

# first times, not last times

Chris Borges da Silva reflects on the 2017 SYD Conference



Chris Borges da Silva is a CMF Deep:ER volunteer in London

**T**his is the first time I've ever seen snow.'

The Sydenham Conference 2017 (SYD) had many 'first time' moments. For some it was the jammie dodgers at tea, for others it was the

warmth of the British sun. Whatever it was, sharing moments together was a blessing.

International medical students spent the week being equipped for Christian leadership in their unique context. This culminated in attendance at the CMF Student Conference, where learning was consolidated and partnerships made, before departing home. SYD saw 19 attendees from 18 different countries at varying stages of training in medicine, drawn together by one gospel, for one mission. The programme was rich in Bible teaching from Paul's second letter to Timothy, interactive seminars from topics like evangelism to medicine in resource-poor countries, as well as fellowship on tours of Cambridge and London.

Organising this conference with help from previous organisers, fellow volunteers and invaluable links with ICMDA and IFES reminded me of God's global plan for the world - the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all cultures, nations and people groups. Before the first day arrived there were moments of sadness and of joy as visa applications were rejected and accepted, flights were booked (some as late as the day before!) and accommodation confirmed. This left us very grateful for the team of internationals that would journey to the British Isles.

I don't count myself a slick administrator. I could even go as far as saying I strongly dislike admin! However, I'm glad I took on the challenge of organising SYD with the support of CMF as I have



grown in ways I never thought I would.

One of the many highlights of the conference was the communal prayer each day. We would come together at the CMF office, led by delegates from a different country each time, and pray together for specific requests on the hearts of those representing their country. Praying together for different countries, as a physical representation of the body of Christ, reminded me of the power of Jesus and the global transformative work of the gospel. I got a small glimpse of heaven as we lived in togetherness, different but united.

As the week progressed, we shared excellent meals, God-glorifying songs, the London hostel-living experience and the uncertainty of London weather. But most of all we got to share our lives. The SYD conference provided a little window into how God is building his kingdom in and through healthcare training and provision. It left me encouraged to continue taking opportunities to foster unity and grow in the truth of the gospel. Further solidifying in my mind Jesus' words as he prayed to the Father in chapter 17 of John's gospel, *'All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.'* ■

Could you help organise this great conference next year or the year after? Contact CMF about next year's Deep:ER programme.