

# local groups

reports from Ireland and Exeter

## Irish Conference 2016

**W**e studied Ecclesiastes, had several seminars and lots of good worship, food, fun and fellowship. The choices of talks were very interesting and eye-opening. Topics ranged from euthanasia and abortion to time management, the Old Testament and evangelism. I found the seminar on euthanasia very insightful in helping to mould and ground our values as Christians - what we believe and being able to defend them when we engage in intellectual debate with others.

Of the many lessons learnt, the most important one I took away from it was the brevity of life, and that is reason all the more to live life everyday seeking to do God's will, because that is what makes life meaningful. At the end of the day, only God will see and remember what you have done, so don't waste it!

One of the highlights was the free time in between seminar sessions. I was encouraged to hear different views and experiences regarding the various topics we delved into. Though I wasn't able to go to all the seminars, understanding the topic from fellow Christians who had gone allowed me to learn about the other seminars with the added value of what others took away from it.

Sometimes when people think of Ecclesiastes, their impression is sad and bleak: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." (Ecclesiastes 1:2). Yet, the message ultimately is a gift of hope and enjoyment - 'That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil - this is the gift of God' (Ecclesiastes 3:13). ■

**Natalie Teh** is a medical student in Galway



## new group in Exeter

**S**ince arriving at medical school, myself and a couple of others have hoped and prayed for CMF group here. We have a vision for a community of medics and doctors in Exeter who support one another, explore what it means to serve Christ as medics together, and work alongside the Christian Union to transform the medical campus into somewhere non-Christians can encounter the gospel.

This term we had our first ever student-doctor meetup! Twelve of us gathered and shared our thoughts on what this group could look like. We plan to continue meeting up termly to discuss and pray over a specific issue that Christian medics face. Alongside

that we will set up 'medic families', where a medical student will meet up monthly with a doctor and their family to chat about how things are going.

I've also just been to my first ever CMF regional conference, where I thoroughly enjoyed talking to medical and nursing students from across the South West. We discussed what their CMF groups look like, shared prayer points, and were given food for thought by CMF Head of Student Ministries John Greenall.

We're really excited about how God can use this small community to transform both our lives and the lives of non-Christians on our campus. ■

**Elizabeth Alexander** is a medical student in Exeter