

My First Introduction to Veritas

My first introduction to Veritas came through listening to the audio book of “Finding God beyond Harvard” by the forum founder Kelly Monroe Kullberg, while I was finishing a post-doc in Australia. Within the book she speaks candidly of her struggles and some of it resonated strongly with things that were happening in my life at that time, barrenness in my relationship with God, relationship confusion as well as a challenge to the intellectual veracity of my faith. As I listened to Kelly relate the Veritas story the whole concept of the a Veritas Forum really appealed to me as it provided a place for earnest exploration and dialogue of the Christian faith within an academic setting. At that time I was investigating what was going on in Cambridge where I knew I was starting a new post-doc position in Jan 2008 so I was excited to find a post on the Christian Graduate Website

requesting for people interested in helping organise a Veritas event in Spring 2008. I emailed and explained that I wouldn't be arriving until the beginning of the year but I would be happy to help out with whatever was required. So they kept me up to date with the plans and prayer points until I arrived just before the first forum. It was a really great introduction into the Christian community in Cambridge and I was really inspired by the energetic bunch on the planning committee, all clearly gifted individuals in the midst of busy post-graduate degrees yet really passionate about sharing their faith with their friends and colleagues.

Once the event was over I took part in the debriefing session and indicated my willingness along with many others that we were keen to help out with the organization of a second forum. However as the months went by it became apparent that the majority of those from the first committee would not be around or available for the next year



including the previous years committee president and I was increasingly being encouraged to consider the position. From a personal point of view this filled

me with fear as I felt inadequate and yet I knew that I was passionate about the Veritas concept as God had used it powerfully in my life while in

“Looking back over the past year God has been amazingly faithful in meeting our needs”

Australia and I knew Veritas could really have an impact in Cambridge. Therefore after prayer and reflection I became one of the most reluctant leaders of all time!

Looking back over the past year God has been amazingly faithful in meeting our needs, whether that be finding speakers, problems with logistics and most of all by providing a great bunch of people to work with who have shared the vision and worked incredibly hard. From a personal point of view God has met my

needs as I have had to step out of my comfort zone on numerous occasions and trust on his resources rather than my own. Our event in Lent term “Can capital markets be moral?” was a real encouragement with an attendance of approximately 180 the majority of whom were non-Christians.

We look forward to building on that in November 11-13th with a forum entitled “Becoming human” which will look at what it means to be human from scientific, philosophical, and religious perspectives. Confirmed speakers include MIT Media



Lab neuroscientist Rosalind Picard (in collaboration with the Faraday

Institute), philosopher and bio-ethicist Nigel Cameron, and, to round out the



field, poet and rock-n'-roll historian Steve Turner. Over the course of the four days the main talks will alternate with smaller seminars, culminating in another panel on Friday night, which will seek to provide an interdisciplinary and inter-faith exchange between contrasting views of the human person. As a committee we would appreciate your prayers for both the planning process and the events themselves. I would also be happy to chat to anyone thinking of starting a Veritas forum at their campus and may require more information.

Ruth Hogg

“What is impossible with man is possible with God”

I asked Jesus to come into my life in December 2005. For a long time I felt like I was doing something wrong, but I was afraid. I didn't really understand what people were talking about when they described baptism, about washing away sins, dying to yourself, being reborn with Christ. I knew I had changed, but that's about all I really

understood. When I bowed my head to Jesus for the first time I didn't understand sin, I didn't understand my separation from God, or Jesus' atonement and the Grace God had bestowed on me. I only knew that I

“I grew up culturally Jewish, but never really believing in God”

needed him. I knew I needed him, that God existed and wanted me, and that the things in the Bible were true.

I grew up culturally Jewish, but never really believing in God. We rarely talked about God, but I could pray, I could read Torah, I could break bread, I was even Bar Mitzvahed according to tradition, but it was never more than just tradition. If God ex-

isted he wasn't really interested in us, but we did these things anyway because we were a part of a culture and a community, and that's what we were supposed to do.

When I was 14 my mom passed away. I wasn't angry with God, I just reinforced my belief that if he was there he wasn't interested. At the time I believed there were things in life under my control and I needed to be strong enough to control them, and that there were things out of my control and they weren't worth worrying about. It didn't seem to do anyone any good to see me upset so I wasn't. I wanted to be the rock my dad and my sister could lean against. I didn't want to need anyone, but I wanted them to need me. I wanted my family to need me, I wanted my friends to feel good when I was around, and I wanted people to feel safe around me. I wanted to be somebody's hero, and if I'm being honest with myself it's probably one of the biggest reasons I joined the Navy.

But when Jesus came to me, or rather when I started listening, he told me I did need something. Now, I didn't like talking about God, much less Jesus - and I thought most of the Biblical stories were ridiculous - but I started learning about the love Christians had for each other, and I saw the love they knew God had for them. The

hope they had in Jesus was foreign to me. I wanted it, but I couldn't believe it was true. Christianity seemed tailor made to fit the inner desires of people; and that made it seem more, not less, contrived. It was as if someone said, "What do people really want? Eternal life? Fulfillment? Then that's what we'll put in here." So I wanted their hope, I just didn't want to believe.

I did need something though and I shopped around. God let me stumble along blindly for a while; I suppose I wasn't ready to come to him yet. I went to self help books with titles like "Unlimited Power," and religions like Buddhism because the no God/no soul philosophy fit

"I was also worried because I didn't know why I needed Jesus, just that I needed Him"

right in with what I wanted to believe. But the deeper I would get into something the more disillusioned I became with it. Then Jesus was presented to me again, and that hope I wanted, which didn't seem to be present anywhere else I looked, resurfaced. I felt awkward listening to it, and when I came to Cambridge a few weeks later I forgot about it, but I was nagged by

the thought that some of the brightest people I knew, people who I respected the most, believed this stuff.



Almost by accident I joined the Alpha program run by the Christian Graduate Society. Though I was a little curious, my connection to Christianity was fragile. Had they started with my sin or even by reading the Bible I would have left, but they started with stuff perfect for an engineer like me. They talked about whether the Bible was an accurate historical document. I wanted numbers and facts and that's what I got, so I went back. It slowly built up from there and I started reading the Bible. I wanted to figure out how a book could survive unchanged for 2,000 years. What could be in it? I marveled to a friend, the same friend in fact who had told me about Jesus before coming to Cambridge, about how each piece of this puzzle had been presented to me just when I was ready: not too early, not too late.

Had Jesus been presented to me a few weeks earlier, when I was deep



into Buddhism, I would have ignored it, a few weeks later and I would have been out of the country and not been around to hear it. It was only by chance I ended up at a party when I first came to Cambridge and I was invited to Alpha. It was like that all along the way. At each point in my progression it seemed as soon as I broke through one barrier, the next step was presented to me. My friend's response was a question: "What's more likely, that this series of coincidences has occurred by chance, perfectly

over the last two years of your life, or that there is someone who has control, that God is waiting for you and helping you to come to him."

My journal entry (scribbled while still on the phone) said "Timing! Could this be possible? Did God know?!"

And that was the

day I knew God was real. I still didn't have to believe in Jesus, but all the sudden it was possible. I read the Bible more fervently and began to pray to God, who I now believed to be there. I prayed He would teach me what was true, and as I continued to read the Bible, it too became more real to me and I was finally left with a contradiction in my otherwise rational life.

How could I believe God was real, that the Bible was real, but not accept Jesus? In order to live without accepting Jesus, I consciously had to live a lie, and it was hard. I started to dream about being a Christian, about what life would be like, and about the hope I would have. It was in one particularly morbid dream that I closed my eyes and asked Jesus to take me. It was the most liberating feeling I have ever had,

"but at that moment Jesus took a big step toward me. I knew I needed Him and asked him into my life"

and knew, I could study forever, read the Bible a thousand times, and endlessly debate science and religion, but never get a step closer to Jesus, but at that moment Jesus took a big step toward me. I knew I needed Him and asked him into my life.

I was relieved and scared at the same time. I had been battling

with this for weeks, months even, and I was exhausted and happy for it to be over, but scared because I didn't know if I could maintain it, because I was worried about my gullibility, worried what I would say to my family and all my Jewish friends back home. I was also worried because I didn't know why I needed Jesus, just



that I needed Him. I didn't really understand sin at the time or how it applied to me. I still struggle with that understanding, but it's become more clear over time. Prayer, scripture, and the fellowship I have at church and with Christian friends - now spread all over the world - have been Christ's avenues to draw me closer to him. I realized I was right to think I could never maintain it on my own, but I also know my fears were unfounded because I never will be alone, what is impossible with man is possible with God.

Michael Dodson

Cranfield Graduate Christian Union

GCU witnessed a fresh start with the new appointment of the GCU Committee members as opposed to having only one person bear all responsibilities. In the wake of 2008/2009 session, the GCU experienced a positive change in the New Year. This year, God brought more labourers into the workforce. The team of five was able to contribute positively towards the expansion of God's Kingdom in Cranfield.



Just before the New Year started, the GCU held a welcome party to receive new students. Also an outreach was organised at the students clubs and societies' fair to make contact with students.

In December 2008, the GCU organised a Christmas Carol which provided an opportunity to reach out to the students. We put together a student choir as well as a guest choir from the local Baptist Church. A guest minister was also invited to share the true meaning of Christmas. With a good turnout, we were able to witness for Christ to the community within and outside the campus.

By March 2009, the Christianity Explored course with the English Made Easy edition was put together as an informal Bible study aimed at teaching the fundamentals of the Christian faith with focus on the

“The vision of the CGCU is to let Christ shine through her to rescue those who are still in darkness.”

book of Mark. Attendees were given free copies of the Bible as well as the Christianity Explored Guide which gave them an opportunity to have the Gospel presented in a way that is easy to understand.

Other activities include an outreach focused on Mandarin speakers (usually from China). Through partnership with the Chinese Mission Organisation in Milton Keynes, the



GCU invited Prof Lian Bing (originally Chinese) from Massachusetts University in the USA to share his testimony of getting to know Christ. This was successful as Prof. Bing shared his experience in Manda-

rin, providing a better understanding to Mandarin speakers. Alongside were Chinese refreshments provided by the CU. This deepened the understanding of the participants and their interest in Christianity. Since then two of the participants have made attempts to attend the regular GCU meetings

Also a film show (Pilgrim's Progress, latest edition) at the Students Bar on an evening was successful to reach people non-Christians. A tour of the historic churches (Baptist, Methodist and Church of England) in



Cranfield Village was useful in reaching students who were interested in exploring the English cultural heritage. The vision of the GCU is to let Christ shine through her to rescue those who are still in darkness. We rely on the God of light to shine upon us in order for His work to be done on the campus. *God Bless!*

Tola Bankole

The next pages show three posters from the National Postgraduate Conference, where the students were asked to write about how their faith affects, challenges and influence their work. I hope this gives you a glimpse of how students are allowing Christ to be central to every area of their life.

Helen Moore, UCL

Circadian Biology

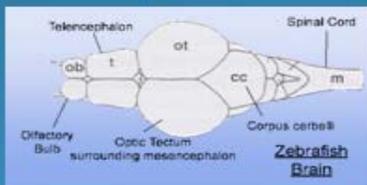
This is the study of how our bodies' behaviour and activity adapts to the time of day.

Tumour cells proliferate most frequently in the early morning – knowing this we can time therapy and improve treatment efficacy.

There are many genetic and molecular components to the circadian clock, and our further understanding can help chronopharmacology, jet lag, sleep disorders, seasonal affective disorder, shift workers, and many more.

Zebrafish

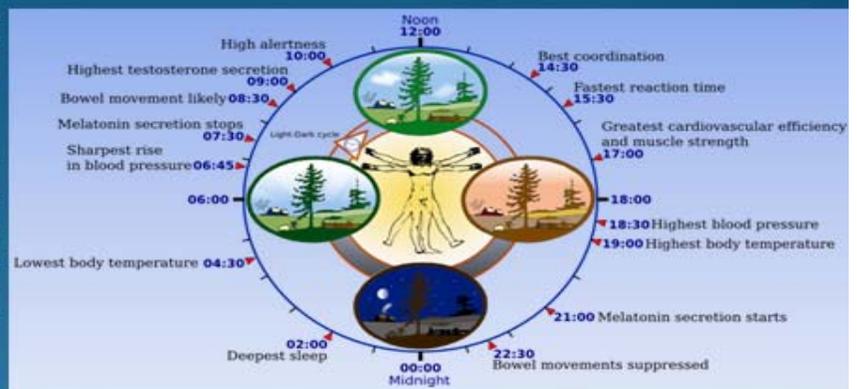
All zebrafish organs are directly light-responsive and can be entrained by light. - different to humans, where only the retina is directly light responsive. Is there a neuronal pacemaker in the zebrafish akin to the mammalian system?



I've spent the first year of my 4 year MRC Biomedical PhD programme in 3 different labs, and hope to use a collaboration between these groups to answer questions about how the zebrafish has adapted to a 24 hour cycle.

Encouraged by faith

As with any PhD, at times my experiments can be monotonous and it can be extremely frustrating to produce results. Knowing that I'm finding out more about God's creation keeps me motivated in my work. It truly is a privilege to be a scientist and to learn more about God's works.



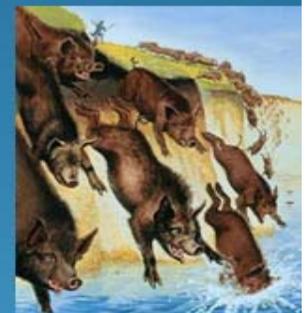
God's Impact on my work Ethical treatment of animals

Matt 8:28-32

Jesus puts demons into a herd of pigs that then drowned, showing he would rather have many animals die than 2 men suffer.

We rule over animals, they are our responsibility - Gen 1:26-31, Exo 23:10, Lev 25:1.

In my research I aim to minimise: the requirement of animals, stress to the animals, and numbers used.



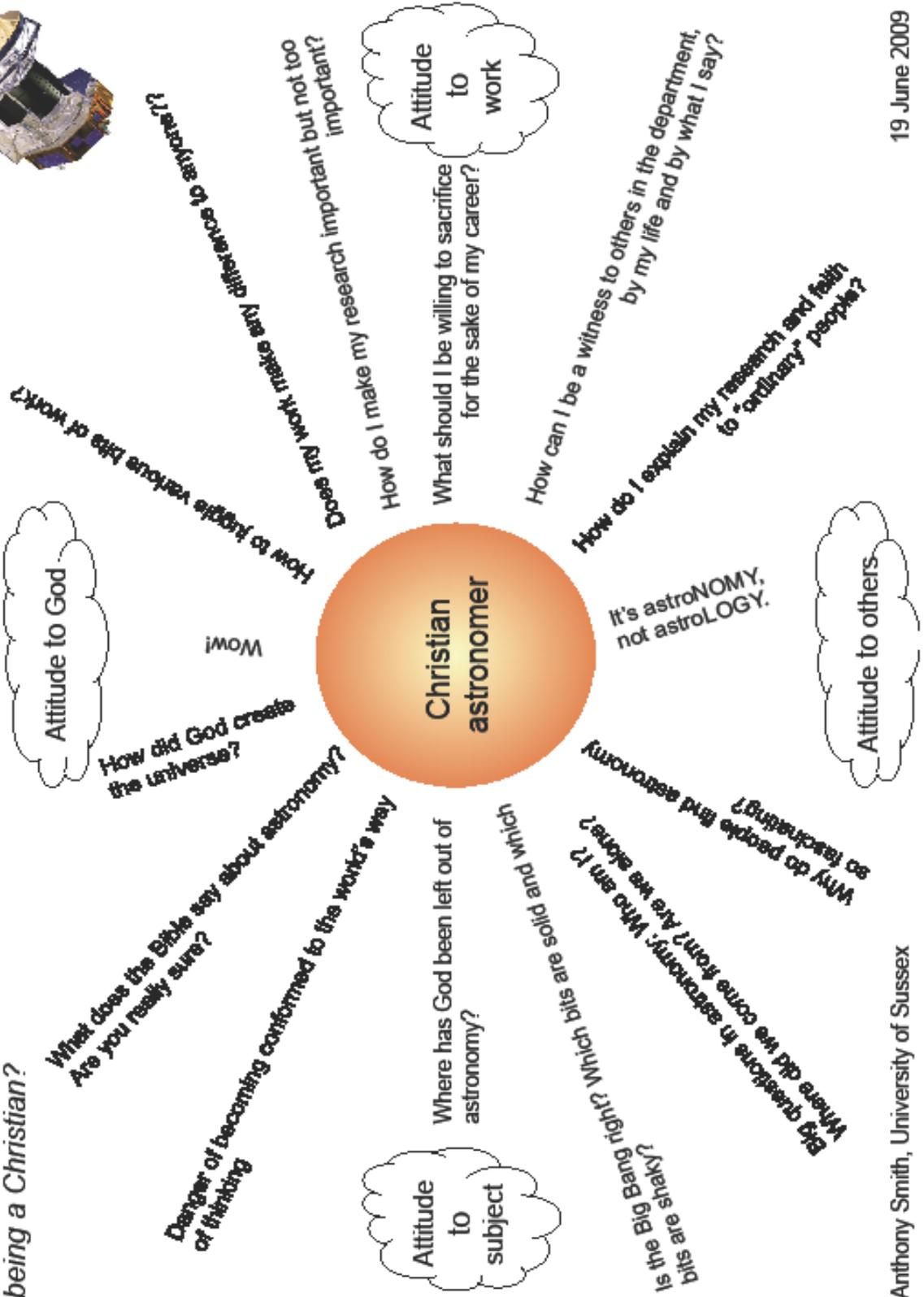
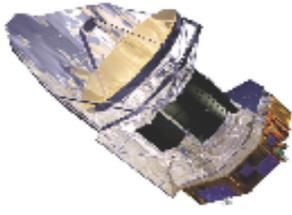
Psalm 104:19-24

*He made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the beasts of the forest creep about.*

*The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.
When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens.
Man goes out to his work and to his labour until the evening.*

*O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.*

I finished counting galaxies for my PhD in the autumn, and for this academic year I have been involved in the Herschel Space Observatory (pictured right), trying to figure out how to use a computer to spot blobs in images. What does this have to do with being a Christian?



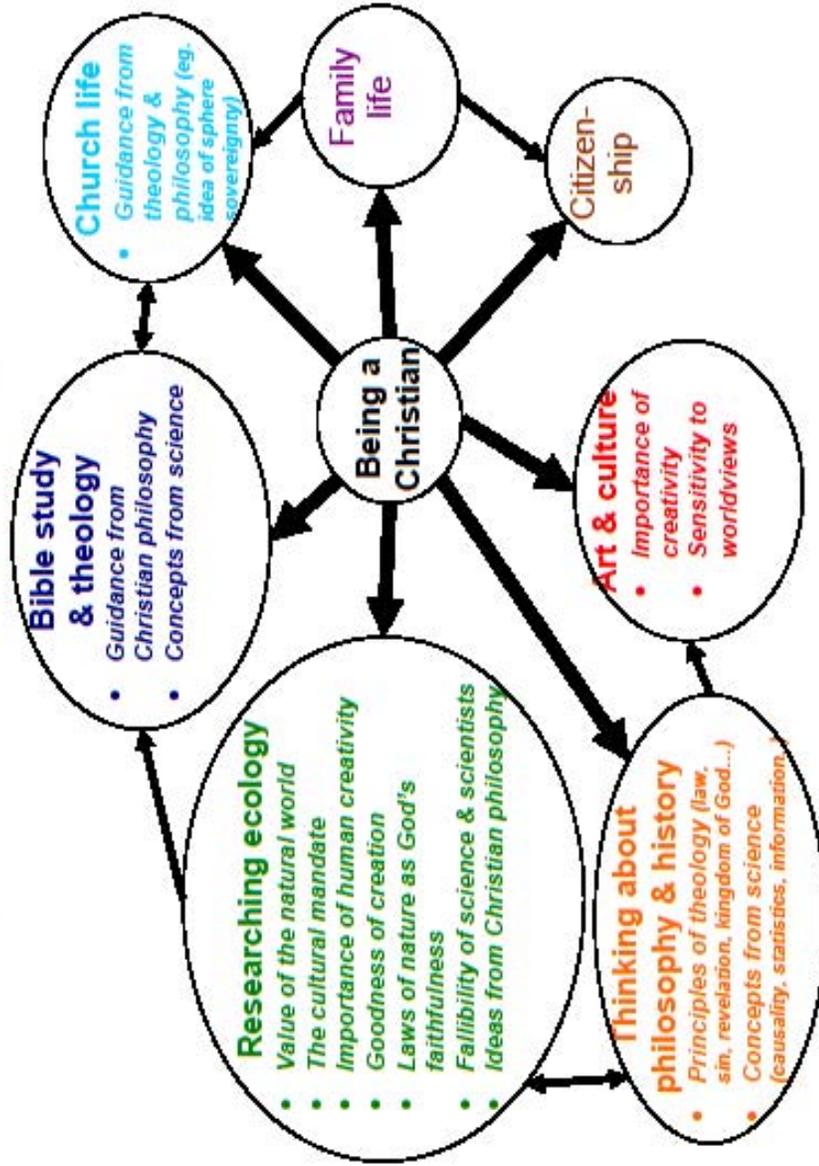
Richard Gunton: Relating Christianity and Ecology

Post-doctoral research in plant ecology at INRA Dijon, France:
How the characteristics of weed communities respond to crop rotations



On the relationship between faith and research:

My Christian convictions should influence everything I do. I can't separate any aspect of my life as "faith" because I'm always guided by the things I know to be true. So I hope that being a Christian affects my research and everything else. And my research can shape the ways I think about church, theology, philosophy, culture, etc.



“What’s wrong with infinite regresses?”

I am currently studying an MA in Philosophy with a focus on metaphysics and the power of the infinite regress argument in philosophy. In October I will begin a PhD looking specifically at Aquinas’ Second Proof for the Existence of God.

My faith has been central in choosing the subject matter of my dissertation and projected thesis, as I feel that this particular argument of

Aquinas’ is often overlooked in favour of the question of temporal causation. By digging into it I hope to see whether it can be used in a contemporary setting as a powerful theistic argument or not. I have also spent the year researching philosophical aspects of contemporary physics such as relativity and quantum mechanics.

This has been a great opportunity to engage with the philosophy of

some major philosopher-theologians such as Aquinas. It has been a challenge to rethink some of the orthodox attributes of God in the light of modern definitions of infinity, but these have largely been positive and affirming challenges.

Kevin Macnish

University of Leeds

A note from Remi

Thanks be to God for the amazing work he is doing in the graduate community across the country: so many students have been blessed with finishing their MPhil and PhD. Some are still writing up their theses with the hope of finishing by the end of this year. In the midst of all their academic work, God’s name is glorified as students and staff live out their faith.

In Manchester this term the first ever Postgraduate-led Fellowship was launched. In Edinburgh,

Humberto Gumeta is going to be a Reach volunteer working with the local Friends International team from this August. He will specifically focus on Postgraduate-led ministry and come alongside Kim, a PhD student who has already been bringing together Postgraduates and Academic staff for the development of a Postgraduate-led fellowship. The first meeting of the group will happen in September.

In the next academic year, I will be spending most of my time on working with local Friends Interna-

tional staff and the Postgraduate community in three cities of the UK. I will help with developing a strategy for a sustainable Postgraduate-led fellowship that would have a lasting influence for Christ on their campus, with the hope of setting an example for the rest of the country. There is so much else going on, I hope you have enjoyed reading what the students have to say. Please keep us in your prayers.

In His Grace, *Remi*



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*Transforming hearts & minds in
the postgraduate student
community*

Supporting us

We value your continuing prayers and financial support. If you are able, would you please consider giving to this work. You can do so by visiting www.friendsinternational.org.uk. You also can send cheques to Friends International address on the left. Please mark your gift “For Remi Tobler”. Thank you.

For your information

Christian Postgraduate-led Ministry Coordinator



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Resources for Postgrads:

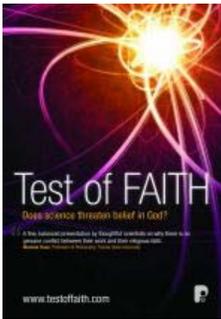
Test of FAITH

Thinking about science and faith

I expect that every postgrad student, no matter what their subject, will find themselves in a conversation about science and faith at some point during their years at university. At the Faraday Institute we've developed some resources to help both scientists and non-scientists from a variety of backgrounds to tackle these issues in an informal setting.

Test of FAITH

Test of Faith is a three-part documentary that uses interviews mixed with stunning and creative visuals to carry you through the main issues where science and faith meet.



The first part asks whether science and faith really are at war, and then uses concepts in astronomy to look at the real relationship between science and Christian faith. The second part looks at creation, how scientists and theologians make sense of the Genesis account in the light of scientific discovery, and how we should care for creation. The final part looks at neuroscience, thinking about what it means to be people made in the image of God, and how this perspective informs ethical debates such as cloning and genetic testing.



With subtitles in English, Chinese (simplified characters), French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish, and dubbing in Arabic and Farsi, it should be a useful tool for a variety of international groups.



The contributors include: Dr Denis Alexander, Professor Katherine Blundell, Professor John Bryant, Rev Dr Alasdair Coles, Dr Francis Collins, Professor Simon Conway Morris, Professor Peter Harrison, Sir John Houghton, Dr Ard Louis, Professor Alister McGrath, Professor Bill Newsome, Rev Dr John Polkinghorne, Rev Dr David Wilkinson, and Dr Jennifer Wiseman.

The course

- The study material that accompanies the documentary series is designed to help small groups to watch the DVD in short chunks and discuss the issues raised. It's flexible, so you can pick the topics that are most relevant to the group, and you can work at a level that suits everyone – ranging from a very basic look at the main concepts, to deep philosophical discussion!



The book

- *Test of Faith: Spiritual Journeys with Scientists* features ten scientists, all of whom are featured in the Test of Faith video resources (on the DVD or online – see below). They tell the story of how they came to faith, how they got into science, and how the two relate. It's an easy read, and doesn't use any scientific or Christian jargon.

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The website

At www.testoffaith.com you will find a range of resources appearing over the next few months, including video,



articles, links, reviews and materials for church services. We also have a Facebook page and YouTube channel where you can rate the videos, and discuss the issues. Spin-off projects include youth, schools and kids materials.

Are you ready?

The scientists and theologians involved in Test of Faith have shared their thoughts and experiences. Now it's over to you!

You can order Test of Faith online at <http://www.authenticmedia.co.uk>, or sign up to our newsletter on the website to find out about special offers.

Ruth Banciewicz, Test of Faith project leader

▶ The last page of Grads-2-Grads focuses on a subject matter of interest or other resource available for postgraduate students. www.cpgrad.org.uk ▶