

TRINITY TERM 2026

ISSUE 2

# THE OICCU MAGAZINE

WORDS THAT WITNESS



IS IT

# WORTH IT?

A SHORT TALK EXPLORING THE  
CHRISTIAN FAITH WITH Q&A

FRIDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY (WEEK 4)  
1-2 PM

FREE LUNCH  
PROVIDED!

WITH GUEST SPEAKER JEREMY WALKER



BLUE BOAR HOUSE  
5 BLUE BOAR ST  
OXFORD, OX1 4EE

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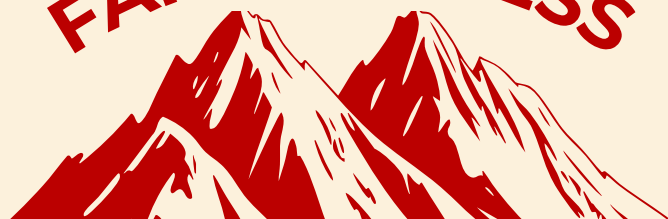
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# “NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL”

As we bid farewell to the 2025-2026 OICCU exec committee, we asked Dee (Internal Vice-President) and Josh (Prayer Secretary) to share some of their thoughts looking back on their role on exec and their vision for OICCU.

Hi! I'm Dee, the IVP. My role involves organising Equips and Aways with the goal of helping CU members to “always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that you have in Christ Jesus” (1 Peter 3:15).

The main way I do this is by booking speakers and planning which topics are covered in Equips, as well as seminars for Aways. This year's Getaway seminars had a particular focus on how to answer some common difficult questions, so we'd be ready to answer these when asked by our friends.

One of my biggest desires for OICCU is that we would fully trust in God's Word and its power to save. There are many great ways of sharing the good news, but one of my favourites is through one-to-one Bible studies. This is why we had a whole Equip dedicated to this in Michaelmas, when we launched *Uncover Luke*. It's been such an answer to prayer to see so many people reading a Gospel with their friends this year, particularly after Events Week. Romans 1:16 has been foundational in shaping how I think about evangelism: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.” God really does save— and he does it through His Word, through His Gospel. What a privilege that He chooses to use us to share it! So let's not be ashamed of it. Let's boast all the more gladly in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Another passage that has helped me during my time on Committee is Romans 8:28–29: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.



For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Sometimes our attempts at sharing God's Word don't go to plan. Sometimes we're left feeling disappointed or confused. But it's such an encouragement to know that our faithful God, who always keeps His promises, is working all things for our good, to make us more like Jesus. For this reason, the post-Events Week Equips have had more of a focus on praise and thanksgiving to God for everything that He has done, whether it's what we had expected or not.

So my hope and prayer for CU is that we would have complete confidence in God's Word, and that we would become more and more like Jesus (God has already promised to answer that second prayer!). I hope you've felt encouraged in these things this year.

*Dee Morland*

*Chemistry, St. Catherine's College*



**The role of the Prayer Secretary is somewhat unique in that there are very few organisational and admin-related responsibilities– there are no teams to manage, no speakers to organise, and very few emails to send.**

What the Prayer Secretary is responsible for, however, is helping to direct the prayer life of the CU, ensuring that in all we do, we fix our eyes on Jesus and ask the Lord to be with us and go before us as we share the Gospel and head into mission together!

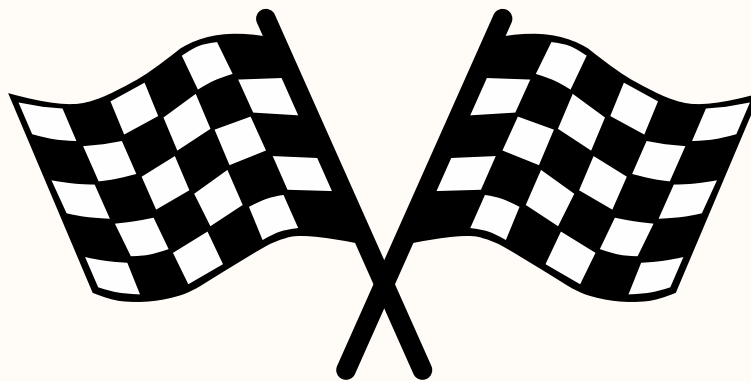
Practically, this looks like leading Monday Morning Prayer and other prayer events,

writing prayer letters to alumni, and praying... lots! There is much I have learnt over this past year: what working in large teams looks like, the joy of serving alongside others in mission, and how much time it takes to prepare prayer meetings well(!). But, perhaps most crucially, I have begun to realise how much we continually underestimate both the importance and power of prayer.

There are many verses I have been dwelling on over the course of the year, but the one that has guided the cries of my heart most is part of the prayer that Jesus taught us: “Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” My prayer for the CU is that together we would continue to wrestle in prayer, both submitting ourselves to the Lord and crying out to Him from the depths of our hearts, and asking that His Kingdom would come in Oxford, and that the name of Jesus would be glorified above all else as we share this faith, hope, and joy we have found.

It truly has been a joy to, in some small way, help lead the prayer life of the CU over these past three terms. Seeing prayer weaved all throughout the CU– from year group and college prayer meetings, to friends reading the Bible and praying together– has been such a tremendous privilege. Let’s continue on in perseverance as we run this race together, encouraging one another and fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

*Josh Wright  
PPE, Hertford College*



*“Let’s continue on in perseverance as we run this race together, encouraging one another and fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”*

# Meet the 2026-2027

# COMMITTEE

*Caleb Mohamed, Prayer Secretary  
Computer Science, Hertford College*

*Ndinashe Furamera, Outreach Secretary  
History, Christ Church College*

*Ben Edey, Treasurer  
Medicine, Corpus Christi College*

*Jack Pennystan, External Vice-President  
Maths, Worcester College*



*Nina Crofton, International Secretary  
Biology, St Anne's College*

*Zoe Todd, Secretary  
English, Keble College*

*Margaret McLean, Internal Vice-President  
English, St Edmund Hall*

*Ester Hattingh, President  
Medicine, St Hugh's College*

oxford inter-collegiate christian union

worship - teaching - fellowship

# EQUIP

wednesdays - odd weeks - 7:30pm

at the North Gate Hall

# TRINITY- FREE?



**"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:36**

Some people go into Trinity term facing exams and look to the other side of them for freedom. But *we* have hope in what has already happened, and a freedom that is in Christ. So how should we approach exam season in the knowledge of this? Should we just ignore our work and spend Trinity term with friends and delighting in God's creation?

Of course, these are good things, but having freedom in Christ doesn't mean our work is to be ignored, rather we should delight in it and do it for His glory. Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ". Go into the term with a newfound vigour, knowing that your work is for the Lord and pray to Him that you might take pleasure in it. But does this mean we should spend all our Trinity term locked away in libraries doing nothing but past papers and essays?

The answer to this is a resounding 'no', for we are made in the image of God, who rested on the seventh day. Although the Israelites were not able to enter God's rest because of their unbelief, we can and should make every effort to do so, and whoever does this also rests from their work. We should observe this rest by being with Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. So, I encourage you to set aside your Sundays as a day that you do no university work, and instead spend time in the presence of God.

*"we are made in the  
image of a God who rested  
on the seventh day"*

Personally, setting aside Sabbaths has been profoundly helpful as I have navigated exam seasons over the last three years, reminding me that God can do more than I can with my time. Being able to return to Him has strengthened me for busy weeks of exams. This has helped me to alleviate stress and to come alongside friends who are struggling, whether it be cooking a meal for them or being around to chat rather than being in the depths of the "Glink".

This is all very well, I hear you say, but how should we deal with stress during the weeks? First, it is helpful to remind ourselves that our worth is not in our work but rather in our relation to God. We are a people of God's own possession, given the status of being sons of God and fellow heirs with Christ and therefore no exam we do can redefine our worth.

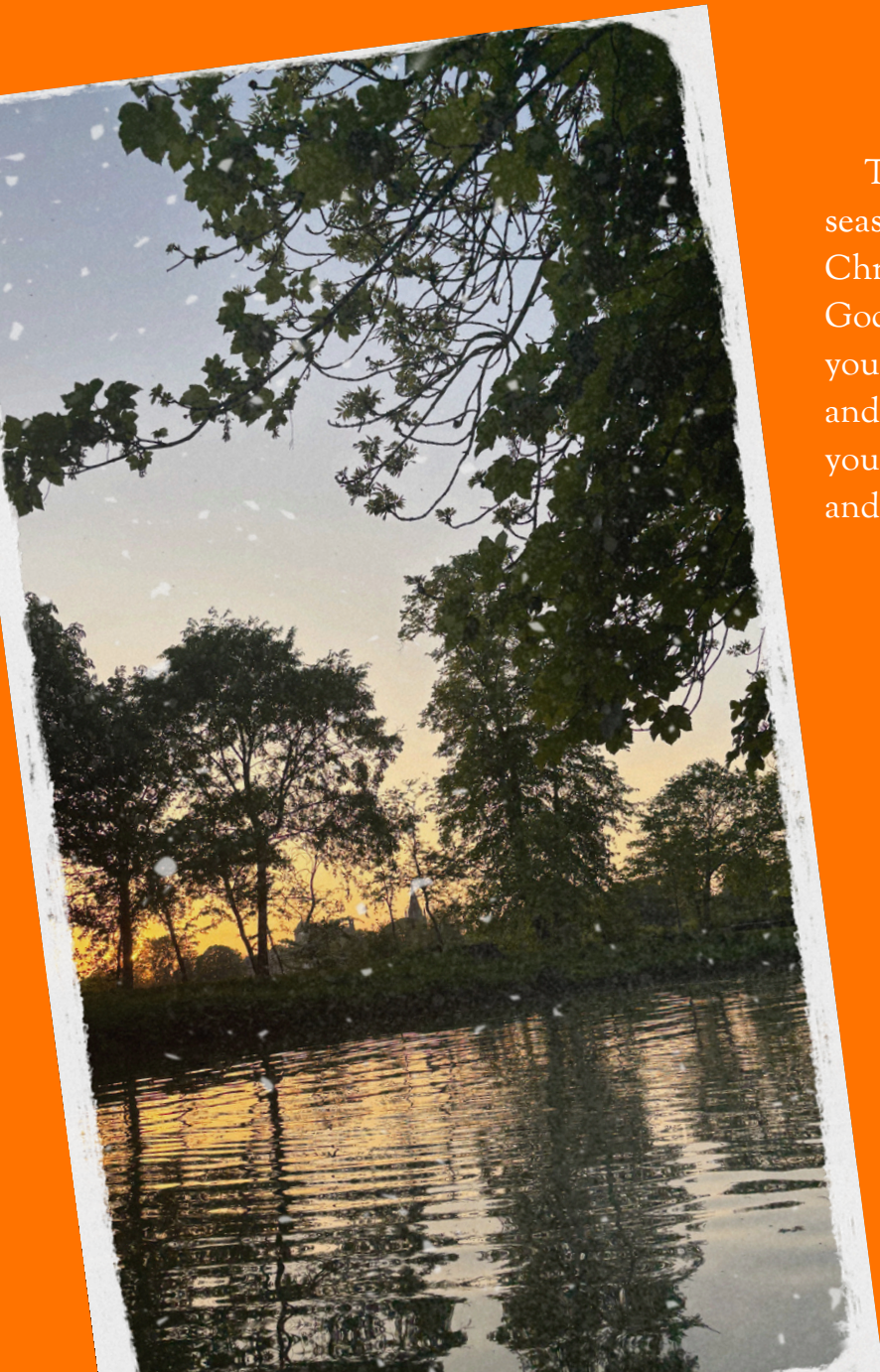
Secondly, we are offered the peace of God that surpasses all understanding when we rejoice in the Lord and bring prayer to God, so make time in your week for prayer and praise to God. Maybe plan prayer breaks into your revision routine or end your days listening to worship music or write down what you are thankful for.

Thirdly, we need not fear, for we have the perfect love of God who casts out all fear and has overcome the world. So spend time reminding yourself of the loving character of God. I find it helpful to pray through some of the Psalms, especially the ones that mention His steadfast love. I find myself coming back to Psalms 61 through 63 in exam seasons, as I am reminded that God is above all, that we can rest in His presence, and cling to Him and His steadfast love. This foundation can help us to be a light to our friends in a stressful time and hold out the reason for our hope and peace.

*“I am reminded that God is above all, that we can rest in His presence, and cling to Him and His steadfast love”*

Therefore, I encourage you to go into exam season with the knowledge of the freedom Christ brings, a desire to focus on your work to God's glory, and a discipline for rest. Spend your Trinity term serving the Lord in gladness and coming before Him with joyful songs, that you might glorify God in your work, have peace, and be a light to your friends!

*Matthew Simpson  
Physics, University College*



# Imperfectly Valuable



**When I was in year 2, I drew a picture of the nativity scene. Mary and Joseph, Jesus and a stable, stars and shepherds. For some reason, the wise men were nowhere to be seen and everyone was floating two centimetres off the ground. It was objectively terrible. But it is still on my parents' kitchen wall today.**

In almost every house in the country where children are (or used to be), you will find evidence of them in the artwork that they created— and it has nothing to do with their talent. People have great sentimentality for their children's drawings, which shows that in a world of AI generated art, there is still a space for the efforts of a child trying to make something. A value is placed upon something that is deeply flawed just because of who created it. And the Bible explains why.

In the Bible, there are countless examples of the unworthiness of people. Everyone— from Ruth to Nebechunezzar, from the Disciples to the Pharisees, from David to you and me— 'fall[s] short of the Glory of God'. But, amazingly, God still loves us unconditionally. It is very clear that this love is not earned, but is given because of one thing: the character of God. God is perfect and holy, and out of His love, bursts life. Creation is a labour of love, a

wonderful part and product of goodness. God created us in His image, and because of that, He gives us innate value. And how do I know this? Because of Jesus, who was friends with outcasts, welcomed children into his arms, and died for us. This paradox of our imperfect yet valuable nature is reflected in the fact that we value the imperfect things we make, just as God values us.

*“... our imperfect yet valuable nature is reflected in the fact that we value the imperfect things we make, just as God values us.”*

As God's creatures, we are, by His grace, able to imitate his character. But what about as his children? We have seen why we have a desire to be creative, but what are we to do with that?

The simple answer is that we are to glorify God in everything we do. There are many phrases that people have coined throughout the years to explain our purpose as Christians, but my favourite is this: that we are to receive God's love, and reflect it back to others. This reflection can not only be done through our words and actions, but in what we put out into the world. Daniel Strange's book, *Plugged In*, explores the relationship between Christians and culture, and in chapter one he comes up with this explanation: 'Culture is the stories we tell that express meaning about the world'.

*“we are to receive God’s love  
and reflect it back to others.”*

Here, culture is framed in a creative way. It is made of ‘stories’ (meaning ‘all the experiences, feelings, imagination and ideas that we communicate from one human being to another’). Art is not just a sidelined aspect of education that leads you to a job in Wetherspoons, it is literally the building blocks of our lives.

And if this is true, then it is so important that we participate actively. Creating things— whether paintings, video games, Instagram accounts or novels— contributes to the culture we are in, and means God is seen more clearly. I’m not saying that all our poems need to be about Jesus, or that every drawing has to depict a scene from the Bible, but the impact of putting out stories that express the true meaning of the world cannot be underestimated. In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis highlights the need for Christians to be in every area of life and every kind of job, and the creative sector is no different. As an amateur photographer or a professional playwright, you can bring God’s perspective on humanity, and His love, into the conversation.

*“If God had a fridge, there’d be a  
picture of you on it.”  
- Vaughan Roberts*

Today, fewer and fewer resources are allocated to the arts. But the Christian God has created us to use our minds not only to build cities and discover elements, but to write, paint, and compose. We are creative beings, with an innate desire to make things. This mystery is not understood by looking deeper in, but looking further up, to the God who loves us. So, next time you make something that turns out as badly as my nativity scene did, don’t throw it away. Display it proudly, remembering that we are deeply flawed people, valued because of who created us.

*Zoe Todd  
English, Keble College*



# GREATER THAN

# SOTA



**It is likely that, as an Oxford student, you have encountered a Singaporean, whether in a tutorial or walking along Cornmarket Street. This is perhaps unsurprising. According to The Telegraph (2023), Raffles Institution in Singapore received more offers from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge than any other school. Considering that Singapore is only about half the size of Greater London, this is an impressive statistic.**

I have grown up in Singapore for most of my life, and by God's grace, I am now nearing the end of my degree at Oxford.

Contrary to what my younger self might have assumed, the greatest blessing of coming to Oxford has not been academic achievement, but the way God has used this time to grow me spiritually through OICCU and the Bible-centred churches here. I was fortunate to grow up in a family that attended church regularly, something that cannot be taken for granted in Singapore. According to the 2020 Census, Buddhism is the largest religion (31.1%), Christianity being the second (18.9%), including both Protestants and Catholics. When I first arrived in Oxford, I went to St Ebbe's Church, a church that felt remarkably different from what I was used to back home. In Singapore, I attended a large, non-denominational, charismatic megachurch, often described as a 'prosperity' church. While I am grateful for the community I experienced there, my understanding of God at the time was deeply shaped by what He could give *me*: good grades, social success, and a comfortable future.

Encountering Christians in Oxford began to challenge this mindset. Concepts such as sanctification, costly discipleship, and repentance were largely unfamiliar to me.

*"my understanding of God at the time was deeply shaped by what He could give me"*



The confessional prayers and careful exposition of Scripture stood in stark contrast to the smoke machines and ‘health-and-wealth’ emphasis I had grown accustomed to. Through this contrast, I gradually realised how my faith was unknowingly centred on myself rather than on Christ.

Why are prosperity-focused churches so popular in Singapore? Part of the answer lies in our culture. Singapore consistently ranks high for workplace burnout, and young people often identify career success as their primary goal in life. In such an environment, a gospel promising material blessing is deeply attractive. Yet God’s promises are far greater than temporary riches. When faith is anchored in possessions, it becomes fragile. True fulfilment is found not in what God gives us, but in trusting that He alone is sufficient, something all people, and perhaps Singaporeans especially, need to hear.

*“my faith was unknowingly centred on myself rather than on Christ.”*

Another challenge facing Christians in Singapore is evangelism. In a society that rightly values religious harmony, sharing one’s faith is often perceived as inappropriate, causing many Christians to grow cautious in fear of social discomfort. The strong emphasis on evangelism within Oxford churches and OICCU serves as a powerful reminder of the impact the Gospel can have on anyone’s life, and of our great need to ask God for boldness to proclaim the Gospel to others.

Many international students have come to faith during their time in Oxford. Yet an unfortunate reality remains: many students, myself included, return home searching for other churches that mirror the deep teaching and intergenerational fellowship we found here. Whilst this search can be discouraging, it is important to recognise that Singapore is also richly blessed with churches shaped for its local context. There are many doctrinally sound, Bible-centred, and architecturally beautiful churches, including

St Andrew’s Cathedral and Orchard Presbyterian Church. The Methodist Church remains the largest mainline Protestant denomination, and alumni networks are increasingly forming to support returning graduates.

*“Yet God’s promises are far greater than temporary riches”*

I have always been fond of the churches in Oxford, but I have also come to appreciate how community-focused churches in Singapore can be. I currently attend Adam Road Presbyterian Church, and I am impressed by their multiple unconventional avenues for fellowship. One ministry I find particularly distinctive is the Culinary Arts Ministry, a space where friendships are deepened and the Gospel is shared through hospitality and shared creativity. My hope is that reflecting on these differences will cultivate gratitude rather than comparison: gratitude for the freedom to proclaim Christ, for loving Christian communities, and above all, for the gift of faith itself. I pray that whether we are walking down Cornmarket Street or speaking with a tutorial partner, God would grant us the courage and confidence to share the good news of Jesus Christ, not only with Singaporeans, but with all people. For the Lord has offered salvation to all who believe, drawing people from every nation to Himself. What glorious news that is, truly worthy of our praise.

*“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the Lord. And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people.”*

*Zechariah 2:10–11*

*Jessica Chan  
Engineering, Lady Margaret Hall*

# A RATIONAL

# Creator

**Chemistry is the science of building models. As chemists, we try to describe and explain what we observe in the world around us, particularly the behaviour of atoms and molecules and the way they react and change. At its core, chemistry is about constructing models that help us understand reality.**

But models are never quite as good as the real thing. They are approximations. We make assumptions, discover limitations, and refine them again and again.

What I find extraordinary is that I know the Creator of the reality that those models are trying to describe. The world we study is not random or self-generated; it is beautifully designed and deeply coherent because it was made by God. He does not need models to understand the universe; He knows it fully and fundamentally. Yet He has created us with minds capable of glimpsing that understanding. There is something profoundly humbling and joyful about studying chemistry knowing that I am exploring something God has made, and that my curiosity reflects something of his own creativity.

*“The world we study is not random or self-generated; it is beautifully designed because it was made by God.”*

For that reason, amongst others, I do not find science and faith in conflict. In fact, I find the opposite: the order, sense, and beauty of chemistry reinforce my belief in a rational Creator. It can sometimes be frustrating when lecturers refer to “Nature” as though it were an active agent, while avoiding any language of creation.

*"The order, sense, and beauty of chemistry reinforce my belief in a rational Creator."*

Yet I have also been encouraged by Christian tutors who show a deep love for chemistry alongside a confident faith. Their example shows that intellectual seriousness and Christian belief do not have to be at odds.

This integration of faith and study also shapes the way I relate to the people around me. Because Chemistry has a large cohort and requires so many hours working alongside others in labs, many of my closest friends are chemists. As with anyone I love, I long for them to know Jesus too. I try to make my faith a natural and visible part of my life, speaking openly about church, being honest about what I believe, and looking for opportunities to talk about Jesus in everyday conversations. The shared highs and lows of lab work can open doors for deeper discussions. When experiments fail or pressure builds, those moments become prompts to pray for my friends and to respond with patience, hope, and perspective.

Living out my faith in chemistry is not only about conversations; it is also about how I approach my work. As a fresher, I was encouraged by a third-year Christian chemist to intentionally take a Sabbath, and it is one of the best decisions I have made in Oxford!

*"When experiments fail or pressure builds, those moments becomes prompts to pray for my friends and to respond with patience, hope, and perspective."*

The Biblical pattern of work and rest feels especially precious in a culture and subject that can easily become all-consuming. Setting aside intentional time to rest, worship, and step away from the library gives me an opportunity to refocus my gaze on Jesus, and I am reminded that my worth is not defined by successful results or academic performance, but by who I am in Christ.

*"my faith increases my sense of wonder"*

Studying chemistry as a Christian does not divide my life into "science" and "faith". Instead, my faith increases my sense of wonder. Our models may be partial and provisional, but they point beyond themselves. As I learn to describe atoms and reactions with increasing precision, I am reminded that they rest within a reality more coherent and beautiful than any model can capture: a reality created, sustained, and fully known by God.

*Hannah McKee  
Chemistry, Trinity College*





# The Heart of HOLINESS

**'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.'** (John 14:15)

**'Holiness' is an awkward word, even for Christians.**

More than that, it is a concept many believers are, if not unfamiliar with, at least hesitant to speak about. That hesitation is understandable. Historically and in our own day, "holiness" has often been misunderstood or misapplied, resulting in what might be called "performatism": an outward display of piety disconnected from the heart.

Perhaps your thoughts turn to the testimonies of John and Charles Wesley, who, before their conversions, were founders of the Oxford "Holy Club". It was not a title they chose for themselves but one mockingly given to them by their critics. The lives of its members were marked by ascetic practices and rigorous discipline, yet this was not what God had in mind when he called believers to pursue holiness. The great irony is that while part of the "Holy Club", the Wesley brothers were not truly pursuing holiness at all. They did not love God; they had not yet become Christians.

A love for God is the well from which Biblical holiness flows. Holiness, therefore, is conforming your desires and behaviour to the will of God out of love for Him— this ought to be our great desire as Christians. Our Lord says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments"; obedience to and love for God are therefore inseparably tied together. To attempt to ascend to the purity demanded by the Christian ethic without a love for God is vanity and warrants nothing but God's displeasure. But blessed be our God that in Christ, all are able and invited to selflessly conform their lives to his will.

*"A love for God is the well from which Biblical holiness flows."*

As members of an active CU, committed to the spreading of God's word, perhaps it's easy for us to forget the importance of our own personal walk with the Lord. Robert Murray M'Cheyne (a 19th-century Scottish minister) said, 'The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness.'

*"Holiness, therefore, is conforming your desires and behaviour to the will of God out of love for him"*

We are not ministers, but the principle still applies: our friends need to see our personal holiness as it bears witness to God's regenerating power. Out of this regeneration— this change— of heart, springs forth a desire to spread the Gospel.

I once asked my home pastor how I can love God more. He simply replied, "Look at Christ on the cross and consider him well." This, I believe, is the key to growing in a love for God— consider Christ on the cross. Consider what it meant for the Son of God to die on the cross for your sin, and meditate upon this well. Don't merely reflect upon the physical agony our Lord endured, but the spiritual anguish he suffered as the Father loaded upon him the sin of His people. Of all people, Christians should be the most meditative.

I heard someone say that the Christian religion is marvellously paradoxical. In most self-help books, we're told that the key to

*"Look at Christ on the cross and consider him well."*

greater esteem is to think better of ourselves. The Bible teaches otherwise: it is through a genuine reflection on our own unworthiness that our love for God is magnified. It is only once we begin to consider the depths of the misery from which we were pulled that we begin to consider the beauty of Christ's atoning work for us on the cross. Christ loves us; He has therefore died for us, and in Him we have been raised to a newness of life patterned after His own resurrection.

*"it is through a genuine reflection on our own unworthiness that our love for God is magnified"*

Relying on God's help, Christians ought to pursue holiness. Not out of habit, custom or even fear (in the negative sense); that would be to misunderstand the very essence of the doctrine. For at the heart of holiness is a love for God; because of this, we daily endeavour to conform our lives to His will. 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments', so says our Lord.

*Ndinashe Furamera  
History, Christ Church College*





Great is thy  
**Faithfulness**

**Raising four kids in a tiny Welsh village on the way to nowhere was probably not what my American born-and-raised parents envisioned for their future during their university days in Greenville, South Carolina, ‘the buckle of the Bible belt’, as I have heard it called.**

But the Lord called them to the mission field, and, in November 2008, they uprooted their whole lives, leaving friends, family and church behind, to move to North Wales, where a fast-diminishing church and a community void of the Gospel needed their help. A handful of acquaintances, the Bible, and an American zeal for facing a challenge were pretty much the sum of their missionary toolkit; ahead of them lay the work of a lifetime.

*“ahead of them lay the work of a lifetime.”*

While a toddler can hardly comprehend the hardships of such a life, I soon grew to understand that my family was not like the other families. My friends at school watched TV shows I had never

heard of, had parents who left for work in the morning, visited their grandparents at the weekend, and used words I didn’t know the meaning of. I quickly learned the British accent and how to pretend my family didn’t sit together to read the Bible every night. But I could never displace the knot in my stomach that told me we were different. Even into highschool, I struggled to explain to people what my parents’ job was, why we had come to Wales, and why I wasn’t allowed to go to birthday parties on a Sunday. I struggled to explain because I didn’t want them to know the truth; I wanted to hide the Gospel mission that characterised my family’s entire life and work.

*“I wanted to hide the Gospel mission that characterised my family’s entire life and work.”*

As the years passed, I watched my parents as they persevered through trial after trial— isolation and rejection from the people around them, a church that refused to grow, an increasing separation from the home in the US they once knew. And a stubborn, hard-hearted eldest daughter that could not, for all

the sermons and Scripture she'd heard, see the purpose in any of it.

For to be a missionary is to love the church as Christ loved her: by laying down your life for the sake of spreading the Gospel, that she might be built up. Laying down your life doesn't always just mean 'devoting' your life. It can mean, as it meant for my parents, laying down your comforts, your confidence, your qualifications, connections and experience. Going to preach the Gospel in a foreign country strips you of these things, leaving you bare to the humbling reality of the mission field. Yet, in this exposed state, the love and faithfulness of Christ is made known all the more clearly.

*“to be a missionary is to love the church as Christ loved her”*

In time, and through God's grace, I came to realise this glorious truth. I accepted Christ as my Saviour when I was fifteen and was baptised soon after. And I am pleased to tell you that, today, many baptisms have followed mine in that small and unassuming church in North Wales, for God has blessed the labour of those two willing Americans. Now my parents' ministry has reached all the way to Oxford University. In some ways, Oxford feels as foreign to me as Wales once did to my parents.

*“Sharing the Gospel requires the patience and faith to wait on the Lord”*

But their constant and forbearing example has taught me that sharing the Gospel does not require training, or numbers, or strategy, although those are good things. Sharing the Gospel requires the patience and faith to wait on the Lord, to wait for Him to give the growth in His sovereign timing. And that might take seventeen years! And perhaps no one around you will understand why you are waiting, or what you are waiting for. But think of Lamentations 3:21-25:

*“But this I call to mind,  
And therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;*

*His mercies never come to an end;  
They are new every morning;  
Great is your faithfulness.*

*“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,  
“Therefore I will hope in him.”*

*The LORD is good to those who wait for him,  
To the soul who seeks him.’*

*Margaret McLean  
English, St Edmund Hall*



Interview with

# Tom Mawdesley

UCCF Staff Worker



We sat down with Tom, ex-Oxford student and current UCCF Staff Worker, to chat about the college CUs.



## What makes the college CU system different to other university CUs?

I have been involved in other university CUs, like Bristol, and the big difference is that college CUs act as mini embassies of the CU within a college context, which other universities don't have. One of the amazing things about Oxford is that you have these self-sustaining communities which people immediately belong to when they arrive.

This means that in your college, there are already a bunch of Christians who are keen to live for Jesus. Often in other universities you might have Hall Groups, but they exist almost exclusively for first years, whereas in a college CU you have the opportunity for encouragement and fellowship across the years. College CUs are also different because it's very clear that you have a local community to which you're proclaiming Jesus. In a lot of other universities it's quite hard to find a mixed community of believers and non-believers, but the colleges provide a unique context for evangelism.

## Why do we need college CUs when we already have OICCU?

When I was a student I wasn't an historian first— I was an Exeter college student. That was fundamental to who I was, and the reality is that lots of students think of college as their people. For lots of our non-Christian friends, they don't spend loads of time outside of their college context— their sport, their music, their studies all happen within the college. So there needs to be a Christian witness in colleges, because often that's the context in which people view their Oxford life.

## Okay, so why should I get involved in my college CU?



Firstly, it's important to be with Christians. Being involved in your college CU means that you get to know and pray with a bunch of Christians—Christians who might not go to the same church as you!

Secondly, your college CU is really well placed to reach your college. Jesus sends out the 72 in pairs, and most often, people do evangelism together. People in college CUs should be thinking, “I want to reach my college, and I want to be part of a team as I do that”.

## What would you say to somebody whose college CU is very small and doesn't seem like it's doing very much?

Be the change you want to make. If you look at your college CU and think, “we don't really pray enough” or, “we're not very good at reaching people”, then why not be the instigator for change? I think your college reps would be absolutely over the moon if you see something like evangelism not being done and decide to start a ‘Text a Toastie’.

Also, sometimes we think that a thing is only worth being involved in if it has numbers. But small college CUs need you— it's not a one way street. You're there to serve your college. I think it's amazing how the Lord uses weak and wobbly efforts for the sake of making his Gospel known.

I would encourage that person not to despise the small things, but treasure what the Lord is doing in that context. And if there's change to be made, seek that change!



## What can I get out of my college CU?

Well, let me first talk about my experience of college CU. I studied at Exeter, and I came into my college CU a bit unsure about evangelism. I spent quite a lot of time with three thirds year guys who were leading the CU. We had brunch together most weeks, and they were very supportive during my first year when I was struggling to make sense of how to do Oxford. I found some of my best mates that I'm still in touch with today, and I also found a context in which I did evangelism. I was (and probably still am now) quite bad at evangelism, but in my college CU, we did three Text a Toastie's per term. We were placed in the JCR, sometimes when the championship football was going on, and we got between 30 and 50 questions each evening. It was amazing, and gave opportunities to engage with mates about Jesus in a way that I'd never done before. So I have lots to thank my college CU and those guys for the way they helped me make sense of Oxford and encouraged me to do evangelism. I would like to think of myself as something of a case study of why being involved in college CU is really good for you as a Christian.

But I would slightly push back on the question. It is a helpful thing to ask ‘what can I get out of my college CU?’. But it is also helpful to ask ‘how can I help and love and care for them?’.

*Tom Mawdesley  
Formerly History, Exeter College*

**WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME**

# *prayer*

*join us to pray for colleges  
and their CLIs in chapels  
across the city*

*a time of fellowship and  
encouragement as we pray  
for our university*

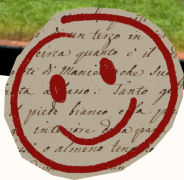


**12:30-13:30 WEDNESDAYS**

**CHECK INSTAGRAM/WHATSAPP  
FOR LOCATION EACH WEEK**



# Getaway 2026!



**On a cold Wednesday in January, seventy or so heavy-laden Oxford students piled out of a coach in the centre of town. You would be forgiven for wondering where they had come from. A trip to a museum, perhaps? Or maybe a visit to a nuclear reactor?**

In fact, they had just been on the OICCU Getaway, a wonderful three days of exceptional teaching, good food (even the multicoloured eggs!), impromptu ceilidhs, early morning runs, and very little sleep. Getaway was held at The Poplars in Ledbury, Herefordshire, a huge site with plenty of room to spend time together, spread out, and stargaze. The kind provision of the Ritchie family, and their kids' famous tuck shop, continues to be such a blessing to us.

Getaway was a great chance to get to know our events week speakers. Andrew Sach spoke on 1 Kings for the main talks, while Amy Orr-Ewing and Joseph Chu gave seminars on apologetics and international ministry respectively. These talks were not only helpful for my own faith but also helped me to get excited about Events Week.

I came away reassured that these were all people who could explain the Bible clearly and convincingly to my friends.

Other encouragements included the prayer and praise evening, a time to worship and reflect before the start of a new term, and the reminder of the goodness of God's creation through the beautiful weather we had. But my personal highlight was time spent in fellowship with friends, old and new. This is probably the main reason I would recommend Getaway to anyone considering it. I find going away with other people to be the best way to get to know them better and a useful reminder that I am not alone in my walk with Jesus in Oxford.

*Hugo Green  
History, Lady Margaret Hall*



# Events Week

**This Hilary term, OICCU had its biggest week of the year. Elliot gives his thoughts on Events Week from a fresher's perspective.**



I'm not sure what my expectations were going into Events Week. There was a lot of evangelistic hype from older years, but I assumed the talks would be filled mostly with people from OICCU, and that we would perhaps get a few friends to come along for some free sandwiches. I was pleasantly surprised by the number of new faces at each talk, and engagement levels seemed to be high. A particular encouragement was how each evening talk in some way built on the last, with a more vivid picture of Jesus each day, whilst still introducing the claims of the Christian faith.



It was striking to see the willingness of CU members to serve and welcome both friends and strangers. Above all, the week was a lot of fun, particularly the Thursday night quiz. It made clear how the Lord is working in my generation, in Oxford, and in the wider academic world to bring his children back to him. I hope and pray that over the next year we will see those friends who came to talks seeking to take the next step with Christ, and that as a CU we would be able to love and encourage them on that journey.



*Elliot Woods  
History, St Anne's*

# Encouragements

Throughout Events Week, students submitted encouraging interactions that they had to share at our daily prayer meetings. Here are some of them.

“We held an outreach event in Merton which went really well. Hopefully it got several people coming to the Wednesday talk on God’s goodness in a suffering world, and I think people genuinely felt loved and appreciated - It’s amazing how far a nice conversation and a few sweet treats can go!”

“I was really encouraged today from Events Week to see a few people stay on from the global hour events to the evening talk. My friends really enjoyed both talks, and are keen to hear more about our Sovereign and loving God!”

“Today one of my mates brought a friend and you could genuinely see the Holy Spirit working in her real time throughout the talk. She got really excited and is coming back tomorrow lunchtime (and took *Mere Christianity* away!)”

“I had an encouragement from being on the door for the EW launch event - these two women came up and asked if they could pop in for a bit. Then on the way out they said they hope that their children get involved in something similar when they go to uni because everyone seemed very joyful and welcoming.”



# TEDDY X QUEEN'S

This term at Teddy & Queen's CU we have enjoyed fellowship together through prayer brunches, outreach, and Uncover Bible studies going through the book of Luke.

It was very encouraging to see many of our CU members turning out to attend and serve at Events Week, and God answered our prayers by bringing seekers from college along!

The Lord has been teaching us to be fully reliant on him in all we do, especially in our efforts to share the Gospel. Prayer is such a priority, and we have focused on setting aside time to come before our Heavenly Father to ask that He would build us up in fellowship with one another, and to pray that His kingdom come in Oxford.

There are many reasons to praise God for what He has been doing at both colleges. We have had new chaplains at both Teddy and Queen's who have been actively supporting the CU in prayer and providing spaces for us to put on events. We are very thankful to God for the opportunities He has given us to start



conversations about faith- in our normal college interactions, during Events Week, and in our college-specific outreach events.

In Trinity and Michaelmas 2025 we introduced a new 5th week outreach event called 'Blues Bites', where we sat in Teddy JCR with lots of snacks and chatted to people about Christianity. Both times this was very well attended, with about 50 people coming each time for food and Jesus chats! We are very excited to run this again in week 7, Hilary.

Hilary is the last term for me and Margaret as college reps, and so we are praying that, alongside the next rep, we would continue to put on successful outreach events. Please pray that we would be able to love and serve both Teddy and Queen's well. Most of all, we would love for you to join us in praying that people in both colleges would encounter Jesus and begin to know, love, and serve Him!

*Abigail Fernández-Arias  
German & Linguistics, St Edmund Hall*

# INTERNATIONAL TEAM

**God's love extends to the whole world!**

Following our International Christmas Dinner, we were thrilled to see students who heard the Gospel for the first time continue their journey at Café 360. It has been a joy to watch these seekers explore what it means to follow Jesus, alongside our regulars who are growing deeper in their faith. Praise the Lord for His amazing work. During Events Week, our Global Hours were a particular highlight. Joseph Chu gave two brilliant talks on success and failure, and members of the i-Team shared testimonies that resonated with the international community.

We were reminded that our identity isn't found in our achievements, but in Christ alone. We are especially encouraged and heartened by those who have been coming along independently, hungry to hear more of the Good News.

We would love prayer for the following:  
Seekers - that those searching for the Kingdom would find eternal satisfaction in Christ  
The future - for the incoming i-Team as they prepare their hearts to serve the international student community next term.

*Kelvin Moy  
Chemistry, Hertford College*

Friday 7pm  
Formosan Tea Bar\*

# CAFÉ360

an event by the oiccu ihub



**Free bubble tea, board games and  
chats about life's big questions!**

Especially for international students, but  
open to all.



@the\_oiccu  
@oxford\_ihub



# ST ANNE'S

In St Anne's College, we meet every Sunday to pray together, both over things happening in college and in our individual lives.

It has been such a blessing to lift things to the Lord as part of Christ's body, and to see prayers answered. One example of this is the outreach that we ran in anticipation of OICCU's Events Week. That week, the first few days had been pretty dismal weather, but in God's kindness it was sunny come Wednesday. This meant that people actually made the effort to stop and have conversations, and even some of the college staff engaged.

During one of our fortnightly Bible studies, we looked at the Parable of the Prodigal Son. It was so helpful to discuss why we are prone to undervaluing God's forgiveness, or wrongly writing people off as too far from God's love.



There is such encouragement in spending that time talking about what it looks like to live out our faith. In other news, our second worship night is soon to happen. Last term, we gathered together as Christians from a number of colleges, both to sing songs to God, and also remind each other of great truths. It has been great to see God's hand over all the logistics and the permissions granted. Please do pray that it will be an encouraging time for all those who come, and that God would provide us with the strength to be salt and light in our college.

*Elijah Smart  
Classics, St Anne's College*

# ST JOHN'S EASTER EVENT

"A city on a hill cannot be hidden."

We at John's were hidden. Week by week, weakness made us conceal our light from the world. But, through studying God's word, His Spirit convicted us. So, we prayed— for each other, our college, our friends. We prayed for faith.

"Shall we do an Easter event?" What an excellent plan! 10 minutes later, the room was booked; it was happening. The risk was both thrilling and scary: we had no speaker, no food, no money, no ideas. As the date approached, we still lacked these things— we sometimes also lacked faith. At every stage, our plans were delayed or frustrated, and so we had to depend on God. We had no other choice but to pray.

The event itself was a clear success. 45 people brought a hearty buzz of friendship which continued throughout the quiz. A stillness followed as Riah Martin gave his own testimony before speaking about Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb for our sins.

Afterwards, people seemed to stay for ages, and we had many fruitful conversations.

I went to bed full of excitement, not just because Christ had been proclaimed, but because we had witnessed God's supremacy at every stage. He convicted us. He gave the ideas. He delayed our plans so that we had to trust Him. He provided in ways we could not have expected (a speaker at last! 30% off Najar's!). Finally, He brought people to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Did it seem risky? Absolutely! But we felt compelled by God to honour Him. And acting in obedient dependence is not risky at all, but the most secure position we could ever be in. We were hidden beforehand, fearful during the run-up, and no stronger afterwards. We truly are just clay pots, yet we contain the glorious light of the Gospel!

Faith won't always look like running an event. Indeed, committing to pray and live for His glory will prove far harder. But Jesus does not call the capable or the bold. We are still weak and feeble. But our God is faithful, He is mighty to save, and He delights to shine His light through people like you and me.

*Caleb Kósciecha  
German & Linguistics, St John's College*

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# COMING UP...

**10-12 SEPT**  
***Freshaway***

Pray for  
Freshers to  
come!

See Margaret (IVP) for more info

**27 SEPT- 3 OCT**  
***International Student  
Welcome week***

Help out if you're  
available!

See Nina (I-sec) for more info

**4-10 OCT**  
***Freshers Week***

Help out with  
Freshers fair, Freshers  
Ceilidh and more!

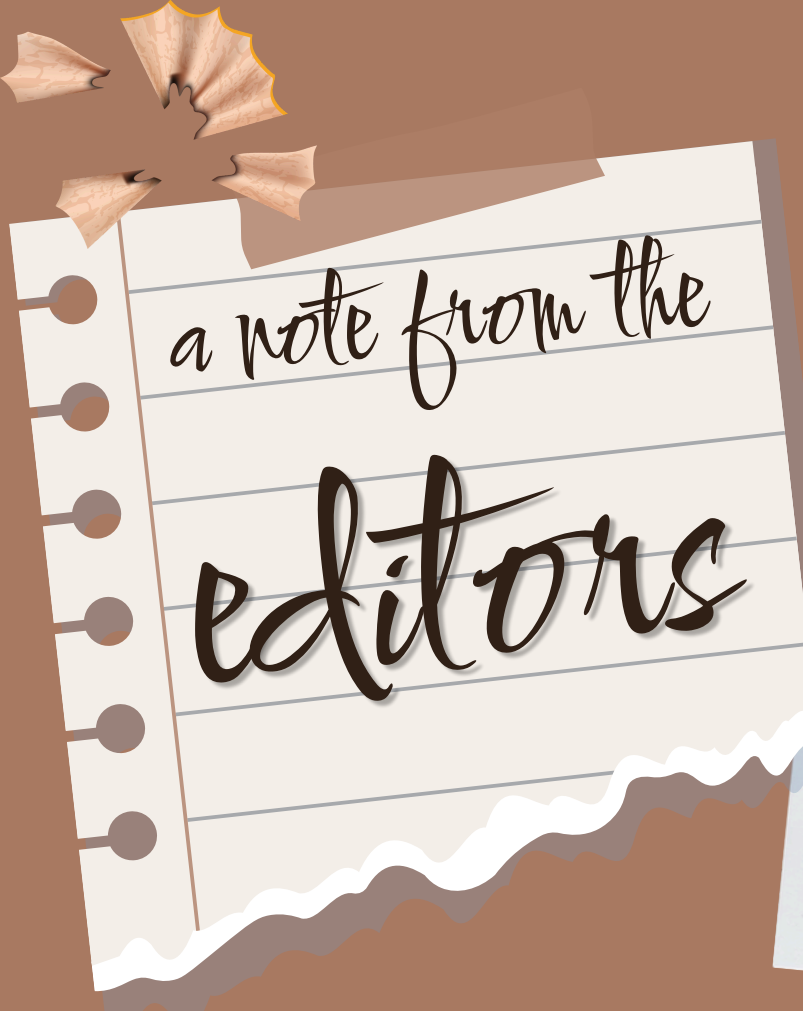
See Ndin Ashe (Outreach)  
for more info

**10-13 JAN**  
***Getaway 2027***

Come for teaching,  
worship & fellowship!

Booking opens in  
Michaelmas

See Julia (Aways officer) for more info



a note from the  
editors



Our names are Margaret and Zoe and we'd like to thank you for being a part of the fledgling OICCU Magazine! Many people have put a lot of hard work and creativity into their writing and we've had a great time exploring their ideas, as we hope you have. From its conception, the OICCU Magazine has been intended to provide an insight into the inner workings, thoughts and experiences of Bible-believing Christians at Oxford University. We want to increase awareness of OICCU's events, community and Biblical principles, for those inside and outside our membership. This Magazine is founded on the message of the Great Commission in Mark 16:15, that Christians should "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." We believe the arts are a powerful way to express this mission and we hope every page proclaims and testifies to the glory of God.

We'd love to invite you to get involved, either by giving feedback or by contributing ideas to future issues. Contact us at [margaret.mclean@seh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:margaret.mclean@seh.ox.ac.uk) or [zoe.todd@keble.ox.ac.uk](mailto:zoe.todd@keble.ox.ac.uk) or catch us during an OICCU event. We pray that this Magazine helps give every student in Oxford University the chance to hear and respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Margaret McLean (English, St Edmund Hall)  
& Zoe Todd (English, Keble College)*

mondays, 7:30pm, at the costa on queen street

# THE SEARCH

free coffee, free cake and conversation

OICCU

as the deer longs for streams of water,  
so I long  
for you,  
O God

PSALM 42:1

## OICCU TRINITY TERM CARD 2026

### MONDAY MORNING PRAYER

Start your week with prayer and praise!

**Mondays - 8am - Hertford College Chapel**

### WEDNESDAY LUNCHTIME PRAYER

A time to pray over our colleges and college CUs. Hosted by a different college CU in their chapel each week so see Instagram for updates.

**Wednesdays - 12pm**

### THE SEARCH

Got questions about faith? Ask them here.

**Mondays - 7:30pm - Costa on Queen Street**

### EQUIP

Our fortnightly main meeting where we gather together for worship, teaching and fellowship.

**Wednesdays, Odd weeks - 7:30pm - North Gate Hall**

### CLUB OUTREACH

Hand out biscuits, share the Gospel and have incredible conversations.

**Wednesdays - 10:30pm for prayer at North Gate Hall (odd weeks), or Exeter (even weeks) - 11pm for outreach**

### SUMMER VIT'S OUTREACH

Give out refreshments and share the Gospel.

**Saturday Week 5**

### BIG QUESTION

Hear a talk answering one of life's big questions, with free lunch and a Q&A

**Friday Week 4 - 1pm - Blue Boar House**

### CAFE 360

Free bubble tea, board games and great conversations - especially for international students, but open to all.

**Fridays - 7pm - Formosan Tea Bar**

### OUTREACH TRAINING

Join us for a practical session on sharing your faith. Grow in confidence and feel ready to take part in outreach.

**Monday Week 3 - 6:15pm - Blue Boar House**

**WE WELCOME ANYONE INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST, REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND OR BELIEF, AND WE WOULD LOVE TO INVITE YOU INTO OUR COMMUNITY!**

 @the\_oiccu

 @oxford\_ihub

 oiccu.org



Find out more, and join our WhatsApp Community by scanning the QR code above.

