

Director's Word

June 2020

Dear friend,

In my last Director's word, I wrote about the need for discernment in the pursuit of prophetic research and scholarship. Little did I know that a couple of weeks after writing, we would be in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, with all its disruption, suffering and painful reminders of the deep injustices and wounds in our societies and the global community as a whole.

OCMS is one small part of that whole. In the early weeks we learned many positive things through the move to remote and on-line working: numbers at our Monday morning prayer meeting (8am BST) multiplied, weekly staff meetings became a place of increased openness and mutual support, and Tuesday academic lectures moved to 14.00 so that students and friends from all over the globe can attend.

As time passes, the negative impact of COVID is becoming clearer: the problem for scholars who cannot make much-needed residencies in Oxford, the inability to start new students in our different programmes, and the financial impact through decreased revenues and donations.

If the pandemic has done one thing for us, it has reminded us forcibly that the work of OCMS is needed. We see so clearly the gap between current realities and the Biblical vision of the Kingdom, where God dwells among his people in shalom. The church is called to be a signpost (bearing witness) to that kingdom and OCMS exists to help the church grow in its witness. So, what does discernment and prophetic research look like in a COVID world?

I suggest we must learn to live with twin realities: a polarity.

On the one hand, church and mission leaders are scrambling from webinar to webinar, looking to understand, learn, respond, and to seize opportunities for new ways of thinking and living. At one level, this is right. There are incredible opportunities to 'build back better' and the window of opportunity for decisive action may be narrow. There is every reason for Christians to be in the vanguard of action to change the global economic and financial system, the ways we impact the environment and work for social justice.

At the same time, there is another reality. God's work usually takes time. William Wilberforce entered the UK parliament aged 21 with an agenda for social reform. It was only a few months before his death, aged 66, that the abolition of slavery act was passed. Alan Kreider wrote about 'The patient ferment of the early church', noting that a key quality of the church in the first centuries was its theology and practice of patient endurance. For evangelicals, the need for action can be a form of idolatry. We must learn to wait as well as work.

May God give each of us the courage to take action and the courage to be still. Please pray that we in OCMS learn more deeply to hold these realities together.



Reflections from Our Post-viva Students

We interviewed two of our students who recently passed their viva. Here's what they said about their experience studying at OCMS and the impact of study on personal life and ministry.

Joo-Yun Eum (Professor/Chaplain at Global Missionary Training Center, Seoul, South Korea)

OCMS has given me the opportunity to understand better and participate in the academic traditions of the UK. OCMS' motto 'Transforming mission through research and scholarship' has become my life goal. It was a time far more than simply fulfilling my duties as a student. Every moment of meeting, conversation, and fellowship with tutors and staff was a moment of learning, self-reflection and inspiration. In fact, the admittedly immense pleasure of being awarded the degree is partly offset by the reflection that I can no longer enjoy this fellowship of learning. Not that it was always easy. In addition to the challenge of studying in a new country, there is the very different intellectual environment. At OCMS I was given the freedom, initially a challenging and even daunting freedom, to seek to make an original contribution to knowledge. A highly qualified and pastorally sensitive supervisory team and the support of the whole OCMS community enabled me to meet this exciting, if sometimes bruising challenge.

The academic world guided by OCMS is one that combines academia with a much deeper understanding of humanity, the world, and mission. This forced me to unlearn aspects of what I thought I knew and to learn a new and richer world of knowledge. OCMS accurately assessed my academic capabilities and safely brought me to the goal I needed to reach. I am not the same person as before I experienced OCMS. I am now very conscious of the need to combine the academic with the personal.

Academic experience at OCMS has made critical changes in my ministry of training missionaries in Korea. OCMS provided an excellent model of the community of God's people, with a balanced integration of theory and practice, the academic and the personal, and life and ministry. This living model demonstrated by OCMS has been a great guide in training Korean missionaries to grow as partners in global mission while maintaining their cultural identity and uniqueness as Koreans. I am deeply grateful to OCMS for their dedication in making all this possible. And I

will never forget the commitment and patience of the team of supervisors and house tutor. I will use this exceptional experience I had at OCMS to fulfil my share of God's transforming mission for the rest of my life.

Terry Garde

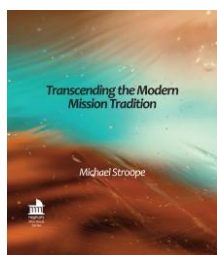
I have benefitted from the open-door policy of OCMS. I struggled to find a home for my research before being welcomed here, which is not surprising as 'Mining God's Way' was not an easy fit for most institutions of higher learning. Once accepted, the faculty and staff all patiently stood by me as I roamed far and wide intellectually, rather than constraining my research. Being situated in Oxford, with access to the resources available in one of the world's great centres of learning, has been invaluable. Thirdly, there is a strong foundation for faith, the institution's evangelical Christian roots are always evident and provided a safety net during the rigours of research.



My study has had a significant impact in three ways. I have learned a lot about research skills, improving my competency in the academic arena. Secondly, no two weeks at OCMS are the same, with different students from different hemispheres, studying different subjects, presenting their work at weekly seminars, coupled with a wide variety of topics from global mission thinkers at the weekly Montagu Barker Lecture series. As a result, my mind has been opened to alternative ways of seeing, and I am a more tolerant Christian. Thirdly, being called by God to retreat from the world to do this study has meant He could do a long overdue work in me, which has borne positive change in aspects of my character.

I came to OCMS as a wannabe missionary, having retired from mine management, trying to establish how artisanal mining could promote shalom and uplift the poor in areas where their livelihoods come from digging for minerals. It has become clearer how this can be approached through working with the miners in promoting mineral resource justice that is appropriate for their particular situation. How this can actually be done as a pragmatic missionary enterprise in the hardscrabble world of mining can only be learned through trial and prayer.

Regnum Publications



Transcending the Modern Mission Tradition by Michael Stroope

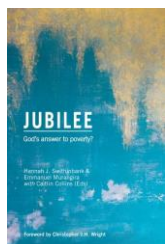
The urgent task of our day is to reimagine the church witnessing to Christ's Gospel. The ethos and spirit of modernity with its ideas of progress, individualism, commodification, and conquest are hardwired into mission, undermining faithful witness and service. Now is the time to transcend the modern mission tradition – to become pilgrim witnesses.

World Christianity in Western Europe: Diaspora Identity, Narratives & Missiology by Israel Olofinjana

This book investigates Christianity as a world religion in Western Europe through the prisms of Diasporic Identity, migrant narratives and mission theology. Through an interdisciplinary approach, scholars and practitioners share knowledge in Diaspora Missiology, Practical Theology, World Christianity, Contextual Theology and Pentecostal Studies. To see a short review of the book by Harvey Kwiyani of Missio Africanus, go to this link



https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NoO5azzaGXUtbYFI7nVzJ3u6Oq681OY_/view?invite=CObp_JEO&ts=5ed82e8b



Jubilee: God's Answer to Poverty by Hannah J Swithinbank, Emmanuel Murangira, Caitlin Collins and Caitlin Collins

At the heart of Old Testament law is a revolutionary concept that, if applied today, could transform our economy and world. Jesus himself claimed that his ministry would bring its fulfilment, transforming the world. Uniting social justice, creation care, equality and worship, jubilee remains a radical challenge and offers ideas and inspiration for disciples today. The authors each bring their unique context and perspectives which challenge us to go beyond viewing the jubilee ordinances as simple rules to help us to begin to understand the redemptive and restorative power of the jubilee principles for us today.

THANKS FOR READING

We hope you've enjoyed our updates. Even though we can only feature a few people and events 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.

To make a donation to OCMS, please use account number: 12043799; sort code: 16-10-15; IBAN: GB84 RBOS 1610 1512 0437 99; swift code: RBOS GB 2L.