

God is in control

Mark Pickering reminds us of the source of our security

There's a sense of uncertainty in the nation. The Conservative Party are voting on their new leader as I write. The summer and autumn will be another frenzied round of Brexit negotiations and whatever their outcome, we are unlikely to see much political normality for some time.

There is much that could unsettle us. What will be the effects on the economy, on NHS workforce planning and funding? Will the fracture that has opened up in UK society be healed, or will we see further polarisation?

For several months now, one particular phrase has come to my mind, time and time again: *God is in control*. For my family and me, it's been a time of great upheaval: considering, then applying for this job at CMF; planning and then living through the transition of moving from Yorkshire back to London; setting up new routines; establishing relationships; and settling back into the CMF office, with all the challenges of this new role.

Many days have felt like surfing a huge wave, not knowing if I'll still be standing and moving forwards at the end of each day, or floundering in the water, completely submerged. No doubt many of you will have your own struggles, both personally and professionally that you are wrestling with daily.

I have been greatly comforted during this time by remembering that God is sovereign, not only over nations and kingdoms, but over the large and small details of our own lives. We may struggle to discern his will while in the thick of it, but he who has called us will never let us down.

In times of challenge and turmoil, it's always helpful to look back at Scripture, to gain a wider perspective and to focus our eyes on the Lord and his sovereign power. Psalm 46:10 is familiar to many of us: *'Be still, and know that I am God.'* This is a timely command that many of us will have meditated on, but in my experience, it has often been taken out of context.

Try googling 'Psalm 46:10 poster' and you'll see what I mean – images of peaceful sunsets over calm lakes, butterflies, flowers, early morning mists and many more besides. As if it was simply a gentle divine reminder to take regular holidays and drink less coffee! But Psalm 46 was written in the midst of national crisis: *'though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea... nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall.'* (Psalm 46:2,6)

US President, Barack Obama chose to read Psalm 46 at the tenth anniversary commemoration of the 9/11 terror attacks in September 2011. It was a fitting choice, recalling the terrible turmoil and trauma of that national catastrophe.

In such awful times as these, the psalmist calls his listeners not to panic or to give in to fear. *'Be still'* is a command, issued to a panicking nation that genuinely fears for its survival in the face of terrible destruction. *'Know that I am God'* is a rebuke to those who have lost their trust in God's sovereignty. Instead of giving into fear, the Israelites were called to live and think in the reality that *'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.'* (Psalm 46:1)

We do not know how Brexit will play out. We cannot tell how NHS funding and service provision will change in the coming years. We can only guess at some of the challenges we will face as a Fellowship in CMF, or personally within our families and careers. Neither do we know how the various doctrinal and pastoral debates will play out within the church on issues such as sexuality and transgender. Doubtless, there are many challenges and uncertainties and we must not minimise the effects that these will have on the lives of vulnerable individuals, nor our own responsibilities to make wise decisions and to speak out where necessary.

Yet whatever we face, we absolutely must hold on to the foundational fact that God is in control. As the psalmist repeatedly reminds us, *'The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.'* (Psalm 46:7)

Mark Pickering is CMF Chief Executive



General Committee

The CMF General Committee (our AGM) was held on Saturday 15 June in the CMF Conference Room at Johnson House. It was an encouraging day of recounting the accomplishments of the last year with over forty CMF members holding key positions in local and regional groups; discussing how we can better connect, equip, support and mobilise our membership; and looking forward to the challenges of the year ahead.

We also officially celebrated the 70th Anniversary of CMF with a display of our resources, events and people from CMF's history along with the first public viewing of the anniversary video (accessible online at cmf.li/CMFat70vid). An anniversary cake was cut by CMF Chair, Maggy Spence to mark the occasion. May there be many more reasons for celebration in the years ahead.

Happy Birthday CMF!

EAT update

New training track

The track has been a huge encouragement already—effective evangelism is absolutely imperative, it's incredibly personal, and it's much more possible than you may think' said Anna.

The Evangelism and Apologetics Track (EAT) has hit the ground running with their first training session of the year. The track members travelled to beautiful



Oxfordshire in May for an extremely hospitable and intensive Persuaders conference, hosted by Head of UCCF, Richard Cunningham and CU Staff

Worker, Ollie Lansdowne. After a hearty meal (the first of many), the conference saw the enthusiastic participants rise to the challenge of persuasive evangelism by giving 15-minute lunch-bar style talks. They then engaged in a Q&A session, before receiving feedback from all in attendance. Talks drilled down into a variety of topics, including Christianity as a psychological crutch, arrogant Christianity, and the problem of pain.

At the conference, track members reflected on Paul's example of persuasion (Acts 17:16-34). He took deliberate care to meet his audience where they were, to challenge their position and then to move them towards God. A framework of 'Identification, Persuasion and Invitation' became the working basis for the talks.

'Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next, make it attractive. Make good men wish it were true, and then show them that it is.' – Blaise Pascal, 17th century mathematician and physicist

The conference proved a valuable opportunity to meet and learn from friends in UCCF, Mark Pickering (CMF Chief Executive) and Richard Scott (CMF Evangelism Associate). Richard is developing a new evangelism course for track members ready for September.

CMF Biblical Justice

Felicia Wong, CMF Head of Graduate Ministries explores bringing health to the vulnerable

Does your heart burn within you to 'defend the weak and the fatherless, to uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed?' (Psalm 82:3)



Justice ministry is on the hearts and minds of many in CMF. There are myriad opportunities to address injustices and inequalities in healthcare.

We are in the first stages of thinking about and developing a CMF Biblical Justice programme, which will look at how we can address inequities in healthcare to bring whole person health to

the vulnerable; at how we can stand up and speak out for the voiceless; at how we can unite and equip members to engage with biblical justice; and at how we can connect and share stories of the work that members are already doing.

Why 'biblical justice' rather than 'social justice'? Social justice focuses on addressing temporal injustices in society. Biblical justice starts with the eternal in mind, seeing people as created in the image of God.

The Hebrew word for justice is *mishpat*, outworked by advocating for the vulnerable (eg. Isaiah 1:17) and changing social and political structures to prevent injustice (eg. Ezra 7:25).

Righteousness and justice are inextricably linked in the heart of God. He is the God who upholds the cause of the oppressed, who provides for the poor and liberates the prisoner; he sustains the marginalised and the vulnerable.

So, what might CMF Biblical Justice look like? It will be distinctly Christian and medical, unashamedly pointing to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The basis for our actions and definitions of justice will be clearly framed by Scripture, rather than the secular values of society.

Who and what are some of the areas where we can 'do biblical justice' and 'bring health to the vulnerable'? Refugees and asylum seekers, addicts, prisoners, the homeless, those suffering from mental health conditions, and survivors of domestic abuse or human trafficking are just a few groups of

people to consider. There are areas such as the inequity of resource allocation, priorities in public health, biased attitudes, undelivered healthcare promises, poor service provision, the pharmaceutical industry and service planning where biblical justice could also be applied.

As healthcare professionals, we see and know more than anyone else in the church about the inequities and disparities in healthcare. But we can also see solutions. We have a duty to stand up, speak out and make a difference.

CMF has a significant part to play and affords a unique and appropriate platform for Christian doctors and nurses in the UK to 'do justice'. We want to see members involved in advocating for the vulnerable and changing social structures to prevent injustice wherever God has placed us.

And by doing so, we want to be known by the NHS and society as people who love and care and 'stick out our necks' for people for whom no one else is willing to, because we are disciples of the one true and living God, who has a heart for the vulnerable, the God *'...who though rich, yet for our sakes, became poor, so that we through his poverty might become rich'*. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Watch this space for more information in the coming months.

New CMF podcast

We are launching a new CMF Podcast in July. Produced and hosted by CMF Associate

James Howitt, each episode of *1st Incision*

will be a 20-30 minute interview with a Christian working at the cutting edge of medicine, nursing and other related fields. Upcoming episodes will look at topics

as diverse as: mindfulness, caring for transgender patients, end of life care and burnout etc.

Episodes will be available fortnightly, firstly on the CMF website (cmf.org.uk/resources) and subsequently from your usual podcast providers (Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Acast, Soundcloud etc.). Please subscribe and remember to rate us on your podcast provider of choice.



CMF Pastoral Care Programme

Steve Sturman, CMF Associate Head of Graduate Ministries explains the new direction

Clinical care comes with a unique set of stresses. We enter into the worlds of our patients and experience their suffering 'by proxy'. Add to that the challenges of meeting needs that often cannot be met



(continuous external scrutiny, peer pressure, uncontrollable workloads, dysfunctional institutional and professional relationships), and you have a toxic mix.



Of course, Christians get along just fine, don't they? Or do they? We are no less human than the next person, and while we do have 'all

the resources of heaven' at our disposal, it often feels like we have hopelessly lost the key and simply don't know which way to turn. Even the hardest survivor among us can get worn down by the continuous attrition of clinical life.

But what if you could see things the way God sees them? What if you could see God's wisdom in a given situation? What if you could talk things through with others who understand? Who could say 'I have been through the same things and learnt how God's grace works'? What if you could learn how to access divine resources to regain the energy and vision you need to make a difference in an otherwise broken situation?

How much is being lost because Christian medics are limping along carrying heavy loads because no one has asked how God might have us do things to share the burden, or even discard things that we were never intended to carry in the first place?

It's a big issue, and while local churches are central to addressing this, CMF understands there is a need for specialised care to understand and support the unique position of Christian health workers. The CMF Pastoral Care Programme is a first step to meeting these needs. This autumn, the Graduate Ministries team will be working on mapping what is required and identifying and developing resources that can be used to support the development of pastoral care networks.

It's a challenging area. The team would value your prayers for wisdom and God's help to see this make progress, and come to

fruition. We would also value your responses to surveys and polls we plan to send out over the next few months – these are vital to understanding where we should direct our efforts. Some of you may already share this burden for pastoral care and feel led to help. If so, please get in touch with me at: steve.sturman@cmf.org.uk

Student news

The Student Ministries team were, as always, encouraged by a new cohort of 52 medical and nursing student leaders attending training as part of the National Conference in May. The new



Learning Platform was introduced, which includes resources for student links to use with their groups including healthcare Bible studies.



The National Student Council meets three times a year. At our last meeting, students reflected on this year's Student Conference and shared ideas for the 2020 conference, which will be held from 31 January to

2 February 2020. The meeting took place with Jeremy Foster as Chair and Silas Anderson as Vice Chair. (Jeremy is due to graduate in July. Silas Anderson will then take over as Chair and Sophie Latta as Vice Chair.)

Zack Millar, an NSC member for the past couple of years, has taken on the role of Student Editor for *Nucleus*. He initiated discussion at the meeting around content for the next issue with the theme 'Science and Faith'. Students were also encouraged to consider writing for *Nucleus*.

The team said 'au revoir' (but not 'good-bye') to Alex Bunn, Associate Head of Student Ministries. He plans to continue his involvement on a voluntary basis and we look forward to enjoying his signature 'Alex-in-a-Bunn' burgers at the next Freshers' BBQ.

We are encouraging student links to prepare for Freshers' weeks at their medical schools. It is a great opportunity to engage with new Christian students and inform them about CMF and all the ways in which we can support them from the beginning to the end of their medical careers.

Nurses & Midwives

encouraging stories

In my role as Head of Nursing, I (Pippa Peppiatt) get the privilege of hearing lots of stories from nurses and midwives on the front line, and the joy of offering support and compassion to them.



Many of these stories are tough and challenging. Just this week I



heard from a few newly qualified nurses about how they battle stress and anxiety before going on to a shift. One even wrote to me of her panic

attacks before leaving the house for work. Any new job can be a daunting experience, but the experience of these nurses and midwives is compounded by low staff numbers and consequently, an increasingly unsafe, working environment.

Thankfully, I also get to hear 'good news' stories about the precious times that make the hard work and the stress all worthwhile for these amazing nurses and midwives.

A palliative care nurse emailed me recently. She writes:

'I had cared for an elderly man, highly educated, who had terminal cancer who was keen to tell me all he had achieved and which I sensed he felt valued and identified by. He was distressed that he could no longer do all he used to, such as organising community projects and liaising with MPs. He mentioned faith and said that although his wife had a strong faith, his had lapsed. We talked and I offered to pray, after which he begged me for a copy of whatever book I'd got the prayer from. I said it was from my heart... and that God hears us just as we speak. No fancy language needed. We talked more about prayer, about God not needing our deeds to pay our way and that when I left the room he could close his eyes and say whatever he wanted to God. He would be heard.'

I didn't get to speak with him again, as he died soon after. I trust he found the peace he was looking for.'

Please email me more of your stories at: nurses@cmf.org.uk

CMF Public Policy update

The Public Policy team met with NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) in June to discuss their new draft guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy. We expressed concern that no guidelines are currently included that would ensure women have an opportunity to discuss other options and choices, or be told of alternatives to abortion at every stage of the abortion pathway. Instead, the emphasis is on making access to abortion even quicker and easier than it already is. It includes guidance on providing self-referrals for abortion; phone consultations; medical terminations at home at later gestation; abortions in 'a range of community settings' (undefined by the guidance), and guidance on maximising the role of nurses and midwives. The guidance also, incorrectly in our view, states that women must be reassured that abortion does not increase their risk of long-term health problems such as mental health issues.

A detailed written response to NICE by Philippa Taylor, CMF's Head of Public Policy can be found on the website at cmf.li/NICE_Abortion_gdln along with the department's other recent written submissions (cmf.org.uk/advocacy/submissions), on commercial genomics, abortion for fatal fetal abnormality and divorce law reform.

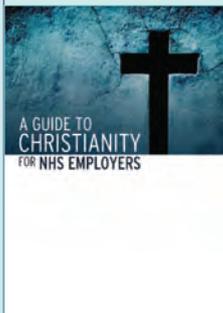
Members who would like to keep abreast of the department's work on current ethical issues and hear of relevant events to attend can sign up to our quarterly 'Ethics and Public Policy E-Newsletter' at cmf.org.uk/advocacy/enevs. The May 2019 edition of the newsletter can be found at cmf.li/2KqJYif

A Guide to Christianity for NHS employers

As Christians, we work in every part of the NHS, but in a secular environment our employers sometimes don't know how to deal with us. This brief guide is designed to help NHS employers foster a positive and inclusive culture in which all staff, not just Christians, can develop to their full potential and

deliver high quality care for patients without unnecessary conflict or misunderstanding. Get a copy for your line manager and your HR department today!

Only available from the CMF Bookstore (£2.00)



Members movements

Incoming

Elsbeth Paterson to the UK from Bach Christian Hospital, Pakistan (May 2019)

Elizabeth Howard from Malawi (August 2019)

Outbound

Graham Longbottom to the Solomon Islands (July 2019)

Obituaries

Professor John Edward Lennard-Jones (q 1953, Cambridge) was born 29 January 1927. He was Professor of Gastroenterology and Internal Medicine at UCH London, and founder of the British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition. He went to be with the Lord on 29 March 2019.

Dr Anita Elaine Davies (q 1959) passed away in autumn 2018. She was a practitioner in homeopathy in Eastbourne and Harley Street and a key leader in Medical Service Ministries.

Dr Elizabeth Owen (q 1986, St George's).

Dr Verna Houghton (q 1955, Guy's) died 29 May 2019. Verna was a GP in Wokingham and to Team GB at the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Dr John Gordon Cole (q 1958, Bristol).

Dr David Neden (q 1952).

Staff movements



Alex Bunn

Leaving

Alex Bunn, Associate Head of Student Ministries, after many years working with the Student Department, left May 2019.



Graham Crosbie

Graham Crosbie, IT Manager left July 2019 to join Samaritan's Purse as their new IT Manager.



Natalie Lee

Natalie Lee, Graduates Coordinator leaving August 2019 to join staff at St Helen's, Bishopsgate.



Steve Sturman

Joining

Steve Sturman joined June 2019 as Associate Head of Graduate Ministries for Pastoral Care.

Keep in touch

We appreciate information about members returning and moving or notices about those who are 'promoted to higher service'. Please contact Steve Fouch at: steve.fouch@cmf.org.uk

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Dates for your diary

SEPTEMBER

- 7 **Saline Solution**, Haverfordwest
- 28 **Saline Solution**, Conwy, North Wales
- 28 **PRIME: Teaching Healthcare Professionals: a Christian Approach**, CMF, London

OCTOBER

- 24-26 **RCGP Exhibition**, ACC, Liverpool
- 25-27 **Junior Doctors' Conference**, Hothorpe Hall, Leicestershire
- 20-27 **Sydenham (2) International Leadership Course**, CMF, London

NOVEMBER

- 9 **Scottish Conference**, Edinburgh
- 18-20 **Seniors' Conference**, The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire

For further information on all these events, please contact: events@cmf.org.uk.

CMF News

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