ministry, another worker shared his excitement for “mobilizing other Latins to ministry in the Arab world.”

⁸³⁷ His training strategy is summarized in Amado, “A Capacitação Contínua do Obreiro,” *Capacitando* 9 (2001), 39-46.

⁸³⁸ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Brazilian Perspectives on Other Ministry Forms

(42) We are seeing God work more among the minority peoples despite the fact that Arabs can be so racist against them.
(36) We have worked in a humanitarian center for refugees in our country that includes a feeding ministry, teaching crafts, [and] home visits [which has led to] evangelism and teaching, and training Christian leaders to run the center.
(41) God has opened doors to work with refugees and we have seen people healed and desiring to follow God.
(35) [I am looking for to] community health evangelism and thus getting involved more with the humanitarian needs of the community.
(33) There were other Brazilian believers there with me and we began a church fellowship among ourselves. We also reached out and shared the Gospel to those with whom we built relationships.
(38) I have had a successful business here. It is a kingdom business. I am challenged to pursue Mission through Business rather than Business as Mission. I want to do more direct evangelism. What's wrong with a hybrid business that includes good godly business and sharing the Gospel?
(5) We have already trained fifty people and seven small companies have already been established around [the country]. At the beginning of this year I was able to pass on the leadership to the locals, and today they lead and I help them.
(11) I . . . started a soccer ministry that one mission organization in the Muslim world has adopted and is using as a strategy.
(11) I think that sports ministry in the Arab world is very important and should continue to be used.
(31) I love using sports—something I really enjoy—for ministry.
(10) I love to minister through my work as a teacher.
(6) In my English teaching for teens, I have shared the good news.
(35) I have been used to touch the lives of my students through words of encouragement.
(13) Now I am in a ministry of training others. My desire is to train 150 workers for Arab ministry. Already, we have trained fifty Brazilians who are on the field.
(12) I believe Southern Brazil with all of our Muslims is a good training ground to send others to the Arab-Muslim world.
(8) I am excited about the potential to minister in Southern Brazil. It is a great place to mobilize and train Brazilians for ministry to Arabs for both here and in Arab countries. I want to teach and train the Brazilian church to have a global focus and to have a heart for Arabs.
(39) [I want] to help mobilize Brazilians from my denomination to be well prepared for work here [in the Arab world]. But I also desire to stay here, too.
(43) [I look forward to] mobilizing other Latins to ministry in the Arab world.

4.3 Brazilian Missions Agencies

Having considered the primary approaches to mission by Brazilian transcultural workers serving among Arabs, let us now survey the work of six exemplary Brazilian missions organizations involved in ministry in the Arab-Muslim world. While some

of the Brazilian workers highlighted in the preceding discussion are affiliated with these agencies, it is also helpful to consider the vision, values, and priorities of each group on an organizational level. The first two organizations—Missão Antioquia and Missão Kairos—are indigenous to Brazil. A third group, PM International, is a distinctly Latin organization that has included Brazilians since its inception. A fourth agency, the Junta de Missões Mundiais da Convenção Batista Brasileira (Brazilian Baptist Convention missions), is a Brazilian national organization that, of course, has historical ties to the North American Southern Baptist Convention. The final two groups, Interserve and CCI Brasil, are international organizations that have opened offices in Brazil.⁸³⁹ For each organization, the following questions will be posed: What is the history and vision of the organization? What are the group's core values? What type of pre-field training is provided? Where are the organization's workers serving? What types of ministries are being pursued in the Arab-Muslim world?

4.3.1 Missão Antioquia⁸⁴⁰

In our discussion in chapter two on the history of missions from Brazil, Missão Antioquia, founded in 1975, was highlighted for being the first indigenous Brazilian missions agency. According to the organization's web site, the primary vision continues to be “to proclaim His glory among the nations.”⁸⁴¹ After some further reflection in 2006, the group added the following value to its vision statement: “bringing about transformation through the Word and good deeds.”⁸⁴² In addition to

⁸³⁹ Though international organizations have established offices in Brazil, in 1995, Limpic noted that 69% of all Brazilian workers were going with Brazilian denominational or non-denominational mission. This continues to be the case for Brazilian workers serving in the Arab-Muslim world. See Limpic, “Brazilian Missionaries: How Long are They Staying?” in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 145.

⁸⁴⁰ All information contained in this section that is not otherwise documented is based on Tostes' responses (participant 4) in the mission leaders survey in Appendix D and on my observations and our discussions during my visit with Tostes at the Antioquia headquarters, July 23, 2009.

⁸⁴¹ See *Missão Antioquia* (web site) <http://www.missaoantioquia.com/visao.html> (accessed April 19, 2010). I am grateful to Cristina Boersma who translated sections of the web site.

⁸⁴² See *Missão Antioquia* (web site) <http://www.missaoantioquia.com/visao.html> (accessed April 19, 2010)

these stated values, Missão Antioquia is characterized by a commitment to prayer, especially through an intercessory prayer chapel on the mission's campus that is occupied for most hours of the day.⁸⁴³ Finally, through his speaking and writing, the group's present director, Silas Tostes, demonstrates a passion for mobilizing the Brazilian evangelical church to becoming more involved in global missions.⁸⁴⁴

Missionary candidates accepted by Missão Antioquia initially spend four months at the mission's campus known as the Valley of Blessing. In addition to receiving training in spiritual disciplines such as Bible study, prayer, and fasting, students take academic courses in the history and theology of missions, world religions, cultural anthropology, contextualization, linguistics, and missionary living.⁸⁴⁵ Recently, the mission has added the "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" course to its curriculum along with specialized training in sports ministry and community development.⁸⁴⁶ As the Valley of Blessing also includes a church, school, orphanage, and day care center, students also have plenty of opportunities for practical ministry involvement. Following the four months of training at the mission headquarters, candidates spend one month in cross-cultural ministry in a neighboring Latin American country after which time they receive an evaluation regarding their suitability for long-term transcultural mission work.

Presently, Missão Antioquia has ninety-two workers serving in nineteen different countries. While only four of its laborers are serving in Arab-Muslim contexts, others are working in Africa and in Asia among non-Arab Muslims. Tostes

⁸⁴³ See Neuza Itiokia, "Third World Missionary Training: Two Brazilian Models," in William D. Taylor, ed., *Internationalizing Missionary Training* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 116-17.

⁸⁴⁴ Tostes recently published a work called *Brilhe a Sua Luz Num Mundo em Trevas* (Londrina, Brasil: Editora Descoberta, 2008), which is a resource intended to motivate pastors toward engagement in global missions.

⁸⁴⁵ See *Missão Antioquia* (web site) <http://www.missaoantioquia.com/cpm.html> (accessed April 19, 2010); also Itiokia, "Third World Missionary Training," in Taylor, *Internationalizing Missionary Training*, 117.

⁸⁴⁶ In 2009, the Brazilian Portuguese version of the *Perspectives* text (Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, eds., *Perspectivas No Movimento Cristao Mundial*) was released.

reports that in its history, the mission has sent around fifteen missionaries to the Arab world. Though Missão Antioquia is not purely focused on the Arab or Muslim world and a majority of its workers are serving elsewhere, the mission does seem to have an increasing Muslim focus. This is certainly due to the fact that Muslim ministry is Tostes's particular burden. After initiating Muslim ministry training at the Valley of Blessing around 1991, Tostes and his wife spent three years (1994-98) ministering to Muslims in the London area. Since returning to Brazil, he has written three books on Islam to equip Brazilians in reaching out to Muslims.⁸⁴⁷ While he has no agenda for directing candidates toward Muslim contexts, Tostes reported that an increasing number are interested in Muslim ministry—including all ten graduates from a recent training group.

In keeping with its vision to see transformation occur through preaching the Word and doing good deeds, Missão Antioquia workers in the Arab world are involved in agricultural development projects and efforts to improve the lives of women. While caring for these physical and temporal needs, they are also involved in personal evangelism, discipleship, and the distribution of Scripture.⁸⁴⁸

4.3.2 Missão Kairos

Missão Kairos was founded in 1988 by a group of Brazilian pastors and missionaries with a vision to take the Gospel to the world's least reached peoples.⁸⁴⁹ Aside from this general vision, the mission strongly values Christian community. While individuals, married couples, and families are held to a high standard of personal integrity and Christian character, members of the mission work together in teams

⁸⁴⁷ See Silas Tostes, *Jihad e o Reino de Deus* (Brasil: Agape Editores, 2002); *O Islamiso e a Cruz de Cristo* (Brasil: ICP Editora, 2001); and *O Islamiso e a Trindade* (Brasil: Agape Editores, 2001).

⁸⁴⁸ See *Missão Antioquia* (web site) <http://www.missaantioquia.com/missionarios.html> (accessed April 19, 2010).

⁸⁴⁹ All of the information in this section comes from *Missão Kairos* (web site) <http://www.missaokairos.com.br/index.php> (accessed April 19, 2010). I am grateful to Barbara Hubbard for translation.

from the outset of their training and, of course, when they reach the field. As missionaries committed to the Lord and to the task, they are also committed to one another and live in a ministry environment characterized by love, patience, care, respect, and encouragement.

Mission candidates with Kairos initially go through nine months of missiological education. The first six months of study are done by correspondence while the final three are completed in an intensive format at the mission's base in São Paulo. Afterward, candidates make a five- year commitment to an intermediate field where they receive practical training and supervision before being released to serve in a long-term context. Those hoping to go to the Muslim world typically serve in Peru or Mexico.

At present, Kairos has sixty-eight workers—including those in the intermediate and long-term stages—serving in eleven countries. While some are working among Muslims, there are currently no workers with Kairos serving in the Arab world. Why then is Kairos listed among Brazilian agencies serving in the Arab world? Because, through the years, Kairos has consistently partnered with Missão Antioquia and PMI in training and also in seconding workers to these agencies for particular fields. Though Kairos has no workers in the Arab-Muslim world at the moment, the organization has influenced the general Brazilian missions sending environment toward unreached peoples and toward the Arab world.

4.3.3 PM International⁸⁵⁰

Mentioned briefly in chapter 2, PM International began in 1984 through the initiative of Pablo Carillo, a Mexican missionary who had previously served with Operation Mobilization in several Arab countries. Carillo's initial vision was to place Latin

⁸⁵⁰ All information in this section that is not otherwise documented is based on the mission leaders responses of Daniel Calze (participant 6) in Appendix D and my observations and our discussions during my visit to the PMI Brazil office in Curitiba, July 21, 2009.

Americans in North Africa and thus “Project Maghreb” was born. Later, as Ibero-Americans were beginning to serve in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the greater Muslim world, the group changed its name to Povos Muçulmanos International (“Muslim peoples international”) in 1991 to reflect this broader focus. While a number of Brazilians had been involved with PMI since its early years, a Brazilian national office was established in 1998. At present, the international headquarters of PMI is located in Spain, while national offices are located in Argentina, the United States, and Brazil.

The vision of PMI Brazil is to “to cooperate with the Brazilian evangelical church by mobilizing and directing human and financial resources in order to establish the church of Jesus Christ among the Muslims.” Daniel Calze, the current director of PMI Brazil adds: “There are approximately 150 thousand evangelical churches of all kinds in Brazil, and some say that there are 25 million evangelicals. As the largest Latin American church, we need to be involved in the biggest missionary challenge of the times—the evangelization of the Muslim world.”⁸⁵¹ PMI is unique in that it is the only Brazilian missions organization solely focused on the Muslim world. As an organization, PMI’s key values include working together in teams, developing strategic platforms in restricted countries, effective cultural immersion, and ongoing pastoral care—both from the organization as well as from the worker’s sending church. Finally, PMI also emphasizes the strategic cultural connection between Brazilians and Muslims, an element discussed in detail in the previous chapter. The Calze: “Why Latin missionaries or Brazilians? Because the work that has been done

⁸⁵¹ See *PMI Brasil: Latinos ao Mundo Muçulmano* (web site) <http://www.pmibrasil.org.br/> (accessed April 6, 2009). English translation by Cristina Boersma.

so far by Brazilian and Latin missionaries has shown that they adapt very easily to Muslim culture and that they share the Gospel very effectively.”⁸⁵²

In terms of missionary selection, Calze states: “We are not looking for ‘perfect’ people, but those who have a true missionary calling and are willing to learn and to suffer difficulties because of their love for Jesus Christ, and also to have perseverance meanwhile. We also understand that the local church is the main organization in charge of sending missionaries to the field.” Regarding pre-field training for PMI workers, he adds: “We are a receiving mission agency. Our missionaries are trained by our partners in Brazil. Those partners are chosen by us according to their training programs and the level of respect that they have.” These partners, which offer theological and missiological training, include Missão Antioquia, Missão Kairos, and Avante⁸⁵³ among others.⁸⁵⁴

Though PMI provides pre-field training to its workers through established partnerships, one of the organization’s greatest strengths is its five-month Transcultural Training Course that happens once the worker is in the host country. Originally developed by Marcos Amado, the course includes training in observing and analyzing a new culture, developing a plan for evangelism in the worker’s specific context, understanding the situation of the national church, as well as understanding the history, geography, economy, and political situation of the worker’s host culture.⁸⁵⁵ In order to bond adequately with the culture, PMI workers will typically live with a national family during this period of training. In addition to this course,

⁸⁵² See *PMI Brasil: Latinos ao Mundo Muçulmano* (web site) <http://www.pmibrasil.org.br/> (accessed April 6, 2009). English translation by Cristina Boersma.

⁸⁵³ See *Avante: Missão Evangélica Transcultural* (web site) <http://www.missaoavante.org.br/index3.asp> (accessed April 21, 2010).

⁸⁵⁴ Related to me in conversation with former PMI director Marcos Amado, August 27, 2009.

⁸⁵⁵ See Amado, “A Capacitação Contínua do Obreiro,” *Capacitando* 9 (2001), 39-46. Another earlier description of PMI’s in-country immersion strategy is available in Pedro Carasco, “Training Latins for the Muslim World,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 11.1 (1994), 1-4.

PMI also provides ongoing training for its workers through reading material, retreats, and conferences.

At present, there are approximately 120 workers from fourteen different Latin American countries are serving with PMI in the Muslim world. A majority of those are Brazilian and around sixty Brazilians are serving with PMI in the Arab world. With a great commitment to evangelism, discipleship, and church planting, PMI is also quite holistic in its approach and their workers are involved in sports ministry, medical care, and humanitarian work.⁸⁵⁶

4.3.4 Junta de Missões Mundiais da Convenção Batista Brasileira

As shown in chapter 2, Southern Baptists from North America played a key role in evangelizing Brazil in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The founding of the Brazilian Baptist Convention in 1907 was a key step in establishing indigenous leadership of Baptist work in the country. In the same year, the Junta de Missões Mundiais (global missions board) was founded and, as noted, missionaries were immediately sent to Portugal. According to the JMM web site, the organization was founded to facilitate planting Baptist churches outside of Brazil and to strengthen existing Baptist efforts.⁸⁵⁷ JMM's stated vision is "to serve with excellence and take the Gospel to all peoples." With that, its mission is "to serve and to mobilize Brazilian Baptist Churches to make global mission work viable."⁸⁵⁸

Currently, around 600 Brazilians, including long-term and short-term workers, are serving with JMM in fifty-eight countries in the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia. The JMM reports that in the last decade, they have made a more concentrated

⁸⁵⁶ See *PMI Brasil: Latinos ao Mundo Muçulmano* (web site) <http://www.pmibrasil.org.br/> (accessed April 6, 2009) and *PMI USA* (web site) <http://www.pmi-usa.org/NEW/english/english.html> (accessed April 6, 2009). Some thoughts are also based on my discussion with Calze on July 21, 2009.

⁸⁵⁷ See *JMM: Missões Mundiais* (web site) <http://www.jmm.org.br/> (accessed April 21, 2010). I am grateful to Barbara Hubbard for her translation.

⁸⁵⁸ See *JMM: Missões Mundiais* (web site) <http://www.jmm.org.br/> (accessed April 21, 2010). Translation by Barbara Hubbard.

effort in the countries of the 10/40 window. In the last four years, a special initiative has been made to open eighteen new fields of ministry and to send 370 new workers in an effort to plant 200 new churches. The JMM further reports that seventy-eight of its missionaries are serving in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia with some of these serving in eight countries in the Arab world.⁸⁵⁹

While Brazilian Baptists are committed to the ministries of evangelism, discipleship, and church planting, they are also involved in other strategic and holistic ministries. The organization has made a special effort to recruit educational specialists, health professionals (doctors, dentists, and nurses), and humanitarian aid workers—especially those trained to work with women and children. Finally, the JMM has greatly emphasized sports ministry and has developed a soccer school strategy that integrates soccer skills and the Gospel message.⁸⁶⁰

4.3.5 Interserve⁸⁶¹

Interserve began in 1852 at the initiative of a group of British women concerned with the medical, educational, and spiritual needs of women in India.⁸⁶² Presently, workers from around thirty nationalities serve in forty different countries with a particular emphasis on the Arab world and Asia.⁸⁶³ The Brazilian Interserve office opened in 2003 as an extension of Interserve Canada, which nurtured the new ministry in its initial years. At the same time, Interserve Brasil became official partners with the Centro Evangélico de Missões, a mission training school that was founded in 1983. The partnership is strategic in that mission candidates are able to receive quality missiological training through the CEM and then be sent to the field via Interserve.

⁸⁵⁹ See *JMM: Missões Mundiais* (web site) <http://www.jmm.org.br/> (accessed April 21, 2010).

⁸⁶⁰ See *JMM: Missões Mundiais* (web site) <http://www.jmm.org.br/> (accessed April 21, 2010).

⁸⁶¹ All information in this section that is not otherwise documented is based on the responses of the Interserve leadership (participant 8) in Appendix D.

⁸⁶² See *Interserve International* (web site) <http://www.interserve.org> (accessed April 30, 2010).

⁸⁶³ See *Interserve International* (web site) <http://www.interserve.org> (accessed April 30, 2010) and also *Centro Evangélico de Missões* (web site) http://www.cem.org.br/br/interserve_eng.php (accessed April 30, 2010).

Interserve's stated vision is "to proclaim by word and action, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all humanity." Also, in partnership with local churches, Interserve desires to see transformation take place as the poorest of the poor in the Arab world and Asia encounter Christ. Interserve mobilizes Christians with medical, technical, and community development training to care for real human needs while also proclaiming the Gospel.⁸⁶⁴

Prior to going to the field, Interserve workers have the opportunity to come to the CEM at Minas Gerais for one- to two-year program that includes studies in Bible, theology, missiology, psychology, world religions, and anthropology. The school also emphasizes training in holistic ministry (*missão integral*) and tentmaking.⁸⁶⁵ Once workers are on the field, Interserve has a developing strategy of pastoral care that includes weekly communication, annual visits to workers on the field, and special care for furloughing missionaries, as well as an annual debrief. While this is primarily the work of the home office, Interserve has also set apart a leadership team on the field that oversees pastoral care.

At present Interserve Brasil has seven workers—including married couples and singles—on the field in the Arab world. The Interserve leadership reports that their primary areas of ministry include teaching and discipleship, prayer and spiritual warfare ministry, and developing local leaders. As Interserve workers use their professions to care for real needs, humanitarian work is also central to their efforts in ministry.

⁸⁶⁴ See *Centro Evangélico de Missões* (web site) http://www.cem.org.br/br/interserve_eng.php (accessed April 30, 2010).

⁸⁶⁵ See *Centro Evangélico de Missões* (web site) http://www.cem.org.br/br/interserve_eng.php (accessed April 30, 2010).

4.3.6 CCI Brasil⁸⁶⁶

In 1987, Crossover Communications International was founded in the United States by Bill Jones and João Mordomo with a vision to “see God glorified among all peoples.”⁸⁶⁷ Initially focusing on short-term missions from North America, CCI began to emphasize sending long-term workers to Eastern Europe and to the former Soviet Union in 1990. In 1995, CCI began work in Moldova and, after a successful decade of church planting efforts, CCI Moldova was established in 2006 in order to send Moldovans in mission. Currently, CCI has offices in the United States, Australia, Moldova, and Brazil.⁸⁶⁸

Recognizing the great missions sending potential of the Brazilian church, CCI Brasil was founded in 1996 by Mordomo and a Brazilian pastor. In 1999, the group sent its first Brazilian workers to Turkey and, presently, CCI Brasil’s sole focus is mobilizing Brazilians for ministry in the Muslim world. Driven by the motto “we love God; we love God’s global glory,” CCI Brasil’s core values include authentic Christian living, biblical authority, and world evangelization. Also, the group emphasizes reaching Muslim people groups, pioneering church planting, and establishing local ministries out of those churches.⁸⁶⁹

What does CCI Brasil offer in the way of pre-field training? Mordomo shared:

We do not have a formal training program. Rather, we assess where a candidate is and seek to fill the gaps of their training. Given the needs, we can offer training in Bible, spiritual life, and professional business-type training. Some of these needs can be met through partnering organizations closer to the candidate's home city.

⁸⁶⁶ All information in this section that is not otherwise documented is based on the mission leaders responses of João Mordomo (participant 5) in Appendix D and my observations and our discussions during my visit at a CCI ministry training in Foz do Iguaçu and at the CCI headquarters in Curitiba, July 17-21.

⁸⁶⁷ See *CCI Brasil* (web site) <http://www.ccibrasil.org/> (accessed April 21, 2010).

⁸⁶⁸ See *CCI Brasil* (web site) <http://www.ccibrasil.org/> (accessed April 21, 2010).

⁸⁶⁹ See *CCI Brasil* (web site) <http://www.ccibrasil.org/> (accessed April 21, 2010).

He continues, “If needed, we may ask a candidate to come to Curitiba for two years and be a part of a two-year program that includes Biblical training, missiology, church planting experience (inside of Brazil), and business and professional training. We have started a business consultancy to meet this [latter] need.” Also, twice a year, CCI sponsors a Muslim ministry training week in the Southern city of Foz do Iguacu in which participants receive classroom training on Islamic theology and culture as well as practical training in meeting Muslims at the local mosque and in the community.⁸⁷⁰

Presently, CCI Brasil has sent eight Brazilian workers to serve in five different Arab-Muslim countries. Also, there is a team in Foz do Iguacu that ministers to Arabs locally but also facilitates the Muslim ministry training just mentioned. In terms of ministry strategy, CCI’s priority is on church planting movements among Muslims—a ministry that implies a great emphasis on evangelism and discipleship. They’re also committed to prayer and partnering with other existing mission efforts in a region. Finally, in light of its convictions concerning tentmaking and transformation in mission, CCI Brasil has been quite innovative in developing Business as Mission strategies.⁸⁷¹

4.3.7 Summary

While some Brazilian workers are being sent directly by their home churches to minister in the Arab world and other Brazilian organizations are also at work in the Arab-Muslim world,⁸⁷² the six organizations surveyed offer a helpful picture of the current status of Brazilian missions sending to this part of the world. In a survey of

⁸⁷⁰ As previously noted, I visited Mordomo in Foz do Iguacu and observed this training firsthand July 17-20.

⁸⁷¹ Mordomo has become a recognized authority on Business as Mission and his published works on the subject include: Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, *Business as Mission*, 219-39; and “Bossa Nova, the ‘Beautiful Game,’ and Business as Mission,” *Connections* (August 2009), 20-21.

⁸⁷² Some other organizations at work in the Arab-Muslim world on some level include: Jovens Com Uma Missão (Youth With a Mission), <http://www.jocum.org.br/>; Missão Horizontes (World Horizons), <http://www.mhorizontes.org.br/>; and Avante, <http://www.missaoavante.org.br/index3.asp>.

ten Brazilian mission leaders, including the five of the six organizations just discussed,⁸⁷³ the most prominent forms of ministry pursued on an organizational level were evangelism (100%), discipleship (87.5%), church planting (75%), humanitarian aid (62.5%), and prayer and spiritual warfare ministry (50%). Other key ministries include sports ministry and Business as Mission. Hence, these groups have been holistic in their approach in continuing to emphasize proclamation in mission while also ministering to human needs.

Each organization also demonstrates a clear commitment to offering its workers a thorough pre-field training experience. While some agencies have developed their own training and others send their personnel to be trained by partner organizations, the value for training is maintained. Most groups require that their workers spend at least one year in pre-field training, while others require even longer. Reflecting on how training has become more important in the overall Brazilian evangelical missions movement, Calze commented:

Before . . . there was a lot of willpower and not so much maturity, [and] the sending of a missionary was disorganized . . . there was no concern with the formation of the missionary [and] there were no missionary schools. Because of that the missionaries used to remain on the field for a very short time, some would return, which created a negative effect in their lives, and for the sending church. Today the missionaries in general are remaining much longer on the field.⁸⁷⁴

The implication, of course, is that increased attention to training has helped Brazilians to remain on the field.

Brazilian missions organizations serving in the Arab world also seem committed to partnership. In a recent article, Bertil Ekström challenged the Brazilian church to pursue partnership in mission. While arguing that partnership leads to a better distribution of resources, guards against duplicating similar efforts, and results

⁸⁷³ I was unable to interview the mission leadership of the JMM.

⁸⁷⁴ See Appendix D, question 25 from respondent 6.

in a more efficient and sustainable work, he asserts that partnership results in unity that ultimately gives more credibility to the Gospel.⁸⁷⁵ He writes, “If those who claim to have been transformed by a personal experience with Christ and indwelt by the same Holy Spirit cannot work together and live peacefully, then what type of image of God are they presenting?”⁸⁷⁶ The noted Brazilian organizations seem to model what Ekström is advocating. CCI Brasil and PMI have partnered with Antioquia, Kairos, and Avante for pre-field training, while PMI and Antioquia have also collaborated on the field. Though PMI and Antioquia focus their partnerships on other Ibero-American churches and organizations, they still greatly value collaboration in mission.⁸⁷⁷

4.4 Strengths of Brazilian Missions among Arabs

Having discussed the most common approaches to ministry by Brazilian workers as well as philosophies of mission of several Brazilian missions organizations, let us now analyze the apparent strengths of Brazilian evangelical missions among Arab-Muslims. This is largely based on the input of Brazilian missionaries and mission leaders.

First, Brazilians have apparently found success in building meaningful relationships with Arabs. While this shared aspect of Brazilian and Arab culture was laid out in the last chapter, Brazilians seem to have made the most of this cultural similarity in their ministries. Mordomo affirmed that Brazilian workers “take

⁸⁷⁵ See Ekström, “Missões e Cia,” in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 777-81.

⁸⁷⁶ See Ekström, “Missões e Cia,” in Bradford, Winter, and Hawthorne, *Perspectivas*, 778. English translation by Barbara Hubbard.

⁸⁷⁷ In 1994, Carillo reported that partnerships were not always easily formed between Latin American teams and organizations; thus, this observed characteristic Brazilian missions represents an apparent improvement. See Pablo Carillo, trans., Kelly O’Donnell, “Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12.4 (1995), 197.

continual initiative in ministry [and] have intentionality . . . our success criteria is less numerical but more based on relationship initiative.”⁸⁷⁸ Similarly, Amado added:

My definition of success [in ministry] is being able to have Muslims trust you for what you are, for your life and faith, and through words and deeds, be able to communicate the love of God. Because of that, you see people coming to the Lord, you are discipling them, and eventually they become part of the local church. In light of this goal, most Brazilians have been very successful at building friendship with Muslims and earning their trust.

When asked about their success in ministry among Arabs, one worker shared, “We believe that our biggest success in ministry is the true love for what we do and for the people,” while another added, “I can look back and see a positive influence in the lives of people; people that I continue to stay in contact with.”⁸⁷⁹

Second, many Brazilian workers seem to have done well at adapting to Arab culture. Facilitated in part by the general cultural proximity that exists between the cultures of Brazil and the Arab world, Brazilian workers have also worked to learn and adapt to the culture. Strategies such as PMI’s Transcultural Training Course have certainly helped Brazilians to be at home in the host culture. Discussing the success of Brazilian missionaries in Arab contexts, Calze asserted: “I believe that this success comes as a result of the [Brazilian’s] natural gifts to adapt himself to a context and particularly to Muslim culture. Because of that, they are able to share the Gospel in an effective and holistic way.” Timothy Halls, a North American who serves to mobilize Brazilians in global mission added: “They have been pioneers in new fields moving out by faith. They have connected to the local culture a bit faster than North Americans.”⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁸ All responses from Brazilian workers and mission leaders on this topic are summarized in Table 4.3.

⁸⁷⁹ This effective relational connection finds further support in Federico Bertuzzi, *Latinos No Mundo Muçulmano* (São Paulo: Sepal, 1993), 11, 20.

⁸⁸⁰ See also Bertuzzi, *Latinos No Mundo Muçulmano*, 10, 14, 22.

Third, Brazilians seem to have also had success in evangelism. While conversion to Christ is often slow in the Arab-Muslim world and the results certainly cannot be compared to that of Brazil or Latin America, Brazilians have nevertheless reported success in seeing Arabs embrace Christ. Amado, who has been involved in Arab-Muslim ministry for three decades, observed: “Most [Brazilians] have been good evangelists. In the first seven to ten years, we did not see many people come to the Lord. Later, however, Brazilians began to see people come to Christ and disciple them.” In a recent article, Ekström and Limpic asserted that evangelism was a general strength of the overall Brazilian evangelical missions movement.⁸⁸¹ It seems that the ability of Brazilians to connect relationally in the Arab context has facilitated evangelistic efforts.

Fourth, Brazilians have found increasing success in planting churches among Arabs. In addition to the reports related earlier in this chapter, Brazilian mission leaders have also affirmed that this is an area of ministry where Brazilians have been successful. Halls related that “[Brazilians] have been pretty good at starting churches,” while Mordomo affirmed that Brazilian ministry efforts have “often had fed into existing church planting movements.”

A final area of strength in Brazilian missions work among Arabs has been excellence in humanitarian work. This is certainly due in part to the general character of Brazilian evangelicalism that has valued integrating Gospel proclamation with caring for human needs. Also, it seems that as many Brazilian workers come to the Arab world with limited financial resources, they can more readily identify with the poor and needy that they are serving. One worker, when asked what he most looked

⁸⁸¹ See Bertil Ekström and Ted Limpic, “Signs of Improvement in the Brazilian Mission Movement,” *Connections* (Summer 2005), 32.

forward to in his ministry, summarized the motivation of many Brazilian workers:

“To work in social projects that shows God’s love in practical terms.”

As Brazilian workers and mission leaders have reflected on their success in mission in the Arab world, it is remarkable that they have defined success more in terms of faithfulness, obedience, and perseverance as opposed to the concrete outcomes of ministry (i.e., numbers of converts or churches planted). One worker shared: “I believe that in God’s eyes, the success is more linked to the faithfulness of the worker than to the numerical result of his ministry. When I am faithful and obedient to God’s calling for my life I become successful and obtain success in what I do.” Another worker added, “I am faithful everyday and I am being obedient; I do not want to measure success in numbers,” while another shared, “[I am successful] knowing that I am just a tool since it is God who is at work in all; so I do not have the pressure of producing numbers.” Finally, one Brazilian worker defined success as “when I am obedient and taking steps of faith . . . at these times I feel I have been faithful to my ministry.”

From an organizational perspective, Missão Antioquia has also reflected on its criteria for success. Acknowledging that success in ministry can be due to many factors, the Antioquia leadership affirms that “we do not want to bring about success . . . at any cost.” Careful not to give undue attention to charismatic personalities or human efforts, Antioquia attributes its success to God’s grace and mercy at work in the ministries of a united team. Success in ministry should only result in God being exalted by His people; thus, there is never room for human boasting.⁸⁸²

The success criteria of these Brazilian workers and Missão Antioquia certainly challenge some previously held notions of ministry success. Though some Brazilian

⁸⁸² See *Missão Antioquia* (web site) <http://www.missaoantioquia.com/visao.html> (accessed April 30, 2010). English translation by Cristina Boersma.

churches expect their missionaries in the Arab world to have the same success that they would in Brazil—a context where there is a generally healthy response to the Gospel—workers and mission leaders have resolved that the outcomes of ministry are outside of their control. Hence, their success criteria have become faithfulness, obedience, and perseverance in the task of mission.

Table 4.3 Brazilian Perspectives on Success in Mission

(ML 5) [Brazilians workers] take continual initiative in ministry [and] have intentionality. Our success criteria is less numerical but more based on relationship initiative.
(ML 10) My definition of success [in ministry] is being able to have Muslims trust you for what you are, for your life and faith, and through words and deeds be able to communicate the love of God. Because of that you see people coming to the Lord, you are discipling them, and eventually they become part of the local church. In light of this goal: most Brazilians have been very successful at building friendship with Muslims and earning their trust.
(14) We believe that our biggest success in ministry is the true love for what we do and for the people.
(18) I can look back and see a positive influence in the lives of people; people that I continue to stay in contact with.
(ML 6) I believe that this success comes as a result of the [Brazilian's] natural gifts to adapt himself to a context and particularly to Muslim culture. Because of that, they are able to share the Gospel in an effective and holistic way.
(ML 9) They [Brazilians] have been pioneers in new fields moving out by faith. They have connected to the local culture a bit faster than North Americans.
(ML 10) Most [Brazilians] have been good evangelists. In the first seven to ten years, we did not see many people come to the Lord. Later, however, Brazilians began to see people come to Christ and disciple them.
(ML 9) They [Brazilians] have been pretty good at starting churches.
(ML 5) [Brazilian efforts] often had fed into existing church planting movements.
(3)[I want] to work in social projects that shows God's love in practical terms.
(4) I believe that in God's eyes, the success is more linked to the faithfulness of the worker than to the numerical result of his ministry. When I am faithful and obedient to God's calling for my life I become successful and obtain success in what I do.
(40) I am faithful everyday and I am being obedient; I do not want to measure success in numbers.
(25) [I'm successful] knowing that I am just a tool since it is God who is at work in all; so I do not have the pressure of producing numbers.
(36) [Success is] when I am obedient and taking steps of faith . . . at these times I feel I have been faithful to my ministry.
(28) I believe that my success is perseverance. We know that it is very difficult but God has given us strength to carry on.

(38) I've been persistent. I've learned so much about culture, business, and having a platform.

4.5 Challenges for Brazilian Missions among Arabs

Having developed rapidly since the early 1970s, the Brazilian evangelical missions movement is still relatively young and not without its challenges. In this section, we will address four major issues facing Brazilian missions efforts in the Arab-Muslim world—Brazilian church support, language acquisition, financial support, and women's issues in the Arab world. Following surveys and interviews conducted with fifty-five Brazilian transcultural workers and mission leaders, these issues emerged as the most critical to Brazilian mission work in the Arab world.

These are certainly not the only issues facing Brazilian missions in the Arab world or in the broader global context. Many leaders are also concerned with pre-field training, ongoing training for current missionaries, combating attrition rates, and ministering to workers on the field (pastoral or member care). Because these issues seem to be receiving adequate treatment elsewhere,⁸⁸³ the following discussion will be limited to the four noted areas. In each case, the problem will be defined and explored after which I will propose solutions, based on Brazilian perspectives, toward resolving the issue and moving forward.

⁸⁸³ The issues of pre-field training have been explored in Itiokia, "Third World Missionary Training: Two Brazilian Models," in Taylor, *Internationalizing Missionary Training*, 111-20, in many of the editions of the Brazilian missiological journal *Capacitando*, and in Finley's dissertation, "Contextualized Training for Missionaries: A Brazilian Model." Also, pre-field training, ongoing training, attrition issues, and member care have been discussed in Jonathan Lewis, "Designing the ReMap Project," 77-83; Ted Limpic, "Brazilian Missionaries: How Long Are They Staying," 143-54; Bertil Ekström, "The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," 183-93; and Margaretha Adiwardana, "Formal and Non-Formal Pre-Field Training: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," 207-215 all in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*. On a practical level, Ted Limpic, after a long career in ministry in Brazil, has relocated to Spain and essentially functions as a member care specialist for Brazilian workers in the region. Finally, a number of Brazilian missions organizations working in the Arab world (Missão Antioquia, PMI, CCI Brasil, and Interserve among others) have developed deliberate member care strategies for their personnel.

4.5.1 Brazilian Church Support

The first major challenge faced by Brazilian workers serving in the Arab world is a general lack of support from their sending churches in Brazil. This can be understood in at least four ways. First, many Brazilian evangelical churches seem to have little vision for global missions. According to one Brazilian missionary from the Pentecostal tradition, the great emphasis on prosperity theology in Brazilian Pentecostal churches has turned church planting into a great competition.⁸⁸⁴ As some Brazilian church leaders are pursuing their own agendas, there is little vision for global efforts, especially in the Arab-Muslim world where the response to the Gospel is certainly much slower than it is in Brazil. Though some Pentecostal churches are taken by a theology that has little room for missions, other churches (both Pentecostal and historic) define missions as evangelism in their local communities or planting new churches in Brazil within their denomination. Finally, others are simply consumed with the great needs facing their communities and have little energy to think about the global mission task.⁸⁸⁵

Second, many of the Brazilian churches that have sent workers to the Arab world have failed to provide pastoral care and encouragement for their missionaries.⁸⁸⁶ Commenting on the general lack of care and support, one worker shared, “Our church gives us very little encouragement and support,” while another frankly related, “Church care—what is that?”⁸⁸⁷ Other workers have desired that their home churches be more connected to their ministries in the Arab world. One Brazilian

⁸⁸⁴ This was related to me in a personal conversation during a visit, January 6-9, 2010.

⁸⁸⁵ These thoughts were related by Daniel Calze in conversation, July 21, 2009. See also, Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 227. Also, Carillo (Carillo, “Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions,” 196) discusses this challenge on a broader Latin American level.

⁸⁸⁶ Maragaretha Adiwardana (Adiwardana, “Formal and Non-Formal Pre-Field Training: Perspective of the New Sending Countries,” in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 208) suggests that lack of church support is one of the leading reasons for missionary attrition among Brazilian transcultural workers in general.

⁸⁸⁷ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.4.

shared, “It would have been nice if my home church was more understanding of my ministry,” and another added, “[I would like] more involvement from my local church—participating and being part of my work.”

Some workers especially long to feel more connected to their home churches as they are serving on the field. One worker related, “In general I should say that the communication could become a lot better . . . with the local church.” Another worker shared, “My church is not so used to communicating with me by email or letters,” but then she added, “When I go back to Brazil I feel their love and encouragement.” Feeling a similar sense of “ought of sight, out of mind,” one missionary stated: “My church has given less care. Once you are gone, you can be forgotten.”

Other workers, convinced that their churches have not forgotten them, have recognized that their churches simply do not understand fully how to be missions-sending churches. One worker shared, “Our church prays for us but they do not understand us or missions in general,” while another related, “They [the church] only send money; they do not understand these other types of support.”

Third, many Brazilian congregations fail to understand the difficulties of ministry in the Arab-Muslim world, including a generally slow response to the Gospel. In reality, many Brazilian workers already struggle with feelings of discouragement because of this lack of fruit. Amado said that the biggest issue facing Brazilian missionaries is “discouragement—overcoming the sense of uselessness and struggling with the lack of fruit (i.e., 1-2 people coming to Christ every few years).” Halls added, “Some [workers] have struggled with the lack of fruitfulness in their ministries and they have moved to other fields perhaps prematurely.” One Brazilian worker reflected honestly, “Sometimes, we feel discouraged and tired because we do

not see immediate results, especially if we compare the results to those of our home country.”

Hence, the failure of Brazilian churches to appreciate these challenges only compounds the sense of discouragement for Brazilian missionaries. Mordomo shared that a great challenge for Brazilian workers was “dealing with the expectations of their sending churches in Brazil who expect the results of Brazil in the Arab-Muslim world.” Silas Tostes added, “The biggest difficulty is the lack of vision by the churches that want to send missionaries only to areas where there is freedom and churches are able to be planted [freely].” One Brazilian worker shared candidly: “It would be great if our church and supporters understood that work in the Arab-Muslim world is different from Brazil. Our church wants to see immediate results. If they understood our context better, that would be an encouragement to us.”

While some Brazilian workers have been discouraged by the lack of understanding from their churches, others have actually felt the pressure to produce results. One missionary shared: “Our sending church was slow to send us out because they want to see quick results. Sometimes the church pressures us to work more aggressively to see results but we cannot do that here.” Another worker admitted, “I worry about sharing a lack of results with the church.” Finally, one couple communicated obvious discouragement: “We cannot fail in our mission because we are afraid that our church will not send any more missionaries to the Arab world.”

Fourth, many Brazilian churches have not regarded encouraging missionaries as their responsibility; rather, they have abdicated this ministry to the partnering missions organization. One Brazilian missionary shared: “My missions organization gave great support and help. My sending church in Brazil did not understand how to be supportive of a missionary on the field.” Another worker shared, “[Pastoral care

was] very adequate from the agency; inadequate from the church,” while another related, “From the agency [pastoral care] is good; but the local church is non-existent.” Though some workers reported that their organizations also failed to provide pastoral care and encouragement, most acknowledged that their missions agencies at least made efforts while their sending churches did very little.⁸⁸⁸

From this survey, it is evident that a great challenge for Brazilian missions in the Arab world is that many Brazilian evangelical churches struggle to have a vision for the Arab-Muslim world, and they often fail to provide pastoral care and encouragement for their missionaries. I would like to suggest three areas for improvement—solutions that are already being pursued in part by Brazilian mission leaders and workers.

First, as many Brazilian evangelical churches (and their pastors) are in need of a greater vision and conviction for engagement in the task of global missions, they must be continually exposed to and educated about the needs of the world. At present, a number of Brazilian mission leaders are hard at work in this task. For instance, Silas Tostes and Edison Queiroz, a missions-minded pastor from São Paulo, regularly speak throughout the country communicating a global vision to churches. Daniel Calze, who refers to Brazilian pastors as an “unreached people group,” regularly meets with pastors and speaks at churches about partnering with PMI in the Muslim world. In addition to directing PMI Brasil, Calze also pastors a small Presbyterian congregation that he is endeavoring to mentor in global mission.⁸⁸⁹ As noted, beginning in 2009, the “Perspectives” course was offered at the headquarters of Missão Antioquia and in a few other cities around Brazil. This church-based strategy

⁸⁸⁸ See Table 4.4 for additional similar responses.

⁸⁸⁹ Related to me in personal conversation with Calze, July 21, 2009.

certainly has the great potential to influence pastors and congregations toward being more missions minded.

While these strategies for educating churches in missions should certainly continue, two further ideas should be considered. First, it seems important to strengthen the missiological offerings at Brazilian theological seminaries where pastors are being trained. Perhaps “Perspectives,” a course rich in theological, historical, cultural, and strategic studies that is also quite reproducible in the local church context, could be offered in the Brazilian seminaries. Second, it would be strategic for Brazilian pastors to visit missionaries sent from their churches on the field in the Arab world.⁸⁹⁰ As the pastor’s global vision is increased, this will surely translate to the congregation. Also, the visit could serve as a means to encourage and offer pastoral care to Brazilian workers.⁸⁹¹

Second, as Brazilian workers often feel disconnected from their sending congregations, some of the burden for establishing this connection lies with the missionaries. Prior to going to the field, are Brazilian workers serving faithfully in their local churches and patiently cultivating a global vision? One Brazilian worker shared, “Our church had no vision for missions . . . [so] I worked [for several years] in the missions ministry of the church.” Indeed, some aspiring missionaries will need to invest a number of years serving in their local congregation and helping that church to develop a global vision. While PMI encourages churches to develop teams to help missionaries with their finances and to facilitate communication with the church, the

⁸⁹⁰ See Carillo, “Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions,” 196

⁸⁹¹ I observed this strategy modeled well (July 19, 2009) in a small Brazilian congregation in Southern Brazil as the pastor was preparing to visit a missionary couple sent from the church. Prior to the visit, the church organized a fund-raising dinner and collected a generous offering to help the couple in their work. During the Sunday service, their ministry was highlighted and the congregation interceded for them. Church members were also invited to write encouraging notes and send special gifts from home. The pastor, of course, went with the intention of praying for and encouraging the couple.

missionary can certainly work to establish these teams through his/her network of relationships within the church.⁸⁹²

Third, the relationship between the local church and the missions agency needs to be clarified. Recognizing this as a priority for his organization, Mordomo shared:

We need to continue to work on partnerships with Brazilian churches in sending missionaries. Some churches want to control everything that our missionaries do; others simply dump them on us and expect us to do everything. So we want to continue to work on more healthy and strategic partnerships.

Similarly, Robson Ramos, affirmed the need to “establish a comprehensive understanding of the role of the mission agency and the local church in the missionary's life.” While no quick solutions can be proposed, it seems that as mission leaders continue to esteem the local churches and initiate ongoing communication with pastors, then trust and partnership will result.

Table 4.4 Brazilian Perspectives on Church Support

(36) Our church gives us very little encouragement and support.
(9) Church care—what is that?
(18) The Brazilian church was not that helpful [in pastoral support].
(8) It would have been nice if my home church was more understanding of my ministry.
(29) [I would like] more involvement from my local church—participating and being part of my work.
(5) In general I should say that the communication could become a lot better, especially with the local church.
(22) My church is not so used to communicating with me by email or letters. But when I go back to Brazil I feel their love and encouragement.
(40) My church has given less care. Once you are gone, you can be forgotten.
(37) Our church prays for us but they do not understand us or missions in general.
(10) They [the church] only send money. They do not understand these other types of support.
(ML 10) [Brazilian workers struggle with] discouragement—overcoming the sense of uselessness and struggling with the lack of fruit (i.e., 1-2 people coming to Christ every few years).

⁸⁹² See Carillo, “Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions,” 196; similar thoughts were realted by Calze in conversation, July 21, 2009.



(ML 9) Some [Brazilian workers] have struggled with the lack of fruitfulness in their ministries and they have moved to other fields perhaps prematurely.
(29) Sometimes, we feel discouraged and tired because we do not see immediate results, especially if we compare the results to those of our home country.
(ML 4) [Brazilian workers struggle because] they have less fruit than in other missionary fields.
(ML 10) The discouragement of seeing lack of fruit [is a great challenge to Brazilian workers].
(ML 1) Discouragement over the hardness of the soil is the greatest problem [for Brazilian workers].
(ML 5) [A great challenge for Brazilian workers is] dealing with the expectations of their sending churches in Brazil who expect the results of Brazil in the Arab-Muslim world.
(ML 4) The biggest difficulty is the lack of vision by the churches that want to send missionaries only to areas where there is freedom and churches are able to be planted [freely].
(36) It would be great if our church and supporters understood that work in the Arab-Muslim world is different from Brazil. Our church wants to see immediate results. If they understood our context better that would be an encouragement to us.
(41) Our sending church was slow to send us out because they want to see quick results. Sometimes the church pressures us to work more aggressively to see results but we cannot do that here.
(37) I worry about sharing a lack of results with the church.
(42) We cannot fail in our mission because we are afraid that our church will not send any more missionaries to the Arab world.
(8) My missions organization gave great support and help. My sending church in Brazil did not understand how to be supportive of a missionary on the field.
(38) From my organization, it [pastoral care] has been good. My church gives financial support but little pastoral care.
(15) Very good support from my mission agency, but very bad support from my sending church.
(25) [Pastoral care was] very adequate from the agency; inadequate from the church.
(26) From the agency [pastoral care] is good; but the local church is non-existent.
(4) Sometimes we go through a long period of time without having any type of communication with our church or sending agency. I understand that finances impose a limitation to it, but I believe that there are other communication channels out there that could be used for pastoral care and spiritual and emotional support.
(23) As far as the sending agency, it is not ideal but I understand that they are doing the best that they can. As far as the sending church, there is no care.
(34) I get no encouragement and support from my church. From my organization, it's getting better; they are trying their best.
(39) My church is not really prepared to offer care. The church does not understand why the work is slow here and sometimes it seems that they feel they're wasting their money here. I am part of the first agency from my denomination and they are concerned about losing their identity through missions. They have tried to understand my situation because of security problems we have had.
(4) It would be great to receive a pastoral visit of the leader of our sending agency or of the Pastor of our local church. This is something that has never happened during all the years serving in the Muslim world and it would be very meaningful.

(44) Our church had no vision for missions . . . [so] I worked [for several years] in the missions ministry of the church.
(ML 5) We need to continue to work on partnerships with Brazilian churches in sending missionaries. Some churches want to control everything that our missionaries do; others simply dump them on us and expect us to do everything. So we want to continue to work on more healthy and strategic partnerships.
(ML 7) [We need to] establish a comprehensive understanding of the role of the mission agency and the local church in the missionary's life.

4.5.2 Language Acquisition

A second significant challenge for Brazilians serving in Arab contexts is that many transcultural workers struggle to learn and master the Arabic language. While Arabic is certainly a difficult language for anyone to learn, let us explore the reasons why Brazilians are having difficulty in this area of ministry and, based on the input of Brazilian missionaries and leaders, propose some solutions for moving forward.

In evaluating their own abilities in Arabic, only 7% of those surveyed felt that their proficiency in Arabic was excellent, while another 18.6% indicated that they were doing well. The vast majority (74.5%) reported that their Arabic level was average (46.5%), below average (14%), or poor (14%).

Indeed, some Brazilians have excelled at Arabic, including Amado, who reported that his level of Arabic was “between well and excellent.” He continues: “I wanted to learn classical Arabic but I used colloquial Arabic. I later studied Koranic Arabic in England and then studied Modern Standard Arabic in Brazil.” He adds, “We did not learn French because it was too easy for us.”⁸⁹³ It should be noted that French is the second language of most of the North African countries and many international Christian workers have been tempted to use French in their ministries because it is easier to learn than Arabic. As Portuguese is similar to French, this could be especially enticing to Brazilian workers serving in the region.

⁸⁹³ All Brazilians responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.5.

Other Brazilians reported that they are able to use Arabic to communicate the Gospel and to interact well in their communities. One worker shared, “I would say that [my Arabic] is good enough for communication in general [and] in order [to do] the ministry we are involved in.” Indicating that cultural immersion was a key to his language acquisition, he continued: “There was not a good language school that could teach the Arab dialect in the city I lived in when I first got here (there was no written language), and I moved to the interior right after I got married. I learned by dealing directly with the people.” One worker shared, “I can get around (shop, etc.) and I can share my testimony in Arabic,” while another added, “I feel free to speak to the children I work with [in my ministry].” Finally, one female worker related, “I can communicate in the market and get by,” while another worker jokingly said, “I can even argue with people [in Arabic].”

Some Brazilians related that they had a basic understanding of Arabic but that it was ultimately insufficient for communicating the Gospel. One missionary shared: “I can certainly get around but I cannot go that deep in Arabic (i.e. for evangelism or a Bible study). I spent two years studying Arabic . . . and I have not had any Christian vocabulary in my study.” Another related, “I can begin to express myself and do my job in Arabic [but] it is difficult to share the Gospel in Arabic.” Other Brazilians admitted that their limited language ability has forced them to pass up opportunities to minister to Arab friends. One worker shared, “My language ability has been limited which has made me reticent to reach out to people,” and another confessed: “Sometimes I pass up opportunities to speak more deeply about the Gospel. I want to be better in Arabic.”

When asked about their biggest failure in ministry in the Arab world, many Brazilians shared that it was failing to learn the Arabic language well. One worker

honestly related, “This has been the most difficult area for me; I truly feel frustrated with my proficiency in Arabic,” while another shared, “Learning the language is a huge failure.” Another worker commented that “language has been difficult; especially studying classical Arabic and colloquial Arabic at the same time.” Finally, one mission leader, reflecting on the work of his personnel on the field, indicated that they “could do a better job if they had . . . if they were more apt to learn different languages.”⁸⁹⁴

While many Brazilians have acknowledged their struggles in learning Arabic, let us consider at least six reasons for why this is the case. First, as previously alluded to, some Brazilians have been hindered in their Arabic study due to financial reasons because they have not had the means to pay for Arabic language school tuition or to hire a private tutor. One missionary related: “[I have failed at] language learning due to my low financial support. I can't afford the lessons! What I know now I've learned with my local friends and by myself.” Similarly, another worker added: “I have been studying Arabic for one year. The big challenge is that I have not always had financial support for Arabic.”

Second, some Brazilians have neglected language study because they have been preoccupied with other activities. This is certainly true for Brazilian women as they endeavor to balance language learning with caring for children and taking care of the home. One woman shared, “Language learning is difficult [for] a mom with kids,” while another related, “I have been trying to spend more time in learning the language but my daily activities take too much of my time.” Other Brazilian workers indicated that their involvement in ministry activities and humanitarian work prevented them

⁸⁹⁴ See Table 4.5 for a more exhaustive list of similar responses. Also, both Bertuzzi (Bertuzzi, *Latinos No Mundo Muçulmano*, 20) and Carillo (Carillo, “Struggles of Latin Americans in Frontier Missions,” 195-96) affirmed that language learning is a struggle for Latin American missionaries in general in the Arab-Muslim world.

from investing the necessary time in language study. One worker shared: “I studied the local language for only two years, as I was also involved with the activities with the organization I belong to. During my second period here after two years, I got settled in . . . and got busy with the activities with the organization.” Even Amado, who eventually attained an excellent level in Arabic, shared, “I was too busy and over committed [in ministry] before I reached a good language level.”

Third, some Brazilian workers have admitted that they have simply lacked the focus and dedication to persevere in Arabic studies. One worker attributed his poor level in Arabic to a “lack of dedication in studying the local language,” while another confessed, “I can be undisciplined about language learning.” Finally, another Brazilian admitted that she was simply “comfortable with communicating the language on an average level” and was therefore not motivated to master the language.

Fourth, some Brazilians have not learned Arabic very well because they have been able to function in another language. One tentmaker employed by an international company in the Middle East shared, “I learned only a little Arabic as Portuguese and English were my work languages.” Another Brazilian worker commented: “Unfortunately, this [learning Arabic] is an area where I haven’t grown much. I chose to speak English with the local people and because of that I didn’t learn the local language as I should have.” It became apparent, after surveying several Brazilians working with Arabs in Southern Brazil, that nearly all are using Portuguese as their ministry language. One worker shared, “My ministry in Southern Brazil to Arabs is in Portuguese. I am studying Arabic though.” A pastor who planted a bilingual Portuguese- and Arabic-speaking church related: “I carried out my ministry

mostly in Portuguese. My sermons in the church (in Southern Brazil) were given in Portuguese and translated into Arabic.”

Fourth, many Brazilians have not persevered in mastering Arabic because of a desire for immediate results. This general Brazilian tendency of *immediatismo* has certainly been a hindrance to Brazilians in other areas of ministry and is the reason why some have not continued in ministry in the Arab world. One Brazilian worker offered this critical reflection:

Brazilians come with high expectations and want to see immediate Brazilian results. We need to adjust our expectations. We need to be humble and patient and see how God will use us here. We need to work more with local people. And we need to come and do a better job studying language and culture.

While visiting some Brazilian teams in the Arab world, I interviewed one Brazilian couple that was investing time discipling other Brazilians and Portuguese-speaking Arabs. While on one hand, this seems to be a valuable ministry, on the other, it appears that this couple is taken by a desire for immediate results while their progress in Arabic study is certainly suffering. As previously discussed, this tendency is also stoked by Brazilian churches that expect immediate results from their missionaries in the Arab world. One Brazilian couple shared, “They [our sending church] want us to quickly learn Arabic but they don't offer to support us in language classes.”

A final reason that Brazilians seem to encounter difficulty in Arabic study is that they struggle with homesickness. Commenting on this sense of yearning (*saudade*)—a particularly strong tendency in Brazilian culture—one mission leader commented that Brazilian missionaries tend to “miss their families a lot (Brazilians are usually very close to their families).” Similarly, one worker shared, “I feel the great distance of being away from my family.” As Brazilian workers attempt to cope with missing family and friends, some tend to gravitate toward other Brazilians to

meet these relational needs. As a result, cultural immersion, language acquisition, and ministry relationships are hindered.

Having made the case that many Brazilian workers are struggling to acquire Arabic, let us propose some solutions for improvement. First, some Brazilian mission leaders and workers have suggested that a more deliberate program of linguistics and Arabic study should be a part of the pre-field training for Brazilian missionaries. One worker shared, “I regret not having some Arabic studies prior to leaving Brazil for the first time,” while a member of the Missão Horizontes Radical Project commented that their pre-field training “could also have included some Arabic language training with it.” Mordomo suggested that “pre-field linguistic experience” be added to their organization’s pre-field training. He added, “This may take the form of a version of LAMP (Language Application Made Practical)⁸⁹⁵ here in Brazil; or, we could send Brazilians to the university here in Brazil to study Arabic.”

Second, some Brazilian workers have strongly emphasized that studying Arabic should be the priority of all workers during their initial years in country. While a number of Brazilian organizations take cultural immersion and language study very seriously, one worker still commented that “we need to come and do a better job studying language and culture.” Another worker, apparently sensitive to the distractions and challenges of simply living in an Arab country, firmly stated, “I believe that everyone who comes to the Arab world must [completely] dedicate their time to the study of the language during the first two years.”

Third, as part of their pre-field cultural training, it would be wise for Brazilian mission candidates to reflect on their “Brazilianness” and to be aware of cultural tendencies such as *saudade* and *immediatismo* that could prove to be a barrier in their

⁸⁹⁵ LAMP refers to the course and book by E. Thomas and Elizabeth S. Brewster, *Language Application Made Practical: Field Methods for Language Learners* (Pasadena, CA: Lingua House, 1976).

cultural adaptation and language acquisition in the Arab world. Don Finley’s thesis on contextualized missionary training for Brazilian workers would serve as a great point of reflection in this exercise.

Fourth, Brazilian workers should raise a special budget for language learning for their first two years in country. As they share this need with their sending church and donors, this would also be a great opportunity to educate their senders on the long-term ministry benefits of language learning, which is itself a ministry.

Finally, some international organizations such as World Horizons and Operation Mobilization have sent their Brazilian personnel to Britain in order to learn English—the lingua franca of the mission community in most countries. The problem is that Brazilians are using up precious language learning energy on English before they begin to work on Arabic, which is certainly the more difficult language.⁸⁹⁶ My suggestion is that Brazilian teams in the Arab world abandon this practice and focus their energy first on Arabic. While communication with the international mission community is important, one suggestion is that bi-lingual intermediaries—including Brazilians fluent in other languages—be appointed to facilitate communication.⁸⁹⁷

Table 4.5 Brazilian Perspectives on Learning Arabic

(21) [My Arabic level is] between well and excellent. I wanted to learn classical Arabic but I used colloquial Arabic. I later studied Koranic Arabic in England and then studied Modern Standard Arabic in Brazil. We did not learn French because it was too easy for us.
(22) I would say that is good enough for communication in general [and] in order [to do] the ministry we are involved in. There was not a good language school that could teach the Arab dialect in the city I lived in when I first got here (there was no written language), and I moved to the interior right after I got married. I learned by dealing directly with the people.

⁸⁹⁶ The general difficulty for Latins to learn multiple languages in order to serve on multi-cultural teams has been raised by Bertuzzi. See Bertuzzi, “Internationalization or ‘Anglonization’ of Missions,” *Journal of Frontier Missions* 21:1 (2005), 15

⁸⁹⁷ In one Arab context, a Spanish-speaking North American serves on a team with Latin Americans. Because he is bi-lingual, he is able to facilitate communication between his teammates and the broader mission community. The model of this Spanish-speaking team could also be helpful for Brazilians.



(8)I can get around (shop, etc.) and I can share my testimony in Arabic.
(42) I feel free to speak to the children I work with [in my ministry].
(12) I can communicate in the market and get by.
(35) I can even argue with people [in Arabic].
(45) I can do all of my shopping in Arabic, but it is hard.
(40) I can communicate but I have a long way to go.
(11)I can certainly get around but I cannot go that deep in Arabic (i.e. for evangelism or a Bible study). I spent two years studying Arabic . . . and I have not had any Christian vocabulary in my study.
(39) I could give more effort in language and I could spend more time with nationals to practice.
(44) I can begin to express myself and do my job in Arabic. It is difficult to share the Gospel in Arabic.
(35) My language ability has been limited which has made me reticent to reach out to people.
(36) Sometimes I pass up opportunities to speak more deeply about the Gospel. I want to be better in Arabic.
(28) Relationships have suffered because of the language difficulties.
(ML 10) [Failure has been in] learning the language
(23) This has been the most difficult area for me; I truly feel frustrated with my proficiency in Arabic.
(1) Learning the language is a huge failure.
(34) Language has been difficult; especially studying classical Arabic and colloquial Arabic at the same time. I need to spend more time in language learning.
(37) I am starting over at the first level [of Arabic] this year.
(37) I don't feel like I have been successful in ministry. My language learning has been a failure.
(12) [Failure has been in] language learning. I wish I had more time for it.
(11)I have not learned language as well as I would like.
(10)I have not done that well learning Arabic.
(4)[Failure has been] in learning the language. I should have learned much more than I have.
(27) [Failure has been in] not learning the language as well.
(40) [Failure has been in learning the] Arabic language. I wish I could be fluent right now. I need to take more initiative to learn.
(ML 8) I can say that they could do a better job if they had . . . if they were more apt to learn different languages.
(6)[I have failed at] language learning due to my low financial support. I can't afford the lessons! What I know now I've learned with my local friends and by myself.
(44) I have been studying Arabic for one year. The big challenge is that I have not always had financial support for Arabic.
(43) Language learning is difficult [for] a mom with kids.
(7)I have been trying to spend more time in learning the language but my daily activities take too much of my time.
(1) I studied the local language for only two years, as I was also involved with the activities with the organization I belong to. During my second period here after two years, I got settled in . . . and got busy with the activities with the organization.
(21) I was too busy and over committed [in ministry] before I reached a good

language level.
(19) [I have failed in language learning because of a] lack of dedication in studying the local language.
(39) [I have failed in language learning because] I can be undisciplined about language learning.
(1) [I am] comfortable with communicating the language on an average level.
(33) I learned only a little Arabic as Portuguese and English were my work languages.
(5) Unfortunately, this [learning Arabic] is an area where I haven't grown much. I chose to speak English with the local people and because of that I didn't learn the local language as I should have.
(9) My ministry in Southern Brazil to Arabs is in Portuguese. I am studying Arabic though.
(13) I carried out my ministry mostly in Portuguese. My sermons in the church (in Southern Brazil) were given in Portuguese and translated into Arabic.
(10) I use Portuguese with Arabs here in Southern Brazil.
(34) Brazilians come with high expectations and want to see immediate Brazilian results. We need to adjust our expectations. We need to be humble and patient and see how God will use us here. We need to work more with local people. And we need to come and do a better job studying language and culture.
(41) They [our sending church] want us to quickly learn Arabic but don't offer to support us in language classes.
(15) [A failure has been] hoping for immediate results and that they people will correspond to my expectations as a Brazilian would.
(ML 8) They [Brazilian workers] miss their families a lot (Brazilians are usually very close to their families).
(40) I feel the great distance of being away from my family.
(19) I regret not having some Arabic studies prior to leaving Brazil for the first time.
(38) [Our pre-field training] could also have included some Arabic language training with it.
(ML 5) Pre-field linguistic experience. This may take the form of a version of LAMP (Language Application Made Practical) here in Brazil; or, we could send Brazilians to the university here in Brazil to study Arabic.
(34) We need to come and do a better job studying language and culture.
(1) I believe that everyone who comes to the Arab world must [completely] dedicate their time to the study of the language during the first two years.

4.5.3 Financial Support

A third area of struggle for Brazilian missionaries serving in the Arab world continues to be raising adequate financial support. Historically, the Brazilian evangelical church has not seen itself as a financial supporter of missions until relatively recently.

Oswaldo Prado recalled the response of a Brazilian church leader in the 1980s when challenged with the idea of involving his church in supporting Brazilian missionaries:

“Forget this idea pastor! This business of missions is not for us in the Third World.

Mission is for the churches of North America and Europe who have tradition in this area and the financial resources.”⁸⁹⁸ Yet, Timothy Halls reflected some optimism over how the Brazilian church had advanced in this area. He writes: “Compared to the mid-1970s when no Brazilians were raising support, [today] most are able to raise support from churches on some level. They are becoming support raisers and are finding solutions to this challenge.”⁸⁹⁹ Both Bertil Ekström and Ted Limpic point to a much stronger Brazilian economy that has put churches in a financial position to send and support more missionaries.⁹⁰⁰

While there are certainly signs of improvement in the Brazilian church’s ability to support its missionaries, it was established in the last chapter that financial struggles continue to plague Brazilian workers in the Arab world. In a study in 1995, Limpic wrote that “Brazilian agencies cite ‘lack of financial support’ as the great single cause of missionary attrition.”⁹⁰¹ In 2009, Halls still admitted that “some [Brazilian workers] have really struggled with their finances—some have had to return because of this; others could not return because of finances and stayed [on the field].” Amado added that the greatest difficulty facing Brazilian workers in the Arab world was “the long-term problem of financial support and future financial planning.”

Though Brazil’s greatly improved economy is certainly enabling churches to give more generously to missions, most Brazilian workers in the Arab world still struggle financially. Given this reality, what models should the Brazilian missions movement be pursuing for financially supporting its missionaries? Currently, most missions organizations are still employing a Professional Missionary Model (PMM).

⁸⁹⁸ See Prado, “A New Way of Sending Missionaries,” 52.

⁸⁹⁹ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.6.

⁹⁰⁰ See Ekström, “Brazilian Sending, in Winter and Hawthorne (4th ed.), 371-72; and Limpic, “Brazilian Missionaries: How Long are They Staying?” in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 144.

⁹⁰¹ See Limpic, “Brazilian Missionaries: How Long are They Staying?” in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 149; see also Steven Downey, “Ibero-Americans Reaching Arab-Muslims,” *Lausanne World Pulse* (web site) <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/worldpulse/325> (accessed May 7, 2010).

That is, the missionary, who typically has Bible college or seminary training, raises his or her support from churches and individuals.⁹⁰² The perspectives of mission leaders currently mobilizing Brazilians for work in the Arab world are particularly insightful. Amado, emphasizing a conviction that funds should not be raised from North America, stated: “Each worker raise[s] his/her own support. Brazilians are to raise 100% of their support from Brazil.” Another leader, highlighting the sending church’s role in raising support for the missionary, related, “The local church should be the main supporter of any missionary, with help from other people and organizations.” Calze concurred:

We believe that the local church is the main organization in charge of raising support for the missionary. Their priority and privilege is to send out missionaries to the field, and also to support them materially and spiritually in all they need while serving abroad. As an organization we help the missionary to raise support, but we do not take full responsibility for it.

While it is impressive that mission leaders long for Brazilian churches to be the primary senders and supporters for Brazilian missionaries, there seem to be some problems with the Professional Missionary Model in the Brazilian context. First, Robson Ramos argues that this model is based on a nineteenth- and twentieth-century North American model of missions—a socio-economic reality that Brazil has never experienced.⁹⁰³ Mordomo adds that in the history of Christian missions, the North American paradigm has certainly not been normative.⁹⁰⁴ Second, Mordomo argues that though the Brazilian economy has significantly recovered from its crises of the 1980s and 1990s and has even become a leading exporter of goods, the country is still

⁹⁰² See Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 224-25; also Ekström and Limpic, “Signs of Improvement in the Brazilian Mission Movement,” 31-32.

⁹⁰³ See Robson Ramos, “Tentmaking and Missions: Reflections on the Brazilian Case,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 15:1 (1998), 49.

⁹⁰⁴ See Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 224-25.

greatly affected by poverty, unemployment, and inflation.⁹⁰⁵ Thus, he is skeptical that the Brazilian evangelical church could be the sole source of financial support for missions, especially as the number of Brazilian workers continues to increase. He concludes rather frankly:

Any Brazilian missionary who seeks to serve in the PMM mold faces an uphill battle and runs a significant risk of never achieving critical financial mass and finally being able to serve among the people to whom he or she is called. And any Brazilian mission agency that chooses to perpetuate this model will very possibly continue to struggle year after year to place even a single worker or family in a cross-cultural ministry.⁹⁰⁶

Concluding that the PMM is not a viable paradigm for Brazilian workers, Ramos and Mordomo have proposed other models. While not objecting to the church providing some level of support for missionaries, Ramos suggests “a bi-vocational model” in which “only a few should be fully financially supported.” He insists that all mission candidates receive a university degree and develop marketable skills—the basis for a career in Brazil as well as in the countries of the Arab world. Also, he is quite burdened that Brazilian professionals who have already proven themselves in the marketplace in Brazil would go as tentmakers to the Arab world.⁹⁰⁷

Reflecting on the current strategy of his organization (CCI Brasil), Mordomo relates, “More and more because of the economic situation of Brazil, we are taking more of a Business as Mission approach to help with support.” Though a thorough discussion of this philosophy is beyond the scope of the present work, let us highlight some of Mordomo’s key thoughts on BAM as it relates to Brazilians serving in the Arab world. Emphasizing that BAM is a holistic strategy that integrates work and

⁹⁰⁵ See Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 226.

⁹⁰⁶ See Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 225. Ramos expresses similar concerns in Ramos, “Tentmaking and Missions: Reflections on the Brazilian Case,” 49. See also Mordomo, “Bossa Nova, the ‘Beautiful Game’ and Business as Mission,” *Connections* (August 2009), 20; and Heikes, “Una Perspectiva Diferente,” 80.

⁹⁰⁷ Related to me in personal conversation, July 29, 2009; see also Ramos, “Tentmaking and Missions: Reflections on the Brazilian Case,” 50-51.

mission, Mordomo supports BAM's philosophy of pursuing profit and sustainability.⁹⁰⁸ The business platform enables the worker to leave Brazil more quickly, to gain access into an otherwise restricted country, to live there with credibility, and ultimately, to use the business platform as a means of transformation.⁹⁰⁹ While international business is undoubtedly a daunting task, even for those with business experience in their own country, Mordomo is confident that with their entrepreneurial spirit (*jeitinho brasileiro*), Brazilian workers will be successful in BAM initiatives.⁹¹⁰

Though tentmaking and Business as Mission strategies are still rather new concepts for the Brazilian missions movement, some workers have reported success. One worker shared “[I enjoy] using my tentmaking job as a place to show God's love and speak about it . . . just letting God work in my life.” One fully self-supported tentmaker in Southern Brazil shared, “I have a good place in the community with my tentmaking job; it is a credible platform.” Finally, reflecting on the value of developing a sustainable platform, one worker related that he looked forward to “building strong platforms to give more [opportunities] for others who will come.”

The majority of Brazilian missionaries in the Arab world continue to pursue the traditional North American model of raising support and, as noted, the majority still struggle financially. While Brazilian churches ought to continue giving financially to support missionaries, alternative strategies such as tentmaking and Business as Mission should also be embraced. In light of this, let us consider six suggestions for moving forward in this area. First, in addition to theological and missiological training, Brazilian missionary candidates ought to receive a university diploma and professional training in order to have marketable skills to work in the

⁹⁰⁸ See Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 231-32.

⁹⁰⁹ See Mordomo, “Unleashing the Brazilian Missionary Force,” in Steffen and Barnett, 227-29.

⁹¹⁰ See Mordomo, “Bossa Nova, the ‘Beautiful Game’ and Business as Mission,” 21.

Arab world. Ramos has made a strong case for this in his writing and teaching since the early 1990s.⁹¹¹ Though this paradigm shift does seem to be slow in the making, some organizations like Missão Antioquia are encouraging their personnel to receive more professional skills.

Second, more Brazilian churches and organizations will want to follow the model of Interserve, which seeks to help Brazilian professionals find jobs in the Arab world.⁹¹² Able to support themselves financially, these workers are more naturally integrated into the community and are able to minister in word and deed.

Third, the Business as Mission ideas of CCI Brasil and others seem to have much promise. Mordomo asserts that Brazilian workers should strategically plan to market Brazilian products such as coffee, soccer, and Brazilian martial arts, and even consider opening Brazilian churrascarias (barbecues) around the Arab and Muslim world.⁹¹³ As CCI Brasil develops their business consultancy strategy, they might consider networking with Brazilian Christian businessmen, including Arab-Brazilians, who are already doing business in the countries of the Arab world.⁹¹⁴

Fourth, it would be strategic for Brazilian missions organizations and teams to network and partner with Brazilian professionals already contracted to work in the Arab world. Teams could provide fellowship, encouragement, and even training in skills such as evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. On the other hand, established professionals could mentor new teams and organizations on how to work successfully in an Arab country. One Brazilian Christian whose job took him to the

⁹¹¹ See Ramos, "Tentmaking and Missions: Reflections on the Brazilian Case," 48, 51; also Ekström and Limpic, "Signs of Improvement in the Brazilian Mission Movement," 32; and Ekström, "The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries," in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 189-90.

⁹¹² See Ramos, "Tentmaking and Missions: Reflections on the Brazilian Case," 50-51.

⁹¹³ See Mordomo, "Bossa Nova, the 'Beautiful Game' and Business as Mission," 21. The idea of opening a Brazilian churrascaria is not at all strange. While visiting one city in the Middle East in 2010, I learned that there were two churrascarias there.

⁹¹⁴ Karam (Karam, 335-36) shows that some Arab-Brazilians have been involved in consulting non-Arab Brazilians in doing business in the Arab world.

Arab world, reflected this need: “I worked in an international company in the Middle East . . . It would be good for Brazilian tentmakers to have more training and preparation to minister in similar contexts to ours.”

Fifth, Business as Mission projects could be pursued through Brazilians partnering with North American and other international Christian workers. Halls shared that the greatest struggle of his teams was being able “to establish a viable, long-term platform.” Though Silas Tostes has argued that Brazilian missionaries should only raise financial support within Brazil, he is in favor of Brazilians accepting jobs and collaborating in businesses with North Americans or other internationals who may have a network of investors to help launch a new business venture.⁹¹⁵ Hence, some BAM and tentmaking projects may serve to facilitate appropriate partnerships between the Northern and Southern countries in global mission.

Finally, while the first five suggestions have related to alternative forms of raising financial support (BAM, tentmaking, etc.), I would like to propose one idea that is actually closer to the traditional model. In light of Timothy Halls’s assertion that “there are probably 1000 Brazilian evangelical churches in the U.S., many of these with missions minded pastors and congregations,” what if North American Brazilian congregations began to support their fellow Brazilians in global mission? These churches are certainly economically stronger and in a much better position to support missionaries than the churches in Brazil. Though money would be coming from Brazilians in North America, it would not be coming from North Americans and thus, dependency from the North would be avoided.

⁹¹⁵ Related to me in conversation, July 23, 2009.

Table 4.6 Brazilian Perspectives on Financial Support

(ML 9) Compared to the mid 1970s when no Brazilians were raising support, most are able to raise support from churches on some level. They are becoming support raisers and are finding solutions to this challenge.
(ML 9) Some [Brazilian workers] have really struggled with their finances—some have had to return because of this; others could not return because of finances and stayed [on the field].
(ML 10) [The greatest problem is] the long-term problem of financial support and future financial planning.
(ML 10) Each worker raise[s] his/her own support. Brazilians are to raise 100% of their support from Brazil.
(ML 2) The local church should be the main supporter of any missionary, with help from other people and organizations.
(ML 6) We believe that the local church is the main organization in charge of raising support for the missionary. Their priority and privilege is to send out missionaries to the field, and also to support them materially and spiritually in all they need while serving abroad. As an organization we help the missionary to raise support, but we do not take full responsibility for it.
(ML 4) The missionaries must have a sending church and a group of supporters. We have a cooperation agreement with the sending church.
(ML 8) The missionary needs to raise his support himself, with our help as possible. But I don't believe that this is the ideal way to go about it. Ideally the local church should be the one responsible for taking the initiative, even if it had to ask for help from other churches/companies/people.
(ML 3) We use the Faith Promise Offering. The missionaries are always our priority. Therefore, if the missionary offering is not enough, we take the money from the general fund to complete the remaining that is lacking.
(ML 7) A bi-vocational model. Only a few should be fully financially supported. The classic support raising model is not sustainable.
(ML 5) More and more because of the economic situation of Brazil, we are taking more of a Business as Mission approach to help with support
(10) Using my tentmaking job as a place to show God's love and speak about it . . . just letting God work in my life.
(9) I have a good place in the community with my tentmaking job; it is a credible platform.
(7) [I look forward to] building strong platforms to give more [opportunities] for others who will come.
(33) I worked in an international company in the Middle East . . . It would be good for Brazilian tentmakers to have more training and preparation to minister in similar contexts to ours.
(ML 9) [Our greatest struggle is] the ability to establish a viable, long-term platform.
(ML 9) There are probably 1000 Brazilian evangelical churches in the US, many of these with missions minded pastors and congregations.

4.5.4 Brazilian Women in the Arab World

A final significant challenge for Brazilian missions in the Arab world relates specifically to the difficulties faced by Brazilian women in Arab contexts. In the previous chapter, it was shown that Brazilian women struggle with how Arab women are treated in male-dominated societies; however, Brazilian women missionaries also face similar obstacles. Mordomo indicated that the greatest challenge faced by CCI Brasil missionaries was “our women missionaries suffering harassment [by men] in Arab contexts.”⁹¹⁶

What are the specific issues faced by Brazilian women? First, they have reported feeling a great sense of disrespect from Arab men. This has most often been communicated through harassing words, gestures, and even inappropriate touching. Though Harrison reports that such behavior is not uncommon in Brazilian culture, Brazilian women missionaries—particularly single women—maintain that this treatment can be quite unbearable at times.⁹¹⁷ One single worker shared, “It was really hard to live in [my Arab context] as a single woman; [there is] no respect from the men,” and another added: “It has not been easy being a single woman working in the Arab culture. We suffer discrimination, lack of respect, etc., that forces us many times to do things that are not allowed for a woman to do so that we can be respected.”

While some of this discrimination is certainly due to a traditional Arab disregard for women in general, it also seems that Brazilian women are portrayed through the media as being morally loose. Van der Meer writes, “Brazilian women are viewed in other countries and cultures as sensual and easy, thanks to Globo (TV) soap operas and Carnival.”⁹¹⁸ Karam adds that Brazilian Arabs inside of Brazil also tend to look down on Brazilian women. In the country’s famous Arab clubs, Brazilian women

⁹¹⁶ All Brazilian responses on this topic are represented in Table 4.7.

⁹¹⁷ See Harrison, 60-61.

⁹¹⁸ See Antônia Leonora Van der Meer, “A Vida dos Missionários que Servem em Situação de Risco,” *Capacitando* 9 (2000), 35. English translation by Barbara Hubbard.

are hired to entertain through traditional Arab dance because the men want to preserve the modesty of Arab women.⁹¹⁹ A Brazilian pastor of Lebanese descent also affirmed this Arab lack of regard for Brazilian women in Southern Brazil.⁹²⁰

For many Brazilian women serving in the Arab world, this lack of respect has led to feelings of insecurity and fear and has rendered some women less effective in their ministries. One worker shared honestly, “Sometimes we feel so insecure and scared and because of that you don't do as much as you can.”

A second area of struggle for Brazilian women is that they feel restricted by the lack of social freedom in the Arab world. Finley writes, “The issue of gender roles and restrictions presents challenges for female missionaries going to serve in Muslim countries, especially among Arabs.”⁹²¹ For example, many Brazilian women find it difficult because they cannot express themselves freely in public or in mixed company. Others encounter difficulty with Arab cultures that frown upon women leaving the house without a male guardian. Finally, some women have felt restricted by having to adopt a more modest dress code in the Arab world, while others have continued dress in a more Brazilian manner, which has resulted in more harassment.⁹²² These issues of social freedom seem especially difficult for single Brazilian women.

In light of these difficulties faced by Brazilian women, which has often resulted in many workers not continuing in their ministries,⁹²³ let us explore at least six suggestions for moving forward—some of which have originated from Brazilian women themselves. First, in terms of perspective, some Brazilian women have

⁹¹⁹ See Karam, 286.

⁹²⁰ Related to me in personal conversation, July 21, 2009.

⁹²¹ See Finley, 162.

⁹²² See Bertuzzi, *Latinos No Mundo Muçulmano*, 17, 50-51.

⁹²³ In 1995, Ted Limpic reported that the attrition rate was particularly high among single women. See Limpic, “Brazilian Missionaries: How Long are They Staying?” in Taylor, *Too Valuable to Lose*, 148.

reported that reflecting on their own difficulties in the Arab world has actually helped them to empathize with the plight of the Arab women whom they desire to reach with the Gospel. While not diminishing their own difficulties, these Brazilian women have allowed their suffering to become a source of compassion. When asked what she most looked forward to in her ministry, one worker replied, “seeing Arab women recovering their self esteem, recovering their happiness, and the feeling that they are important.”

Second, also in terms of perspective, some Brazilian women are regarding this cultural difficulty as an opportunity to persevere by faith. Reflecting on her ministry, one woman shared her hope of:

Overcoming the fear of being here as a single woman especially because of the men [being] able to trust God with the security challenges and to be discerning; knowing that God has me here not just to survive but to live well regardless of the results; and seeing doors open and seeing women respond to Christ.

Third, it seems imperative that Brazilian missions organizations working in the Arab world would include a special track for women’s issues in their pre-field training. Perhaps using Nida’s three culture model as a point of reference,⁹²⁴ Brazilian women mission candidates should first reflect on their Brazilianness and what it means to be a woman in Brazil.⁹²⁵ Second, they would benefit from studying the Arab family and gaining a profound understanding of the roles of women in their host culture. Also, it would be helpful to reflect on how Brazilian women are perceived in the Arab world. Finally, they ought to study the Scriptures for perspectives on the Christian family and what it means to be a Christian woman. As this process

⁹²⁴ Cited in David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989, 2000), 200.

⁹²⁵ Finley’s thesis (“Contextualized Training for Missionaries: A Brazilian Model”) would certainly serve as a helpful starting point in this exercise.

continues, Scripture should serve as the basis for evaluating and transforming both Brazilian and Arab culture.

Fourth, Brazilian women missionaries—aware of their own Brazilianness and the roles of women in Arab culture—should enter the host culture with a learner’s posture and a willingness to adapt. While organizations like PMI have been innovative with its in-country Transcultural Training Course, at least one Brazilian woman feels that the women need to be more deliberate in this area. She asserts: “We need to come and do a better job studying language and culture. Most Brazilian women come and hate the Arab culture at first.” Specifically, Brazilian women must be willing to identify with Arab women in their general social freedoms (i.e., not traveling out alone after dark). Also, they should endeavor to dress according to the standards of modesty in the host culture. Though it is not necessary that Brazilian women take the veil or adhere to a strict Muslim dress code, it is imperative that they relinquish the right to dress as they would in Brazil.⁹²⁶ As they reflect on biblical principles of modesty, Brazilian women ought to seek guidance from mature Arab Christian women in the host culture on matters of dress as well as other women’s issues.

Fifth, Brazilian women should plan to overcome the negative and immoral perception of Brazilian women through a winsome moral testimony. One pastor in Southern Brazil remarked that over time, his wife began to be greatly respected by Arab men in the community because of her good testimony as a woman, wife, and mother. Bertuzzi reports that some Latin American single women have been a vibrant

⁹²⁶ Bertuzzi (Bertuzzi, *Latinos No Mundo Muçulmano*, 57) reports that some Latin American women missionaries in the Arab and Muslim world have successfully worked through such challenges by embracing the local culture as much as possible.

witness to single Arab women on account of their evident hope, peace, and joy in Christ as well as their contentment with being single.⁹²⁷

Finally, in light of the high rate of attrition among single Brazilian women missionaries, Brazilian missions organizations, mission teams, and churches should especially consider the needs of single women in their member care strategies. One single worker shared, “It would be good for the Brazilian church to appreciate the role and work of single Brazilian women in the Arab world,” while another added, “We single female workers in the Arab world need more support and help.” As single Brazilian women seem to struggle the most in the Arab world, caring for these needs does not seem unreasonable.

Table 4.7 Brazilian Perspectives on Women Missionaries’ Struggles

(ML 5) [The greatest challenged is] Brazilian women feeling hassled by Arab men.
(ML 5) [The greatest challenge is that] our women missionaries suffering harassment in Arab contexts.
(6) It was really hard to live in [my Arab context] as a single woman; [there is] no respect from the men.
(29) It has not been easy being a single woman working in the Arab culture. We suffer discrimination, lack of respect, etc. that forces us many times to do things that are not allowed for a woman to do so that we can be respected.
(6) Sometimes we feel so insecure and scared and because of that you don't do as much as you can.
(29) [I most look forward to] seeing Arab women recovering their self esteem, recovering their happiness, and the feeling that they are important.
(39) [I look forward to] overcoming the fear of being here as a single woman especially because of the men [being] able to trust God with the security challenges and to be discerning; knowing that God has me here not just to survive but to live well regardless of the results; and seeing doors open and seeing women respond to Christ.
(34) We need to come and do a better job studying language and culture. Most Brazilian women come and hate the Arab culture at first.
(25) It would be good for the Brazilian church to appreciate the role and work of single Brazilian women in the Arab world.
(6) We single female workers in the Arab world need more support and help.

⁹²⁷ See Bertuzzi, *Latinos No Mundo Muçulmano*, 7.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a practical summary of Brazilian evangelical approaches to mission in the Arab-Muslim world has been offered. This included some prominent historic mission strategies employed by Brazilian workers (evangelism, discipleship, and church planting) as well as a summary of integrated support ministries, which include humanitarian work, medical work, sports ministry, and Business as Mission among others. In addition, the work and core values of six Brazilian missions organizations that work in the Arab world were considered. These included two groups that are indigenous to Brazil (Missão Antioquia, Missão Kairos), one that is indigenous to Latin America (PMI), one historic denomination (Junta de Missões Mundiais da Convenção Batista Brasileira), and two international organizations that have opened offices in Brazil (CCI Brasil, Interserve).

Based on this survey of Brazilian mission strategies in the Arab world, the apparent strengths (as described by Brazilians) were discussed. It was argued that Brazilian missionaries are doing particularly well at building relationships, adapting to culture, communicating the Gospel, planting churches, and offering humanitarian aid. It was further observed that Brazilian workers and missions organizations tend to measure their success in terms of their ability to persevere and to build relationships. Finally, the chapter concluded by exploring the four most apparent challenges facing Brazilian evangelical missionaries in the Arab world—church support, language acquisition, financial support, and women’s issues. In each case, an effort was made to understand and define the problem clearly after which some suggestions—based largely on Brazilian reflections—were offered toward resolving the problem. In short, this chapter has demonstrated that after a few decades, Brazilian evangelical missions efforts the Arab world are focused, innovative, courageous, and still developing.