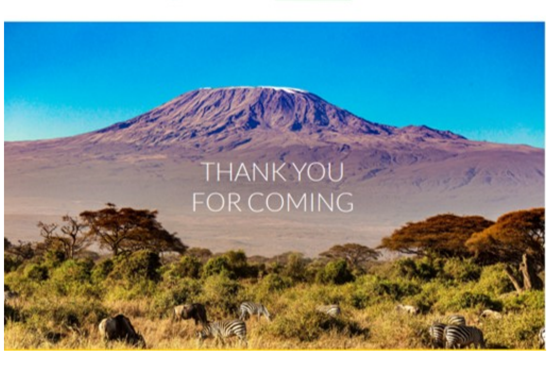
ICMDA e-news

ICMDA CEO's E-newsletter
June 2023

Dear friend,

Thank you for keeping in touch with ICMDA, especially if you've joined us at one of our recent webinars. I hope you are keeping well and knowing the Lord's presence and blessing. Below are a few updates and highlights from ICMDA's ministry over the last month.

ICMDA 2023 WORLD CONGRESS ARUSHA TANZANIA 20-25 JUNE



ICMDA World Congress – Just two weeks away!

'Serving with love in a hurting world' is the theme of the 17th ICMDA World Congress in Arusha, Tanzania, East Africa on 20-25 June 2023. 1,002 people from 102 countries have registered including 388 from 73 countries who have received bursaries covering registration costs, thanks to an incredibly generous response of over $225,000 to the bursary fund appeal.

This record attendance is an incredible turnout given the threats of covid, Marburg virus, recession, inflation and increased travel costs. But God is good and as per usual has surprised us with his extravagant grace (Ephesians 3:20, 21). Thank you to all those who gave and prayed.

The attendees include 440 senior doctors and dentists, 216 juniors and 252 students. 750 have opted to attend a student or graduate preconference alongside the main conference. The main Bible speakers are Voddie Baucham and Mamusha Fenta with additional plenary speakers including John Wyatt, Vinod Shah, Florence Muindi and Mike Chupp. In addition, there are over 100 other speakers leading breakout sessions and 52 speakers will take part in one of ten Preconference streams including Family Medicine, Bioethics, Leadership, Saline Process, Advocacy and Strengthening your national association.

Please pray for this strategic event, that God will speak powerfully and that attendees will be equipped and challenged, and for the brilliant organising team led by Augustin Lutakwa as they negotiate the final lap.

New National Members

The mission of ICMDA is to start and strengthen national associations of Christian doctors and dentists and our vision is 'a Christian witness, through doctors and dentists, in every community, in every nation.' At the time of writing 20 new national associations have made successful applications to join ICMDA this year and three more are completing the process.

These new movements will take our total membership, currently at 84, to over 100. This includes several countries where persecution against Christians is significant and where, for many, the only Christian they may ever meet is a doctor or dentist. Christian doctors and dentists are strategic in Christ's mission to gather a people from all over the world into his kingdom and are almost uniquely placed to be a witness in every community with an ability to cross boundaries into places where professional evangelists, pastors and church planters cannot freely go.

As these new movements - mainly from Francophone Africa, Latin America, South East Asia and the former Soviet Union - are welcomed into membership at the World Congress it will be a wonderful foretaste of that great day when a great multitude that no one can count, 'from every nation, tribe, people and language,' will stand before the throne and cry out, 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.'

Albanian Adventures

Apart from an unexpected trip back to New Zealand for my mother's funeral (see family news below) the month of May was dominated for me by two overseas trips to Albania and Poland. On 5-7 May I was the speaker at the Albania CMDA (MDKSh) national conference speaking on the theme of 'Living in uncertain times' near Durres on the Adriatic Sea, my first visit to this country since 2001.

I was amazed at how the country has developed in the last 20 years and it was a real blessing to be hosted by Edvin and Valbona Selmani and their team. About 100 attended the conference including spouses and children. It is always such an encouragement to hear the testimonies of largely first-generation Christians in this Muslim majority country which was once the world's first officially atheist state with nearly complete suppression of all religious activity.

I also managed to squeeze in a visit with Edvin (centre pic) to see my dear friend Zefjan Nikolla (left) at Emanuel Church in Tirana, one of the first two evangelical churches planted after the revolution in 1991. Zef pastors the church and heads up the National IFES group as well as the Albanian Leadership Forum and I have been doing an online Confident Christianity (CC) course with him and other Albanian church and mission leaders. Their plan is to roll out CC across Albania in Albanian starting later this year. Are those tongues of fire? Probably just a trick of the light, but God's blessing was much in evidence in the warm fellowship.

Ukraine – The blessings go on!

Oxford is a stronghold of atheism, but last Saturday 23 people gathered in a South Oxford church to make up emergency paramedic back packs for Ukraine. The team included Christian doctors and other healthcare workers from CMF UK and other members of Oxford churches, but there were also representatives from the charities 'Humanitarian Aid' and 'Mighty Convoy' and members of a St Albans tennis club who were inspired by hearing of the task and wanted to be part of the action.

Under the leadership of ICMDA logistics manager David Sawday and CMF Oxford Secretary Esther Park, they put together 120 packs in six hours, each containing about £800 worth of medical equipment and consumables, specially designed to provide frontline paramedics with everything they need to attend casualties. The goods were supplied by Reflex Medical and made possible by a grant to ICMDA of $150,000 from Swedish partners Heart of Evangelism.

This week the packs will be delivered in three 'Mighty Convoy' ambulances (also donated) to our Ukrainian affiliate CMAU (under the inspirational leadership of Rudi Migovich) for distribution to destinations all over Ukraine. With the help of our partners, we continue to send new donations of equipment, consumables and medicines.

Last month, ICMDA's Ukraine efforts were acknowledged in a parliamentary Early Day Motion (EDM 1128) submitted by my local MP Daisy Cooper. If you live in the UK, please write to your MP and ask them to sign.

Poland and DLS5

On 20 to 25 May I was in Wisla, Poland, for the European Leadership Forum (ELF). This annual event brings together around 800 European Christian leaders for fellowship, teaching and encouragement. The programme consisted of morning Bible readings (on Malachi), evening plenaries on topical issues in ministry, a bewildering choice of afternoon workshops and 20 different themed morning training tracks.

I was involved in the 'Leaders of Christian organisations' track teaching on leadership and team building and also led a half-day seminar on 'Bioethics and the Christian Mind' (see here). I also hosted three recorded speaker interviews (Chris Townsend of Cambridge Papers, Ross Hendry of CARE and a Ukrainian Pentecostal Church network leader) and recorded some of my own material for the ELF website which will be processed along with hundreds of other speaker interviews over the next year (my past talks can be found here).

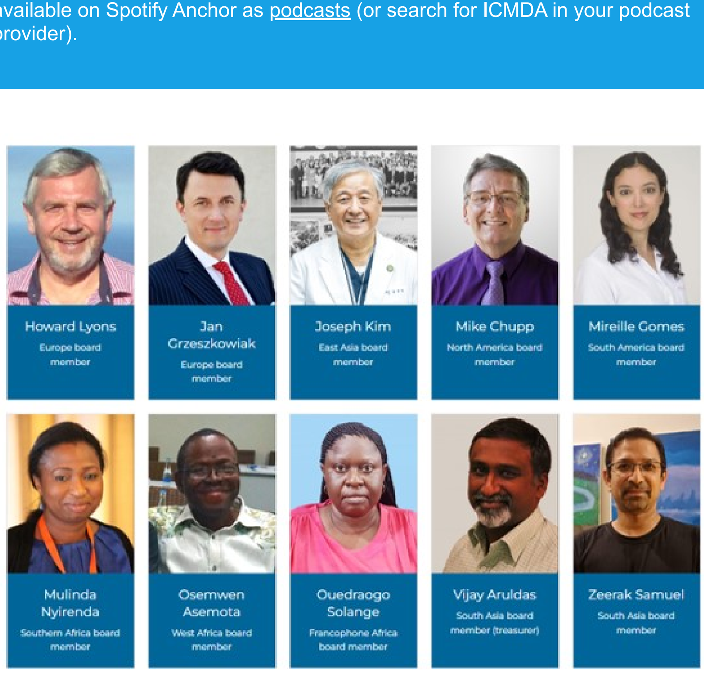
I have been involved in ELF for over 20 years since its launch in 2002 and always find it a great blessing and source of spiritual encouragement, particularly the opportunity to network with other Christian leaders.

Also, this month we printed 2,000 copies of the English version of Doctor's Life Support volume 5 (DLS5) in India. This highly valued daily devotional written by Christian doctors and dentists will be available at the World Congress in Tanzania this month (pic shows our training administrator Bhaskar Tiwari with the first copies). We are working on making the book available in eight other languages by year end. To support the DLS5 project please make a donation here and designate your gift for Doctors Life Support.

ICMDA Webinars

Our ICMDA webinar series continues to attract a wide following with four more presentations held in May including 'Community mental health in low resource settings' (Johann Ebenezer and Praveen Alexander), 'Promoting family medicine worldwide' (Rebekah Zechariah), 'Lessons from the birth of medical mission' (Mark Pickering) and 'Where is God in war?' (Rudi Migovich). June webinars include 'Faith flags, faith stories and faith prescriptions in clinical practice' (Walt Larimore – already screened) and a three part series at 1400 BST (UTC/GMT+1) on 8, 15 and 29 June by Jay Smith on the theme of 'Understanding Islam' looking at the historical, archaeological and manuscript evidence for Mecca, Muhammad and the Qur'an.

There will be no webinar on 22 June during the World Congress (see above). You can access all past webinars on our searchable database (154 so far) and book free for future events on our website. Each webinar is published along with links to relevant resources so they can fill a helpful session for regional, national or local groups wanting to engage with the issues. Over 80 webinars are also available on Spotify Anchor as podcasts (or search for ICMDA in your podcast provider).



Upcoming Events

This month for me is dominated by the World Congress on 20-25 June (see above). It is also a busy time of committees with the World Congress Steering Committee (5 June), ICMDA Executive (6 June), Senior Management Team (8 June) ICMDA board (19-20 June) and World General Assembly (22 June). The last two events take place in and around the World Congress in Arusha.

I'll also be preparing for my own sessions at the world congress where I will be leading breakout sessions on 'Managing transition' and 'Confident Christianity' and a preconference stream on 'Strengthening your national association'. On that latter theme I will be involved in final discussions with over 20 national movements due to join ICMDA as members at the Congress (see above).

It is a much quieter month for ICMDA member organisations holding events mainly because of the world congress. Our May to July 2023 prayer diary is now available online (or write to us to receive a hard copy). You can also sign up for the daily Doctor's Life Support email on the ICMDA website – a great way of starting the day. There is also information about how you can support ICMDA in prayer and giving (Ukraine, World Congress, Projects).

Family News

In between my trips to Albania and Poland last month (see above) I made a nine-day unexpected round trip back to New Zealand for my mother Jan's funeral on 15 May. My mother's sister Betty, with whom she was very close, died 20 years ago, at which time mum effectively adopted her five children and later 15 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren as her own - so it was an important time to connect with extended family and friends.

We held two services on the day, the first, attended by 45 immediate family members and cousins, allowed a more intimate farewell in which 20 extended family members gave tributes, including Kirsty and our three sons and two daughters-in-law, all of whom who came in on Zoom. The main thanksgiving service which followed was more structured with hymns, prayers, readings and six tributes. My brother Andrew and I led the tributes at both services. Mum had the gift of making everyone feel valued and welcome and epitomised the Proverbs 31 woman.

My later return from Poland on 26 May coincided with a bank holiday weekend, so Ben, Caroline and our two grandchildren, Owie and Edie, came from Cardiff for a weekend including a night camping in the garden (for Ben and Owie), a 5km park run for me with Ben as pacer, reading children's books, Duplo constructions, planting out the vegetable garden and the highlight, a visit to Whipsnade Zoo (pic).

Thank you for your prayers and support. It's always a joy to hear from you too, do get in touch. May you know God's grace and peace in full measure over this coming month.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Peter

Peter Saunders
ICMDA Chief Executive

DONATE HERE

ICMDA
Suite 8 Censeo House, 6 St Peters Street, AL1 3LF, St Albans

This email was sent to
You've received it because you've subscribed to our newsletter.

Unsubscribe