

Summer
2018

NOTE FROM THE
DIRECTOR

Global Christian Forum

NEW VENTURES IN
ECUMENISM



THEOLOGY AT THE
HEART OF MISSION



TEACHING MISSION &
WORLD CHRISTIANITY

CGCM NEWS

Center for Global Christianity & Mission



Global Ecumenism

On July 1st, the Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah ('03) will become the new Secretary of the Global Christian Forum. The Center for Global Christianity and Mission's Research Fellow, Soojin Chung, managed to interview him before he assumes his new post.

SC: Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah, could you please describe your role as Secretary for the Global Christian Forum?

Note from the Director

One of the most fulfilling moments in academic life is graduation. Graduation exercises bring to conclusion many years of hard work—especially in the case of doctoral students. This month we celebrated the recent graduations of three Ph.D. students affiliated with the CGCM: Jean Luc Enyegue, Francisca Ireland-Verwoerd, and Derrick Muwina. Congratulations to them, and to all 2018 graduates!

It is equally exciting to celebrate the important accomplishments of alumni. In this issue of the CGCM News, we showcase the work of the Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah, and Dr. David Scott. After distinguished service as minister of missions at two large congregations, Dr. Essamuah has been selected to lead the Global Christian Forum. The GCF brings together Christians of all major traditions to share what

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Gina Zurlo ('17) spoke at the third Global Christian Forum gathering in Bogata, Columbia on "Global Christianity: Continuity and Change." Photo by Peter Kenny/WCC.



Ruth Padilla DeBorst ('16) addresses the third Global Christian Forum on "Old and New Relationships." Photo by Albin Hillert/WCC.

CE: The Global Christian Forum exists to offer a safe space for churches that have not traditionally been in conversation with each other to meet, encounter Christ in each other, and discern ways that God would have them collaborate for the sake of the kingdom of Christ. It is possibly the only space that exists for churches from all streams – Orthodox, Catholic, mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Independents, Pentecostals/Charismatics to encounter each other.

SC: How did your experience at BU shape and prepare you for this role?

CE: At Boston University, I had the privilege of studying World Christianity and History of Missions courses with Prof. Dana Robert. These courses put in the right context what I had experienced, having been born and raised up in Ghana's very vibrant Christian community, as well as the church life of the United States through my work in Global Missions at the historic Park Street Church, Boston. Prof. Robert gave me the strongest reference for this new position, for which I am grateful. Boston University also prepared me to serve as global missions pastor in two very significant US churches: Park Street, Boston, and Bay Area Community, Annapolis, MD; and at the same time, voluntarily serve the Ghana Methodist immigrant churches in the US and Canada as Synod Secretary. As you very well know, the best education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge and skills but the combination of curiosity and humility to ask the right questions, and the confidence to make executive decisions based on the available information. Boston University offered that and more.

SC: What are some of the challenges and opportunities you foresee in this new role?

The Global Christian Forum is the only space where church leaders from Catholic, Orthodox, mainline Protestant, Evangelicals, Pentecostals and Independents meet for prayer, fellowship and faith story sharing. As such, it is a delicate and precious space that needs to be nurtured by support and prayer. Since all of us have a tendency to define ourselves as narrowly as possible, the Global Christian Forum's aim is never completely accomplished. It is always championing the cause that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. One of the aims of the GCF is to ask: who is missing at the table? Preparations for all gatherings ensure that those from traditional ecumenical churches and those who are new to the table are both represented. Overcoming sectarian tendencies and welcoming more people at the table – these two seem to me to be recurring challenges. As with every organization, and especially one like GCF that is not based on membership, there's the great need for human and financial resources to implement this worthy vision.



Mission Theology: At Home in the Church

After completing his Ph.D. in religious studies from Boston University, David Scott ('13) became the Pieper Chair of Servant Leadership at Ripon College. Not long ago, he assumed new responsibilities for the United Methodist Church. Soojin Chung asked him about his new position.

SC: Dr. David Scott, could you please describe your role as Director of Mission Theology for the United Methodist Church?

DS: As Director of Mission Theology, I have a wide-ranging job that differs greatly from week to week. Some weeks I'm conducting trainings for staff, missionaries, and church leaders. Some weeks I'm coordinating the bicentennial celebration of American Methodist mission. Some weeks I'm doing academic research and writing. Some weeks I'm theologically assessing materials or programs related to our work. A constant is continuing to run the UM & Global blog (www.umglobal.org).

SC: How did your experience at BU shape and prepare you for this role?

DS: BU helped lead me to my current role as Director of Mission Theology for Global Ministries of the UMC in two ways. I was

Director's Note (cont.)

Jesus Christ means to them. This ecumenical task is particularly important in an age in which the expansion of Christianity has resulted in the proliferation of thousands of denominational divisions. With global expansion comes the challenge to honor Jesus' wish that his followers be one.

Dr. David Scott is the Director of Mission Theology for the Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church. Despite divisions within the church today, mission is often seen as a source of direction and unity. Dr. Scott has the challenging task of bringing together academic, lay, and practitioners' understandings of mission. Among his responsibilities is organizing the bicentennial of American Methodist missions, to be held in April 2019.

Please join me in celebrating the wonderful ministries of the missiologists and historians mentioned in this issue of the CGCM News!

—Dana L. Robert

recruited by Global Ministries for the position, in part because of the recommendation of Dana Robert and in part because of the reputation I'd established through running the UM & Global blog a project I'd gotten involved in through Dana as well. It pays to have Dana as an advisor! BU was also very influential in helping prepare me intellectually for my current role. While I'm primarily trained as a historian, my doctoral classwork gave me a good grounding in mission theology and contemporary issues in mission as well as in mission history.

SC: What are some of the challenges and opportunities you foresee in this new role?

DS: An opportunity of my current position is meeting devoted Methodists from around the world, though travel is also hard, since it means time away from my two young children and wife. Working for a church agency is very different than working in academia, and figuring out how to navigate the networks of the church is at times a challenge. I'm grateful, though, that Global Ministries provides me the opportunity to continue some of my academic research and writing pursuits.

SC: Could you please share a little bit about some of your current/future projects? How does your work fit into the larger context of global Christianity?

One significant project I'm working on is the bicentennial commemoration of the 1819 founding of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the first denomination-wide mission society and earliest predecessor to Global Ministries. This commemoration includes a web database of Methodist mission biographies (<http://methodistmission200.org/mission-stories/>) and a conference about Methodist mission in April 2019 (<http://methodistmission200.org/bicentennial-conference/>), along with other components. There was a Centenary celebration of mission in 1919 that was an extravaganza conflating mission, democracy, and America. I think about this Centenary and the shift from mission to global Christianity as I'm planning the bicentennial. How do we avoid the imperialism of the Centenary? How do we reflect mission as an activity of the whole church, not just wealthy Westerners? How do we place the work of mission – past, present, and future – within the context of the story of the evolution of Christianity as a global religion? Such questions, which draw on how scholars are thinking about global Christianity, have important implications for my everyday work.

More New Jobs

Kenaleone Ketshabile ('12) was installed as the new bishop of the Kimberly, Namibia, and Bloemfontein Districts by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

Douglas D. Tzan ('13) was appointed Assistant Dean and Director of the Doctor of Ministry and Course of Study Programs and Assistant Professor of Church History and Mission at Wesley Theological Seminary.

Jean Luc Enyegue ('18) will work for the research department of the Jesuit Historical Institute in Africa, and teach at Hekimba University College in Nairobi, Kenya.

Eva Pascal (projected '19) became an Instructor of Religious Studies at St. Michael's College in Burlington, Vermont.

Soojin Chung (projected '19) was appointed Assistant Professor of Intercultural Studies and the Director of the Intercultural Studies program at California Baptist University.

Jeremy Hegi (projected '19) will become Assistant Professor of Global Christian History at Lubbock Christian University.