

ICMDA CEO's E-newsletter
April 2024

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.



Moldova Meanderings

It was a real joy to meet with national leaders and fieldworkers of the ICMDA Eurasia region for their leaders' conference in Chisinau, Moldova on 21-25 March. The conference was organised by local Area Representative Ruslan Riodobutshch, led by Eurasia Regional Secretary Noel Anuparayal and hosted by the Emanuel Centre clinic in the city, which is also the base of the Emmanuel Christian Medical Society of Moldova which formally joined ICMDA as a full national member last year. The 18 conference attendees came from twelve countries including Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the UK.



Rwanda Rendezvous

A day after returning from Moldova (see above) I flew to Kigali, Rwanda (27 March - 2 April) for the East Africa Leaders' training event and regional conference. The leaders event brought together 20 fieldworkers and national leaders from our six East Africa member countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Rwanda) along with visitors from South Africa, India, Australia, the United States and the UK. An intense two-day programme covered the vision, mission and values of ICMDA; Principles of leadership; Integrating faith and work; Building a student ministry; Understanding worldviews; Time management; Evangelism and apologetics; Strategic planning; Mentorship and discipleship; Advocacy and justice; Conflict management; Medical ethics and much more!

We then moved camp to Kigali University and medical school where 200 participants from all over East Africa and beyond joined together for the 2024 Africa regional conference. The conference theme was 'Being an effective brother's keeper' based on Galatians 6:2 ('Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ'). Four plenary sessions covered 'Theology of care and compassion', 'Mental health and compassion fatigue', 'Healthcare and social responsibility' and 'Promoting preventive medicine', and there was a choice of almost 30 different breakout sessions on Christian medical themes. The programme also included a city tour (Rwanda's recent transformation is astounding!), a visit to the Genocide Museum (very sobering) and an international night featuring some amazing singing and dancing in dazzling African dress.

It was a privilege also to sit in on the East Africa regional committee where Daniel Ojika (Kenya), now an ICMDA global board member, handed over to Proscovia Mugaba (Uganda) as chair, and plans were agreed for a regional students' conference in Uganda next year.



Early morning on Tuesday 2 April I flew overnight from Kigali (see above) with Santhosh Mathew (ICMDA head of training) via Ethiopia to Lomé, the capital of Togo in Francophone West Africa. Togo is home to 9 million people and is a former French colony wedged between Ghana and Benin. It was earlier a major centre for the slave trade. We were met by Jean Paul Dansou, Togolese radiologist and ICMDA regional secretary for Francophone Africa. After a restful night enjoying the wonderful hospitality of Jean Paul and his family we picked up our area representative (AR) Sofako Eghlo in Lomé and drove the ten-hour 560 km journey north to Hôpital_Mango (Hôpital De L'esperance) - no mean feat in 40 degree heat but the fellowship was even warmer!

The 65-bed hospital was opened by ABWE in 2015 and now has a bustling 12-room outpatient department, paediatric and general medical wards, three operating theatres and an obstetric department doing 1,500 deliveries per year. The senior staff are mainly from the US and France but there were also three Togolese doctors plus two African surgical residents being trained as part of the PAAGS programme (Pan African Academy of Christian Surgeons).

The purpose of our visit was to assess the hospital as a potential base for our diploma of family medicine programme (DFGFM) which we plan to launch in French next year. We have already trained (or are currently training) 190 doctors from over 50 countries in English using the two-year programme. Our impressions of the hospital were excellent and we were very warmly received. Watch this space. In the next few months I'll be assessing our regional sites to assess hospitals in Central Asia and Central America for our Russian and Spanish programmes, also due to launch in 2025.

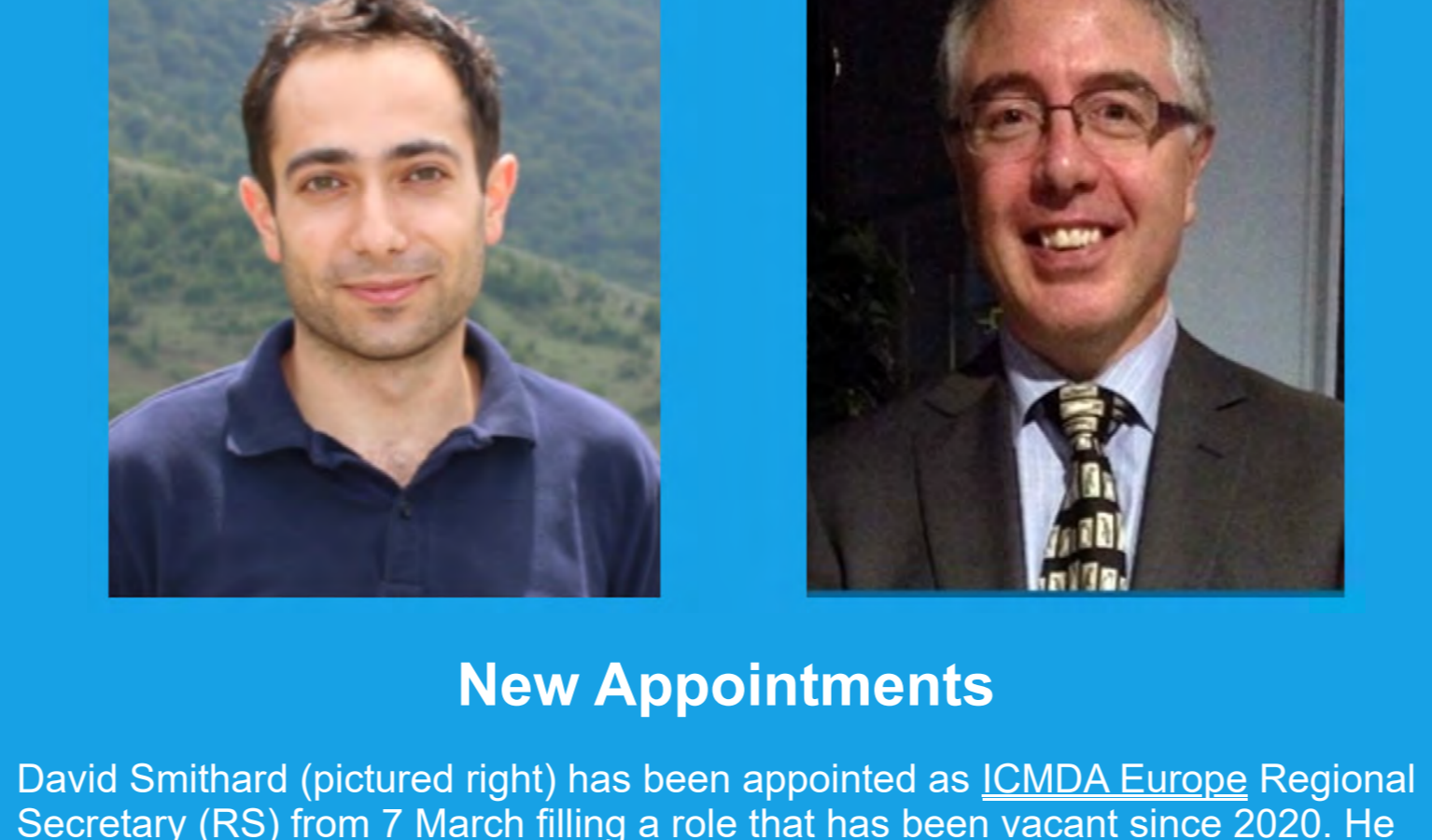


Togo Travels

David Smithard (pictured right) has been appointed as ICMDA Europe Regional Secretary (RS) from 7 March filling a role that has been vacant since 2020. He is a consultant geriatrician at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Liverpool and Greenwith NHS Trust, London, UK and has been president of the UK Swallowing Research Group for 15 years. He is also a supervisor for medical students and junior doctors and teaches MSc and BSc level at University College. David is married with two grown up children and is a member of Folkestone Baptist Church. He is currently undertaking an MA in Christian Thought and Practice at Spurgeon's College and also edits the CMF UK journal Triple Helix which is appreciated by Christian doctors all over the world. In this new voluntary role, David will lead a team of eight regional and area representatives (RRs and ARs).

Niko Arzumanyan (pictured left) has been appointed as ICMDA Area Representative (AR) for the Caucasus region of Eurasia (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan). He is a consultant neurosurgeon and was recently appointed head of the neurosurgery service at Arabkir Medical Centre, Yerevan, Armenia, after postgraduate training in Bulgaria. As well as organising the work of the department, Niko's work involves neurosurgical operations especially for epilepsy, Parkinson's disease and tumours. He has volunteered in the Armenian Christian Medical Association (ACMA) for more than ten years, and after completing Confidentially training with ICMDA, then helped to translate it into Russian and is now teaching it to Russian doctors. Niko is married with two sons and a member of the Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church of Yerevan where he sings in the choir and is doing part-time training at a theological seminary.

Please do pray for David and Niko as they take up their new roles and for all our 13 staff team and 70 volunteer fieldworkers around the world.

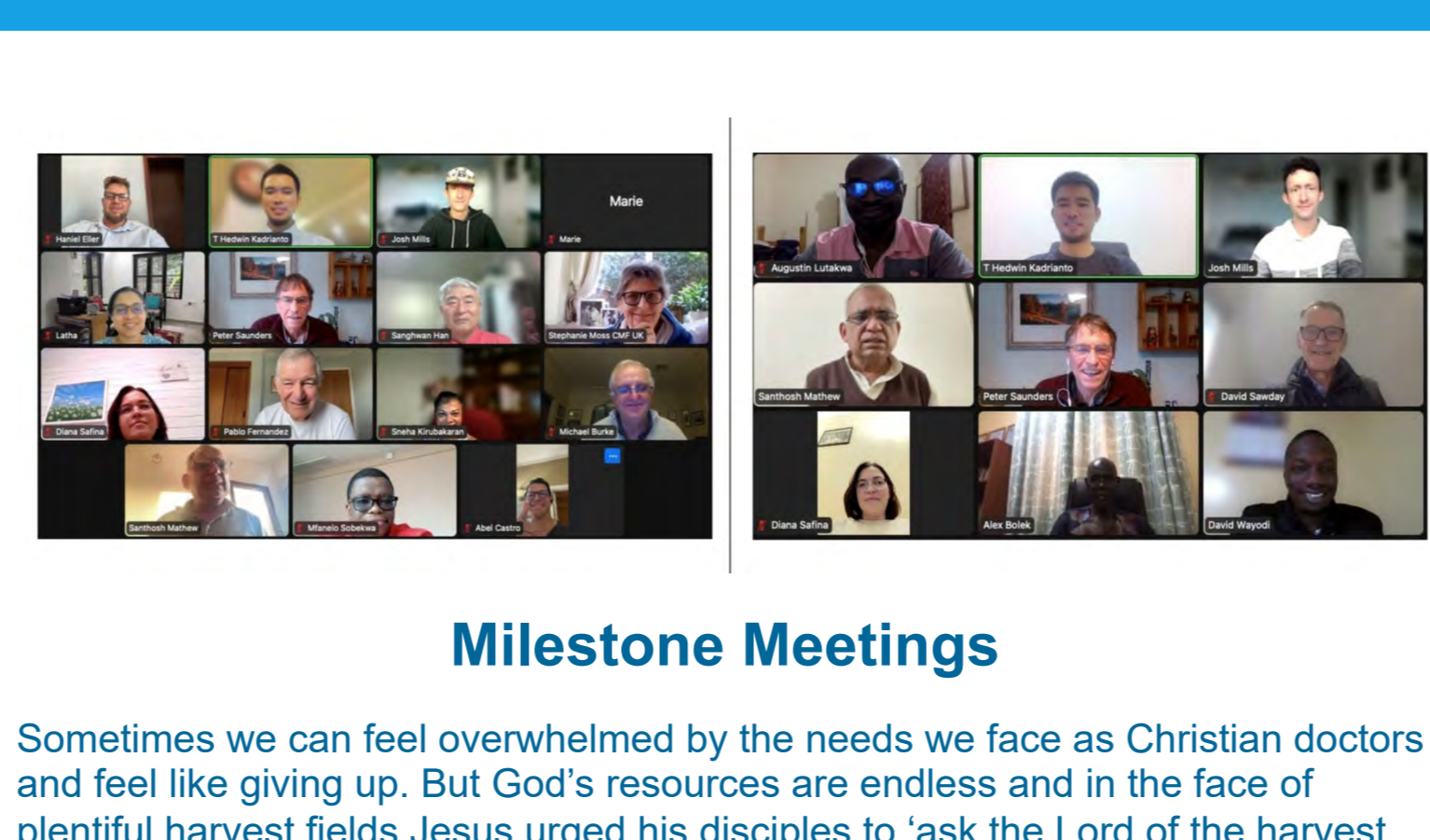


New Appointments

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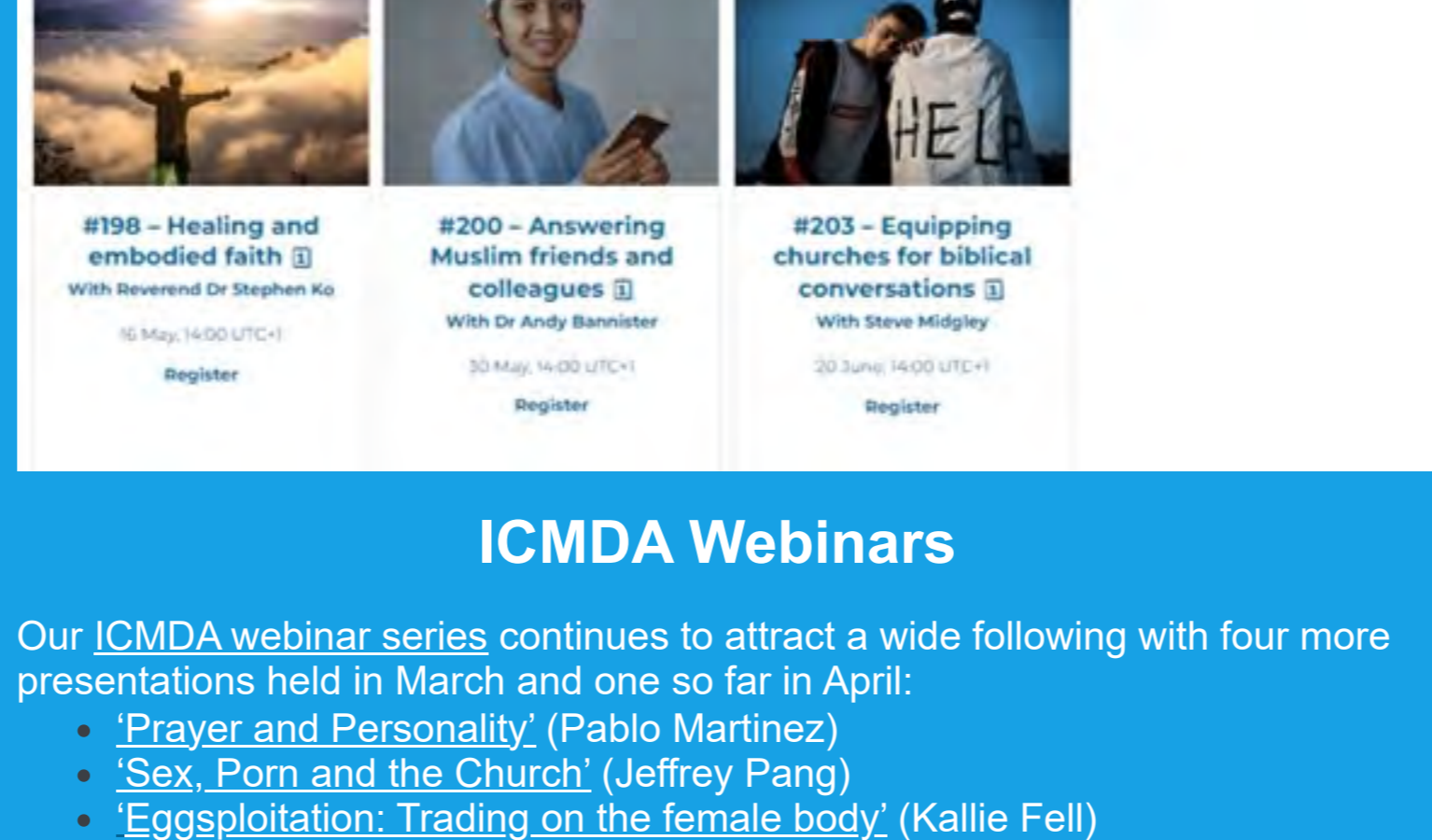
Milestone Meetings

Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by the needs we face as Christian doctors and feel like giving up. But God's resources are endless and in the face of plentiful harvest fields Jesus urged his disciples to 'ask the Lord of the harvest... to send out workers into his harvest fields'. Moses had to learn more than once (Exodus 18; Numbers 11:10-25) that to do the work he needed more people to help him.

Over the last five years we have witnessed repeatedly that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness and that he is faithful in bringing more workers to the cause. Since January 2019 our staff team has grown from three to 13 in nine countries and our volunteer fieldworker team from 53 to 72 in over 50 countries. Now we are learning how to share the work with volunteers in growing our training track ministry.

One striking example of this is our Saline Process training where we have grown from zero multiplying trainers (MTs) in 2019 to 29 now worldwide, with a respective huge increase in the number of Saline training events that we can run across all our 14 world regions. The Saline Process training equips doctors and dentists to share their faith with patients with 'sensitivity, permission and respect' and MTs are equipped to train new witness trainers (WTs) who will be able to equip others (2 Timothy 2:2).

It was wonderful last month to gather our staff team and then our saline MTs group together to share testimonies, pray for one another and plan future activities (see pics). May the Lord continue to raise up willing workers.



ICMDA Webinars

Our ICMDA webinar series continues to attract a wide following with four more presentations held in March and one so far in April.

- Prayer and Personality (Pablo Martinez)
- Sex, Porn and the Church (Jeffrey Pang)
- Eggosoliation - Trading on the female body (Kallie Fell)
- Supporting women physicians & dentists (Pati Frances)
- Attitudes to Women, Christianity vs Islam (Emil Shehadeh)

Many thanks to Philippa Taylor and Felicia Wong who stood in admirably as host for the last three of these when I was travelling.

We have three more webinars due to screen on Thursday 11, 18 and 25 April at 2pm UK time (now UTC+1): 'Preventing Suicide: the story, the facts, the future' (John Gibson), 'Conscientious Objection and Duty of Care' (Lary Wetheran) and 'The Elephant and the Ant: Why bother with Messianic Jews?' (Richard Harvey).

You can access all past webinars on our searchable database (192 so far) and book free for future events on our website. Each webinar is published along with links to relevant resources so they can fit a hospital/region/ local group, national or local groups wanting to engage with the issues. Over 130 webinars are also available on Spotify Anchor as podcasts (or search for ICMDA in your podcast provider).



Events

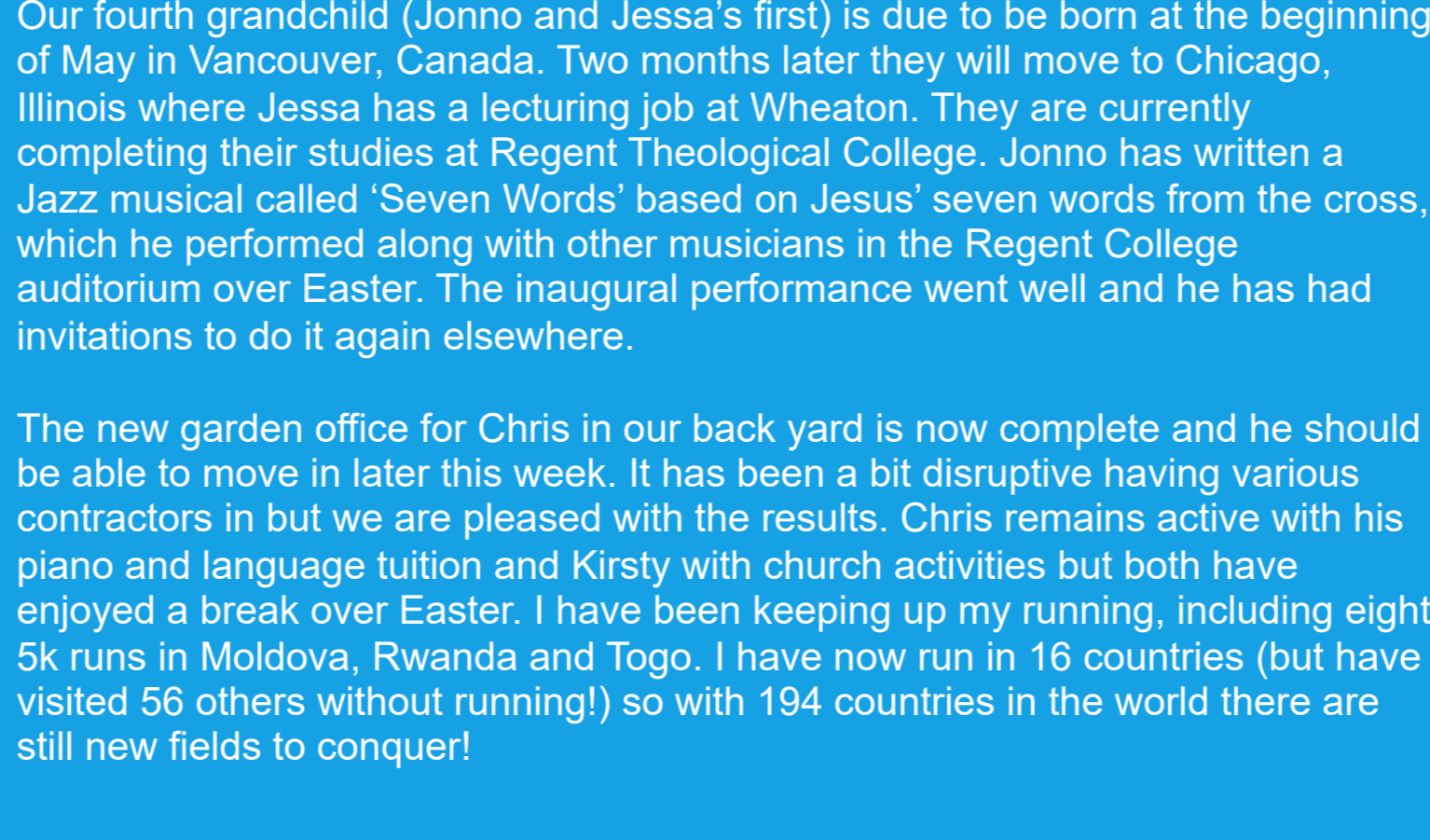
Date	Event	Location	More info
0-10 March 2024	Registration 2024	Oslo, Norway	Click here
0-10 March 2024	CMF Russian Conference	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Click here
14-17 March 2024	HCJ Malaysia Conference	Malaysia	Click here
15-17 March 2024	ACM Conference	Düsseldorf, Germany	Click here
16 March 2024	CMF Day Conference	Scotland	Click here

Upcoming Events

I got back from my Africa trip (see above) on 6 April and apart from the CMF UK national conference on 18-21 April have no more travel this month - a good chance to catch up on administration, online meetings and correspondence before trips to Central Asia and Poland in May. Key meetings for me this month, apart from the weekly webinars (see above), include International Saline Partnership (10 April), Family Medicine Steering group (23) and Senior Management Team (24).

This month ICMDA member movements will hold national conferences in France (5-7 April), Nepal (5-7), Czechia (12-14), Germany (Juniors, 12-14), Denmark (13), UK (CMF, 19-21), Australia (25-28), Austria (25-28) and UK (CDF, 27) - details here. It goes without saying that our fieldworkers and staff will be active all over the world in supporting these events, pioneering new movements and strengthening existing ones.

The February to April 2024 Prayer Diary is still available online (or write to us to receive a hard copy). Over 1,000 people receive the daily Doctor's Life Support email, a great way to start the day - you can sign up too on the ICMDA website. The May to July Prayer Diary is currently being assembled and will be out soon. There is also information about how you can support ICMDA in prayer and giving (Ukraine, Projects).



Family News

Granddaughter Edie (Ben and Caroline's second of three) turned three on 3 April and celebrated with a unicorn cake and matching costume. Kirsky was present in person at the great event but sadly I was travelling and had to be content with video and audio exchanges. We are thankful for the technology which enables us to connect in real time. I remember our time in Kenya in the 1990s as medical missionaries when aerogrammes to and from New Zealand took six weeks each way!

Our fourth grandchild (Jonno and Jessa's first) is due to be born at the beginning of May in Vancouver, Canada. Two months later they will move to Chicago, Illinois where Jessa has a lecturing job at Wheaton. They are currently completing their studies at Regent Theological College. Jonno has written a Jazz musical called 'Seven Words' based on Jesus' seven words from the cross, which he performed along with other musicians in the Regent College auditorium over Easter. The inaugural performance went well and he has had invitations to do it again elsewhere.

The new garden office for Chris in our back yard is now complete and he should be able to move in later this week. It has been a bit disruptive having various contractors in but we are pleased with the results. Chris remains active with his piano and language tuition and Kirsky with church activities but both have enjoyed a break over Easter! I have been keeping up my running, including eight 5k runs in Moldova, Rwanda and Togo. I have now run in 16 countries (but have visited 56 others without running!) so with 194 countries in the world there are still new fields to conquer!

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 Saunders

Peter Saunders
ICMDA Chief Executive

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