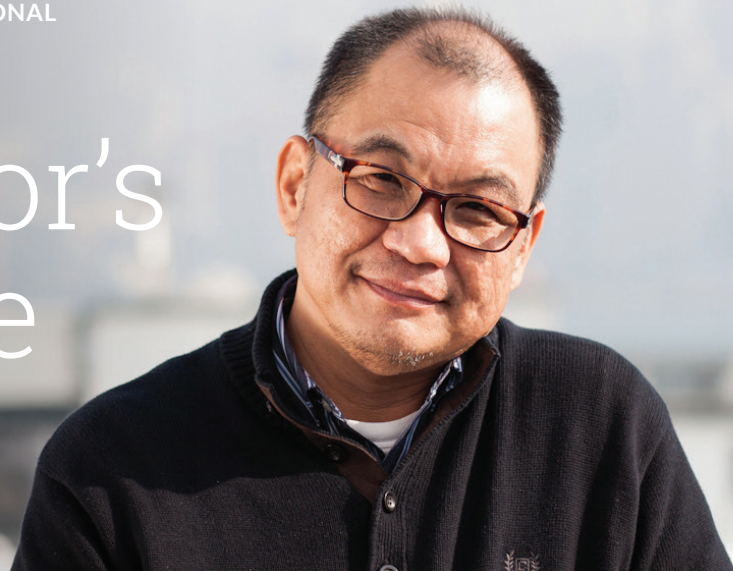




# Director's Update



LAWRENCE TONG

## The new partner

OM would not exist, let alone make a significant impact in God's kingdom, without the faithful, focused commitment of people around the world who contribute determined prayer, sacrificial giving and networking with others to join the work. We consider our partners as extended OM family members. God has linked us together to compliment and empower one another in the task He has given us jointly.

The same holds true for me personally (and for every active OMer): Without the constant encouragement and accountability of my partners, I would not be doing what I am today. I would have left long ago.

However, we cannot automatically expect their heirs to follow in their footsteps. Today, subsequent generations express their faith differently. People are far less 'brand loyal' than in previous generations. But relationships are not inherited; they are cultivated. Just as we had to earn the trust of partners in earlier days, it will demand effort, time, perseverance, initiative and prayer to see mutually-beneficial partnerships emerge and stand the test of time. This is the case as well with a whole generation raised without a spiritual legacy, the first in their families to follow Christ. For them, participating in world mission is one more facet of coming to faith in Christ awaiting their discovery.

Here we must be careful to not rely on software or systems to manage relationships. As people support the work in prayer, finance or networking, we owe them a personalised response and dialogue. Let them hear our gratitude personally, and let us learn what their passions and strengths are that can inform and teach us as OM. What a simple way to bring great encouragement to partners!

Understanding churches of today is increasingly complex, but engaging them as intercessory partners is an irreplaceable resource. Is there still place for the earlier, 'radical' intercession for the world that OM has been famous for? I hope so, because Ephesians 6 makes it clear that we are engaged in spiritual warfare, whether or not we do it well. As OMers, we must be diligent and candid about our team prayer life. Have we 'lost the plot' by praying more for our own needs at the expense of global intercession? We need to ask—and answer—that with urgency.

### Showing up still works

We also need to be candid about taking church meetings to share mission vision and also pray with churches who choose to partner with us in some way. I remember in the early days of ship ministry, it was not uncommon to have 20 onshore church meetings every Sunday morning and another 20 every Sunday evening,

all while hosting thousands of visitors on board. That kind of passion still exists in some areas but, overall, it is hard to find. At stake is the fact that God has given OM (and others) a legacy of world mission awareness—evidenced by our international staff on teams anywhere—and we are obligated to pass that knowledge and example on wherever we are, even if it is no longer fashionable.

We should not expect churches to come to us in search of a relationship. They are already busy doing great work. We should go to them, one church at a time, and offer what may be otherwise missing: a vision, a mission, a plan for all God's people to participate in revealing the Gospel among those who have never heard it.

I believe there are still many, many thousands of churches worldwide who have the desire and readiness to partner with OM in the Great Commission. It has to be so, because God has determined to work through us all! I am calling all OM leaders to devote less attention to managing teams and offices in order to spend more time connecting with churches for the sake of the Gospel. By recruiting managers, they can focus on building effective partnerships. I am downsizing my own leadership team so that I and others can focus on linking with churches in partnerships. Let us make this a new day with our partners.



## IN THIS ISSUE...

- Lesotho ● South Asia ● Turkey ● South Africa ● Italy ● Moldova

EVANGELISM **LESOTHO: THE RIGHT CHOICE**

The Missions and Discipleship Training

(MDT) programme includes rural outreach in the mountains. Anita Van Der Merwe (South Africa) and a colleague went door to door in one village. They saw a lady sitting outside her small hut. They started a conversation, when Anita noticed that the lady had something around her neck and asked what it was. *"I went to the witch doctor, because I had difficulties breathing and massive headache,"* the woman explained. The witch doctor gave her the amulet on her neck, tied with a little bone.

The trainees had opportunity to explain the Gospel, asking if she would commit herself to Jesus. They wanted to pray with her and for healing, but wouldn't do it while she still had the thing around her neck. As she took it off, Anita said, *"No! If you [only] take it off, you are going to put it back on again. God doesn't want you to serve two gods; it's either Him or not."* The lady fetched a knife, cut the thing off and threw it into the fire, saying, *"Now you can pray for me."* After praying, they asked her to breathe in and out and see how it felt. She was so surprised that she didn't have pain anymore. She smiled and the trainees could see the change and relief on her face.

Pray for the Spirit of God to deliver the people of Lesotho from ancestor worship and other demonic practices. Pray that His people will be bold in sharing the Gospel.

RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT **SOUTH ASIA: A NEW START**

*"Now I have a better house,"* said 75-year-old Chiring Dindu. *"Thanks to OM for helping us build such a beautiful house."* One year after a traumatic earthquake that forever changed the lives of the people of Langtang, Chiring, his daughter-in-law and several



children were gifted the first reconstructed house in their village.

In partnership with others, OM built a model house to demonstrate safe building methods to the community on land belonging to the family of Tenzin, 13, who lost both parents, two siblings and his grandfather during the landslide. Tenzin is severely physically disabled and spends most of his time in a hostel in Kathmandu, thanks to the generosity of a foreign sponsor.



As a disabled orphan, Tenzin was identified by the community as extremely vulnerable; it was thus decided that the first house should be for

him. Tenzin's aunt, Dawa Gyalmu, was widowed the day of the earthquake, and her father-in-law, Chiring, will live in the house most of the time. Dawa's three children, aged 13–18, and Tenzin will live in the house when they visit during school holidays. With monsoon rains coming, the family was relieved to move into the house. Pray that the community will be impacted by the generosity of believers, and this will lead to learning of Christ.

CHURCH PLANTING **TURKEY: FOR THE FIRST TIME**

Tekin is an agricultural city of 120,000 people near the ancient city where the touch of the legendary King Midas turned everything to gold. However, just as King Midas has no relevance now in Tekin, until very recently, there were no known believers in the living King of kings, Jesus Christ; almost 100 per cent were followers of Islam.

Two years ago, Mick\* (UK) visited Tekin on a short-term trip, discreetly passing out Gospel tracts that included contact information for a free New Testament. One was given to Farhat\*, who had lived in Finland for 20 years, and was more open-minded about Christianity than most others in the city. Farhat called the Bible Correspond-

ence Course (BCC) in Istanbul, and they mailed him a New Testament. Bill\*, a worker with another organisation, was happy to follow up and was delighted that Farhat's friend, Mehmet\*, was also interested in God's Word. Two church planters began visiting Tekin for weekly evangelistic Bible studies. Shortly afterward, Farhat and Mehmet placed their faith in Christ—the beginning of a church plant where the Gospel had never been known before.

Farhat and Mehmet invited Tunç\* to join them. As an atheist, he was willing to participate because, *"Your enemy is Islam, and my enemy is Islam. So, I'm happy to be here."* To this they responded, *"Islam is not our enemy; sin is."* Tunç was an avid reader and, within two weeks of investigating God's Word, he came to faith in Christ! Through Farhat and Mehmet, God had led two church planters to a community of friends open to the Gospel. By the end of the summer,



three more Turks in this city believed and were baptised.

One year later, this group of six friends had come to faith in Christ, and progress is clearly

being made toward a healthy church plant. Indeed, this fellowship is actively inviting more friends to their meetings. They are even using social media like Facebook to tell complete strangers about Jesus Christ. Pray for these believers to continue to grow in faith and for the Lord to continue to increase their number.

**LOGOS HOPE: INWARDLY FREE**

*"I'm here to tell you today, God is real,"* proclaimed Abraham Moxen (Papua New Guinea), who shared a powerful testimony with inmates in Empangeni jail just outside Richards Bay in South Africa. He shared about his past, living on the streets as a child and almost getting imprisoned. *"He knows you by name; He cares for you. He wants to give you a life and a future to look forward to."*

At the end of Abraham's message,

six inmates accepted Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. In subsequent one-on-one conversations, another 10 inmates expressed their desire to do the same. One of the prison guards, a pastor for the prison, was deeply moved by



the response and presence of God that morning. He will play a crucial role in these inmates' lives as he continues to disciple them and help them grow in their faith. "I could feel the oppression once I stepped into the prison," recalled team leader, Dyfan Graves (Wales), who was visiting a prison for the first time and experienced the eagerness of people to accept Jesus into their lives. "We are bringing true freedom, the freedom of Christ, into a place with no physical freedom."

JUSTICE

**ITALY: COMPLICATED LIVES**

Women sit along streets surrounding the OM office in Pisa—many of whom have been trafficked to the area and forced to provide sexual services to men who stop along the road. Forced labour and sexual exploitation are issues that affect millions of people worldwide, and the OM team has decided to respond.

"It is a symbol of the hypocrisy in our society," says one OM worker after an afternoon outreach among transgender sex workers. "The same people that criticise, make fun of and abhor these people are the same that pick them up in broad daylight and pay for their bodies. What would have Jesus done? Would He have not spent time with them in love and forgiveness?"

OM moved to Pisa in September 2014 and spent months getting to know the area, the churches, the local people and human trafficking victims from Nigeria, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and other Eastern European countries. A large number of transgen-

der individuals from Brazil end up in prostitution as they struggle to find other work. In January 2015, people arrived to start working against the sexual slavery in Pisa. A year later, a weekly outreach on the streets of Pisa took off. The team has been connecting with local services and believers, as well as other ministries throughout Italy and beyond, to learn best practices and build a support network.

Engaging the local churches has been and continues to be a priority since, for sustainable ministry, the involvement of local believers is a necessity. A team of volunteers has come alongside the OM staff to support the work through joining the outreaches, praying and providing material help.

"None of us wishes to have a life like this," is a phrase the outreach team has heard on multiple occasions. "The fact that many women have allowed us to pray for them and have opened up about their traumatic past shows us that we're doing the right thing," the team coordinator shared. Much needs to be done to help the women holistically, including planning for other income to help those who wish to exit a life in prostitution.

MENTORING & DISCIPLESHIP

**MOLDOVA: BETTER ROLE MODELS**

In mid-April, about 50 boys from OM's day centres came to Chisinau for a weekend of fellowship, gaining a new perspective on being a 'real man'. Many were surprised to find that God's perspective is very different. Like all

the children cared for in OM's day centres, these boys come from desperate backgrounds marked by poverty and severe neglect. If nothing changes their perspective, many will grow into criminals;

some may become human traffickers exploiting others.

At this conference, the presence of godly leaders who live a different example was immensely valuable. Activities helped to build the boys' self-image and



The fact that many women have allowed us to pray for them and have opened up about their traumatic past shows us that we're doing the right thing,"

show them they can experience success without harming others. The boys were taught many aspects of manhood: good hygiene and bodily changes, but also examples from the Bible to identify characteristics God desires in men.

They also began to understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own lives and that their fate is not bound by the experience of their families. The boys were taught God's good purpose for them as men, and many



expressed a desire to follow Him.

At the end of the last meeting, the boys formed a circle while the leaders went from person to person, pray-

ing over them individually. One OM worker, unsure about his usefulness because of his limited knowledge of the language, remembers this as the most powerful time of the conference.

"In a room of 49 boys and eight to 10 godly men praying over them, you could feel God's Spirit," he shared. "I knew for sure this was my 'why' for the conference: Even with the language barriers I was able to understand these boys' needs and could ask God to intervene in their lives." Pray that these boys and others that attend OM's day centres would experience the love of Christ and be made into the kind of men God wants them to be.

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

\* name changed



# The way I see it

REDEMPTIVE LEADERSHIP • BY Y'CHING CHAN-THOMAS



Leadership development is big business, I have discovered. Organisations in both Christian and non-Christian spheres are willing to spend big money to find the most effective methods and paradigms to realise their project in leadership development. Buzzwords like *entrepreneurial leadership*, *transformational leadership* and *transactional leadership* are common in the business and corporate environment. Meanwhile, in Christian circles, we also boast of biblical leadership approaches like *servant leadership*, *shepherd leadership* and *spiritual leadership*. As OM embarks on a quest to dream of our future while bracing ourselves for the increasing complexities inevitably faced as residents of this fallen world, we must ask: What kind of leaders are we nurturing to steward us into the future?

OM is an organised group of Jesus followers with a mandate from our Lord. Hence, the ones who lead us towards achieving this mandate must be clear on what it is and what it takes to get there. Individually and corporately, we are called to make disciples of all nations. However, we must first be His disciples ourselves. As followers of Jesus, we claim to have found true and abundant life in Christ. It should then be a natural consequence that those we engage with on a daily basis would experience the benefits of love, truth and beauty that flow from that abundance we know and share—just like the well of living water described by Jesus (John 7:38). The life in Christ that we proclaim must be experienced and manifested in our lives—even more so for Christian leaders called to invest, support and enrich every aspect of the lives of those they lead for the growth, flourishing and common goodness of all.

If our call vis-à-vis the Great Commission is ultimately to establish and grow the kingdom of God by incarnating the virtues, wisdom, power and godly character that will draw

the world towards reconciliation, restoration and wholeness, it follows then that our leaders must also bear responsibility for being at the helm of our corporate project in redemption.

May I therefore propose the term, 'redemptive leadership,' to refer to how Christian leaders are to embrace their call and gift to lead? Redemptive leadership happens when leaders perceive their key responsibility as inspiring, inducting and directing those they lead towards the flourishing life that Christ has initiated for us (John 10:10). Only by exhibiting a flourishing life themselves will they enable those they lead to live an abundant life in Christ. Such an approach to leadership requires leaders to view their calling as a way of being a good person pursuing good ends for themselves and those they lead. Unfortunately, this ideal is far from the life that many of our Christian leaders experience; they have unwittingly replaced incommensurable life *with* God for mere satisfaction derived from a life *for* God. Consequently, we have leaders who are exhausted, frustrated and insecure—to say nothing of people hurt by their unhealthy and destructive leadership.

As OM launches into the implementation of our Global Planning Process, it is time to ask: What are leaders called to within OM? How can we ensure that our leaders stay on course in their life with God, without compromising their life for God and vice versa? May the Lord help us.

*I am an aspiring sinologist who wears three hats: wife to a New Testament professor, mother to a first-grader and OM's International Director of Leadership Development. I also moonlight as an apologist and a writer in all things related.*

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