



IBCM Network exists to serve the international Brethren community through:
strengthening leaders, encouraging churches, empowering mission, facilitating networks & unifying all worldwide.

WELCOME TO THE IBCM NETWORK NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019

DR DAVID SMITH | INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR – IBCM NETWORK



Greetings to the churches around the world from IBCM Network and welcome to our newsletter. The IBCM Network team understands the importance of working together for the kingdom and of being connected so we can act as one family. To that end we will be sending out regular newsletters to keep you updated with the work of IBCM Network as well as to bring you highlights of what God is doing with his people around the world.

I trust that as you join us on this journey you will be captivated by what God is doing and encouraged to serve him with renewed strength, as together we share in the call to manifest Christ locally and globally for his glory.

In this first edition we look at:

IBCM Network – The Future

IBCM7 - Conference Report

IBCM7 – Thank you

IBCM7 – Participant Appreciation

IBCM Books

If you know of others who would like to receive this newsletter and be kept up to date on the happenings world-wide please email the team at ibcm@ibcm.net.

As 2019 comes to a close we pray you know God's richest blessing as we remember his love expressed to us in Christ at this special time.



IBCM NETWORK – THE FUTURE

DR IAN BURNES | CHAIRMAN – IBCM NETWORK

The future of IBCM has been discussed among the organising committee and beyond for several months. We have recognising for a long time the heavy demands that running such a large event



places on a team of volunteers, so earlier this year a charitable organisation called "IBCM Network" was set up, which now provides a foundation for the future development of the conferences and all the associated activities and networking that have grown out of this. IBCM Network will still organise our large international conference every four years.

However, in addition the IBCM Network will work in close cooperation with the growing number of regional conferences, the Brethren Training Network, and other initiatives. The potential of the network to provide coherence, encouragement, and advice to many national networks and local churches, can only develop if we have the staff to run the organisation. Therefore, in our planning for the future we have recognised that we need staff members who can run and develop the network. At present we are in the process of appointing as international director, Dr David Smith, who many of you would have met and heard in Rome, along with an administrator, Ms Sanja Zurovac, whose name will also be well known to many of you as one of the key organisers of IBCM7. This is a major step of faith and will depend on our ability to find the resources needed for their support, but as a board we believe that we should move forward, trusting that the Lord will meet these needs, as we partner with other agencies in this ministry.

As we move ahead, we will keep you informed of these and other developments. In the meantime we would ask you to pray for these plans and the development of the IBCM Network.



IBCM7 CONFERENCE, ITALY, 24 – 28/29 JUNE 2019

NEIL SUMMERTON | TRUSTEE IBCM NETWORK, FORMERLY GENERAL SECRETARY OF IBCM



I was very directly led to work for IBCM, at the end of the 1990s, as the Lord called me use some of the skills and experience which I had gained in international work for the British government, on behalf of the coming Kingdom as expressed through the worldwide local churches connected with the Brethren movement. (Our chairman,

Fares Marzone, had of course been associated with IBCM since before the first conference in Singapore in 1993.) But I don't think that either of us expected the growth of interest and numbers that we have seen in the recent conferences, as shown in the following table:

Conference	Number of participants	Countries represented
IBCM1, Singapore	194	22
IBCM2, Ostia, Italy	239	53
IBCM3, Sibiu, Romania	305	57
IBCM4, Wiedenest, Germany	420	77
IBCM5, Strasbourg, France	480	90
IBCM6, Pomezia, Italy	680	104
IBCM7, Pomezia, Italy	880	122



IBCM7, 24-28 June 2019

The theme of the IBCM7 conference was the challenge of witness to Christ by Brethren churches and mission in many different countries and cultures across the world. It was distinguished by four addresses by Prof. John Lennox, emeritus professor of mathematics in the University of Oxford, who shared from the wealth of his experience as an advocate and defender of the Christian faith in many ways in the

public arena, in the media, and in universities across the world.

Main conference addresses were also given by Professor Joel Hernandez ¹ (USA/Mexico), Dr. Ivan Chow ² (Singapore), Santhosh Thomas ³ (India), Dr. David Smith ⁴ (Australia), Dr. David Henry ⁵ (Jamaica), and Fares Marzone ⁶ (Italy). The main conference addresses can be seen and heard on YouTube via the IBCM website at <https://new.ibcm.net/live-streaming-of-ibcm-2019/> They can also be reached via 'Keynote Address Videos' on the homepage.



The opening session of the conference was addressed by Senator Lucio Malan, a member of the Italian Senate, formerly a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and an evangelical Christian from the Waldensian tradition in Italy, as well as by Eliseo Santangelo on behalf of the Italian Brethren assemblies. The main programme was supported by a rich programme of workshops. Speakers' and workshop introducers' notes can be viewed via 'Conference Programme and Notes' at <https://new.ibcm.net/ibcm7/>. The Evening programmes illustrated the conference themes with examples drawn from work among, and outreach from, Brethren churches from the different main regions of the world, including Oceania, South and East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. As usual, these contributions were informative and encouraging, and some were deeply challenging. The conference was followed by a 24-hour session of the Brethren Training Network – see www.brethrentraining.org for more details and workshop notes.

You can see a file of conference photos at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZStrvKXHKLAoeiUqgGRpoElyLNvQWiE>

1 Professor of Intercultural Studies, Emmaus Bible College, Iowa, USA, and a director of Christian Missions to Many Lands (USA)

2 Deputy Senior Pastor, Bethesda Church, Bukit Arang, Singapore.

3 Principal, Bengal Bible Training Institute, India.

4 Principal, Perth Bible College, Western Australia and a director of Christian Community Churches Australia.

5 Lead Pastor, Swallowfield Chapel, Kingston, Jamaica.

6 Then Principal, Italian Evangelical Bible Institute and chairman of the IBCM7 conference.



IBCM8

The next conference (IBCM8) is expected to be held in 2023. An announcement as to the location and other arrangements will be made in due course.

The Brethren Movement Worldwide

The growth and success of the IBCM conferences, and what has emerged from them, through regional conferences and Brethren Training Network, is testimony among other things to the scale of the Christian or Open Brethren movement worldwide, thanks to the astonishing missionary effort of the movement, to the continuing interest within the movement to encourage one another in the work which God has given us to do in each country, and to the continuing gospel vitality of this group of churches.

The scale of the movement is shown in the new edition of The Brethren Movement Worldwide: Key Information, edited by Ken and Jeanette Newton, published by IBCM and OPAL Trust for the conference. This 346-page handbook of the Brethren movement includes overall statistical information on Brethren churches country by country, and continent by content; a statistical overview; and entries for 117 countries and territories giving key information relating to the churches in the particular country and the bodies which serve them. Many entries include illuminating historical information on the origins and growth of the movement in the particular country⁷.

7 Copies of the volume are available from IBCM Network CIO, Abbey Court, Cove, Tiverton EX16 7RT, UK (or via ibcm@ibcm.net), price £6.00 plus postage (ascertained on dispatch, followed by an invoice), provided that a postal address is supplied. See "IBCM books" bellow.



IBCM7 - THANK YOU

FARES MARZONE | CHAIRMAN INTERNATIONAL PLANING GROUP



It was so wonderful to have all of you at the conference. The preparation, both with the international executive committee, and for the logistics, with the Italian one, took literally thousands of hours, sometimes with worries mingled with great joy. But what a blessing it was to see Hotel Selene's auditorium full of participants coming from so many different parts of the world. I had been '*dreaming*' of such an event for years. It was thrilling to hear the unique challenges from the teaching-preaching of the Word at the plenary sessions, at the workshops and also during the inspiring evening session. It was also great to participate in worship while singing and praying in different languages, to have fellowship in many ways, and to share with others during the corridor time and at the meals.



I want to thank you all for coming and for your earnest prayers for us. Please continue to pray for the Hotel's staff who were impressed by our respectful manner during the conference, and impacted by the singing and the kindness showed to them in many ways. I want to thank my colleagues of the executive committee, the members of the

International Planning Group and the Italian people who were involved in the practical side of the organization, in particular Donato, the Lorefices and above all Sanja. I don't want to forget the technicians, translators and the worship team who worked hard. My thanks go to the Emmaus and IBEI students, to our (IPG) wives, and of course to all the speakers. In particular, I thank Professor John Lennox for his willingness to come and be led in such a fantastic way by the Lord. But, above all, it's Him who deserves my thanks for the way He guided the whole conference and for what has happened afterwards. We received many encouragements through emails, reports published in various magazines, and we know that many plans have been made that will find their accomplishments in the years to come, if He carries His coming.



And now a personal note. It has been a great privilege for me to be involved with IBCM for so many years, since February 1994. In fact, the first IBCM which took place in 1993, in Singapore, signaled a great change in my life! I desired to go there to participate in an international missionary conference, which by itself would have been something amazing, as I was at that time President of the Italian Missionary Service Group. But I was immediately faced with much more. From that time onward IBCM has been a great part of my life and ministry. I thank the Lord for the privilege of having worked for this ministry for more than twenty-five years first as Vice Chairman and then as Chairman of the International Planning Group and of the conference itself. Following Singapore, the successive IBCMs have always emphasized the word

'Mission' in the broad unifying meaning that captures the entire work of the church for the kingdom.



As Neil wrote, I agree that we could never have foreseen the incredible growth of the conference, and not only in numbers, but also its impact worldwide! I think that the time has now come for me to leave my role as Chairman. However, God willing, for a year or so, in order to give continuity, I'll continue to be involved as a trustee of the recently established IBCM Network CIO committee. So, I take this opportunity to greet all of you thanking the many who have prayed regularly for me and for my wife Ada as well. Special thanks goes to Ken Newton, who passed me the baton many years ago, and to Neil Summerton with whom I worked with for so many years as a team alongside others. Life won't be the same as we used to spend hours on the phone and, in more recent years, on long and frequent skype calls. I regret that during the last conference I didn't have the time to share and to talk to many of you. I apologize for that.

My prayer is that the IBCM Network will continue to grow for the furtherance of the Gospel and for His glory alone.



[CLICK TO VIEW THE CONFERENCE VIDEO](#)



IBCM7 – PARTICIPATION RESPONSES

STEPHEN BEDFORD | CHAIR OF TRUSTEES, PARTNERSHIP UK

IBCM7 - THERE WE FOUND BRETHREN!

Such was the title of Fares Marzone's talk in the concluding session of IBCM7. The words are lifted from Acts 28:14 reflecting Paul's (and writer Luke's) joy at meeting fellow believers who had made a special journey to meet them on their Rome-ward way.

Such joy was truly present as we gathered as a united company of nearly 900 fellow disciples from 122 countries that I often found myself weeping tears of joy as we sang. Whilst there are many differences not only of culture and language but also of local church practices in the spectrum of churches represented at the conference, there was a clear and overwhelming intention on the part of all to focus on the gospel that unites us and how we can communicate it to a desperately needy world. And they were not at all ashamed to be part of the brethren movement, which is clearly alive and well and being used by God in so many countries of the world. I wish our 'brethren-sceptic' brothers and sisters could have experienced this conference!



BRUCE STORMER | GC3 BOARD CHAIR, NEW ZEALAND

IBCM7 - A FORETASTE OF HEAVEN!

In June I had the privilege of attending the Seventh International Brethren Conference on Mission (IBCM7) in Rome. The theme was 'You shall be my witnesses' – Engaging with the world and its Needs. With 900 people and 122 countries represented, it was the biggest conference in the history of IBCM. The organising committee did an outstanding job in arranging all aspects of the

conference, so we received clear practical teaching from Dr John Lennox, a wide range of workshop topics and presenters to interact with, and reports on God's work from many regions of the world. If I had to describe the conference, I would say it was a foretaste of heaven. Why? Because of the joy of being together with people from so many (not every) countries and languages, all with the same desire to worship, serve and give glory to our great God.



JOHNSON MWEBEMBEZI | CHAIRMAN EMMANUEL MISSION, UGANDA
IBCM7 – A REHEARSAL FOR HEAVEN

I hope you are all back safely to your respective countries. It was great meeting you at IBCM7. What a joyful time of fellowship we had together in the beautiful hall and workshop rooms at Selene Hotel, Pomezia. I now believe beyond doubt that God is at work in the Brethren movement worldwide, more than ever before, it is unstoppable. The memories of earth moving testimonies from hard to penetrate nations are still fresh. The beautiful praise voices together with prayers from brethren of all tongues of the earth seemed to be a rehearsal of how it will in heaven. This clearly shows what the blood of Jesus has done by uniting people who wouldn't have known each other. The powerful presentations in the plenary sessions and the diverse workshops were so challenging. I think this conference was organized for me specifically. God bless the organizers, the participants, and the Italian brethren.



AMANDA DOUGLAS | STUDENT, EMMAUS BIBLE COLLEGE, DUBUQUE, USA
IBCM7 - HERE I DISCOVERED MY CALLING

My name is Amanda, I am 23 and I went to the IBCM7 conference to volunteer, with our small missionary team from Emmaus Bible College. My intention in choosing this mission trip was to help open my eyes and see if the Lord would point me in a new direction for my future. You see, during the trip I was between majors and was very lost with what direction my life should take next. So being at the IBCM Conference really affected me. Although the IBCM conference was not specifically for young adults my age, it still is a conference that can shake your world and make you truly rethink what living for God is all about. While at

the conference I was impacted by the great community, I enjoyed getting to know the amazing leaders who spent so many hours putting the conference together, I even got to listen to people from all over the world and hear their stories, and the best part was that I made lasting friendships with people who will support me for the rest of my life. Ultimately, I ended up changing my course major to Intercultural Studies, with the goal of working overseas as a missionary teacher. Honestly, it may sound cheesy, and it may sound like a typical Sunday school answer, but in the end I truly believe God orchestrated me being at the IBCM Conference this past summer, because without that experience I don't think I would have discovered what the Lord was really calling me to do - "To lay down my own life and live for Him."





Emmaus students (Dubuque, USA) together with Joel Hernandez, Donato Santamaria and Sanja Zurovac visiting a Brethren Church in Rome

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

- **2020 Portuguese Conference (22/07 - 26/07):** Sao Tome, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome & Principe - Encontro de Irmaos das Comunidades de Paises de Lingua Portuguesa. Brethren from Portuguese speaking countries.

- **2020 Asia Pacific Conference (29/07 - 01/08):** Port Dickson, Malaysia - Partners in the Harvest Conference (PITH). Brethren from the Asian and Pacific regions. (Contacts: email address - pitharvest.ao@gmail.com; Website - <http://pith-ao.org/> You can register at: <http://pith-ao.org/wp/conference-2020/>)

- **2021 - Pan African Conference** (dates and location to be announced).

- **2021 - Hispano Conference** (dates and location to be announced)

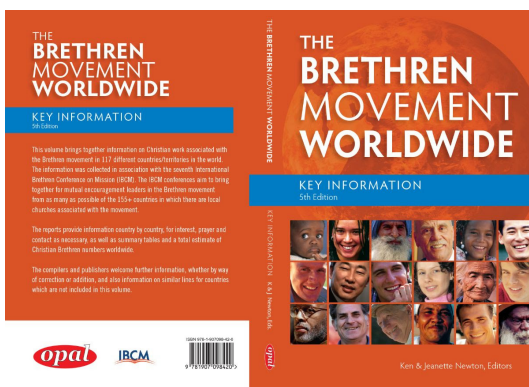
- **2021 - Caribbean Conference** (dates and location to be announced)

- 2021 - European Conference (dates and location to be announced)

- 2022 - BTN Consultation (dates and location to be announced)

For further information, please go to <https://www.ibcm.net/regional-conferences>

IBCM BOOKS

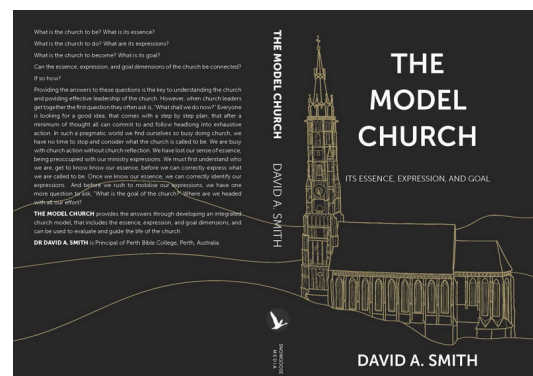


The Brethren Movement Worldwide: Key Information (new edition).

For the 2019 IBCM conference, Ken and Jeanette Newton (Australia) edited a new edition of this handbook. It gives summary statistical information about the Christian Brethren movement worldwide, and key information for 117 countries/territories where there are churches connected with the movement (out of the 155+ worldwide).

Price: £6.00 plus postage and packing (in the UK, a total of £9.00).

Dr David Smith presented in Rome on “Empowering Leadership” and has just released his book called “The Model Church”. What is the church to be? What is its essence? What is the church to do? What are its expressions? What is the church to become? What is its goal? Can the essence, expression, and goal dimensions of the church be connected? If so how?



Providing the answers to these questions is the key to understanding the church and providing effective leadership of the church. However, when church leaders get together the first question they often ask is, “What shall we do now?”

Everyone is looking for a good idea, though comes with a step by step plan, that after a minimum

of thought all can commit to and follow headlong into exhaustive action. In such a pragmatic world we find ourselves so busy doing church, we have no time to stop and consider what the church is called to be. We are busy with church action without church reflection. We have lost our sense of essence, being preoccupied with our ministry expressions. We must first understand who we are, get to know know our essence, before we can correctly express what we are called to be. Once we know our essence, we can correctly identify our expressions. And before we rush to mobilise our expressions, we have one more question to ask, "What is the goal of the church?" Where are we headed with all our effort? The Model Church provides the answers through developing an integrated church model, that includes the essence, expression, and goal dimensions, and can be used to evaluate and guide the life of the church.

Price: £10.00 | A\$20

plus postage and handling (in the UK, a total of £13.00, in Australia \$26).



Most readers may be surprised by the topic of this work... Few are familiar with this important part of the Reformation, and most English-language Church history texts give it scant notice if any at all. This book fills a gap... ... since no comprehensive book on this movement from its nineteenth century planting in Italy until the end of the twentieth century has been published in English...

Fares Marzone has done a great service to the English-language reader by making readily available this history he presents and is to be commended for both his labours and this book, the fruit of his labours.

T. J. Marinello, PhD, FRHistS

Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology

Tyndale Theological Seminary, The Netherlands

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