

Jesus Christ: the be all and end all

Steffi Whitehead reports on the 2014 CMF Student Conference

Jesus Christ over all! Whatever burdens they came with, medical students from far and wide were reminded of that truth throughout the weekend. This truth stands whatever situation we find ourselves in. Mark Meynell led us through Colossians, reminding us that Jesus is the 'firstborn over all creation' (1:15)¹ in whom 'all things hold together' (1:17). Our creator God loved us so abundantly that he sent Jesus, who was fully God (2:9-10), to rescue us from sin. Day-to-day, we so often forget how much we are loved - that Jesus left his Father, humbled himself to walk amongst the created, died a painful death and was raised to life so we could be like him. This is scandalous! God, lowering himself to be a human?

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul writes that we have been 'raised with Christ' (3:1) and this is a complete work (2:11-15). Though society, people and Satan may attempt to 'deceive you by fine-sounding arguments' (2:4) we can know Jesus is completely God and we are completely forgiven. The only person who can truly judge us is our Father in heaven (2:16) who sees us as 'holy in his sight without blemish and free from accusation' (1:22). In response to this awesome truth we can turn away from sin each day (3:1-17) and love because Christ loved us first, in fellowship (3:11-14) and with complete dependence on God (3:15-17).

This theme was picked up by John Wyatt, whose conference address challenged us that it



is then our choice to be the person God created us to be in our medical studies and careers. I have come from a privileged background and know I will not be alone in this, but as doctors we will be given responsibility as well as authority, and it is up to us to treat that responsibility as Jesus did.

He demonstrated that Christian ethics is service ethics because Jesus came to serve, which he did voluntarily and with humility (John 13:1-17). Christian ethics is to care. In an ever target-driven environment this is difficult, but it is what Jesus came to do. When Jesus met a widow mourning the death of her son 'his heart went out to her' (Luke 7:11-17). Empathy allows us to respond in this way to patients rather than emotionally distance ourselves from them. Jesus came to bring truth, and even when rules and policies in our studies or work seem credible, it is important to ask ourselves whether they speak truth and whether Jesus would agree with them. If not, we are in a position where we can stand up for truth with 'gentleness and respect' (1 Peter 3:15) in our work place but also on a local and national level.



Steffi Whitehead
is a medical student in Bristol



and abortion, understanding eating disorders, reaching out to Muslims, international work and medical mission, a personal experience of opposition in the workplace, relationships, singleness and marriage as a medic, serving Christ in inner city general practice and sharing faith with friends.

For instance, there are some student CMF members who are involved in the BMA and are able to speak up for the vulnerable and marginalised on a national level to influence policy. When standing up for something we believe is wrong, it is not enough to say that we disagree; instead we must find an alternative. Jesus himself was sent by the Father into opposition and yet through prayer and obedience he triumphed over death and his opponents had no power over him until he gave it to them. It is worth remembering that not only does Jesus understand how we feel when oppressed, but when we draw close to God through the Holy Spirit we can have that same power over the situations we find ourselves in. Lastly, Jesus was sent as a sacrifice. There is always a cost to following Jesus, and you will experience this throughout your life and career. But this sacrifice, like Jesus', is voluntary and with love. None of this is achievable without prayer, fellowship and his Word.

The wonderful teaching didn't stop there. We had seminars on issues such as a practical Christian response to unplanned pregnancy

Of course, the CMF weekend would not be complete without walks, wonderful food, worship, fellowship and reunions, a quiz, late night chats with cups of tea, a ceilidh, books at ridiculously reduced prices and rugby.

I would like to leave you now with a prayer written by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, which I believe sums up the weekend:

'I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.' (Ephesians. 3:16-21)

REFERENCES

1. All references are to Colossians unless otherwise stated.