

the greatest question?



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Which type of books sell best on CMF student conference bookstalls? (a clue – as you work out your answer, consider which are often the largest seminars at the same conference...)

The outside observer of CMF might answer ‘discussions on medical ethics’, or a devotional book for doctors’. Even if these are partially accurate, it is almost always sexuality and relationship topics that actually draw the biggest numbers and sales.

This has been true since I was a student. But the specific topics causing challenges have changed, and continue to evolve. Therefore, *Nucleus* is ready to revisit this topic only five years after our last edition themed around it.

Same-sex attraction is not new. But the attitude of society has changed significantly, particularly with same-sex marriage established in law. Some churches openly affirm such relationships, while others argue that same-sex attracted Christians can still uphold a biblical standard in their sexual behaviour, with God’s help. The anonymous testimony piece in this issue encourages us that this is possible. Our student co-editor Liz Birdie Ong reviews Sam Allberry’s *Is God Anti-Gay?* and adds helpful context on the huge contrast she has observed over this issue between her native Malaysia and current home in Ireland.

Gender identity has seen the most change of any area in this field in recent years. The huge increases in the number of children referred to gender services over this time raises questions not only for healthcare students but for churches and parents. This complex topic is tackled from both a biblical and practical perspective.

Singleness is an unchanging topic – and of course everyone is single at some point! Jennie Pollock explores contentedness and flourishing as a single person. Another ever-present question whether single or not is that of masturbation.

Marolin Watson explores what the Bible might have to say.

Many books that sold well in my student days are long out of print. Some of these were very helpful at the time, but others have been actively repudiated by their authors. Given that the message of Scripture hasn’t changed, does this tell us something about the way in which we are looking at relationships as Christians? Are we writing too much that is culturally determined, or perhaps going beyond what the Bible says?

While we’re right to avoid legalism, this shouldn’t lead us to say nothing at all, or to diminish commands that are clear. Some books trying to tread this path age rather better than others, and our other student co-editor Daniel Nie reviews one such example.

There has been enough to say about sexuality to almost fill this edition. We have tried to resist this temptation, knowing that our salvation ultimately comes through faith in Jesus, rather than in discussion of ethical conundrums.

Most of us probably have heard of Blaise Pascal, but in the context of vacuums and fluid dynamics, rather than faith. Retired surgeon Bernard Palmer tells the story of two fellow surgeons of the seventeenth century who practiced truly holistic medicine, sharing both orthopaedic expertise and spiritual wisdom, and thus leading the eminent physicist Pascal to Jesus, along with much of his family. We hope this encourages you to persevere in sharing the gospel.

Our *be prepared* piece testifies to the unexpected opportunities with both patients and colleagues that FYI doctor Sally Barker has seen during the year. We hope her advice and experience help readers for whom this is the last edition of *Nucleus* they will read before starting work. If that is you, we wish you every blessing for this first season of work, and look forward to receiving articles about your experiences! ■