

Director's Word *Sept* 2018

OCMS is a bit like a 24/7 petrol station, always open for business! Well, it's not quite true as the staff do sleep and we shut for two weeks over Christmas. None-the-less, it's easy for the seasons to slip by, so to help us mark the new academic year we have instituted a staff day together in September. Part of the programme this year included a workshop exploring the nature of mission studies. We all agreed that at the heart of mission studies there needs to be deep biblical and theological engagement. We also sensed that this is an area where OCMS needs to pay more attention in order to help our scholars build this intentionally into their work. To this end we will develop a module that all our PhD students will do in the first year with us.

The new year kicked off with OCMS faculty helping to facilitate an anti-corruption consultation in Manila. At the same time, we co-hosted a quite different consultation in Hamburg, exploring Christian responses to secularism in Europe. In October Regnum will publish a multi-authored book responding to this theme, drawing from a dozen quite distinct European contexts. Next year we expect to publish something similar reflecting African church experience. All this demonstrates OCMS' conviction that mission research is needed in post-Christian contexts as well as the majority world and that categories of North/South,

West/Majority world are increasingly poor descriptors in a polycentric world.

Having said that, one area where we do see a division along 'Western/Majority World' lines is in the area of capacity for mission research. While theological education is now increasingly available globally, mission research capability and capacity is nowhere near so well 'democratised'. This is one of the motivators behind OCMS' Mission Research and Applied Scholarship project that seeks to develop an on-line community of mission research institutions that shares research output and facilitates collaboration. A group of 10-12 institutions from different regions are in the process of forming a core Alliance in order to develop the project together.

By now you will have received our annual funding campaign brochure. It is exciting to see the development of new training programmes, research initiatives, consultations and publishing projects. Please pray and consider how you could be involved in financially supporting these ministry opportunities.



Thanks for being part of the OCMS community!

OCMS Co-Hosted Conference on Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity and Religious Pluralism, Hamburg, Sept 2018

OCMS joined the Missionsakademie of the University of Hamburg and the European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Association to present the Triangle Conference on Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity and Religious Pluralism. Papers were presented on associated themes by leading scholars such as Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Rolf Zwick, Werner Kahl, Claudia Währisch-Oblau, Uta Andrée, and William Atkinson. Three papers were presented by OCMS representatives: Brian Seim on 'Intercultural Churches for Diverse Neighborhoods', Marina Behera on 'Religious Plurality in a Contested Field: Christianity and other Religions in India', and Thomas Harvey on 'God of the Gaps: Pentecostal/Charismatic Vesture in a Naked Secular Public Square.' The papers were well received and the OCMS papers served as a bridge between Western and Non-Western perspectives on Secularism, Religious Pluralism, and global perspectives on Pentecostalism and Charismaticism. The papers presented from the conference will be published by OCMS either through Regnum Books or Transformation Journal.



Faith in Public Integrity Network



The Faith in Public Integrity Network held its second consultation, September 10-14th, in Manila, Philippines in collaboration with Micah Global. Around 70 participants attended three afternoon workshops designed to equip participants to understand and act on corruption in the church, in society and in the highest levels of public office and business. A global phenomenon, participants came from many different parts of Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe. Challenging stories were shared while a series of case studies demonstrated the way Christians are making a real difference.

OCMS has been an integral part of FPIN since its inception in 2015. This event provided the steering committee with a clear mandate to strengthen the network so that it can create a supportive, learning space for organisations and activists who want to fight the deadly plague that is corruption and spread the fragrance of public integrity. Our work includes developing the missiological resources the church needs to do this as well as engage in the kind of research that enables us to speak truth to power. We published our first three mini-books in time for the conference, all dealing with corruption from different angles.

Interview with Mark Oxbrow (Director of GSP)

Can you tell me two things you want others to know about you, please?

- 1. I was brought to faith in Christ when I was a teenager by another teenager who happened to be an Ethiopian living thousands of miles away. 53 years later he is still one of my closest friends. This personal experience leads me to give priority to resourcing young people in mission and to look to the Global South for the future of God's mission in our broken world.*
- 2. I am a life-long evangelical who for most of my serious theological reflection chooses to draw on Orthodox sources despite my unease with some contemporary Orthodox ecclesial praxis.*

What brought you to OCMS?

I have been a regular visitor to, and admirer of, OCMS for many years but retirement this year opened up the possibility for a deeper engagement. I initially asked Paul whether I could use OCMS space for my own reading and reflection but he, persuasive friend that he is, turned that round to become an invitation to lead the Guided Studies Programme (GSP). As I guide others I hope I can still do some of my own reflection on my past 30 years in mission leadership.



Mark's Ethiopian friend and his family

What has been your experience of OCMS so far?

As a visitor I was not so aware of the spiritual life of OCMS which I am now deeply appreciating. The greatest richness, however, that I am enjoying here, is the amazing diverse community – the people that make up our international fellowship of missional reflection.

Testimony from a Graduate

I came to OCMS not knowing what to expect or if I was even capable of doing a PhD. Well, thankfully there were people who believed in me more than I could myself. It has been an incredible journey. Incredibly positive. Traveling the world I have never encountered a place even close to OCMS. The diversity of students, the excellence of the staff and supervisors and the Christian ethos is truly remarkable. The daily 3p.m. prayer and chapel are evidence for the deep spiritual commitment that OCMS stands for. It is this combination of Christian humility, love and academic excellence that make it such a unique place anywhere in the world. Doing research has been a life changing journey, quite literally. I have been forced to go really deep and think about my subject area in ways I could have not imagined before. Now that this journey has come to successful end, I look forward to supervising others, training the next generation of scholars and pastors as my family and I relocate to Germany to teach at a theological seminary there. I am quite certain that without OCMS this next step would have never been possible. I therefore want to say from my heart: "Thank you!"



- Dejan

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.