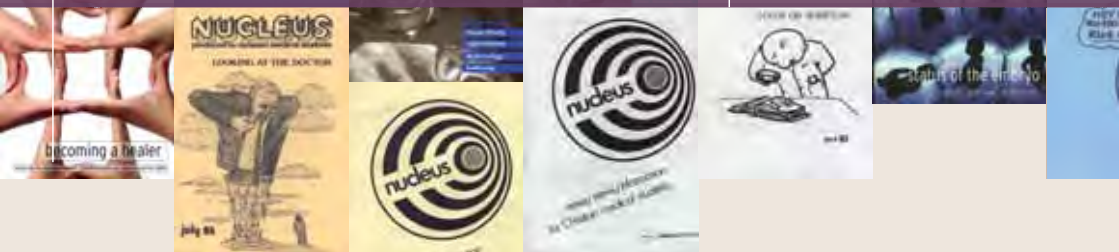


40 years of *Nucleus*

Vongai Madanire marks a generation of CMFs student journal

Vongai Madanire is an intercalating medical student in London, and editor of *Nucleus*



The 40th (Ruby) wedding anniversary is one of the most significant celebrations in a marriage relationship. 40 years is often taken scripturally (and elsewhere) to represent one generation - and indeed the number 40 appears remarkably often in the Bible!

When God wanted to cleanse the world and start all over again with a righteous man, he sent rain for 40 days and 40 nights.¹ After the waters receded, Noah waited for 40 days before opening the window of the ark.² Moses is twice recorded spending 40 days and 40 nights on the mountain with God,³ after which his face shone with the glory of God. The children of Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness⁴ and later on, Goliath strutted in front of the Lord's army for 40 days before being killed by David.⁵ After being fed by the angel, Elijah survived on the strength of that one meal for 40 days and 40 nights as he travelled to Mount Horeb, where the Lord passed by and Elijah heard his voice.⁶

Jesus drew parallels between the sign of Jonah and his own death and resurrection.⁷ Jonah warned the City of Nineveh that they had 40 days until God would overthrow the city, but within that time they repented, and the city was saved.⁸ Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness,⁹ and just before he ascended to heaven, he appeared to various men speaking

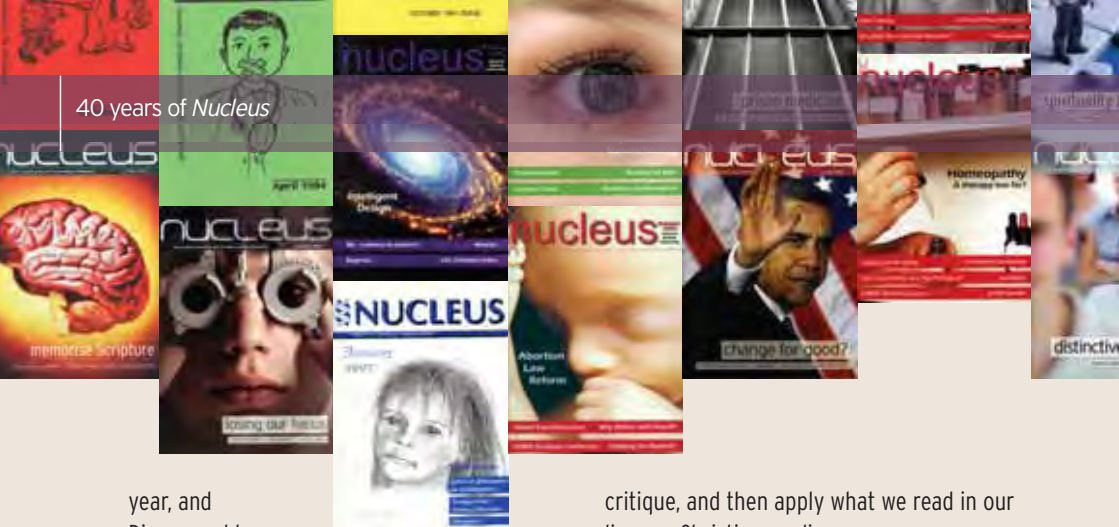
about the kingdom of God for 40 days.¹⁰

Although it might not always be appropriate or necessary to draw exact parallels with all biblical numbers, the frequency of number 40 in the Bible and what it represented seems to reflect some great significance which we can not completely ignore; days or years of trial, probation and endurance, usually followed by renewal or great transformation. Therefore it is interesting for us to reflect on the 40 years for which *Nucleus* has so far been produced.

Nucleus was founded in 1971, 22 years after the formation of Christian Medical Fellowship in 1949. A typical doctor who qualified in 1971 would have been born in the late 1940s, and is probably in the process of retiring now, or considering the possibility.

1971

The Prime minister in 1971 was Edward Heath (Conservative) and Parliament at that time was debating, among other issues, NHS prescription charge exemptions and free school meals (perhaps not so much has changed!) January 1971 saw the death of 66 football fans in a crush at Ibrox stadium in Glasgow, and later that year, Arsenal won the FA Cup final, completing a league and cup double as they defeated Liverpool 2-1 in extra time. The Apollo 14 and Apollo 15 missions landed on the moon that



40 years of *Nucleus*

year, and Disneyland opened in Florida in the autumn - at about the same time the first edition of *Nucleus* was printed. The Nobel Prize for medicine was won by American Earl Wilbur Sutherland Jr, for work on the mechanism of action of adrenaline.¹¹

Given that computers were just beginning to develop at that time, the first issues of *Nucleus* were in paper form. Electronic (and online) copies exist only from year 1992 onwards - and indeed a large file of hand-drawn illustrations was in use until much later than that (and probably still exists somewhere in the CMF office!) Until 1977, the front cover displayed '*Nucleus: News, views and information for Christian medical students*'. The first edition was essentially a newsletter of about 15 pages, seeking to address the problem of lack of communication and people's apathy in response to information. The first page read:

'Information is useless and sterile unless it serves some purpose or provokes a response... We hope that this new journal-cum-newsletter will help in some way ...but for that to happen you must not only read it, but use it.'¹²

Although these words are 40 years old, we stand by them today. For *Nucleus* to be of any value, it needs to be read. But as (hopefully) intelligent medical students, we can surely go beyond just reading. We need to analyse,

critique, and then apply what we read in our lives as Christian medics.

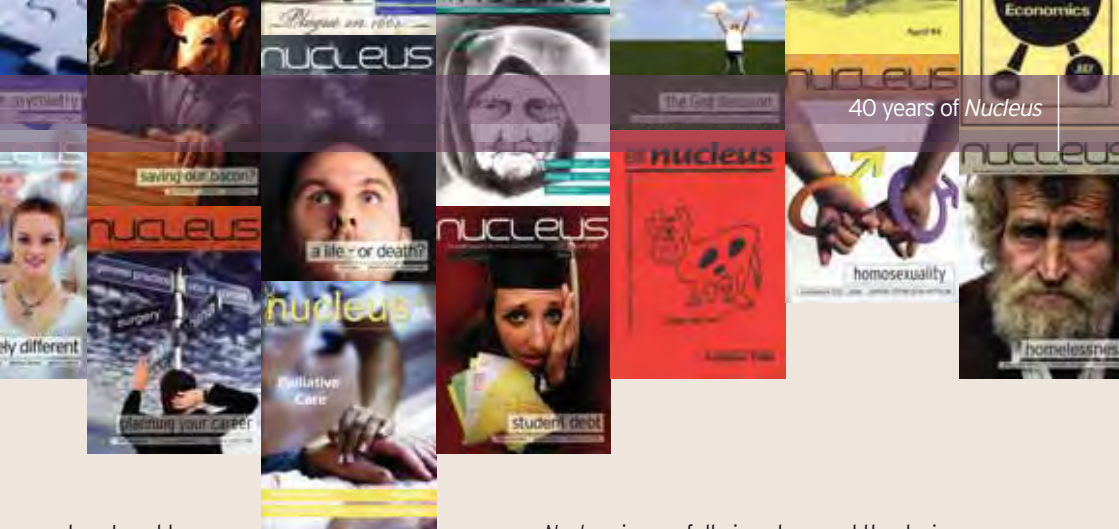
Nucleus has continued to improve in design and appearance - particularly with advances in design software and desktop publishing. The quality of the articles remains central, however. We consistently aim to address topical issues in medical ethics, and to equip medical students to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

The founders of the journal in 1971 set out a vision: 'to equip medical students to know Jesus Christ more and his relevance to the medical field, in which we are all ambassadors'. Perhaps this has fuelled my own passion the most - reading every issue I have received and enjoying the editorial work I have done. The October 1986 issue (pictured) discussed 'A time to die', looking at issues around palliative care and euthanasia. Most final year students in the UK were born around this time - and it is a reminder that some issues never go away!

how can one person fit in?

Nucleus has only been successful for so long because students have consistently been at the heart of its production. I relate some of my own story here in the hope of inspiring others to get involved.

Like most of us, I just jumped onto the *Nucleus* boat by virtue of joining CMF in 2007. I had no idea how much *Nucleus* had to offer or



how I could ever contribute. In high school I had always run away from every 'arty' subject which would require me to write long essays or 'compositions' as we used to call them. Academically, I read the bare minimum necessary to do well in exams. But here I was now, in the busy world of being a medical student and in addition to *Gray's Anatomy*, *Kumar and Clark's Clinical Medicine* and other medical school textbooks (never mind the journals to read for SSCs), I was now receiving three copies of *Nucleus* each year! In no time I awakened to the fact that medicine was a minefield in which I would not flourish if I did not commit to searching diligently for knowledge, understanding and wisdom.¹³ Beginning to see the value of *Nucleus*, I developed an interest in being actively involved in its publication. I did not know much about writing or editing but the beautiful thing is I didn't have to; I just had to be willing to receive the riches it brought and take the opportunities it presented.

This edition already marks a new season in its renewed appearance. For the first time,

Nucleus is now fully in colour, and the design has changed. To continue to see the success and improvement of *Nucleus*, as well as its impact on medical students in the UK and beyond, I would encourage you to continue reading, sending in your comments or feedback, and submitting your own articles for publication. Consider joining the editorial or reviewing team (contact Vongai at the CMF office).

As we thank God for all that has happened through *Nucleus* so far, there is one thing we should also do: forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead.¹⁴ We should press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us in Christ Jesus. As we gain knowledge, understanding and wisdom, we will be equipped to shine in our workplace and win souls of many to the glory of our God. Congratulations to *Nucleus* and lastly, thank you to everyone who has been involved, to editors, authors and especially to our readers! ■

REFERENCES

1	Genesis 7:12	6	1 Kings 19:8	11	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1971
2	Genesis 8:6	7	Matthew 12:40	12	Why communicate? <i>Nucleus</i> ; 1971, October: 1
3	Exodus 24:18, 34:28-29	8	Jonah 3:4, 10	13	Proverbs 4
4	Exodus 16:35, Numbers 14:33-34	9	Matthew 4:1-2	14	Philippians 3:13,14
5	1 Samuel 17:16	10	Acts 1:3		