



## 15th World Congress of the ICMDA 2014

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Celebrating 50 years of operations, the International Christian Medical and Dental Association chose the title “Serve, Share and Shine” for this year’s ICMDA Congress: Serve Jesus, Share the Gospel and let your light Shine in the Darkness. <http://icmda2014.org>

Speakers from all over the world readily agreed to come, to lecture and/or to give seminars. With the help of the Erasmus University Congress Bureau for the logistic issues, things finally came together: Venue ready, program complete and many host-families ready for their guests.

Over 900 people came from 99 countries, from all continents to Rotterdam, Netherlands. The venue, the municipal Music Hall named The Doelen, strategically located opposite the main railway station, was buzzing with life: so many people, so many languages, so many contacts. It was great!



The first three days were especially for the students and junior doctors. The overall message, not to dichotomize life but to make Christ Lord over all, was given in Bible readings from Colossians by Lindsay Brown (Fellowship of Evangelists in Universities of Europe - FEUER) and in the keynote talks: “Differentiating your purpose

from your calling” (Jan Kunene, South Africa) “Developing competencies - spiritually” (Pablo Martinez, Spain) and “Growing to full potential” (Florence Muindi, Kenya). After the break, with plenty to eat and plenty to discuss, students would either participate in one of the many seminars or in a parallel program: psychiatry, psychotherapy and counseling, or PRIME, partnerships in Medical Education. The entertaining evening programs, worship & music, student presentations often resulted in a ‘more-than-12-hour-a-day’ stay, but to everyone’s joy.

At the 50 years celebration ceremony with talks by Peter Ravenscroft, Ed Heule, Daryl Hacklund and ICMDA CEO Vinod Shah there was a flag parade by all 64 member-countries. People proudly displayed their national flag while the band played the first lines of their national anthems. A delicious gala-dinner followed.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the conference Bible readings were led by Andrzej Turkanik (Quo Vadis Institute, Austria, preparing the new generation for Christian leadership). The message was taken from the book of Titus: We can’t live ‘A-historically’ but must find our narrative in Him. Keynote lectures were on “Serving Jesus as a medical professional” (Gisela Schneider; Germany), “Sharing in Practice” (John Wyatt; UK), and “Shining in Society at large (Issam Raad; USA), challenging us to our Christian action in society.

Seminars were many and varied: “Whole person medicine”, “Prayer, personality and temperament”, “Marriage”, “Faith in a busy life”, “Neuroscience and Faith”, “What is a Christian physician”, “Leadership”, “Knowing God’s path”, “Cross-cultural Medical Mission”, “Integrity”,

“Career choices”, “Growing a student movement” among many other topics.

Every day started with a prayer session in a separate room. This “chapel room” stayed open all day for people who wanted to pray or who wanted counseling. Literature was also available: during the whole conference there was a large well stocked bookstall and over 4000 books went to the 99 countries!

The conference ended with a very impressive commissioning service on Saturday morning, led by Rev. Ron van der Spoel. Together we participated in the Lord’s supper and together we sang. Host family members were also invited. Finally, led by the choir, Adonai, the ICMDA song, once more filled the auditorium:

*Bring your healing to the nations  
Through our lives and through our hands  
Bring your healing to the nations, Dear Lord  
Change our lives and change our lands*

Then came the time to say goodbye; the time to go back. Filled with memories, thankful for the blessings and longing to serve, to shine and to share.

**Editorial Comment:** There were many workshops on global health by members of the journal’s editorial board such as “Redefining poverty for mission - a ‘wholistic’ understanding” by Anil Cherian and Vinod Shah;; “Scratching where it itches: influencing community health determinants among the impoverished - the Luke Society’s experience” by Apolos Landa; and “Challenge not to conform in the context of changing values” by Mathew Santhosh Thomas, as well as talks on healthcare in conflict zones such as Egypt and South Sudan. The Managing Editor for CJGH, Daniel O’Neill, also presented a workshop on research, reflection and publishing during the main congress. There was a time of mourning for the Dutch researchers whose plane was shot down over Ukraine days before the Congress as they were travelling to an international AIDS conference in Singapore. The Congress was an excellent time of networking and sharpening, with a view toward the next Congress in Hyderabad, India in 2018.

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