

Annual Meeting Reflections



Nancy Stoehr earned her PharmD from the University of Wisconsin Madison, School of Pharmacy in 2006 and is currently enrolled in the Master of Education – Teaching and Learning program at Concordia University Wisconsin. Dr Stoehr is carrying out her vocation as an Assistant Professor at Concordia University Wisconsin School of Pharmacy where she primarily teaches in the pharmacy compounding laboratories. She is also continuing her pharmacy practice as a home infusion pharmacist and enjoys incorporating practice and research into her education of future pharmacists about this sub specialty in pharmacy compounding. Concordia School of Pharmacy started its first CPFI student chapter in November 2012, and Dr Stoehr is proud to serve as one of two faculty advisors for this group of Christian pharmacy students.

After conferences, I always review my notes. As this was the first CPFI conference I had attended, I was excited to reflect on my experience in Flat Rock, NC. Immediately, I noticed differences in my CPFI conference notes from my usual notes. Usually, my notes contain the following: random clinical facts that I want to remember, contact information for newly met colleagues, reference articles and books that were mentioned and, of course, coffee stains from the continuous caffeine infusion throughout the day. The first difference I noticed was that the coffee stains were replaced by tea stains – the conference was in the South after all. The second and more important difference was that my notes also contained a smattering of Bible verses throughout. Every page of notes contained at least one verse– one important tidbit of Christian knowledge or Biblical fact I wanted to review and study later.

So I got out my Bible and studied the verses that I had noted. The first verse written was Philippians 2:22, “But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel”. At first I wasn’t sure why this verse was so noteworthy that it earned a spot on my tea stained pages. But, as always, scripture provided the answer to my questions. Reading the surrounding verses and eventually the whole chapter, I found that it centered on Paul’s writings to the people of Philippi. Among the purposes for this letter, Paul used it to tell the Philippians that he wanted to send Timothy to them. Paul refers

to Timothy as remarkable because he “...will show genuine concern for

your welfare”, Philippians 2:20. Paul goes on to say in 2:21 “For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ”.

Reading these versus made me realize that CPFI is to the pharmacy profession much like Timothy was to the Philippians. Like Timothy, CPFI has worked alongside other Christian pharmacists and other Christian organizations “like a son with his father....in the work of the gospel”, to bring pharmacists to faith as well as to strengthen and shape that faith toward service in Christ. CPFI, again like Timothy, looks out not “for their own interests” but for the interests of Jesus Christ. CPFI looks at health-care from a Christian perspective, giving guidance toward maintaining professional status AND a Christ centered practice. I could immediately tell from my time at Bonclarken that my fellow CPFI members shared a “genuine concern for [my] welfare” in both the professional and spiritual realm. This stood out to me as a unique quality owned by CPFI and a quality I value highly with this group.

Further reflection confirmed that I not only heard the missions of CPFI, but I also felt them through the conference programming, the friendship and the fellowship with the other attendees. As Timothy was to provide for the Philippians, CPFI provided for me through this conference. The conference left me energized with the power of the Holy Spirit, ready to serve my Lord and do my “work of the gospel”.



Daniel Spadaro PharmD is Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), where he has served on the faculty for 35 years. He obtained his BS in Pharmacy from the Ohio State University and PharmD from the Medical University of South Carolina. His current area of interest is self-care and nonprescription drugs. He currently serves in the Experiential Education program at UAMS, and teaches self-care therapeutics, pharmacognosy and complementary/alternative medicine. He also teaches pharmacology in the physician assistant program. Dr Spadaro has served as faculty advisor to the UAMS CPFI student chapter for the past 21 years, and previously served on the CPFI Board of Directors. He and his wife, Wynona, have 4 grown children, reside in Little Rock, AR, and attend Little Rock Bible Chapel.

As a long-time member of CPFI, I have always appreciated its uniqueness within the profession. Being able to communicate with fellow believers who are facing similar work-related issues on a national level is invaluable. How important is it to be a part of a body of committed believers? The Apostle Paul expressed this need at the end of many of his letters as he thanked those who helped him in his ministry (Romans 16, 2 Timothy 4:9-22). Attending the annual CPFI meeting provides the opportunity to interact in a variety of ways with committed believers. Continuing education talks provide an in-depth Christian perspective on current issues impacting the profession. Sharing meals and attending social activities provide ample opportunities for face-to-face conversations. Devotionals allow us to worship and pray together as a body of committed believers and draw us closer together. By the end of the meeting, I always feel encouraged and my soul is refreshed and renewed.

I have been a CPFI faculty advisor for the College of Pharmacy student CPFI organization at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences for over 20 years. It has been my privilege to watch the spiritual growth of future Christian pharmacists as they progress from their first year to graduation. Unfortunately, I have also seen students put their spiritual life “on hold” for four years thinking they don’t have the time for spiritual matters. As I tell my students at the beginning of each year, there is no

neutral position when it comes to your spiritual life. We either go forward or in reverse, and putting everything “on hold” for four years is really making a decision to go in reverse. Without CPFI, our student organization may not exist and more of our students may choose to put their spiritual lives in reverse for four years. This year’s CPFI annual meeting was held in conjunction with the annual Student Retreat. One of the most significant aspects of the meeting to me was the many interactions I was able to have with the students. These are our future Christian Pharmacy leaders and I had a chance to listen to their dreams of the future and “pass the torch” of that which has been important to me as a Christian pharmacist. I believe we are heading into some very challenging times for health care and pharmacy. The words of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:1-5 come to mind. These are some of Paul’s last words before he was to be executed. He tells Timothy to “preach the Word” and warns him that many will believe false doctrines. As we move into the future, believing sound doctrine will be crucial. Student pharmacists need to have solid Christian organizations, like CPFI, so they can resist the many false doctrines they will encounter during their pharmacy careers.

The CPFI annual meeting is a rare and precious gift from God. We should not take it lightly or for granted. Instead, we should praise God for His provision by supporting the annual meeting with our attendance next year in Myrtle Beach, SC.



Daniel Wilson is a P4 student at Purdue University, College of Pharmacy. He currently serves as the Membership Transitions Coordinator for CPFI. He has also represented CPFI's student members on the Board of Directors as the 2012-2013 National Student Council Chairperson. Following graduation in May 2013, Daniel plans to complete a PGY1 residency in ambulatory care.

At the 2013 Annual Conference, we had several opportunities to discuss our role as Christian pharmacists in the changing healthcare system. Speakers such as David Stevens and Jeffrey Copeland reminded us to continue to put our faith in God in the face of uncertainty with topics such as, "What is a pharmacist to do?" and, "Finding hope in a changing health care system." Pharmacists are facing pressing challenges with the Affordable Care Act and community pharmacy accreditation. While it is important to look with faith at the changes that we cannot handle on our own, we can find encouragement in the changes for which we are inherently prepared.

One challenge facing outpatient clinical pharmacists is the release of the Accountable Care Organization 2013 Program Analysis which came as a result of the Affordable Care Act. Pharmacists working in outpatient clinics are already familiar with the struggle of financially supporting their position. Clinics are now facing more pressure

with the possibility of reimbursement adjustment based on performance measures. While the exact standards vary among ACOs, CMS has a list of 33 standards that must be included. Seven of these standards, are based on patient/caregiver experience. This means that a clinic could have a reduction in reimbursement rates based on factors such as a decrease in patient satisfaction or a perception of poor communication. While these new standards are intended to improve outcomes, the uncertainty has caused concern for many practitioners.

Though the Affordable Care Act has been the center of concern, pharmacy is faced with other changes as well. One such change is the current push for accreditation of community pharmacies. Currently two organizations, the Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation (CPPA) and the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission (URAC), have created accreditation standards which are intended to help community pharmacies stand out by providing quality care. These standards of care include effective business management, improving medication adherence, and being proactive about medication therapy management. Many people have questioned the need for multiple accreditation programs, challenged the vague criteria that they outline, and expressed concern about the economic impact on independent pharmacies. Despite many issues which must be resolved, these programs have the potential to advance the community pharmacist's role in improving health outcomes.

If you are like me, these changes may make you a little uneasy. However, we need to remember that we are ahead of the game. What are these new standards trying to accomplish? Looking

at the details of the ACO and accreditation standards, it is easy to see some central themes. They have identified the importance of taking the time to talk with your patient and make sure they understand their medications. It has been recognized that common courtesy, respect, and the ability to listen are positive qualities of a practitioner. Strategies have been developed to promote the excellent care exhibited by those pharmacists who routinely take steps to be sure that the patient comes first. As Christian pharmacists, we trust that God will guide us through these changes. If our attitude toward our profession is one of service to God, addressing these "barriers" should be easier. Will these written standards translate into a real change in practice? I would argue that they cannot be implemented by any means other than a change in the heart. If we are already practicing pharmacy in a way that puts the patient first, we are prepared for this change in the health care system.

Unfortunately, even if we have the right attitude, these issues are still present. As a student nearing the end of my academic career, I must admit that these issues only add to the already present uncertainties about the future. During pre-pharmacy, I knew that I was entering a secure field with high demand for my services. But with time, I have seen decreased job placement and increased competition. Changes in legislation and policy only add to the questions surrounding the future of our profession. However, during this time God has also shown me the importance of trusting in Him. I am thankful that He has used CPFI to help guide me to contentment as the muddled future approaches. Only through His direction can we find strength to be a light to our profession and to the world around us.