

counterparts: a banquet in God's kingdom

Leo Hacking reports on the SYD2 conference

'But the Lord stood at my side and strengthened me'
(2 Timothy 4:17)



The Sydenham 2 Conference 2019 saw 13 delegates from many corners of the globe gather in the UK for a week of engaging talks and activities. Named after the Puritan doctor Thomas Sydenham, the conference aims to encourage international junior doctors and dentists to live as faithful Christians in their jobs and to equip them to lead Christian medical movements within their countries.

During the conference, we began each day (apart from Wednesday) with a talk from 2 Timothy. We learnt from Paul's encouragement to Timothy that in living as a faithful Christian, we should expect opposition and endure suffering.¹ But, it is a huge comfort to know that the Lord dwells in us through

the Holy Spirit. He will strengthen us to persevere and to guard what has been entrusted to us.² Many of the delegates attending the course face many different pressures and challenges, so we hope these talks encouraged them.

During the rest of each day, we addressed a specific topic. These topics included ethics and advocacy, evangelism, leadership and global mission. We were privileged to hear talks from Mark Pickering and Jennie Pollock on current medical ethical issues, Peter Saunders on sharing our Christian faith (using the Confident Christianity course) as well as many other CMF staff. We were privileged to receive a visit from Rick Paul from the Netherlands who spoke of the work of the ICMDA



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(International Christian Medical and Dental Association – jokingly called by Rick the 'International Christian Marriage and Dating Association'!)

Each evening we hosted the delegates for dinner, mostly at local restaurants. One of the delegates said that fellowship over these dinners reminded them of the 'banquet in the kingdom of God' (Luke 14:15 NLT)

On Wednesday, we did a fantastic Christian Heritage walking tour of London run by Ben Virgo. In visiting many sites around the City of London, we learnt more about the rich mercy of our Lord in the way he preserved, restored and pardoned many unworthy people (from John Newton to William Tyndale) and used them to bring hope to London and the rest of the world.

We ended the week by heading off to the annual Junior Doctors' Conference in Leicestershire, which was attended by doctors from all over the UK. The delegates found it really encouraging to meet so many contemporaries excited and passionate about living for Jesus in medicine. During the weekend, we heard talks from John Wyatt on 'Walking the talk – practical obedience to Christ as a doctor' and seminars covering a wide range of topics.

We were very thankful to God for the wonderful encouragement this week was to all involved.

David & Nathalie

David and his wife Nathalie are soon-to-be qualified junior doctors working in Burkina Faso. To attend the Sydenham Conference, they travelled from Ouagadougou to London on a two-day (6,800 mile) journey that took them via Lome (Togo) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

Having just arrived in the UK, they mislaid a bag containing their passports on the Underground. This was a challenging time as CMF office staff tried to navigate the Transport for London lost property system and seek alternative travel documents from

the nearest embassy in Belgium. But it was also a time when we knew that the Lord was standing with and strengthening us³ and a time when one of our leaders choked with tears of joy, in seeing others within the group give generously for the relief of the saints from 'poorer' countries.⁴

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David in his feedback wrote:

'We have seen the love of Christ through your work in our lives; We have been touched by your sympathy; You bear our burdens; We are so grateful for your support.'

Robin

Robin travelled to the UK from Bern in Switzerland, completing the final stage of his journey by boat! He is a junior doctor currently considering specialty training. He has recently begun to lead the student ministry branch of the Swiss Christian Medical Fellowship (AGEAS). AGEAS is an older but significantly smaller group than CMF. Robin applied for this conference to equip him to start this new role.

During the conference, Robin was very supportive and encouraging towards the other participants. He brought a lot of expertise that he has gained in Christian medical ministry. During the week he enjoyed the Christian Heritage tour and even stayed on to do an extra tour of the British Museum! ■

REFERENCES

1. 2 Timothy 2:3, 3:12, 4:5
2. 2 Timothy 1:14, 2:1, 4:17
3. 2 Timothy 4:17
4. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5