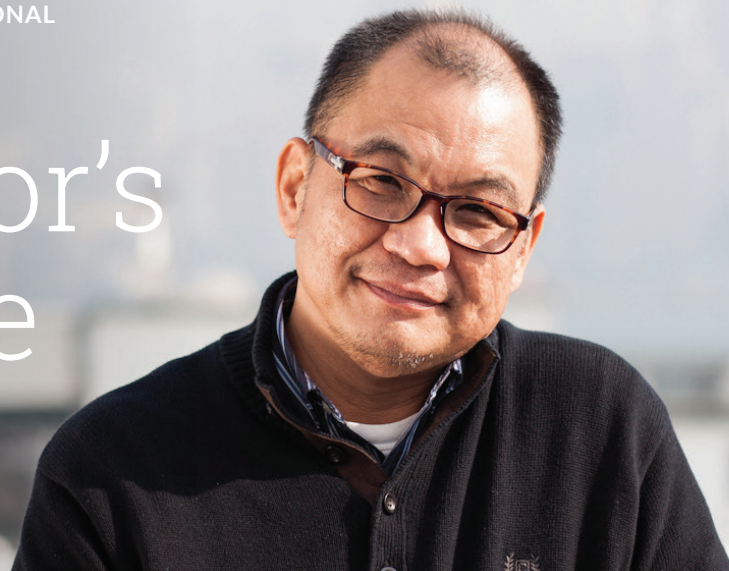


Director's Update

LAWRENCE TONG



The new command is an old command

I recently read a study that estimated that today's total Bible-believing missionary force is approximately 400,000 men and women among over 6.4 billion people who have yet to confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour (including nominal Christians and sects)—one missionary for 16,000 unreached people! Frankly, that is depressing and unacceptable. McDonald's has 1.7 million workers worldwide; the Church has only 400,000 missionaries. It's not a lack of resources, but hardened hearts. The great need, anywhere in the world, is for 'ordinary people' to share the good news among neighbours.

When Jesus said that the harvest is great but the workers are few, He did so at the pinnacle of His ministry and popularity (Matt. 9:37). Today millions are turning to Christ, often from least-expected areas. A pastor told me that 5,000 Muslims were coming to faith in Christ every week in Indonesia. It took 2,000 years to grow the Christian population to four per cent; in the last 60 years, we have leapt to twelve per cent. If that doesn't amaze us and spark a reflex, we need to ponder why. You might say that the harvest is plentiful, but our response is pitiful.

Small faith, big God

Highlighting the harvest and need for workers, Jesus' command was clear: Pray. My first introduction to the classic OM prayer meeting was in 1977. A group returning from serving with OM invited me to a small room, where I joined 30 others. The leader gave out a set of 52 simple prayer cards, saying that everyone should take a few and then pray aloud for the needs of those nations. Never had I dreamt of doing such a thing and I can't remember the countries I prayed for. But the attitude of the group was life-changing for me: They prayed fervently in expectation that God would change the world through prayer. We need to bring that kind of prayer meeting back.

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Intercessory prayer for the world also changes us. Praying for the world used to be our priority but, over time, we shifted to praying mainly for our own ministry needs. It may be the self-interest so prevalent today, but this can be turned around with the right kind of leader; if George Verwer leads a prayer meeting, you can be sure that

people will pray for the ten neediest countries. We in leadership and influential roles need to transmit those traditions that have shaped OM to the next generation, who come to us ready to learn and imitate what they see us do. If we leave this to those who put their own needs first, that too will be passed onto future generations. We cannot let this happen. Perhaps it is time for the 'new' to include a bit of the 'old', including the style of our prayer meeting. Let's rise up again in faith and intercede for the lost. Let's make prayer meetings about praying. Let's sacrifice a little comfort to press on (as it was said) without an eye on the clock or our phones. We need to re-discover a way of working, praying and giving that will see miracles happen.

In a past era, teams would only advance through prayer and sacrifice. In place after place, there would be strong resistance, and so we waited on God. Of course it was not easy. Of course we had to be willing to encourage one another to keep praying, keep thinking about lost and suffering people. Of course we understood that our own needs paled in comparison and that God was in charge anyway. Is it time to capture that again? Of course it is.

Lawrence Tong

PRAY
GIVE
GO

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EVANGELISM **MOZAMBIQUE: SPIRITUAL TEST**

Now that his church has grown to 50 members, OMer **Limardes Domingo** has been called to serve the Yao Muslims. Moving to Mecula, he and his wife were told one of them would die as a testimony; the locals promised death for anyone accepting Christ. Limardes and his wife (now with a team including four other couples) nonetheless planted themselves in the community.

About two years ago, the local *Imam* (leader of the mosque)—and dealer in witchcraft—became paralysed; the man who used witchcraft to ‘cure’ locals of could not be helped.

After two years of paralysis, the *Imam* sent his wife to Limardes. “*She said, ‘I want your help. You can give us another way to follow.’*” Limardes remembers.

Limardes told the *Imam* he would only pray when all traces of witchcraft were removed. With the house cleared, Limardes prayed, and the *Imam* experienced a healing that sent shockwaves throughout the village.

Though the OM team still faces persecution, the growth in the church has meant increased outreach and witness. Pray for God’s deliverance of the village of Mecula, with a population of around 5,000, many of whom still worship nature and animals. Pray for those in OM leadership positions to have the wisdom to equip those coming to Christ and facing persecution.

ISRAEL: IN ANY LANGUAGE

A university student invited two OM team members into his home who wanted to talk with him about Jesus. “*I’m an atheist,*” he said, “*but you’re welcome to tell me about Him.*” After 15 minutes, the university student said, “*It’s good what you are doing. You should tell others about Jesus.*” He gave them his phone number for one team member to



follow up with him.

Each outreach is finding at least one divine conversation like this in the home of an Israeli. Because of many new immigrants, opportunities are plentiful to visit homes of those who speak Russian, German, French or other languages. The field leader explains, “*It is an answer to prayer that doors open so readily to speak about Jesus.*”

RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT **SOUTH AFRICA: HOPE FOR KIDS**

Working with OM’s AIDSLink ministry to present a ‘Channels of Hope’ workshop for children, *Logos Hope* crew-member **Colyn Borlinghaus** (Germany) encouraged young children in a village to “*treat everyone the same way: With love, honour and respect.*” HIV and AIDS are prominent social and health problems, with approximately 30–40 per cent of people living with HIV. Extremely effective antiretroviral therapy (ART) can keep the virus under control. To educate children on how HIV enters the body and affects the immune system, and how ART slows down the virus, the team performed a sketch. Another topic was teaching children how HIV is transmitted. They were quizzed with questions such as, “*Can you play football with a person who is HIV-positive?*” or “*Can you sit next to someone living with HIV on a bus?*” Each child received a copy of *The Bible App for Kids Book of Hope* booklet full of Bible stories and word games provided by partner organisation, *OneHope*, as well as a picture book titled, *Brenda has a dragon in her blood* that teaches children to accept others living with HIV and to prevent prejudices.

**NEPAL: THE BLIND SEE**

“*The believers stopped attending our training or church services,*” a discouraged Community Mobilisation Team (CMT) member told her supervisor, **Bharat**, in May 2015. She and her team-mate were troubled that their work in a remote village in Bajhang was not well-received. “*Teach those who will listen,*” Bharat encouraged them. “*Continue the ministry, even if only a few come.*”

For almost four months, the two women laboured among anyone who would listen:

tutoring at a local school, continuing church fellowship times, and teaching a few local women about health and hygiene-related topics.

Then, in September, they met nine blind people and began to teach them oral Bible stories that revealed who God is and His plan for man. The women found an audience hungry to listen. The nine had never heard these stories before. After several weeks, they asked the CMT women if they had any braille Bibles. A phone call to their supervisor and a search with other OM contacts produced several copies of the Gospels and Romans.

When the nine received these precious books, they studied them for themselves, reading God’s Word for the first time. Three have since made commitments to follow Christ, and two have been baptised. In a place that seemed so dry and resilient to God’s work, He revealed Himself to those who could not see. Pray that other groups like this could be formed across the country, and that churches would prepare for new believers.

JUSTICE **MACEDONIA: GREAT NEEDS**

While thousands of refugees are desperate to continue towards Western Europe, many are stranded in Greece, Serbia, or in a no-man’s land along



closed Balkan borders. An OM team distributes water and food packages in the Greek village of Idomeni, where there are over 12,000 refugees.



The OM team in Athens also distributes water and food as the number of refugees stuck in the Port of Piraeus quickly rises. The

OM team hopes to increase its aid as other sources of help dwindle. "We will be renting an old restaurant that was closed for years," shared **Gabby Markus**, OM field leader. OM has employed two people to run this project, together with volunteers coming in for three months or longer.

Pray for the OM teams in Macedonia, Serbia and Greece ministering to refugees. Pray that God would continue to provide the right people and resources. "Please keep us in prayer, the refugees and also the Macedonian and Greek regional governments," said worker **Jacek Duda**. An OM project called *Safe Passage* focuses on meeting refugees at initial entry points, providing information, water, food and essentials. To give to OM's relief efforts, or for more information about how to get involved, contact your local OM office.



MENTORING & DISCIPLESHIP

SOUTH ASIA: KEEP GOING

"Reading through *Exodus* has taught me a lot about leadership," shared **Manju**, an OM assistant training leader. The 26-year-old said that her leadership role over the *Joshua Training Course* (JTC) team leaders could be challenging. Reading how Moses continued to faithfully lead the Israelites, despite their continued whining, has encouraged Manju to do the same.

Manju initially joined OM for three months in 2009 as a student of the *Disciplined 2 Go* (D2G) programme, a young believer learning more about God. Seven years later, Manju is now an assistant leader for JTC, helping with scheduling, organising outreaches and debriefs, mentoring and discipling JTC team leaders in their roles. "Sometimes I don't feel right for the work," Manju said. "But God has taught me so much; He continues to show me how to do it well." Pray that many who graduate from the training will go on to plant or serve in local churches.

ZAMBIA:

A growing concern for Africa area OM workers is the need for continued discipleship among the communities they work in. **Charles Chansa** and his team have led several locals to Christ, only to see them return to old practices and 'traditional medicine' (witchcraft).

Three women in a village were pregnant; all suffered greatly from the hot weather. All three babies were stillborn. Recently, the same women became pregnant again and, when pain returned, they visited 'traditional' doctors. Receiving no relief, they looked to the OM team for help. "We explained that we don't give medicine but that, by calling on the name of Jesus, if spiritual forces have been causing their pain before, then their pregnancies would not end as they had before," Charles said. "I read the Bible, I led them to Christ. We prayed with them that they would have faith that Jesus was [with] them." Two days later, one woman gave birth to a healthy child.

In another instance, a man came to the OM team, after local witch doctors said that another man had cursed him. The man's condition worsened as problems with his eyes and stomach arose. "When he came to us, we explained how powerful Jesus is, in comparison with witchcraft," Charles described. "In order to experience healing and deliverance, he needed to forgive the man who had cursed him. As we started praying, his symptoms and pain ceased." Today, the man and his wife are part of the church in Nsumbu. When the chief of the village heard that the man had been healed, he charged him payment—a common practice. The man explained that he was healed because he had forgiven the other man through faith in Christ. "I am now a Christian," he told the chief. "Therefore, I forgave this man."

Pray for Charles and the OM team in Lake Tanganyika as they take on the villagers' deeply ingrained spiritual practices. Pray that more healings would occur, opening the door for others to know Christ.



FREE DOWNLOAD!

Associate International Director Viv Thomas wrote *The Spectacular Ordinary Organisation* in 2013. This workbook focuses on how organisations, teams, communities and churches can grow in their corporate spiritual life...or discover a road to it. It helps leaders grasp the spirituality of their organisation and what is driving it forward by looking at 12 core Christian life-giving dimensions.

"Many organisations self-destruct for lack of awareness of what is presented in *The Spectacular Ordinary Organisation*." Moss Ntlha, General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, South Africa

This book is available as a FREE download from www.formation.org.uk. Click to 'publications' and 'download'. Hard copies cost £10 plus post and packaging.



Thank you for your prayers and support of OM ministries worldwide.

* name change

PRAY
GIVE
GO

The way I see it

THOUSANDS OF VIBRANT LOCAL COMMUNITIES • BY JULYAN LIDSTONE



Thinking in terms of movements will change our paradigm of church.

I have been surprised and encouraged by the traction gained by our proposed vision statement calling for “*thousands of vibrant local communities of Jesus followers among the least-reached.*” Although we are still fine tuning our understanding of the terminology, this represents a significant shift in our theological and missiological thinking. One reason for the excitement generated by this statement is that it calls us back to our original and foundational commitment to the primacy of the Gospel but, at the same time, also expresses how our understanding of the Gospel has grown over the last 50 years.

Moving beyond our early individualistic view of the Gospel, we now see that it necessarily involves corporate expression. In fact, the Gospel is best modelled by a community of love. When Middle Eastern friends first attend a worship gathering, their first comment afterwards is not about the content of the sermon but about the warmth of the welcome they receive, and the sincerity of the relationships they sense around them. When this Gospel of grace is truly preached, it always bears fruit in a community of grace where God’s forgiveness and acceptance draw people into mutual loyalty.

Jesus’ final commission was to “*make disciples of all nations*” (Matt.28:19, NIV). Discipleship inevitably results in the formation of communities, just as Jesus’ three years with his disciples resulted in 5,000 being baptised and added to their number at Pentecost. Conversely, community has to be the context of discipleship, since love can only be taught through relationship. Vibrant communities are the final result and crowning glory of our ministry, while discipleship is the critical process that gets us there.

The other major shift in our understanding of the Gospel has been to appreciate its holistic impact: It not only saves us for heaven but is also the agent for seeing the Kingdom of God transform the earth. Societies are impacted by communities whose members are empowered and supported to affect their neighbours. One of the churches we link with in Syria is supplying reasonably-priced electricity to their neighbourhood,

and helping to clean up the streets. As a result, they have won such favour with the ruling party in their region that they have been asked to register themselves.

Taking it to the next level

Our proposed vision statement calls for thousands of local communities. Some quick research found that we in OM were instrumental in planting 250 churches in the last five years. Our new vision demands a drastic acceleration in the rate at which new communities are formed. This acceleration is demanded by the fact that our current efforts at world evangelisation are only just keeping up with population growth, while the growth rate of Muslims outstrips both that of Christians and the world as a whole. This means we must think in terms of multiplication through movements rather than the addition of congregations.

Thinking in terms of movements will change our paradigm of church. Instead of gathering believers to worship services led by professional clergy in dedicated buildings, we will release believers to meet in small groups in homes, where they are equipped by lay leaders to form other new groups among their relatives, friends and neighbours. This is the shape of church in the new movements of China, India, Africa and the Middle East. There will be a place for paid staff in central locations, but we cannot let them become a bottleneck that stifles growth.

The Global Planning Team have set up a Church Planting Task Force to work on the problems and implications of this for our movement, and to develop a road map for how we move forward. Please pray for them!

I joined OM in 1973 and went to India for four years. While there, God called me to serve Muslims, which resulted in me and my wife, Lenna going to Turkey for 15 years. We had two children there, and helped plant a church in Ankara. Back in Glasgow, we have ministered to Iranians and Turks. Having stepped down as area leader for Western and Central Asia (WACA), I am now the Ambassador for our Muslim Ministries, helping with promotion and training.