



No. 18, Fall 2005

The Hearth

A Newsletter for the Friends of OMSC



International Residents Share Stories and Joy in Mission Community

By Irene Ai-Ling Tsen
Yale Divinity School Intern

OMSC hosted more than 125 people at its fall reception on September 7, 2005, held in Great Commission Hall. Representatives of the religious and academic communities of New Haven welcomed the new residents from around the world. This academic year OMSC welcomes 42 church leaders, professors, mission executives, and missionaries from Ghana, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Indonesia, South Korea, China, Ukraine, Bolivia, Russia, and the United States.

These new residents include **Beaung Ae Jung**, who, moved by love for God, committed her life to Christian service after reading Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." She adds, "My debt was paid by Jesus Christ; I wish to bring him pleasure."

Beaung Ae was involved in missions in her own country of South Korea (1990–94) and in Tanzania (1996–2005). In Africa, she was a lecturer at Calvin Theological College, Dar es Salaam, during her first three years. She taught New Testament and church his-

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Katrina Victims Relocate to OMSC's Doane Hall

When Hurricane Katrina smashed into the Gulf Coast on the morning of August 29 it left thousands of New Orleans residents homeless and hopeless, including Kelly Delgado, Michael Wade, and their daughter, Isabella Delgado, who found their way to New Haven and now reside in Apartment H of Doane Hall.

Wanting to serve those displaced by the

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From the Executive Director

Hospitality and Life Together

By Jonathan J. Bonk
Executive Director

When two recently graduated Yale students were married at OMSC on August 13, they invited me to give a homily on "building a marriage and a home through hospitality." Sydney and Erin had been in our home on numerous occasions and, while hospitality has been a central feature of our existence for almost forty years, something about their invitation surprised me: it had not occurred to me that *hospitality* might be one key to a good marriage. But as I reflected on their request, the prescience of their insight became apparent.

Hospitality, for instance, helps us keep our egos in check. Escape from the cramped, stifling dungeons of our egos is often routed through hospitality and service. A focus on the well-being of others ameliorates our predisposition to self-absorption. Our Lord's observation that "*unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain*" is as true of a human life as it

is of an apple seed; "*but if it dies, it bears much fruit*" is the law of the harvest (John 12:24). We reap not only *what* we sow, but *more than* we sow. "I did it my way" is a fitting epitaph only for an ultimately pathetic life.

Hospitality, furthermore, enhances our capacity to keep personal issues, struggles, and agendas in perspective. When one associates with people whose lives are more harrowing, whose challenges are more daunting, whose fortitude of spirit is more indomitable, and whose accomplishments are more notable than one's own, one cannot but be humbled and sometimes not a little inspired.

And finally, hospitality aligns us with God's constantly reiterated concern for the poor, the homeless, the orphaned, and the widowed among us. It is instructive to note that when Ezekiel cites Sodom as an example of wickedness, he is not thinking of the

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Residents Seek Spiritual and Physical Renewal While Living in Community

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tory while also helping the administrative and kitchen staffs. Since she spoke only Han Gle while growing up in South Korea, learning English and Swahili were two of the many difficulties she encountered during her cultural transition.

In 2001, Beaung Ae, who also uses the name Bess, was transferred from urban ministry to rural ministry when she was stationed at Iringa, in western Tanzania. There, she brought the Gospel to men and women of various ages, including AIDS patients and Muslims. She also trained people in disciple groups and led Sunday services in the village.

She developed a passion for teen mothers, many of whom, unmarried and possessing little knowledge of motherhood, were still children themselves. Resources and energy

for these youths and their children, however, were often scarce.

Beaung Ae hopes to be replenished spiritually at OMSC as well as to be strengthened physically; her body was weakened when she contracted malaria numerous times during her mission work. Radiating a spirit of gentleness and resilience, Beaung Ae strives to live as Enoch lived (see Gen. 5:24), walking closely with her Lord.

During the Communist regime in Ethiopia, **Dirshaye Menberu Getahun**, who grew up in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, gave her life to God. Five years prior to this decision she read the Marxist Manifesto and was convinced that she was an atheist. "Religion is culture," she said. "Anyone, including my family, could be openly religious, but privately they were worshipping other idols."

When Communism arrived, she was only too ready to accept its atheistic beliefs. Her confidence in godless teaching, however, was temporary.

In 1977 Dirshaye began to have strange dreams that jolted her up from her sleep. In the dreams she was proclaiming God's name at a crossroad; she saw images of blue fire and a praying man inscribed over a stone, which she believed was Jesus. These dreams and providential encounters with Christians left her without peace. Dirshaye became increasingly frustrated with answers offered by the Communists, yet she was not able to make sense of the theology of the Orthodox Church.

During this time, God continued to work in her heart through lives of Christians she

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Community life

On September 7 more than 125 OMSC staff members and friends welcomed church leaders, professors, mission executives, and missionaries from around the world.

Page one, clockwise from top left: Alexey Markevich of Russia demonstrates a computer program to Maureen Iheanacho of Ghana. OMSC Executive Director Jonathan Bonk introduces new residents including Xiaohong Zhu and Liang Shen of China and (back row) Irene Ai-Ling Tsen, Yale Divinity School intern. Domician Tinkaligaile of Tanzania enjoys a quiet moment on a bench that overlooks Long Island Sound. Dirshaye Menberu of Ethiopia greets OMSC friends and supporters Clyde and Betsy Work.



Page two, clockwise: Residents and staff gathered on the steps of the administrative building for a large-group community photograph. Lev Markevich of Russia enjoyed the beach cookout in Branford, Connecticut. From left, Hazel Ayanga of Kenya, Carolyn Engelhardt, director of the Ministry Resource Center at Yale Divinity School, and Dorcas Akintunde of Nigeria share a moment together at the reception in Great Commission Hall. (The large group photo is by Michael Marsland of Yale University; all photos for The Hearth are by Dan Nicholas.)



Hospitality and Life

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citizenry's proverbial obsession with non-procreative sex: "This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy." (Eze. 16:49 NRSV). No wonder, then, that when Jesus portrayed the day of judgment, those welcomed into the joy of their Lord were not the ones whose theological propositions were closest to the mark, but those who had welcomed needy strangers into their homes (Matt. 25:31–46).

Once more "home" to a community as diverse as any we've had in recent years—China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Canada, and the United States are all represented—OMSC has made room for a young New Orleans family. Rendered at once homeless and jobless by Hurricane Katrina, Kelly Delgado and Michael Wade, with their daughter Isabella, moved into 490 Prospect Street in early October. Young, and not especially religious, they now find themselves in a surreal new world of the professionally pious—missionaries, church leaders, and academics—most of them middle-aged Asians and Africans. This is a far cry from off-beat, up-beat New Orleans! As we grapple with the devastating practical effects of this young family's geographical and social dislocation, the boundaries of our parochialism are broken, stereotypes are shattered, and racial prejudices are mitigated. Hospitality is both the means and the result.

I hope that you will be able to visit us sometime in the coming months. After all, this is your work—one tangible expression of your faithful prayers, support, and commitment to hospitality. In the meanwhile, with this issue of *The Hearth* we offer you a window into life at OMSC.

Sydney Penner and Erin Birdsong were married at OMSC on August 13.



PERRYS JOIN STAFF AS HOSTS

New Haven residents David and Molly Perry joined the OMSC staff in August as resident hosts in Great Commission Hall.

As part of their service, they welcome short-term guests including Norman E. Thomas, professor emeritus of world Christianity, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Thomas (left) was one of many guests who took advantage of the summer residency option at OMSC.

Visit www.omsc.org/summer.pdf to read and print a brochure about summer 2006 residency possibilities.



Menberu



Byaruhanga



Kemdirim

Three African Scholars Writing for Online Dictionary

By Michèle Sigg

DACB Project Manager

This year OMSC is home to three Project Luke fellowship recipients who will each contribute at least ten stories to the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*.

Dr. Dirshaye Menberu, the first woman to receive a Project Luke scholarship, is a retired professor from the department of chemistry at the Science Faculty at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia (see her story beginning on page 2).

Dr. Christopher Byaruhanga is a Munyoro from Hoima, in western Uganda. He and his wife Christine have three children: Dan (24) who holds a masters in economic planning and policy, and Dixon (19) and Dianah (17), both in their first year of studying for a bachelor of law. Christopher is an associate professor at Uganda Christian University, Mukono, where he teaches systematic theology and African Christian theology while also acting as dean of Education, Arts, and Sciences. He is an ordained priest in the Anglican Church of Uganda. While on sabbatical at OMSC, he plans to take advantage of the resources at Yale University to sharpen his research skills. He is working on one book on the history and theology of the ecumenical movement in East Africa and another on the life of Bishop Alfred Robert Tucker.

Dr. Otitodirichukwu Protus Kemdirim lives in Port Harcourt, in southern Nigeria. He and his wife Maria Nkechi have three children: Emmanuel (12), Chinonye (9), and David (7). Protus is a senior lecturer in Christian theology and gender studies in the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies at the University of Port Harcourt. Formerly he was secretary general of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) and editor-in-chief of *The Nigerian Journal of Theology*. Protus is the author of a book entitled *Foundations of Christian Religious and Moral Education* and has published articles in *Mission Studies*, *African Ecclesial Review*, and *British Journal of Theological Education*. This year he is hoping to work on a book on Christian doctrine and theology.

In July, Project Manager Michèle Sigg was invited to present the DACB (see www.DACB.org) at the biannual meeting of the Réseau Anglican Francophone (Anglican Francophone Network) in Montréal, Canada. Among the participants, Gérard Florigny, director of Formation Biblique et Théologique à Maurice (Center for Biblical and Theological Training in Mauritius), enthusiastically offered his support for the project in the Indian Ocean region by seeking contributors in the Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian churches in the area.

Missionaries, Professors, Leaders, and Families Share Life Together

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knew. In 1979 Dirshaye was faced with disappointment by others. In her anger, her own vanity became ever so clear. “God showed me who I really was. I was worse than anyone else.” This realization led to her repentance. After years of searching for the answer to her questions, she was baptized on September 3, 1983.

After she requested retirement from a career as a chemistry professor at Addis Ababa University, Dirshaye sought a theological education to prepare herself for ministry in the church. A Project Luke scholar, she is the first woman resident at OMSC to serve as a contributor to the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*. Dirshaye and her husband, Agonafer, are the parents of three children: Elelta, Elias, and Mekonnen.

Hee Youl Lee, the current chairman of OMSC’s residents committee, resides in Doane Hall with his wife, **Wonsun Park** (Hebziba), and their children **Jaisung** (13), **Jairyung** (9), and **Jaemin** (4). Originally from South Korea, the family has served in Indonesia for the past eight years. “We went to Indonesia by faith,” says Hee Youl, who is also called Barnabas. “It is my principle not to ask for money from the Korean churches.” Rather, he believes Christians in Indonesia must learn to give towards mission in their own nation, as well as the world.

Holding to this principle was not easy, however, because churches in Indonesia were either limited in their resources or simply had not cultivated the awareness to give towards missions. In faith and humility Hee Youl and his family persevered, trusting in God’s providence through the words of Isaiah 41:10, which says, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Drawing upon his experience as a business person who had received the best tertiary education in Korea, Hee Youl taught courses on business and economics at a local Indonesian university for four years. His passion, however, is his ministry at the Barnabas Leadership Training Center, an effort he initiated.

Christian education, he says, should not focus only on theoretical theology but also on practical theology—the way Jesus taught his disciples. Therefore in the training center Indonesian students live in community for six months. Their day starts with communal prayer at 5:00 a.m. and the training runs until 9:00 at night. Hee Youl strongly emphasizes the importance of praying together. He says Christians must learn to intercede for the spiritual, moral, political, and economic conditions of their nation.

“Although I am tempted to be proud of this training center,” Hee Youl admits, “I have come to realize I am just a sinner. I cannot do anything without God.” Transformation is not possible through human effort; only God can transform a person.

“During the Cultural Revolution, people in China had to disclose too much about themselves that they were unwilling to disclose, and uttered too many things that they did not wish to utter,” says **Yin Wenjuan**, who, for the sake of her research, was required to interview countless graduates from mission schools established by Western educators during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. “The political changes in the past 50 years have caused people to be painfully hesi-

tant to speak about their experiences and to trust other people, especially strangers,” she observes.

Wenjuan leads a research committee of both Western and Chinese scholars studying the mission schools which provided secondary education for girls before the political upheaval in China. She needs to quickly compile as much oral history of these female graduates as possible because this age group is experiencing a high mortality rate. “These elderly women who once attended the mission schools bear a mark of distinction—an unspoken gentleness, peace, and simplicity—which I really enjoy,” she observes.

Wenjuan grieves with her people for the price that they paid—the ancient Chinese culture they sacrificed in the name of modernization. According to Wenjuan, China is now in the midst of a spiritual paradox: “In history, people were expected to accept too much in too short a period of time. Yet, on the other hand, now there is emptiness, a vacuum in China. People are hesitant to accept or to trust, yet they have a great yearning for some kind of fulfillment.”

People are often surprised when they discover that this young lady standing before them is actually a professor at one of the premier universities in China. Yin Wenjuan is currently teaching the history of Christianity at Tsing Hua University. This fall she is a member of the OMSC community and a research fellow at Yale Divinity School.

“My cup runneth over!” exclaims **Marcella Hoesl, M.M.**, at the grand finale of her missionary pilgrimage story (see the April 2003 *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*). Recently retired as academic dean of Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas, Marcella is not idle even during this time of transition and rest at OMSC, where she is a senior mission scholar in residence for the fall semester.

The most meaningful portion of her experience at Oblate, she says, was her experience working with the students. Embodying the experiences and the spirit of pastoral care, Marcella enjoyed immensely her conversations and relationships with students of many different cultural and denominational backgrounds. As her active involvement in the field of education testifies, “theology is important.”

Merely through brief observation of her steadfast demeanor, however, one could gather that, for Marcella, theology is vital so long as it impacts one’s daily living.

For Marcella, a Maryknoll sister since 1957, the word “retirement” is not suitable to describe her current vocation. Looking forward to returning to her roots in Cincinnati, she is contemplating the possibility of serving in the Hispanic ministry there. Marcella served for many years in Latin America, while undergoing the many significant impacts brought by the wave of Vatican II.

In 1982 she set forth for what became one of “the greatest learning experiences” of her life—work as dean of the mission department at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England, the school where Lesslie Newbigin was a professor. There she began “stressing the idea of *missio Dei*, God’s mission, and our privilege of being involved in it.” God’s mission is truly boundless and all-encompassing, she emphasizes, adding that mission is the overcoming of “barriers and obstacles that separate us from God, from our brothers and sisters near and far, and from the world.”



Pamela Sola (center) gave each child a school backpack as they arrived at OMSC.



Family Flees Hurricane Katrina, Moves into OMSC

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crisis, OMSC Executive Director Jonathan Bonk contacted New Haven officials about the apartment that had remained vacant when pastors from Myanmar were unable to receive visas for travel to America. Delgado and Wade, meanwhile, traveled to Connecticut to be near Kelly's cousin in Milford. They heard about the vacancy from a social worker and soon were being welcomed by staff and residents alike.

Hurricane Survivors: *Kelly Delgado, Michael Wade, and their daughter, Isabella Delgado, are living at OMSC since they fled Hurricane Katrina. (Bottom) Isabella has already made a new friend, Ella Hedman, daughter of resident hosts Nathan and April Hedman. Ella turns two in December and Bella will celebrate her third birthday at OMSC in January.*

The family had stayed in a Lake Charles hotel for eight days after disaster struck before deciding to relocate to Connecticut. Being displaced by the killer hurricane "was horrible, like something you never want to experience. It was like a movie!" says Kelly, who worked for eight years as a waitress and sales clerk at the famous Café Du Monde in the French Quarter and is seeking employment in New Haven while planning to complete a degree next year at Gateway Community College, New Haven.

Michael worked in restaurant and custodial jobs in New Orleans and says he is happiest when hanging sheetrock, repairing roofs, or doing similar construction jobs. He is seeking such employment in Connecticut. Michael has enjoyed seeing Yale, the famous university about which he had only heard.

Kelly says that since arriving in New Haven she has been most pleasantly surprised that "there are a lot of angels watching over us here. It's amazing how people are good to you and they do not even know you."

Kelly and Michael express their appreciation and thanks for the staff and residents who have made them feel welcomed at 490 Prospect Street. —by Dan Nicholas

News in Brief

Three **churches donated winter coats** and other warm clothing for OMSC residents, many of whom will experience winter for the first time. Thanks go to Hang Sung Presbyterian Church, Woodside, New York; First Korean Presbyterian Church, Manchester, Connecticut; and St. John's Episcopal Church, New Haven.

Donn Hayden of CompUSA, Orange, Connecticut, led a **Computer Users' Group** for residents, hours his employer will count as paid time. Twelve people attended on October 4 to consider "How to Select, Evaluate, and Purchase a Computer." A second session will be held November 15 on "How to Understand, Manage, and Maintain a Computer." Wilson Thomas, Bedford, New Hampshire, gave nine people an "Introduction to Computers: Understanding the Basics," on September 2.

Jean Bonk's **English-as-a-Second-Language class** started this fall with eight participants on Monday mornings and Thursday nights. Participating residents are from China, South Korea, Russia, and Ethiopia. The executive director's wife also leads an **American cooking class**. A dozen residents learned to make carrot cake during the September gathering and will create apple pie, pumpkin pie, and Christmas cookies later this year.

Nearly fifty pastors and missions committee members filled Great Commission Hall October 5 to hear Philip Jenkins, distinguished professor of history and religious studies, Pennsylvania State University, speak about his book *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. Director of finance and housing Judy Stebbins and her staff cooked a delicious luncheon for those who attended OMSC's second **Mission Seminar**. Two Fairfield, Connecticut, churches, Black Rock Congregational Church and Greenfield Hill Congregational Church, cosponsored the seminar.

The Board of Trustees welcomes two new members, **Angelyn Dries, O.S.F.**, a missiologist who holds the Danforth chair in the Department of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University; and **David M. Mace**, who is retired as chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Northern Trust Company of Connecticut.

The **2005 Christmas Reception** at OMSC will be held Wednesday, December 14, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., in Great Commission Hall. All are welcome to attend.

OMSC welcomes two student interns. **Irene Ai-Ling Tsen** of Yale Divinity School is writing profiles for the resident and staff directory and for *The Hearth*. **Sidney Yeung** of Albertus Magnus College assists staff and residents with the computer systems.

Angela C. Scipio, *IBMR* circulation coordinator and OMSC computer systems manager, teaches evening computer classes for Wallingford (Connecticut) Adult Education. She received the master of healthcare administration degree in August from the University of New Haven.

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Introducing He Qi

When **He Qi** was asked to give only one color to describe God, he smiled with his eyes glimmering in surprise. Shaking his head hesitantly, he answered, "If I had only one color, I would stop drawing altogether!"

One cannot fully appreciate the art of He Qi, the current OMSC artist in residence, unless one understands his reinterpretation of the Divine in the context of ancient art in China. Chinese religious art, namely, Zen, was historically typified as tranquil and utopian portrayals of nature, often painted with black ink mixed with water. Within this framework, He Qi has redefined the relationship between people and spirituality with bold colors, embellished shapes, and thick strokes, comparable to the characteristics of the Creation and humanity, the art work of God. Quoting Genesis 1:3, He Qi exclaimed, "Let there be light!"

He Qi was among the many people sent to the countryside during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. As a young man, he escaped hard labor by painting pictures of Chairman Mao Zedong. During this time, he found a copy of Raphael's *Madonna and Child* in an old magazine and was deeply moved by its radiance. "I painted Mao by day, Madonna by night."

Today He Qi is an internationally known, contemporary Chinese Christian artist and professor of Christian art at Nanjing Theological Seminary. His residency is made possible through a generous grant from the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. —by Irene Ai-Ling Tsen



Artist He Qi at the reception September 7

Plan to view the exhibit at the
Yale Institute of Sacred Music
409 Prospect Street, New Haven



**Look Toward the Heavens:
The Art of He Qi**

March 6 to April 26, 2006

A reception for the artist
will be held at Yale ISM
March 23, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Thank You, Cosponsors and Contributors!

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