

## **2007 CLF National Student Conference Report**

-By Candace Cho, *Student Conference Director*, and Geoffrey Trotter, President of *Christian Law Students Association*, UBC

The third annual 2007 CLF National Law Student Conference was hosted by the UBC Christian Law Students Association (CLSA) at the University of British Columbia from February 15-18. The theme of the student conference this year was *Justice: A Light to the Nations*, and by all appearances, the conference lived up to this ambitious theme!

The conference kicked off on Thursday evening with a lively reception which was graciously held at the home of CLF member Peter Mogan. There was food, there was laughter and there was fun and games. Indeed, Cal's rendition of Justin Timberlake dancing will never be forgotten!

Friday was filled with an intense line-up of speaker sessions. First was *The Christian Legal Journey* Panel, which presented the different stages in a legal career from student to partner. Four perspectives were thoughtfully presented in a well-balanced manner by CLF members Geoffrey Trotter (student), Phebe Chan (junior associate), David Gileff (senior associate) and Peter Mogan (partner).

Following *The Christian Legal Journey Panel* was Dr. Carson Pue's session on *The Christian Lawyer and Leadership*. This session was a unique opportunity for the students to understand the internal process of reflection as well as the implementation skills involved in becoming an effective Christian servant leader. Philosopher and TWU lecturer Michael Horner then led a well-reasoned session on *Ethics and Morality in practice*. This session, accompanied by free pizza and pop, was an outreach-minded public lecture open to the entire law school. The issue of ethical relativism vs. universal morality prompted a number of challenging questions from non-conference delegates which led to interesting rebuttal from Michael Horner and a forum for healthy discussion and debate.

Michael Horner and Dr. Darrell Furgason then led the two breakout sessions on apologetics and the necessity of maintaining a biblical worldview to equip Christian law students to present the truth in love on their university campuses.

The final plenary session scheduled for the day was a talk by Jamie McIntosh of International Justice Mission Canada. Jamie was unfortunately forced to cancel due to illness, so

a 15-minute IJM video was shown instead, along with Ruth Ross sharing the story of a CLF student who helped with an IJM mission last year and CLF student Derek Ross relaying his experience doing research for IJM through a placement with Pro-Bono Students Canada. The students and staff then spent a half hour in worship, reflection, journaling, and prayer which was the perfect way to cap off the day's plenaries and seminars. Before heading off for dinner and social time, the students, speakers, and local lawyers broke into small groups of five for intentional mentorship time. This new initiative for a CLF Student Conference was very popular and will most likely be continued in future years.

Friday night was kept low key for the sake of many students who were still suffering from jet lag from flying in from Eastern Canada the day before. Everyone had a good time of fellowship over dinner on campus at Mahoney & Sons Restaurant, with the more energetic ones then attending a Varsity men's playoff basketball game between UBC and Trinity Western University. Indeed, it was quite refreshing to be fed so much wisdom and truth during the day, and yet still have such a wonderful opportunity to fellowship with like-minded students and lawyers from across the country.

There was an early start to the next conference day on Saturday, with Ruth Ross, Kevin Boonstra and Scott Kennedy giving the students an update and introduction to religious freedoms litigation in Canada. The men and the women then split into their separate work/life balance panels – each with four distinguished lawyers who provided practical tips on time management, as well as emphasizing the deeper spiritual truths which animate our priorities. After a final mentorship session, the students were released to enjoy a leisurely afternoon exploring the sights and sounds of downtown Vancouver. Some students chose to go shopping while others took walking tours to Granville Island Market, historic Gastown, and other areas.

The celebration banquet dinner at the Law Courts Inn was the perfect culmination of a fantastic conference weekend. Dr. John Stackhouse of Regent College spoke on *Pride, Sloth and the Christian Lawyer*, and most stayed for two and a half hours of worship, prayer, and testimonies of the Lord's work over the weekend.

On Sunday morning, the delegates attended Point Grey Community Church. Ruth, Cal, and a number of students spoke to the congregation about the Conference, and Pastor Greg delivered a timely sermon from 1 Peter 4. The service ended with a powerful time of commissioning prayer.

Looking back at the weekend as a whole, all who attended can agree that the Spirit was particularly present. There was an emphasis from a number of quarters on waiting for the Lord, hearing His voice, and stepping out in faith. Also, our times of worship and prayer at the UBC law school, and at the Law Courts Inn which is located in the same building as the BC Court of Appeal (which a few years ago declared the “Supremacy of God” in the *Charter*’s preamble to be a “dead letter”), were powerful times where many sensed a spiritual breakthrough.

As part of the leadership and organizing team on the CLSA for the conference, we cannot express enough our gratitude and appreciation for God’s mercy and anointing on the conference and all who attended. The CLSA has gone from a fractured group to one which is gelled and cohesive. It was a great blessing to host the conference this year, and we pray that the Lord will soon confirm to next year’s hosts His will for them to step out in faith and trust His provision in doing the same! Until then, let us not forget to be patient and obedient to the Holy Spirit. The Lord is merciful and just and will reward those who lovingly serve Him and His people. It has been our joy to do so over the last year, and we know that He will continue to lead us on.