

Volunteering or Voluntourism?



In Albert Camus' novel, "The Fall", the protagonist, Clamence, is a fine, upstanding lawyer who specialises in "widow and orphan" cases. He is a generous man who enjoys helping unfortunate people. However, his life reaches a crisis when one day he helps a blind man cross the road and afterwards doffs his hat to the man. Since the blind man obviously cannot see this acknowledgement, Clamence asks himself, "To whom was it addressed" and realises that his life has been lived in hypocrisy. His motives for good works were driven by a desire to improve his own reputation.

When I was a dental student, a friend of mine who was a lapsed Catholic, used this story to explain why Christians, and myself in particular, were interested in volunteering and working overseas. Jesus himself warned us that our motives for "acts of righteousness" may not always be pure (Matt 6:1).

Later, at a selection conference to become a Mission Partner with the Church Mission Society (CMS), we explored our reasons for wanting to work overseas. The truth is that there are many factors which motivate us, some noble and some less so. As dentists we know the pain and suffering that untreated dental disease can cause. We know the compassion our Lord has for us, we respond to the call to "love our

neighbour", but we must also realise that some of our reasons for volunteering are selfish; a sense of adventure, a desire to see the world, wanting to feel important or respected. The whole history of Western Missionary Endeavour is tied up with tremendous acts of faith and the working of the Holy Spirit but also enormous blunders and sins – colonialism and slavery. How could it be otherwise – as Camus implies, we are all subject to the effects of the Fall.

A recent article in the British Dental Journal, "*Dental volunteering – a time for reflection and a time for change*" (Holmgren and Benzián 2011) discusses the positive and negative aspects of the traditional approach to dental volunteering. I think this is a debate that Christian dentists must engage with and I recommend the article and associated leader by Stephen Hancocks in the same issue. It discusses the positive and negative aspects of the traditional approach to dental volunteering and identifies that this approach can be inappropriate, lack coverage, sustainability, evidence base and integration within the existing health care system.

This has led me to reflect on my own experience as a dental volunteer and the kinds of projects that the Christian Dental Fellowship supports. We were invited to serve by the local church and worked in partnership with its community health program. At the time, the church's infrastructure of health centres and community workers was probably more developed than the State system. CMS and many traditional missionary societies realised after the Lausanne conference of 1974 that there was a need for repentance and a change in attitude to spread the Gospel. The Lausanne Covenant (www.lausanne.org/covenant) re-affirmed the need for Christian social responsibility, "because men and women are made in the

image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited." The Christian Dental Fellowship strives to support mission that is in accordance with these principles. We need to constantly re-examine our motives as individuals and as an organisation to ensure that they are in line with those of the Gospel.

When I think back to my own experience, did we sometimes undermine the State systems? Was our work sustainable? Can the same be said for the other projects CDF supports? Actually, as I look at the range of Mission Partners and projects, although we cannot be complacent, there is a good track record of working with local agencies, of using appropriate technology and leaving behind work that can continue when the Europeans have gone home. However, I am aware that in my home church there is a growing tendency for people to "do their own thing" in mission, the traditional Mission Societies with their experience and history of partnership are struggling. We have seen a large growth in "Gap Year" volunteers. When supporting projects, there are often difficult choices to make. We do not want to dampen the enthusiasm of those who have great compassion for those who are suffering. Neither do we want to support projects that do more harm than good. These issues were debated at this year's BDA conference and are scheduled to be discussed next year. Think, pray and engage with the debate.



Peter Thornley
President

Reference: Holmgren, C. and H. Benzián (2011). "Dental volunteering - a time for reflection and a time for change." *Br Dent J* 210(11): 513-516.

How to Survive Retirement

Practicing dentistry is a high-pressured occupation; bending over the patient and working in the dark confined space of the mouth. Relief from the constant demands of the surgery is a pleasure to be looked forward to, we hope! Retirement releases us from the stresses and strains of our meticulous work and excuses us from always having to have one eye on the clock, to keep to timed appointments. My mantra to patients was often, "sorry to keep you waiting!" However, a life of leisure without professional responsibilities is not attractive to all and a gradual retirement might be advisable.

Thanksgiving



There is so much to be thankful for: for a worthwhile professional career in which we have been able to help many with their dental needs; for sustained grace for the physical and spiritual demands of the work; for the comfort of home and measure of good health to enjoy retirement; for the 'perks' of old age in the UK, such as free subscriptions, bus passes to anywhere in the country and concessionary charges to many activities; fewer expenses; adventurous holidays and time to visit grandchildren (a wit has said, "having grandchildren is God's reward for your not having killed your children!"). As Christians, a great blessing in retirement is that there is no longer the morning rush to get up and dash off in the car or catch a train to work and so there is opportunity for unhurried Quiet Time. There is time for waiting on God, meditating on his word and intercessory prayer for family, friends and

people in situations of special need. David Watson wrote "sheer busyness can squeeze out close intimacy with God."

Regrets

As we look back on our days in the surgery, inevitably there will be memories mixed with regrets where we made the wrong decision, said or acted in ways we now see as unwise. There were times when we took the easy way instead of denying ourselves and taking up the cross. We may have missed many opportunities to witness to colleagues and patients. How wonderful to know we can come humbly to the foot of the cross and know God's cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ. He forgives and chooses not to remember our sins. We are not to live in the past. As the apostle Paul wrote, "forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead." (Phil 3:13)

Home Life

There is an adjustment to make to married life, with the husband getting under the wife's feet or vice versa! It is a testing time too, with the onset of physical ailments caused maybe by our occupation; back trouble, fallen arches, and deafness due to the whine of the high speed drill! In chapter 12 of Ecclesiastes a grim picture of old age is painted '...when the grinders cease...' but reminds us to remember our Creator. John Eddison, in his book *"The Last Lap"*, sums up retirement in terms of Christ's invitation "come to me" with the three criteria: recreation in the presence of Jesus ("I will give you rest"), occupation in His service ("take my yoke upon you") and education ("learn of me"). An elderly friend kept the "L" sign after passing his driving test and stuck it to his study wall, as a reminder he was still a learner as Christ's disciple. The art of leisure is to develop the personality, widen the horizons, give increasing space to read, meditate and pray and accept gradual limitations. As Amy Carmichael said "in acceptance lies peace".

The famous prayer of the anonymous nun puts a wry smile on my face, "keep my

mind free from the recital of endless details: give me wings to get to the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others' pains but help me to endure them with patience."

Hobbies and Volunteering



Retirement is not a rosy outlook for all. Having finished an enjoyable career we have to seek another vocation. Hobbies, if we have them, may not completely satisfy. Golf, tennis and bowls are popular with many and gardening is usually amidst all our failures, but beware of too much physical exercise, small doses is advisable!

There need be no retirement in Christian discipleship. There is frequently a great demand for the services of retired members in the church; for those available during daytime, with time on their hands. Having been in charge of the business side of a practice, we should be competent to help with the church finance and transport of members around the parish is greatly appreciated by elderly folk. Voluntary work in the community is another outlet. Charity shops would have to close down if there were no retired volunteers. To offer to be baby-sitters is a great help to couples to get out together and there may be opportunities to help in a missionary society office or to go overseas for short term dental mission work. This could be hands on work in the surgery or helping therapists to learn simple dentistry.

I could not sell the practice; no-one seemed to want to work in London! I had to sell off the equipment and cope with two break-ins, in the unoccupied premises. A difficult start to my retirement! Shortly after this, Andy Patching was speaking about his work in Zambia, at a local CDF meeting. One person asked "How can we help you?" and Andy replied, "oh, I'd love someone to come out for a month and give me a break." I took this as God's call to me. Mary and I much enjoyed our visit; she helped in the mission school office and I was in Andy's well equipped mobile unit. We went away several other times in this capacity.

Moving On

With retirement there often comes a need or a want to move into smaller accommodation. Our four children had all married and left home, and we wanted to get out of London, but had to make the decision about where to move to. We settled on Cranleigh after visiting the Baptist church where a friend was assistant minister. We came to like the church and so started looking at houses and found a chalet bungalow that was ideal for us and had the space for the family to visit. It has proved very convenient for our family in Zimbabwe as it is not far from Gatwick or Heathrow. It was a wrench to leave our friends in London but we visit them and have made many new

friends in the church here (to say you can't have new friendships when you're older is untrue). We've been glad to leave behind all the noise and traffic of London and we can go for walks in the woods close by.

It is important to get involved in the community and we helped with Meals on Wheels and joined U3A classes in local history, painting and computing as well as getting immersed in church life. We've helped at the seniors meetings, joined Mission Council, led home groups and have taken services at village chapels and old people's homes. I have become interested in local radio and recorded "Thought for the Day" scripts for County Sound at Guildford. I am gradually learning the 'art of the laptop' with help from my grandchildren and am still actively involved in CDF. Having a wonderful wife means so much to me.

Retirement could be summed up in the words of the final verse of Timothy Dudley Smith's hymn, Lord for the years:

Lord, for ourselves in living power
remake us,
Self on the cross and Christ upon the throne.
Past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone

Alan Vogt

Congratulations



Congratulations to Colin Watterson and Claire Finlay on their wedding which took place on 16th July 2011 in Belfast. We wish them well for their future together.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecc 4:12

CROSSbite

A date for your diaries if you are a student / FT / young dentist:

Our next get together will be at the Christian Medical Fellowship event, entitled "Medical Mission Explored - wherever you are!" on Saturday 12th November, 9.30 - 16.30 at The Megacentre, Bernard Road, Sheffield S2 5BQ. There will be a team of speakers to encourage us, so please pop it in your diaries! Full details to follow. Hope to see as many as possible there!

Pastoral Care Scheme

Help is on hand from the CDF Mentor Group and Pastoral Care Team for a variety of problems and issues that we all face in our working lives. Often, we are so busy looking after others, we fail to look after ourselves, yet if we are stressed and tired, we may fail to give our patients the best care.

As dental professionals we understand the value of prevention yet often fail to apply it to ourselves. Good posture at work and maintaining good health and fitness now, may prevent future problems developing. It is important to take time to re-charge physically, mentally and spiritually in order to look after others the best we can. 'Do not wear yourself out to

get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint' Prov 23:4. So enjoy some guilt free relaxation, take time to rest, even treat yourself to a massage or a quiet day alone to be with the Lord and take care of yourself. This may involve seeking help, prayer support and advice from someone who has been through a similar situation.

There is a wealth of experience on hand through the CDF Pastoral Care Scheme. Please contact Anne Hallows at cdfadmin@btinternet.com. Also we can arrange for an appropriate member of the mentor group to be available to offer help and support.

Regional Day Roundups 2011

South Wales

Our regional meeting was held on 5th May at The Friars Postgraduate Centre, part of The Royal Gwent Hospital Newport. Our guest speaker was Andy Jong, the CEO of Dentaid. The evening had two objectives, firstly to meet our fellow CDF members and secondly to raise the profile of CDF & Dentaid to non-CDF members both Christian and non-Christian. To help achieve the aim of outreach, all the dentists in the area had been informed about the meeting and that attending would not only be interesting but that it would also qualify for one hour of CPD. As a result of the publicity there were between 50 and 60 people present.

A buffet meal provided an opportunity to chat, catch up with friends, meet new colleagues and introduce our dental students to members of the profession they did not know. The meeting was chaired by Stuart Gerrish, a former CDF President who briefly talked about how he wished he had met Andy when they were both in Uganda working on different projects unaware of each others presence.

Andy gave a brief history of Dentaid, from its humble beginnings in a garage in North Wales to its present position as the biggest dental NGO in the world with Raman Bedi as their current clinical director. Dentaid's vision is constantly growing and one of their new ventures is to work with the Global Dental Live initiative providing opportunities for dental students and professionals to assist in the volunteers programme.

Andy was happy to take questions which demonstrated how many members of the audience had been unaware of the scale of dental need worldwide together with the importance of the work done by Dentaid.

Brian Ritter

London North

On Saturday, 14th May four members of CDF and a non member dentist, who is currently a Baptist pastor in Leighton Buzzard and his wife met at the Giffard Park pub in Milton Keynes on 14th May, We enjoyed chatting during lunch and then walked along the canal to my house for pudding and coffee. We certainly benefitted from having time to talk, this covering a range of personal and professional issues as well as getting to know each other better.

Jonathan Longhurst

Thames Valley



You never know who you may see when you open the door on a CDF regional group day. Two of our number had previously met at a bus stop and another two had met when playing football together without realising that they were connected through CDF. This was one of the things that we chatted about on a sunny day at the beginning of June when the Thames Valley group met together in Oxford for a lunchtime barbeque. We were a mixture of dentists and a hygienist together with spouses and children. It was good to welcome a couple of new faces and to meet up with 'old' friends once again. The weather was kind to us and we were able to spend the afternoon in the garden eating, chatting and fellowshiping together. There was plenty of space for the children to run around in which hopefully meant a good night's sleep for all the families concerned!

Chris Evans

West Midlands

A number of us met on the afternoon of Saturday 21st May in the home of Ian and Lesley Knowles to hear John Clark, a Scottish CDF member from Dundee. Peter Thornley had met John and heard him speak of the experience of some Dundee Christians as they met with Muslims in that area discussing various issues of common interest. "Opening doors and building bridges". See page 8 for more on this.

In the discussion afterwards several members stressed that as we explore and build respect, seeking truth, it was important that we Christians, must stress how important Jesus and our faith in Him is to us.

Later we had a great time of fellowship over our 'bring and share' tea and continued our discussion and shared our experience of meeting Muslims, in which our Egyptian CDF member was very helpful.

Ian Knowles

London South and the South East



Members of both regions met together in Cranleigh on 9th April. Many sent apologies so we were few in number but enjoyed good fellowship and appreciated the ministry of Paul Adams, CDF member and senior minister of Banstead Baptist Church. He gave us a Bible study on Colossians 3:18-4:1 on relationships: husbands and wives; parents and children (fathers, don't wind up your children so much that they give up trying to please you) and masters and servants. "Submit" is not authoritarian but voluntarily, putting yourself 'under' in order to glorify God. He illustrated this from his early days in dental

practice and pointed out that *all* our life - at home, surgery and relaxation should be led as unto the Lord, pleasing Him.

Paul reminded us that the Lord sees when we try to "cut corners", at work, for example not removing all the caries in a cavity and covering it with the filling. God also sees into our hearts and sees the 'decay' we try to hide.

Paul went on to tell us about the Beacon Light Trust, where scripture texts with his explanatory notes are sent out daily on the internet. There has been phenomenal growth worldwide of those who benefit by it. After a 'bring and share' lunch, we had a time of prayer for CDF activities.

Alan Vogt

Avon & Gloucestershire



Nine of us, including two toddlers met at Seth & Susan's home on a lovely sunny Saturday afternoon. We enjoyed lunch in the garden and caught up on each other's news while taking in the glorious April sunshine. Paul Brind shared with us on their upcoming mission with Bridge2Aid in Tanzania through a PowerPoint presentation. We also learnt more about the dental volunteer programme by Bridge2Aid. The toddlers were kept

fascinated with tadpoles from the pond and enjoyed running around in the garden. We ended the afternoon with a prayer for the Brinds. Praise the Lord for a fabulous day!

Angeline Nga

East Anglia



Once again dentists, both practising and retired, together with their spouses, experienced the warm hospitality of Clive and Jan Sprawson at their home in Hilton, Cambridgeshire. Whilst enjoying the sunshine and fellowship, we were able to build upon friendships made over the years and share encouragement from each other in our Christian life as we seek to be Christ amongst those we work and live alongside. It was particularly interesting to hear of how God had guided Les Manderson in both his professional and ordained roles over the years. Clive enlightened us about the complexities of his church's community project of successfully taking over the role of providing a local post office service to the community.

After a wonderful shared lunch, we then visited the post office situated within the church hall and saw the latest development of a coffee shop which was currently being used for a marriage preparation course. It was an excellent

example of the church reaching out to be of service to the local community.

We concluded the day, as has become our custom, with a slice of cake and tea, with Barrie Lawrence extolling the benefits of his new diet! It was another truly enjoyable day providing both nourishment and encouragement.

Barbara Taylor

Northern Ireland



On Saturday 14th May, we enjoyed cinnamon scones, pancakes, eggs and much more for breakfast in Common Grounds Cafe in Belfast. The menu is Fairtrade and all profits go towards community projects in developing countries. Nineteen people came, including four VTs, a retired dentist, nurse and family so it was good to chat together and see lots of new faces.

Ivan Steen - minister, dentist and international hockey player - spoke about faith at work and our identity as dentists. We learnt lessons from Peter's denial and need to see ourselves and others through God's eyes with our primary identity as Christians. Everyone was challenged and inspired about whole-life discipleship and the opportunities we have within the world of dentistry.

Helen Douglas

Can you get 'Off the Fence'?

Off The Fence Trust is a Brighton based registered charity founded on a Christian vision and driven by Christian values. The charity provides vital services to the most vulnerable and marginalised in the community. The charity works in the three areas of street homelessness, women facing times of crisis and schools and youth.

The charity's 'Project Antifreeze' aims to serve the many needs of those who are homeless in the Brighton and Hove area. The aim is to

keep the homeless alive by engaging with them, assessing their needs and offering holistic support.

Outreach teams work on the streets of Brighton and Hove, offering hot drinks, sandwiches, toiletries, sleeping bags and most importantly, time to sit and listen. These volunteers will then invite the homeless to the drop-in centre, which can then lead to the referral centre where the multiple needs of the clients are assessed

with the intention of linking them to relevant services. Part of the referral service is access to medical care.

Many clients have dental needs but, as yet, there is no dental care link. If any dentist in the Brighton and Hove area feels that he/she could/would like to help the homeless of Brighton and Hove by offering to work with Off The Fence, please contact them at **01273 733566** or **office@offthefence.org.uk**



A Profile of this Year's Conference Speaker David Hewitt



David is minister of Chudleigh Baptist Church in Devon. After many years as part of East Dartmoor Baptist Church, Chudleigh became an independent church at the beginning of 2010 when David became its minister. Starting from scratch has proved to be an exciting opportunity to ask basic questions about what a local church is all about.

Before this, he was a Regional Minister with the South West Baptist Association with particular responsibility for caring for and mentoring new ministers in the area. In this role he was able to draw on many years'

experience in pastoral ministry, firstly as a youth minister at Upton Vale Baptist Church in Torquay, followed by 12 years as Minister of Counterslip Baptist Church in Bristol and then 14 years in Andover in Hampshire.

David's passion is to help Christians to discover what it means to be authentic followers of Jesus Christ in today's world and help the church to be a community that models the life of the Kingdom of God. The word 'Christian' is found just three times in the New Testament, whereas the word 'disciple' comes around 270 times. The New Testament is a book written by disciples, for disciples and about discipleship, but what does a 21st century disciple look like? How does this express itself in our life together and in the world?

Having been in Christian ministry (and married!) for 37 years he has been through tough and testing times as well as times of joy and blessing. All these experiences help shape his ministry today. One of his favourite verses is, 'He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion' Phil 1:6. It is important to finish well.

He has written a book on evangelism and the local church called '*The Power of Love*' and a commentary on Mark's Gospel. He also contributed a chapter to a recent handbook for church leaders' called '*How to be a Creative Church Leader*'.

He is married to Katheryn and they have three children and three grandchildren. He lists among his interests, cricket (watching and playing, until recently), music (listening and playing) and surfing (trying and failing!).

Family Conference

Hothorpe Hall, Leicestershire

Friday 30th September to
Sunday 2nd October 2011

"Staying the Course"
David Hewitt, Devon

Clinical Speaker: Tony Giles,
Mercy Ships

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It has been said that the only constant thing in life is change. There is an ebb and flow to life. Life is not static, even though sometimes we wish it were.

It is that time of year when, for our students, there is a drawing to a close and the prospect of change ahead. Whether that means the end of this academic year and the prospect of moving one step closer to that coveted BDS degree certificate; or, with certificate in hand, the prospect of a Foundation Training position beginning in a matter of days. CDF as a whole seems to be experiencing a period where change might be necessary, a pattern that we can see repeated across our nation and the world. Even if your life seems to be predictable and stable right now, sooner or later you will have to face change.

Some people thrive on change and seek it out, but others dread change and struggle through it when it comes. Most people want enough change to keep life interesting, but not so much as to make them uneasy.

The British poet W E Henley wrote "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul". I do not want to minimize the importance of learning to overcome obstacles, but the reality is that so much in our lives is beyond our control. Sometimes our response to change is based on our desire to have control and power over our own lives. Are these in fact common idols that we can cling to? In "*The nature and destiny of Man*" Neibuhr argues "man is insecure, and...he seeks to overcome his insecurity by a will-to-power...He pretends he is not limited". The first step in dealing with change is to recognise that God is in control and that allowing Him to be, is far better than trying to take the reigns.

The Bible is very clear that our point of stability is in God himself.

I the Lord do not change... (Malachi 3:6)

He will never leave you or forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:6)

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8)

I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13)

To successfully adapt to change, we must keep our commitment to God up-to-date. He alone is constant in our ever-changing world. As we read in Isaiah 41:10 "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

It is my prayer that we will all be able to hand the ebb and flow over to God, and trust Him through the changes to be our Rock.

Becky Perren
Student Co-ordinator

Douglas Munns 1919 – 2011



Douglas was born in August 1919 at Mortlake on the banks of the River Thames. His family had a

long association with the river, with his father coming from a long line of watermen and lightermen who earned their living from the barge traffic. The water remained important to Douglas throughout his life, and for quite a while Beryl and Douglas owned a series of river craft on the Thames.

Douglas' career began when he commenced his studies at the Royal Dental Hospital of London and trained as a dental surgeon. He went into a dentistry world very different to today; with the standard equipment a non motorised treadle engine drill. He would delight in telling his son Jonathan, who followed his father into the profession, how he would see 40 patients in an afternoon. Then, general anaesthetics were the norm and when the patients turned blue he knew it was time to bring them round. These were old methods, but Douglas was not stuck in the old ways and he supported the new developments in dentistry as they came along.

Like so many of his generation, the war changed his world. After a spell as a London ARP warden and with water and salt in his veins, he joined the Navy as surgeon lieutenant. His service took him to HMS Gerusalem, the hospital ship of the Pacific Fleet. Here he had some profound experiences. He was particularly moved by the evacuation of Japanese's POWs from Singapore. He was shocked by the human cost of warfare.

Douglas loved the sea, he loved steam trains, but most of all he loved Beryl. They married in 1955 at Cockfosters Church in North London. The date was September 3rd and Douglas always joked that it was the day war broke out.

Beryl and Douglas were immensely proud of their children Jonathan and Elizabeth. They celebrated their golden wedding in 2005. The family remember fondly holidays in West Wales caravanning.

But there is another important part of Douglas that has not been mentioned and this was his deep, deep faith. This began when he was involved with the Crusaders at his school; The City of London. He went on camps and his faith matured. He and Beryl

were involved with the Billy Graham crusade in 1950's in Haringey.

He was always active in church life. He enjoyed committee work, PCCs and the like and then found a way to link his faith and his career. He helped to found the Christian Dental Fellowship and became president. His attention to detail was particularly important in getting the Fellowship onto a solid foundation. In his latter years Douglas was a great support to Beryl in her work with the Children's Hospice South West.

Douglas had great attention to detail and was reluctant to show his emotions. He was dedicated, loyal and trustworthy. He had quiet support for his family and gave solid moral guidance. He was never selfish in conversation and always interested in what others were doing.

Douglas will be greatly missed by us all. One of Jonathan's special memories was a journey he took on the steam train King Edward I out of Taunton. They both loved the experience. Douglas has gone on another journey now. A trip through the last station on earth into his loving Father's arms.

Don Halliday 1930 – 2011



Don graduated from the Glasgow Dental School in 1954 and went straight on to do his National

Service. He was home on leave the following Easter when Billy Graham was in the middle of his campaign in Glasgow. He persuaded a few friends to go with him on Good Friday to hear him and Don was really challenged to go forward to give his life to Christ, but chickened out because it was being televised that night!

However, God was still drawing him to Himself. Don was sent to work in a military hospital in Malaya, as it was called then, and through the invitation of an Indian dental mechanic on the staff, went along to the local Gospel Hall. Here he made a commitment and through the English missionaries and the Chinese and Indian Christians who befriended him, he grew in his faith.

This gave him a love for the Far East and a desire to serve the Lord there. After completing his army service and doing a year at Bible College in 1959 he returned to work with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) in Thailand for a few years,

setting up a dental department in Manrom Hospital. Peter Farrington, also known to CDF, took over from Don. In 1963, he married Lilian Geddes, a Scottish doctor who had joined OMF at the same time as him.

Don later worked in Tiverton, Devon, then in Beccles, Suffolk. In both counties he was involved in CDF activities and church. After moving to Oxford last year, Don also joined the Oxford area CDF prayer group where he will be sadly missed. He enjoyed family life with Lilian and their three daughters and as time went on, with his ten grandchildren.

He died on April 9th after a short illness.

A Ministry of Reconciliation

There are now many more Muslims in our universities and in our profession and therefore many more opportunities to be a Christian witness to our Muslim colleagues.

Jesus calls us as his followers to experience and live out the love of God, made accessible to all people through Christ. This includes showing God's love to all people, including those of ethnicities and worldviews different from our own. "The Word became flesh in Christ and dwelt among us full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In that spirit, we as his followers seek to show grace and truth to all people, as manifestations of God's love. We have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

However, our obedience to the command to love God and our neighbour in authentic engagement may be limited or even prevented by fear. Fear, often subliminal, is fuelled by an unfavourable stereotypical portrayal of Muslims and Islam in our religious and secular press. Muslims in Britain are too often depicted as a threat to traditional customs, values and ways of life. Facts are often distorted, exaggerated or over simplified and the tone of the language is frequently emotive and immoderate.¹ For example, the headline in the Daily Mail in 2007 *Muslim dentist 'told patient to wear a headscarf or go elsewhere'*²

Whilst recognising that Muslims experience prejudice, discrimination or persecution from Christians we must not forget the many situations where Christians experience the same from Muslims. Awareness and understanding of the influence of complex longstanding local and international political issues is an important component of an authentic engagement with Muslims and we should be prepared to work at this.

So how should we approach our Muslim colleagues in a ministry of reconciliation?

Martin Whittingham, an evangelical Christian and the Director of the Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies in Oxford³ suggests that the Samaritans provide a valuable insight to how we should relate to our Muslim neighbours. Like Muslims, the Samaritans were (and still are – we visited the Samaritan community in March!) monotheists. They had different views to the Jews and intense communal hostility existed between them. However, Jesus is gracious in the face of Samaritan hostility and rebukes the disciples for failing to be so (Luke 9:51-56). Yet he also challenges the Samaritan woman at the well over issues of truth (John 4:1-26) and as a result of the woman's testimony, many Samaritans become believers (John 4:39, 41).

Jesus includes the Samaritans in his healing ministry, (Luke 17:11-19), uses a Samaritan as the model for loving others (Luke 10:29-37) and explicitly mentions Samaria on commissioning the disciples at his Ascension (Acts 1:8).

Integrity and compassion modelled on Jesus' ministry to the Samaritans should be the basis for our "ministry of reconciliation" to Muslims or indeed to everyone. The Christian Muslim Forum⁴ has published a helpful, practical guide that includes the following statements which are worthy of consideration as we embark on a 'ministry of reconciliation'.

- We will speak clearly and honestly about our faith, even when that is uncomfortable or controversial without demeaning or ridiculing the faiths of others.
- We bear witness to, and proclaim our faith not only through words but also through our attitudes, actions and lifestyles.
- Sharing our faith should never be coercive. Everyone should have the choice to accept or reject the message we proclaim and we will accept people's choices without resentment.

- We will be honest about our motivations for activities and we will inform people when events will include the sharing of faith.
- We cannot convert people; only God can do that. In our language and methods we should recognise that people's choice of faith is primarily a matter between themselves and God.
- Whilst we might care for people in need or who are facing personal crises, we should never manipulate these situations in order to gain a convert. An invitation to convert should be a decision of the heart and mind alone and should never be linked with other inducements.
- Whilst recognising that either community will naturally rejoice with and support those who have chosen to join them, we will be sensitive to the loss that others may feel.
- Whilst we may feel hurt when someone we know and love chooses to leave our faith, we will respect their decision and will not force them to stay or harass them afterwards.

Jesus' words challenge us; "if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?" and "if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others?" (Matthew 5:45-47) It is only through meaningful friendships with our neighbours, whether Muslims or not that we will be able to share the Good News of God's redeeming love shown to us in Jesus.

John Clark

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