

President's Address: Trees Planted Along the River Bank



As Advent and Christmas fast approach, let us take time to reflect on *the reason for the season*. How can we be distinctively different from the secular world's view of Christmas and hold fast to, and show, the true meaning of Christmas, sharing the joy and hope of that very first Christmas Day?

I recently had the opportunity to tell a non-dental, non-Christian friend about the work of CDF. I told her about how we support dental students, new graduates and dental professionals working in dental practices and clinics, as well as how we support overseas dental work etc. She was interested to hear of what we do in a practical sense and asked, "where does faith come into the role of CDF?" That is a question for all of us in our own lives as well as CDF.

There are many good organisations that do similar work to CDF in terms of supporting people in their careers; providing mentoring, well-being and mental health services to dentists, as well as organisations supporting dental

care both here in the UK and also overseas. Many of these are professional services that we could and should use at times in our professional lives; but what makes CDF distinctive? How are we different to other organisations? Where does faith come in to it all?

Firstly, let us just ponder what "faith" means. Most people have a belief system or values that they live by; a faith of sorts. They may not call it a "faith" or share it with others. It may not be recognised as a religious or even spiritual entity, but rather something or someone that shapes their values - whether they realise it or not.

How can we each be distinctive in the way we live and work, and how can CDF be different and distinctive in the way that it seeks to support and encourage dental professions - and where does faith come into it all?

Some of the issues that we face as Christian dental professionals are

perhaps no different from the issues that the vast majority of ethically and compassionately-working colleagues face. However, there might be some particular issues that we as Christian dental professionals face, such as:

- How do we treat our patients in the way that we would like to, in light of the configuration and constraints of the NHS?
- Should we run our businesses as money-centred or patient-centred practices, and how do we do that whilst balancing the books and abiding in the Word?
- How do we ensure we can earn enough to recompense ourselves for our time, skill and the material costs of providing the service, whilst caring for the poorest in society?
- How do we balance our well-being and attitude to the work/life balance against the pressures and demands of work?
- How do we view and support our fellow staff members, dental colleagues, our bosses and those in authority over us?

You will each have your own particular areas that vex you and cause you to pause and think on.

More important than the issues themselves, and what makes us distinctive and different, is how we respond to these and other issues and challenges. This is where our faith and Godly values perfuse through our attitudes, our words and deeds, and our practice of dentistry.

On reading Psalm 1:1-3 we learn how our faith directs our lives:

continued overleaf..

“Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.”

There is opportunity for joy in all we do and are, that is not dependant on our circumstances, our bank balance or the length of our waiting lists. We are to delight in the law of the Lord, even delighting in the anatomy of a pulp chamber or a successful tooth extraction in a nervous patient that we have persuaded to have local anaesthetic. The word of God and his ways are to be our constant companion and guide, by day and by night, suffusing into our hearts and heads, and being the source, or well, from which comes our attitudes, our spoken and written words, our actions and, therefore, our practice of dentistry and life. This is the counter to following the advice of those who are not following

God’s kingdom values, or following the ways of those whose values take them further from God rather than closer, or joining in with those mocking and devaluing others.

Therefore, we can then be like those trees planted along the river bank, whose roots go deep into the fertile and watered ground - or God’s word and well. For then we can go on to bear fruit each season, being known by our good fruit, whatever season of life and work we are in, young and older, in paid or unpaid work, clinical or non-clinical, being fruitful in our labours and in the fruit of the spirit. We will remain evergreen trees with leaves that persist, and we will prosper and thrive in all we do.

Our Christian faith and the living-out-of-that faith affects and shapes us as well as shaping our responses to any challenges and difficulties we face, our faith being built upon the practices of:

- **Prayer:** for prayer is powerful, dynamic and relational. It is, as it says in Galatians 4:6-7 “...because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to

call out, “Abba, Father.” We not only have a heavenly Daddy, we also have Jesus his Son interceding on our behalf to the Father.

- **Support and fellowship:** “So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Seeing others as Christ sees us; “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10).
- **Bible and Spirit-led counsel:** we look to the word of God for wisdom and guidance, and the Holy Spirit for counsel. In the words of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.” (Zechariah 4:6).

By these practices, this is how we overcome, and how we are different and distinctive. We can each do this individually and corporately as CDF, being God-centred, Christ-inspired and Spirit-led people of faith.

Karen Paterson
CDF President

Snapshots

A feature looking at the difference Jesus makes to our work in dentistry.

CDF member Michael Lee kindly agreed to be interviewed for this edition.



What is your job? I work as a principal for a mixed NHS/private practice in Weybridge, Surrey. I’m also an NEBDN (National Examining Board for Dental Nurses) trainer for dental nurses studying for their qualification.

What does your surgery window look out on? Depends which surgery I’m working in but generally I have a view out onto the street in a quiet residential area.

What are some of the things you enjoy about your work, and what are some of the challenges? I enjoy working with the rest of team since we come from many different regions of the world (I’m an Aussie originally from Sydney, Australia) as well as talking with and treating our patients. The biggest challenge is trying to manage an NHS contract which really doesn’t reflect the changing needs and requirements of patients in the ‘real world’ on a daily basis.

How does your Christian faith impact your work day-to-day? I would like to think that I treat everyone with respect and care just as Jesus did in His time here on earth.

Do you have a particular Bible verse or song that God has been using to speak to you recently? No particular Bible verse or song at the moment but I’ve just started reading *Dominion*, a book by historian Tom Holland who was initially an atheist but came to faith after studying Christian beliefs and the story of the Resurrection.

How can we pray for you and others in your particular area of dentistry? Prayer for my team and patients is always appreciated! Thank you.

CDF Peer Support Scheme

CDF has always been a place where our faith and dentistry merge together, where you can chat to like-minded, faith-led dental professionals. Peer, pastoral and prayer support are available informally through CDF regional groups and meetings as well as at conference, but there may be times when this is not possible or appropriate.

CDF has both a Pastoral Care Scheme and a Prayer Support Scheme for members to access. In addition, we have put in place a Peer Support Scheme to further support our members in this area.

What is peer support? For this we have used Rieszeman's definition (1989): 'people who share common experiences or face similar challenges come together as equals to give and receive help, based on the knowledge that comes through shared experience.'

Since there is an overlap between pastoral and peer support, the coordination will be undertaken by the newly renamed 'Pastoral and Peer Support Coordinator.'

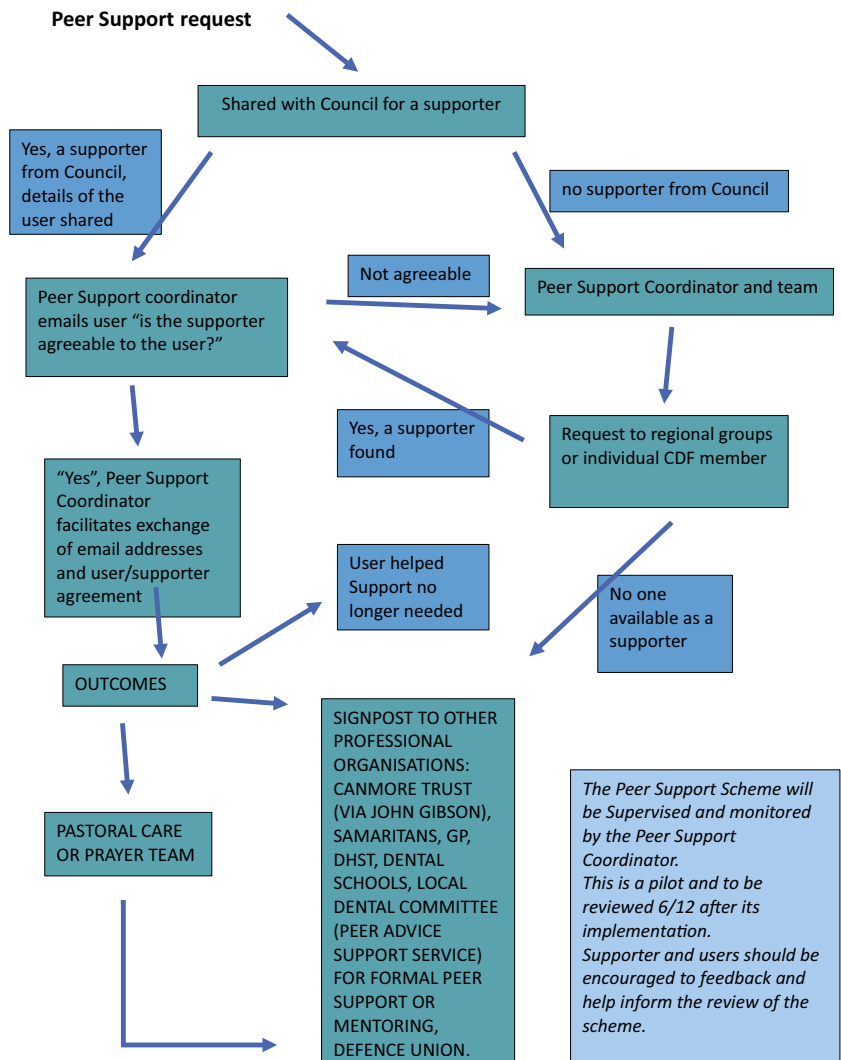
If you would like to access the scheme, please feel free to email peersupport@cdf-uk.org detailing the area you would like peer support in. Our Peer Support Coordinator will then put you in touch with a fellow member who would be happy to chat with you informally and/or signpost you to additional professional services where appropriate.

Further information is available on the CDF website cdf-uk.org or alternatively via email peersupport@cdf-uk.org. Please be mindful that the CDF Peer Support Scheme is not a professional mentoring service but a friendly, informal buddying scheme. CDF or its workers are not liable for any informal advice given.

We hope you will feel free to use this service and find it helpful.

Margaret Reynolds

Pastoral and Peer Support Coordinator
pastoralcare@cdf-uk.org
peersupport@cdf-uk.org



The Dressing Prayer (a Celtic prayer for daily life)

This day I bind around me
 The power of the sacred Three:
 The hand to hold,
 The heart to love,
 The eye to see,
 The Presence of the Trinity.

I wrap around my mortal frame
 The power of the Creator's name:
 The Father's might.
 His holy arm,
 To shield this day
 and keep from Harm.

I cover myself from above
 With the Redeemer's love:
 The Son's bright light
 To shine on me,
 To protect this day,
 To eternity.

I pull around me with morning light
 The knowledge of
 The Spirit's sight:
 The Strengtheners eye
 To keep guard,
 Covering my path
 When it is hard.

This day I bind around me
 The powers of the sacred Three.

*David Adam, Tides and Seasons:
 Modern Prayers in the Celtic Tradition*

Elective Report from Cambodia and Japan

Background

My name is Sabrina and I am a final-year dental student at the University of Dundee. With the support from CDF, I was able to do my dental elective in Cambodia and Japan over the summer. I spent my first week in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where I volunteered with a Christian non-profit organisation, One-2-One, to provide dental service in a prison. I then spent two weeks in Japan doing my elective, where I had my first experience attending a Japanese church service at Praise Community Church (PCC) in Sendai.

Where it all began

I want to go back to the basics of how I came to be who I am and where God is calling me. Before I started dental school, I always knew that an elective programme would be a great opportunity to have a taste of what a Christian dental mission trip is like. I believe that God has always been preparing me for something bigger than myself - to actively participate in His plans and expand His kingdom by sharing the gospel through the act of service, with dentistry as an entry point. On the other hand, knowing that only 1% of the Japanese population identified themselves as Christians, I wanted to visit this country again to explore the work that God has been doing there.

Prison Dental Service in Cambodia

Without a doubt, serving in a rural prison is a new experience for me. Since there was a language barrier between myself and the patients, the local dentist and students carried the majority of the communication load while I concentrated on completing the treatments. This has made me realise how much I appreciate soft skills as a clinician. If I have to be honest with you, there were multiple times when I struggled with feeling inadequate because of how hard it was to maintain high-quality dental care when



Group photo with the dental team in Cambodia

the resources were few and the working environment was not ideal. Looking back, I found myself falling into the prideful trap of trying to do things right with my own strength. Slowly, it became a pressure that I had to maintain, and it felt like I was operating to be loved and accepted rather than operating from already being loved and accepted, where God has already done so by sending Jesus Christ on the cross. Now whenever I feel inadequate or weak, I know where to seek help because, as the Lord states, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Christianity in Japan

I spent 2 weeks doing a hospital attachment in Japan and I attended a Sunday service at PCC in the meantime. I was lucky enough to join them for a potluck-style meal after church. Since PCC is a bilingual church, I was able to communicate with some of the locals there and hear them share about their testimonies and their lives living as Christians in Japan. During my time there, I realised that hopelessness is a major issue that Japanese people of all ages and backgrounds struggle with. Many are chasing for worldly success but often

struggle with the feeling of emptiness that only God can solve. Interestingly, the God of the Bible often does not call the equipped but equips the called. He calls those who have a willing heart to make themselves available to Him, not based on their achievements and qualifications as the world does. As Jesus says, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17). In fact, none of us are righteous before God and no one can measure up to God's standards. Thanks be to God that His grace is our



Church service at PCC

hope and we don't have to earn it because it has been given freely through Jesus.

Prayers for One-2-One and Praise Community Church

One of the Bible verses that I really like is from Ephesians 3:17-19 — “I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit... May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.” I keep forgetting that God is sovereign and He has always been preparing me in advance to do His works. By the grace of God, we will be made complete according to His will. We are like “jars of clay” - simple and unimpressive. But when we submit our lives to God, we become containers that demonstrate His love and grace to those around us.

Praise God for all that One-2-One and PCC do to serve and display the love of Christ to their local community. Pray for the One-2-One team as well as for the people that



Last dinner with the students and the staff in One-2-One

they are serving to continue receiving revelations of God's truth and grace. Pray also for PCC for their ministry and financial challenges as they expand their community, that God will supply their needs accordingly.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone at CDF who has supported me on this journey, be it in prayers or with financial support. I do not know what the

future holds for me regarding dental mission, but I do know who holds the future. May I continue to live out my time as a foreigner here in reverent fear and be missional wherever God has placed me.

Sabrina Wong

Final Year Dental Student,
University of Dundee

Country Focus: Cambodia

Spiritual darkness persists in Cambodia, from the many spirit shrines, the powerful grip of Buddhism that opposes Truth, and the widespread loss of morals.

Only prayer will lift it. The enemy of souls makes people suffer under terrible abuses and oppressive poverty. The drug

and sex trades hold power over many people. Criminals exploit the high number of unprotected children and young people. Land grabs by people with wealth and power enrich a few at the expense of the majority. Pray for the light of the gospel to shine on individual lives and all social structures in Cambodia. Christians

can make a difference in the areas of justice, rehabilitation, orphanages, healthcare, and development. Cambodia also needs outside help with projects in agriculture, fisheries, water management, and education

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Country Focus: Japan

Japan faces many crises. Even its leaders called it “a superpower without a moral compass”. Many lack hope or confidence in the future.

Young people struggle the most, in particular with problems such as a suicide epidemic (over 30,000/year),

mistreatment by peers, and teenage prostitution. High suicide and divorce rates in other age groups confirm the crisis. The constant threats of earthquakes, economic decline, and social isolation leave many people open to spiritual matters. The government

alone cannot solve Japan's social problems. This gives the Church a chance to engage with society. Pray that the Church might become prominent in Japan through ministries of compassion, kindness, and love.

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Gordon Stroud (1937- 2024)



Gordon in the early years

Gordon's Story:

In the beginning God created... Arthur Gordon Stroud... born 7th March 1937 in Rugby to Leslie and Irene Stroud, moving to Wrexham during the war years and finally settling in Slough. At school he enjoyed middle-distance running and rifle shooting, competing in both for Buckinghamshire Schoolboys. As with many who grew up in the war years, he had a strong interest in military matters and joined the cadets at school, rising to the rank of corporal and acting as their signalman.

Inspired by his maternal grandfather Arthur Black, Gordon decided to become a dentist. He took A Levels in chemistry, physics, zoology and botany before beginning training at the London Hospital in Autumn 1955. Diana, his sister, later followed in his footsteps, trained at the London Hospital and practised dentistry for many years. Before starting his training though, Gordon spent the summer hitch-hiking around Europe, across Germany, Austria, France and Italy, a formative experience to which he would refer throughout his life.

Although a Christian from childhood and baptised at the age of fifteen, his notes suggest that he had no 'assurance' of his standing with God during these years.

This came in his second year of dental training, when he had a profound spiritual experience at a Christian Union weekend. This 'assurance' was to give him a strong sense of direction for the rest of his life.

He spent the next few summer vacations helping at Scripture Union missions, including the beach resort of Frinton in 1959 where he met his future wife Marion. Qualifying in 1960 he then spent two years in military service attached to the Household Cavalry in Windsor and Colchester.

In 1962 Gordon left the army, became a GDP and worked within the NHS until his retirement. His experience of training in Whitechapel, a very deprived area at the time, gave him a strong belief of the need to provide accessible dental care to all, regardless of wealth. This was a core value that always stayed with him and shaped his dental career.

In 1963 he was engaged and then married to Marion. They had three children together over the next few years; David, Jo and Angus. They also became foster parents in 1980 to siblings Robert and Ici and adopted them into the family.



Gordon and flag - assume England won the cricket!



The children (back l-r Robert, Angus, David. Front l-r Ici, Gordon, Jo)

In 1964 Gordon and Marion moved to Bedford and he bought a dental practice at 7 Goldington Road; initially as a sole practitioner, later to become Stroud and Pedley Dental Surgeons. They joined Russell Park Baptist Church and Gordon led the youth work there. He also became an active Gideon member until 1980. In 1976 (note the year), they left Russell Park Baptist as part of its church plant team to form Woodside Community Church, later to become a leading church in the New Frontier's movement. Initially Gordon led the worship team until 1986 when he became Church Treasurer for ten years. Perhaps surprisingly he enjoyed this experience, which led him to conclude if not a dental career, then probably accountancy. Their first of sixteen grandchildren, Edward, was born in 1993.

Retiring in 1997, he planned to follow his interests in history and Wolverhampton Wanderers, while also aiming to watch all five days of every England Test Cricket match, either in person or on TV. Often Marion had other ideas! He became a Trustee and later Chair of Bedford Christian Family Care, a women's refuge charity, and together they spent more time with their children and grandchildren. They also continued to serve in their church, leading a home group. He supported Marion in her role as President of the Association of Christian Writers on many international trips, and

they supported each other when both faced cancer in their later years.

In 2015, Marion died and Gordon slowly came to terms with living alone. He remained actively involved with his biological and church-based families. On 2nd August 2024, after a short illness, he died peacefully, marked by that strong sense of 'assurance' as to his future spiritual destination.



Gordon and Marian's 50th wedding anniversary

The Practice Story:

I, training at the Royal Dental Hospital, met Gordon casually at CDF Autumn Meetings in the late sixties at the BDA HQ. I qualified in 1969, did a house job, married Margaret in 1970, entered a GDS practice in Wallingford and then Guildford in 1972. At the 1974 Ashburnham CDF Family Conference we met again and got to know each other better. We were both in practice with non-Christians and ideally wanted to work with Christian colleagues. Gordon had an enthusiastic, strong personality, was a lively Christian and had lots of ideas. I commented to Margaret as we drove home, *"The Strouds; lovely family but I don't think I'd want to work with him."*

In my fourth year at Guildford I was considering the future, whether to stay or move. A phone call 'out of the blue', one year after the conference, changed all that! *"Hallo, Gordon Stroud speaking, I'm looking for a Christian to join me in practice, would you be interested?"* "Yes..." was my reply. To cut a long story short, I spent a day in Bedford, listened to

his ideas and five year plan, talked about how we would work together, shared my hopes and dreams, and viewed the practice. And then we prayed together. I returned home down the M1, realising I was in the wrong place at Guildford. Much prayer and searching with Margaret and the Lord followed, but on the 8th of March 1976 I became an associate to Gordon.

Over time a strong relationship developed, each recognising our complimentary giftings. The practice grew through a time of great changes in dentistry; dental materials, techniques, dental instrumentation and equipment, dental attitudes to dental team work, training, hygienists, auxiliaries, staff meetings, advertising, computerisation, NHS contract and Private Dentistry. We became VT and then VDP trainers by which other Christian colleagues through CDF joined us. To reflect our team approach we became 'Teamcare Dental Practice', subsequently needed more space and moved premises. We were later joined by a CDF colleague's orthodontic practice. This all made dentistry exciting, challenging, and enabled us to provide a caring practice to a high standard.

Gordon became a mentor to me in so many ways; in business management, financial management and dental training. We trained, planned, discussed cases, had away days together and served on the CDF counsel. Gordon was a vibrant, active, real Christian who knew and practised the scriptures. He was energetic, enthusiastic, open, honest, truthful, trustworthy, selfless, realistic and wise, while being gentle, caring and empathetic. However, he did have other characteristics. He could be blunt, rude, intimidating, had strong opinions, always had an answer and didn't suffer fools gladly. He wasn't everybody's cup of tea!

Right through the twenty-one years of partnership, once a week we had lunch and prayed together. We had our differences and sometimes strong disagreements, but we always prayed, slept on it, and then came to an agreed decision. We also supported each other and our team members as we navigated challenges related to marriage, family, faith, and social issues. This continued



Gordon in the last year

after his retirement in 1997 and mine in 2007, through our bi-monthly catch-up walks and lunches, until his death.

God's Story:

From the beginning, whether acknowledged or not, God was involved in every aspect of our lives - our backgrounds, upbringing, training, and faith. Through CDF, we received support from other members and opportunities to meet. Having God at the centre empowered us, both individually and together, through the good times as well as the dark, dry, and challenging "desert" periods. Father God had pleasure working His purposes out in numerous ways; through the dental practice affecting our team and patients, and in our social lives, marriages, families and church fellowships. I look back and honour Gordon for all that he was to me and to so many others. To God be the glory.

So be encouraged, the LORD has purposes for you as a dentist or team member, and promises, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you." (Psalm 32:8). May you enjoy His presence daily. I am looking forward one day, with that firm 'assurance', to meeting Gordon again.

Praise God,

Tim Pedley

CDF Member, former Secretary and Three-in-One (then, Newsround) Editor

East Anglia Regional Group Summer BBQ

Eleven CDF members and partners met on the last day of August for a BBQ at our home in Norfolk. Being the British summer we had to retreat indoors to eat our BBQ that Jonathan gallantly cooked in the cooling temperatures, although some were brave enough to even take a dip in the swimming pond! (The observant amongst you will notice that one member, Thulasi, has managed to appear in two regional meeting pictures this year by moving from the South West to Norfolk recently - now that's dedication!) It was a

lovely time of fellowship sharing with each other the joys and challenges of life, and I'm sure we all went away mindful to keep each other in our prayers. I would encourage any local reps not to hesitate in organising a simple social event as these can be of such value in themselves. We are hoping for warmer weather next year for what is becoming a (nearly!) annual event. Please come and join us if you are in the East Anglia region.

Victoria and Jonathan Graham



South West Regional Group Summer Gathering

A big thank you to Martyn and Sue Green for opening their beautiful home for our Regional Group meeting this summer. After the CDF July Prayer meeting on Zoom, those South West



members on the call quickly packed up and carefully drove the 1-2 hours to Tiverton. Our CDF President Karen and her husband Mike were on their way to Cornwall for a short break and decided to join us for lunch and the afternoon, which was lovely.

Martyn and Sue, with the help of a few others, provided a delightful buffet lunch. There was so much food that not even Mike and I were able to eat it all! Fifteen of us gathered, building new friendships and rekindling old ones. With the weather holding fine and dry, the afternoon soon whizzed by. Neil and Jane McDonald gave

a short presentation, summarising their work overseas and sharing how they are waiting on the Lord for future direction.

The afternoon would not have been complete without a cup of tea in the garden and some delicious bourbon brownies made by Priscilla. Thanks again to Martyn and Sue for hosting such an enjoyable day.

Malcolm Prideaux

You are warmly invited to join us at these regional gatherings. To find out more about your nearest regional group please email cdfadmin@cdf-uk.org

Top Three Tips for Success in Your Dentistry

In September our Student and Newly Qualified Group met online for a Zoom event entitled "Top 3 tips for success in your dentistry". A panel of three experienced Christian dentists shared with us tips that you'll not find in any textbook. In our Q&A time we also discussed questions such as, "When is it appropriate to share my faith at work?", "How do I manage patient expectations?" and "What do I do when I run over time with a patient and others are waiting?"

Want to know the answers to these questions? You'll have to ask someone who came to the session! Or better still, come to our next meeting in December and ask questions of your own. Here are some of the tips our panel shared:

Prince Thomas is a specialist in prosthodontics. He works in NHS, private

practice, teaches at his local dental school and consults in restorative dentistry. His top three tips:

1. Pray: start your day praying for your patients.
2. Prepare: develop a special interest or specialise if that's how God is prompting you.
3. Pan out: fill your week with variety. Working in different contexts keeps it interesting and also spreads your Christian influence.

Mark Taylor has been an associate GDP for 28 years and is also a Clinical Teaching Fellow at his local dental school. His top three tips:

1. Manage money with integrity: everything needs to be patient-orientated, not money-orientated. Do this and the

money will follow.

2. Build relationships with your patients and build a patient base.
3. Give God your time: in prayer, in the scriptures and in being faithful in church. He will guide and help you.

Alastair Bartlett is a practice owner of 27 years, having taken a single-handed surgery and built it into a two site six surgery family practice. His top three tips:

1. Get excited about teeth - they were created by an endlessly creative God.
2. Be Jesus to your staff. We get an unrivalled chance to show them what He's like.
3. Remember that the person in your chair is Jesus (Matthew 25:40). It is His mouth and His teeth you are treating, so revel in the delight and privilege that this offers.

Deadline for the next issue of Three-in-One is 1st January 2025. Please send contributions to Naomi Wilson: editor@cdf-uk.org

Email: cdfadmin@cdf-uk.org Website: www.cdf-uk.org

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