

Where do we stand – on rock or sand?

Mark Pickering addresses the challenges and opportunities of the current global situation

It's hard to predict what shape the world will be in by the time *CMF News* hits your doormats. As I write in late March, schools and restaurants are closed, supermarkets are rationing to limit panic buying, and those over 70 are self-isolating for three months. Borders are closing around the world as deaths from coronavirus continue to rocket in Italy and Spain. The UK health service is creaking under the strain, and we are all bracing ourselves as we wonder how bad things will get before we see any improvement.

Fear and anxiety are gripping many, and the very foundations of modern western civilisation have been shaken to the core. Such restrictions on daily life have not been seen since World War 2.

This all drives us back to ask what our own foundations are as Christians. Jesus told the parable of the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7:24-27. When the storm battered the house, it was the foundations that made all the difference. The house on sand collapsed, but the house on the rock stood firm. Jesus compares these builders with two kinds of people, both of whom heard his words; the crucial difference was whether they put them into practice.

We know Jesus tells us not to worry (Matthew 7:25); we know he tells us to put our trust in him (John 14:1); we know he tells us not to fear death (Matthew 10:28). These are easy enough to assent to when the supermarkets have bread on the shelves, or when there are enough ventilators in ITU, and we don't have to decide who gets one and who doesn't. But in times like these when a pandemic is sweeping the globe, everything normal is upended, and the rubber really hits the road. Do we *really* trust him? Are we *really* confident in the face of our own mortality? We all need these reminders and never more so than now.

We knew that 2020 would be a challenging year for CMF. We've had to make difficult financial decisions, such as saying goodbye to two staff, and reducing the sessions of others (see finance section for further details). Now, due to coronavirus, the National Conference has been cancelled. Members across the country and beyond are facing challenges like never before. CMF staff are working hard to respond and offer support, even whilst working from home due to the closure of the office. Several members of staff are juggling this challenge with their own increased clinical demands, as colleagues go sick and services struggle to cope. Worries about Brexit seem a fond memory!

Yet we know that times of challenge and crisis can bring great opportunity. How can we best connect with and support our members, especially when so many are under pressure? What resources do they need, and how can we mobilise prayer and pastoral



support for them? As the pandemic has forced us to do things differently, so we see the hand of God in what is happening:

- Our prior decisions to omit the summer publications this year for financial reasons had already led us to plan a re-evaluation of how we engage with members digitally. Now that so many things are also moving to online and digital, our communications team have the space they need to respond to the new landscape in the coming months;
- During 2019 we laid the groundwork for a new pastoral care and wellbeing ministry. Little did we know just how vital it would be for members in 2020 (see pastoral care section);
- Regional Catalyst Teams have grown over the last two years. We are already seeing them step up to provide flexible, localised support and community for members in different areas, embedding prayer, pastoral support and

fellowship as needs arise;

- We had already planned to increase engagement with members in areas more distant from London who often find it hard to get to events such as the General Committee (AGM). Now that remote meetings are becoming the norm, we hope to incorporate this in some way into our AGM in June as we plan the next phase of CMF's ministry, into 2021 and beyond.

These are just a few ways in which we sense that God has been preparing us to respond to the current crisis in ways we could never have foreseen. His timing is perfect, and his foundations are sure. In these uncertain times, let's keep our feet firmly fixed on the Rock, and our eyes looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Mark Pickering is CMF Chief Executive

Voices from the frontline



Voices from the frontline is a CMF podcast miniseries hearing from healthcare professionals on the frontline of the response to the coronavirus pandemic here in the UK and in other parts of the world. We will publish daily during the working week at 5 pm (UTC). Available on iTunes, via CMF's *1st incision* podcast feed or on our website at cmf.li/COVID19VFF

CMF Finances

Praise God, thank you, but keep praying!

Shortly after the last *CMF News* went to press, it became clear that the financial challenges we faced in 2020 were even more significant than previously anticipated. Maintaining the ministry capacity built up over recent years was dependent on achieving significantly increased sustainable income. While we have made definite progress, thanks to our members, by the end of 2019, our remaining financial reserves were significantly depleted. We needed to make difficult decisions about what we could afford in 2020 and cut our previously planned expenditure by 13 per cent.

A very significant part of our regular expenditure is staff salaries. We made the hard choice to say a sad goodbye to two valued staff members in February. Philip Martin and Oluwatosin Oyeniyi worked hard in our communications team, producing video and printed materials respectively (see staff movements section). We also had to reduce the sessions of some of our senior staff and implement a wage freeze on almost all other staff. Furthermore, we have had to cancel the Sydenham 2 pre-conference for international junior doctors in October and omit the summer round of printed publications (hopefully in both cases, just for this year).

Thankfully, because of those difficult decisions, we appear to be on target. We were delighted that the *2019 Christmas Appeal* hit its goal of £80,000. The generosity of our members has been an enormous encouragement. We have made steady progress catching up on accounting, and the first draft numbers for the 2019 financial year were released in early March. These show a modest surplus of just over £27,000, after a deficit of almost £58,000 in 2018. Work continues to refine the figures before they are presented to the General Committee in June. This has also been a massive encouragement, giving us the financial buffer that we need.

CMF's ministries rely almost entirely on donations and subscriptions from our members. While many challenges remain, especially during the current pandemic, God has been faithful through you our members. We thank each one of you who gave generously to the Fellowship in 2019.

Graham Sopp, Operations Director

#COVID1900Prayer

Mobilising our members to pray daily

Whether we are working in the NHS or not, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented almost everyone across the world with a nearly unprecedented challenge. Recognising that our members and others working at all levels of health, social and emergency services are functioning under extreme pressure and threat to health, we have launched a new prayer initiative, Covid-1900 Prayer.

The aim is to get people praying every day at 7 pm for those working at the coalface of the health service, for our nation and for the world, as we all deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. You can join us on Facebook (cmf.li/FBook), Instagram Live (cmf.li/InstagramStudents), and then on a YouTube Playlist (cmf.li/YTbCOVIDprayer) for



a five-minute devotional and prayer points, which will also be shared on social media.

Look for the hashtag *#COVID1900prayer* on social media and please share this with your friends, colleagues, and churches.

When everyday life is breaking down, and the very fabric of society is under immense strain, what better time to call the nation to pray, and who better to do that than Christians at the coalface

of the NHS? Please join with us.

Also, check out the CMF Podcast on iTunes and the *1st incision* podcast on all feeds (see cmf.li/1stIncision) for stories of members working on the frontline and John Wyatt's talk to students in 2019 when he showed how the response of Christians to the Cyprian Plagues in the third century AD changed the world.

Pastoral Care

Steve Sturman, Associate Head of Doctors' Ministries

We presented data at last November's conference from the 2019 CMF Pastoral Care



Steve Sturman

Survey. This highlighted the impact of overwork and high expectations in clinical care. The Survey also identified the presence of a perceived 'Church-Clinical Gap' – the difficulty clinicians encounter in accessing pastoral care in local churches. Pastoral care is not just about solving people's problems but also helping them flourish.

Next Steps

The program is now known as 'CMF Pastoral Care and Wellbeing' (PCW), reflecting the emphasis on growth and prevention and not just focusing on problems and challenges.

Our focus will be on three workstreams:

- **Governance** - ensuring we have safe structures to deliver care
- **Engagement** – helping people get involved in Pastoral Care
- **Pilots** – setting up schemes to deliver care

Governance

We have now completed a **Code of Practice for Pastoral Care**. This forms a foundation for safe practise. We will soon be appointing a Pastoral Care Advisory Group to oversee the development of the program.

Engagement

We have drawn up a Role Description for Pastoral Care Partners (PCPs) who will be recognised and accredited to deliver care through CMF. We are putting together a training program for them.

Pilots

Developing pastoral care is going to take time; it is a huge undertaking. However, we want to launch pilot projects this year to identify what will work best.

Peer-to-peer support has been identified as a priority, and we will be aiming to start this program as soon as possible.

We are working on a Pastoral Care and Wellbeing page for the CMF website to appear over the next few months – see cmf.li/PCWP.

Please consider how you might get involved. Watch out for our call for applications or register your interest now by emailing us directly on wellbeing@cmf.org.uk

Public policy

Jenny Pollock, Associate Head of Public policy on the continued opposition to assisted suicide

We thank God recently for several pieces of good news around assisted suicide. First, the Tynwald (the Isle of Man's Parliament) debated assisted suicide and unanimously voted to take no action at the current time.

Next, a Westminster Hall debate rejected Christine Jardine's call for a parliamentary review of the law. Many MPs spoke out strongly against assisted suicide, citing the experiences both of Oregon and, more recently, Canada. Both jurisdictions have seen a rapid extension of the scale and scope of the law.

Then the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) released the results of their members' poll on the College's position. With 47 per cent of respondents saying the College should remain opposed to a change in the law, 40 per cent in support and eleven per cent supporting a neutral stance, the College decided to retain its opposition.

Finally, the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), who last year controversially took up a neutral stance on the topic, have clarified their

Assisted Dying
Don't be neutralised

LAST CHANCE
The BMA's consultation, which closes on Thursday 27 February, invites you to share your views on the results of vulnerable patients, and implications for the medical profession, and the wider community.

- 2014: The BMA's position was to support the current law.
- 2015: The BMA's position was to support the current law.
- 2016: The BMA's position was to support the current law.
- 2017: The BMA's position was to support the current law.
- 2018: The BMA's position was to support the current law.
- 2019: The BMA's position was to support the current law.
- 2020: The BMA's position was to support the current law.

Support continued BMA opposition to physician-assisted dying - VOTE NOW!

Our duty of care

position to emphasise that they do not support a change in the law. Campaigners for assisted suicide and some parts of the media had reported the neutral position as meaning the College had 'dropped its opposition' to assisted suicide. This was not what the College intended it said last month.

The British Medical Association (BMA) also polled its members on

the subject. The BMA has been clear that 'The results of the survey will not make BMA policy.' Rather, they will 'inform a discussion and debate on the BMA's policy position' at the ARM (Annual Representatives' Meeting). However, due to COVID-19 that has been postponed at least until September.

We are delighted with these developments and are very grateful to all who have been praying, campaigning and voting. Please continue to pray for the BMA to retain its longstanding opposition to a change in the law. Vulnerable people at the end of life need to know that the medical profession and the country as a whole values their lives and seeks to provide outstanding care for them when they need it most.

Students

Sydenham1 and National Student Conference 2020

Thankfully, both conferences took place earlier than usual this year, narrowly escaping the uncertainty over travel and large gatherings as a result of COVID-19.

We were pleased to welcome 20 medical students from Asia, Africa, Eastern and Western Europe, Oceania and South America to the CMF office on 26 January. This was for a week-long programme of leadership and discipleship training, culminating with the national student conference at Yarnfield Park. The international students were able to visit the Houses of Parliament and Cambridge for the Christian heritage tour. As always, strong friendships were formed, which may well last a lifetime. It was encouraging to hear what God is doing in other parts of the world. But it was also sobering to hear about the tough challenges that many



overseas students face. The National Student Conference theme this year was 'Shining like Stars', based on the book of Philippians. Peter Saunders, the former CMF CEO, was the keynote speaker. As always, there was a great atmosphere and a stimulating selection of seminar choices, including such topics as the transgender agenda, abortion, evolution and creation and self-care.

Thanks to the addition of Ashley Stewart - a trained counsellor as well as a former doctor - to the student leadership team, we were able to offer a more structured pastoral care programme to individual students, and many took advantage of this. The issues arising from these conversations confirm yet again the urgent need for CMF to develop its pastoral care services to both students and graduates. We are grateful to all the speakers and volunteers who took time out of their busy conference schedules to support students with prayerful counsel, sometimes late into the night.

Member stories

Building up a new generation for Christ

In my role as Head of Nursing, I get the privilege of hearing lots of stories from nurses and midwives on the frontline. Many of these stories are tough and challenging. Just this week, I heard from a few newly qualified nurses how they battle stress and anxiety before going onto a shift. One even wrote to me of her panic attacks before leaving the house for work. Still, the experience is compounded by low staff numbers and consequently, an increasingly unsafe working environment.

Thankfully, I also get to hear 'good news' stories about the precious times that make the hard work and the stress all worthwhile for these amazing nurses and midwives.

For your encouragement, I'd like to share one or two in the upcoming CMF News editions.

This first one is about prayer and the privilege of being with patients at pivotal moments in their lives:

A palliative care nurse emailed me a fortnight ago about something that had happened that day. She writes *'I had cared for an elderly man, highly educated who had terminal cancer. He who was keen to tell me all he had achieved and which I sensed he felt valued and identified by. He was distressed he could no longer do all he did, such as organising community projects and liaising with MPs. He mentioned faith, and he said although his wife had a strong faith, he had lapsed. We talked, and I offered to pray, after which he begged me for a copy of whatever book I'd got the prayer from. I said it was from my heart for him and that God hears us just as we speak. No fancy language needed, and he can talk in prayer. We talked more about prayer and God not needing our deeds to pay our way and that when I left the room, he can close his eyes and say whatever he wants to God. He will be heard. I didn't get to speak with him again as he died soon after. I trust he found the peace he was looking for.'*

Please email me (pippa@cmf.org.uk) more of your stories so we can share them for mutual encouragement!

Pippa Peppiatt, Head of Nursing

Global

Fi McLachlan, Head of Global

Global Track

Hopefully, many of you are now familiar with CMF's Global Track? It's currently a group of 25 students or newly qualified health care professionals who wish to explore how God might call them to serve him in global health and mission. The Track is made up of seminars in London, webinars, an international trip, taking part in the Developing Health Course (12-24 July), and having a mentor walking alongside them on their journey of exploration and learning.

One participant recently wrote: *"In the past, my view of God tended to be restricted to what he was doing in my life or the lives of those around me. On the Global Track, I learnt about the history of global mission – 'the West to the rest'. But mission today is more 'everyone to everywhere'. This has helped me to really understand the Lord has been establishing his worldwide kingdom since the beginning, and he will continue doing so into eternity. He is at work, and he invites us to join Him."*

Among the first cohort of 24 in 2017-2018, two are currently working overseas, six have been abroad on an elective, six are actively planning to work overseas, three are undertaking further studies related to global health and mission, and two are actively engaged in global health work from within the UK.

Let's thank God for all that He is doing in and through the lives of our members.

'Attentive to God'

CMF Global is arranging a retreat **18 to 19 July** at the **London School of Theology**. This is for those engaged in global health and mission who want to take time out to spend time with God. To get away from the busy schedules of clinics, overseas

life, visits in the UK for mission agencies, or seeing family and friends. Why not take two days to come away and seek God in a led retreat with others who understand your working environment? There will be a chance to rest, read, pray, talk and worship. Do book through the website (cmf.li/39Z1Gm8), or pass to colleagues or mission partners who may be interested.



Nurses & midwives

Pippa Peppiatt, Head of Nursing

Retreat for student nurse & midwife reps

We recently held an annual retreat day for our student nurse/midwife group leaders (or 'reps') in Winchester. The bulk of the day was a Christian 'Kintsugi' retreat, led by local Christian artist Gill Drew. She guided us through a meditative activity which essentially involved smashing a ceramic pot that was precious to us, then glueing it back together and painting the new joins with gold paint. It was a profound and moving time, with lots of bible verses and trying to listen to the Lord at each stage of the process. It was also a good reminder of the verse Isaiah 64:8 'Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.'



Having had a lengthy time of silent meditation, being nurses, we then needed a chance to CHAT! So, we finished our day having speciality teas in a local brasserie. The volume level certainly went up in the place as soon as we arrived!

Obituaries

Dr David E. Ford, *q* 1955 and worked as a GP

Dr Gordon Lavy, *q* Cambridge, 1949, died 21 November 2019. He worked as a missionary general surgeon at CMS's Mengo Mission Hospital in Uganda in the 1950s.

Mr Mervyn Hawe, FRCS *q* Belfast, 1974

Dr Norrison Alexander Harker, *q* Cambridge, 1958, died peacefully on 15 February in Cirencester. He was a man of strong faith and a strong supporter of CMF until his death.

Member Movements

Nicholas Cook, to Kigali, Rwanda

Abigail Nye, to Blantyre, Malawi

Staff movements

Departures



Oluwatosin Oyeniyi



Phgllip Martin



Liz Flores Silva

Arrivals

Olu Lampejo will be joining us in mid-June as CMF's new Operations Director

CMF senior staff



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Associate CEO
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Dates for your diary

All events are currently under review due to COVID-19. Some of these events will be happening online rather than in person. Further news on specific events will be circulated by email and on our website

However, please keep the following dates in your diary:

APRIL

25 Online talks and resources related to the **National Conference**

JULY

12-24 **Developing Health Course**, London School of Theology

18-19 **Attentive to God - Spiritual Retreat 2020**, London School of Theology

OCTOBER

23-25 **Junior Doctors' Conference**, Hothorpe Hall

NOVEMBER

30 October - 1 November
Irish Conference

7 **Scottish Day Conference**

For further information please contact: events@cmf.org.uk.

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