

Soojin Chung Appointed OMSC@PTS Director as Thomas J. Hastings Retires

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History is being made as the Overseas Ministries Study Center at Princeton Theological Seminary welcomes **Dr. Soojin Chung** as its eleventh director and expresses its gratitude for Dr. Thomas John Hastings, who retired on June 30, 2023. Incorporated in 1922 in Ventnor, New Jersey, by American Baptists Marguerite and Ida Doane, OMSC relocated to New Haven, Connecticut in 1978 and continued its work there until 2019. In 2020, OMSC returned to New Jersey, this time to the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary, where it is now fully embedded in the center of that historic campus.

For the first time since 1972, OMSC will again welcome a woman as director.

A gifted professor, author, and scholar of World Christianity, Chung begins her tenure August 1, 2023. The Assistant Professor in the School of Theology and Director

of General Education at Azusa Pacific University brings a commitment to equity and justice, and a record of service in India, Thailand, Japan, and China, where she worked with missions organizations and conducted community-based research on the relationship between ethnicity and religious experience.

As a faculty member and curriculum developer at the evangelical university in Southern California (2021–23), Chung designed and taught World Christianity, Asian and Asian American religions, Christian missions, and comparative religion courses. She also led diversity seminars for first-year students, oversaw faculty development and program assessment, organized conferences



and seminars, managed the operational budget and grants, represented the General Education program at campus and external events, and conducted a Department of Ethnic Studies research project on “Faith Integration and Race.”

Prior to joining the Azusa Pacific faculty, she organized World Christianity seminars and conferences as Director of Intercultural Studies and Assistant Professor of Intercultural Studies at California Baptist University (2018–21.) Since 2019 she also has been developing reading and writing curriculum for international students and teaching academic writing at the University of California, Irvine.

Previously, Chung was a missionary with Youth With A Mission, Children’s Pastor at Boston Onnuri Church in Woburn, MA, an international student ministry leader at the historic Park Street Church in Boston, the English Ministry Pastor of Changshin Holiness Church in Seoul, and a Student Pastor at Boston Hope Church in Waltham, MA.

As Associate Editor of *Missiology: An International Review*, the American Society of Missiology journal, she acquired articles and book reviews, conducted preliminary screening of submissions, served as the liaison between publishers and authors, facilitated the peer-review process, and assisted in setting editorial guidelines—all of which will be a part of her portfolio when she assumes the editorship of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSION RESEARCH in 2024. Hastings, who retired in June, will continue as the *IBMR* editor for another year.

While completing a PhD in World Christianity from Boston University School of Theology (2018), with Dr. Dana L. Robert as her mentor, Chung managed the daily operations of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission, supervised graduate assistants as Director of the Korean Diaspora Project, and assisted with the Chinese Christian Posters Project. A native English and Korean speaker and writer, who has a basic reading ability in Chinese, she earned a Master of Divinity from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (2012) and a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia (2008).

Chung’s Boston University School of Theology dissertation, published in December 2021 as *Adopting for God: The Mission to Change America through Transnational Adoption* (New York University Press, <https://nyupress.org/9781479808885/adopting-for-god/>), explores the role played by missionaries between 1953 and 2018 when some 170,000 Korean children were adopted by families in dozens of countries, with Americans providing homes to more than two-thirds of them. The book “shows that, somewhat surprisingly, both evangelical and ecumenical Christians challenged Americans to redefine traditional familial values and rethink race matters,” Chung wrote. “By questioning the perspective that equates missionary humanitarianism with unmitigated cultural imperialism, this book offers a more nuanced picture of the rise of an important twentieth-century movement: the evangelization of adoption and the awakening of a new type of Christian mission,” she added.

The new OMSC@PTS leader is also the author of numerous articles including “The Seed of Korean Christianity Grew in the Soil of Shamanism,” (*Christianity Today*, November 2022); “The Missiology of Pearl Sydenstricker Buck,” (INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSION RESEARCH, April 2017); “Transnational Adoption: A Noble Cause?

Female Missionaries as Pioneers of Transnational Adoption, 1945–1965,” (*Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, October 2016); and book chapters including “All God’s Children: How Missionaries Fostered World Friendship through Transnational Adoption,” in *Unlikely Friends: How God Uses Boundary-Crossing Friendships to Transform the World*, (Wipf and Stock Publishers, July 2021); and “Baptists, Global Christianity, and the Christian Tradition,” in *Baptists and the Christian Tradition: Toward an Evangelical Baptist Catholicity*, (B&H Academic, June 2020).

“I am deeply humbled to join the Overseas Ministries Study Center team as the next director. I am excited to continue the legacy of the Doane sisters, who founded the Center as Houses of Fellowship that welcomed missionaries on furlough. The Center carries on this tradition through residential programs where global partners, students, faculty, and staff experience fellowship together and enrich the scholarship of their respective fields,” Chung said. “The importance placed on theological praxis—where scholarship and practice are necessarily entwined—makes OMSC a unique host for a community that lives and learns together. I look forward to carrying on the innovative programs of OMSC and envision new programs focused on women in mission and World Christianity,” she added.

“I am so glad to welcome Dr. Soojin Chung as the new director of OMSC@PTS. She brings us excellent scholarship, strong administrative and team-building skills, and a great love for the church and its mission. We are confident that she will continue the wise and winsome leadership that OMSC has enjoyed over its century of service,” said Dr. Joel A. Carpenter, provost emeritus at Calvin University and an OMSC@PTS Advisory Committee member.

“We are delighted by the search committee’s appointment of Dr. Chung. She brings significant gifts of mission experience, scholarship, and administration to OMSC@PTS, and as she continues the legacy of this unique ministry and helps to shape its future, she will be assisted by the extraordinary academic and administrative gifts of Dr. Easten Law and Ms. Caitlin Barton,” noted Dr. Hastings.

“A highly competent and impressive scholar of mission and global Christianity, Dr. Soojin Chung brings creativity and fresh visions to the OMSC at PTS. I am delighted to learn of her appointment, and I look forward to the future of our beloved institution,” commented Dr. Dana L. Robert, Distinguished Professor and Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission at Boston University School of Theology. A former OMSC board member, she is a longtime *IBMR* contributing editor.

After seven years at the helm of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, a transitional period that dramatically reshaped the international, intercultural ministry’s focus and footprint while securing its sustainable future, **Dr. Thomas John Hastings** retired at the end of June.

An intercultural practical theologian, author, pastoral educator, and former Presbyterian mission coworker for twenty years (1988–2008) in Japan with his wife, Carol, and their four children, Hastings brought a fresh Asian flavor to the Center on Prospect Street in New Haven. His appointment in August 2016 launched an era of momentous changes as the OMSC Trustees, under the visionary leadership of the late Dr. Edith Blumhofer, made the difficult but forward-looking decision to sell its New



Haven campus and relocate in 2020 to Princeton Theological Seminary following the signing of an historic memorandum of understanding on June 5, 2019.

After the move to Princeton, Hastings, 69, continued to direct and inspire OMSC@PTS, as it is now known, through its three signature programs: the Residential Study Program, which temporarily morphed into an Online Study Program during the Covid-19 Pandemic; the *IBMR*, editing twenty-seven issues to date; and the Artist in Residence Program. Along with his academic colleague, Dr. Easten Law, Hastings also inaugurated several new program initiatives: the Gerald H. Anderson Lectures, Lamin Sanneh Research Grants, and English Translations of Christian Scholarship. Greatly expanding OMSC's online constituencies, Dr. Law created a digital course in Lived Theology and World Christianity, launched a regular blog called "The Occasional," and piloted

a new series of Online Learning Modules in World Christianity, Mission Studies, and Intercultural Theology based on recordings from the Online Study Program.

In other accomplishments, Hastings increased significantly the number of women and Global South contributors to the *IBMR*. Also, recognizing the vitality of artistic expression and thanks to the efforts of Dr. Diane Komp, OMSC's former art curator, Hastings relaunched OMSC's Artist in Residence Program in 2016, which he said is "integral to our mission of amplifying the often silent or silenced voices of the world Christian movement." He also planned and presided at OMSC's joyful Centenary Celebration on June 9, 2022.

"I want to assure you that we are committed to building on the wonderful legacy of OMSC and seeking ways to sustain and renew this work," Hastings, a native of Auburn, MA, wrote in his first editorial as *IBMR* editor (January 2017). By the grace of God and the support of many friends, that worthy goal has been accomplished.

"Tom Hastings had the vision and the leadership skills to weave OMSC into the mission of Princeton Seminary. It wouldn't have happened without him. Through OMSC@PTS Tom has helped shape the future of both institutions as together they

will better serve the global work of Jesus Christ,” said Dr. M. Craig Barnes, President Emeritus of Princeton Theological Seminary.

“Dr. Tom Hastings is to be praised for leading the successful transfer of the Overseas Ministries Study Center from New Haven to Princeton Seminary and for the incredible progress in World Christianity study being made there since then. His editorial leadership and wisdom have enhanced the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSION RESEARCH, which is considered to be an outstanding academic resource like no other. Tom’s legacy will benefit many scholars for years to come,” said Dr. Gerald H. Anderson, the former OMSC director and *IBMR* editor.

—Dan Nicholas, *IBMR* Managing Editor