

SYD: 'a piece of heaven'

Paula Prittinen reports on CMF's International Students and Young Doctors Conference

In February 2015, we had a wonderful opportunity to travel from all over the world to attend the Sydenham International conference, held in London immediately before the CMF Student Conference. Altogether there were 19 medical students and junior doctors from 16 different countries; China, Brazil and South Africa, to mention just some of them. We were all leaders or leaders-to-be of our local CMF groups.

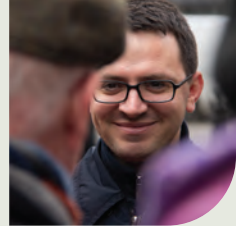
From the moment I arrived at the hostel and met my new friends, I knew that it was going to be a unique, once in a lifetime experience. Our days were full of tight and close fellowship, learning, thinking and being inspired, laughing and sometimes happily crying, encouraging others and being encouraged, and most of all, praising God and getting to know him better.

We started the mornings with Bible readings from 2 Timothy and also prayed for our home countries. Retired surgeon Bernard Palmer challenged us to dig deeper into the Bible and learn it by heart, so that we would be able to stay Christ-centred and give a meaningful answer when asked about our faith. We discussed Christian medical ethics with ethicist and neonatologist Professor John Wyatt, and talked about leadership and public policy with CMF Chief Executive Peter Saunders. In addition, the amazing CMF student staff team took such a good care of us and prepared us for our work at home with teaching including whole-person medicine, personal discipleship and Confident Christianity. After the seminars we sometimes felt that we would need at least a week to think

through those things we had just learned. The days were very inspiring and we were given a lot to think about! We are so grateful for that.

Between the great seminars and discussions we had some free time as well. We headed to the city to have a walk around the main sights and learn about its Christian heritage at the same time. The guide really knew what he was talking about, and I'll never look at those places in a same way I used to. In the British Museum we saw a lot of evidence that shows the accuracy of the Bible and it's difficult to describe the feeling of looking at some of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament in existence, which are on display in the British Library. We also had the pleasure of meeting up with some of the London students; we ate some fish and chips, visited the Wyatts' home and strolled around London with Andrew, a UK junior doctor who spent the whole week encouraging us in so many ways.

When the SYD conference was coming to an end we jumped on the bus with Londoners and





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travelled to the CMF Student Conference in Staffordshire. It was wonderful to meet so many enthusiastic Christian medical students and be part of your joyful get-together. We felt at home there and we are so thankful for all your prayers for our countries and your support for the SYD conference. You inspired us by your strength and will to serve Christ in your life. Keep trusting him in everything you do! It's also great that we can continue to support each other in prayer.

The most important thing I was reminded during the week in UK is that we are all called to be God's children, be part of his big family and to love each other no matter where we are. And it's our shared job to invite those still outside the family to come to know his grace in Jesus Christ, too. I feel blessed to know so many Christian colleagues, dear sisters and brothers, around the world. Our week was like a piece of heaven and I've never felt so openly and unconditionally loved. I praise and thank our God for giving us that precious time together. I pray for the CMF in UK and for your incredible work there. You all gave us

can you help?

CMF has been running an annual conference for international students for more than 15 years. Initially focused on students in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the scope has broadened to encompass nearby counties in western Europe (where there are often very few evangelical Christians) and those from much further afield.

Previous delegates have gone on to take up leadership roles in their own Christian Medical groups, with some starting groups from scratch. A number of summer teams of UK doctors and students have also arisen from the conference.

Putting on the conference is no small undertaking. Though delegates from western Europe can usually pay their own way, it is impossible for those from many countries to come without significant financial support. If you would like to make a donation towards the 2016 conference, do get in touch.

We're also always in need of 'helpers' during the week, to aid with catering, organisation, and travel. If you think you might be able to help in 2016, please get in touch with us in the CMF office.

a wonderful example and it makes me so happy to think about you. Please feel free to contact us anytime, if you want to come and visit us in our countries. You'll all have a home here waiting for you and I know that I'm saying this also behalf of my fellow delegates.

Be blessed, our sisters and brothers! ▀

Special thanks to organisers: Eve, Alex, John, Andrew, Megan, Scott, Vicky, Laurence and Laura! You are wonderful!