

my trip to...: the ICMDA WEC

Teresa Mergia reports on the 2019 ICMDA Western European Conference



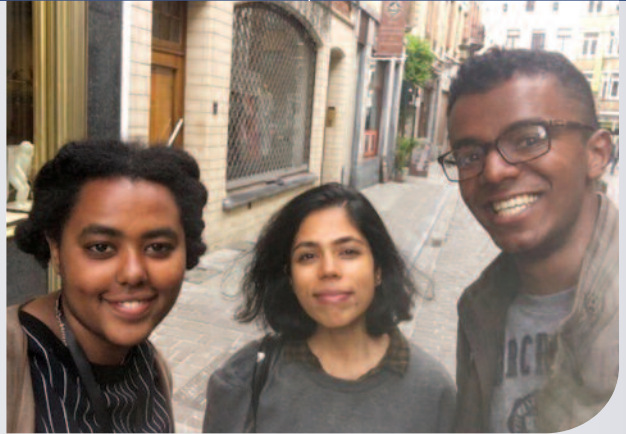
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Truth comes as a revelation from God, not man.' That was just one profound piece of learning from my trip to Belgium in May 2019. Being my first ICMDA conference, I didn't know what to expect, but a medical student from the year above assured me that he had enjoyed the times he'd gone and described it as an intimate setting of like-minded people.

We arrived early in the day which allowed us time to sit out in the sun, see the city and shop for chocolate. Everyone was kind and willingly offered car space to get to La Foresta, the beautiful monastery that we were staying at for the weekend. There were visitors from all over Europe: Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, Georgia, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Belgium. In the middle of our seminars on Saturday, we got the chance to explore the nearby town of Leuven and were shown around by a tour guide.

Conference talks encouraged us to maintain Christian unity and to keep the Great Commandment. A highlight was Peter Saunders' insight into the role of the gospel in the Christian heritage of Western Europe. I was struck by the example of William Wilberforce; his understanding of divine judgement, the work of Christ on the cross, justification by faith alone and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, led him to political reformation. It is the revelation of Christ's divinity in people's hearts and minds that leads to the manifestation of compassion, love, peace and gentleness. Today in secular Europe, those who do not acknowledge that God is good are the same people who benefit from Christian historical influence, which brought acceptance, tolerance, freedom of speech and loving kindness.

Peter Saunders explained the stark fundamental difference between the basis for the Enlightenment (where men were keen to discover truth for themselves) and the Christian's discovery of truth. I came to understand that morals can only ever be



revealed to us - truth comes in a form of a revelation from God not from man.

It was a wonderful learning experience, and I left with a greater understanding of the mighty work God has and is still doing in Europe and the importance of still loving and obeying him. I heard

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true stories of Christian martyrs like William Tyndale who fought during his life to translate the Bible into English and was burned at the stake for it. But my favourite story was that of James Simpson, who despite discovering chloroform, confessed the greatest discovery he ever made was that he was a sinner in need of a Saviour.

As a result of the conference, I have grown in confidence and understanding of the God that I serve. I was able to interact with people from other countries, connected by our love for Jesus. Any UK medical student attending a future conference is likely to be inspired and encouraged. Join the ICMDA Western Europe group on [facebook.com/groups/529681407152850](https://www.facebook.com/groups/529681407152850) to keep up-to-date with future plans. ■