

Ann-Marie Wilson

Link Letter no. 47 | April 2022

churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson

CHURCH
MISSION
SOCIETY



The call in action

Dear friends,

The first few months of 2022 have been very special indeed, and included the honour of presenting an update to the CMS Southern Conference. I am now looking forward to a long-anticipated study sabbatical from August to January 2023, following hip surgery in May.

28 Too Many successes and 10th anniversary

The first few months of 2022 were very fruitful for our charity. Around Anti-FGM Day (6 February) and on International Women's Day (8 March), I addressed numerous global events through Zoom, including in Egypt and Sierra Leone, and we hosted the launch of a new film focused on Liberia. We also commissioned a researcher for vital analysis in Guinea for our upcoming country report there, and co-hosted a panel for the UN Commission on the Status of Women on tackling FGM in fragile states. We've also completed a consultancy report for PLAN International.

March was a significant time, as we celebrated our tenth anniversary, with a party generously hosted by Ashurst law firm! It has been remarkable for me to reflect on surpassing the ten-year goals we set as we started out – to see a 10 per cent reduction in FGM in 10 countries over 10 years. During the evening, we celebrated our shared achievements – societal changes away from FGM, and the reduction in prevalence. We heard stories of hope from women who have been supported in their journey, or who have avoided being subjected to FGM at all. We also watched the premiere of a film we commissioned, focusing on positive changes in Kenya. (You can watch a video of the event at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_xiog7PKGo). I am humbled by the part I have been able to play in all this, alongside amazing colleagues and fellow travellers from around the world. It was wonderful to bring some of them along to the evening to address us. My heartfelt thanks go out again to our panel, speakers and film producers.

Breaking news: 28 Too Many merger with Orchid Project!

On 1 April, 28 Too Many merged with Orchid Project, an NGO that also works to end FGM. Our organisational strengths are complementary – we will add our entire research team, where they do not have one. This will add to their forte with advocacy and programmes. There is still much anti-FGM work to be done around the globe, and bringing our expertise together will mean an even greater difference for the many women who are still at extreme risk. This



Name: Ann-Marie Wilson

Location: Across 28 countries in Africa and the diaspora

My call: Working to end FGM and violence against women and girls, specifically across Africa and the diaspora where FGM is practised – aiming to reduce it by 10 per cent in 10 countries in 10 years.

My role: Through the charity 28 Too Many, which I founded, undertaking country-specific research and sharing knowledge with influencers to prevent FGM and protect girls.



Continued over the page

Celebrating in style for 28 Too Many's 10th birthday.

will also mean that I will be changing from my position as executive director to serve as senior research advisor at Orchid Project.

Upcoming study sabbatical

I have enjoyed an amazingly fruitful 12 years as the founder/leader of 28 Too Many, for which I am enormously grateful. I am thankful for the upcoming opportunity for extended rest and reflection, retreats, pilgrimages and further study during my sabbatical. I am looking forward to a gear change in the way I put my experience to good use in the world around me, through research, advisory work, and championing causes against injustice. My two chaplaincy roles, along with being on the pastoral team at my home church, St Barnabas, North Finchley, will continue.

Pastoral and chaplaincy

Since January, I have been able to take part in various trainings for my pastoral and chaplaincy work, including Mental Health First Aid validation and two Diocese of London courses, on being a pastoral assistant and on responding to modern-day slavery.

St Barnabas had an away day at YWAM Harpenden for those of us who are part of the World Mission Support. I have also been having review meetings with my vicar, the Bishop of Edmonton, the training director for the diocese and the chaplain at the Royal Veterinary College to explore possible next steps for my ministry.

Leisure and pleasure

I was so happy to finally get to enjoy my deferred treat of a trip to Go Ape, swinging through the trees with friends! I also fulfilled a long-held wish of taking part in a police pursuit driving course! I wasn't allowed anywhere near the steering wheel, of course, but had a thrilling time speeding around the Home Counties at 135mph, seeing how specialist police officers learn to do car chases. In early April I spent a precious five days with my goddaughter. We visited several fascinating places, including Sutton Hoo, the Science Museum for a lecture and silent disco(!), and the Postal Museum with a trip on London's underground postal train. My bucket list is diminishing!

Prayer points

- Navigating a significant time of transition with the charity merger, and my sabbatical.
- Comfort and strength for those facing serious illness, mental health issues and, especially, those impacted by the conflict in Ukraine.
- My personal health, and that of those who are in the caring professions and are at risk of burnout.

Wishing everyone a peaceful, hopeful summer.

With love, Ann-Marie



Photos from top to bottom: Sharing stories from my book at my home church and signing copies; St. Barnabas Missions Team enjoying a sunny away day!; Celebrating my birthday with adventurous friends at Go Ape!; My unforgettable police driving day!

GOING FURTHER WITH CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY

Are you pondering a call to cross-cultural mission? We'd love to connect and help you discern what God might be saying. Find out more about how we can help you to step into God's mission at churchmissionsociety.org

You can give to Ann-Marie at: churchmissionsociety.org/annmariewilson

Contact details:
annmarie@28toomany.org

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400

Church Mission Society is a mission community acknowledged by the Church of England. Registered Company No. 6985330 and Registered Charity No. 1131655 (England and Wales) and SC047163 (Scotland).