

Dear Prayer Intercessors,

We are having an absolutely gorgeous spring day today! It is difficult to not **feel hopeful** as you see the sunlight cascading over the trees that are finally beginning to blossom and bloom. The last three weeks since the March DCM Conference have been a weather rollercoaster ride with patchy cold sunshine punctuated by unexpected torrential downpours, all mixed together with many an overcast, gray day. So today's sustained sunshine is a vast improvement upon what we've been experiencing and it speaks of the promise of the Eastertide!

A quick update: the March DCM Conference went wonderfully with 134 in attendance! We're **so grateful for your prayers!** I'm including a full recap below of the speakers and their talks. Also below are some very **encouraging impact quotes** from those who attended!

Much of the Conference's content is pitched to those of faith but who might experience a disconnect between their research and their beliefs. However, we often get a handful of folks who aren't Christian but have been invited by their friends. **I heard from one attendee, Mary*, that her good friend, Linda*, who is a non-Christian attended and absolutely loved it.** Linda came for the first day, and during the Friday evening dinner sat next to Professor Andrew Briggs (Material Sciences, University of Oxford). **She raised every question she had about Christianity and its compatibility (or incompatibility) with science and medicine, and he responded thoughtfully and winsomely.** The next day Linda couldn't come to the rest of the talks, but she asked Mary to share the slides and to share her notes! She was not only sad to miss it but hungry for more! Mary and I are excited to continue to engage Linda through our church and other DCM events this coming term.

A week ago, Mary and I were catching up in a local coffee shop. As she shared more of her (incredible) testimony of significant loss, suffering, and healing as a trained medical doctor, and then of God calling her to Oxford, I noticed a young woman, Sandra*, who was also sitting at our shared table. Towards the end of our coffee meeting **I felt prompted by the Holy Spirit to speak to Sandra, and it turns out that she was from Taiwan, had recently come to faith,** and was visiting for the day from Paris where she was doing a course in luxury hospitality. She had been listening in on our conversation the whole time and had been encouraged! We swopt contact information, prayed for her on the spot, and learned that **she is going to try to come back to Oxford next year to do a masters degree.** We can't wait to continue to encourage her in her faith journey!

Will you join us in praying:

***For Sandra as we connect her** to some international Bible Studies and churches in Paris

***For Linda as we invite her** to church and future DCM events

***For the incoming Graduate Christian Forum (GCF) leadership team** as they prepare to take the helm this next term. We completed our handover brunch and one-to-one meetings over the last two weeks

***For David as he writes the introduction** to his dissertation. He has to resubmit for Confirmation of Status with this introductory chapter as an additional writing sample

***For doors to continue to open** if it's God's will for David to do a postdoc here as a next step

***For wisdom, patience, and divine insights** as Charlie develops a will of his own - including his ability to say "no" - which I still find charming about 50% of the time...

Will you praise God with us:

***For divine connections and smooth logistics** at the latest DCM conference

***For significant progress in potty training** Charlie over the last two weeks

***For a sweet time and traveling mercies** for my sister and her family as they come to visit at the end of April

***For all of our incredibly generous donors** who have given faithfully so far this year! Pray that all of our supporters would experience abundance, provision, and freedom in all that they do

Thank you so much for planting seeds of hope and transformation through your prayers. We feel that we are consistently seeing the fruit of your faithfulness in intercession!

With gratitude,
Alissa, David, Charlie

Feedback Quotes from DCM Conference Attendees:

'...I really appreciated hearing from senior academics speaking in a more informal way. Each DCM conference I've been to I've heard scholars name an experience I've had studying Theology which I hadn't previously been able to conceptualise so clearly. It's helped to give me clarity as I've reflected on and evaluated my own experience...'

'I enjoyed being in an environment of extremely bright people doing big things in the world, but who are also humbly submitted to the call of Christ and earnestly looking for how to best offer themselves and the gifts they've been given back to Him.'

'I most enjoyed...Everything! The seminars were informative and interactive, the formal dinner was brilliant, I made new friends and got to think more deeply about the intersection between my faith and my discipline of study.'

Developing a Christian Mind March Conference Recap

On Friday and Saturday of ninth week of Hilary Term we hosted our Seeking Wisdom Conference at Magdalen College. We had four discipline "streams" running co-currently, and saw the wonderful fruit of the labour of our hard-working convening teams.

On Friday, the Philosophy and Theology Stream invited speakers to speak on the topic of Vocation and kicked off the day with a talk entitled '**The Political is Personal and the Personal is Political: Black Liberation theology, Anger, Activism and Living out 'Christian Values'**' by Anthony Reddie (Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture, Regent's Park College, Oxford). This was followed by a talk called '**Academic Theology and the Eyes of Faith**' by Simeon Zähl (Theology, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge). After lunch the stream heard from John Goldingay (Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary) and about his journey through a talk called '**What is a Vocation and Do I Have One**'. Finally, the day ended with a talk by Kate Kirkpatrick Philosophy and Christian Ethics, Regent's Park College, Oxford) called '**Freedom and Vocation**' with a response by John Olson (Theology, Oriel, Oxford).

The Humanities Stream was the next to start on Friday with two short talks from husband and wife team, Susan and Andrew Dunning. Andrew (English, Jesus College) spoke on '**Making the past accessible to town and gown**' while Susan (Classics, Somerville) shared about '**Belief and Emotion in Religions of the Roman World**'. After lunch the stream participants shared examples of poetry or samples of prose that had inspired their journey as Christian academics. They closed the day hearing from Steven Gunn (History, Merton College) who shared '**Writing, teaching and applying the history of religion when not writing church history**'.

On Saturday the Humanities Stream started with a talk by Jason Lepojarvi, (C.S. Lewis Associate Professor of Theology & Literature, George Fox University, USA) called '**C.S. Lewis and the Personal Opinion Fallacy**' and this was followed by an interactive workshop where he and Simon Horobin (English, Magdalen) engaged the group in discussion on selections from ***The Great Divorce* by C.S. Lewis**. The second day ended with a panel discussion featuring Joel Bell (Hebrew & Jewish Studies, Christ Church), Jason Lepojarvi, and Audrey Southgate (English, Merton College), chaired by Simon Horobin.

On Friday the Social Sciences and Law Stream started with a time of introductions and small group reflection followed by a talk on '**Social scientific and Christian understandings of human beings in society**' by Donald Hay, (Economics, Jesus College). The afternoon sessions included a talk called '**Social ethics in the social sciences: theological and secular approaches**' by Tom Simpson (Philosophy & Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government). On Saturday there was a roundtable discussion on the **Christian perspective on human rights**. After hearing contributions from Thiago Alves Pinto (Law), Stephanie Barclay (Associate Professor of Law Director, Religious Liberty Initiative, Notre Dame), Nigel Biggar (Christian Ethics), and Richard Ekins (Law and Constitutional Government), chaired by Timothy Endicott (English Law), the group discussed what rights human beings have by virtue of being human, and what the law of a country like the UK (and/or international law) can do and must do to give legal effect to those rights. As a focus for the discussion, panellists responded to Nicholas Wolterstorff's book *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (2008).

The Natural Science Stream gathered on Friday to hear their first talk on '**Human and Robot Autonomy**' by Nigel Crook (Associate Dean, Engineering, Computing and Mathematics, Oxford Brookes University). On Saturday they enjoyed a talk called '**An introduction to big questions in science and faith**' by Ard Louis (Physics) followed by '**The servant as leader**' by Michele Hu (Professor of Clinical Neuroscience and Consultant Neurologist). Their day ended with a panel including Monique Davisson (Clinical Infection Consultant, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), Kezia Gaitskell (Consultant Pathologist & Honorary Clinical Lecturer), Mark Younger (Startup Advisor in Technology, Engineering) and chaired by Professor Ard Louis (Physics).

Friday evening attendees from all four streams gathered together for prayer in Magdalen College's Auditorium and then walked together to New College to enjoy a relaxed reception and three course meal in their gorgeous mediaeval dining hall. We heard from a representative from each stream summarising some of the highlights from the day. Saturday's proceedings started with prayer all together in Magdalen College's chapel. The two days were punctuated with lively coffee and tea breaks and opportunities to build new friendships.

Photos

- 1) DCM Fri Dinner
- 2) DCM Fri Reception
- 3) DCM Natural Sciences Talk
- 4) DCM Social Sciences Talk

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