

Niagara Falls Weekend Retreat Student Testimonies

As part of the inaugural class of the Christian Legal Institute, I attended a Retreat in Niagara Falls with the CLF Staff and other interns. Although our experiences and reasons for joining the Institute are unique, all of us have the same desire to let God use us by letting Him pour into our lives. I realize that the Christian Legal Institute is the kind of ministry that can help me grow in the knowledge of God and in living a life worthy of Him (Colossians 1:10). We are like jars of clay, allowing God to reveal His all-surpassing power so that not only others will be edified, but that we "may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully" (Colossians 1:11). Those who attended the Retreat encouraged each other to act as witnesses for Christ "so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 4:15). The Retreat provided spiritual support and encouragement for those who needed to be strengthened by the Lord because of stress or personal struggles. I was able to draw inspiration from various Christian lawyers' testimonies ("those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed" (Proverbs 13:25)). I am reminded that if we practice law without a higher purpose, we will be miserable. In other words, if we start to be self-centered and do everything on our own, we will be doomed to failure. As soon as we give God our service, He will use us in wonderful and miraculous ways. This reminder serves as a confirmation that my desire to practice law is correct. - *Janice*

The conference gave us an honest look into the everyday lives of lawyers. The practice of law is not as glamorous and comfortable as one may have thought! The beautiful thing for the Christian lawyer is that the struggles of the legal profession are opportunities in disguise: the Lord humbles the proud and dignified jurist and reveals Himself to be the all-sufficient One even for those who are esteemed by the world. CLF lawyers are setting an example for me of sincerity and brokenness before the Lord. It is when I contrast this image with the protected and hardened visage of others that I see the effects of the Spirit's work in the lives of His people most clearly. Chaplain Cooke's passion for the word of God and his pastoral heart for the people of God have been an inspiration to me. It was awesome to hear about how his simple practice of calling lawyers to pray for them was having such a profound effect. It is a blessing to have Chaplain Cooke's years of experience in ministry at the disposal of CLF. - *Josh*

The lawyers at the retreat were willing to show us another side of law through their own vulnerabilities and weaknesses. The transparency was a blessing to me and I believe the other attendees, as it clearly pointed to our need to depend on God's faithfulness and strength. CLF's chaplain, Reid Cooke, challenged us to identify anything in our lives that could stand in the way of truly trusting in God. As a law student, involvement in CLF retreats provides me with the chance to internalize these messages and to gain a thorough understanding of the issues surrounding a godly law career. I am most thankful for the many occasions to enter into prayer and trust I will continue to see those prayers answered. - *Heather*

The retreat encouraged me to take up the mantle of leadership and make my mark in this world. If these brave lawyers can keep their chin up despite the trials and tribulations that we face on this earth, then there is no reason why I cannot do the same. If I should falter, I must remind myself that the opposition is intense and I must press on relentlessly. Heavenly Father, let it not be said that I have caused harm to, rather than glorified, Christianity through my actions. Amen. - *Matthew*

The Retreat was an excellent opportunity to connect with lawyers and others, to encourage each other and enjoy the Niagara region together. I was greatly encouraged by the message and heart for ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ to lawyers and others whom God places in our lives. All the panelists were interesting, and the experiences they shared helped me to envision the future potential of my own calling. Reid and Esther Cooke

make an excellent team together. I was thoroughly blessed by Esther's worship leading and Reid's sincere and informative teaching. - *Monick*

As a pre-law student, the retreat was a first-hand glimpse into the profession of law from a Christian perspective. The topics and subjects addressed during the retreat are rarely, if ever, addressed in law school. Beyond that the fellowship was refreshing. It was a pleasant surprise to experience the camaraderie among the lawyers, CLF staff, and students in attendance. It was advantageous for the students to have an opportunity to network and be mentored by several seasoned practitioners and veterans in their faith. There was a mutual feeling of being a part of something much larger. - *Melissa*