

Joseph, Chief of Staff

Alexandra Roche reports on the 2012 CMF National Student Conference

As medical students, we all have a dream. We dream of being able to alleviate people's suffering and having the privilege of listening to their concerns.

Although we may not want to admit it, perhaps we also dream of power; of white coats, stethoscopes and having other people look up to us and respect us as doctors. These are often the dreams and aspirations that get us through the harsh reality of being a student, from being at the bottom of the ladder on the wards by day and slaving away over mountains of textbooks by night, not to mention the other challenges life throws at us along the way.

Joseph's story also started with a dream. Over three talks at the CMF National Student Conference in February, John Lennox (Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, Fellow in Mathematics and Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College, Oxford and Adjunct Professor of the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics) brought the story of Joseph right alongside the lives of us 21st century medical students.

Joseph's journey was not an easy one. He went from being sold as a slave, to becoming head of Potiphar's household, to prisoner, to prison warden until finally he became Vizier of Egypt. As John Lennox said, at the end of Joseph's suffering, the word of the Lord proved him true. Joseph trusted the Lord. Could he have held the same wisdom and integrity without facing the suffering along the way? Likewise, we as medical students should embrace any hardships that come our way, trusting fully in the Lord through it all, for this may be the way that God moulds us



into the doctors and the people that he wants us to be. As an older graduate-entry medical student who has a long-winding tale of my own, the story of Joseph fills me with encouragement to trust God for the future.

John Lennox also unearthed parallels in Joseph's story that illustrate the importance of confidentiality, reliability and integrity. He warned us about favouritism. He made us question the basis of our ethics, our motivations and our attitudes for using our gifts, and took stories of Joseph's family to illustrate how God can use many situations to his glory. There are too many beautiful examples to list fully here - why not download the talks at www.cmf.org.uk/media/

Abi Boys, a doctor currently training in dentistry to become a maxillofacial surgeon, frequently travels overseas. Her conference address brought examples of the incredible work that she and overseas medical teams do. While the lack of medical care in the world's poorer nations means that many cases she has dealt with have been heart-breaking, it was mind-blowing seeing the ways in which God has often provided for her patients in these situations.



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one moment feel out of place. I found that the teaching was as relevant to me as to any 18 year old, and I was warmly welcomed by the other students.

Everyone came from different places and backgrounds, including 26 international students. We each had a different story to tell, but we all shared a common faith in Jesus. The 'on the couch' interviews also gave us a chance to get to know some of the CMF team.



Following on from what we had been learning about Joseph, it was a more current reminder of the importance of trusting in our Lord.

We were also spoilt for choice in teaching with 15 seminars, ranging from medical topics such as psychiatry and reproductive technologies, to more practical issues such as productivity and



procrastination and the involvement of medics within the church - all geared to help equip us in our future lives as Christian doctors. A question and answer session with John Lennox further helped us think through some difficult questions about our faith.

Whilst the teaching was inspiring, the other ingredients of a great conference are the people, the entertainment and the food (which was delicious)! At the age of 29, I was worried that I would be a fossil. However, I did not for

As for the activities, the snow gave a chilly but stunning backdrop to our afternoon walk across the fields on Saturday afternoon. For those who preferred to stay warm, there were sports in the hall, rugby on TV, board games, a large bookstall to browse and general mingling. For the unfortunate few like myself that had an exam on the Monday after the conference, there was also time to catch up on some last minute revision!

I opted to start with the quiz on Saturday night. The quiz was slightly unconventional (including a doughnut eating competition), but the unexpected is more exciting! Buzzing from the sugary rewards of my team's quiz victory, I then joined the barn dancing and we were stripping the willow until midnight! For those who wanted a quieter evening, there was a film and discussion, and some watched the rugby from earlier in the day.

For my first CMF conference, it was an amazing experience. I came away feeling challenged from the talks and seminars, refreshed and encouraged from being able to praise God with nearly 400 other medical students, and hungry for more. I can't wait to come back! ■