

# my trip to... : Egypt

Jennifer Black Reports on an Egyptian adventure...



In February 2019, I attended the METNA conference in Egypt. METNA is the Middle Eastern division of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA) and the conference brings together Christian health professionals and students from the region, with representatives from Libya, Jordan and Egypt (amongst others). This year the focus of the conference was *'You are the light of the world'* (Matthew 5:14) and we spent three days together learning what this means as Christians and healthcare professionals.

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Led by the national METNA leaders, each day started with a time of devotion. After a traditional Egyptian breakfast, we had the first of the main talks. The speakers unpacked Matthew 5:14, what it means to be light, why we need to 'shine', how we can be light and what this should look like in practice. I was especially inspired by the talk 'What it means to be light', where the speaker drew parallels between the characteristics of light and the character of a Christian. There was also worship in Arabic. It was wonderful to hear worship songs

sung in a different language and from a different culture; it reminded me that throughout the world we worship in thousands of languages but are united in one faith by one Saviour.

We also heard from representatives from different countries in the METNA region, who gave us ways to pray for their ministry and their countries. It was humbling to meet brothers and sisters who live sacrificial lives to reach people in a region of the world, which is desperately in need of the gospel. Security means that I cannot write about individual ministries, but clearly God is working across the Middle East in incredible ways! In the afternoon we had our second meeting with worship and the second of the main talks. We then split into small groups to discuss everything we had heard that day - it was a valuable time of listening and learning from one another, especially given the mix of cultures, ages and experiences!

It's hard succinctly to summarise everything that I enjoyed about this conference. The main talks were fantastic - challenging us to be bold in our witness for Christ and encouraging us with the reminder that God has given us the resources we need to do this.

During my time away, I was challenged to 'be light' and to be distinctive in an increasingly secular society. Sometimes in the UK, I feel that the choice between following Jesus or the world can be extremely subtle. I personally recognised the need to discern better when I am being asked to make that choice. The time away was one of great blessing, especially meeting (self-professed) ordinary, but godly men and women, who in God's strength live extraordinary lives for his glory. The impact of their faith is being seen throughout the Middle East. ■

**Jennifer Black** is a medical student in southern England. Some names and details have been changed to protect conference participants.