

# CDF Three-in-One

CHRISTIAN DENTAL FELLOWSHIP

Newsletter of the Christian Dental Fellowship

## Not One Word Has Failed



**'I've not known anything like this before', has become an icebreaker phrase in recent times. The plans of many have fallen through, commitments were left unhonoured through no one's fault, leaving a trail of distrust and bad taste in the hearts and minds of all involved parties.**

A few years from now, we will all look back in the mirror of hindsight and see an invisible source of hope that held us during our trying times caused by this pandemic. Isn't it true, that hindsight always gives us a clearer picture of how faithful God has been? His promises for us have never been limited by our circumstances, but throughout history we see a God who continues to deliver despite the calamities and overwhelming odds. His Word never fails.

Moses, before his death, reminded all followers to hold on to God's word very seriously. He cautioned his listeners:

**"They are not just idle words for you-*they are your life*. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."** Deuteronomy 32:47

The word of God wasn't meant to be merely a source of helpful suggestions, preventive warnings or inspirational thoughts; it is life itself. God commanded His people to bind His word on their hearts, to teach them diligently to their children, and to regularly discuss them in their homes (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

During Joshua's time, God had assigned to the Israelites an impossible task of conquering mighty and fortified cities, with armies more powerful than their own and He gave him His Word:

**"Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you."** Deuteronomy 31:23

The Israelites, led by Joshua, were to go forward with nothing more than God's promise that He would go with them and take care of them. In his farewell message to leaders many years later, Joshua looks back over their collective experiences and reminded the Israelites that God had kept every promise and provided for all their needs.

In the new covenant times apostle John writes:

**"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us."** John 1:14

God, in His mercy, has given us access to the utmost gift, Jesus the Living Word. As followers of Christ we all are given unfettered access to the power of this living word through the Holy Spirit. Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians that we are expected to reflect His glory which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). The potential for daily application of this Living Word in our daily lives was highlighted by Jesus himself as an example when he was tempted by the devil while hungry in the desert. He echoed Moses in his reply:

**"It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."** Matthew 4:4

What a comfort to know that the same power which guided Moses and Joshua is living in us in the form of the Holy Spirit - striving to work through all the promises which are in store for us. However, the question remains, are we willing to allow Him to take root in us?

***"Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed."*** Joshua 23:14



**Prince Thomas**  
CDF President

# Mercy Ships Guinea Dental Project



**Imagine having a toothache so severe it becomes life-threatening, simply because the dentists in your country have not been properly trained. For those living in countries with little or no access to proper dental care, easily curable dental diseases can deteriorate into serious conditions. Many of the facial tumours that the volunteer surgeons working with Mercy Ships remove are caused by preventable dental problems.**

For many people in Guinea, simple dental procedures are almost impossible to find. However, the Mercy Ships Dental Clinic is working to change that, by training local dental students in a hands-on learning environment.

Until now, trainee Guinean dentists studied for seven years before qualifying, but it was all theory: they never actually treated a patient during that time. Also, the lecturers at Gamal Abdel Nasser University (the only dental school in Guinea) needed to work as dentists themselves to earn a living, but their



practices were on the other side of Conakry. This often meant that lecturers would miss their own classes because they were stuck in traffic or delayed with a patient at their clinics.

Mercy Ships created a brand new, state of the art dental clinic inside the university so that lecturers could run their own private practices from the university and their students would be able to attend and get practical experience at the same time. In addition, Dr David Ugai and thirteen Mercy Ships volunteers partnered with the Guinean Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene to provide mentoring and courses to staff and students during the Africa Mercy's stay in Conakry. This training contained practical and relevant projects that demonstrated and imparted knowledge, skills and a compassionate, professional attitude to each participant.

Dr Ugai is the lead dentist and heads up the Mercy Ships medical capacity building programme for dentistry, which aims to enhance the standards of care within African partner healthcare institutions.

“Working with the dentists and dental students has been a mutually beneficial learning project,” Dr Ugai said. “The dentists and students are very equipped and motivated to provide excellent care for their patients... it has been a privilege and honour to work alongside these very skilled professionals.”

## Jim's Successful Channel Swim for Dentaaid

**Dentist Jim Lafferty has overcome crashing waves, exhaustion, hidden rocks and vicious jellyfish to successfully swim the English Channel and raise almost £7,000 for Dentaaid.**

After an anxious wait, Jim received the call to tell him that conditions would be right for him to attempt the epic swim at 7.30pm on Sunday, September 13. Accompanied by his support team and pilot boat High Hopes, Jim overcame a wave of challenges and swam through the night before reaching a remote beach near Calais in 11 hours and 53 minutes.



“I'd only ever swam for six hours before so I was very nervous before setting off,” he said. “The sea temperature was about 18 degrees which was ok but in the first hour I faced the roughest seas I'd ever swam in. It was very choppy and I swallowed a lot of salt water.

“It soon became more of a mental challenge than a physical one. I did consider getting out after three hours but I knew there was nothing wrong with me and I had to keep going.”

Every 45 minutes Jim stopped to take on food and liquids while treading water, before ploughing on through the waves. “It takes a long time before France appears

to be any closer, which was incredibly frustrating, but it was a clear night and swimming under the stars was pretty special.”

About half an hour from France, Jim was stung on the face by a jellyfish and hidden rocks made his final few metres a perilous challenge.

“I was pretty wobbly as I got out,” he said. “I’d been pulled so far by the currents that I missed Cap Gris Nez which is the closest point to England and ended up on a tiny beach where I was greeted by a French couple who’d been tracking my progress.”

Jim is only the 32nd swimmer to complete

a solo crossing of the Channel this year and the 2143rd person to achieve the feat since Matthew Webb first swam from Dover to Calais in 1875.

“I’m quietly proud,” he admitted. “My brother Ben is a proper swimmer – he reached the finals of the Commonwealth Games – and having him on the boat as part of my team really kept me going.”

Jim’s amazing swim has so far raised £6904 for Dentaaid which will help the charity restart its work providing outreach dental care for homeless and vulnerable people on two mobile units.

“The support I’ve had has been amazing,”

he said. “People were tracking my progress through the night and sending such wonderful messages of support. I was touched by the kindness of strangers and want to thank everyone who sponsored me.”

Jim, who works as a dentolegal consultant for Dental Protection and at Orgreave Dental Surgery in Sheffield, is slowly recovering from his swim.

“There’s aching muscles,” he said. “But it was absolutely worth it.”

You can still sponsor Jim’s Channel swim by visiting

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JimLafferty2>

## View From My Chair - Lockdown Life



**The more observant of you will have spotted that this edition of Three-in-One is only half the usual length. Usually the Winter edition is full of**

**photographs and tales of the Annual Family Conference which sadly couldn’t take place this year for understandable reasons.**

As I write this article, we are all having to try and grasp the new rules and the tier system. It seems a long time ago that we were seeing restrictions loosened and things seemed to be starting to get back to normal. We could not only go out for dinner with friends but the Chancellor agreed to pick up half the bill! Now the nights are drawing in and those freedoms we were celebrating in the summer are disappearing.

I’ve been thinking about what life is like under lockdown. In many ways for me lockdown made my life a little easier. No

more need to manhandle myself and my wheelchair out of the house and into my car to get to meetings; everything now is on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. I can access it all from the comfort of home. However, there aren’t as many excuses to miss those meetings you would really like to avoid because there aren’t any other things in your diary to give you a reason to send your apologies. (Maybe that’s just me though...!) We have had the great opportunity of setting up the CDF prayer meetings on the first Saturday of every month. I love the fact that we can all meet up and “see” each other even though we are miles apart and it has meant that people are joining us from overseas too. I promise this isn’t one of the meetings I am trying to find an excuse to miss! We’ve also got the opportunity to try out our new found tech skills to offer the online conference.

But even while we can see the opportunities that have occurred in the midst of the pandemic, we can also see what we are missing out on. The human face-to-face contact which we used to take for granted. Am I the only one who watches television programmes filmed before Covid and marvel at the amount of

physical contact there is? Look at all those people hugging and touching each other! But here comes the real reason for my little article. One of the things which has had to stop has been overseas travel; holidays cancelled and overseas friends not seen. This also means that there aren’t any overseas electives going on or people going overseas on short trips with Dentaaid or Bridge2Aid and the like. This has left my inbox rather empty. I love receiving articles about what people have been up to which I can include in Three-in-One.

So here is a huge plea from me. Can you put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and write something for me? It doesn’t have to be long; it doesn’t have to be academic. Just what you have been up to in these strange times. What has helped you or what has been difficult. How has God helped you to cope? What amusing tales do you have of welcoming patients back? This is your opportunity to let genius flow and see your name in print! I look forward to a bulging inbox of articles which I can use for the next Three-in-One.

**Tracey Dalby**

Three-in-One Editor

# Righteousness

**CDF has been holding prayer meetings via Zoom since the Corona virus crisis started at the beginning of the year. These are now held on the first Saturday of every month from 10am. For details of how to get involved please get in touch with the CDF administrator, Karen. (christiantentalfellowship@gmail.com) Below is a transcript of a devotion shared at one of the meetings by Sam Appaiah.**

Paul writes a letter to the church in Philippi to acknowledge receipt, with immense gratitude, of the gift sent. From the outset, Paul states his main aim in life: to extol the virtues of his Saviour, Christ Jesus in his life, even at pain of death (Philippians 1:20-21). Therefore, not only does he admonish the Christians at Philippi to do same, but he offers a practical guide – an opinion, which reads:

“Finally, brethren, whatever things *are* true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8-9)

Paul lists seven virtues or “true values of life” and encourages his hearers to meditate on them i.e. to exercise our minds on these; *to fix our minds on these things*.

Contemplation of these virtues alone is not enough. Thought must be translated into action. On this point, Paul offers very useful and practical advice – that is **COPY ME; IMITATE ME**.

Paul had given, essentially, the same advice earlier on in his letter to the church:

“Let me be your example here, my brothers: let my example be the standard by which you can tell who are the genuine Christians among those about you” (Philippians 3:17)

No matter what we may think of our profession, dentistry, (without intending offence if I unwittingly do), is a glorified apprenticeship based on the broad principle of **see one, do one, teach one**. In other words, the trainee sits at the feet of his master - somebody who knows his or her trade until such a time that the trainee becomes proficient and competent (from being unconsciously incompetent to unconsciously competent). The four stages are: 1<sup>st</sup> unconsciously incompetent (novice); 2<sup>nd</sup> consciously incompetent; 3<sup>rd</sup> consciously competent; and finally, unconsciously competent (expert).

I remember vividly at least on two occasions in my early years being advised (as a student by a legendary teacher) to “copy *some* of the gestures of your professors” and (as a trainee in oral surgery by one of my consultants) “Sam, learn from me, but *only the good*. The bad, tell yourself never to repeat them” (emphasis, mine).

Is Paul advocating hero or heroine worship? Not at all! Why?

Paul is very conscious of who he is; a servant, not the master. He therefore makes it abundantly clear “Copy me, my brothers, *as I myself copy Christ Himself*” 1 Corinthians 11:1 (emphasis, mine).

Yes, the Christians to whom this opinion was given are all dead and long gone. So is the advice relevant to me, and for that matter, you today? The answer is definitely yes. The Bible, the word of God, is a live document. It is relevant for all time; in Paul’s era, now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in the future.

So, what is the relevance of Paul’s advice to me – as a father/husband/son, mother/wife/daughter, grandparent, uncle, auntie, and employer/employee (or whatever role you have)?

There are some people who may never read the Bible but will “read” mine and your lifestyle as their “bible”. Germane to this point is the advice by the apostle Peter:

In the same spirit you married women should adapt yourselves to your husbands, *so that even if they do not obey the Word of God they may be won to God without any word being spoken, simply by seeing the pure and reverent behaviour of you*, their wives. 1 Peter 3:1(emphasis, mine).

Here is Paul’s opinion again:

“Here is a last piece of advice. If you believe in goodness and if you value the approval of God, fix your minds on the things which are holy and right and pure and beautiful and good. Model your conduct on what you have learned from *me*, on what I have told you and shown you, and you will find the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9 (emphasis mine).

**Me: the servant of Christ; ambassador of Christ**

As Christians, we are to reflect the attributes of Christ. Do our lives reflect Christ so that we can say with Paul, copy *me* as I copy Christ? Can anyone learn from *me*? Can anyone see the attributes of Christ in *me*? Think on these and work on them, as I *do*.

**Sam Appaiah**

**Deadline for the next issue of Three-in-One is 1st January 2021. Please send contributions to Tracey Dalby: editor@cdf-uk.org**

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