

## The faithfulness of God

Final thoughts from Peter Saunders after three decades of service to CMF

**W**hen Kirsty and I left New Zealand bound for Kapsowar Hospital in 1989, with two boys aged eight months and three years, we were planning to be 'career missionaries' in Africa. A taste of healthcare mission in the Kenyan highlands only intensified that desire and leaving home, friends and family seemed a small price to pay for the adventure of practising medicine in a developing world setting, where our surgical and paediatric skills made a real difference to people's lives.

Cross-cultural mission training at All Nations College in Hertfordshire brought us to the UK later that year. Being with 130 students from 37 countries as the Berlin Wall came down and huge new areas of the world opened up was both frightening and exhilarating. I had begun to think it might be more strategic to teach in an African medical school and mentor nationals. But doing surgical locums in British hospitals to pay our way through college opened my eyes to the fact that Britain itself was a mission portal, where people from every country under the sun were coming to study and train.

A few weeks before finishing college in 1991, with child number three on the way and Kirsty asking in which continent we were going to be serving in three months' time, I began to doubt. I remember telling my tutor that I felt I was swinging on a vine across a dark chasm, not knowing if there was anything on the other side, or if I had sufficient momentum to get back to where I had jumped from. And to make it worse I had my whole family with me. Had we misheard the Lord? Was it all a big mistake?

When the *CMF Newsletter* came through the door advertising the newly created post of Student Secretary, Kirsty was sure that this was it. It was obvious, she declared, that everything in my life up to that point had prepared me for this moment. I couldn't see it. Why had I spent 15 years training to be a missionary doctor if God was



asking me to give up surgery, turn my back on Africa and live in England? A serious wrestling match ensued.

But the more I thought and prayed about it I began to sense God's new direction. By the time of my interview I was able to say that working with CMF discipling medical students was like treasure in a field. I'd sell my whole life for the opportunity.

Looking back now over 27 years of ministry with CMF – eight in student ministry and 19 as CEO – I have no regrets. It has been an immense privilege to serve a generation of students and doctors and to see them grow in their faith and seek to serve our wonderful Lord and Saviour. After living my first 30

years in New Zealand my next 30 have taken me to over 50 countries and gained us many Christian brothers and sisters all over the world. And as Kirsty and I start this new adventure with ICMDA, we look forward to serving new and growing fellowships in over 80 countries and beyond.

Of course, it hasn't all been easy. Medical and spiritual needs are huge, hostility to Christian faith and values is growing and we all face the personal struggles of living in a fallen world this side of glory. But Christ's promises are sure and his victory is certain. And the day when his kingdom comes in all its fullness draws steadily closer.

*'Truly I tell you,' said Jesus, 'no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the gospel will fail to receive a hundredfold in the present age – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, along with persecutions – and to receive eternal life in the age to come.'*

(Mark 10:29–30)

That has absolutely been our experience. God is faithful.

*Peter Saunders is CMF Chief Executive*

## Looking forward

**W**e are now in the third year of our five-year 2020 ACTIVE Vision with six main strategic priorities - Advocacy, Communications, Training, International Partnerships, Volunteering and Evangelism.

Integral to this is the mobilisation of members under the direction of our new National Field Director, John Greenall and the building of a strong volunteer workforce in four main areas: Regional Catalyst Teams, Deep:ER Fellowships, Associate Staff Workers, and other opportunities.

These changes are really starting to bear fruit. Over the last three years Catalyst Teams have been established in six regions to stimulate local ministry; fifteen junior doctors and students have so far been engaged in our one year Deep:ER ministry training programme; five members have served as Associate Staff Workers and many others have been involved as speakers and trainers. All these people have given their time voluntarily to serve the Fellowship.

In addition:

- 24 students, nurses and juniors have now completed our 18-month Global Track preparing them for the challenges of cross-cultural mission

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## Looking forward

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- Sixteen new nursing student groups have been established throughout the country
- We are rising to meet the huge ethical challenges of assisted suicide, any-reason abortion and transgender ideology
- Exciting new resources in film, blogs, podcasts, videos and social media are coming on-stream

### Needs going forward

The board and senior staff have prayerfully considered what we need going forward to maintain momentum and streamline our ministry and have identified five priorities.

- Senior Advocate (four sessions) – a doctor to take on our departing CEO’s role in media and public policy strategy
- IT Support (six sessions) – a skilled specialist to help us clear backlogs in income processing, membership administration and website development
- Administrator (ten sessions) – to provide much needed support to our Head of Nursing, Head of CMF Global and National Field Director
- Pastoral Associate (four sessions) – a senior doctor to coordinate pastoral support for members nationwide
- Evangelism Associate (four sessions) – a senior doctor gifted in evangelism to run training and events aimed at reaching colleagues for Christ

### Significantly stretched

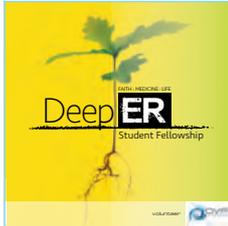
We are encouraged but still feel we are only scraping the surface. We also face huge new challenges, with Peter Saunders moving on as CEO after 27 years with CMF. The search is currently underway for his successor. We are also significantly stretched, especially in the areas of administrative and IT support for our ministry staff. We need a to develop our ministry and admin staff to support the growing volunteer opportunities we are developing with members.

There are big financial challenges too. We are projecting a deficit of over £80,000 this year – over 5% of our annual budget of £1.5million.

## Volunteering

Opportunities and updates

### Deep:ER



This year we welcome five new Deep:ER Fellowship participants who will be with us to be trained and gain experience in Christian ministry:

- **Morenike Da Silva** – Intercalating Student at Bristol (Global Health) working with the Global and Student departments
- **Mary Odonkor** – Intercalating Student at King’s (Philosophy) administrating our SYD 1 International Student Leaders’ Conference
- **Emily Cullis** – year-out medical student from York working with the Central Services Team to produce a staff intranet
- **Lavinia Miries** – Junior Doctor from London working with the student team editing an edition of *Nucleus*
- **Kelly Hibbert** – Junior Doctor from Birmingham working in Public Policy on a range of advocacy projects

If you’d like to join us next year check out [cmf.org.uk/volunteer/deeper](http://cmf.org.uk/volunteer/deeper)

### Catalyst Teams



We have six Catalyst Teams up and running in West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, SW Scotland, Mersey, Inverness (Highlands and Islands) and north

London. Each is developing local ministries to Christian doctors and nurses.

If you’d like to hear more about starting a team where you are, please contact [volunteer@cmf.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cmf.org.uk)

### Associate Staff Workers (ASWs)



James Howitt



Esther Chevassut

CMF currently has two ASWs, Dr James Howitt and Esther Chevassut, who ‘drop a day’ to serve medical and nursing students where they live. We are recruiting to fill a team of ten ASWs in the next year, five for medical students and five for nursing students. Please pray that God would raise the right people and spread the message – perhaps it could be you?

### Esther shares a day in her life as an ASW



Esther Chevassut

I begin my CMF Associate Staff Worker day by meeting with Pippa over a much-appreciated coffee, after a few long day-shifts on the ward. Pippa and I share about our weeks – including personal life, work and CMF. Pippa updates me on recent projects in the CMF Nursing Department and asks me if I’ve had any responses from nursing and midwifery students at a university we’ve been communicating with about meeting as a group for the first time. Pippa and I pray about this as well as praying over plans discussed for upcoming conferences and meetings.

I head home and set up my laptop ready to skype into the Deep:ER session, in which the Deep:ER volunteers meet fortnightly, share and pray together and look in-depth at a theological or ethical subject. James, another Associate Staff Worker, leads us in a great discussion about multi-disciplinary team working, exploring what makes this effective and challenging in healthcare practice, and how we can approach this in a Christlike way. I share some of my experiences working in a team during my first ten months of work as a staff nurse.

I head out to a local cafe for lunch with a student nurse from Southampton who is one of the co-leaders of the CMF group here. It’s a joy being able to share with each other and to listen as she shares of the challenges of her current placement but how God has been faithful.

I print off a few copies of a very helpful *CMF File*, which has aided my preparation for tonight’s CMF meeting in Southampton, and some lyrics for the worship songs the group have planned for. The meeting is a very precious time, sharing some of our experiences of mental health, both personal and from exposure on placements. It’s helpful hearing advice from different perspectives. We round off with worship time and prayer, plus puddings, in the lovely home of our host – a retiree nurse herself.

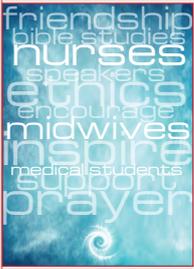
As I head to bed, I reflect on all the conversations and meetings I’ve had today. I am so grateful for the opportunities I have had and give these situations to God in prayer.

## Nurses & Graduates

News from coalface

### An encouraging evening with a CMF nursing group

**E**arlier this autumn I spoke at a CMF student nurse group. I went thinking I would be giving out, but ended up being blessed and encouraged myself. This



was in response to seeing how the Lord is using CMF groups and hearing individual stories. Here are just a few of them.

Among the new fresher students who came, there was one third year nursing student who had

desperately wanted to connect with others and be re-envisioned to see her faith integrated with her nursing. She hadn't heard about CMF until someone in church told her about this local group. She was so thrilled to meet up, connect, be encouraged and prayed for and told me what a complete answer to prayer it was!

Another (newly qualified) nurse had moved to Southampton this summer for her first job and felt rather lonely, not knowing anyone in this new place. She had such a smile on her face as we introduced her to friendly local Christian nurses – she said it made all the difference.

During the time of worship, I was struck at how worshipful one particular student was; afterwards she came up and spoke with me. I realised I had met her at the group's fresher event last year when she had come along as a non-Christian, attracted by both the talk that evening, and by the loving hospitality of these Christian nurses. She had continued attending each month since, and had given her life to Jesus in the summer term. She told me of her debt to the group and how instrumental it had been in leading her to Christ.

Finally, I'll end with the highlight of seeing how well the three local student reps of this group have grown in their leadership. They were united and thriving, sharing seamlessly the roles of cooking, hosting, leading, welcoming, praying, etc. Their faith and enthusiasm were infectious, and their generous serving of others a witness to Christ; it's no wonder that Jesus loves hanging out with this group!

*Pippa Peppiatt, CMF Head of Nursing*

### Grads news

**C**MF hosted a stand at the RCGP Annual Conference at Glasgow from 3–5 October. It was a wonderful opportunity for local CMF



members to get involved and to meet other Christian GPs from around the world. Stephanie Moss, a GP from Birmingham, spoke at the breakfast on 'Count it all joy

- responding to trials at home and at work.' It was an excellent start to the day, remembering our Lord Jesus Christ who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross for our sake (Hebrews 12:2).

At the end of October, we had what we believe was our biggest ever Junior Doctors' Conference, with 160 juniors joining us. This included nine juniors from nations around the world who had been on our SYD2 course the previous week, and 19 juniors from the ICMDA Western European Region.

### Upcoming events



The annual London Healthcare Carol Service will be held on 12 December 2018 at 18:30 at All Souls Church, Langham place, London. This will be a wonderful opportunity to bring friends, colleagues

and loved ones to hear the message of Christmas. We look forward to seeing many of you join us to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

### Clinical Academic Day Conference



Join us for this one-day conference which aims to equip and encourage Christian clinical academics to flourish. There will be plenty of opportunities for networking, and we will hear from some excellent

speakers with lots of experience to share. This conference is for Christian clinical academics at any stage of their career and those who are considering an academic career. All healthcare professionals and students are welcome.

Further details of both these events are on the CMF website at [cmf.org.uk/events](http://cmf.org.uk/events)

## Juniors update

### Junior Doctors' Committee

**H**ello from the new Junior Doctors' Committee! We have recently undergone a transition period from one group



to another and this is our first opportunity to tell you what's going on in the Committee.

We have members from all over the country who are united with the common goal of equipping juniors to live and speak for Jesus Christ. We have divided into three groups with each responsible for different committee activities. We have one group liaising



with students and the transition from students to juniors; one group encouraging engagement with CMF among junior doctors and organising events; and one group working with the more senior graduate doctors.

We are continuing to encourage engagement with the wider Fellowship and organise events for juniors across the UK and hope to grow the number of junior CMF groups running throughout the country.

We would value your prayers at this time as we begin this new era for the Juniors' Committee. We would particularly value prayers that we can encourage junior involvement in CMF, help juniors engage their local peers and do God's work in this world.

### Staff movements

**Dionysia Ayeni:** after six years on the CMF Staff Team, Dion has left her post as the Students and International Coordinator. Please pray for Dion as she seeks God's direction and spends time with her new family.



Dionysia Ayeni

## Global news

News and updates

CMF Global has had a busy year. Besides the trip to Uganda and the ICMDA World Congress, two week-long trips to Erbil in Iraq were organised to enable young medics to experience the challenges and rewards of working with mainly Syrian refugees in the country's Kurdistan region.



Unfortunately, the first trip had to be cancelled at the last minute because the airport in Erbil was closed to international traffic. The second in September was able to proceed.

The two-week *Developing Health Course* takes place in July each year at the London School of Theology and is packed with practical and theoretical training from a variety of experienced speakers for those considering global health work. Next year, the course will run from 21 July – 2 August.

The *Developing Health Course* is open to day visitors as well as those staying for the whole two weeks and there is a limited bursary programme for medics living in resource-poor countries.

A 4-day retreat on the Isle of Man, *Medicine, Mission and Me*, gave participants an opportunity to seek God about the possibility that he was calling them to use their skills in service overseas.

The *Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health Course* was held in Stockton in March and in Cardiff in October. Both were well attended by health professionals eager to engage with the myriad difficulties faced by refugees in the UK.

For those considering global healthcare work, the *Who is my Neighbour?* course offered valuable insights to health professionals in London in September.

The 18-month *International Track Programme* saw 24 medical students and junior doctors working together either to consider, or prepare for, work abroad. The course, now called *Global Track*, consists of ten sessions – ranging from webinars to a residential weekend based at All Nations Christian College.

Next year, trips so far are planned to Iraq, Bangladesh or Cambodia. The day courses will be offered at different locations so that all our members have the opportunity to attend. For more details, go to: [cmf.org.uk/international/global-track](http://cmf.org.uk/international/global-track) or email [globaltrack@cmf.org.uk](mailto:globaltrack@cmf.org.uk) – admissions for next year's programme are now closed, but we hope to run it again in 2020.

## Obituaries

**Paul Cassell** (q 1960, Bart's and the London)

**Frank Green** (q 1974, Glasgow)

**Hope Green** (q 1944, Addenbrookes). A long term missionary nurse and former warden of the Medical Missionary Association (MMA) Hostel in London, Hope Green died on 22 September 2018.

Hope and her husband Dr Peter Green served together at the EMMS Hospital in Nazareth from 1950 and subsequently around a number of other Christian hospitals in the Middle East. While in Hebron she opened the first non-governmental nursing school in Jordan, before moving to Kenya. There she served at a variety of Christian hospitals until 1974 when the Greens moved back to the UK to take over the leadership of the MMA. Hope became the warden of Harcourt House, the MMA's hostel for Christian medical students in Camden, while Peter became the General Secretary. Many who recall her years at Harcourt House remember how she made medical students feel that it was their own home, and she was a mother figure to many.

She and Peter served there faithfully until their retirement in 1992. Even in retirement, Hope continued to minister to the local church and wider community in Ninfield and Bexhill in Sussex, and to support ministry to Christian nurses in the UK.

**John Holden** (q 1976, Birmingham)

An active sportsman, John Holden died on 15 July 2018 after falling from a ridge in the Joss Naylor Lakeland Challenge. Holden served as a GP in Liverpool. He was also a keen writer and contributed to numerous journals and Cochrane reports. His Christian faith was practical and evident to many. A recipient of the President's Medal, Holden was committed to his field and better practice, particularly in the service of the elderly. He leaves behind his wife Alyson, and their three children: Jenny, Emily and Rosie.

**Keith William Masters** (q 1961, Birmingham)

**Mike Sheldon** (q 1964, London University, Middlesex Hospital)

A CMF member for more than 30 years, Mike Sheldon passed away on 10 September 2018. Mike was a GP with a passion for computers. He was also a man determined to redeem the time after a major accident in his forties. This led to international medical work in Ghana, Nigeria, India, Poland, Thailand, Uganda and the Philippines. An academic career followed at St Bart's.

Sheldon was committed to whole person healthcare and had a heart for alcoholics, addicts and the homeless. He was an Honorary Fellow of the Association of Christian Counsellors. He was blessed with four children with his wife Jenny.

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## Dates for your diary

### NOVEMBER 2018

23-25 Scottish Conference, Lendrick Muir

### FEBRUARY 2019

8-10 Students' Conference, Yarnfield Park

### MAY 2019

3-5 National Conference, Yarnfield Park

For further information on all these courses, please contact: [events@cmf.org.uk](mailto:events@cmf.org.uk).

For more details see [www.cmf.org.uk](http://www.cmf.org.uk)

## CMF News

is issued by the CMF Office

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Items for inclusion in the Spring 2019 issue should be sent to CMF Head of Communications Steve Fouch by **31 March 2019**.

A company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England no. 6949436  
Registered Charity no. 1131658  
Registered office: 6 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1HL

Design: S2 Design & Advertising Ltd  
Print: Partridge & Print Ltd

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