

Peter Pattison gives an international update.



Warurua Mugo, Peter Pattison, Ralph Sinn, Ricardo Zandrino.

ICMDA

New frontiers

What's happening on the international scene? Peter Saunders (PS) talks to Peter Pattison (PP) on recent developments at the International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA).

PS: Peter, we hear that ICMDA has just appointed a new General Secretary to follow on from you. Can you tell us a little about him?

PP: *Ralph Sinn and his wife Barbara both graduated from the University of Alberta Medical School, Canada, in 1984. Ralph is a family physician practising in Edmonton, Alberta, with a special interest in general practice psychiatry. They have four children aged 7 to 13 and Barbara works two half days a week in general practice. Ralph attended the ICMDA's Executive Committee meetings in April last year and from that time the Lord began to lay on his heart a calling to work with ICMDA. The appointment was confirmed in February and Ralph expects to take up the position on 1 October. It has been agreed that ICMDA's international office will move from Cambridge to Edmonton, Alberta.*

PS: That certainly is a major move. ICMDA has always been based in UK. What implications do you see for CMF UK's role in ICMDA?

PP: *ICMDA's office at one time was within CMF's offices in Partnership House. ICMDA's office relocated to Cambridge ten years ago, in part to dispel the perception that ICMDA was simply the international arm of CMF UK. The move to Canada is a further step in internationalisation and will raise ICMDA's profile in North America. CMDS Canada already has heavy involvement in international programmes and is well placed to provide local support for the ICMDA office.*

PS: Canada – Yes. But isn't Edmonton a bit 'out in the sticks'?

PP: *In one sense, but in today's world of modern communications the actual office location is a secondary matter. As it is, we have almost no personal visitors to the office in Cambridge. We looked carefully at other options but Canada is as good a choice as any.*

PS: What about Europe? With so much happening in Europe at present, and so much need, do you think this will lead to a dilution of ICMDA's contribution in Europe?

PP: *No, part of ICMDA's strategy over the last two years has been to develop effective regional committees supporting and guiding adequately funded regional secretaries across the world and I have agreed to take up a role as Regional Secretary for Europe for up to two years while we develop the structures and look for a younger person for a substantive appointment. The next ICMDA European Regional Conference is in Germany in September 2004. I hope that by that time I will be handing over an effective ongoing programme.*

PS: Tell us a little about recent encouragements in ICMDA.

PP: *With over 50 affiliated national movements now ICMDA continues to grow. Dr Warurua Mugo in East Africa and Dr Ricardo Zandrino in South America as regional secretaries are both experienced in the work and widely respected. Last year we established committees in East Africa and South America to support them. As well as Europe, this year we hope to establish an effective committee in East Asia.*

The other area that is enormously encouraging is the student work. New groups among medical and dental students seem to be springing up all over the world. Mark Pickering has made a tremendous contribution in this area as ICMDA's Student Secretary. Over the next couple of years he too will be looking for his successor. Over Easter East African students are meeting for a retreat in Mombasa. ICMDA was able to make a grant to their travel expenses. In Zambia a large group of students from Lusaka is hoping to attend the Taiwan Congress, raising approximately £1,000 each toward their expenses from local sponsorship and support.

PS: You mention Taiwan and some of us are already coming to that World Congress in July. How are the preparations going?

PP: *Very well and we are looking forward to a great conference. The programme of plenary sessions and seminars is now tied up and the President of Taiwan will address the welcome dinner.*

When the bursary allocation committee met in February we had £65,000 to allocate, from the generosity of donors around the world. We expect to help around 150 people. Each delegate will contribute something, and many have been challenged to ask in faith for more than they initially indicated that they could contribute. We are particularly praying that there will be representatives from every country in East Asia as well as across the world. We know that these conferences have played a pivotal role in establishing and strengthening new national movements in the past.

PS: I'm a great ICMDA enthusiast. How can CMF support ICMDA more?

PP: *First I'd like to say a big 'thank you' to CMF and its members for all they are already doing through support, prayers, encouragement and financial generosity.*

I am particularly keen to establish ICMDA's development fund on a firmer financial basis. CMF members have contributed significantly to this and I hope that this will continue. Perhaps the move to Canada will help to internationalise our prayer and funding support. A number of CMF members are already checked in for Taiwan but there's plenty of room for more. Please come to encourage others and to be encouraged. Thank you CMF and let's have more of the same.