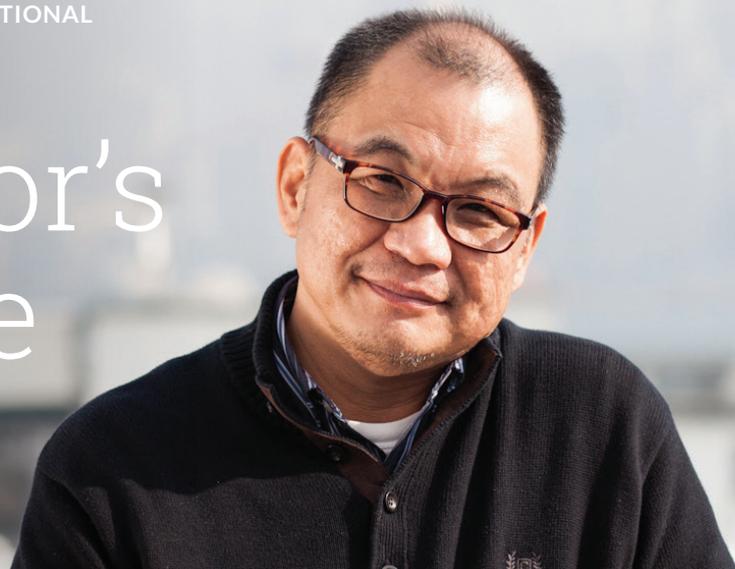




Director's Update



LAWRENCE TONG

Dear OM friends,

In February, more than 350 OM leaders from around the world gathered in Panama City for our annual International Leaders Meeting. Coming back to South America has brought back many fond memories. It was in this continent, in 1978, that I first started my OM missionary journey with the ship, MV DOULOS. At that time, the concept of mobilising Latin American churches into world mission was so new, it was inconceivable. Many saw the continent largely in need of missionaries, not the other way around. We pressed on with the

vision and the call to mission. The churches, many small and young, were ready for the challenge.

Today, Latin America has moved from being a mission field to a missionary sending continent with 400+ mission agencies and more than 10,000 Ibero-American missionaries serving cross-culturally around the globe. These are exciting times for the churches, and I am convinced we only see the early stage of what God is doing missionally in that continent.

Let me echo what my colleague Chacko

Thomas once said; "Let us rejoice for the Latin flavor entering world missions today. The whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world is becoming a reality."

Thank you for the part you play in making our work in Latin America an ongoing reality—and for your partnership with us around the world.

His,

Lawrence Tong



EVANGELISM

LOGOS HOPE: STUDENTS CARE

A ship team spent an invigorating day at Tanzania's national university, the University of Dar es Salaam, having conversations with students. The students' good command of English helped greatly in facilitating meaningful exchanges. Crewmembers supported one another in group discussions, answering challenging questions about their faith. "Sometimes the discussions got really intense, like being in a debate," shared **Sadie Kim** (South Korea), who made use of creative tools to share the Gospel. "However, I find it exciting to be able to share about my faith and my God." While talking with one group, **Abdiel Exposito** (Latin America) was challenged with questions related to the different ways of worship. This led on

to a conversation about life after death as well as deeper spiritual exploration. "I enjoy such conversations, as they challenge you," reflected **Shevette Koehn** (USA). "We need to be sure of what we believe in order to answer challenging questions." Pray that many who engage with Logos Hope crew members will experience a transformative understanding of the Gospel.

EGYPT: LET'S MAKE A DEAL

Following a prayer walk one evening, **Peter*** went to purchase two souvenir scarves. **Hassan***, a shop worker, told Peter the price was 50 of the local currency; Peter offered to pay 40. Suddenly, Peter had an idea. "Hassan, I see you are a good person; I like you. If you reduce the price, you will get the gift of your life," Peter told him. "What is it?" Hassan asked. "I can't tell you unless you

sell the scarves for 40," Peter replied. Hassan spoke with the owner and then took a few heavy steps back to Peter: "He doesn't want to sell them for 40." Of course, Peter knew God's mercy is free for everybody.

"You know what Hassan? You will still get the gift," he reassured him. "It is a small puzzle. There is a person who loves you more than all humans of the world together. Who is it?" "I don't know, but tell me," Hassan answered. "Do you know this person?" "Yes, we do; He lives in us, and through Him and His love to us, we have the assurance of eternal life." "I want to have the same," Hassan said. "Please give it to me."

"We will pray for you, but you have also to pray," Peter told him. "You have



to search your heart and ask the Lord how you can get it. I promise you that He will reveal it to you if you ask—and He will change your life completely.” Peter gave Hassan a verse from the Bible (Titus 3:5 (KJV), “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us.” Pray for those Egyptians who will hear the Gospel through our teams today.

RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

NEPAL: HIV IS NOT THE END

“I have nothing. I have HIV,” Sita* said. Years ago, Sita’s husband left her as a single mother of two sons and a daughter, in a village outside Kathmandu. She has a small shop by which



she keeps her little family alive. Kamal from AIDSLink** Nepal (ALN) visited her two years ago, after which the 35-year-old woman became one of the People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) that AIDSLink Nepal supports.

Kamal informed her about available medical treatments, what to do if she gets sick and how she can keep the virus under control and live a healthy life. “If they [the neighbours] knew, they would hate her,” Kamal said. Kamal has visited Sita every six months to help her journey to Kathmandu for check-ups and times of rest in the ALN Hope & Light Care Centre. “We don’t want to create dependency on us [AIDSLink Nepal]”, Kamal explained. He wants her to be able to take medicine herself and to sustain her small family financially.

Meeting Sita in her own village has given Kamal opportunities to pray for her and share the Gospel. Through the relationship built with staff at AIDSLink Nepal, Sita has a new hope for the future, a way to live with HIV that does not keep her from a rich and joyful life with her family and friends. Kamal prays that she will understand that real

healing comes not only with medication but with Jesus Christ.

**OM partners with AIDSLink International to make a difference in the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

CHURCH PLANTING

CAUCASUS: TO TALK WITH GOD

This Central Asian region has been fought over and invaded for centuries by major regional powers, and avenged countless times—part Muslim, part Orthodox Christian, part animist. ‘Mountain of Tongues’, a local legend, recounts the world-spanning Language Angel tripping on the high Caucasus, spilling some 50 languages onto it from a sack. Located between the Black and Caspian Seas, the Caucasus is home to over 50 diverse ethnic groups. OM has had a presence there for over 20 years, initially in Azerbaijan, then in Georgia and occasionally in the Russian North Caucasus republics. We focus on humanitarian work, evangelism, business development, literature translation and production, and promoting missions in local churches, both locally and globally. We long to see local believers worshipping with their former ethnic enemies.

A worker relates: As we walk life with such people, memories are unforgettable. Such a one was with my language professor, Meb. We had a class, coincidentally, the day before the tenth anniversary of the murder of her daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. For some reason, I was the only one there. We went through her lesson plan but, obviously, her mind was elsewhere. I asked how her plans for the memorial that weekend were going. As she opened up, my heart broke for her. I told her I would pray for her over the weekend. She asked what it was like to pray as a Christ follower. I explained that we can bring anything to God in prayer, and then asked if I could pray for her;



she asked me to also pray for her surviving granddaughter. In closing, I looked up to see that she was tearing up.

Please lift up others like Meb who need to experience the healing touch of the Father. Pray that they encounter Jesus in ways that bring reconciliation and peace on many levels.

NEAR EAST: WORTH ANY COST

After two decades in the region, Joe* and Alisa* are amazed at the changes and new opportunities to share the Gospel. Before the war, Muslims in local churches were rare. Now, up to half of their congregation are Muslim refugees from Syria. Churches have been instrumental in helping refugees, regardless of religious background. In the past, Kurds were not open to the message of Christ. Now arriving as refugees, they were welcomed and loved by churches and our workers. They have ladies’

meetings where 50–70 refugee women come together, often bringing their children. They listen to stories and teaching about Jesus, starting from creation, the fall of man, the sacrifice (which they would recognise from their culture and the Koran) and salvation through Jesus.



Joe and Alisa have never witnessed so many Muslims wanting to learn from the Bible. “They come,” said Alisa, “in need, in tears, in sadness and find release and peace as people pray for them. Many refugees now minister to others, offering to share and pray with relatives and neighbours. We see many miracles and answers to prayer.” Joe visits groups of believers in several countries to mentor, encourage and develop leaders. The OM team organises training for Arab partners that deals with church planting and Discovery Bible Studies (DBS) but, equally important, self-care and member care. Meeting others in the same situation is a great encouragement.

While the world may look at the physical war in Syria and the movement of refugees, OM workers see a very real and present spiritual war. Pray that Syrian refugees would understand and receive the message of Jesus, see God at work in their lives, and grow in faith. Pray that God will raise up leaders for Bible study groups, as well as new church fellowships. Pray for the OM workers and for the churches reaching out to refugees, for patience, perseverance, strength and wisdom.

JUSTICE 

SERBIA: WE'RE ALL LISTENING

Last month, **Michel Di Feliciano** and three other Italian Christians spent a week in Šid, helping refugees on their way. *"Experiencing this first hand, I remembered that our contribution, as believers, cannot miss,"* he shared. They saw thousands of refugees in a few days—lying on the grass, sitting on cardboard, washing from the fire hydrant, queuing at shops—some crying with blank stares, discouraged yet proud and hopeful—people from Syria and Afghanistan, but also Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Eritrea, Sudan and Palestine.

They listened to their incredible stories amidst a confusing present and an uncertain future, and explained why they had come to help. Some refugees are Iranian Christians and most refugees are fleeing persecution and destruction of their homes. Many are vulnerable to exploitation. Children are torn away from education and any sense of normalcy. Pray for OM and other workers in the migration wave, that they will have daily fortitude and grace, and spiritual sensitivity amidst grueling physical demands.

OM's *Safe Passage* project focuses on meeting refugees at their initial entry points, providing information as well as water, food and essentials. To give to OM's relief efforts, or for more information about how to get involved, please contact your local OM office.

OM has created a new website, which helps to share the Gospel among refugees. The *Love4Refugees* website provides links to Christian resources in the Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Kurdi, Pashto and Urdu languages. Feel free to share the link to *Love4Refugees*: www.love4refugees.com. Small cards, which share a link to this website, are also available. View card here: news.om.org/photo/r48723. Copies of the cards can be ordered with a small donation from: info@love4refugees.com



MENTORING & DISCIPLESHIP 

NEPAL: LEARN, THEN TEACH

For the past five months, the OM *Community Mobilisation Team (CMT)* has been tutoring at a school and teaching oral Bible stories to believers in a remote village in Mugu in the far west. Hearing of a new believer, two CMT members began a five-hour hike on narrow roads clinging to the mountainsides. For the next week, the two CMT men lived with **Ram*** and his family, discipling him in his new faith and teaching him the Old and New Testament. They spent hours studying and discussing God's Word and encouraging Ram to spend time alone with God.

Ram needed to travel to a city two days away to meet his sister. While there, he used any opportunity to teach them what he had just learnt. Two weeks later, while Ram and his sister's family journeyed back to their village, Ram's brother-in-law prayed to receive Christ as well. The family stopped for a week to visit the CMT team, and during that time both young believers were discipled. OM teams seek to raise up men and women like Ram, who are



passionate about passing on what they learnt to others.

ARABIAN PENINSULA: STILL HUMAN

Lauren*, a long-term worker, has seen Muslims come to faith who struggled to stay in the faith



because it's hard, she observed. *"Many times God uses us to encourage them."*

Bayan*, a Muslim background believer (MBB), suddenly started avoiding Lauren and other Christians. After nine months, Bayan and Lauren met again, four days before Bayan travelled to visit family. She shared her doubts and fears concerning her relatives. Lauren asked her, *"Do you remember the promises God has given you, for your family and for different things? God revealed to you that your whole family will be saved,"* she reminded her. Before the women parted ways, Lauren committed to pray for her every day. *"I know you pray,"* Bayan told Lauren. *"That's why we're still standing."*

"Every day, on Facebook or WhatsApp, she would post a verse, which is quite a step for an MBB," Lauren said. Lauren also posts daily verses on social media as an example and encouragement to her friends. She's honest about her own struggles. When Bayan heard that even Lauren struggled with doubt, *"She found it encouraging to hear that we, who have known Jesus for years, can also doubt and fear, but have to commit every day to the Lord,"* Lauren remembered. *"We can never understand completely what they're going through, we can just pray how we can encourage them in their walk with God."*

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

xx* name changed



The way I see it

ONE MOVEMENT, ONE FOUNDATION, ONE MISSION • BY JASON MANDRYK



The global Church spends millions of dollars and commits thousands of people every year to mission activity. And yet most of us would struggle to clarify our missiology coherently.

Is there any other enterprise on such a scale that could get away with such fragmented thinking, siloed operations and lack of overarching strategy? Karl Barth expressed this vital relationship between thinking about and doing mission nearly 60 years ago, writing, *“Missiology’s task is critically to accompany the missionary enterprise, to scrutinise its foundations, its aims, attitude, message, and methods—not from the safe distance of an onlooker, but in a spirit of co-responsibility and of service to the church of Christ.”*¹

The ‘reflective practitioner’ is how this is expressed today, when it is more vital to be so than ever with our every move observed, scrutinised, recorded, uploaded, commented on, blogged about, critiqued, and even submitted to annual performance review. We now do mission before the eyes of the entire world, and so it must be done wisely and articulated well. What is our overarching missiological goal, and how are we going about achieving it?

AN OUTSIDE OPINION

My hunch is that a hypothetical space alien, observing Earth, would not conclude that the priority of the billions who identify themselves as Christian is to reach the whole world with the Gospel message—far from it. True, there are many challenges to the fulfillment of the Great Commission that seem enormous, even insurmountable. But I’d guess that it would also be apparent to our alien that the most significant factor in preventing this message from reaching the entire world is not external, such as terrorism or persecution or atheism. No, it would be rather clear that the number one thing that keeps the Church from fulfilling the Great Commission is our own flawed set of priorities and teachings.

The numbers bear this out: Less than 1% of Christian income is given toward mission activity, and only a tiny proportion of mission activity is directed at the unevangelised world. Less than 1 in 10,000 of those calling themselves Christian are devoted to full-time missionary endeavours. You can generally discern priorities by where the money and time are

spent—and the global Church has made it quite evident that mission is far down the list. This, of course, is not so within the OM framework. But what shapes why we do what we do, and how we do it? In a globalised, pluralised, post-modern context—where our options for what we do are virtually endless and where our motives are continually scrutinised—we need to work from a missiologically solid foundation. If not, we can be pulled in all kinds of directions and our resources and energy dissipated into a well-meaning but strategically ineffective altruism.

Our mission must be informed by more than compassion and urgency, essential though they are. Unless you believe that the Apocalypse looms, we need both an overarching strategy to the human dimension of our activity, as well as a nuanced appreciation of the *missio dei* for the 21st century. Much of our heritage (in OM and Western evangelical circles) has been shaped by the evangelistic fervour of people such as DL Moody, who famously said *“I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said, ‘Moody, save all you can.’”* Many shared Moody’s theological persuasion but not his evangelistic fervour, withdrawing from the world into quietist circles, awaiting Jesus’ return; the world, after all, was an irredeemable ruin in their eyes.

OM does not strike me as being guilty of this. When I look at the breadth of ministries under the OM umbrella, I see a growing appreciation of how the Great Commandment and the Great Commission work together. And yet, out of its own strongly activist history, OM has not articulated a clear missiology. Activists get stuff done, and save thinking about the ‘why’ question for later! So, what is OM’s missiological foundation? *And what is yours?*

¹ *Theology and Mission in the Present Day*, 1957

This article is one of an 8-part series by Jason Mandryk on the topic of The Mission of God as featured on the Global South Initiative website. To read the rest, visit www.omgsi.org/blog or sign up for the GSI newsletter by contacting ali.geake@om.org.

Jason Mandryk: I am with WEC International, having been recently seconded to OM’s Global South Initiative. My ministry is predominantly with research and production of Operation World (the info / prayer guide), although I spent two years aboard MV Doulos. My passions include the use of information and research for mission strategy and prayer. I now live in the UK.



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