

# The Story: Postgraduate Christian Ministry around the UK

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**friends**  
INTERNATIONAL

## One year on: Remi's reflection

Looking back, it has been a very exciting, inspiring encouraging and challenging year! I would like to share with you some of the amazing things that have happened in this time.

I started this ministry knowing of only Cambridge and Oxford postgraduate groups. Now, I have contacted and made connection with many more postgraduate groups across the country and there are even some new groups in the process of being formed. All of this would not have been possible without the groups themselves, local churches, various individuals and my advisory committee.

One of the wonderful things that has happened and is continuing to happen is to bring all the groups together, creating a sense of connectedness among the different Christian postgrads in the different universities across the UK. It is wonderful to create opportunities for networking between postgraduate groups at different universities. This has been facilitated by the creation of the National Postgraduate website. [www.cpgrad.org.uk](http://www.cpgrad.org.uk)

I have had the opportunity and the privilege of meeting Christian academics in the different universities. In Warwick there are faculty members working on developing postgraduate and staff fellowships, while at Imperial College London, staff, postgrads and postdocs are enjoying a weekly fellowship time. In Sussex a group meets to support each other and reach out to their fellow postgrads. They have built a leadership team and are now moving towards bringing together a group of diverse Christian professionals to be their advisory council. Cambridge and Oxford have taken up the challenge of hosting the first ever Veritas fora in the UK. These are just a few things going on across the UK.

A great deal of my time is spent travelling, speaking at various Friends International and UCCF team days, with students, faculty members and church leaders. I have also had the opportunity to spend encouraging time observing the amazing ministry that the various Friends International staff

are doing with international postgraduate students in their regions. While in St. Andrews, I met with students who seem very interested to see a postgraduate ministry develop, I was also fortunate to be there when the monthly local church leaders meeting was happening. I had the opportunity to speak at this meeting.

The visit to St Andrews gave me a richer insight to the necessity of bringing together church leaders, postgraduates, faculty members and anyone who feels called to postgraduate ministry and sharing the vision. This is very helpful in the process of moving forward with the ministry. It helps each group to see how they fit into the big picture of building God's kingdom.

There are some challenges along the way as well! I have had good meetings with students, people that seem very keen to see a focus on postgraduate ministry started, but months after this meeting, still nothing has been set in motion for the ministry. Please pray for courage and trust in the Lord Jesus for these groups.

I have also been involved in various other activities, such as one-on-one contacts with postgraduates and visiting scholars, Christianity Explored, postgraduate book discussion groups, UCCF missions, Cambridge International Outreach, Kairos team meetings and my local Church, Eden Baptist Church.

My outlook for the coming year is to network with more groups, locate further universities without postgraduate groups and help develop groups there. I would like to try and strengthen links of groups with their local churches. Moreover, I hope to visit Canada to give a ministry update and thanks to ministry supporters there in person. Finally, I hope to raise more funds for the ministry.

Please praise God with me, for all the amazing things He is doing in the lives of students across the country. Thank you for your continuing ministry partnership!

In His Grace, Remi



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## News From Across The Country!

### Strathclyde University, Glasgow

Glasgow's International Postgraduate Fellowship (aka Students4Christ) was founded about six years ago, by Matthew, a PhD student from India studying at Strathclyde University. He originally arranged to meet with friends in the university chaplaincy to pray at lunchtimes during the week. Apparently, they made so much noise that it attracted the attention of others, including one girl who was so curious she came to ask them what it was they were doing which had disturbed her lunch so! In the end she decided to join them, and later became a fundamental member of the new fellowship!

Since then the group has grown into a proper fellowship which now meets on Friday evenings to start off the weekend in praise and worship, with testimonies, bible discussion and prayer for one another and the world. It is amazing to see students and young professionals from all corners of the world united with one common aim: to glorify God,

their Father. It really gives us a wee picture of what heaven will be like; and our fellowship verse has got to be Psalm 133:1 which says, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" It is here that God commands His blessing (v.3). To us it is not just any Christian fellowship, but it is a true family away from home. In Psalm 68: 6 it says, "God sets the lonely in families", and this is truly what He has done for us as internationals away from our family, maybe spouse, and even children. God provides another family for us here and we are able to carry each others burdens (Gal.6:2) and love one another as He intended, whatever life will throw at us! He is our blessed heavenly Father and He has been gracious and compassionate to us! He is always faithful. Amen!

For More Information Please contact: Jamie Trelogan  
[sfc\\_glasgow@hotmail.com](mailto:sfc_glasgow@hotmail.com)



### Leeds University

Leeds Christian Postgrad group started about 18 months ago, as a small group of Christians in the University who wanted to meet together to support one another in their place of work and study. That remains our focus and it's great to see the mailing list getting steadily larger and new faces each week. We meet for about an hour on Wednesday lunchtimes in the Chaplaincy for fellowship, Bible study and prayer. Over the summer we looked at 'The Dawkins letters' together – a response to Richard Dawkin's 'The God Delusion' and we have just recently started a series of studies looking at Philipians. It is great to have an opportunity in the middle of the week to take some time out to spend with God and supporting one another in what can be a difficult place to work at times. We have also had a variety of social events that normally involve food! These have been a good time to spend time together and to get to know one another better.



Thank God for good fellowship and fun together as a group and pray that we would continue to find ways to reach out to all at the University, both as a group and individually.

For information please contact [fbsleh@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:fbsleh@leeds.ac.uk) or [een2dgd@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:een2dgd@leeds.ac.uk).

### University of Surrey

The story of our Postgraduate Christian Fellowship is knit tightly to the story of one man, Dr Tim Brown. Forgive me, Tim.

The University of Surrey is a middle-of-the-road institution, whose main claim to fame is good employability. We're also in the saddle of the South, and all the materialism, cynicism and despondency that entails. Students here are a good lot, but they're focused on enjoying themselves and getting a job - philosophy, politics, religion all get brushed aside. The postgraduate follows the undergraduate trend and mixes in an even larger proportion of international students. Most postgrads keep themselves to themselves, and although there are many Christian postgraduates, few get to know each other.

God has, however, given us a driving force, a motivator, a lightning rod. Mr Brown (as was) brought us together, arranged meetings and kept us all up to date. I remember having some quite intellectual chats about the Christian lifestyle. Like most of the members, I knew Tim because he was, frankly, part of the furniture in the Surrey student Christian sphere, and he nudged and prodded and reminded and emailed until I finally remembered and turned up. We do have a Staff & Postgraduate Christian Fellowship, but it's almost entirely staff, and I always forget to go.

Tim got a proper job in Denmark, was gone, and the fellowship moved into a time of hiatus, with our glorious leader off learning Timsdansk, and no forward momentum. After two years of receiving some excellent missives from Daneland, Tim came back. As staff. But he's still got a heart for postgrads, and God seems to have brought him back for a reason. We're currently getting back on our feet, with Tim's motivating force back behind us. And his roof over our heads. And his sandwiches, and witty banter. We're also submitting to the modern world and using an email list to communicate.

So what would I like to say to other Christian postgraduates? I would say value your motivating people, and even more so

value the people that keep everything ticking over. Don't be scared to engage with each other. Fellowship



and community are what make the body of Christ, and who else is God going to work through? So here's to the Tims amongst us, the sociable binding forces that enable the body to exist, and provide the sandwiches, and here's hoping we find people that can keep things going. Surrey's postgraduate fellowship is back, and I look forward to what God plans to do with it and through it.

By: Phil Howard.

For more information please contact Dr Tim Brown at [tim@brown76.name](mailto:tim@brown76.name)

### Cranfield University

God has been merciful to each and everyone of us in Cranfield graduate CU. Some of our members are working in Scotland and some has gone back to their respective country. This year, we have a lot of members, 43 signed up. More are still coming. We con-



tinue to pray that God would bring a lot of students to His fold. We had a successful outreach barbecue, the turn out was quite big. We know that the Spirit of God is moving and doing great things in Cranfield University. We have Christian books stall about 3 to 4 times in a year. This books stall is co-run by staffs Christian fellowship. All the books are free and everyone is welcome to pick whatever suit their interests.

The GCU is not only for students but for all who are willing to participate. Our spouses and family members on campus do attend as well. We pray on Mondays and study the scriptures on Thursdays. God's love and blessing will continually be with us. I want to encourage all Christians out there to embrace who they are in Christ and also let others know what life is like if they walk with Christ. The Bible says "with God all things are possible". We must be passionate in what we do, that is proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to all. Be steadfast and God will reward you greatly. May God richly bless you all. Amen.

For more Information Please contact: Tamas Nagy at [t.nagy@Cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:t.nagy@Cranfield.ac.uk)



# What is a Veritas Forum?

Veritas Forums are university events that engage students and faculty in discussions about life's hardest questions and the relevance of Jesus Christ to all of life. The forums are created by local university students, professors, and ministers. Veritas' mission statement: "We create forums for the exploration of true life. We seek to inspire the shapers of tomorrow's culture to connect their hardest questions with the person and story of Jesus Christ."

## The Veritas Forum at Cambridge 2008

### Personal Faith in the Public Sphere

In the UK in general, and in Cambridge in particular, there has been much discussion about *religion in the public sphere*. While some have argued that one's religious convictions should have no bearing on decisions that one makes as a 'public person', it seems inevitable that one's most deeply-held convictions will influence the way one performs one's job and the political positions one adopts. The pressing question of the day is not whether personal faith should influence decisions that one makes in the public sphere, but how and in what ways. To explore these and related questions, a group of graduate students, faculty, and staff are organizing the first-ever Veritas Forum at the University of Cambridge.

The Veritas Forum, scheduled for the first week of March, (Feb 29<sup>th</sup> - March 4<sup>th</sup>) is a series of lectures and seminars designed to facilitate discussion among students and faculty about life's most important and challenging questions and about the relevance of Jesus Christ to all of life. Although its interactive nature designed to give members of the university an opportunity to explore and define their own beliefs has made Veritas Forums popular in the United States and other countries, this particular

format has never been tried at Cambridge. Confirmed speakers for the event include **Baroness Caroline Cox**, **Dr. Elaine Storkey**, **Sir John Polkinghorne**, and **Professor Alister McGrath**.



The speakers at this event, as well as its organizers, are committed to the Christian faith and world-view, and will explore the complex issue of the role of personal faith in the public sphere from a Christian perspective. However, the organizers believe that everyone benefits when people with many different points of view respectfully consider life's most challenging and important questions together. Thus, they invite members of all Christian denominations, adherents to other faiths, and those of no faith at all, to come and join in the dialogue. In wrestling with these difficult questions, participants will not only put the Christian world-view to the test, but their own convictions as well.

For more information please contact The Chair [veritascambridge@gmail.com](mailto:veritascambridge@gmail.com) [www.cam.ac.uk/societies/cgs](http://www.cam.ac.uk/societies/cgs)

### For Your Information



National Postgraduate Ministry Coordinator

Remi Tobler contact details:

7 Ferry Lane, Chesterton, Cambridge. CB4 1NT [remi.tobler@friendsinternational.org.uk](mailto:remi.tobler@friendsinternational.org.uk) [www.cpgrad.org.uk](http://www.cpgrad.org.uk)

Perhaps one of the most exciting things to be born out of the Oxford Graduate Christian Union and its renaissance in the last academic year is the convening of the first Veritas Forum at Oxford. In the '06 – '07 year, the GCU seemed to hit a nerve in Oxford as it sought to create a space where graduate students could come and ask the tough questions of life and faith, and in particular, with the question of how Christ might be relevant to our respective fields of study. In this respect, the GCU saw itself as doing mission in the kingdom sense of enlarging the faith of believers, whilst at the same time creating a safe place for non-Christians to explore Christianity and its impact on everyday life.



In the same vein, the Veritas Forum at Oxford will seek to demonstrate the relevance of Christ to academic study, and indeed to all areas of life, through a series of events concentrated over three days. Our theme is ***Blessed are the Poor*** and will seek to be a genuine engagement with the big

questions of poverty and blessedness in this world, and significantly, with the issue of material poverty and its alleviation.

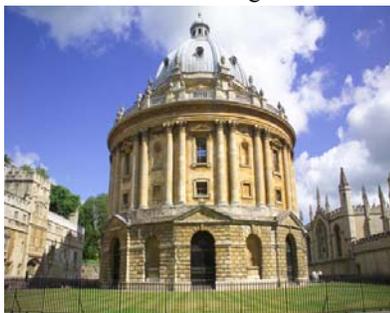
The programme for the Forum at Oxford will include: As an introduction to our theme, a **Rich/Poor Dinner** on Friday 18 January, 2008. This fundraising dinner will seek to raise awareness as to the realities of global wealth distribution. Our major keynote event, ***Blessed are the Poor***, to be held at the Sheldonian Theatre on Friday 25 January, 2008. This event will be a direct engagement with the issue of material poverty and its alleviation. Our confirmed speakers are **Lord Brian Griffiths**,

## Oxford American Mission:

For a visiting scholar, few things could be more exciting than studying in one of the greatest seats of learning the world has ever known - Oxford, England. With its global reputation for academic excellence; its unique history and traditions, and its iconic colleges and chapels ("dreaming spires"), the British university experience is unlike anything else in the world. Yet for many visiting students and scholars British Universities can be very lonely places and the experience of studying here, a daunting one. This

is especially true for American students, who often find themselves abroad for the first time in their lives, and who learn quickly and sometimes painfully that it isn't always easy to stand out in a crowd.

The ***Oxford American Mission*** is a Christian ministry, designed to reach out to those students and offer them a spiritual "safe haven" and a "home away from home" while they are here. It is also an opportunity to explore what it means to "love God with our minds"; to "think theologically" as well as offer praise in an informal, familiar and contemporary setting.



***Oxford American Mission*** is a ministry of "presence". It is there to offer support, encouragement and love to students from America and

elsewhere who may just be seeking a friendly face (or a familiar sounding accent); a bit of counsel; or just a safe place to blow off some steam. It also exists to support and complement the pastoral ministries of the local churches. It is a ministry of thoughtfulness and reflection, considering such things as what it means to love

God with one's mind? It is also a ministry of praise and outreach. please contact :Ken Barnes [kbarnes1@compuserve.com](mailto:kbarnes1@compuserve.com)

[www.igniteuk.org](http://www.igniteuk.org)

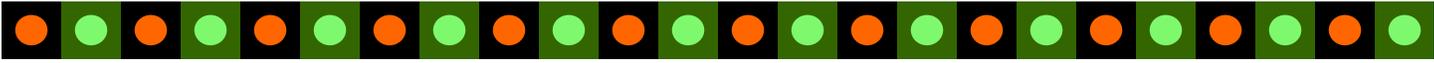
Elaine Storkey and Revd Cyprian Yobera.

Several "satellite" events to be held on Saturday 26 January, 2008, including:

- **Alister McGrath** on "Are We Machines?" – an engagement with science, and a reductionist view of humanity;
- A Young Development Practitioners' Forum – giving Oxford students who have already been involved in significant charitable ventures the opportunity to share their experiences and motivations; and
- A concert of sacred music exploring the richness that the fine arts adds to our lives.

All of the events will have very interactive formats and will move into times of refreshments and socialising to allow the conversations to continue. They will be promoted and led by Christian students and academics, but will be geared to gather together faculty and students from different worldviews for the purpose of encouraging discussion and exploration of issues.

It is the hope and prayer of the organizing committee that the Veritas Forum will serve as a catalyst for the on-going engagement by students and academics at Oxford with Christ via the many existing ministries that are here. To that end, it is also our hope that the Forum will be a space to which the many Christians groups in Oxford can gather in unity for the furtherance of the Gospel. For more Information Visit <http://www.veritas.org/oxford/> or Wendy Quay at: [wquay\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:wquay_2000@yahoo.com)



Over the past few years the number of postgraduate students at Oxford University has grown to make up over 35% of the student body, and because many are on shorter courses, about 50% of the annual intake. Almost 60% of these students are from outside the UK. Similar growth has been happening around the country, but traditionally student work here has almost entirely focussed on a predominately British undergraduate population. We are very excited about this new opportunity for a Pastorate chaplain

and two lay assistants to help minister to postgraduate students,

Included below are a copy of the advertisement, and some excerpts from the further particulars. We pray that it may help attract the right candidate, but also that it may stimulate churches in other cities to think more strategically about reaching the postgraduate students on their doorsteps Ard Louis (ard.louis@physics.ox.ac.uk)

**The Oxford Evangelical Pastorate  
wishes to appoint a  
GRADUATE CHAPLAIN  
(Ordained or Lay)**

The Oxford Evangelical Pastorate was set up with the aim of promoting a true and lively faith in Christ amongst members of the University of Oxford. The Oxford post-graduate student scene is international, diverse and fragmented. The Graduate Pastorate Chaplain should be gifted at mobilising, training and inspiring Christian post-graduate students to reach their peers with the Gospel. This new post will provide a genuine opportunity for pioneer ministry. The successful candidate will have:

- A living faith rooted in scripture and a passion and ability for communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people, regardless of their cultural background;

- A proven track record of working with University students, preferably at post-graduate level;

The ability to build effective teams and enable others in mission and discipleship through servant leadership;

A good level of theological literacy;

- A commitment to the integration of faith, vocation and academic life; A willingness to show hospitality.

In addition, one or more of the following would be highly desirable:

- Some experience of pioneering new Christian work;

- A post-graduate degree or equivalent experience;

A willingness to work occasional evenings and week-ends, as appropriate.

Housing will be provided and remuneration will be on the Oxford diocesan incumbent scale. The post is subject to CRB enhanced disclosure.

For the Further Particulars of the post, please contact: Prof. Lionel Tarassenko, St John's College, Oxford OX1 3JP.  
Closing date for applications: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

Interviews will be held in Oxford in the second half of January.





## Excerpts from further particulars:

### Background to Pastorate Post

The Oxford Evangelical Pastorate was set up by Trust Deed in 1898, with the aim of “promoting a true and lively faith in Christ amongst members of the University of Oxford”. The Pastorate Council seeks application for a *full-time Graduate Pastorate Chaplain*. This is a new post, created by the Pastorate Council after a period of reflection and prayer, during which it became apparent that there is a need in Oxford for a full-time worker committed to bringing the Gospel to the growing graduate community.

The Oxford post-graduate student scene is international, diverse and fragmented. Most students socialise primarily with other post-graduate students in groups based around their colleges, houses of residence, labs or faculties. An effective outreach to post-graduate students requires bridges to be built into their world, and the best equipped people for this task are Christian post-graduate students themselves. For that reason, the Graduate Pastorate Chaplain should be gifted at mobilising, training and inspiring Christian post-graduate students to reach their peers with the Gospel.

Applicants should ideally have a post-graduate qualification but this is not essential. They may or may not be ordained but applicants should be aware that the Pastorate is an Anglican charity and so the successful applicant will need to be able to work with the Anglican church.. The closing date for applications is 12.00 noon on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2007. The full further particulars can be obtained from Professor Lionel Tarassenko, St John’s College, Oxford, OX1 3PJ ([lionel.tarassenko@eng.ox.ac.uk](mailto:lionel.tarassenko@eng.ox.ac.uk))

### The Graduate Pastorate Chaplain’s Duties

The person to be appointed will have the opportunity to develop the role of Graduate Chaplain, working in partnership with the Pastorate Council, the Graduate Christian Union and evangelical churches in the centre of Oxford. As this is the first appointment to this post, there will be some flexibility in the Chaplain’s duties, but they are expected to be:

- to promote among University post-graduates “a true and lively faith in Christ and a knowledge of divine truth”, as stated in the 1893 Trust Deed of the Oxford Evangelical Pastorate;
- to inspire and train Christian post-graduate students to reach their peers with the Gospel. This will require the Chaplain to meet with Christian post-graduate students on a one-to-one basis or in small groups to help empower them for outreach to their peers;
- to lead the work of two post-graduate Lay Assistants (one in the Sciences and one in the Humanities). The Graduate Pastorate Chaplain will play a key role in the process of appointing these Lay Assistants, who will be expected to work part-time for the Pastorate for one year. The first set of appointments should be made to coincide with the start of academic year 2008-9. The Lay Assistants’ main task will be to assist the Chaplain in his or her work amongst the Oxford post-graduate community and provide administrative

support, including networking with the virtual post-graduate community;

- to meet on a regular basis with student workers in the Oxford evangelical churches and the leaders of the Graduate Christian Union (see [www.oxfordgcu.org](http://www.oxfordgcu.org)) and of Friends International Oxford (see [www.friendsinternational.org.uk](http://www.friendsinternational.org.uk)) so that activities involving post-graduate students can best be co-ordinated;
- to organise and facilitate open meetings in which aspects of the Christian faith, especially with respect to post-graduate studies, may be explored in a neutral venue;
- to explore other opportunities to create and exploit openings for the Gospel among post-graduate students in Oxford;
- to organise Pastorate events such as meetings with College Chaplains, under the direction of the Pastorate Council.

### Criteria for Selection

The Pastorate Council is looking for a candidate who meets the following essential criteria:

- a living faith rooted in Scripture;
- a passion for communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people, regardless of their cultural background;
- a love of people, and the facility to engage with them, to listen to them, and to understand their worldview ;
- a proven track record of working with University students, preferably at post-graduate level;
- the ability to build effective teams and enable others through servant leadership;
- a good level of theological literacy;
- a commitment to integration of faith, vocation and academic life;
- a willingness to show hospitality.

In addition, one or more of the following would be highly desirable:

- a post-graduate degree or equivalent experience;
- a willingness to work some evenings and week-ends, as appropriate;
- some experience of pioneering new Christian work.

Informal enquiries about the post can be made to Professor Tarassenko via e-mail.



## Resources for Postgrads: Spotlight on The C-A-N

[www.c-a-n.org.uk](http://www.c-a-n.org.uk)

### C-A-N- Recognising our calling

The heart of the mission God has given **C-A-N-** (Christian Academic Network) is to encourage **Christian academics** to recognise that they have a calling from God in their academic as well as their church lives – and to integrate the two.

This calling includes Post-Grads.

Our culture sits comfortably with the sacred / secular divide – and gets uncomfortable when this is challenged. Our culture is happy when we keep our faith private and keep our public life neutral. We therefore do not get a lot of encouragement (from either the world or generally the church) to integrate our academic lives and our Christian lives.

So **C-A-N-** is about encouragement and facilitating this integration.

Of course **C-A-N-** is not alone in this, and we do not try to replicate what other groups are doing. **C-A-N-**'s focus is on adding value to any existing disciplinary groupings by considering the bigger picture and working in an inter-disciplinary way. Our experience is that many of us find this inter-disciplinary exchange

both exciting and stimulating and gain insights into our own areas through sharing with those of other disciplines.

**C-A-N-** is about enriching our disciplines with the insights gained from thinking about them with a God given, Christian mind. We would like to invite and encourage you, as Post-Grads, to recognise yourselves as called by God to research – and not just to gain a qualification. How does your understanding of God

and His ways enrich your discipline?

We have a resource centre for you to browse at [www.c-a-n.org.uk](http://www.c-a-n.org.uk). We have an annual conference where we can meet face-to-face. We also send out regular updates etc by email.

As Post-Grads we would like to invite you to sign up for our email newsletter with latest updates and news. You can do so from the resource centre above.

But better still, why not share with us your insights and experiences as you integrate your Christian faith into your academic life? We would love to hear from you – email us [info@c-a-n.org.uk](mailto:info@c-a-n.org.uk)

**Each edition of "The Story (PG)" will focus on a subject grouping or other resource available for post-graduate students. [www.cpgrad.org.uk](http://www.cpgrad.org.uk)**

**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](http://www.friendsinternational.org.uk). You also can send cheques to Friends International address below. Please mark your gift "For Remi Tobler". Thank you.

#### Friends International

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#### NEXT EDITION:

- Faraday Institute Cambridge
- Preview of national postgraduate conference 20-22 June 2008