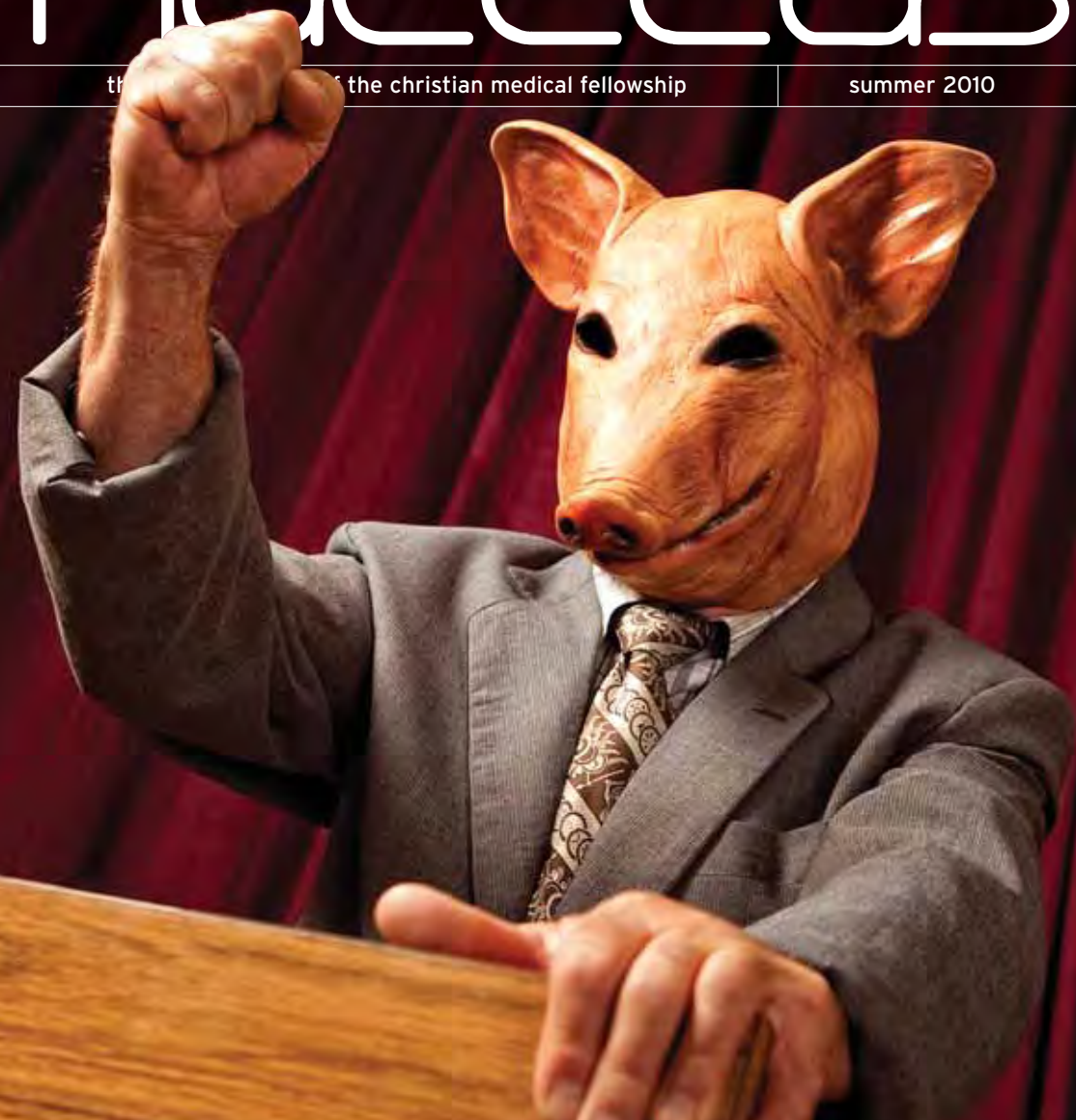


# NUCLEUS

the journal of the christian medical fellowship

summer 2010



saving our bacon?

abortion ad

mission

biblical ethics

# NUCLEUS

summer 2010

## CONTENTS

is the student journal of the  
Christian Medical Fellowship.  
It has an international circulation  
in more than 40 countries.

**Editor** Pete Mackley (Imperial)

**Managing Editor** Laurence Crutchlow (CMF)

### Editorial Committee

Karim Fouad Alber (UCL)

Abigail Bremphah (UCL)

Oluwatosin Haastrop (St George's)

Norris Igbineweka (King's)

Vongai Madanire (St George's)

Colleen McGregor (Imperial)

Sheldon Zhang (Imperial)

### CMF Office

Andrew Fergusson, Giles Cattermole,

Laura Risdale, Peter Saunders

### Cover

**Design** S2 Design & Advertising

**Printers** Partridge & Print Ltd.

### Editorial policy

The editor welcomes original contributions  
that have medical and Christian content.

Letters and emails are invited. Authors have a  
reasonable freedom of expression in so far as their  
articles are consistent with the Christian faith as  
recorded in the Bible. Views expressed are not  
necessarily those of the Fellowship. Unless otherwise  
stated, biblical quotes are taken from the  
New International Version.

### Editorial address

The Editor

*Nucleus*

Christian Medical Fellowship

6 Marshalsea Road

London SE1 1HL

**Email** [nucleus@cmf.org.uk](mailto:nucleus@cmf.org.uk)

**Tel** 020 7234 9660

### Subscription rates

*Nucleus* is sent to all student members of CMF as part of the  
benefits of membership, but individual subscriptions  
inclusive of postage are available to non-members  
at £2 a copy (UK) and £3 a copy (overseas).

Back issues are available from

[www.cmf.org.uk/literature](http://www.cmf.org.uk/literature)

editorial <i>Laurence Crutchlow</i>	3
best left to pastors and chaplains? <i>Emma Ditchfield</i>	4
news review	8
what does it mean to be human? <i>Jo Lovell</i>	10
medical school news - north-east <i>Clare Bird</i>	15
saving our bacon? <i>Zoe Greaves</i>	16
medical missionary today? <i>Stephen Hibbs</i>	20
in search of a biblical ethic <i>Matt Lillcrap</i>	24
the new 'abortion ad' <i>Karim Fouad Alber</i>	32
crossword <i>Lactometer</i>	36
heroes and heretics: Tertullian and Marcion <i>Alex Bunn</i>	37
how to read the Bible: the Gospels <i>Giles Cattermole</i>	40
reviews	42



**The end of an era. What does this mean to you? For some deep in mourning over England's recent performance in the World Cup, the era of hope that we would ever win again may have ended. For ministers in the previous government, the months since the last issue of *Nucleus* have seen the end of 13 years in power.**

For many medical students, this summer brings the end of years of training. Yet it also marks a beginning. Just as recent football events might eventually herald a new age of English sporting greatness (at least once a few changes are made!), the end of medical training also heralds the first weeks and months of work as a doctor, with many changes.

Starting work will change our spiritual lives. Students are often well supported by dedicated church workers, CMF and UCCF, and other Christian students. It isn't always like this in the early months of work as a doctor. Fellowship can of course be found through CMF and in church, but often more effort is needed to find it.

A common early difficulty is putting into practice what has been learnt. There's often a tendency for students to hold very 'black and white' views about ethics. Sometimes this is entirely appropriate. Certain things are just plain wrong. But tensions arise when we aren't so sure. The abortion request, thought through in detail in a CMF student meeting, may seem very different with an upset patient sat opposite, expecting to get exactly what she wants. Black and white can seem grey.

The world is often against us when we want to do right. Often those who came to power with the best of intentions enact unjust law, and perpetuate the system they once vowed to change. It is all too easy for us to become part of the problem.

Against such opposition, we need better Bible understanding than a simple 'proof text'. To help, Matt Lillicrap considers how and why we use the Bible in ethical decision making. Zoe Greaves looks at how to act when the law of the land conflicts with the Bible, and Karim Fouad Alber explores what protest if any we should make when we see something wrong.

Those starting work must also consider what place spiritual care has in medicine. Emma Ditchfield argues against the idea that it should be left to others. To care for the whole person, we have to understand something of the image of God - explained in this issue by Jo Lovell.

We thank Siôn Glaze, who has handed on editing the news review after becoming National Student Committee chair. We also welcome the long overdue return of the crossword to *Nucleus*!

We once again hope that this largely student authored edition of *Nucleus* will help you meet the challenges of living God's way in the medical world.

**Laurence Crutchlow**  
*is managing editor of Nucleus*

# best left to pastors and chaplains?

*Emma Ditchfield* considers an ongoing controversy over spiritual care

**W**e are taught as medical students to be holistic in our management approach, considering a patient's physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs. However, step into the hectic buzz of a ward... beeps, patient alarms, drips going off, a patient's relative asking questions, another patient being taken away for physiotherapy, for x-ray, for theatre... and a holistic

approach, good in principle, suddenly becomes a lot more difficult to express in reality. I have noticed from the experience that I have had on wards, that often it is spiritual care that is most neglected. Even when filling in 'patients' religion' on A&E forms I have been advised just to put 'not known' rather than asking. Why is this? Time pressures? Lack of training in this area? The assumption that spiritual care should be left to pastors and chaplains to give to those who are 'religious'?

## **spiritual needs**

Such an assumption sits uncomfortably with me for several reasons. One is that it

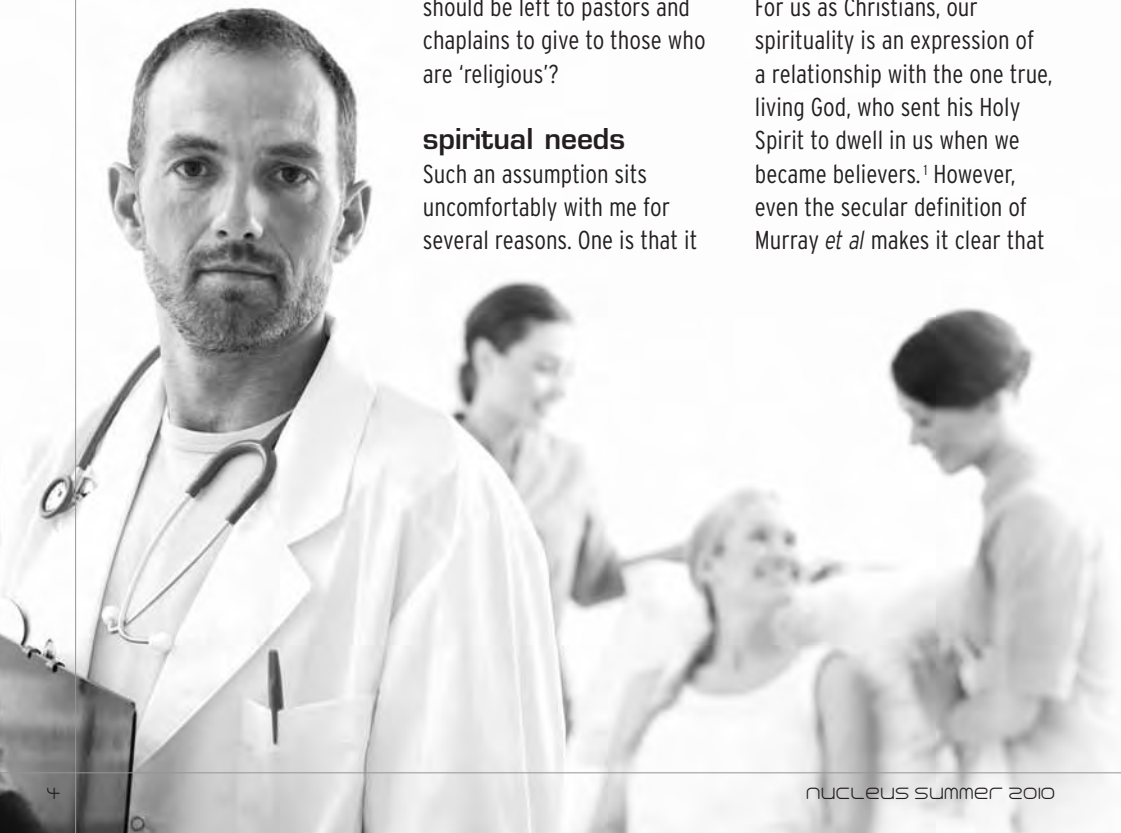
draws the conclusion that only people who have a defined religion have spiritual needs. I have found that there is generally a misunderstanding

---

our spirituality is an expression of a relationship with the one true, living God

---

in society around what is 'spiritual' and what is 'religious'. For us as Christians, our spirituality is an expression of a relationship with the one true, living God, who sent his Holy Spirit to dwell in us when we became believers.<sup>1</sup> However, even the secular definition of Murray *et al* makes it clear that



there is a distinction: 'a quality that goes beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspirations, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those that do not believe in any god.'<sup>2</sup>

Even 'secular spirituality' is about relationships - with yourself, other people, nature or God - which are thought to bring us closer to unity, compassion and cooperation. The whole idea lies in opposition to our 'extreme individualism of post-Enlightenment Western culture'<sup>3</sup> which puts pressure on us to see the concept of all as spiritual beings as out-of-date and irrelevant, particularly as church attendance figures continue to plummet. However, many studies would suggest otherwise. Western medicine has been blamed for separating the 'mind, body and spirit (which are integrally connected)'.<sup>4</sup> 76% of non-church attendees when questioned admitted to spiritual and religious experiences and 71% had an important spiritual belief even though it may not have been expressed in a religious way.<sup>5</sup> 75% of people in another survey were aware of a spiritual dimension (interestingly, this is an increase from only 48% reported in 1987).<sup>6</sup>

These statistics imply that a spiritual dimension still deeply affects each one of us. The awkwardness and embarrassment noted in the people who were questioned highlights how frequently spirituality is misunderstood and viewed superficially as little more than a taboo subject that is only relevant for 'religious' people. I believe that it is essential that we do not fall into this trap, but see everyone as a spiritual being with spiritual needs which need to be explored and given the opportunity to be expressed.

---

illness may well be a time for our patients when the spiritual dimension to their being is brought into focus

---

### patients may have specific spiritual needs

In the medical profession, we will come across people who have specific spiritual needs due to their circumstances. The Bible says that God shapes us in times of hardship: *See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.*<sup>7</sup> Periods where we face

difficulties such as ill-health can make us more like Jesus and allow us to rely more on God, or they can be times of doubt, disappointment and movement away from God. Whichever way, illness may well be a time for our patients when the spiritual dimension to their being is brought into focus, challenged and changed. The GMC acknowledge that 'Patients' personal beliefs may be fundamental to their sense of well-being and could help them to cope with pain or other negative aspects of illness or treatment.'<sup>8</sup> This is backed by Robert *et al* who concluded that 93% of cancer patients said that a spiritual hope helped them to cope.<sup>9</sup> The fact that the GMC accept this cannot be ignored but instead highlights that (contrary to popular belief) the NHS is still a place where spirituality can be explored.

I have volunteered a couple of times as an assistant hospital chaplain and was amazed at how well received we were and how grateful patients were for us taking the time to be with them, seeing them as individuals and whole people with a wide range of needs.

### our responsibilities

Yet, do we as medical students, and in the future as doctors,

## best left to pastors and chaplains?

have a part to play in helping our patients to explore their spiritual needs and express them? If we believe that the

---

addressing spiritual needs is not just acceptable but, in fact, encouraged by the GMC

---

duty of a doctor is: 'to cure sometimes, relieve often, and comfort always',<sup>10</sup> then surely part of this process is acknowledging all patients under our care to be whole people with physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs. In our attempts to fulfil Christ's commandment to love our neighbours as we love ourselves, we need to be acknowledging our patients as more than a fractured humerus in A&E or an MI in bed 2, thus showing that we are genuinely concerned for their wellbeing.

This could lead to a positively therapeutic patient-doctor relationship and increase the overall effectiveness of any interventions.<sup>11</sup> It is 'faith, hope and compassion (that enable) people to accept and live with otherwise insoluble problems'<sup>12</sup> and by nurturing these we can 'promote the healthy grieving of loss and the maximising

of personal potential.'<sup>13</sup> The GMC states that: 'For some patients, acknowledging their beliefs or religious practices may be an important aspect of a holistic approach to their care. Discussing personal beliefs may, when approached sensitively, help you to work in partnership with patients to address their particular treatment needs.'<sup>14</sup> Therefore, being aware of and addressing spiritual needs is not just acceptable but, in fact, encouraged by the GMC, and can provide comfort and healing even when a physical cure is not possible. An interesting illustration that I found useful has been made by Culliford, who likens the need for good physical nutrition for physical healing to occur to also needing good spiritual nourishment for a fuller notion of healing to occur.<sup>12</sup>

There is a growing amount of evidence to support this claim. Koenig *et al* analyse 1,200 studies and 400 reviews looking into religion and spirituality, and in many physical and mental health conditions demonstrated that there was a 60-80% relation between being spiritually aware and having better health.<sup>15</sup> This included studies covering conditions as

wide ranging as heart disease, immunological dysfunction, pain, substance misuse, psychoses and depression. The areas of health most notably better were in prevention, the ability to cope with illness, recovery from surgery and treatment outcomes. For example, it was shown that patients who had a faith were three times less likely to die after cardiac surgery.<sup>16</sup> Further to this, forgiveness, serving others, having a support network and a time to be quiet and reflect all appear to promote health and wellbeing.<sup>17</sup>

---

do you have a faith that helps you in a time like this?

---

### **a spiritual history**

This gives us an understanding of the importance of taking a spiritual history. Questions asked should give you an indication as to whether the patient has a religion, how they express their spirituality (eg do you have a faith that helps you in a time like this? have you ever prayed about your situation?) and if they have a faith community for support. These may give you the starting

point necessary to explore their spiritual needs and how you could best move on to address them. This depends what is requested but may involve contacting someone in the faith community, praying with the patient, offering insight into your faith and working alongside the chaplains.

comforted even when everything else is looking bleak. I believe, therefore, that providing spiritual care is a responsibility that medical students, doctors and other healthcare staff must address and work towards achieving alongside pastors and chaplains.

*Emma Ditchfield has just completed a year at Belfast Bible College, and is now returning to clinical studies in Aberdeen*

In conclusion, evidence suggests that the majority of the population are still aware of their spiritual dimension, although the sense of being religious is decreasing. Therefore, these people will be affected by ill-health in a spiritual way as well as physically, emotionally and socially. As Christians, we should be striving to love others with a genuine love and serve God through providing the best medical care possible.

It is vital that we are constantly looking for this care to be patient-centred and holistic in reality as well as in the lecture theatre. This includes spiritual care; giving patients the opportunity to explore and express their spiritual needs, which may help their outcome in many ways - how they respond to treatment, recover from surgery and giving them a means to cope and be

### REFERENCES

1. Romans 5:5
2. Murray RB *et al. Nursing Concepts For Health Promotion.* London: Prentice Hall, 1989
3. Hay D. The Spirituality Of Adults In Britain. *Recent Research, Scottish Journal Of Healthcare Chaplaincy.* 2002; Vol.5 (1):4-9
4. Wig NN. Mental Health And Spiritual Values: A View From The East. *Int Rev Psychiatry.* 1999; 11: 92-96.
5. Hay D, Hunt K. *Understanding the spirituality of people who don't go to church: a report on the findings of the adults' spirituality project.* Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 2000
6. Soul of Britain survey (2000) conducted by BBC for 'Soul of Britain, with Michael Buerk', broadcast in June and July 2000.
7. Isaiah 48:10
8. *Personal Beliefs and Medical Practice. General Medical Council* (2008); clause 5.
9. Roberts JA, Brown D, Elkins T, Larson DB, Factors influencing views of patients with gynecologic cancer about end-of-life decisions, *Am J Obstetr Gynecol.* 1997;176:166-172.
10. Usually attributed to Dr. Edward Trudeau , late 1800s
11. D'Souza R, Spirituality and Health, The importance of spirituality in medicine and its application to clinical practice, *Med J Aust.* 2007 May 21;186(10):S57-9
12. Culliford L, Spirituality and clinical care. *BMJ* 2002 December 21; 325(7378): 1434-1435.
13. Nathan MM. *A study of spiritual care in mental health practice: patients' and nurses' perceptions.* Enfield: Middlesex University; 1997.
14. *Personal Beliefs and Medical Practice. Art cit,* clause 9.
15. Koenig HK, McCullough ME, Larson DB. *Handbook of religion and health.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2001
16. Oxman TE, Freeman DH and Manheimer ED. Lack of Social Participation or Religious Strength or Comfort as Risk Factors For Death after Cardiac Surgery in the Elderly. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 1995; 57:5-15.
17. Oman D, Thoresen CE. *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality, chapter 24 - do religion and spirituality influence health?* New York: The Guliford Press, 2005

## coalition government

*Like many other media, our April news review did not consider the possibility of a Conservative - Liberal Democrat coalition when looking at health policy. Here we present a short guide to what the new government is planning.*

The general election held on May 6 produced a 'hung' Parliament in which no party commanded an overall majority. Contrary to much media comment, this was not in fact unprecedented, with a similar situation having occurred in 1974, and with both Labour (in the late 1970s) and the Conservatives (in the mid 1990s) having governed without an overall majority before.

After a number of days of uncertainty, the Conservatives (who were by far the largest party following the election, with 307 of the 650 available seats) announced a coalition with the Liberal Democrats (who had in fact lost seats, winning 57).

*The Coalition: Our Programme for Government* set out the new administration's plans. A major point is a commitment to maintain health spending increases in real terms in each year of the new Parliament. This has drawn considerable controversy when other departments are facing significant cuts. There are plans (some already being implemented) to reduce 'top-down' targets and management. More controversially, there was a plan to allow patients to register with any GP, regardless of their address, which has already been opposed by the BMA at a subsequent Annual Representative Meeting.

Other policies include work on urgent care, the creation of an independent NHS board, and establishment of a 'Cancer Drugs Fund'. Outside

the 'NHS' section of the coalition programme, policies such as limiting the application of the European Working Time Directive in the UK and banning the sale of alcohol below cost price may also have implications for healthcare.

The last page of the document is worthy of special note, stating that 'the deficit reduction programme takes precedence over any of the other measures in this agreement', and meaning that even with such a document, it is hard to predict exactly what might happen.  
([programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk](http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk))

## christians and the election

The *Westminster 2010 Declaration of Christian Conscience* sought pledges from would-be MPs to 'respect, uphold and protect the right of Christians to hold and express Christian beliefs and act according to Christian conscience'. Organisations such as *Christian InSTITUTE* produced guides to suggest a Christian perspective on election issues. The *Westminster 2010* team's analysis of past voting records and pledges signed suggested that the election had resulted in a higher number of MPs who would be 'supportive of Christian conscience'.

63 MPs whose voting records had not usually been supportive on conscience issues lost their seats (perhaps the most famous being Liberal Democrat Evan Harris). Eleven members of the Conservative Christian Fellowship were elected, along with at least one member of the Christian Socialist Movement. However specifically Christian parties won few votes, with George Hargreaves' *Christian Party* getting just over 18,000 votes nationally.  
([westminster2010.org.uk](http://westminster2010.org.uk), [ccfwebsite.com](http://ccfwebsite.com), [christian.org.uk](http://christian.org.uk))



## new NICE guidance

Draft guidance from NICE has suggested that 'emergency contraception' should now be provided in advance. The news came the day before figures published showed that more than 1,000 children aged 14 and under had undergone abortions during 2009.

The Chief Executive of Birmingham Brook Advisory Centre said: 'We know emergency contraception is more effective the sooner you use it after sex so it's crucial young women have it on hand in case they need it'.

However Norman Wells of the Family Education Trust commented: 'The draft guidance is clearly more interested in getting young people to use contraception than it is in discouraging them from engaging in sexual activity in the first place. The easy availability of the morning-after pill is part of a mix that is lulling young people in particular into a false sense of security and encouraging a more casual attitude to sex.'

In separate document, NICE has called for consideration of minimum pricing per unit of alcohol, and reducing personal allowances for the import of alcohol. It also suggested consideration of a total ban on alcohol advertising.

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association commented: 'this guidance proposes measures that will not address the root causes of alcohol misuse and will merely punish the majority of British consumers who drink responsibly. Minimum pricing is probably illegal and won't stop problem drinkers.' The BMA supported a minimum unit price for alcohol in 2009. (*telegraph.co.uk* (25 May, 26 May) *nice.org.uk*, *wsta.co.uk*, *bma.org.uk*)

## artificial life

American scientists claim to have developed the first living cell governed entirely by synthetic DNA. Dr Craig Ventner said 'we've now been able to take our synthetic chromosome and transplant it into a recipient cell - a different organism. I think they [the organisms] are going to potentially create a new industrial revolution.' Dr Helen Wallace of Genewatch UK said: 'If you release new organisms into the environment, you can do more harm than good. He isn't God, he's actually being very human; trying to get money invested in his technology and avoid regulation that would restrict its use.'

Professor Julian Savulescu of Oxford said the potential of the science was real and significant, but in the far future. He also warned that 'the risks are unparalleled. We need new standards of safety evaluation for this kind of radical research and protections from military or terrorist misuse or abuse.' (*news.bbc.co.uk*, 20 May)

## cmf facebook page

[www.facebook.com/ukcmf](http://www.facebook.com/ukcmf) is the address for CMF's new facebook 'fan page'. With over 440 followers, it enables quick and easy communication. If you are a facebook user and haven't 'liked' the page already, why not do so, and encourage your friends to do so. We're updating the page with news of upcoming events and campaigns, along with a central link to many CMF groups already on facebook. Why not check if your medical school has a group, and resurrect it if it is out-of-date?

## erratum

On checking the last edition, we realised that we'd missed the names of those who kindly contributed to the news review. Our sincere apologies to Charles Williams, Will Nevard, Sam Botchey, Emma Henderson and Si n Glaze.

# what does it mean to be human?

*Jo Lovell considers an age-old question*

Everyone would recognise Michelangelo's painting of a naked man (Adam) lounging on the ground, pointing towards a figure sitting in the sky (God) who points back to the man. The painting can be found on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City and is called 'Creation of Adam'. Michelangelo paints the moment in which God made humankind:

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*<sup>1</sup>

These familiar words have been the subject of much deliberation amongst biblical scholars through the ages. What does it mean to be made in God's image? Far from being a topic only for academics, thinking this through as medics is crucial if we wish to defend the truth about the worth of a human being. The true position and worth of a human being must be the starting place for any discussion about medical ethics. Why should we care for the frail and sick, if this life is just a 'dog-eat-dog' survival of the fittest, or if we are just biological robots, programmed to respond to external stimuli?

## **who are we? the creation of the image**

Let's look again at the creation story. In eloquent poetry, the author of Genesis describes light bursting out of darkness, skies and oceans separating and filling with creatures that swarm and swim and soar, and stars made at God's command. In the beginning everything was fresh and new, untainted by pollution, unspoilt by human folly. And we read that at the close of each new day, God looked at the things he had made and 'saw that it was good'. Again and again, the recurring stanza: 'And God saw that it was good'.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, on the sixth day, God made man 'in his own image'. Out of all the beauty of creation, when we meet a human person we meet the pinnacle of God's creation; God's 'image-bearers'. What was God's conclusion at the close of that day? 'God saw everything he had made and behold, it was *very good*'.<sup>3</sup> The creation was complete.

So it is 'very good' to be made in God's image. It is to be made like God, a reflection of who he is. We are God's representatives here on earth. What does this mean? If we look at Genesis chapter 2 (a sort of commentary on chapter 1) we

note that when God had made Adam, he judged that it was 'not good' (ie not like God) for man to be alone.

If you have ever seen the Walt Disney film 'Lilo and Stitch' you may recall a point in the film when Stitch, an alien from another planet, is looking for his family. He longs to find those who are the same as him, who will love him and look after him, so he sits and waits all night in a dark forest all alone. Sadly he doesn't have a family because he is a genetically created mini-monster, the only one of his kind. The evil scientist who made him suddenly sees how lonely this must be. 'What must it be like' he wonders 'to have nothing, not even memories to visit?'

Adam could not alone represent the God of three persons. God provides him a companion in Eve; another person, unique (and different from Adam), yet one with whom Adam can live and ultimately be united with, just as God is completely united within himself. Therefore reflecting God's image must also be a shared privilege. God created 'male and female', the same but different, and together we are like him. We were made to be in



what does it mean to be human?

## what does it mean to be human?

relationship with each other, born into families and communities, because God is a perfectly united, relational God.

### **what are we doing here? the purpose of the image**

Why did God create mankind in his image? Piper suggests it was so he would be seen and enjoyed and honoured through what man does.<sup>4</sup> God describes the sons and daughters from the ends of the earth as those 'whom I created for my glory'.<sup>5</sup> When we use God-like skills and characteristics, we reflect God's glory! We discover true joy, true life if you like, when we know and enjoy the God who made us. We are never more human than when we worship God.

God gives the man and the woman jobs to do<sup>6</sup> because he is a God who works. This is sometimes referred to as the 'cultural commission'. Work is part of what it means to be human! But can you see the difference it makes to know that we are made in his image? It means that the very work we do, whatever it is, is intrinsically valuable because of who we are.

As we are made in God's image, we derive our status from him. Just as an image in a mirror is

merely a reflection, so our identity is bound up in who God is; something outside of ourselves. This is hugely humbling. Graham Beynon, in his helpful book 'Mirror Mirror'<sup>7</sup> describes this as 'humble dignity'. Humble because we are only an image, but dignity because of whose image it is. This is the true identity of every human being, of whatever 'standard' of intelligence, whatever age they are, however unwell, whatever their worldly wealth.

*Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.*<sup>8</sup>

What a difference it would make in treating our patients, if we treated each and every one indiscriminately, not because they have earned the right to our care, but because of their identity as image-bearers of the most high God.

### **what has gone wrong? the shattered image**

It is clear that this glorious depiction of humanhood is not what we see today. We only need to look at one day's worth of news items to know that humans, apparently made to be like God, do not often behave in a very God-like way. What went wrong?

The story in Genesis, which began so well, is soon wrought with tragedy. The first humans, Adam and Eve, fail to grasp the 'humble dignity' of being God's image bearers, and instead aim to become like God by choosing for themselves what is right and wrong.<sup>9</sup> Disaster! God passes a terrible judgment on them;<sup>10</sup> humanity is cursed for their disobedience, for abandoning their true identity.

---

### **We are never more human than when we worship God.**

---

We feel the effects of that terrible punishment today; we have weak and imperfect bodies that break or get infected; we see nations at war; we are hurt by broken relationships, and we each have failed to love others as we should. We continue to rebel against our good and wise God. Every aspect of the image is distorted and changed, like a house of mirrors at a funfair. It's hard to believe that we were once made to be like God.

And yet, although broken and barely recognisable, the image is still there, and sustains its value because of whose image it is. Even after the 'fall', God condemns murder on this basis:

*Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.*<sup>11</sup>

Every human then, however they look or behave, is alike and equal in that they are bearers of God's image. We behold the marred image wherever we look. It is like '...a temple which is now in utter ruins - a temple in which a shattered window here, and a doorway there, and a column there, still give some faint idea of the magnificence of the original design, but a temple which from end to end has lost its glory and fallen from its high estate'.<sup>12</sup>

## **redemption - the restoration of the image**

Wonderfully, despite the brazen disobedience of mankind against the Creator, God did not give up with the world he had made. Even as he banishes them from his presence, he hints at a promise to provide a rescuer, and moreover a *redemption*. His wrath at human rebellion is real and terrifying, but rather than abandoning the world to destruction and ruin as we deserve, God's amazing love prompts him to come himself, clad in the same feeble flesh, to share in our humanity.

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father...*<sup>13</sup>

Think about what this means .... Jesus began life as a tiny zygote... he was born and was a helpless baby ... he grew up in a family with brothers and sisters ... he would have experienced sickness, headaches, diarrhoea ... he worked as a carpenter. Essentially, he joined us in our dirty, sweaty, messy human existence! John Wyatt observes this as another reason to treat the human body with special respect 'because this strange idiosyncratic collection of 35,000 genes, ten billion nerve cells, several miles of wiring, eight metres of intestinal plumbing, five litres of blood, and assorted biochemical engineering - this is the form in which God became flesh!'<sup>14</sup>

But what was the difference between us and Jesus? Not only did Jesus never sin (unlike Adam who sinned and marred God's image) - he is the exact representation of God's being.<sup>15</sup> He was not created, but was with God in the beginning.<sup>16</sup> Yet he 'became flesh and made his dwelling among us'.<sup>17</sup> He was not only human, but as an exact

representation of the God in whose image we are made, he was the most human person who ever lived!

Why is this important? It meant that he could die in our place, and bear our sins on our behalf.<sup>18</sup> Jesus rose again as a physical human being, who was seen and touched, he ate and drank, and chatted ... he rose in *bodily* form!<sup>19</sup> Jesus' resurrection affirms God's total commitment to the significance of physical human bodies.

---

## **Jesus' resurrection affirms God's total commitment to the significance of physical human bodies**

---

What happens to my human-ness when I become a Christian? As the Holy Spirit does his transforming work in our lives, and we grow in godliness (that is God-likeness), in effect we become more and more human as we reflect increasingly accurately the One whose image we bear! In trusting in Christ for our full forgiveness, we are able to turn back to be in right relationship with God himself; to have his image restored in us. Think about all the ways humans are made in his image .... *all of us*

are affected by the Fall, all are distorted .... but Jesus came that *all* can be restored. Often we think about 'growing in godliness' only in terms of the moral aspects of our God-likeness. But think about all the other aspects of ourselves, our creativity for instance, or our relationships ... the Holy Spirit works in hearts to restore these as well!

This gives us confidence that our study, our families and friendships, modern art, cancer research, our responsibility to look after the planet, charity...these and all other parts of our humanity *matter*, because Jesus came to redeem them all, to make them whole again.

### **the great commission - the transformation into his likeness**

In the beginning, God made man to be like him. In the end, 'we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is'<sup>20</sup> and the image once restored will never again be broken. We experience something of this transformation as the Holy Spirit lives in us - but should remember that we are not *yet* at the end. We are still in our earthly bodies, and must continually put to death the sinful nature.<sup>21</sup>

Until the end, as we live our lives for Jesus' glory, we must continue to fulfil our cultural commission; to be good stewards and to cultivate the earth, to work hard, play hard, exercise our brain cells! The Christian is someone with a new identity, who therefore has to put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature,<sup>22</sup> be that lying or laziness, cruel joking or mean giving; in effect to be more and more truly human.

As Jesus left the earth, he commissioned his followers: 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>23</sup> Part of this great commission is to live in such a way as to represent him as he really is, to 'image forth God' as John Piper expresses it.<sup>24</sup> And as we are gradually changed to image forth God he uses us to 'adorn the doctrine of our Saviour'.<sup>25</sup> We must speak about Christ for whose glory we are living. Otherwise, for those he has placed around us it would be like 'watching an effective ad on TV that never mentions the product. People may be impressed, but they won't know what to buy'.<sup>26</sup>

What message do we 'adorn' then, with our image bearing

lives? It's the knowledge of a great God of grace who longs for people to realise their true identity and come back home to him. As we wait for Jesus' return, let's strive to live lives that make him look good, letting it be known that it is he who has made us, he who will bring us home, and he who will restore us. To God be all the glory!

*Jo Lovell is a clinical medical student in Sheffield*

### **REFERENCES**

1. Genesis 1:27
2. Genesis 1:10,12,18,21,25
3. Genesis 1:31
4. Piper J. *Don't Waste Your Life*. Londonderry: CIAM, 2003:139
5. Isaiah 43:7
6. Genesis 1:28
7. Beynon G. *Mirror Mirror*. Nottingham: IVP, 2008:49
8. Proverbs 22:2
9. Genesis 3:6
10. Genesis 3:16-19
11. Genesis 9:6
12. Ryle JC. *Holiness*. Darlington: Evangelical Press, 1976:4
13. John 1:14
14. Wyatt J. *Matters of Life and Death*. Nottingham: IVP/CMF 2009:77
15. Hebrews 1:3
16. John 1:2
17. John 1:14
18. Romans 5:19
19. Luke 24:39
20. 1 John 3:2
21. Romans 7 explains this tension
22. Colossians 3:5
23. Matthew 28:18-19
24. Piper J. *Op cit*:139
25. Titus 2:10, ESV
26. Piper J. *Op cit*:143

# medical school news - north-east

In a new regular feature, *Clare Bird* collates a northern update

In **York**, we've met fortnightly for fellowship, lunch, prayer and discussion - including ethics, psychiatry, assisted dying and homelessness. Clinical students have also met for Bible study. We have enjoyed dinner with our medical school secretaries, Mark and Rachael Pickering. We've been able to serve our student colleagues by providing goodies in the CMF cupboard in the common room, a toastie and film night, and a crispy cake Easter gift for each student.

**Hull** CMF recently held an awesome jazz night in a coffee shop - an evening of chilled out music and great conversation. We continue to enjoy monthly meetings with our medical school secretaries, Dave and Anne Crick, recently looking at self-esteem and forgiving fallibility. A highlight in the HYMS calendar was our weekend in Scarborough. It was a fantastic opportunity to get to know Christians from both sides of the medical school (Hull and York) and to welcome in the freshers.

**Sheffield** pre-clinical students meet weekly to discuss topics related to the work of Christian doctors. There's sometimes a speaker, often lively discussion and always food. One recent session was led by a representative from Sheffield Pregnancy Counselling Support. Each month, Christian doctors open their homes to provide a meal and a warm venue for an evening meeting.



We've had speakers on climate change; medicine overseas and 'dealing with being fallible'. It's such a blessing to have generous hosts and speakers prepared to give their time. Earlier in the year Matt Lillicrap gave a short evangelistic talk on 'Why believe anything at all?' Although turnout was a little low, the talk provoked good discussion and God was certainly at work.

In **Leeds** a highlight of the year was the *Answering Other Faiths* conference; a great opportunity to learn about other religions and how we can relate to them. With December came our annual Carol Concert with over 200 guests. The medics' choir, orchestra and Afro-Caribbean gospel choir gave terrific performances and Mark Pickering delivered the gospel talk. Nearer Christmas, members visited patients in the hospital with hand-made Christmas cards that were very much appreciated. Two 'Cake for a Question' stalls involved answering the questions of fellow students in return for a cake. Questions

ranged from 'why are you a Christian?' to 'what do you think about abortion?' and even 'what will happen at the end of the world?' Weekly pre-clinical meetings involve discussion topics, prayer and worship. Clinical students meet monthly with local doctors to share a meal, with teaching or discussion.

*Clare Bird*

*is a clinical medical student in Leeds*

# saving our bacon?

*Zoe Greaves considers whether we should be law-breakers or law-makers?*

A journalist named Walter Winchell once said that 'too many people expect wonders from democracy, when the most wonderful thing of all is just having it'.<sup>1</sup> What do you expect from democracy? Moreover, what do you feel democracy owes you? Now I stand guilty on this front, along I am sure with many of you.

Living in the UK, for the most part we find ourselves in an extremely fortunate situation, and yet, having paid our taxes and every now and again crawled out of bed to cast our vote by marking a small X in a box, we consider that we have the right to expect a multitude of different services; our streets cleaned, our children educated, our health needs met, crime controlled, our rights and freedoms upheld. We expect a lot from one small X. And when these expectations do not come to pass we feel robbed or cheated. It seems increasingly possible that there may come times when our democracy no longer serves us as we consider it should. If that time comes, what as Christian medics should we do and who should we be; are we to be Law Breakers or Law Makers? In the words of JF Kennedy I would

challenge you now to 'ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country?'<sup>2</sup> If I have convinced you that this challenge might be worth taking, then please, read on.

## **a little perspective**

The recent national election spawned a number of lobbies and petitions, people from every belief and background seeking to ensure that for the next five years they would have fair representation in our government. Amongst these, the Westminster Declaration stood out as one of the larger, an appeal to MPs to respect the views of Christians in legislations to be proposed and passed. From this petition, one sentence caught the attention of many: 'As UK citizens we affirm our Christian commitment to exercise social responsibility in working for the common good and also to be subject to all governing authorities and obey them *except* when they require us to act unjustly.'<sup>3</sup> It was in the light of this exception that many parliamentary candidates (PCs) found themselves unable to pledge their support and it raises some interesting questions with

regard to personal faith and medical ethics.

From the faith view, Christians have a moral as well as biblical obligation to obey their governing authorities, with the provision that the governing authority does not command disobedience to the higher authority, God himself. Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 amongst other scriptures make this eminently clear.

In the field of medical ethics, abortion is a topic that invites a broad range of views throughout the medical profession from people of both secular and religious opinions. Here we find the mother's autonomy coming into conflict with beneficence for the unborn child; depending on where we lay the greatest importance we make the decision of whether or not to abort (or to facilitate the provision of an abortion). At present, the 1967 Abortion Act states that 'no person shall be under any duty, whether by contract or by any statutory or other legal requirement, to participate in any treatment authorised by this Act to which he has a conscientious



## How to make a law in 10 easy steps!<sup>7</sup>

**1. First know your MP:** If you're particularly fortunate, your MP will be a member of the governing party or even a Cabinet member. Having recently voted, I'm sure you know who your current MP is, but prior to the election comes the careful decision of who to vote for. Who will most represent what you believe? There are a number of resources which enable us to look at previous voting records of an MP and surveys answered by PCs expressing their views, so there is no need for us to vote randomly or on gut instinct. Vote wisely.<sup>8,9,10</sup>

**2. Raise your issue:** Many more Bills are proposed than will ever see the light of day. There are many ways to assess how much interest there is and to raise awareness. This can be done through Early Day Motions (effectively petitions signed by MPs), asking questions in the House, or the publication of Draft Bills (Green and White papers, which consult the public about an idea or make a definite proposal for legislative change respectively).

**3. First Reading:** Unfortunately not a book club! A Bill can start in either the House of Commons or Lords. There are public Bills - introduced by the Government and therefore likely to be passed - and Private Members' Bills. In order to have a Private Members' Bill read the MPs must enter a ballot giving them

a slot at which the Bill can be read; or make use of the Ten Minute Rule which is unfortunately far more complex than the colloquial three second rule and very rarely results in a Bill being passed! Hence, it is worth hoping your MP will be a member of the Government. At the point of first reading the title of the Bill is simply read and an order is made for the Bill to be published in full.

**4. Second Reading:** At this point the Bill is first debated and amendments proposed and voted upon. If you ever accidentally landed on the Parliament channel while flicking between Sky Sports and E4 then you may have seen one of these often lively debates which have made our parliamentary system the butt of many jokes on the international stage yet allow all MPs the chance to have their say and to influence legislation, even when not a part of the governing party.

**5. Committee:** Not tea and scones with the WI (!), this is the point at which each clause and amendment made is examined in detail by a carefully selected committee who are obliged to consult relevant experts and interest groups in order to take account of their views.

**6. Report:** The committee makes its report and the amended Bill is again debated and further amended.

## law breakers or law makers?

How to make a law in 10 easy steps<sup>17</sup>: continued

**7. Third and final Reading.** Following immediately from the report stage; it is the issues raised by the Bill that are debated. The final vote for the first House is then made.

**8. Repeat in the Lords/Commons:** The Bill then passes to the other House and goes through stages 3-7 again. There are Bills that don't need to go through the Lords but these usually involve finance and taxes rather than medical ethics.

**9. Consideration of amendments:** Having been seen by the other House the Bill returns to the House it started in where there is a vote to

approve the changes made by the second House. It is at this stage that a game of ping-pong can start, with the Houses disapproving of each other's amendments and the Bill bouncing back and forth, but this tends to drag things out, unlike the rapid-fire sport.

**10. Royal assent:** We're off to see the Queen! A relatively easy bit. The last time a monarch withheld assent was in 1708 so you'd have to catch her on a very bad day for this to be withheld.<sup>11</sup> From this point on the Bill becomes an Act of Parliament. That is Law. Nothing to it!

objection....'<sup>4</sup> The 1990 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act contains a similar clause.<sup>5</sup> This allows freedom of the healthcare provider to decide where he or she draws this line. But, consider what the situation would be if this clause were removed? In light of this conundrum what would we do?

Thankfully, this has not yet been the case. We have the profound privilege of living in a democracy and one that, for all its flaws, seems to work. Oscar Wilde perhaps cruelly described the democratic process as 'the bludgeoning of the people, for

the people, by the people'.<sup>6</sup> In reality it is this clause to the Abortion Act which shows a democracy working to protect its citizens, equipping and encouraging the coexistence of immeasurably different groups. Returning to our question; faced with a situation in which the conscience clause did not exist, I would suggest that we are not only faced with a difficult choice, either to sacrifice our principles or disobey the law. Rather, can we change the law and if so how?

Now, I hope I've given some indication of why politics and in

particular legislation has the potential to be of such vital importance in our lives, so, see the 'how to' guide starting on the previous page.

Faced with this, it would be easy to stand back and admit defeat; there is nothing I can do. However, you could not be more wrong! Although I must admit that to suggest our ten step approach would be easy was perhaps a touch ambitious, as medics we can play an important role in the above process and in the absence of a snappy mnemonic we have instead the four Ps as an *aide memoir*:

## The Four Ps

**Petitioner:** We often think of parliamentary petitions as having thousands of signatures. However, the minimum number of signatures for a petition is one - that's you! There are just a few simple rules on how a petition should be composed but these are easily accessible on the Parliament website and even better, the new Government plans to further simplify the process.<sup>12,13</sup> You can then aim to have your petition presented to the House of Commons. This will help towards raising awareness of an issue prior to the introduction of a bill.

**Politician:** Your MP works for you; aside from their party line and personal views an MP's role is to represent the views of you, their constituent. Write to them with issues that concern you; they can't be representative if they don't know your views. They can then be representative in debates, in which petitions they sign and the Bills they propose. MPs also vote during the second and third Readings and can sit on Committees.

**Professional:** As future doctors it is possible that we will have expertise on issues of medical ethics that come under discussion in Committee. As

Christians we should not shy away from controversial and ethically challenging fields such as obstetrics and gynaecology as we will no longer carry the expertise in such fields necessary to influence decision making processes.

**Prayer:** Most importantly, let us remember our leaders in prayer, as we are commanded to in 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

## law makers or law breakers

So, what will you be? Law maker or law breaker? Well perhaps it's not just one or the other. I hope this article has challenged you to consider the role that you can play in both! In the former, to be aware of the world of politics and the part you can play! And in the latter, well, to be prepared to be like the apostles, who could not be silenced,<sup>14</sup> and be a 'law breaker' when the law of this land

contradicts our *highest* authority.

*Zoe Greaves is a clinical medical student in Newcastle. This article arose from a student selected component with CMF.*

## REFERENCES

1. [www.best-quotes-poems.com/democracy-quotes.html](http://www.best-quotes-poems.com/democracy-quotes.html); Accessed 26/05/2010[0]
2. Kennedy JF, Inaugural Address. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inaugural\\_address\\_of\\_John\\_F.\\_Kennedy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inaugural_address_of_John_F._Kennedy); Accessed 26 May 2010
3. The Westminster 2010 Declaration. [www.westminster2010.org.uk](http://www.westminster2010.org.uk); Accessed 26 May 2010
4. *Abortion Act* (1967). London: HMSO, 1967; clause 4
5. *Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act* (1990). London: HMSO, 1990; clause 38
6. *Wilde O.* The Soul of Man Under Socialism, 1891.
7. The UK Parliament site. [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk). Accessed 26 May 2010
8. They Work For You. [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com). Accessed 26 May 2010
9. The Public Whip. [www.publicwhip.org.uk/index.php](http://www.publicwhip.org.uk/index.php). Accessed 26 May 2010
10. The Christian Institute. [www.christian.org.uk/resources](http://www.christian.org.uk/resources). Accessed 26 May 2010
11. Withholding of Royal Assent. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish\\_Militia\\_Bill\\_1708](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_Militia_Bill_1708). Accessed 26 May 2010
12. Public Petitions to the House of Commons. [www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/petitioning/public-petitions](http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/petitioning/public-petitions). Accessed 26 May 2010
13. The Coalition: Our Programme for Government. [tinyurl.com/38o4nxa](http://tinyurl.com/38o4nxa) Accessed 28 May 2010
14. Acts 5:27-29

# medical missionary today?

*Stephen Hibbs reports on an unusual student selected component*

Each time I am asked about my future plans in life, a miniature social experiment begins, in which I assess the person's response to the word 'missionary'. This series of experiments has now been running for some time - I have wanted to be a missionary since my mid-teenage years and so have had ample opportunity to explain my plans to others. The responses are variable: many will be very encouraging, asking whether I plan to go with the Red Cross or *Médecins Sans Frontières*, and bemoaning their own lack of commitment to such a cause. Others will begin to share their concerns about 'mixing religion and medicine' and will investigate whether I have any plans to 'convert people'. Clearly the words 'missionary' and more specifically 'medical missionary' can mean many things to different people.

Medical missionaries have played important roles in the spread of the Christian faith. 19th century Korea was completely closed to Christianity until the arrival of Dr Horace Newton Allen. The medical service provided by



Allen to a member of the Korean royal family in 1884 led to a thawing of relations between missionaries and the nation of Korea. In the decades following, the Korean church grew rapidly. Today, South Korea sends the second largest number of overseas missionaries of any country.

So what does it mean to be a medical missionary in the modern world? To explore this question I interviewed 20 doctors who had previously been involved in medical mission work or who are still involved but temporarily based in the UK. Amongst those I interviewed, time spent working abroad ranged from one year up to 26 years. Cumulatively, these doctors had spent over 180 years as medical missionaries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In addition,

I spoke with five experienced mission agency personnel and missiologists to further consider the role of a missionary doctor. This article discusses the variety of focuses and roles played by medical missionaries today, how we can find our place within God's work abroad, and some of my own reflections on how these interviews have shaped my understanding and future plans. Although this article emphasises working abroad in resource poor settings, God calls many to live and work within rich nations, or even to work cross-culturally within their own country.



## **the situation today**

Huge medical and spiritual needs still exist across the world today. As medics, it is likely that we will have some

sense of the enormity of the former needs (although the scale of problems is almost always bigger than we appreciate), but often spiritual needs are more hidden. Did you know that around 6,600 ethnolinguistic groups (groups of people united by a common culture and language) have no known gatherings of Christians? Many of these groups comprise millions of individuals who are unlikely ever to hear the good news of Jesus. As Christian doctors, we must prayerfully consider how we are going to respond to these dual callings that emerge from the Bible.

Many of the doctors interviewed felt an emphasis towards responding to one or other of these needs. As a young girl, one of the doctors was struck by the need for medical missions after reading 1 John 3:17 - 'If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?' She spent around a decade in sub-Saharan Africa openly expressing her Christian faith, but motivated primarily by this challenge to give a compassionate response to 'brothers in need'.

In contrast, several doctors

were motivated to work in a foreign country as they would have an opportunity to testify about their Christian faith with their neighbours, colleagues and patients who would otherwise be unlikely ever to meet a Christian. One doctor told of an experience within a very isolated setting in South Asia where no known church existed. Late one evening he heard a knock on the door, and opened it to find a stranger who had travelled to meet him after hearing he was a Christian.



'What must I do to be saved?' the stranger asked. After watching a copy of the *Jesus* film in the local language, the stranger made the decision to commit his life to following Jesus. Tales like this were not uncommon amongst the doctors I spoke with, however progress in seeing churches planted was slow. One community health doctor

working in Central Asia described his role as 'not sowing, not reaping, but clearing away rocks'.

In all cases, these were emphases of motivation, rather than sole motivations. Dr Wonsuk Ma, the executive director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, describes a tension between mission strategies - 'There are two camps: [those focused on] life before death and [those focused on] life after death. Christian mission has been divided'. A recurring concept amongst interviewees was the desire to aim for 'holistic mission', addressing both physical and spiritual needs. In addition to responding to these needs, for many the motivation towards medical mission had a somewhat unexplainable component - a personal sense of calling that was joyfully obeyed.

Each doctor interviewed said that a large part of their motivation was to respond to the overwhelming medical need in developing world countries. Most of those interviewed for this study aimed not only to perform medical duties, but also to teach and train national doctors and improve medical

infrastructure. In practice, faith is expressed within a medical role in several contexts. Some stated that their main witness was through serving their patients with integrity, and explaining their motivations for working in the particular country when asked. Many doctors would pray with patients during consultations or before surgery if this was culturally appropriate in their setting.



Several interviewees were involved in working with the local church separately from their medical role. Some taught in seminaries and preached in churches. Others had more informal roles leading house groups or helping younger Christians grow in their faith. However, the need for national church leaders to have the freedom to lead without overbearing foreign input was emphasised. In one case, a

doctor in South Asia found that a role in developing leadership within the national church became his priority, and he stopped medical work altogether.

### where do you fit in?

A key point that emerged from the interviews was that there is a real diversity in focus within the medical missionary community, but that these differences do not reduce the legitimacy of anyone else's work. We can therefore define the term 'overseas medical missionary' broadly, referring to any doctor who works abroad for reasons relating to their Christian faith.

Looking back through history, we can see how God has used different approaches to medical missions. Horace Newton Allen was first and foremost a doctor, who worked as a diplomat in his later years. J Hudson Taylor was a 19th century medical missionary who had a huge impact in planting churches across inland China. He saw himself firstly as a preacher, Bible translator and encourager of mission, who used his medical work when it was helpful in achieving these ends. Despite their different emphases, God used both men

powerfully to see the church grow in Korea and China respectively.



In light of this, it is liberating to see that there is no particularly strict profile of a medical missionary. You may feel more like a Newton Allen or a Hudson Taylor, or feel little in common with either. The most important response for us is to remain open to God using us abroad and to being prepared to follow him obediently and sacrificially, submitting to his call whether it is to stay or go. It is a good idea to speak to a broad range of people who have worked as missionary doctors, trying to spot the ingredients in their lives that resonate with your own heart, as well as allowing new aspects to challenge you. Read books about those who have gone before, visit missionaries who are working abroad and pray that God would stir your heart in a particular direction.

## personal reflections

After the privilege of speaking with such a wide group of godly and inspiring people, I have found that my own motivations for mission work have been clarified. Over the last few years the concept of 'unreached people groups' has been a huge motivating factor for me. To be obedient to the great commission at the close of Matthew 28 must involve a response to the thousands of people groups who have never heard the good news of Jesus. However, an isolated focus on this meant that I lost the motivation to respond to other needs that the Bible calls us to respond to. Specifically, I have been reminded that evangelism and church planting are not the only things desired or required of us by God, but that a compassionate response to medical and physical needs is promoted throughout the Bible.

Additionally, the project reminded me that the desire to live adventurously can be something God-given! While we are not to go abroad with some romantic and ill-informed idea of mission work, I was struck by the number of people who enjoyed being in situations that involved thinking on their feet. Stories of moving a dying yak

onto the back of a pickup truck, entering completely different cultures or examples of miraculous answers to prayer peppered the interviews. One family described the experience of working as missionaries as something of a rollercoaster ride, and that on returning to the UK they found that 'no day is truly low, but no day is truly high'. The desire to work in a context that forces me to require God's help has always been an attraction to mission work for me, and this motivation was bolstered by these interviews.



This opportunity to explore something so central to my future plans during a special study module has been excellent. I would encourage anyone who is thinking through how their faith applies to an aspect of their medical career to consider using a student-selected module in a similar

way. The support I received from both the missionary community and the medical school has been exceptional, and I have even had opportunities to share more of my faith to fellow students through presenting the project and answering questions.

It is key for those of us who follow Jesus to pray through our own involvement in God's work abroad. Pray for other nations, visit missionaries on short-term trips (with a clear purpose) or electives and be intentional about growing deeper in your own faith. The most common piece of advice given from missionaries to medical students was simply to go for it! A good friend and missionary gave this exhortation: 'You only have one life - so give it! In the end, however much training you've got, however idolised you are as a doctor, you are there as a clay pot to show Jesus.' May each of us live out our days joyfully as clay pots, sharing the treasure freely placed within us wherever God leads us.

*Stephen Hibbs is a clinical medical student in Oxford*

# in search of a biblical ethic

*Matt Lillicrap explores how we should use the Bible in ethics*

Love it or hate it, an understanding of ethics is essential to practising effective and consistent medicine. Wherever you turn, there are decisions to be made. How should you respond to this patient's request for contraception, or an abortion? How do you respond to a son's request to withhold information from his father who has cancer? And that's just medical ethics. What about other decisions you make? Do you give money to the person begging on the street? Who do you decide to vote for in an election?

How are we to approach these decisions? In a world that often insists there are no absolute rights or wrongs, how are we supposed to act? As Christians we want to do what God says is right. But how do we know what that is?

Over the years many great thinkers, including Christians, have devised ethical principles. But there are so many differing opinions that it almost makes things worse! Where are we to go?

## why biblical?

Living in 2010, why would we

want to look at a book written thousands of years ago? There's no mention of antibiotics or anaesthetics there, let alone physician assisted suicide. So why make so much of it?

Ultimately it's because in the Bible God reveals himself to us. If you want to know what God is like, and what he thinks about the world, start here. Paul famously writes: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness'.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible is a divine book, but this doesn't mean that the words were simply dictated by God. As well as being divine, it's also a human book. God used different people at different times, in different ways to write it. For example, occasionally parts are dictated (the letters in Revelation)<sup>2</sup> or directly given by God ('This is what the Lord says'<sup>3</sup> in the Old Testament prophecies), but other parts are carefully collected by historians and written down.<sup>4</sup>

Even though written long ago, the Bible remains authoritative. The writer of Hebrews illustrates this in his use of Psalm 95, written long before Hebrews. 'So, as the

Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion"<sup>5</sup> (author's italics). The Holy Spirit initially *said* the words through David hundreds of years before; but the writer is clear that he still *says* them at the time of writing, and implies that they are still relevant even after so long.

Hence understanding the Bible correctly takes work. Because it's a human book, each part was written at a certain time to specific people, but because it's also a divine book, the meaning remains vital for us today. We can't just make the jump from original writer to us. To ascertain its meaning we need to do the hard work of understanding what was being said then, before we can see how the principles apply now.

## the authority of the Bible

If the Bible is 'the word of God' then its authority is greater than *all* other authorities - church teachings, experience or our ability to reason.

Many approaches to biblical ethics forget this. People sometimes use experience or



feelings to guide them, saying 'this is what feels like the right thing to do' and then find some part of the Bible to back them up. Or they might take principles based on human reasoning, such as Aristotle's virtues, and then go from there to the Bible, saying 'look, the Bible teaches virtue ethics here, so that's the right set of principles'.

If we do that, we're imposing ourselves onto the Bible, allowing feelings or reason to have the final say. Instead we need to do our best to allow the Bible to speak first, and let it shape our thinking and decisions.

God hasn't given us an ethical handbook. Nor is the Bible a list of commands (although it does contain some) or even a 'manual for our lives' because the Bible isn't primarily about us (though in our pride we often think it is). It's about God, and his dealings with his creation. So the first step to understanding and applying the Bible in any arena, let alone ethics, is to ask: What do I learn about God here? This means that we need a good

# creation:

## God makes

God makes an intensely varied and complex universe. From galaxies and stars to cells and DNA, he makes it with order. The patterns we call the 'laws of nature' are created and continually sustained by him<sup>8</sup> and he also sets the pattern for how things work morally. At the pinnacle he creates humanity, giving us an amazing gift: 'In the image of God he created him; male and female he created them'<sup>9</sup> and a command: 'You must not eat from the tree of good and evil'.<sup>10</sup>

There is much to be said about the principles that come from creation and how they shape ethics, but the first question must be: 'what does this teach me about God?' The Bible is not, first and foremost about us!

From the outset we see the work of God in trinity. The 'Spirit of God' is present and active in creation,<sup>11</sup> and God the Son is 'the word' through whom 'all things were made'.<sup>12</sup> God is relational, and 'continually pours himself out between the persons of the Godhead, in unceasing communication, love, friendship, and joy'.<sup>13</sup>

In creating humanity in his image, God creates beings who 'continually pour themselves out' in all of life.<sup>14</sup> At creation Adam and Eve do this perfectly as they fully depend on God and follow his commands. This is the response God deserves, because he is worthy. It is the essence of worship.

Much ink has been spilt trying to define 'the image of God', but that almost misses the point. Ultimately, the image of God gives humans tremendous value, demanding deep respect, and shows that God makes us like him, for his glory. The ethic is set: We are made to be centered on God in all-of-life worship as we image him.

# fall: God judges

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve 'strike a blow for moral autonomy independent of God'.<sup>15</sup> They ignore God's command and decide right and wrong for themselves. Now God reveals his justice, and even this demands worship. He pronounces judgment on Adam and Eve: the promised consequence of their dethronement of him in their lives.

After the fall, creation becomes fractured. Has it ever occurred to you that before this the study of ethics didn't exist? Prior to the fall we enjoyed perfect relationship with God; worshipping him alone in obedience to his will. But since we 'exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator',<sup>16</sup> our relationship with God, one another, and creation is damaged.

In Romans 1 Paul makes it clear that God 'gives us over' to this 'creation-worship'. We become unable to see God's will, let alone follow it. Sin leads to blindness leading to sin, and so on.<sup>17</sup> It's no wonder that we sometimes struggle to know what's right or wrong! We need God's revelation to cure our blindness.

Is the worshipping image of God in us destroyed? No! We are still worshippers, but our worship is misdirected. The image isn't destroyed, but marred. Individual humans remain incredibly valuable, and deserving of deep respect, which is seen even more clearly as God unfolds his restoration project.

understanding of the full 'story-line' of God's work in human history.<sup>6</sup> This is divided into four episodes: **creation, fall, redemption** and **restoration**. Through these, God progressively reveals himself like a master painter adding layer upon layer until the full picture appears. This is important because, as John Wyatt points out, we will 'obtain distorted and partial ideas of Christian truth if we fail to use this four-fold perspective'.<sup>7</sup>

At each stage we see that God's revelation demands a response. He is not a passive God who reveals himself and then leaves it at that; the only right response to him is worship. Our approach to ethics as Christians must begin and end with worship of God.

## from here to there: worship-ethics

That was hard work wasn't it?! But it still feels like we're a long way from real-world ethics doesn't it?

We've seen that the creation ethic was: 'we are made to centre our lives on God in all-of-life worship as we image him'. That continues through the Bible as God reveals himself in grace that demands response,

and is what God is working towards in us today.

That has massive implications for ethics. Various suggestions are put forward today as a basis for making ethical decisions, such as relief of suffering, doing our duty, or bringing the greatest good to the greatest number. In contrast, the primary motivation in biblical ethics is always *worship*. The central question, 'what is right?', is re-defined to be: 'How can I image God by honouring him most? How can I be most like Jesus?'

As the Bible applies 'worship-ethics', it's amazing to see how many secular ethical theories hold much *partial* truth. In his goodness God allows us to get some of the way even without him! But, unless we look to his revelation, we always fall short of his truth.

### the duties of worshippers

One common theme in ethical theory is the 'deontological' view that stresses our duties. The best recognised is probably that of the philosopher Immanuel Kant. For him, there was no possible answer to 'why should I do my duty?' other than '*because it is your duty.*'

# redemption:

## God pursues

Throughout the Bible, God reveals himself by calling people. He gives promises of grace, which always demand a response. Just as the creation pattern set out, that response is complete devotion and all-of-life worship.

It starts with Noah. God reveals himself as he warns Noah about the flood, gives instructions to build the ark, and promises: 'I will establish my covenant with you and you will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you'.<sup>18</sup> Noah's response is complete devotion in all-of-life worship. He sacrifices reputation and friendship by building the ark in trust and obedience to God.

Then comes Abraham. God calls Abraham and gives him a mind-blowing promise: 'I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing ... all peoples on earth will be blessed through you'.<sup>19</sup> Abraham's response is complete devotion in all-of-life worship. He sacrifices everything, leaving home and family. He is even willing to sacrifice his promised son, Isaac, when God asks.

God is faithful. Abraham's descendants do become a 'great nation' and then, under Moses, God reveals himself further as he saves Israel from slavery and brings them to Mount Sinai.

God does this even while Israel consistently ignores him. Even at Mount Sinai, as God reveals himself in such power that no one can even touch the mountain, the people repeat the pattern of the fall by ignoring the creator and worshipping a statue of a calf.<sup>20</sup>

## redemption: continued

Meanwhile God graciously gives these people 'the law' through Moses. So what *is* the law? What's it for?

The most famous part is the ten commandments, which act like a summary of the whole law and are rightly some of the most famous verses of the Bible. But what is often missed is God's *explanation* for them: 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery'.<sup>21</sup> The entire basis for God's law is what he has *already done* by saving his people.

God revealed himself in similar ways to Noah and Abraham, giving them a promise that demanded the response of all-of-life worship. So what is the promise to Israel? It becomes clearer when we see the repeated reason given in the Old Testament for God's work to save his people, despite their resistance to him: 'I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God'.<sup>22</sup>

Read on to the first commandment and we see the full picture: 'I am the Lord your God ... you shall have no other gods before me'.<sup>23</sup> In other words, 'I am God who has shown myself by saving you to be *my people*, so don't worship anyone or anything else'. The promise is 'being God's people', the response is complete devotion. As the rest of the law is unfolded the basis is still the same. It's not, 'you need to keep this law to stay in my good books', but 'you will be my people - this is how my people live'. In other words the law is God's description of all-of-life worship. But Israel continued as they did at

God created us to image him in all-of-life worship. There is an appeal to duty here but this duty is not a reason to do something in itself. It is because we are God's creatures, made by him, dependent on him, and designed to image him in all-of-life worship, that we have a duty to obey him. It is what God deserves.

## the virtues of worshippers

However, the history of Israel shows that mere duty isn't enough to bend our stubborn hearts to God's will. The law wasn't enough to break the power of the fall<sup>31</sup> because we simply don't *want* to be devoted to God. So, God promises 'new hearts' with the law 'written on them'.<sup>32</sup> As God works in our new hearts we have new character traits, or 'virtues' that gradually change our desires, and what we do.

Virtue ethics places high regard on the *character* of a person as they make decisions. For Aristotle, virtues cause us to respond to our feelings correctly, for example what we do when we are angry or unhappy. The person who develops them is a 'good' man, and is *happy*.<sup>33</sup>

The Bible teaches that we cannot become 'virtuous' ourselves. It's only through Jesus that we can develop character that causes us to want to do what is right. Those who follow the desires of their new hearts, are *joyful* as they image God in all-of-life worship as they were designed to.<sup>34</sup>

The ultimate list of virtues is the 'fruit of the Spirit'.<sup>35</sup> They are the *product* of the Spirit's work in us as we seek to serve Jesus in all-of-life worship. In God's mysterious power, he restores his image in us as we respond to him.<sup>36</sup>

This doesn't deny the duty we have to follow God's revealed will in the law, although it changes our motivations for doing so. In many places the New Testament teaches that development of godly character *fulfills* the law. One example is Romans 13, where Paul encourages us towards that greatest of godly virtues: love, 'the fulfillment of the law'.<sup>37</sup> Love does not allow us to justify anything as long as it was a 'loving act', rather, the law helps define what 'love' means. Paul gives the command 'do not murder' as an example. It's possible to keep this command in itself while holding all the

## redemption: continued

Sinai, by rejecting God and worshipping other things. Despite this, prophets like Jeremiah look forward to God acting in even more outrageous grace. The promises remain, and the law still plays a central role: 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. *I will be their God and they will be my people ... for I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more*'<sup>24</sup> (author's emphasis).

Later, God's reveals himself fully in Jesus, the 'image of the invisible God'.<sup>25</sup> This means, not only that Jesus is the perfect *revelation* of God, but also that he is the perfect *example of humanity*. He shows us what it looks like to image God, and is said to 'fulfill the law' as he perfectly keeps God's description of all-of-life worship.

But he is far more than an example. As he worships God perfectly, he obeys him to the cross and death in our place. There God reveals himself most completely in both judgment against our sinful creation-worship and in grace towards us. As ever, this revelation demands a response. Jesus dies to break the power of the fall and call people to him.<sup>26</sup> Those who respond are enabled, by his Spirit, to 'worship in spirit and truth'<sup>27</sup> and the words of Jeremiah are fulfilled as 'the righteous requirement of the law is fully met in us who live, not according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit'.<sup>28</sup>

# restoration:

## God renews

At the end of history God is fully revealed in Jesus, and our response is perfected: 'we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is'.<sup>29</sup> Jesus sits on his throne at the centre of all things, and his image in us is restored. We will be part of 'a great multitude that no-one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb'<sup>30</sup> pouring ourselves out in worship to him.

negativity of vengeance, bitterness and hate - everything up to, but not including the actual act of murder. However love fulfills this command more completely because these negatives are ruled out and replaced.<sup>38</sup>

This means that 'the law' of the Old Testament is still vital now. The power of the fall is still present because we're living this side of God's final restoration. There are times when what we want to do is not right according to God's revealed will. It's at those times that we need the law to prompt us to do what's right. It's then that we find our desires changing because doing what God declares to be right in all-of-life-worship brings us joy.

Under the worship-ethic we are driven towards godly character as we seek to follow God's will in dedication to him.

### **the aim of worship**

Many ethical theories put consequences first. It doesn't matter *what* you do or even how you do it, as long as you were aiming for 'good'.

The Bible places a lot of focus on the what and how of our decisions, but where the aims

are concerned, worship of God is central. As the Westminster Catechism puts it 'the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever'.<sup>39</sup> The 'good' consequence the Bible emphasises is always God's glory.

In Romans 14, Paul talks about situations where people find God's will hard to discern. Sometimes Christians disagree. This may mean that we need to work harder to understand his revelation, but it may mean that it truly isn't clear.

In Romans 14 Paul addresses the issues of eating meat and observing certain religious days, saying that 'he who regards one day as special, does so *to the Lord*. He who eats meat, eats *to the Lord*, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so *to the Lord* and gives thanks to God'<sup>40</sup> (author's italics). In other words, these matters are to be handled with the recognition that what motivates all Christians is, and should always be, God's glory.

Under the worship-ethic we aim to bring God glory in everything.

**the finality of worship**

From creation to the end of

history God is restoring his image in us. We are his masterpiece, flawed by our sin now, one day to be restored even beyond the perfection we had at creation.

Biblical ethics teaches that our view of humanity should take account of his purposes in both original design and restoration. As John Wyatt helpfully expounds, our responsibilities in medicine towards people 'are to act as art preservers and restorers... [restoring] them *in line with the artist's original intentions*'.<sup>41</sup>

The worship-ethic encourages us to act in the light of God's revealed eternal purposes.

It is liberating to know as we grapple with ethics that one day there will an end to sin and its consequences. We struggle now because we only 'see in part' but then we will 'see fully'<sup>42</sup> and worship in response!

*Matt Lillicrap is a medical core trainee and CMF North East student staffworker*

*A further article on how to work this out practically is planned for the next edition!*

**REFERENCES**

1. 2 Timothy 3:16
2. Revelation 2 and 3
3. Jeremiah 26:2, amongst others
4. Luke 1:1-4
5. Hebrews 3:7-8
6. For a more detailed overview see Meynell M. Hope in a despairing world. *Nucleus*. 2009 Summer 14-21.
7. Wyatt J. *Matters of Life and Death 2nd Edition*. Nottingham: IVP/CMF, 2009:49
8. Colossians 1:15-17
9. Genesis 1:26-27
10. Genesis 2:17
11. Genesis 1:2
12. John 1:10
13. Driscoll M, Breshears G. *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010:338
14. *Ibid*
15. Wyatt J, *Op Cit*, p63
16. Romans 1:23
17. Romans 1:24-25
18. Genesis 6:18
19. Genesis 12:2-3
20. Exodus 32
21. Exodus 20:2
22. Exodus 6:7
23. Exodus 20:2-3
24. Jeremiah 31:33-34
25. Colossians 1:15
26. John 10:1-18
27. John 4:24
28. Romans 8:4
29. 1 John 3:2
30. Revelation 7:9
31. Romans 8:3
32. Jeremiah 31:33
33. See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/virtue\\_ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/virtue_ethics) for more information
34. Philippians 4:4
35. Galatians 5:22-23
36. 2 Corinthians 3:18 (brackets indicate NIV footnote)
37. Romans 13:10
38. See Matthew 5:21-23 for fuller exposition
39. [reformed.org/documents/WSC.html](http://reformed.org/documents/WSC.html)
40. Romans 14:6
41. Wyatt, J *Op Cit*
42. 1 John 3:2

# the new 'abortion ad'

*Karim Fouad Alber considers our response*

**O**n 24 May 2010, Marie Stopes International (MSI), a group known for providing abortion services, ran the first 'abortion ad' in the UK on Channel 4. In the UK, MSI accounts for about one third of all abortions performed.<sup>1</sup> While the advert itself does not explicitly mention or promote abortion, both Channel 4 and the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) have received hundreds of complaints after airing the advert.<sup>2</sup> I have found

that many Christians who care deeply for the wellbeing of both women and their unborn children have very different opinions on how to respond to such a development. This article aims to provide some key points to keep in mind when deciding how to respond as a Christian to decisions undertaken or public policy that we may disagree with, and then explores some of the reasons Christians will give justifying whether or not we should complain against the airing of the advert.

## **what is your motivation?**

'Do everything in love', was one of Paul's last reminders in his first letter to the Corinthians.<sup>3</sup> Too many times Christians have portrayed a terrible image of hatred and prejudice because they failed to keep love as the motivation of their actions. Demonstrations on the street with placards proclaiming 'Abortion is murder' or 'God hates homosexuality' are not acts of love. Jesus came to save people, not condemn them.<sup>4</sup> Whatever you do, it should be done in a way that seeks people's best interests; this includes relieving the psychological burden that





many young women already feel when undergoing abortion, not adding to it.

### expect some opposition

On the other hand, that does not mean that Christians should idly stand back and never do anything that may be found to be offensive or unacceptable by people in society. Jesus warns that it is inevitable that people will not understand us and will hate us for who we are and what we do.<sup>5</sup> This does not

### that does not mean that Christians should idly stand back and never do anything

mean that you should go and seek deliberate confrontation, but do expect that people may disagree, and even try to subvert you when you act out your faith. We are fortunate that it is not our lives that we are risking when we do so, as some of our Christian brothers and sisters have to do abroad, but nurse Caroline Petrie's case (who faced suspension last year after offering to pray for her patients) was a clear example of the kind of opposition that we may face in acting out our faith in the UK.<sup>6</sup>

### what would Jesus (want me to) do?

The popular wristband that many of us may have worn carries the WWJD message to remind us to ask ourselves what would our Lord and Saviour do when confronted with a situation warranting a decision. As medical students, we need to think how this applies to us in each of our own individual lives.

Each one of us has been placed in a unique environment, with our own gifting that we are expected to put to use. One could metaphorically label this as our own personal 'kingdom'. Bringing in the kingdom of God to our lives means allowing his effective will to be carried out across our own lives, or 'kingdoms'. In order to do so, each one of us *must* study scripture and spend time in prayer. In other words, to know God's will you must first spend time getting to know God and reading his Word. As David once put eloquently, 'your statutes are my delight; they are my counsellors'.<sup>7</sup>

As medical students, we need to be aware of which specific areas we can engage in to further God's kingdom. Many times this will involve getting

involved in student societies or unions, helping make a positive change. Getting involved in decision-making bodies or other influential groups in the medical profession, such as the British Medical Association (BMA), is often a good start. Keep in mind that God looks for those who are obedient, not just high achieving. Each one of us should seek to obey him first in the little things, and then he will take us on to bigger things.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, we should all make sure that we make an effort to study and think through the ethical dilemmas that we will encounter in our profession. Personally, a great start for me has been reading John Wyatt's book *Matters of Life and Death*<sup>9</sup> and doing an ethics-based student-selected component was a huge help. More recently I have found reading some of the articles in *Triple Helix* helpful in providing insight on how Christian doctors are tackling tough decisions today, especially when it comes to abortion requests.<sup>10</sup>

### why would Christians complain about the MSI 'abortion ad'?

The advert by MSI has led to some Christians deciding to make a formal complaint to the ASA. As a result, the ASA may

initiate an investigation to see whether the commercial has breached the advertising code.<sup>11</sup> Christians may often feel that abortion is morally wrong; however this alone is not a

---

### Christians may often feel that abortion is morally wrong

---

good enough reason to warrant a complaint to the ASA. This is because the ASA only investigates cases that may be in breach of their guidelines, which do not include laws of morality. As Christians, we ought to be sensitive to the world we live in, and avoid being blunt or sounding intolerant as that will often cause more damage than good.

More importantly, if the advertisement is found to target and result in an increase of young women using the abortion service offered by MSI, then it would not be unreasonable to demand that the service offered should undergo high levels of scrutiny before being offered. Having an abortion may have negative medical consequences, and this has been noted by non-

Christian physicians too.<sup>12</sup> Even though association does not necessarily mean causation, it can be reasonably asserted that it would be irresponsible not to disclose the fact that a woman may be potentially at higher risk of mortality and serious morbidity, including psychological harm, after undergoing a termination. An advert that aims to see an increase in the use of a service carried out without properly informing women about potential consequences should not be aired. Lastly, one controversial point that could be made on the subject is by questioning the legal status of carrying out an abortion and subsequent advertisement. If it can be proven that women would be at less risk if they continued with a pregnancy to delivery as opposed to terminating, then one of the legal grounds permitting terminations in The Abortion Act (1967)<sup>13</sup> could be questioned.

### why would Christians not complain?

On the other side of the discussion, I have found that some Christians will find themselves not compelled to make a formal complaint. This is not due to apathy or lack of a move in conscience. Indeed,

doing nothing about an outstanding problem is the cause of much suffering and evil in the world. As someone once put it, 'all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing'.<sup>14</sup> It is more the fact that they do not feel that it is the best way to implement a change. There is a huge lack of knowledge in the world today of God's message of grace and hope, and for many Christians the proclamation of this message in as many ways as possible becomes their priority.

---

### There is a huge lack of knowledge in the world today of God's message of grace and hope

---

Creative ideas of reaching out to young people and mothers in need are being proposed. Why not air our own adverts or short videos on *YouTube*? Last year's infamous atheist bus adverts were then followed by similar Christian ones, which in my experience provided for good opportunities to engage non-Christian friends in positive discussion. Support and counselling services by Christians are more available now than ever before. There are

now over 160 Christian Crisis Pregnancy Counselling centres available across the UK.<sup>15</sup> A confidential helpline and websites are also available to women nationwide, with the aim to help women make unbiased and informed decisions. These centres offer support to post-abortion clients, many of whom are in great distress and largely ignored by society around them. It is alternatives like these that many Christians believe are the true and only way to minister effectively to women in need, and not by making a formal complaint.

Lastly, since the advert itself does not directly mention abortion, some may conclude that there is no reasonable ground to denounce the airing of the advert. To do so may seem overly aggressive and contrary to what some Christians may feel is appropriate.

### final comments

Christians in the early church in Rome could not agree on issues regarding the Sabbath and permissible food. While laying out the correct theology in his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote that 'each one should be fully convinced in his own mind'<sup>16</sup> when reaching a conclusion.

The advert run by MSI is yet another example where there is no clear answer to how Christians should respond.

---

we ought to equip ourselves by studying the law and ethics surrounding controversial issues.

---

As medical students, we ought to equip ourselves by studying the law and ethics surrounding controversial issues. Moreover, as Christians we should strive to seek God's will and always

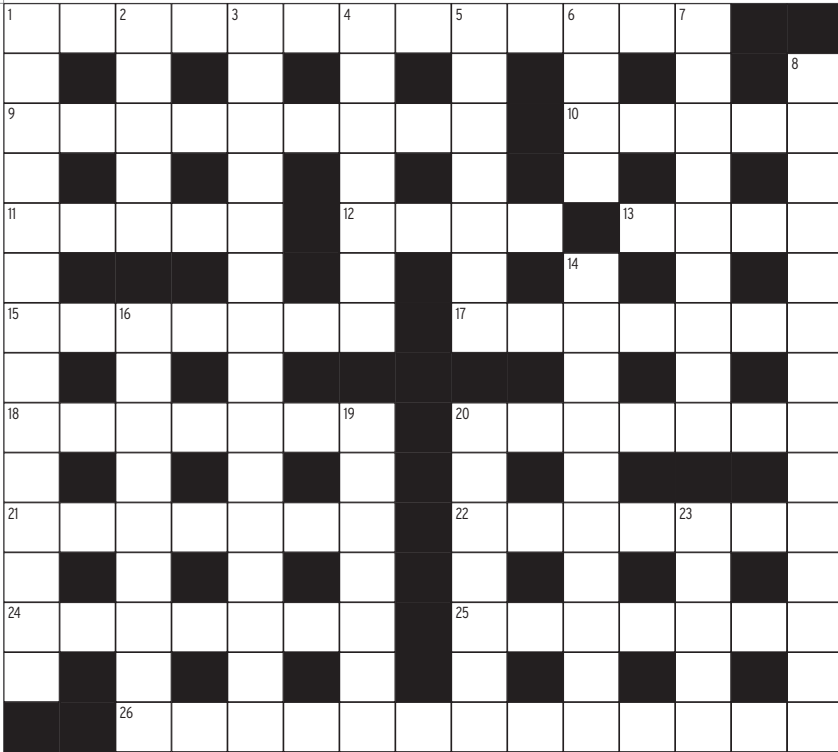
petition in prayer that the Holy Spirit will bring about true change in people's hearts. In the end, if you have truly submitted yourself to God and believe you are acting in love and humility, then take courage and persevere in your decision. God promises to work all things for good for those who love him.<sup>17</sup>

*Karim Fouad Alber is an intercalating medical student at University College London*

### REFERENCES

1. Abortion Information MSI. *tinyurl.com/2wbdybm* accessed: 04.06.2010
2. Abortion ad draws 600 complaints to C4. *tinyurl.com/35nkrzs* accessed: 17.06.2010
3. 1 Corinthians 16:14
4. John 3:17
5. John 15:18-20
6. Victory for suspended Christian nurse. *tinyurl.com/2w4xbqh* accessed: 17.06.2010
7. Psalm 119:24
8. Luke 16:10
9. Wyatt J. *Matters of Life and Death (2nd Edition)*. Nottingham: IVP/CMF, 2009
10. Fergusson A. Abortion requests: should we 'refer'? *Triple Helix* 2010; Easter:14
11. '607 complaints over abortion advert'. *tinyurl.com/3ayrm7m* accessed: 04.06.2010
12. Fergusson A. Consequences of Abortion. *CMF File* 35. 2007
13. Abortion Act 1967 c. 87 - section 1(c). *tinyurl.com/mf6j74* accessed: 04.06.2010
14. Probably Edmund Burke, paraphrased. c 1770
15. Wyatt C. Christian crisis pregnancy counselling. *Triple Helix* 2007; Winter:16
16. Romans 14:5
17. Romans 8:28

cross-word 1 by Lactometer (1Peter 2:2)



**ACROSS**

- 1 Muscle up Saint Francis muddled up with a note (13)
- 9 Tidy - half tidy - race four consumed (9)
- 10 Less common are in posh car (5)
- 11 Follow inside when sued (5)
- 12 Get half of diamonds back for girl (4)
- 13 Esau made endless rope (4)
- 15 The last Indian's protein content (7)
- 17 A grave expression has old Gomer's son (4)
- 18 Fighter in Iran relieves headache (7)
- 20 Sea-storm round French island (7)
- 21 Shaded nude can dance (7)
- 22 Bolt away factory closure (7)
- 24 Less than a worker might have with Amelia (2,5)
- 25 Shakes again in shaky storm (7)
- 26 Following, we look for light, but is 59.9? (3,2,8)

**DOWN**

- 1 John's opening first book (2,3,9)
- 2 Unborn child evenly affects us (5)
- 3 Gut, gutted Aram lay in Lancet (10,5)
- 4 Psalm in cascade activated by tPA (7)
- 5 Poorer finish in near sound (7)
- 6 Ezekiel prophesied against it the year Rehoboam exiled leaders (4)
- 7 Madcap Summer's first dance admits eight (9)
- 8 Chest disease: siblings carry chance it mutated (14)
- 14 Proof-read time stop (5,5)
- 16 Song has mathematical beginning in Joseph's town (9)
- 19 I'd run without leader up ways Adam and Eve were innocently (7)
- 20 Letter sent here at one, in festival (7)
- 23 O three, air at sea (5)

Solvers must shade the appropriate 'cross-word' in the completed grid (John 19:19).

Entries can be submitted by post to the office, or email to giles@cmf.org.uk

The first two correct entries randomly chosen on 31 October 2010 will receive a copy of 'Cure for Life' and a CMF pen-torch.

# HEROES + HERETICS

Alex Bunn considers Tertullian and Marcion

## NO. 4 - TERTULLIAN VS MARCION

### Marcion



*The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.* (Dawkins, *The God Delusion*)<sup>1</sup>

One of the surprising things about heresies is that they are never new, only recycled. The quote above could easily have been penned by one of the earliest of all heretics, Marcion (85-160 AD). Unlike famous

atheist author Dawkins, he was well placed *inside* the church, where he could cause the greatest harm. He was a consecrated bishop from Asia Minor (modern Turkey), who intensely disliked anything Jewish within the Christian faith. Especially the fighting and smiting, or even the creating and walking around in gardens. He suggested that someone must have tampered with the original version of the Bible, and he set out to rectify it.

For Marcion, the God of the New Testament was far nicer than the lower deity of the old. Not only did he seem less angry, he just seemed more dignified, and remained at a respectful distance to creation. Likewise, his son Jesus only *appeared* to share human flesh. So he never actually died on a cross or needed a bodily resurrection. In fact, Jesus was so other-worldly, he wasn't born in the usual messy fashion, but 'came down to Capernaum'<sup>2</sup> fully

formed, by some kind of celestial teleportation.

Whereas some heretics distort scripture, Marcion savaged it with a pair of scissors. Out went the entire Hebrew Bible. Out went all three of the gospels written by Jews. In what was the first recorded list of books of the Bible, he kept only a corrupted gospel of gentile Luke and ten letters of Paul. A radically anti-semitic and very 'new' testament.

Unfortunately Marcion was wealthy from his family's ship building trade and was able to make a huge donation to the church in Rome, which won him a great deal of influence. Eventually the church woke up to the danger of his pick and mix approach to Scripture, and expelled him in 144 with a full refund. But he had won many followers, and founded a rival church. 'Marcionites build churches like wasps build nests'<sup>3</sup> complained one concerned onlooker.

## Tertullian



The onlooker was Tertullian, 160-222 AD, a North African Berber and giant of the early church. He was scandalised by Marcion's approach to the Bible documents that had been carefully handed down from those entrusted with them, just one generation before.<sup>4</sup> Comparing them with the precious cargo on one of Marcion's ships, he asked Marcion if he had ever tampered with the documents; a sacrilegious crime just as tampering with cargo would be. He ridiculed Marcion's 'discovery' of a hitherto unknown version of the gospels, which he recognised as a flagrant fiction: 'O Christ, most patient Lord, who suffered this interference with your revelation for so many years, until Marcion came to your rescue!' <sup>5</sup>

Tertullian recognised Marcion's motives for inventing a

designer god, who would be less demanding of us: 'A better God has been found! He never takes offence, never gets angry, never punishes ... He forbids all crime, but only with words'. You can almost hear Marcion dreaming up a god made in his own image, with the words 'I like to think of god as ...'

Many recent authors have followed in Marcion's footsteps, discarding the most historically reliable texts for more palatable works of fiction. Dan Brown most recently suggested that the New Testament was corrupted, perhaps at the time of Constantine when the church and Roman Empire became inseparable. But thankfully, the work of safeguarding the 'good deposit'<sup>6</sup> entrusted to the first Christians had been achieved two centuries before Constantine, within one generation of Jesus. Thanks to men such as Tertullian.

Tertullian was one of the first theologians to describe in detail how the old related to the new, without 'cutting God in two' as Marcion did. The God of the Hebrew Bible was just as much a God of grace as revealed by Jesus. Jesus spoke more on sin and judgment than anyone else in scripture,<sup>7</sup> and showed

himself to be at one with the creator, as shown by many of his miracles. He also referred to the Hebrew Bible (the only one he ever read) as the highest authority in all matters. Indeed, he came to fulfil the Old Testament law and prophetic expectation,<sup>8</sup> not to abolish it, as Marcion wanted.

---

**Dissenters like Marcion have been catalysts for mainstream Christians to clarify ideas central to the faith.**

---

There is an irony here, though. In one sense we should be grateful for these early disputes. Dissenters like Marcion have been catalysts for mainstream Christians to clarify ideas central to the faith. Ironically then, orthodoxy has been the legacy of heretics. For instance, faithful Christians were so shocked by Marcion's butchery of the Bible, that they formalised the collection of books known today as the Bible, in what is referred to as the *canon*, named after a measuring stick. Only those books that measured up to the 'rule of faith', in terms of historical reliability, would be accepted as authoritative.

Tertullian was so immersed and captivated by the seamless story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, he went on to write prolifically on many topics, and shape a Christian worldview. For instance, he was the first to coin the word 'trinity' to describe the God of the Bible in three persons, in both Old and New Testaments. This was controversial to the Jews and is still a great mystery. But he was keen to submit to how God had revealed *himself*, rather than dream up a 'designer god' out of wish fulfilment. He was therefore rather sceptical about secular philosophy, famously asking 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? Or the Academy with the Church?' This may sound a little anti-intellectual, but it was a Greek philosopher (often quoted by Dawkins) who most eloquently warned of the danger of creating gods in our own image. Xenophanes noted that different races drew gods to look precisely like them, and predicted that if animals could paint, lions would create lion gods, and horses horse gods, in their own likeness!<sup>9</sup>

### conclusion

It's easy to side with Tertullian with hindsight. No orthodox church today teaches contempt

for the Old Testament or the God of the Jews, although anti-semitism has been all too common amongst many Christians until surprisingly recently. But more subtly, do we love the only Bible Jesus read, as much as he did?

Have you ever performed the smudge test? Take your Bible and look along the edge of the pages: which pages are worn and smudged from repeated reading? Just the New Testament and Psalms? Do we treat the Bible like a pick and mix selection, to be plundered for its sweet selection of comforting promises? Or are we willing to submit to the whole

---

the smudge test: take your Bible and look along the edge of the pages: which pages are worn and smudged from repeated reading?

---

counsel of God,<sup>10</sup> perhaps especially the parts we find difficult? These might be the parts we most need to hear, that prevent us from dreaming up a god made in our own image, but with no basis in reality. Will we follow Tertullian's brave example?

### SUMMARY

## Marcion's recycled heresies:

recognise these?

- The Old Testament has been rendered obsolete
- Jesus is too nice to be angry about sin
- Jesus didn't really have a body, die on a cross, or rise from the dead
- The New Testament has been corrupted, and needs revision

## Tertullian's legacy

- Scripture is the way God has chosen to reveal himself
- The Bible is a seamless whole and should be revered in its entirety
- The concept of trinity explains how God can be simultaneously ruler, God incarnate and indwelling spirit

### REFERENCES

1. Dawkins R. *The God Delusion*. London: Black Swan, 2007:51
2. A deliberate distortion of Luke 4:31
3. Tomkins S. *A Short History of Christianity*. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2005:29
4. Luke 1:1-3
5. Cited by Tomkins S. *Loc cit.*
6. 2 Timothy 1:11-14
7. For instance see Matthew 25, Mark 13, Luke 10:8-14
8. Matthew 5:17-20
9. *Clement, Miscellanies V.110 and VII.22. Isn't it wonderful that it was a Christian church father who has preserved this philosopher's warning for Dawkins to quote at Christians?*
10. Acts 20:27

# how to read the Bible

*Giles Cattermole considers how to understand the Gospels*



## The Gospels: One story, many dimensions

This series is summarised from Fee G, Stuart D. *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* (3rd ed). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003

**T**he four gospels form a unique style of literature. Not just biography or history, not just a collection of Jesus' teachings. Instead, they're both narrative (*about* Jesus) and teaching (*sayings* of Jesus): Jesus' words are presented as an integral part of the account of his life. This is the way the Holy Spirit inspired the writers to present their accounts of Jesus' earthly ministry. And of course, he inspired four of them. Perhaps this was because different approaches met different needs, but for whatever reason, each is equally valuable and authoritative. The Gospels tell us who Jesus is, what he said and did - and why. And what it means to follow him. They continually re-tell the story of Jesus for every generation after Christ. In the words of Justin Martyr, they are 'memoirs of the apostles', recording the facts about Jesus, recalling the teachings of Jesus, and bearing witness to Jesus.

### the context

**...of Jesus.** As we read the Gospels, we need to consider the context Jesus lived in. At one level, knowledge of first century Judaism helps our understanding of Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees and Sadducees. Reference books can help us here.<sup>1</sup> Appreciation of historical context also can help us understand the forms of teaching that Jesus used: parables,<sup>2</sup> proverbs,<sup>3</sup> poetry,<sup>4</sup> questions<sup>5</sup> and irony.<sup>6</sup>

**...of the material.** At another level, we need to remember that everything Jesus said, was said in a context: the events around that saying. Not all of his sayings have been passed on to us with those original contexts. Sometimes the writers may not have known the context in which a particular saying happened, and directed by the Spirit they have grouped sayings together in different ways - perhaps thematically rather than chronologically. For instance, the

collection of sayings in Matthew 10 are grouped in the *topical* context of the disciples' missionary task - it seems that Jesus gave these instructions at different times (compare v5 with v18). Luke on the other hand records the same sayings - but scattered throughout his account, perhaps more chronologically, or perhaps because he's chosen to group them in different thematic contexts.<sup>7</sup>

**...of the writers.** The way the writers select and arrange their material also suggests what prompted them to write their particular account. For example, Mark seems especially interested in explaining Jesus' messiahship in the light of Isaiah's suffering servant. The key point in the Gospel comes in 8:31-33, when the disciples finally realise Jesus is the Christ. Jesus then explains how the Christ must suffer. From then on, as Jesus repeats this, he also teaches that suffering and servanthood is the way his disciples must follow too. Mark probably reflects the 'memoirs' of Peter, who was martyred at a time of general persecution. This historical context can help us appreciate more fully what Mark was trying to do, and how he's done it.



## the feeding of the 5,000

	Matthew (n=157)	Mark (n=194)	Luke (n=153)
John (n=199)	8.5%	8.5%	6.5%
Luke	44%	40%	
Mark	59%		(n = word count)

53 words are common to Mark, Matthew and Luke; John has only eight words in common with the other three writers. It seems that the first three Gospels are interdependent in some way, and that John represents an independent telling of the story.

Most scholars think that Mark wrote his Gospel first, and that Luke and Matthew had access to this as well as to other material, some of which they had in common, but that they didn't have access to each other's account. These three Gospels are known as the 'synoptics' (synoptic = common-view); John wrote independently of all three.

### application

**...teachings.** Once we've done the work of exegesis (understanding the authors' original intent), we can apply Jesus' teachings today in a similar way to the epistles.<sup>8</sup> Remember that obedience to Jesus' commands is not how we become right with God; but the mark of the Christian life because of God's acceptance of us.

**...narrative.** Stories are not like Aesop's fables, simple morals or precedents. Often they are in the context of teaching, and illustrate the point being made in that particular situation. And they often function as demonstrations of God's Kingdom breaking into this world through Jesus'

ministry, showing us who Jesus is and why he's come.

### dimensions of interpretation

**...horizontally.** Thinking 'horizontally' means being aware of the parallel stories in the other Gospels. Not to 'fill in' details from the other accounts - but to identify the differences that help us understand more clearly the distinctive message that this author is trying to get across.

**...vertically.** Thinking vertically means being aware of the historical contexts, appreciating how a 'story' context that the writer has given to a 'saying' might help us understand

the point he is making.

**...wholly.** The writers were authors, not merely compilers. They wrote under the Spirit's guidance; they weren't free to invent things! But they were able to structure their material creatively to meet their readers' needs. They selected those stories and sayings that suited their purposes best, and arranged and adapted what they selected. We should invest time reading their accounts as they intended. Not just as compilations of quotes, or chronicles of events, but as Gospels. Carefully composed collections of stories and sayings of Jesus that teach us in different ways, who he was, what he said and did and why, and what it means to follow him.

*Giles Cattermole is CMF Head of Student Ministries*

### REFERENCES

1. Marshall IH *et al* (editors). *New Bible Dictionary* (3rd ed). Nottingham: IVP, 1996.
2. Randall D. How to read the Bible for all its worth: parables. *Nucleus* 2007; Winter: 39-40.
3. Matthew 6:21, Mark 3:24
4. Matthew 7:6-8, Luke 6:27-28
5. Matthew 17:25
6. Matthew 16:2-3
7. Luke 9:2-5, 10:3, 21:12-17, 12:11-12, 6:40, 12:2-9, 12:51-53, 14:25-27, 17:33, 10:16
8. Glaze S. How to read the Bible for all its worth: Epistles. *Nucleus* 2009; Easter: 38-39.

## [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul tells us that 'all scripture is God-breathed', emphasising the importance of biblical understanding and application. With the rise of the internet, the Bible is more accessible than ever, and websites are becoming increasingly versatile and sensitive to Christian needs.

*biblegateway.com* freely offers an extensive range of full Bible translations, including 19 versions in the English language alone, each complete with footnotes and cross-references.

The site is essentially a Bible search engine, enabled through verse, keywords and topic searches. It provides the user with multiple routes to reach their sought passage, and has proved to be incredibly valuable when trying to recall the exact reference or wording of a particular verse.

Passages can be read in alternate versions of the Bible, which I have found to be an incredibly useful evangelistic tool. It not only permits scrutiny between versions, reinforcing scriptural reliability, but can also provide language translations of any chosen verse, which is particularly helpful when ministering or evangelising to those who find English more difficult.

*biblegateway.com* makes biblical referencing much easier, which thus aids the learning of memory verses. Although not a substitute for daily Bible study, it is nonetheless a useful and comprehensive referencing tool, which can help improve understanding of scripture and increase its application in everyday life.

**Chee Yeen Fung** is an intercalating medical student at UCL

## [www.theologynetwork.org](http://www.theologynetwork.org)

A short web address that is easy to remember is a good start! *Theologynetwork.org* has always been easy to access during free time when online. I expected theology to be a dull and deep study of serious matters, with text heavy presentation. But amongst the few theology websites I have seen, this one gave an outstanding first impression with good graphics and design, compelling me to read more.

It is easy to navigate, guided by links to different theological sub-topics (with accompanying pictures). An engaging pointer to 'what's new' or 'what's popular' is helpful if clueless about where to start. There are also links to other resourceful websites designed for students.

Even more importantly, the website explains why believers should be interested in theology, and offers ways in which we can get involved in this network. *Theologynetwork.org* is literally a pool of rich resources in both text and audio formats (with no additional downloading prerequisites) that will facilitate you (in their words) to 'know God better, love Jesus more and join the revolution'.

I highly recommend this website to everyone - both to grow in your personal walk with Christ and to be an effective minister of the gospel. For the sake of being objective I wish I had even some little 'constructive criticism' but that's it ... *Theologynetwork.org* stood out as an excellent resource to grow deeper in God's word

**Vongai Madanire** is a clinical medical student at St George's, London

# student services

These include literature, conferences, elective advice, international links and Christian Union support.

Reps can supply joining forms, literature, extra copies of *Nucleus* and information about conferences and activities. Further information is on the CMF website: [www.cmf.org.uk](http://www.cmf.org.uk) or from [students@cmf.org.uk](mailto:students@cmf.org.uk).

Ideas or feedback can be sent to the National Students' Committee through its chair, Siôn Glaze, on [sion@cmf.org.uk](mailto:sion@cmf.org.uk)

## CMF Student Representatives

<b>ABERDEEN</b>	Sieh Yean Kiew, Eleanor Love
<b>BELFAST</b>	Ashleigh Martin, Andrew McKelvey
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b>	Anna Mason, Nyasha Mudondo
<b>BRIGHTON</b>	Frances Germain, Liz McClenaghan
<b>BRISTOL</b>	Alice Cozens, Beth Machnee
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b>	Hamish Findlay, Nathan Lawrence
<b>CARDIFF</b>	Will Barr, Anna Davies
<b>CORK</b>	Jessica Tang
<b>DERBY</b>	Olubukola Esho, Phoebe Tackie-Obliie
<b>DUBLIN (RCSI)</b>	Grace Ho, Dana Thambiraj
<b>DUBLIN (TCD)</b>	Erin Allison, Nicole Chen
<b>DUBLIN (UCD)</b>	Sarah Gibbons
<b>DUNDEE</b>	Anna Bradshaw, Laura Thomson
<b>DURHAM</b>	Anna Warren, Jessica Walker
<b>EDINBURGH</b>	Gareth Jones, Jonathan Twynam-Perkins
<b>GALWAY</b>	<i>Vacant</i>
<b>GLASGOW</b>	Amanda Macaskill, Richard Workman
<b>HULL</b>	Sam Botchey, Becca Harrup
<b>KEELE</b>	Marle Christine Haack,
<b>LANCASTER</b>	<i>Vacant</i>
<b>LEEDS</b>	Alison Stockbridge, Elizabeth Tynegate
<b>LEICESTER</b>	Nathan Lorde, Matthew Player
<b>LIMERICK</b>	<i>Vacant</i>
<b>LIVERPOOL</b>	Elizabeth Hargrave, Esther Lloyd
<b>MANCHESTER</b>	Juliette Brettell, Emmanuel Oladipo
<b>NEWCASTLE</b>	Lisa Hegarty, David Tan
<b>NORWICH</b>	Rachel Peirce, Martine Rukengwa
<b>NOTTINGHAM</b>	Susie Bryson, Jamie Perry
<b>OXFORD</b>	Alice Self, Tasha Watson
<b>PENINSULA</b>	Sam McGinley, Abigail White
<b>ST ANDREW'S</b>	Amalfi Dessain, Laura Johnstone
<b>SHEFFIELD</b>	Jennifer Reiss, Hannah Wilson
<b>SOUTHAMPTON</b>	Elizabeth Butler
<b>SWANSEA</b>	<i>Vacant</i>
<b>WARWICK</b>	Afinki Akanet
<b>YORK</b>	Cynthia Okecho, Amy Watson
<b>LONDON</b>	
<b>BART'S &amp; LONDON</b>	Priscilla Joneh, Ehhui Yong
<b>KING'S</b>	Christopher Onyema
<b>IMPERIAL</b>	Christopher Lai, Lei Wang
<b>ST GEORGE'S</b>	Yvonne Igunma, Rachel Owusu-Ankomah
<b>UCL</b>	Elaine Bruce, James Pocock



## President

Sam Leinster MD FRCS

## Chairman

Nick Land MB MRCPsych

## Treasurer

Allister Vale MD FRCP

## Chief Executive

Peter Saunders MB FRACS

## Head of Graduate Ministries

Kevin Vaughan MB MRCPG

## Head of International Ministries

Vicky Lavy MB MRCPG

## Head of Student Ministries

Giles Cattermole BM FCEM

## Head of Communications

Andrew Fergusson MB MRCPG

## Student Chairman

Siôn Glaze

CMF was founded in 1949 and has over 4,500 British doctor members in all branches of medicine and 1,000 student members. We are linked with around 100 similar interdenominational bodies worldwide through the International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA). CMF is also one of several postgraduate groups affiliated to the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF). A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 6949436. Registered Charity no. 1131658. Registered office: 6 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1HL. Our aims are to unite Christian doctors in pursuing the highest standards in Christian and professional life - in evangelism, ethics and student and missionary support.



christian medical fellowship

# uniting and equipping christian doctors

To find out more, telephone 020 7234 9660 or visit our website [www.cmf.org.uk](http://www.cmf.org.uk)

.CMF, 6 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1HL  
Tel: 020 7234 9660 Fax: 020 7234 9661  
Email: [info@cmf.org.uk](mailto:info@cmf.org.uk) Website: [www.cmf.org.uk](http://www.cmf.org.uk)

