

Director's Word

March 2018

To coin the words of Dr Wonsuk Ma, my predecessor, **OCMS is evangelical by conviction, ecumenical by relationship.** Events in the USA and elsewhere have not made it easy to align with evangelicalism, particularly for younger people. None-the-less, while our expression of faith and spirituality may be broader and richer than this stream, we fully align ourselves with those elements that are sometimes known as 'Bebbington's quadrilateral:

Biblicism- submission to the authority of Scripture

Crucicentrism -the centrality of the cross and resurrection for faith

Conversionism - the need for conversion for salvation

Activism- we are called to participate in the fullness of God's transforming mission.

These elements are important in shaping our understanding of what constitutes mission research and scholarship. They will be important in shaping OCMS future priorities for equipping and research that go beyond the PhD programme.

We affirm our evangelical convictions, we also delight in our ecumenical relationships, welcoming opportunities to fellowship with, learn from and partner with those from different Christian perspectives. I have just returned from the World Council of Churches' (WCC)

Conference for World Mission and Evangelism, joining a 1000 participants reflecting on the theme: 'Moving in the Spirit, called to transforming discipleship.'

Among the many rich conversations, I pass on one comment. I was discussing the trajectory of the WCC with the outgoing Officer responsible for church relationships, a Patriarch in the Eastern Orthodox church. His comment: 'in the past theology has divided us; today it is ethics.' This was not a denial of the importance of theology, rather the expression of a deep concern that differing views on Christian behaviour are undermining our witness in the world.

This challenge is not new. The post-apostolic church grew extraordinarily against the odds. Many believe this was largely due to its radically counter cultural ethics: non-violence, anti-abortion and infanticide, sexual purity and business integrity.

The goal of OCMS is to pursue the kind of research and scholarship that will enable the church to engage more effectively in faithful and fruitful witness. Pray with us as we consider how we can support the church in bearing faithful witness in a world of disordered ethics.

Thank you for being part of the OCMS community.

Paul Bendor-Samuel



PROFILE: Cleison Mlanarczyki, Canada/Brazil

Research Topic: 'Whoever believes in Him:' Individuality, Kingdom and Kerygma in the Gospel of John



Academia and Church are big passions in my life. Theological schools make me thrill in seeing people being transformed and motivated to work for our God, and at church I can develop and apply leadership skills as well as be aware of people's everyday life, their needs and gifts. Being in these sometimes so different environments makes me understand the necessity of teaching and training people for the Kingdom.

I started my academic studies when I was still living in Brazil. First, I graduated in Theology, then I've got another degree in History. I was ordained to be pastor in 2003, and in the same year I started my first master degree.

After 9 years in pastoral ministry and teaching Greek and New Testament courses in theological schools in Brazil, I moved with my wife to Vancouver (Canada), where I started my second master degree in New Testament at Regent College, in the fall of 2012. Since 2015 I have been the pastor of a small church in Vancouver and also the Distance Education Administrator at Regent College.

After one year working in Vancouver I understood I should take another step toward my dream of becoming a professor. I wanted to study in a place where I would be able to develop my academic skills without forgetting people "here on earth." I came across to OCMS program through Ruth Padilla and Regent professor Iwan Russel-Jones, and from the school's website I saw OCMS' mission and vision, the integral commitment with the academy, church, and kingdom, which helped me make the decision to come to OCMS.

In October 2017, my wife Renata and I, with our little baby Victoria, arrived in Oxford for the RIS. It was an amazing time, a real adventure full of learning, good surprises, challenges, new friends, and confirmation from the Spirit that I really was at the right place. I am sure that pursuing my PhD at OCMS will allow me to grow in my scholarship and be more prepared to help the people of the church, this way keeping my dream and call to work for the kingdom by training disciples from all over the place.

Organisational Design Workshops

In the mornings of February 27 and March 6, the OCMS faculty, staff and some students worked together to reflect on the future design structure for OCMS. The discussions were facilitated by Julie Beedon, a top organisational development consultant, who led us through a process of looking at what kind of organisation we want to create in order to fulfil our mission and vision.

We examined the organisational 'building blocks' that make up OCMS. What emerged clearly was that currently all the systems and processes are focused on the delivery of the PhD programme. We then spent some time creatively imagining some of the systems, processes, people and other resources that will be needed as OCMS begins to develop other programmes to equip, research and disseminate knowledge. A highlight of the process so far has been to experience the rich range of perspectives of students, admin staff, part time and full time faculty.

In the next two sessions in March (21 & 28) we will explore the kind of organisational culture and simple rules we want to shape our future and consider how to transition into new ways of working.

Friends of OCMS

On the evening of 25 January OCMS held a Reception to launch the Friends of OCMS network. Over 40 people from the local community and churches attended, along with the Lord Mayor and our local City Councillor.

The evening started with refreshments, and an opportunity for guests to explore the Centre and its resources. Students, staff and trustees were on hand to mingle with guests and show them round.



Dr Paul Bendor-Samuel, gave a presentation on the work of the Centre, followed by a series of short interviews with staff and students, explaining how they approached their research, and how this was applied to the field of Christian mission to the benefit of the world Church. After the presentations one visitor enthused, 'as a result of tonight I will have to change my understanding of mission'.

The evening was closed with prayer by the Chaplain, Revd Andrew Anderson, who, quoting that "In a world of complex problems, common solutions were needed", said that OCMS reflected in a unique way the world-wide family that saw itself united in Jesus Christ, thereby offering real hope to a divided world.

GRADUATE PROFILE: Nicu Butoi, Romania

It is my joy and privilege to bring my thanksgiving to God and to those who supported me during my journey at OCMS. I almost cannot believe that my research and its application in theology was honoured with PhD degree by the examining panel on 9th of Oct. 2017. I would have never lived that uplifting moment without your support. Again I want to thank God and thank you all.

Currently I am serving the Lord in the person of His people with Jesus Market, an organisation I co-founded in 2016. Jesus Market is a Media Platform where we invited people to 'buy' from Jesus. We witnessed an incredible growth of the audience and a very encouraging phenomenon of multiplying. Many churches and organisations followed our model of ministry and today our modest beginning is many multiplied.



You can see a few aspects of our ministry at <http://heaven.ro/work/jm/raport.pdf>

THANKS FOR READING

We hope you've enjoyed our updates. Even though we can only feature a few people each time, we love sharing glimpses into the work here at OCMS. Do send us your own news, we love hearing from you.

OCMS is a charity and depends on the generosity of God's people. Let us know if you would like to support the work of OCMS, sponsor a student or become part of the team support for a faculty member.

God bless you abundantly.