

# crossing cultures: 18 delegates, 1 mission

Bukola Ogunijimi reports on SYD 2018, with help from two delegates

The Sydenham (SYD) Conference brings together students and junior doctors from across the world, and has been run by CMF since the 1990s. Named after 'English Hippocrates', Dr Thomas Sydenham (who described the eponymous chorea), the conference equips delegates to lead Christian medical groups through Bible teaching, fellowship, and specific talks. SYD is held immediately prior to CMF Student Conference, which all delegates attend.



**D**aniella Osaghae and I (both Deep:ER volunteers) were based in London's best office (CMF's Johnson House, of course) and coordinated the programme and travel plans. 18 delegates from 15 different countries were able to attend.

We spent an incredible week together, starting each morning with prayer and praise, and studying evangelism, discipleship and medical ethics. Other practical sessions taught what to consider, when starting or running a CMF group with members from a variety of denominations.

We spent time exploring London (so many selfies), visiting Parliament and the British Museum (we concluded it ought to be called the Egyptian museum due to the number of Egyptian artefacts on display!). We toured Cambridge (did you know that Isaac Newton was a Christian?), and spent the final evening enjoying a cheeky Nando's together.

The Sydenham Conference reminded me that God is at work across the globe, and his word is relevant and active for people of all nations, tribes, and tongues. Though from across the world, we were wonderfully united in our desire to see his gospel reach far and wide among medical students and doctors.

Since returning home, the Sydenham delegates have given talks, written articles, organised mission weeks, and one has even helped start up his country's first CMF group! We've been encouraging

and praying for one another through it all, and seen that Jesus truly is at work raising up Christian leaders in medicine.

## Mike Ronoh travelled to SYD from Kenya:

There is an African saying - '*Kutembea kwingi kuona meng'*'; translated, it means: 'the more you travel, the more you see and learn'.

I landed at Heathrow at 0800 the day before the conference. A thousand expectations crossed my mind as this was my first trip overseas. Everything would be new. I was so excited yet scared by being in a different continent, environment and culture. What would happen if I get lost in those underground machines called tubes, don't 'mind the gap' or stand on the left instead of the right? What if I freeze in the snow? One of my expectations was to experience the snow but as the saying goes, I was ready to learn.

I appreciated the warm welcome, without which perhaps you would now be reading about a missing Kenyan last seen at Heathrow airport. London is a busy city and everyone is always on the move. I found this interesting and if you doubt this statement, just plan a trip to Africa - we are just never in such a hurry. Often, I felt cold and would suffocate myself in my newly bought winter clothing, something I'm not used to.

I have never felt the spirit of unity in Christ like I did during the conference. Every speaker spoke



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to my heart. From sharing unlimited continental breakfast every morning to walking together in the streets of London, we formed a strong bond between us in the short time we had together. The conference sessions were just phenomenal and another benefit of the conference was gaining access to great quality books.

God used this conference to impress in my heart a vision to share and build others through what I have learnt and experienced. To CMF UK, I am forever indebted to you for investing your resources and time into our lives. Thank you so much for planning and ensuring the success of the conference. This is a true example of love in action. God bless you.

### Rachad Ghazal, a medical student in Beirut:

Though there is no Christian medical student movement in Lebanon, students can be involved in general campus ministry and medical mission. Some Christian doctors are involved in ICMDA, and through them I came to know about CMF.

Last summer, I met a group of student doctors and nurses from CMF UK who came to Lebanon. I signed up for the SYD not knowing what to expect, along with Dr Lee, a South Korean surgeon who has served God in neighbouring countries and is now serving as a medical missionary in Lebanon.

The topics covered at SYD not only enriched my trust in the word of God but also made it rock-solid

in preparation for different topics and challenges. Seeing fellow Christians who take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, worship God (in its meaning, and its entirety) and serve him in their fields was truly a blessing. They taught us how to be better witnesses for Christ in our community, in our field, and in our student groups.

The content they prepared was delivered in concise yet complete 'boost-packs'. We learned CMF doctrines and leadership do's and don'ts, to a Christian perspective on controversial dilemmas like abortion and euthanasia. In addition to the conference sessions, we had the opportunity to buy books and get our hands on some CMF publications. These were really the *crème de la crème*. As soon as I got back home, I started reading the CMF publications and felt really blessed by the contents.

At the Student Conference, the amount of prayer and time put into preparing each seminar was truly apparent. The seminars really challenged and changed my perspectives on how to perceive or deal with daily challenges in the light of the Word of Life.

I would recommend both conferences to anyone who is still hesitant or is considering applying. The growth and change I experienced there was one of the best things that happened to me since I believed in Christ. Dr Lee and I came back equipped with a better understanding of CMF. We have started our own CMF Lebanon group. Our group is still small, but we pray for the Lord to overshadow quantity by quality. ■

#### REFERENCES

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