Dear CCCW Friends and Supporters

Another calendar year comes to an end, and we have been reflecting on what an incredibly busy and social year it has been. A quick glance at our Visitors’ Book has entries from Brazil, Canada, USA, India, several African nations, several European nations, Australia, New Zealand, and the West Indies (sorry if you have been missed out).

The year started with the CCCW Day Lecture on Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960) by Revd Dr Tom Hastings, Executive Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Centre at Princeton Theological Seminary, and we have just had our final seminar ‘Thinking about Missionaries Children’ by Dr Hugh Morrison of the University of Otago, New Zealand. It was the second time this related topic had been the title of a seminar in 2023 (see ‘Missionary Children in the Development of the Ruanda Mission’ by Hannah (Briscoe) Mollalleyn. Mentioning the two book-ends of the seminar series does not do justice to the range of topics covered, but hopefully gives you a flavour! Our partnership with the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge through Dr Jörg Haustein, Associate Professor of World Christianities, in running our seminars and lectures is a source of mutual encouragement. As a taster, and if you weren’t there, here is a link to a recording of Professor David Bebbington’s Henry Martyn Day Lecture on 19th Century Evangelical Theology in the English–Speaking World.

Our cohort of Research Associates is taking on a more vibrant life which is exciting, guided by Dr Pavlina Kasparova. It feels like a prestigious thing to be included in this community and we are also grateful for the different ways the RA’s support the work of the Centre. Our eight Doctoral Researchers bring another life-giving energy – they are testing new waters and it's great that they are often supervised by our RA's.

The Board of Trustees authorised a second Summer Institute and we partnered with the British and Foreign Bible Society to make a week-long, residential conference happen. The theme ‘The Bible: Everywhere in Everyday Life’ was greatly appreciated. Our third Summer Institute (30 June – 5 July 2024) will tackle the topic of ‘Poverty and the Church’.

This year we have been blessed by some long-stay visitors in Cambridge too: Joanildo, Esther, Elisabeth, Lionel, Daryl and Cisca. They have supplemented our small, part-time team in wonderful ways. Local affiliates Ian and Janice Randall, Terry Barringer, and Graham Kings are often at the Centre. The first printrun of the latest CCCW publication – Ian Randall's book Georgina Gollock (1861–1940): Pioneering Female Missiologist (2023) sold out and has already been reprinted!

Muthuraj continues with his writing and research and is working on some fascinating collaborations. Sadly, his father died in April, and he has had two trips to India this year. We were all very proud of his elder daughter's GCSE results this summer!

Last Christmas we appealed for an Honorary Treasurer, and although no one was provided, a good temporary solution was found, for which we are very grateful.
2023 was a bumper year for our Archives collection building. Major acquisitions were the collections of Dr Gordon Mungeam for his and James Foster’s collections, for a biography of Leonard Beecher (1906–1987), Archbishop of East Africa, including notes of almost 100 interviews of persons involved in the church mainly in Kenya undertaken by the latter, and the travel journals worldwide of John V. Taylor when General Secretary of CMS (1960-70). Additionally, a new departure in our archives collections into the charismatic movement, was the gift of the extensive archive of recordings 1959 - 2001 of the preacher Cameron McAlpine and his wife Shelagh (Lydia Prayer Fellowship founder). Further additions have included C.W. Hattersley’s photographs of home life in Uganda 1909, Jenny Taylor’s papers on Christianity and the media, and publications of the Methodist Church Overseas Division. Use of collections has continued light, but recent visitors have ranged from research into a precursor of Henry Martyn’s Hindi Gospels to the work of the East-West Relations Advisory Committee of the British Council of Churches during the Cold War.

The librarian has added at least five shelves of books to the library throughout 2023, many being small donations from a variety of sources. She also accepted four large donations – ex libris collections from Paul Weston, Janet Parsons, and the late Bishop Peter Dawes, and three boxes of books from Westminster College’s missiology collection. This year two people committed to giving monthly donations of designated funds for the library. Priorities for next purchases are the Brill series ‘Theology and Mission in World Christianity’ and the Oxford handbook of Mission Studies, which were recommended by one of the donors. If you have a specific interest in strengthening a particular part of the library, we would be delighted to welcome more contributions, of any size, of funds for the library!

“The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men’s brains, proves that he has no brains of his own.” Charles Haddon Spurgeon (November 29, 1863. Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:13 From: Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 9)

We really want to thank you for your support in friendship, encouragement, finance, attendance at events and more this year. If you pray, please do remember the team: Muthuraj, Ruth, Philip, Pavlina and Rachel; the Trustees and the work in your prayers: that “Whatever we do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17).

We all wish you much joy at this Christmas Season and good health in the New Year!