Well, it has been some time since my last update! And, as I’m sure you know, there has been much afoot since that time. Please indulge me and allow me to catch you up on what has been up in my life since I last write a newsletter. You will note that this is not in the traditional format, but was written in a less formal layout. I thought that it was more important to actually get something composed and distributed than to fret overlong about which pretty photos to include.

The first big news utterly dwarfs everything else, and isn’t really even news anymore.

OPERATION WORLD IS FINISHED!!

After 5 years, 33 team members, over 1000 pages and countless challenges, the 7th edition of OW came out last autumn. We finished the manuscript near the end of August and the DVD extras about a month later. That month of getting through producing the DVD extras was possibly the toughest month of all as we were all running on empty. Even so, the book was out on the shelves in October in the USA and Canada and shortly thereafter in other parts of the world and the DVD followed not long after.

The final six months leading up to finishing all the material being completed were a huge crucible in which the whole team and myself in particular were refined. It was draining in every sense of the word, facing intense pressure and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. There were times last year when I thought that I might just pack it all in and go live on a desert island somewhere! All things were combining to have a detrimental impact on my health – spiritual, physical, relational. And I was not alone on the team in facing this kind of crisis.

However, this caused us to band together more tightly as a team, to dedicate ourselves to the task with redoubled efforts, and most of all, to cast ourselves very deliberately onto God’s mercy. The life of prayer and the spiritual openness of the team – corporately and individually – were notably different during this period. It was therefore simultaneously a trying and yet a wonderful time. But this renewed dedication to prayer, and to teamwork yielded encouraging results. God heard our prayers and answered them in both obvious and subtle ways; we are so grateful for that. Many of you were an integral part of this process last year – you were lifting us up before the Lord and praying for us and with us for His will to be done in and through us. And he answered those prayers in all kinds of ways.

The feedback thus far for the new OW has been resoundingly positive. Never before have I and we (the whole team) felt such a mix of pride and humility to see how God has used us to produce this unique resource for the Church. I have attached a few links at the bottom of this letter for those who want to take a look at what people are saying.

THE AFTERMATH

In the aftermath of completing the book, a litany of travel destinations followed. First, I had a trip to Canada, which included visiting WEC Canada HQ, some friends in Toronto, speaking at a great church in Saskatoon (Ebenezer Baptist), visiting family
in multiple destinations and catching up with my home church of 23 years, Trinity Baptist, in Winnipeg.

Not long after, I had the privilege of participating in the Lausanne 2010 Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. This gathering of around 5,000 Christian leaders from nearly every country and walk of life and ministry was a challenging, though-provoking and encouraging time where I not only learned much, but was able to connect (and re-connect) with researchers, prayer leaders, missionaries and theologians, artists, etc. from all over planet Earth. You can find out more about Lausanne at www.lausanne.org. We were also able to have a launch event for the new OW in Cape Town, which was brilliant as many of our contacts and correspondents from dozens of countries were present at the congress.

I also had the privilege of being able to hang around for a few days after the congress ended. This was a great time of both fellowship and socializing with friends as well as a bit of a personal retreat time at a beautiful place on the Western Cape coast, thanks to the gracious generosity of a friend who is involved in the prayer movements in South Africa and globally. Thanks Hanneli!

Not long after I got back from South Africa, I was off to the USA. This short trip was to connect with Biblica and GMI, our publishing partners for all things OW. It was a superb opportunity to get to know all the people involved with the OW projects – our friends in these two organizations worked as hard as we did in the final months before publication. We also shot and recorded the live web launch of Operation World.

It was shortly after I got back from THAT trip, that our whole OW team went on a 3 day retreat in the English countryside. This was a really fruitful time for us to look back at the last couple of years and review what we did well, what we could have improved on, etc. We also used the isolation to pray together, and to discuss together and seek God’s guidance on how to build for the future ministry of Operation World. It was not always an easy time, but it was definitely time well spent and worth the investment.

THE NEW STUFF

So, in the time since the end of November, we have seen a lot of team members coming and going for all kinds of reasons – furlough, illness/surgery/accidents, Christmas holidays, ministry travel, and so on. Meanwhile, in the office, our time in the last three months has been spent on four major areas:

1) Tying off loose ends from the last edition. In the mad rush to finish, there was a lot of informational shrapnel from the last 15 years that we have had to clean up and get sorted in the right place, both physically and electronically. This is a process that is still ongoing…

2) Relocation of offices and staff. We are all still at Bulstrode, but our third office space has been replaced by two small offices closer to the two main offices. This also prompted the reshuffling of who works at which desks in which offices. In the end, our new arrangement works well for everyone!
3) Starting new projects. Many of your will be pleased to know that a number of translations are underway (Arabic, Korean, Indonesian), with others still in the negotiation process (Portuguese, Spanish, French, Chinese). We are also starting work on a children’s version (tentatively called The Children’s Prayer Atlas) and, possibly, a simplified English concise edition (for use in non-native English speaking contexts).

4) Missions research. We are painstakingly going through all agencies for which we have records and trying to discover all we can about their work and their workers. The OW database is the most extensive in the world on the work of mission agencies (at least, Protestant, Anglican and Independent ones), but even ours has major gaps. We want to have a bash at improving it even further; we will be spending much of our time this coming year working on it. It is a unique body of information that, if improved further, can provide invaluable insights into the changing face of missionary activity today and into the future.

I suppose the other area worth mentioning is the public ministry for the coming year. With Operation World recently published, the opportunities to teach, preach, speak, present, mobilize, consult, analyze, etc are coming in with increasing frequency. These are great openings to really help shape the prayer life, the ministry commitments and the strategic input of churches, denominations, mission organizations and even nation wide movements, and they are there not just for myself, but for other members of our gifted OW team as well.

My speaking and travel itinerary for the next 6 months or so includes: Canada, Italy, Spain, England, Canada (again), Hungary, England, USA (plus Canada?), England, Nigeria, USA, England, USA, and then probably several locations in Asia. That’s a lot of airmiles!

So, after that epic epistle, you are all pretty much caught up with my story for the last few months. Thanks again for your continued support…in all things, this work depends on God for provision, and God has used a number of your to faithful keep us lifted up in prayer, looked after financially, and buoyed by encouragements of all kinds. Please do not stop now that the book is done; we have found ourselves under as much spiritual pressure as ever and enduring more challenges to our physical health than before. As travel increases and new projects begin, we’re also trusting God for the finances to make this all happen as well.

Keep in touch and well done for making it to the end!

Jason
Operation World website
www.operationworld.org

Review by blogger Eddie Olliffe

Review by David Rogers in SBC Impact

Article from Christian Post on OW
http://bit.ly/gRr5z9

The Amazon.com page on OW
http://amzn.to/gNj8jm

and don’t forget to join the Operation World group on Facebook!