

# IMPACT REPORT 2019



SHARING THE GOSPEL  
TO ALL THAT WILL LISTEN



**OUR GOD  
GIVEN  
MISSION**



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# OUR DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

## ***Mike Omoniyi***

A cursory glance at any major news outlets will have you believe that millennials are not interested in organised religion. The numbers are staggering and understandably have left many churches and charities feeling disillusioned and flabbergasted. Out of ideas, some churches have accepted this reality and have entered into a period of managing diminishing congregations. We have a different opinion at Our God Given Mission. We still believe there is a God shaped hole in each individual life and it is Our God Given Mission to introduce Jesus to it. We have seen, this year in particular, that it is imperative for us to always focus on things unseen and to always have an eager expectation that millennials will come to faith. Some of the testimonies and victories that have been reported in this Impact Report, were lovingly put together by our trustees and volunteers.

This year has seen us stand face to face with the damning reports that say '50% of those raised in Christian homes will continue to follow their parents' faith,' We treated everywhere as the mission field and took the story of the Cross to anyone that would listen. We took the gospel to party islands in Tenerife, partnering with other charities there, to universities up and down the UK through our live shows, to churches and to cities right across the UK. We have seen God move in an amazing way this year with new believers up and down the country as well as those that are in church experiencing a freshness and newness in their Christian journey.

**"We are the instrument He uses to accomplish His cosmic plan."**

Some 70 per cent of millennials describe themselves as 'nones': no religious belief. That is a trajectory that has been coming for 100 years. With every generation, profession of belief, has decreased further and further. I often ask myself before I go to bed, did the world get darker or brighter today? Somedays I'm encouraged and others I'm discouraged. However, no matter where I land, I always know one thing; after pondering and going to bed, God begins His cosmic work and continues drawing men to Himself using our efforts. He is sovereign in salvation.

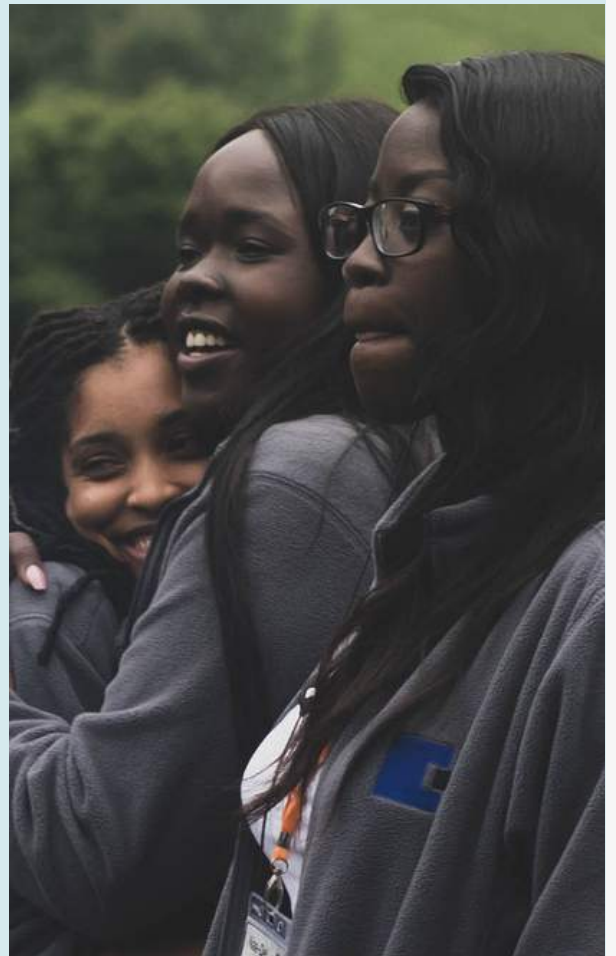
## 2. INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Our God Given Mission embarked on a new chapter with a new plan. Driven by our desire to continue connecting people with the Word of God and sharing the Good News, we sought to make our internal structure and in turn our external outlook more seamless and sustainable. The result of this was the introduction of three separate divisions within OGGM; On the Air, On the Ground and Missions.

The driving force of this organisational structure was to enable our core team to work more efficiently, practically and successfully with the overarching theme of ensuring that God's Word remained easily accessible, well understood and tangibly livable. We hope that these changes will lead the way for OGGM to maintain and strengthen its role as an effective and compassionate Christian charity for young people and the world at large.

## THE PROBLEM

The world is dark. Despair. Confusion. Corruption. Abuse. Depression. Despondence. Meaninglessness. If not just words that litter our headlines, they are sentiments that trickle across our lives. The need for light has never been more urgent and a generation that is becoming increasingly concerned about this is millennials. In the past perhaps the Church would have been their choice place to begin looking for answers. Today, for many millennials, church is dead. The numbers speak for themselves with church attendance figures at an all time low, and young adults in particular leaving the church in droves. For others, God is dead too. Secularism, a view that God does not exist, is the train that is not stopping. Never have there been more options for exploring what it means to be spiritual or live a life of meaning. Like peas or garden salad, God is commonly presented as an optional side dish on a menu of fresher alternatives. If not a side dish, He is a knife and fork - simply an instrument to enjoy the main course rather than a personality to be known and delighted in. The person of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection offers a weighty response to a broken world. Amidst all the consumption of new ideas is there space for Him at the table?



# Our Goals at OGGM

Despite the significant growth you will learn that we have made in the coming pages, we know that much work remains to be done by OGGM to achieve our long term goals and ensure that they are sustainable. Many people do not know God, many people do not know that He has a purpose for their lives and many are being overlooked and left behind. We want to reach all people, in particular the young community.

Our God Given Mission will become a major platform for articles, videos and web series that are easily accessible. We will continue to focus on equipping people with the tools to read, understand and live the Gospel in their everyday lives, and similar to Global initiatives such as Desiring God and The Gospel Coalition, we will strive to serve the body of Christ by providing a hub for accessible Christian community and exposition on God's Word.

In light of this, we do not claim to have a monopoly on understanding of God's Word and we know that as children of God we must remain teachable. Partnerships are therefore welcome in consideration of our growth and Our God Given Mission will continue to collaborate with churches such as Tenerife Family Church and the Living Room Tenerife whom we have been working with for 4 years as of 2019. It is no secret that through the charity, God has allowed us to touch thousands of lives. However, we believe that sound partnership will further permit us to co-create the emergence of a world that is not shrouded in darkness.

## Looking Ahead

Our God Given Mission Impact Report 2018-2019 highlights our achievements over the past year and provides a glimpse as to our plans for the future. It presents a brief overview of our genuine desire for change in Christianity's young community, informed by our singular motivation of sharing the true Gospel. We will continue to reevaluate our strategies and projects in the hopes that through it all, we remain ambassadors for Christ and in turn, ignite the same flame in the hearts of many.



# 3. On The Air

[www.ourgodgivenmission.com](http://www.ourgodgivenmission.com)



## Our Audience

As a charity founded by millenials and operating in an exciting and growing digital age, Our God Given Mission recognises that both reaching out to and connecting with our target audience also requires a commitment to using new tools at our disposal; tools such as social media. We believe that the emergence of interactive publishing platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube has provided the Charity with vital and unique access to sharing the Gospel with not merely the masses, but Christian and non-Christian audiences that we would otherwise be unable to reach. And so in 2018 we were proud to announce the arrival of 'On The Air' here at OGGM.



## WHAT WE DO

The 'On the Air' team is a team focused on driving Our God Given Mission's online presence primarily via two main channels; publishing articles and blog posts and publishing online videos. During the last year, we have amassed a team of over 10 devoted writers and contributors and published more than 25 articles which have had over 10,000 concurrent readers. All of our articles and blog posts here at OGGM are focused on guiding our readers to have a greater understanding of various topics regarding the Christian faith. In the past, articles have covered a range of topics from faith, suffering, forgiveness, ecclesiology and much more.

Alongside the articles, we have also launched two successful seasons of 'The Pulse' which is OGGM's online Q and A video series which aims to tackle heart racing questions about the Christian faith. Throughout these two seasons we have published over 20 episodes on our YouTube page which has reached an audience of over 3,000 concurrent viewers. The first season of the Pulse launched in 2018 and tackled difficult questions such as 'Does the Bible condemn slavery?' and 'What is the true Gospel?'. The second season of The Pulse launched in early 2019 and similarly tackled difficult questions such as 'Can you lose your salvation?' and 'Should Churches be controversial?'. Overall, the Pulse series has been very well received by our audience and we have routinely seen many of our viewers engage with the thought provoking discussions both online and offline. The highly anticipated third season of the Pulse is set to begin filming in August 2019 with the season set to air publicly mid-September.

As we seek to grow our online presence and increase our regular interaction with our audience, we are now in the process of launching a brand new podcast series which, similar to The Pulse, will tackle various questions regarding the Christian faith. However, the podcast will afford us more time and flexibility to really dig deep into the many pertinent issues and discussions Christians query daily and also from various angles over a longer time-frame. This brand new segment by Our God Given Mission will launch at the end of 2019, and similar to The Pulse, will produce weekly uploads led by an array of passionate and Biblically sound hosts.

# 4. ON THE GROUND

## *our history*

On The Ground is the arm of OGGM that oversees the various events we run over the course of the year. Through these events we aim to engage, enlighten and equip people in order for them to know God and live the lives He has called them to live. Although a large portion of our events are primarily aimed at those in university and young adults such as the yearly retreats - #FOCUS2017, #PASSION2018, #BATHOS2019 - and #YourQ, we also host projects such as our Homeless Outreach which is open to all and #MCOG which invites and welcomes people from all walks of life to share in a fun-filled night of live entertainment. And as you can probably tell, yes, we like hashtags.



# RETREATS: #BATHOS2019

“It was a life changing week. I found Jesus for the first time”

In brief, #BATHOS2019 was the third edition of our annual retreat and was an incredible time away where we took over 100 young people to Wales to escape the busyness of life and tackle issues dear to our hearts. The retreat helped to provide a community for those who came, and as you will find out, every day equipped us to go deeper in our relationship with God, from the worship, to the keynotes, to the seminars, to the times of fellowship; it was truly a life-changing experience.



# #YOURQ

“They really broke things down. I loved how funny the session was”

#YourQ is an interactive panel Q & A show, much like the format of Question Time, which we host in several universities throughout the academic year around the country. The aim of #YourQ is simple: giving people the chance to ask, discuss and find answers to their most pressing questions regarding faith, God and the gospel – it's your cue to ask questions. These shows have drawn in both large and more intimate audiences and through them we have really gotten to grips with the Word of God. Questions regarding the church, relationships and modesty have all been grappled with, and our panel of seasoned ministers has helped us to unpack some truths and falsehoods about our understanding of Christianity and the gospel.





# HOMELESS OUTREACH

“*I have never done something like this before but after today I need to do it again*”

Our Homeless Outreach is an annual event which takes place during the Christmas period. In 2018, having fundraised from the beginning of December, we gathered a team of volunteers and traveled the streets of Central London handing out homemade hampers and spreading the love of God to all the homeless people we encountered. The Christmas period for many is a time of joy spent in the presence of loved ones. However, many homeless people will not have that same experience and so we believe that it falls upon us, those conscious of God's mercy, to share with them His truth that they are not forgotten.





# #MCOG

“

*The bar was high after previous ones...but the artists & musicians were phenomenal and God was glorified*

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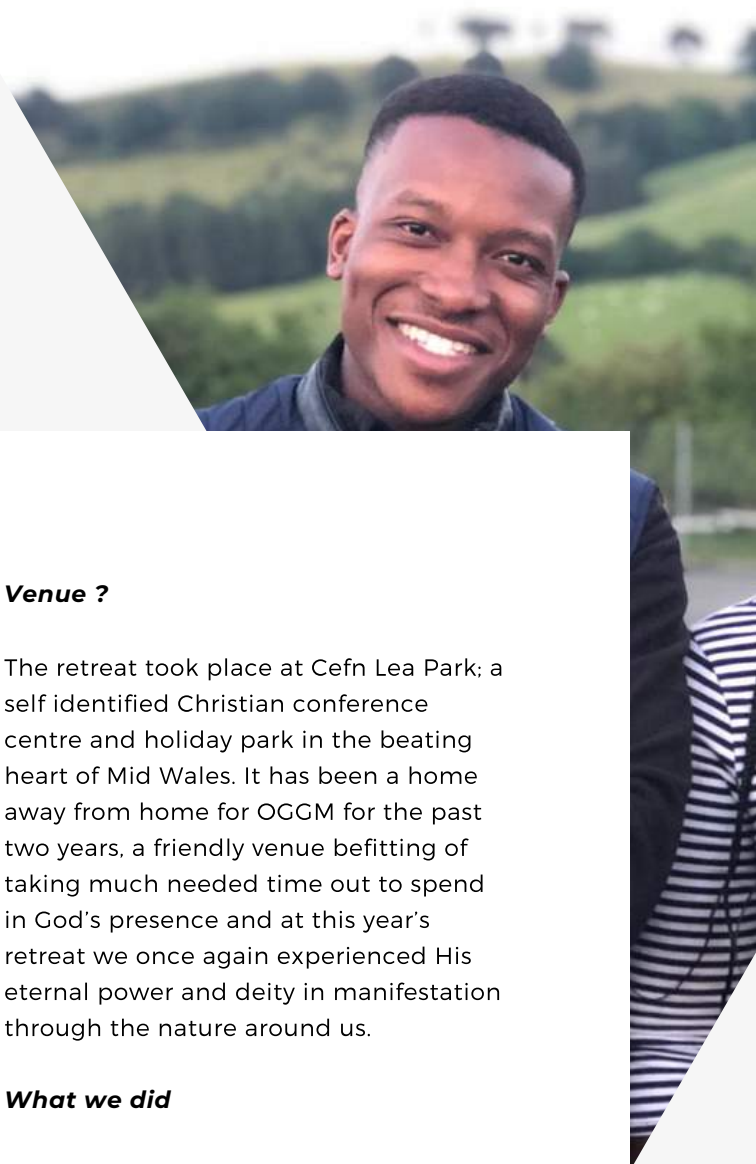
Finally, #MCOG – My Celebration of Gospel, is a musical night that we have hosted twice in 2019 that really aims to celebrate the gospel. #MCOG hosts a variety of singers, rappers, spoken word artists and instrumentalists who shine the light of the Gospel through the gifts God has given them. Although it is a night to celebrate, fellowship and worship God among Christians, it is also our opportunity to share in a night of entertainment with those who we may otherwise not be in a relaxed setting to interact with socially.

All in all, On The Ground encompasses our umbrella of events which seek to see God magnified and glorified in our local community. It is Our God Given Mission's opportunity to physically engage with our online audience and we have been blessed to see that through the consistency of hosting such events, many people have proclaimed to come to know God more personally and more intimately, and we are eagerly awaiting for what comes next in 2020.



*a year's overview*

## 5. #BATHOS2019



Here at Our God Given Mission we are committed to helping people live a life that brings glory to God and maximises their joy; whether that be in their ministry, career, studies, or creative pursuits. In order to equip people for this, we organised our third yearly retreat entitled "BATHOS2019".

### **Why BATHOS**

Bathos in the Greek simply means "to go deeper" which is exactly what we believe is needed across the young adults within the body of Christ. Bathos was designed with young adults and professionals in mind. In a time where we are all managing our various pursuits, passions and interests, the question that remains is; are we willing to go deeper in the things of God? Are we willing to search deep and wide to know Him as a man knows his friend? This year's retreat provided our delegates with an opportunity to go deeper in our knowledge of God through gaining a comprehensive understanding of who God is in light of sovereignty, suffering, and the like.

### **Venue ?**

The retreat took place at Cefn Lea Park; a self identified Christian conference centre and holiday park in the beating heart of Mid Wales. It has been a home away from home for OGGM for the past two years, a friendly venue befitting of taking much needed time out to spend in God's presence and at this year's retreat we once again experienced His eternal power and deity in manifestation through the nature around us.

### **What we did**

Out of the 100 delegates that came to the retreat, every single person left the retreat feeling encouraged, equipped and enabled to walk as Christ walked. A typical day at the retreat began with a prayer walk at 7:30am, where all of the delegates gathered together as an assembly of praying believers. Following this, delegates split off into their teams and had a group bible study where ample opportunity was given for them to share what was on their hearts or ask any itching questions.



Throughout the retreat, delegates attended 5 life changing seminars which tackled the areas of going deeper in Faith, Word, Prayer, Relationships and Ministry, conducted by ministry leaders such as Ify Alexis-Lee and Dr. Emmanuel Olatokun. In addition to the seminars, we held sessions in which all of the delegates were addressed by our amazing keynote speakers such as Lord Michael Hastings, Pastor Joe Reeser, and many more. By day three of our five-day retreat, a number of delegates had given their lives to Christ and 13 delegates made the decision to be baptized on that very day.

Following the events of our past retreats and noticing a need for one-on-one personal sessions, this year we also introduced the opportunity to engage in Christian counselling facilitated by our new guest Dr. China, a medical doctor and Psychotherapist. We saw 40% of our delegates receive counselling from both our female and male qualified counsellors and are proud to share that they have since agreed to serve in this capacity within OGGM in the future.

It was our desire that whilst at Bathos, delegates would be able to immerse themselves in a community of believers with whom they would be able to receive edification and brotherly sharpening. In order to facilitate this, we set aside time outside of seminars and keynotes to enable and encourage the delegates to bond, pray and study with each other. Delegates left truly understanding and appreciating the need for fellowship and spending time with like-minded people, and we were inundated with testimonies that OGGM had created a space where life-long friendships had been built. But the work did not stop there; we know too well how retreats may set genuine hearts alight but a return to one's everyday life can quickly infringe upon the progress in motion. We therefore made it our goal to recommend churches to those who didn't have a home church so that they could continue to experience and remain connected with such community long after the retreat had become a great memory.

#Bathos2019 was a time where believers were able to join together in love with the same goal in mind; to know Christ. Delegates were challenged, stretched and equipped through the vulnerability and transparency encouraged throughout the retreat, and we look forward to meeting friends old and new and encountering God's desires as we plan for #Vision2020.



# 5. HOMELESS OUTREACH

In the same way that Jesus cared for and loved those who could not help themselves, we aim to be His ambassadors and mirror this very conduct. We believe that it is imperative to reach out to everyone no matter their circumstance and so three years ago Our God Given Mission launched the Homeless Outreach project.

## ***The Aim***

Each year we embark on the streets of major UK cities affected by high levels of poverty such as London and Manchester. Our aim is to avoid the stereotypical handing out of care packages and thereafter patting ourselves for a job well done. Rather, we first seek to engage in conversations and demonstrate active compassion and as a by product hope to be able to provide basic essentials that may assist with the difficulties of day-to-day life on the streets.

Whilst Jesus walked the Earth with man, his love and compassion knew no bounds and so through our outreach we hope to give hope to the hopeless by meeting them at their point of need. As is to be anticipated, the preparation and planning requires a committed and accessible team of people and we are fortunate to have an events team who rally up our volunteers across the country to make this outreach possible.



### **Planning and Execution**

Months prior to outreach day OGGM launched a fundraiser using the online platform GoFundMe. We sought out donations from family and friends, our social media audience and at various events such as #YourQ to help raise funds for the hampers, we also used this as an opportunity to reach out to new as well as existing volunteers.

The support we received from the public has been consistently amazing and for our winter 2018 outreach we successfully raised over £300 from a total of 25 donations. From these donations we were able to purchase toothbrushes, a selection of non-perishable snacks, cleansing wipes, sanitiser, tissue, sanitary towels, gloves, socks, underwear and for the first time ever, sleeping bags and blankets enough for 20 hampers.

On the evening of 21st December we met at Charing Cross station and mapped out the areas we wished to cover. We began by praying over the hampers and asked God for His presence to guide us over the course of the evening. We then organised ourselves into smaller groups and set off on the streets searching for those who were willing to have us.

### **Feedback**

A trend that frequently seems to occur during this outreach is that volunteers expect to give to the homeless and share a message from the Gospel. However, the outcome is usually far from this simple. This year and in years passed we have received feedback of life-changing encounters that were "humbling", "emotional" and of "incomparable experience" and we take this opportunity to share Oye's with you, a volunteer from 2018:

"It was a very interesting experience for me. I tend to see homeless people wherever I go and I never really think about how tough it is for them. For us to be able to take part in this was very touching for me, it's a great thing to do and something that needs to be done more often and I certainly will be doing this more often myself."

The feedback we receive from volunteers after the outreach is phenomenal and provide us with the encouragement and assurance that God is using this event not just to share the gospel with the homeless, but to humble and soften the hearts of all of his children. This is just the beginning for Our God Given Mission, and our plans for the future as it concerns the homeless seek to offer more preventative and sustainable methods for tackling their circumstances. We hope that you will be encouraged to join us in fulfilling this mission.



## 6. #MCOG

My Celebration Of Gospel is a vibrant night of live music, poetry and stand-up comedy, hosted with the aim of sharing the Gospel through various creative means in a laid-back and chilled setting. We strive to hold every #MCOG event at an accessible location which would traditionally be considered 'neutral ground', and we have found that this successfully positions us in an environment where unbelievers may feel more comfortable to attend.

### *Encouraging Unity*

This year we had the privilege of hiring out a bar in London's Shoreditch which enabled us to reach out directly to those unfamiliar with the Gospel whilst still controlling the atmosphere within the building. With our two #MCOG events this year alone, we have managed to amass an audience of over 300 people, many of whom were indeed non-believers and who have gone on to engage with the charity both online and offline, such as through our articles and at #YourQ events.

The atmosphere at both events was undeniably vibrant, full of genuine joy and contagious happiness. To say the positivity and warmth that radiated through the crowd and between the performers was overwhelming would be an understatement; we were applauded and thanked by the venue's staff for putting together such a welcoming and open event with a clear singular theme of unity and love.







## CREATING A FAMILY

On the night, attendees were able to hear about the great work that Our God Given Mission is doing to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ across the world. Before and after the performances, we gave attendees the opportunity to get involved in any of our initiatives running throughout the year with the Homeless Outreach attracting the most number of volunteers. As well as being given the opportunity to donate to OGGM, attendees were also encouraged to network and stay in contact with members of the team via social media, helping to ensure that the charity maintains its accessibility and familiarity.

#MCOG also serves as a platform for underground artists to have a voice whilst glorifying God using His given talents. Through #MCOG we have had the honour of working with artists such as Sharyn Jaz, Lauren Milne, Dee Witness, Sam Cole, and many more. Whether it be in melody, rap, spoken-word or the like, we encourage people to use and enjoy the talents that they have cultivated in an environment that brings the focus back to the origin of such gifts.

Due to the success of these nights, #MCOG is now an event which is sought after by many individuals of all ages. At both of our events this year we have successfully reached maximum capacity and are now beginning our plans for the new year in search of a bigger venue to accommodate all those who are eager to come. With overflowing faith and confidence, we look forward to holding bigger and better #MCOG events over the coming year.

# 7. MISSIONS

## ***The Journey***

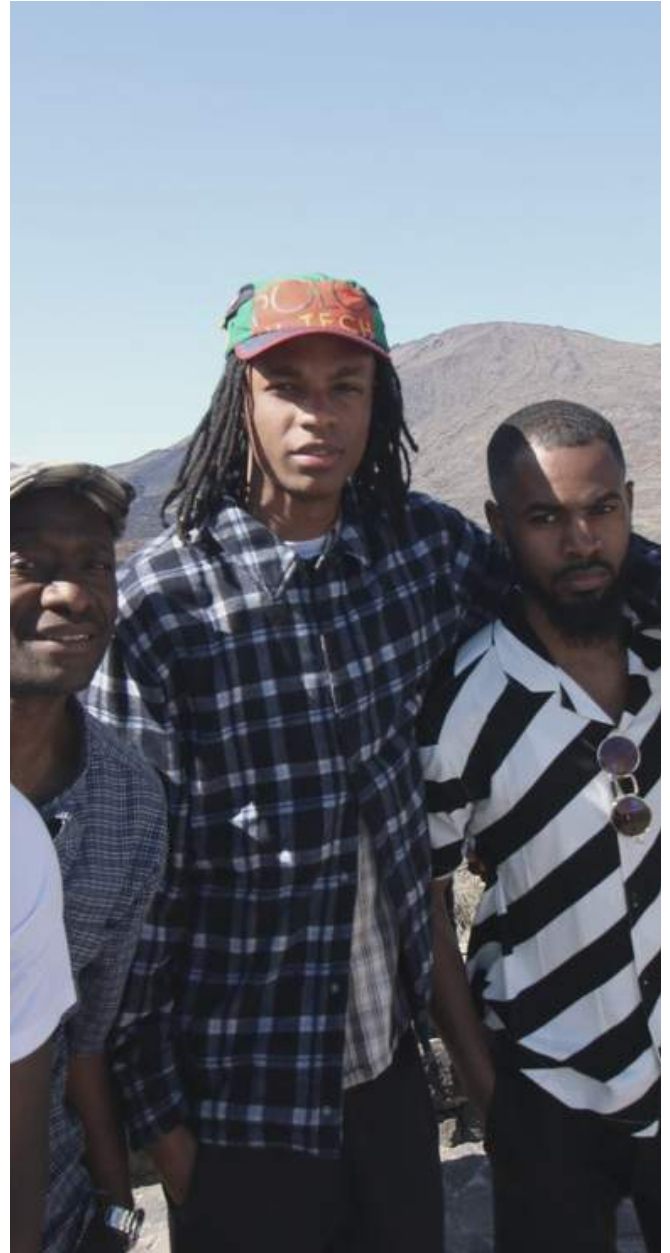
In 2015 OGGM embarked on its first mission trip abroad to Tenerife, Spain stepping out into the unknown with hope, faith and the desire to be renewed. With this experience under our belts, we returned in Easter 2019 with a new and eager team for the third time, once again joining Pastor Bill of Tenerife Family Church and Rachel of the Living Room Tenerife to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the majority of this particular team however, it would be their first mission trip abroad and it without a doubt exceeded all expectations.

## ***Why Tenerife***

When people think of Tenerife, it is usually in the context of a holiday or retirement destination. The hot weather, cheap food, and non-stop parties ensure the lure of worldly enjoyment and relaxation. But beneath this veneer of happiness, there is a darker underbelly that people don't necessarily see, marked by addiction, depression and despondence. And in that sense, Tenerife presents a perfect backdrop for the light of the Gospel to shine through.

## ***What we did***

For us, the days began with a light breakfast (toast and butter!) followed by a group Bible study on themes concerning the meaning, power and relevance of the Gospel. We sought to develop unity of thought and understanding, to become equipped for evangelism and to begin our days worshiping God through deep contemplation of His Word.





We spent a lot of our time working with our friends at Tenerife Family Church. The church is well integrated in the community and serves as a lighthouse in the area pointing people to Jesus. There is a real sense of unity and compassion at the church which makes the environment easy to feel welcome in. Many members used to be victims of drug and alcohol addiction but today they stand as living testimonies of the power of Christ to transform lives.

After 10pm each day we set out onto the busy streets to evangelise, meeting with Rachel of the Living Room; a ministry of Tenerife Family Church based in the middle of the infamous nightlife strip in Playa de Las Americas. We split into two main groups; one group would stay in the Living Room, praying over the strip for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the community of Las Americas whilst the other group took to the streets to interact and meet with the locals and holiday goers.

### ***What we Learned***

One unforgettable lesson we learned whilst on the trip was the importance of building relationships. As we were introduced to new people daily, people battling complex issues and challenging circumstances, we were reminded of the need for us as Christians to exercise patience, discernment and intentionality with our conversations in order to enable people to feel safe enough in our presence to open up. By doing this, we were able to really engage with and meet people at their point of need, and we were further reminded that whilst salvation itself is a miracle from God, God desires to use us as vessels through which that miracle may be performed.

Through spending a few moments asking people how they were, we saw complete strangers breaking down in tears, revealing their struggles and opening up about their thoughts on God.



# ULTIMATELY THE TRIP SHOWED US FOUR THINGS:



## ***Familiar religion***

Many people have had interaction with religion through some way or another. It is like a stream that touches the river banks of our lives. What we can't assume however is that everyone has heard the Gospel and understands its message.

## ***Let's not be ashamed of the Gospel.***

We plant. God will provide the increase. In Paul's words "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16). The Gospel is as potent today as it ever was. Let us not be afraid to tell its message.

## ***Veneer of light, reality of darkness.***

On the surface, people often appear to be happy and content with life. But, just because someone says they are happy does not necessarily mean they actually are. Search for a 'good time' is often a search for the meaning of life and genuine joy within it, knowledge and an experience however which can only be found in Christ Jesus.

## ***Pushing past the guard***

People are made up of layers. Sometimes it takes a while for them to open up. Be patient, be wise and be intentional. To show real love and compassion we need to begin by asking the Lord for wisdom on how to introduce people to Him.



## 8. SOCIAL MEDIA

### *Changing Times*

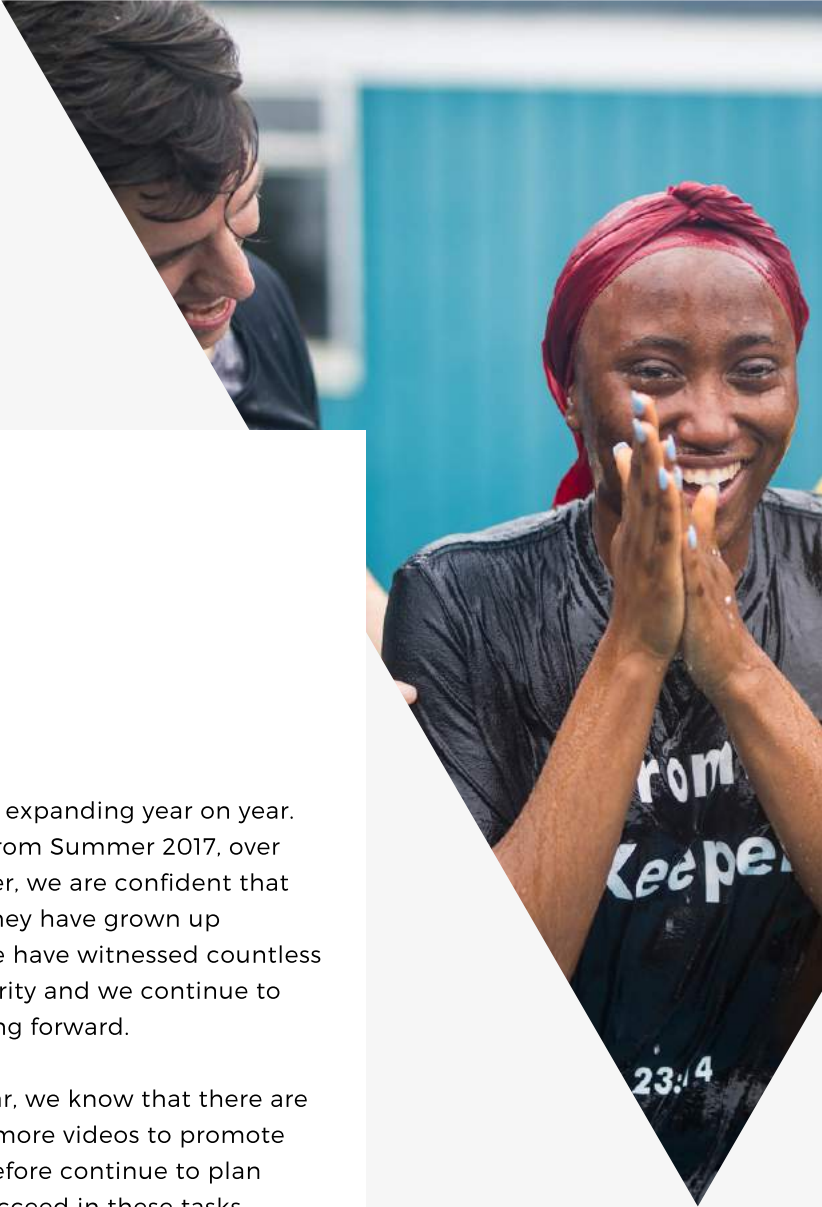
The call to take the Gospel to the highways and hedges (Luke 14:23) is a call that applies to every generation but one which may understandably look different as society advances and reshapes. At Our God Given Mission, we are passionate about reaching young audiences, from those navigating the ups and downs of secondary school life to those dealing with the trials of their various professional pursuits. And with this audience in mind, we understand that if we want to effectively communicate and share the Gospel with them, we need to take advantage of the resources at our fingertips; social media.

Our mandate at Our God Given Mission is to obey Christ's command to proclaim the Good News and to mobilise and disciple others to do the same. Through our social media platforms, Instagram, Youtube, Facebook and Twitter, we share Gospel related content in the form of articles on our website and videos on Youtube as well as starting polls on Twitter and using #WisdomWednesdays on Instagram live to discuss pertinent issues whilst garnering direct interaction with the world at large. We have found that the consistency of our work on social media over the past year has had amazing results, not only allowing us to reach individuals, but also enabling us to connect with organisations with similar aims and thereby helping to maximise the reach of the Gospel further.

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### ***Our Reach***

As you may have read earlier in this report, over the past year we have facilitated and executed a range of successful projects. Events like #MCOG and #YOURQ, our web series The Pulse and our annual retreat, this year titled #BATHOS2019, all require promotion on these various platforms. The truth is that as a core team of only 16 trustees, whilst we have each exercised our responsibility to share OGGM with friends, family and acquaintances, many of the thousands of people who have come to know about the charity have primarily been through our social media work. Subsequently, they have either gone on to volunteer with us, attend other events or been spurred on to further growth in their own relationship with God and have taken to social media to share just how much of a positive impact the charity has had in their lives. And therefore, despite any statistics which we may be able to provide, the success and usefulness of social media for the charity has been unquantifiable.



Nevertheless, we are growing. Numerically, our reach is expanding year on year. With nearly 2,500 followers on Instagram - a 60% rise from Summer 2017, over 670 likes on Facebook and over 680 followers on Twitter, we are confident that our work is bringing people closer to Christ. Whether they have grown up Christian, or are exploring the faith for the first time, we have witnessed countless testimonies of the work God has done through the charity and we continue to trust that He will lead us in our use of social media going forward.

Although there has been great growth over the last year, we know that there are so many more people to reach, more articles to share, more videos to promote and more events to let the world know about. We therefore continue to plan prayerfully for our social media work to enable us to succeed in these tasks. Whether On The Air, On The Ground or on Mission, our great desire is to share this Good News and mobilise people from all walks of life to share it too.



# 9. WELFARE

## ***The Need***

If our social media arm is telling of anything, it is that the Our God Given Mission family is expanding and evolving year on year. And, whether it be in the growth of our core team or through the new people we meet at our events, we have recognised that there is a pressing need to ensure that we don't simply address spiritual needs, but that we are also equipped to cater for people emotionally, mentally and physically. In light of this, this year we introduced our welfare and hospitality roles within the charity, roles which focus on making our members feel loved, welcome, safe and comfortable. We truly believe that a problem shared is a problem half solved and so we seek to help people work through their various issues and challenges by creating, sharing and providing useful resources. Where it concerns our core team, we ensure that every member is fully supported through prayer and regular check-ups as well as organising a schedule which accommodates flexible working and the ability to share each other's load when necessary.

## ***Christian Counselling***

For the very first time at our yearly retreat, we held one-to-one counselling sessions open to both delegates and trustees. These sessions were led by qualified Christian counsellors, Dr. China, Ify Alexis Lee and Dr. Emmanuel, who demonstrated genuine compassion and understanding for each individuals' needs and circumstances. In order to appropriately match people with the right counsellor, initial assessments were carried out by our two welfare trustees, allowing us to assess the nature of their issues or concerns and determine whether they needed a basic session (30 mins) or standard session (50 mins). Through this, we became sensitive to the fact that some delegates had very complex cases in need of specific attention. Counsellors were able to deal with these issues from a Christian worldview always using the Bible as a primary guide. Alongside this, practical advice was given to delegates on steps they could take to ensure that they paid attention to their wellbeing and were able to deal with issues that arose long after the retreat. Such tips included:

- Joining a church community
- Seeking further counselling sessions/therapy
- Spending time with the Lord in solo and group Bible study



## ***The Challenge***

As this was the first year in which we were offering the sessions, we could not truly anticipate how useful they would be or how many people would seek to use the service. However, God truly showed us that there was a sincere need. Of the 100 delegates that attended the retreat, over 40 counselling sessions were conducted. Although a gift in itself to be able to see people break down barriers and begin to address previously concealed problems with God at the forefront, we realised that we would need to create more time within our schedule to accommodate each individual. Our welfare trustees were therefore stretched to their full capacity and the reward was a blessing.



### ***The Results***

The feedback from these sessions was a testament of the goodness of God and how our expectation that He would pour out His strength and wisdom unto the hearts of the counsellors was fulfilled. Delegates were very grateful that these sessions were implemented as it gave them an avenue to seek help towards a constructive change and growth in every aspect of their lives as a child of God. With delegates of a different faith, there were no assumptions made about their belief system and counsellors did not in any way press their faith onto them.

### ***Going Forward***

We have been fortunate to benefit from the kindness of Dr China who has offered free follow on sessions to all those who engaged in counselling at the retreat. We hope that these will ensure that delegates continue to have access to this same level of personal help and spiritual development that is so evidently necessary at this present time. Trustees have also been assigned to contact delegates at various points throughout the year to see whether or not the practical advice given from the counsellors has been carried out, as well as ensuring that they continue to live a life of faith and courage in the Lord.





Our God Given Mission  
Charity No: 1170615