

Welcome to inSpired, news from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

December 2016

This newsletter is a new venture we hope you will enjoy, find informative, and that will better enable you to be connected to the life and ministry of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS).

No matter how well presented, a newsletter cannot compete with the impact of meeting people and hearing their stories. So alongside OCMS news, we will introduce you to some of our staff, students, and alumni in each newsletter. If *you* have a story to share, please let us know.

The OCMS story...

One of the dreaming spires of Oxford is St Philip and St James Church, the home of OCMS - a hidden gem of global significance to the international Christian community. This beautiful church has housed OCMS since 1983. Envisioned by a group of majority world church and mission leaders, OCMS was birthed through the imagination and creativity of its founder leaders, Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden. John Stott, who had been involved since its inception, wrote in 2008: "It is the conviction of OCMS, which I share, that during this century many of the influential leaders in the church will come from the Global South." Since OCMS' foundation in 1983, around 130 Christian leaders from around the world have completed PhDs here, the great majority of whom have continued to work in their own mission context, further equipped to carry Christ's message of love and reconciliation to a broken world.



A ten year journey:

Much has changed since those early years. In 2006, Dr Wonsuk Ma, a respected Pentecostal academic, took over as Executive Director, building on the foundations laid by the founder leaders. Wonsuk was



wonderfully supported by his wife, Julie, also an able academic. They faced many challenges, including a life-threatening illness for Julie, but through it all remained full of faith, their confidence in God rock solid. In the past 10 years, the OCMS programme has matured into an effective quality academic programme currently enrolling 125 scholars from 42 nations. Wonsuk, a pastor at heart, has grown OCMS as a pastoral community in which scholars feel connected and nurtured during their academic journey.

Regnum, OCMS' publishing arm, has grown in stature over the same period. Regularly publishing

over 20 new titles/year, its greatest achievement to date has been the completion of the 35 volume Edinburgh 2010 series. With 600 contributors from every continent, this mission series may well prove to be one of the most significant legacies of Wonsuk's tenure.

At the end of July 2016, Wonsuk handed over the leadership of OCMS to Dr Paul Bendor-Samuel.



He and Julie have now taken up posts at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma. They leave OCMS a prodigious legacy in terms of both academic & community development, not forgetting the funds they secured which have kept OCMS functioning.

Though we will miss Julie & Wonsuk, now an Emeritus Fellow, we will remain in contact with them and wish them both well in their new role.

New direction:

Paul Bendor-Samuel took over as Executive Director in August after a fruitful six-month transition period with Wonsuk.

Paul and his wife Liz are both medically qualified.

Paul is the son of Wycliffe Bible Translator missionaries, and was raised in Brazil and West Africa. He and Liz met at the Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff, and were married in 1983. They have four sons and one daughter in law. They completed postgraduate training in 1987, then did two years of theological studies at All Nations Christian College, UK.



They joined Interserve in 1990, serving in Tunisia for 12 years, first in primary health care and rural development, then as Executive Director of the joint mission agency, L'Association de Coopération en Tunisie (ACT), for 7 years. There they had the joy of seeing God building his church again in that country after fourteen centuries.

In 2003, Paul was appointed International Director of Interserve, moving to Malaysia in 2005. Between

2003 and 2015, he led the organisation through two major change processes: organisational and missiological. He brings with him extensive organisational leadership experience, a global missiological perspective and a wealth of connections across the world. Paul and Liz remain mission partners with Interserve, seconded to OCMS. With donation and loans from friends, OCMS has been able to take out a mortgage on a house in Kidlington which will be their home while they are at OCMS.

On 9 November, OCMS Council, staff, scholars, and friends gathered to celebrate the commissioning of Paul as Executive Director, led by Chair of the Council, Dr Makonen Getu. The service was a joyful mix of worship from around the world, prayer and liturgy, including an exhortation by Dr Chris Wright. At the end, Paul spoke of the ongoing commitment to strengthen OCMS as a prophetic missional community, stewarding the resources God has given us in service of the global church.

Around 100 stayed on to enjoy a communal lunch.

Staff profile: introducing Bill Prevette

Brought up in an orphanage after his father, a surgeon, died at a young age, Bill's colourful life includes skiing in Alaska and fishing for king crabs in the Barents Sea, where they went out in all weathers unless the waves were higher than 50 feet. From there to building sailboats on the United States Eastern Seaboard and involvement in activities which were not entirely in accordance with the law, Bill was converted, in part, though his wife Ky. Together they worked for many years in Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia, helping children who were caught up in drug trafficking and the sex trade. He completed his PhD at OCMS in 2008, then joined the academic staff. He is passionate about helping mission activists grow as reflective practitioners. Bill combines academic excellence with a commitment to personal spiritual transformation. He loves the international diversity and commitment to community that characterises OCMS. He travels extensively, teaching and networking, and is a great recruiter for the institution.



Our scholar: Dr Maqsood Kamil

Maqsood is a highly respected Christian leader from Pakistan. Born into a Christian family after his father converted from Sikhism, Maqsood, like Samuel of old, was dedicated to God from his birth. After his graduation, he was appointed lecturer in the Gujranwala Theological Seminary where he also established a Presbyterian Congregation in Gujranwala Cantt.



In 1998, he was elected as honorary executive secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (PCP), a position he held for 13 years, handing it over in 2011. Maqsood is undertaking his PhD studies at OCMS, researching one of the greatest Muslim converts to Christianity in India, Rev. Dr. Imad udDin, a master apologist who engaged in public debate with Islamic scholars. Pray for our brother Maqsood as he seeks to complete his PhD in the next year whilst providing leadership to the church in his own context.

Architectural transformations:

Anyone who has visited or worked in OCMS knows what a beautiful setting it is. St Philip and St James has a 150 year history as a church for mission as transformation. The building is so beautiful, it has the highest level preservation order placed on it. For years at the centre of the Oxford Movement, known for its commitment to social transformation, the building itself is a challenge to transform into an effective workspace as a study centre.



A great step forward was initiated by Dr Wonsuk Ma: the transformation of the South Transept.



Putting in a floor has doubled the workspace and created a lovely, open setting for a new faculty office, illuminated by the stunning Rose Window.

Watch this space for the next transformation project.

OCMS looks forward:

On 10 November, OCMS staff and Council met for a day consultation, the start of a period of organisational reflection and discernment into the future of OCMS, as the world-wide church and context for mission has changed dramatically in the 33 years since OCMS was founded. Given these changes, what is God calling OCMS to be and do and whom should we seek to serve? Data is being gathered from those currently involved with OCMS as well as alumni, friends, and Christian leaders around the world. Over the coming months, we will draw this material together in a reflective process leading up to the Council meetings in May 2017. Please pray with us and let us know if you are willing to participate in a survey and share your thoughts on the future of OCMS.



OCMS wishes you a blessed Christmas. May the hope of Christ bring you comfort, joy, peace and happiness to last throughout the New Year ahead.

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