

revelation

Becky Horton, Grace Petrovic and others report on 2016 CMF Student Conference

CMF's Student Conference this year was a record breaker - 450 attendees meant every seat in the hall at Yarnfield Park was taken. Every bed was filled (with overspill in a local budget hotel), and the conference centre had to hire lots of extra chairs for the seminar rooms!

We were delighted to welcome Dr Tim Chester who spoke on the oft-neglected middle chapters of Revelation. A wide variety of seminars covered both beginning and end of life issues, overseas work, healing, sexuality, and the impact of the online world on Christian medical students.

BECKY SAYS

Appropriately for a conference focussed on Revelation, we began by singing 'no-one like Jesus' in four different languages. What a way to get us looking forward to that day when people from all nations will be before the throne!

The talks challenged us with a call to live by a different set of values, but massively encouraged me that, even when it feels like God is losing the battle; we can know that it has already been won by Christ.

It was really helpful to take some time out to reflect - I can't speak for everyone but my head was feeling quite full - and a joy to get alongside the others in our region in a new regional group session. Be excited for joint events coming up soon!

I'm so encouraged to live more wholeheartedly for Christ, both at medical school and in my future career. Overall, loads of fun; and we have left with 'Weep no more. Behold' (Revelation 5:5, ESV) stamped more firmly onto our hearts.

GRACE SAYS

Having some guidance through this challenging and poetic part of scripture was very helpful. It can often feel too intimidating to start! Tim explained the symbolism and imagery by using his own helpful analogy. Revelation is like a single beam of light from the sun in an otherwise darkened room. Focus on that beam and we seem to move beyond the room. He likened this to what happens when we focus on God, glimpsing something beyond ourselves and beyond this world.

The seminars were a great time to focus on more specific topics in smaller groups. I found the psychiatry seminar particularly helpful. A number of us Oxford medics had been struggling authentically to reconcile faith and psychiatry. Dr Nick Land, the session leader, was so helpful, clear and kind that I left wondering why I had ever found the reconciliation a struggle! Other topics covered this year included how to share your faith with patients, truth and relativism, abortion, dying with dignity and mission work abroad.

STUDENT FEEDBACK INCLUDED

'It gets better every year! I think as I get further on in my degree everything becomes much more relevant and important to me.'

'Great to tackle a really challenging book of the Bible together, one that otherwise might get neglected because we are confused by it.'

'Incredible, some of the best teaching I've heard in a long time. Very applicable and very encouraging.'

'A fantastic seminar delivered by people with first-hand experience of this issue. Very clear and relevant, Bible based teaching. This seminar definitely gave me a new perspective on 'Is the gospel good news for gay people?'

'As a first year, seeing so many Christian medics who have a common purpose to love and serve the Lord Jesus in every sphere of life was so refreshing and opened my eyes to the possibilities available and the boldness that is possible, as a Christian. I am in awe of how much God blessed me, built me up, encouraged me, and challenged me to live more wholeheartedly for him, under his Son's forgiveness and grace. Thank you God!'

If you missed out on conference this year, all of Tim Chester's talks on Revelation are on the CMF website at www.cmf.org.uk/media

2017

Preparations for 2017 are well underway. We're delighted that John Lennox has agreed to come and speak. John is Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford and Emeritus Fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College, Oxford. He is interested in the interface between science, philosophy and theology and his books on those topics include *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?*, *God and Stephen Hawking*, *Seven Days that Divide the World* and *Gunning for God*. He is a great friend of CMF and we look forward to hearing him speak to us!

The dates are February 10-12, and the venue will once again be Yarnfield Park. This year we sold out well before the closing date - so why not put the dates in your diary now. Further details will be announced as we have them at www.cmf.org.uk/students/student-conference with booking usually open by the end of September. ■