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focus

FAITH AND PRACTICE

A Christian Medical and Dental Society Publication



*Living as
an ambassador
for Christ in
our world.*





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An illustration of several envelopes, some overlapping, in a light blue color scheme. One envelope is prominently shown in the foreground, slightly open, with a wavy line representing a stamp or seal.

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...is a publication of the Christian Medical and Dental Society (CMDS) who has a Statement of Faith that holds to an orthodox Christian understanding of Jesus Christ and essential Biblical truths.

Our readers are students, practitioners, retired healthcare professionals and others concerned with contemporary issues relating to Christianity and healthcare.

The purpose of focus

...is to act as a forum in which Christian healthcare professionals may exchange information and experiences to encourage one another in the integration of their Christian faith and their professional practice.

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Living as an Ambassador for Christ

by Roger Gingerich



Roger's
Editorial

*Could it be?...
Was He
really using
my voice to
call out
to others?*

Roger Gingerich is the executive director for CMDS and also has a part-time medical practice in Steinbach, MB.

The idea for this issue of *focus* has been formulating in my mind for several years. The search for the meaning of this concept began on one of my medical mission trips. It germinated while sitting in a hot, dry, dusty, woven grass structure in Darfur, Sudan. I was on a German crisis medical response team, but spoke no German. Although the team members could converse in English, they would frequently revert back to German when we were not working in the camps. God used the involuntary isolation to refresh in me the joy of reading and contemplating the scriptures. One verse I meditated on was the passage we are using as the theme for this issue of *focus*.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal (or calling or speaking) through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:20)

I recited this verse, over and over in my mind, as I travelled to and from the refugee camps. Sitting in the back of a Land Rover, bouncing over the dusty sand trail, the words of this verse kept coming back to me.

Could it be? Was it possible? I was the voice of God! I was the Representative of God! I was the Ambassador of God! Was He really using my voice to call out to others?

As I sat in the Souk (market) after dark, sipping on my locally brewed coffee and swatting at the flies, I kept asking myself was He really using me? Was I doing my part? Here I was, surrounded by hundreds of Sudanese Nationals who did not know our God. They were devout people, praying to Mecca five times a day. Was He relying on my words?

There, amid the smells of decaying produce leaves, sweaty bodies and struggling humanity, I sought understanding of how this verse applied to me in Sudan and at home. I still wonder, for I'm not sure I experienced the full expression of this verse...not then...not now.

Let us read the thoughts expressed by the authors of the articles in this issue, and together try to understand what it means to be an *Ambassador for Christ.* *f*

Foreigners in this World

Are we too much at home?

by Terry Kaufman



We are not here as a citizen, nor as a tourist, but as a diplomatic messenger for Christ.

If, as outspoken UK politician Tony Benn has suggested, “All war represents a failure of diplomacy,” then a cynic might suggest that world diplomacy is completely ineffective. On the other hand, it may be true that, were it not for the work of diplomats, our world would be suffering even more from the ravages of war, than it presently is. Of course, not all diplomacy operates on the world stage. Diplomacy is a skill that each and every person must learn and practice in order to function effectively in relationship with others in our world. We are a broken people in a broken world, resulting in the need for diplomacy in almost every relationship we encounter. So we are all diplomats.

But within the world of diplomacy, there are some callings of a higher nature. An Ambassador may be defined as a “diplomatic official of the highest rank, sent by one country to another as its representative who has been given authority to communicate or to act on behalf

**Ambassadors do not serve
in their home land.**

of a ruler.” As Christians we are called not simply to be diplomats, but to be Ambassadors. Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthian church, said,

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is


Terry Kaufman is senior pastor of the Emmanuel Evangelical Free Church, in Steinbach, Manitoba.

from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor. 5:17-21, NIV)

That is a serious calling and certainly worthy of further consideration regarding the implications of such a calling. It may, for example, seem extremely obvious that an ambassador is called to serve in a foreign land, yet that most fundamental of truths is worthy of note. Ambassadors do not serve in their home land. The same can then be said of Christians who are also called to serve in a foreign place. Thus, the worldly view of life, the typical “secular worldview” if you will, should be more foreign than native to us for we are foreigners in the world. James Reston once said “This is the devilish thing about foreign affairs: they are foreign and will not always conform to our whims.” 1 Peter 2:11 says that we are aliens and strangers in the world. We are called to serve in a foreign land!

Of course, acknowledging this fact raises further and somewhat provocative questions, “Are we too much at home in this world? Do we believe (or do we act like) this world is our home? Or do we act as if we have dual citizenship?” Yet spiritual dual citizenship does not exist. You are either a citizen of the world, or a foreigner. A true ambassador of Christ can only be a foreigner in this world.

**Do we act as if
we have dual
citizenship?
Spiritual dual
citizenship
does not exist.**



God has given us
authority to act
on His behalf.

A second observation is that a foreign ambassador is sent by a higher authority. In verse 18, Paul

wrote that it was God Himself who gave us this responsibility, a responsibility for which we will be accountable. Our tasks, as ambassadors, are not a matter of personal choice. We have been called, and we will have to answer for that call.

And with that call, comes authority. God has given us authority to act on His behalf. Matt. 16:19 is a powerful verse: “*Whatever we, the church, the body of Christ, bind on earth will be bound in heaven, whatever we loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*” We are not serving in a foreign land empty handed. We have been given a ministry by Jesus Christ and also given authority to carry out that ministry. That is a fact that is both encouraging and frightening at the same time.

We confuse God's message to the citizens of heaven with the message to the citizens of this world.

Paul also reminds us of the nature of an ambassador's task—that we are called primarily to represent and communicate. Verse 20 says, “*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*” God makes his appeal through us, and that appeal is made as we live godly lives, godly lives that are defined by God's rules, not ours. This means that, the picture that the world has of Christ, it will have received from His representatives.

But what is the message that we are to communicate? What appeal is to be made through us? Ambassadors often have to make appeals that are difficult—appealing for human rights where there is little appetite for it, appealing for moderation where extremism rules. But what of our appeal? Is it an appeal of such a controversial nature that we share it with fear and trembling? Verses 18 and 19 articulate what that “appeal” is.

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of

reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”

While, on certain levels, this is a controversial appeal, it is truly not such a painful message to deliver. Why then do we, too often, cower in our delivery of this message? God has reconciled Himself to us by NOT counting men's sins against them because of the work of Jesus Christ. In Jesus, we have become righteousness. That is the message that God has asked us to give to this world, this foreign land.

Why is it then that we often struggle to deliver the message when it is such a good message? I wonder if sometimes we confuse God's message to the citizens of heaven with the message to the citizens of this world, and then, we deliver the wrong one to the citizens of this world. The message for citizens of heaven is one of obedience and service (among other things), but the message for foreigners is one of reconciliation. Foreigners should not be expected to live as citizens until they actually have been reconciled into citizenship in the kingdom of heaven.

Finally, we are called to remember that an ambassador is, by definition, diplomatic. In verse 13, Paul shares that while, on the one hand, he is crazy about God and crazy for God, he is still controlled and sensible for the sake of those who he is reaching out to. Paul had a tremendous enthusiasm for God, so much so that it could appear to be insanity to some; yet he contained it, so as to be heard by all. We are ambassadors, and ambassadors measure their words and actions carefully, in order to be heard in the land they serve in. This is part of what I believe Paul is saying. We should be so excited about God that we can barely control ourselves, but we contain it so that the message of reconciliation is heard.

We are ambassadors, diplomats of a high order. We are not here as citizens of this world nor as tourists in a foreign land, but as messengers for Christ, servants of the King. That is not an option for us, we have been given this assignment by God, but He is faithful to equip us for that which He has called us to. Of course, we must be sure that we deliver the right message, the message of reconciliation.

Paul leaves no room for a question about whether or not we are called to this office. The only question that remains is,

*“What appeal is being made through your life?”
Welcome to the foreign land Ambassadors! f*



Being Christ's Ambassador in the Office

Conflict within and without

by Michelle Korvemaker

Jesus came to reconcile us to God (1 Pet. 3:18) and we are called to be His ambassadors here on earth, so we must become skillful at peacemaking rather than giving in to the natural propensity that humans have towards war-making¹.

When I used to dream about being a physician, I never imagined that I would have to face the difficult interpersonal conflict situations that have come. Currently, I work as a locum physician. I wonder sometimes whether I encounter interpersonal conflict more often because I don't have a long-term relationship with the

Michelle Korvemaker is a family physician/emergency physician locum. She has been a member of CMDS since 1997. Her home is in Woodstock, ON.

patients that I see. However, when I speak with physicians who have a practice, they also report interpersonal conflicts with their patients.

Consider the following snapshots of life in Dr. S's practice. **Scene 1:** It has been a long week. Dr. S is tired, following a busy "on call" shift a couple days earlier, from which she hasn't recovered. The day is fully booked with patients. She arrives 10 minutes early to get through lab reports, prior to seeing the first patient. The problem is that there is a patient in the waiting room already—a patient who does not have an appointment but expects to be seen immediately. Irritation wells up inside of Dr. S. She knows that she is called to serve the patients in her practice. She knows that she is Christ's ambassador. At this moment, she feels nothing of the compassion of Christ for this person. She agrees to see the patient but she was

unsuccessful in hiding her irritation at the disruption in her schedule. The patient was unhappy with the visit because she didn't feel that Dr. S was concerned enough about her medical emergency, which was nothing more than a musculoskeletal headache.

We flash to **another scene:** This time, Dr. S is on top of her game. She's been having a great day and good interactions with everyone. A worried mother has brought in her daughter who has had a fever on and off for the last five days. The daughter sits demurely on the examining table in no apparent distress. Dr. S starts to take the history. The mother states that the fever has been present for five days. Dr. S asks what temperature readings the

Two people fighting are like two closed books which are banging together.



mother has obtained. The mother becomes angry stating that she knows when her child has a fever and how dare Dr. S ask her for numbers. Dr. S remains calm, apologizes for upsetting the mother with her question, and moves on to other parts of the interview. Dr. S leaves the room to have a throat swab processed. On returning, the mother apologizes for her outburst stating that their family had received bad news that day and she wasn't herself. Dr. S accepts her apology; however, she wonders whether she could have asked her question differently to avoid the conflict.

Interpersonal conflict is unfortunately a part of everyone's life—whether or not one is a Christ-follower.

As physicians, we are caring for people who are not well and some who “think” that they are not well. As Christians, we are called to be ambassadors for Christ. (2 Cor. 5:20) We are called to live at peace with all men, as far as it depends on us. (Rom 12:18) We are to seek the good of those around us. (Philip. 2:4) Melding our faith with practice offers a unique opportunity and method for being Christ's ambassadors in our culture. We also acknowledge our responsibility to God in how we conduct ourselves in practice.

Generally, the Bible speaks about the source of interpersonal conflict as being within each of us. James 4:1-2 says “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.” In the first scene, Dr. S was easily sent into a bad mood because her agenda for the day had been upset, and

thus a bad interaction with a patient. However, Dr. S is responsible for teaching her patients how to access medical services appropriately. She could have chosen to redirect the patient to a local walk-in clinic or emergency department, if she truly was not able to see the patient. As many physicians, Dr. S gave into a desire to please the patient and attempted to avoid conflict. However, she stepped into conflict because she couldn't meet the expectations of the patient. In the second scene, the mother was dealing with a problem in her life and reacted negatively to a question from the physician. The conflict wasn't something that the physician could have avoided. Thankfully, Dr. S was in a good state of mind and was able to respond with grace in the situation.

These scenes demonstrate that the difficult interactions that we have in the office are a result of the passions which war within ourselves, sometimes to the passions which war within our patients and sometimes both. In the Journal of Biblical Counseling, Dr. David Powlison wrote an article called “Getting to the Heart of Conflict: Anger, Part 3”¹. In this article, he illustrates how two people

Food for Thought

- ~ Coincidences are when God chooses to remain anonymous.
- ~ Don't put a question mark where God put a period.

- ~ Some minds are like concrete—thoroughly mixed up and permanently set.
- ~ Forbidden fruit creates jams.

- ~ We are called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.
- ~ It seems society is more preoccupied with ingesting

fighting are like two closed books which are banging together. Inside each book, if they were to be opened, one would find the answers to why they are fighting. In the physician-patient interaction, we may not discover why the patient responded negatively. We are responsible, however, to open our own book and look at why we ourselves are fighting.

Some of the reasons that physicians experience difficult interactions include—lack of sleep, an onerous call schedule, booking too many patients, financial pressures (often self-induced), a need to be liked and appreciated, the desire to please, the desire to be in control, pride, etc. There are also external pressures which may include—family conflicts/illness, church conflicts, caring for a child with a developmental disorder, caring for elderly parents, lawsuits, working in an underserved area, etc. Many patients are also facing similar stressful situations. Some patients may be so miserable (real or imagined), from their illness, that they are not able to be peaceful in interactions with anyone. Unfortunately, some patients have preconceived notions about what physicians are like, generally because they have suffered under the hands

of someone who has mistreated them in the past.

Ultimately, however, when we get into a conflict with anyone, each party is looking out for themselves. When we want something too much, we sin in order to get it. Interpersonal conflict easily arises. God calls us to respond with grace to the stress that occurs in our lives and in our practices. We are to be like Jesus, as His ambassadors. As such, we need to be humble and meek in our interactions with people. God gives grace to the humble. (1 Pet. 5: 5) We are called to use the godly wisdom which is described in James 3:17-18:



“...the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere...”

In our day-to-day interactions with patients, Christian physicians need to be drawing on God's grace and love to be able to complete their calling in

a way that honours God. We need to be remembering God's sovereignty and remember, as someone has said, that every appointment is a “divine appointment”. It is important that we strive to order our lives so that we get the amount of sleep we need to be able to function well. We may need to book less patients. We may need to take the day off after having been on call. We need to ensure that we don't become enslaved to our practice or the financial blessings which come from this calling. We need to abide in Christ daily, in order to bear fruit for Him, in our practices and in our personal lives. (John 15:5)

While interpersonal conflict is not usually pleasant, it is an occasion to demonstrate God's grace and mercy. It is an occasion to grow and to become more Christ-like. It is possible to demonstrate Christ's character, as we strive to be peaceable and to reconcile on this interpersonal level. Perhaps dealing with the present conflict in a godly way will open up an opportunity to help that particular patient to be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ. We need to be daily relying on our God for strength to do the task that He calls us to. (Isa. 40:31) *f*

1. Powlison, D. Getting to the Heart of Conflict: Anger, Part 3. Journal of Biblical Counseling 1997; 16(1) 32-42

dietary fiber, than with instilling moral fiber.

~ If you must let your mind go blank, please turn off the sound!

~ Some rise from a sermon greatly strengthened, others wake from it delightfully refreshed.

Ambassadorship for Christ

The Art of Being Odd

and Yet Attractive



by Dan Reilly

Called to proclaim His message.

Ambassadorship for Christ involves a complete surrender of one's own agenda to that of the One who sends us.

The title of ambassador is one of the highest honours a head of state can give to a civil servant or previous member of government. The position entails the best seats at ceremonial functions, an entire staff to do your bidding, and a large expense account.

Foreign heads of state must accord you the same respect they would grant your head of state. At the same time, the position involves a complete surrender of one's own agenda to that of the One who sends you. You represent the head of state and your own ideas and thoughts are inconsequential.

One of the key functions of an ambassador is to convey messages from the leadership of the home country to the

leadership and population of a foreign country. We are each ambassadors for Christ in different places and different walks of life. Christ's key message was one of reconciliation. He invited those who were far from God to come closer. All were welcome to join the kingdom, to emigrate, to escape bondage and come to freedom. Christ came to proclaim this message, and then, to make it

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possible by his death and resurrection.

Those who were already in the foreign kingdom, who were supposed to be God's ambassadors, failed to recognize him. The religious leaders of the day failed to recognize that Jesus came from the King they claimed to serve. This failure arose from a misunderstanding of the message of the kingdom, from interfering personal agendas, and from distractions caused by a focus on surface issues.

We can become comfortable being members of God's chosen and lose track of our task.

The religious leaders thought the King wanted perfect obedience to His rules in order to earn admittance to His kingdom. They worked hard to obey the rules and were proud of their achievements. This message suited their agenda of superiority. They enjoyed the power and privilege that came with being "God's chosen" and didn't want anyone else to compete with them. Rules only **they** could obey defended their positions of power. Jesus said of them:

"They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. Everything they do is done for men to see: ...they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'" (Matt. 23:4-7)

Jesus' message of reconciliation threatened their superiority and power. If reconciliation is impossible to achieve on our own, but is as easy as accepting

One of the key functions of an ambassador is to convey messages from the leadership of the home country...

forgiveness, then anyone could become one of God's chosen. The tax collector could enter God's kingdom by asking, but all the religious leaders' hard work amounted to nothing!

Rather than accept this radical new message as being from the King, the religious leaders needed some way to dismiss this Jesus as "not of God." They found the rationale for rejecting Him in the way He conducted Himself. Jesus summarized this by noting:

For John [the Baptist] came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon" The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and 'sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her actions." (Matt. 11:18-19)

The religious elite had been threatened by John the Baptist some years earlier but had dismissed him as a lunatic. He lived in a cave and was never seen eating or drinking. He obviously was demon possessed! Christ was observed eating and drinking, but in the company of

those the religious leaders knew were far from the kingdom. Obviously Jesus was not of the kingdom.

Two thousand years later, Christ's ambassadors are still called to proclaim the Good News of God's kingdom and to live in a sacrificial and loving way to encourage reconciliation between sinner and God. But we can become comfortable being members of God's chosen and lose track of our task. We are still prone to defining kingdom membership by compliance with superficial rules of behaviour that we can easily follow but that keep those we do not like separate from us.

We are called to represent Christ. The message is too important to allow ourselves to get off message. Living Christ-like purity, in a sinful world, will make us as odd as John the Baptist. Living Christ-like love in a selfish and uncaring world will make us as attractive as Christ.

Can we be accused of being different from the world and yet a "friend" to those who are lost? Or is the accusation that we add to the burdens of others and seek superiority, more accurate? f

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(Gems by Wayne Elford, our CMDS Planned Giving Coach)

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- And, a charity that you value, has received a charitable gift. f



Abraham & Leela Ninan

On Being a Creative Minority

Our response, in these times.

by Abraham Ninan

(Based on a talk given at the CMDS Annual Meeting, Canmore, AB in May 2008.)

“It was the best of times; it was the worst of times...”

Like it or not, Christian doctors and dentists, occupy leadership positions in society—within the Christian community as well as in the world at large. This gives us both the privilege and the responsibility to impact our world. In order to do this effectively, we need to be aware of the times in which we live. The two questions I would like to address are “What are the salient features of our day?” and “How ought we to live in these times?” The model for us here is the tribe of Isacchar of whom the Scriptures record that they “understood the times and knew what Israel should do.” (1 Chr. 2:32).

What kind of time do we live in? I am reminded of the opening sentence

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of Charles Dickens' novel, “A Tale of Two Cities,” “It was the best of times; it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...” In short, as then so now, there are some good things and some not so good things in our day.

The characteristics of the times in which we live

On the positive side of the ledger, we are blessed with prosperity, peace and opportunities.

We enjoy **unprecedented wealth**. Canada, with just 33 million people, has the eighth largest economy in the world. Despite the constant carping and complaining heard in doctors' lounges, the medical community is quite well off. This is a mixed blessing. The “health and wealth gospel,” which has invaded the church, has the effect of numbing us into what Amy Carmichael has called “the subtle love of softening things.” The “mammon of unrighteousness” should be used for the benefit of others.

We live in a country where, for the most part, there is **unfettered peace and security**. Peace fosters progress. Canadians are privileged with **exceptional opportunities**.

Freedom and democracy, at home, give us opportunities to share our faith, to contribute to ethical and public policy issues and become change agents in society. Internationally, the ease of transportation, the internet, our professional expertise and a Canadian passport, allow us to bless countries that are closed to others.

Of course, all is not well in Shangri-la. We also live in “interesting times”—which I am told is a Chinese euphemism for challenging times. The first of our challenges is that we live in a **time of uncertainty and fear**. The ghost of 9/11 stalks us. In a recent visit to a local bookstore, I was impressed by the number of titles that sought to analyze the attack on the twin towers. This episode is still fresh in our collective memory. The clash of civilizations has landed in our backyard. The Western mind, with its naïve acceptance of multiculturalism, relativism and postmodernism, has difficulty dealing with this serious phenomenon. Added to this, are the

Extraneous religions
and alien ideologies
compete for our
hearts and minds.

threats of nuclear war, global warming, food and gas shortages etc.

Secondly, our age is characterized by a sense of **disorienting perplexity**. Rapid changes in our world have led to a confusion that is both socio-cultural and intellectual. Canadian society is increasingly multicultural and multiethnic. Extraneous religions and alien ideologies compete for our hearts and minds. This is a relatively new and bewildering phenomenon and we are at a loss to formulate a clearheaded response. On the intellectual plane, we are torn between two competing, yet complementary, ideologies, namely naturalism and postmodernism. While these are quite distinct worldviews, both deny the objectivity of truth with respect to the non-scientific aspects of our common existence, i.e. virtue, ethics, morals, spirituality and aesthetics; in other words, those intangible, yet profound, verities that really matter in our day to day life.

Once dominated by Christendom, the West has now entered an era of **cultural and moral decline**. Robert Bork's book title, "Slouching towards Gomorrah" vividly captured the essence of our downward spiral. A process birthed by the Enlightenment has come into full flower in the 21st century. There has been a seismic shift in Western culture. Once blessed by a Christian world view, the West is now largely a secular, quasi-atheistic society. It is, thus, out of sync with the rest of the world which is predominantly religious. Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic, has described present day Europe as the first atheistic civilization in the history of mankind. Canada is not far behind. The result of our predicament is that morality has been stood on its head. Tolerance is our only virtue. The silver lining—a

very thin one at that—is that we are still living off the credit from our Judeo Christian heritage. The bottom has not fallen out, but we are fast descending into the abyss. How long before the barbarians at the gate take decisive control of the palace, the schoolroom and the cathedral?

How we ought to live in these times—as a Creative Minority

For the first time since the fourth century, then, the Christian viewpoint is in a minority position in the Western world. If this is the case, the question that we must answer is "How do we live as a minority?" We have a number of options—First of all, we can circle our wagons, retreat into our little ghettos, nurse our wounds and let the world continue its free fall. After all, we are going to heaven. Or we could, as some have done so well, exploit our status and stridently demand our rights. This strategy might benefit us as a special interest group, but we essentially take ourselves out of the murky business of life. It does little to fulfill our *raison d'être*, i.e., to bring glory to God in a dying culture. Besides, it is unlikely to succeed, because we have been judged to be the party of the majority, i.e., the colonists and winners who have ruled the roost for so long and who created the mess in the first place. And to boot, our particular world view has been singled out for censure since we are accused of projecting exclusivist claims and are therefore guilty of the only sin of a relativistic culture, that of intolerance. Another seductive and rather tame option is to merge with the rest of society, give up the struggle and join the crowd. How can we be so sure about our position? Everything is, after all, relative. It is easier to give up

our distinctive claims. This, of course, is defeatist.

Is there a better way than these strategies of retreat, militancy and appeasement? I believe there is. We need to become what Pope Benedict XVI has referred to as "*a creative minority*." In so doing, we join the rest of the worldwide church and, at the same time, return to our historic roots. Christianity had its origins in a rag tag group of 12 Galileans, many of them simple fishermen, who dared to take on the world. It was said of them that they turned the world upside down. As a result of their witness, there was a dramatic shift in western society. By the fourth century A.D., Europe was transformed from a largely pagan culture into a distinctly Christian one. Can history repeat itself? Hopefully, yes. But it is admittedly a mammoth undertaking. However, as followers of Christ, we are called to do the unthinkable because we have a God of the impossible. Our challenge is to attempt the unattainable. In fact, we regularly ask for this when we pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Our exhilarating, if daunting, challenge today is to emulate that "noble army, men and boys, the matron and the maid" who followed "in the train" of the Son of God.

What are the marks of a Christian minority?

Firstly, a Christian creative minority conducts itself with **scrupulous integrity**. Holiness (a seemingly archaic word to express an equally archaic concept) is the badge of a Christian. Holiness is

Our particular world view has been singled out for censure.

what God is all about and what the Bible prescribes as our distinctive calling. This means bearing the image of Christ. We are to be "conformed to the likeness" of the Son of God. (Rom. 8:29)

Holiness begins with repentance. This is not just a one-off event. Repentance must become a habit and an attitude. What are we to repent of? As upwardly mobile people, our sins are not so spectacular. We are unlikely to rob a bank or cheat on our spouses. We are guilty of seemingly boring little sins, sins of the Spirit. Our transgressions are likely to be white collar misdemeanours such as avarice, hypocrisy, envy, or that peculiar peril of the professional, namely, pride. Hubris comes to us naturally, innocently perhaps. It is

There is a tendency in our culture to retreat into comfortable ghettos of personal space.

fostered by our professional credentials and fed by the esteem in which society holds us. After all, we are privy to the bodies and souls of those who voluntarily seek our help. Now pride, of course, is not a small sin—it was the weakness that felled Lucifer, the particular sin that God hates and the one from which many others develop. And it is particularly unworthy of those whose Servant Lord was "meek and lowly in heart."

Holiness, while beginning with repentance, needs to grow through intimacy with Jesus. This requires an in-depth knowledge of the Scriptures. As someone has said, we should stop reading the Bible and start studying it. It is further enhanced, and is perfected, by the

practice of the spiritual disciplines, the primary one being prayer. These essential disciplines have too often been sacrificed on the altar of our busy schedules and we neglect them at our peril.

Secondly, a Christian creative minority engages the culture—while not being of the world, we are still in it and it is a world that God loves. Engaging the culture involves being a **credible witness** to patients and to other health professionals and friends. This has to be one of the functions of our chapters.

There is a tendency in our culture to retreat into comfortable ghettos of personal space. Religion has been privatized. Furthermore, the prevailing ethos of relativism deters us from witnessing to the distinctive truths of our faith. **In fact, having lost faith in our own culture, our society accommodates and elevates other ideologies while decrying its own.** But, as Christians, we are called to reach out, not to ignore, but to love our neighbours and to share the good news of the gospel. This involves witnessing to the majority culture and to those from different faith backgrounds. Some of the latter are more comfortable discussing religious matters.

An extension of this is in the task of overseas missions. This is a focus area of CMDS. It is important that we extend Christ's love to those less fortunate than we are. In the global village that we have become, we cannot ignore the plight of those suffering in the difficult places of the world. However, I fear that our two to four week tenure in distant lands can appease our consciences and result in ignoring needs at our doorstep. The complex and dire needs of our First Nations people, the tragic plight of the drug addict, the muted cry of the child prostitute



and the despair of the homeless in our inner cities beg for our attention.

Further, our engagement needs to address the critical bio-ethical problems of the day. The evangelical retreat into Bible schools and private spheres of religion has effectively marginalized us in the public debate on these issues. We acquiesce to the mantra that these matters are to be relegated to the private sphere and have no place in the public square. On the other hand, when we do enter the fray, we realize that the contours of the debate have been circumscribed by rationalism and naturalism. By virtue of our own university education, with its profound naturalistic bias, we have become complicit partners in this world view. This is the reigning plausibility structure within which the medical profession (and this includes Christians) live and move and have our being. We are being bullied into believing that the last word on such issues as abortion has been heard and that it is a closed book. Our response ought to be, first of all, a return to revelation and Biblical orthodoxy. But we need to go further by developing, understanding and promoting a careful intellectual and, dare I say, philo-

sophical answer to these dilemmas. Thus equipped, we can and must challenge the prevailing views championed by the academy, the media, popular culture and government.

Another aspect, and a crucial one at that, of engaging the culture is to **demonstrate the love of Christ**. This entails not just random acts of kindness but genuine deeds of agape love, both spontaneous and intentional. A commendable example that has direct relevance to healthcare providers is recorded in Rodney Stark's book, "The Rise of Christianity." He documents the fact that when small pox and measles ran rampant in the Europe of the early centuries of the Common Era, the wealthy and the elite (including Galen, the father of modern medicine) fled the disease infested cities of the Roman Empire to the safety of the countryside. **Christians, though, in the very face of death, stayed and cared not only for their own, but for the stranger.** Many of these hapless victims were nursed back to health and life. Pagans, experiencing firsthand the unselfish love of the Christian community, were attracted to Christ and the church grew. What of today? In the cold, sterile, depersonalized and technologically advanced healthcare system, we have a singular opportunity to inject doses of civility, compassion and mercy. The suffering and the sick need Christ's healing touch mediated through His servants.

A realistic obstacle to all of this is the busy life of the average practitioner. We find more and more demands placed on us. I have no easy solution to this dilemma, except to say that we need to step back, set boundaries, establish priorities and ask for divine guidance in helping us engage our culture creatively and compassion-

ately. Are there some activities we can safely shed?

Thirdly, a Christian minority harnesses the power of **corporate endeavour**. The temptation of our individualistic culture is, as Frank Sinatra crooned, to "do it my way." Many of us suffer from the Lone Ranger syndrome. We need to rediscover the gift of the corporate body that we are—the church of Jesus Christ. We have different gifts which we need to pool and then work collaboratively to be a blessing—on a local level, through our chapters, and at a national and international level through co-operation with like minded organizations.

Finally, a creative Christian minority is **familiar with the God of miracles**. Beholden as we are to the Enlightenment, we have been blinded to the supernatural dimension of the faith. Christianity is adjudged to be just another "ho hum" religion in the market place of ideas. The plain reading of the biblical text, however, should make it clear that God is a God of miracles. Signs and wonders leap out at us from every page of the gospels and the book of Acts. The early church demonstrated the power of the Spirit by miraculous healings and deliverances. We ought to be a "*naturally supernatural*" people. How do we, trained as we are, to be down to earth rationalists and pragmatists, access God's storehouse of power? This is an area of our discipleship that is strangely foreign to many of us and obviously needs exploration that is beyond the capacity of this essay. Perhaps we should start with prayer, our most neglected resource. Prayer unleashes the **uncommon grace of God**.

We began with a consideration of the times in which we live. There is

one aspect to this theme that has deliberately been left unsaid until now but it is one that needs special emphasis. Jesus, at the beginning of His ministry, stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth and declared that the promise of Isaiah regarding the year of the favour of the Lord was fulfilled in their day. (*Luke 4:18-21*). From that day to this, we are in the time of the uncommon grace of God—the day of God's favour. The gift of salvation, in all its multi-faceted glory, has been lavished on us, in the person of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of heaven has been inaugurated. This powerful concept and reality is the dominant aspect of the times we are in. As the truth of this

awareness grips us, the negative aspects that I noted at the beginning of this essay, namely those of fear, confusion and moral decline will essentially be neutralized. Rather, this knowledge should encourage us to avail of the benefits accruing from the favourable features of our times—those of unfettered peace, unprecedented prosperity and exceptional opportunities. As Paul admonishes us, may we "*buy up the opportunities*" even though the days are evil (*Eph. 5:18*). As we prayerfully seek God and engage the culture we will be able to see the Kingdom of God advance in our world. This time of uncommon grace provides us with an unfading hope, bringing us into the sphere of the abiding love of an unfailing God in order to achieve His enduring purposes. As Christians engaged in the care of the sick and suffering, this is our distinctive challenge—to be a creative, compassionate Christ-like minority in a world starved for love and groping for answers. *f*

Christianity is adjudged to be just another "ho hum" religion in the market place of ideas.



Ambassadors and the New Testament

More than just
representatives

by Dan Hardock

All that we say and do should not be derived from the values and morals of this world, but rather from the One we represent.

When the Bible declares that “*you are ambassadors,*” what does this actually mean for the individual Christian? How has this passage been historically understood by the church?

The role of
ambassador,
once played
by the prophets
and Christ
Himself, has now
become ours.

Despite the fact that it is a popular theme among contemporary Christians, the New Testament only uses the word translated as “*ambassador*” twice—in 2 Cor. 5:20 “*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.*” and in Eph. 6:20 “*Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.*”

In both cases it is from the apostle Paul's hand. As a result, it is very hard (if not impossible) to do a purely internal comparison of NT literature to get a precise meaning of the term. Paul's statement of “*As God's fellow workers*” (2 Cor. 6:1) gives a clue as to the ambassadorial role that he is implying, but it is not much to go on. Essentially, like Paul, we have a message to deliver, although being God's “*fellows*” shows a remarkable degree of collegiality.

Dan Hardock is a long-time member of CMDS, past associate staff coordinator and campus leader at the University of Calgary.

“Ambassador” in Greek

Although the word translated as “*ambassador*” in English is not a common NT word, the Greek word does have some fascinating connections from which we can learn.

The word “*ambassador*” appears twice in the New Testament: *πρσβενομεν*—“*we are ambassadors*” (first person plural) that is used to address the Corinthians to whom Paul is writing, and *πρεσβευω*—“*I am an ambassador*” (first person singular) which Paul uses to refer to himself. This word, in some forms (and contexts), can be used to refer to an ambassador, but it also has the same root as the words that are often translated as “*elder,*” “*presbyter*” and is related to the word for “*priest.*” In this sense, the Greek “*πρεσβευω*” can refer to an ambassador but also someone who is older, or a person who is of high rank such as a city administrator.

Historical/Cultural Context

In order to get an idea as to what Paul meant by “*we are ambassadors*” we must turn to contemporary literature for comparison. A good source can be found in a passage in Josephus' work *The Jewish Wars* written around 75 AD. A major earthquake has devastated Israel, and its enemies have moved to take advantage. Herod (later “*Herod the Great*”) as Israel's protector, addresses the people in order to rally them against this new enemy's threat:

“...they have barbarously murdered our ambassadors, contrary to the common law of mankind; and they have destroyed so many, as if they esteemed them sacrifices for God....”

Of interest here, is that Herod associates harm to ambassadors as not only “*contrary to the common law of mankind*” but also as an affront to God Himself. The blood

of the ambassadors “cry out,” so to speak, for justice, as they have been treated inappropriately. Representing the nation which places itself under Yahweh, the killing of its ambassadors represents an attack not only on its leadership but its God as well. In this sense, an ambassador is more than just a representative. They are also viewed as being the person or authority in proxy of that leadership. To kill the ambassador is to symbolically kill the leader of the country represented.

Paul's “Ambassador” Theme in the Early Church

Given that what appears above was the general cultural assumption concerning ambassadors, what did the early church think when it viewed Christians being called ambassadors?

Because the theme only appears twice, it is not surprising that the Church Fathers (the theologians of the early church period) did not make much use of the term. Nevertheless, there are mentions of Paul's use of it especially among those like Augustine whose commentaries on the full text of various Biblical books have survived. Two theologians in particular who picked up Paul's ambassador theme are Origen of Alexandria (185–254 AD) and John Chrysostom (347–407 AD).

Origen of Alexandria

Origen of Alexandria is probably best remembered as being condemned as a heretic posthumously, as a result of what some of his followers did with his writings. Despite that, most theologians would point to him as being instrumental in early doctrinal formation of the Trinity. His use of the term “ambassador” appears in his massive apologetical work called “Against Celsus” named for a Platonic philosopher who had argued and written against the Christian faith during Origen's lifetime.

“We acknowledge...that we do desire to instruct all men in the word of God, so as to give to young men the exhortations which are appropriate to them, and to show to slaves how they may recover freedom of thought, and be ennobled by the word. And those amongst us who are the ambassadors of Christianity sufficiently declare that they are debtors to Greeks and Barbarians, to wise men and fools...”



In this sense, the role of the Christian ambassador is to declare the Gospel to all persons, regardless of social status, and to dispel ignorance. Later, in “Against Celsus,” Origen argues that “*the words of those who at the first assumed the office of (Christian) ambassadors, and who gave their labours to rear up the Churches of God...were accompanied with a persuasive power, though not like that found among those who profess the philosophy of Plato, or of any other merely human philosopher, which possesses no other qualities than those of human nature.*” For Origen, the power and authority to be Christian ambassadors comes directly from Christ.

Origen thought that Christians should not recognize any authority outside of their own nation—that being the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, we are to resist participating in all activities or customs that would compromise our positions as ambassadors. We should not bow down to authorities who would have us act contrary to the Kingdom we represent.

John Chrysostom

If Origen was known for his allegorizing tendencies when it came to Scripture, John Chrysostom, living nearly 200 years later, was known for his relatively literal interpretation of the Holy Writ and his excellence as an exegetical preacher. Many of his sermons have survived (referred to as “Homilies”) and cover the majority of Paul's writings. Interestingly, Paul's theme of “ambassador” appears many times in Chrysostom's writings. Applying the ambassador theme to the motif of Jesus' parable of the Tenants, Chrysostom makes this observation concerning God's love in one of his sermons on Romans:

“After all this, we killed the Prophets, we stoned them, we did them other cruel wrongs without number. What

Paul's words were not to specific individuals or classes of people, but are inclusive of all who follow Christ.





then? In their place, He sent no longer Prophets, no longer Angels, no longer Patriarchs, but the Son Himself. He too was killed when He had come, and yet not even then did He quench His love, but kindled it even more, and keeps on beseeching us, even after His own Son was killed, and entreating us, and doing all things to turn us unto Himself. And Paul cries aloud, saying, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: be ye reconciled to God.'"

In this sense, the role of the ambassador, once played by the prophets and Christ Himself, has now become ours.

Later Developments: Church and State

As time moved on and the ancient world disintegrated into innumerable factions, the church became the one unifying factor in the midst of the political chaos. As we move into the medieval period, the theme of ambassador appears a few times, but where it does, it almost always refers to the church and its clergy. This is partly due to the fact that all persons in a Christian society were considered Christians and not in need of an "ambassador." The church was involved in innumerable embassies to other countries, which were thought of as not only political in nature, but spiritual as well.

Later, as the Protestant Reformation (circa 1500) started to emphasise the importance of the individual believer, the idea that Paul's words applied to all who follow Christ became an accepted understanding. In many ways, this is a natural outflow of Martin Luther's concept of the "priesthood of all believers." John Calvin (died 1564 AD), showing a shift in the medieval attitude, wrote concerning 2 Cor. 5:20: "Any other person, it is true, might also be a witness to us of the grace of God, but Paul teaches that this office is specially entrusted to ministers." Later, preachers such as John Wesley and George Whitfield (1700s AD) assume that being an ambassador applies to all followers of Christ.

Summing Up: What are we called to?

So what are we to make of all this? Firstly, it needs to be understood that Paul's words were not to specific individuals or classes of people, but are inclusive of all

who follow Christ. Designated as such, we should not recognize any authority as being higher than the Kingdom from which we have been sent.

It also means, by implication, that we are in a foreign land and that we are not the citizens of the place where we find ourselves. Our citizenship is of the place we represent—the Kingdom of God.

We are literally only the messenger for someone else.

But most importantly, we are Christ's representatives to the world. We are literally Christ's presence to those around us. When we speak of spiritual matters, it is not our own point of view that we represent, but rather the point of view of Christ. When we are opposed, it is not as ambassadors that we are being opposed, but rather the country and leader that we represent is being opposed. We are literally only the messenger for someone else.

In light of all these things, how then should we live?

I think the answer to the above is obvious: We should live worthy of the calling of ambassadors. *In this sense, all that we say and do should not be derived from the values and morals of this world, but rather from the One we represent.* There is no division between professional and personal life in this respect. Furthermore, we need to be aware that we do represent Christ to others in His absence. As His ambassadors, we are His hands, His means of comforting, His love personified and His way of communicating that the state of war that existed between *humanity* and God, can come to an end. We are the ambassadors of God's peace and love for all humanity.

There will be a day when the King will come to represent Himself to the world. On that day, every knee shall bow, and every tongue will confess, that Jesus is Lord. Some will do so with glad rejoicing while others with grim realization. In the meantime, as ambassadors of the King, we have some diplomatic work to do. *f*

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1. It is, in this sense, the now archaic English term "Elders of the City" to refer to city councillors or "The Fathers of Confederation" do not so much denote age but rather authority or position.
 2. Josephus, Jewish Wars 1:19:4
 3. Origen, Against Celsus, Book II, Chapter 54
 4. Ibid, Chapter 68
 5. Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-19
 6. John Chrysostom, On Romans, Homily 5
 7. John Calvin, Commentary On 2 Cor. 5:18-21

Focus on Medical Students

Coming alongside our practitioners of the future



by Michelle Korvemaker

Medical and dentistry schools represent a new adventure for those who are aspiring to become the physicians and the dentists of the future.

CMDS Canada recognizes that the students of today represent the practitioners of the future. Dr. John Patrick often speaks about how Christian medical students lose their faith during medical school, if they haven't already lost it during their undergraduate studies. One of the roles of the CMDS student group is to provide support and encouragement for Christian students in medical and dentistry school. Some of the medical schools in Canada have a CMDS

associate staff member who helps to organize the group. In some medical schools, there are staff physicians, such as Drs. Robin and Margaret Cottle at the University of British Columbia, and Dr. Sheila Harding and her husband Terry, at the University of Saskatchewan, who open their homes regularly to the Christian students.

Below, you will find reports, from some of the *CMDS associate staff on campuses* and *CMDS student leaders*, giving us the highlights of their groups. **Many thanks to everyone who contributed.**

For the next issue of *focus* magazine, it would be great if we could get official reports from:

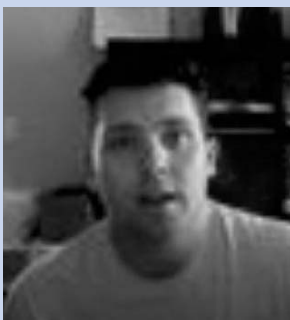
- UBC
- U of Northern BC

- U of Alberta
- U of Saskatchewan
- U of Manitoba
- Laval U
- McGill
- Memorial U
- Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM)
- Université de Montréal
- Université de Sherbrooke

Please send your report to:
studentmin@cmdscanada.org

Michelle Korvemaker is a family physician/emergency physician locum. She has been a member of CMDS since 1997. Her home is in Woodstock, ON.

University of Calgary Calgary, AB



Every Thursday, from 12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m., Dan Malin meets with five to seven CMDS students for Bible study. This past year, they have been looking at “*Heroes of the Faith*.” Some of the people they have

examined include, David, Hannah, Daniel, Barnabas, and Philip. Dan has been impressed with the faith of these students. He is even more impressed with their willingness to reach out to their peers and be lights in

Student Issues

the darkness. Besides a monthly "Dinner with the Doc(s)," one initiative, that CDMS at the U of Calgary will be starting, is a worship and prayer time. This will be

a bi-weekly event to *focus their attention on God and what God would have them do at the medical school.*

Darren Malin
CMDS Associate Staff

University of
Western Ontario
London, ON



McMaster University
Hamilton, ON



At the McMaster Medical School, students are invited each month to the home of Dr. John Harvey. His wife Mary cooks a fabulous meal and about 10 students and residents join the Harveys and CMDS associate staff, Don Corry, for a meal. Later, doctors join the gang for dessert and they discuss various issues that affect medical students. It has been encouraging to see students from every year, plus residents, regularly attend this function. At other times, Don meets with students

individually and in small groups. This year, they have looked at NOOMA videos and discussed Christian maturity. NOOMA is a series of short films, produced by Flannel, promoting spiritual perspectives on individual life experiences (*taken from Wikipedia*). Also, in some of the one-to-one times with Don, they have focused on talking about relationships and missions. There is a high percentage of McMaster medical students who are currently planning electives in a mission context or who have long-term goals to work overseas. John and Mary Harvey model missions as they conduct eye clinics in places like Columbia, Nepal and Burma several times a year.

There is a healthy interaction between the doctors and the students within the Hamilton CMDS chapter.

Don Corry
CMDS Associate Staff

The year started with an overwhelming response to the invitation to attend their kick-off steak BBQ. Over 100 students replied saying they were coming and even with a change of location, due to the need for a larger venue, plus rain on the day of the event, 90+ attended, including local physicians and dentists.

Their fall retreat seemed more like a summer retreat with the amazing warm weather that inspired a few people to take a dip in Lake Huron. Dr. Lori Teeple shared from the Bible and her own life in a way that was both thought-provoking and challenging. The Monday night weekly meetings, this year, again included worship, prayer, devotionals, testimonials and talks given by doctors as well as others who shared their experiences, lives and expertise. A few of the

highlights included a look at science and faith by Professor Dale Laird, a missions night focused on looking at the difference between aid and development, and a couple of nights hearing from women who have had abortions and hearing about

studies on women's health after an abortion. Another thing that happened on Monday nights that should also be mentioned was the viewing of several Alpha videos. They had decided to do this because of the diversity of Christian backgrounds that students



University of Toronto Toronto, ON



The University of Toronto's Medical Christian Fellowship (MCF) held a variety of events this past year. They held a MCF Welcome BBQ during the second week of medical school, to invite medical students to enjoy some food, to get to know MCF leaders and to learn what MCF was about. They also heard from a Christian physician who gave a short talk. They held a retreat in September. Their speaker was Dr. John Patrick and

their host was Dr. Michael Bentley Taylor. It was a great success! During the year, they held weekly lunch meetings. These meetings were comprised of praise and worship, prayer, either a talk from a guest physician, MCF member or studying material from the "Saline Solution." Physicians were contacted using the CMDS website. They also operated a Mentorship program where students were matched to physician mentors based on gender, specialization and location. Monthly evening dinner meetings were held at local physicians' homes. Dinner was provided for students. They also spent time in prayer and had a devotional often given by the host physician. The student leaders would also meet to pray and plan for all the activities. *They testified that God has been so faithful!*

*Student CMDS Leaders
(Dr. Peter Agwa
CMDS Associate Staff)*

were coming from and the need to address foundational issues. Showing the videos led to some great sharing and discussions. In particular, after watching the video "Does God Heal Today?" the students had the opportunity to hear from one of their professors on how he came to faith through the Alpha course several years earlier, and a couple of forth year students shared about their opportunities to minister to their patients during med school. Much more could be shared about the making of exam care packages, our annual Christmas party, small groups, etc., but let's just say that *there were many opportunities, this year, to build community and encourage relationships that may last a lifetime.*

*Kenji Saito
CMDS Associate Staff*

Student Issues

Queen's University
Kingston, ON



At Queen's, the CMDS group has been continuing their traditional "Dinners with Docs." They invited several doctors to speak on issues of faith and their own medical experience, in order that students could hear firsthand about how doctors integrate their belief and practice. Some of the Kingston CMDS students meet weekly for Bible study with Susan Norman, the CMDS associate staff member at Queens. Last fall, they used a guide based on "Run with the Horses" by Eugene Petersen, which looks at the life of Jeremiah. Since January, they have been studying the gospel of Mark, taking turns leading from a study guide. Jesus has "challenged them to enter more fully into his upside down kingdom, where the blind have deep spiritual sight and the hungry are fed."

In November, the CMDS students hosted a panel

discussion for the public—"Death, Faith, & Medicine: An Inter-Religious Panel on Death and Dying." They asked representatives from various religious groups to answer questions about what they would like healthcare professionals to know when caring for members of their faith communities who are nearing death. Their hope was that they would be providing useful information, but also that the Christian perspective would be clearly articulated in the discussion. That hope was fully realized! Over 80 people—students, professionals and interested members of the Kingston community, came together to listen to a fascinating discussion. Everyone who participated was respectful, thoughtful, and informative. The six panelists included a

Hindu, a Jew, a Muslim, a Buddhist, and two Christians—one from the Protestant and another from the Catholic tradition. All presented their beliefs and concerns and answered questions from the audience. It was really a remarkable evening, and the CMDS group was repeatedly thanked for presenting it.

Three medical students went to the student leadership conference and came back with a broader vision of what CMDS can be at Queen's.

Susan and the CMDS students are praying and planning for next year, excited about the possibilities as they put their trust in God's love and care.

Susan Norman
CMDS Associate Staff

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Will you help us? *Ask for your Airmiles Card today!* Contact Marilyn at: office@cmdscanada.org

A big **THANK YOU** to those who are using their cards! We are well on our way to our first flight!



University of Ottawa Ottawa, ON



Students in Ottawa gathered for prayer and Bible studies on Monday afternoon and regular potluck supper community nights where they looked at and discussed various videos, including the NOOMA series on discipleship. These were led by their CMDS leader Pam Carlson. Louise Plante was the CMDS student social event coordinator, which involved organizing activities to get the CMDS members to bond as a group. At the beginning of the year, they held a BBQ which gave them a chance to introduce themselves to the new students as well as the older members of the group. Information about CMDS was given and upcoming events were advertised. Other events included rock-climbing, a Christmas potluck and a sugar-shack event. Finally, they ended the year with a BBQ party.

As an outreach to the campus, they held a

speaker series which was led by Dawid Martniak. The following is the list of speakers and topics we had for the series:

- (1) Dr. John Patrick: *Why Secularism is a Religion Too but not Many Patients Believe It.*
- (2) Dr. Dan Reilly: *Ethical Decision Making.*
- (3) Amanda Li: *Reflection of Medical and Mission Work in Eastern Asia.*
- (4) Dr. Karen Coulibaly: *Medical Missions—from the Heart of Africa.*

Students came from within and from outside of CMDS.

Their goal was to offer a Christian perspective on medical issues and practice.

The speakers were excellent and a good discussion period followed.



Melanie Lecavalier was the Community Outreach Coordinator which involved recruiting CMDS students to volunteer in community activities. The CMDS students volunteered some evenings at “A Place To Go,” a downtown drop-in centre for the homeless. As volunteers, CMDS students helped prepare and serve meals to the clientele. They also participated in an evening of singing at the Peter D. Clark Retirement Home.

*Lorne Likely
CMDS Associate Staff
and the students*



Dr. John Patrick

Student Issues

Dalhousie Medical School Halifax, NS



The Dalhousie CMDS group started the year with a BBQ during the first week of September. They had a good turnout of first and second year students and had a chance to talk about what they were planning for the year. There was significant interest in starting a mentorship program between Christian doctors and students, so they launched this new initiative. They invited CMDS doctors to be mentors and paired them with CMDS students. It was very beneficial and something they plan to continue each year. From September to mid-April, they met weekly to pray and discuss a passage of Scripture. *This meeting was a good connecting point and a time in the week that they knew they were going to be focused on God in the Med school.* It was also a place where they could invite others from the Med school to join them. At their last

meeting for the year, they all went out to dinner together. All year they had wanted to sponsor a talk in the Med school to raise their profile and contribute something to the school but nothing seemed to materialize. During this dinner, the topic came up and, Matt, one of their first year students, took on the task of finding a speaker. When this report was written, Matt had found Dr. Johnath Trites who was to come in May to speak. Matt described him as someone who the students

really like and who is “*really funny, really interesting and a strong Christian.*”

Another highlight for one of their students was the Student Leadership Conference in Guelph. *Every year, students come back with a larger view of what CMDS is and how helpful it can be to keeping faith vibrant throughout the university years and beyond.* This was certainly the case again.

Ron Abarbanel, CMDS
Associate Staff *f*

One of the dreams of CMDS Canada is to have a student group as well as a CMDS associate staff member, at every university in Canada. As the financial support for this student ministry grows, the hope is that this dream will be realized.

Please pray for Christian medical/dental students and residents regularly!

Pray for all students and especially for the CMDS students who started residency on July 1st, and also for those who are to start their first year of medical school at the end of the summer.

Michelle Korvemaker

Attention Students

We need a name...

for the section of *focus* which will be about you. Please send name suggestions to: studentmin@cmdscanada.org



You'll be Changed Forever

by Roger Gingerich

My wife and I recently returned from a visit to Africa. We went to visit our CMDS colleague, Dr. Chris Brooks, and see the ministry he has begun called *Lifeline Malawi*.

Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's most densely populated and least developed countries. It is in the centre of Africa and is a small country, roughly twice the size of Nova Scotia. It is densely populated with 14 million people; this is about one half the population of Canada. The infant mortality rate is 92 deaths per 1000 live births (in Canada it is 4.3/1000). Those that do live to adulthood have a life expectancy of 42 years. The HIV prevalence rate is officially at 14%, although many suspect it is closer to 30%.

What a pleasure it was to land in Lilongwe, the Capital of Malawi. We had spent a few days in the chaotic city of Nairobi, and the contrast between these two cities was dramatic. Nairobi was full of people, cars, dust and unrest. Lilongwe although poor and full of people, was peaceful and relatively spacious. We were met promptly by our host and spent time touring the city, the ministry offices and listening to the dreams of *Lifeline Malawi*.

Lifeline Malawi (LM)

is a charitable non-profit Canadian organization with offices in Calgary and Lilongwe Malawi. They are committed to providing healthcare for the underprivileged Malawi Nationals in resource poor areas of the country. **Beginning with a small mobile clinic in 1998, it has evolved into a large healthcare delivery system** that operates in two locations in the country. They are motivated by the love of Christ.

A Unique Healthcare Ministry

Medical missions has historically relied on North American doctors and dentists to provide healthcare in the developing world. This practice is proving unsustainable. Thus this ministry is also having difficulty

recruiting North American doctors and dentists to deliver healthcare. Their solution is to employ Malawi Healthcare Officers to provide primary healthcare. These are Malawi nationals who have very basic skills to diagnose and treat the common conditions seen in rural Malawi.

How Can You Help Our CMDS Colleague?

LM is looking for physicians and dentists to give from two to four weeks, providing training to the local Healthcare Officers. They need specialists and primary care professionals to provide basic healthcare training. You need to be able to provide your own finances for the trip, but it will be a trip you will remember for a lifetime.

Just before you leave Malawi, make sure you visit the Liwondi National Park and go to sleep listening to the snorting hippopotamus. There you will see some of the beautiful wildlife of Africa. **Truly a trip to remember!**

If you would like to have Dr. Brooks speak to your chapter, or would like further information on working in Malawi, please contact Barbara Mikus at lifeln@telus.net



from the desk

from the desk of the Executive Director

I am a member of the Christian Medical and Dental Society!



As I have travelled across our country, I have been privileged to meet people having vastly different backgrounds who make up the CMDS community. And sometimes I have to pinch myself! No, I do not have ICD-10 X84 (Intentional Self-harm by unintentional means). Rather, I am amazed at the calibre of people who make up the CMDS membership! And I get to meet these people!

Prior to taking this position of Executive Director, my wife and I would listen to Dr. John Patrick's tape series, while travelling in our car. He has a lecture entitled "Why There Are No Hittites on the Streets of New York." (This is available on our website). We were greatly blessed by his words and wondered what it would be like to sit and talk with him. Well, we have had the chance! As most of you

know, John is no different than the rest of us (*sorry Sally (Mrs. Patrick), you don't get to respond! ☺.*) It doesn't matter what position in life we have, we are still impressed when we meet others who have achieved significant goals.

Thus, when I look over our membership and see so many of our members in positions of influence, I feel just a bit of pride in being associated with this organization! For example, there is Dr. Robert Stephens, who was the Executive Director from 1985–1998. He is a Member of the Order of Canada. As I understand this award, the criteria were met mainly during his tenure as CMDS Director. In my own province of Manitoba, Dr. Allen Ronald, who is an Officer of the Order of Canada, is currently one of 50 people being considered for the honour of the Greatest Manitoban.

There are so many others who carry influence and are members of CMDS. For example, Dr. John Harvey leads the Hamilton CMDS Chapter and is Professor and Head of the Division of Ophthalmology, Department of Surgery at McMaster University. Dr. Margaret Cottle is a sought after speaker and Palliative Care Physician in Vancouver who has addressed Parliament. Dr. John Palmer has been both a President and

Executive Director of CMDS. He is also sought after as a conference speaker in Canada and the US. Currently, he is Director of the BC Dental Profession Advisory Program Counselling Services. He also runs our Young Wounded Healer program.

Recently, I heard Dr. Sheila Harding, Associate Dean of Medicine in Saskatoon, challenge her professional audience to be the first to volunteer for positions in the medical/dental societies and admissions committees. Her proposal has caused me to consider what our world would look like, if CMDS members occupied a significant proportion of the positions in the halls of medicine and dentistry. Imagine, Christians serving on the committees that decide the future of our professions! Christians excelling in academic research! Christians being honoured in Parliament for their service! Christians living lives that shout out one's faith, not using words but using actions!



I'm proud to be associated with CMDS!

Dr. Roger Gingerich
Executive Director, CMDS
ed@cmdscanada.org *f*

CMDS National Conference 2009



Building a Legacy



April 30–May 3, 2009
Spiritual Retreat
White Rock, BC

*“He has showed you,
O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD
require of you? To act justly
and to love mercy and to
walk humbly with your
God.” (Micah. 6:8)*

To register for this conference,
call the *CMDS National Office*
at 1-888-256-8653 or register
on-line, after Oct. 15 '08 at:
www.cmdscanada.org

Speaker:
Dr. Dave Currie Ph.D
National Director
FamilyLife Canada
www.familylifecanada.org

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