

### I'd like to believe, BUT...

Deep down inside each one of us knows and feels that something within us needs an answer. What did the world come into being from, when we find ourselves on our own as human beings we start thinking, and in our thinking we formulate deeper questions such as, what can I know? What am I supposed to do? What can I hope for? And again, does God exist? Does a life exist beyond death? Is it worth being good? What do good and evil mean?

There are many answers, old ones which are continually re-formulated, modern ones opportunely worked out, religious ones, aesthetic ones, moral ones, and even bohemian and ironic ones.

Here we are interested in the answers provided by the Christian faith revealed in the Bible.

- God created the world and placed human beings in the centre of it.
- Something went wrong and God's creations of both the world and people became caricatures. Things do not work well in our world.
- The Jewish/Christian revelation recounts an amazing story. God the creator starts to say and suggest what could be done to change things and people.
- He reveals His plan, which He calls His "Salvation Plan", and which involves starting over again with man, re-creating him and transforming him into the image of His son, Jesus, who the Creator makes live and walk on the face of the earth two thousand years ago.
- He presents this course of action as good and wonderful news for human beings, because it also involves the Son giving up His life to make our lives better.
- The mission succeeds insomuch as the Son takes up His life again after resurrecting from the dead, leaving an empty tomb.
- God's project concludes with twelve men who travel the world, eventually reaching us, asking everyone to believe that in Jesus "Christ" there is salvation, there is the thing we are lacking, the thing which went wrong.
- The only way to commandeer this new opportunity is for men, women and students to believe in the Son, who offered up His life and took it back again so that He could take us with Him too, transforming us day by day.

What way do people respond to God's story when they try to answer the questions they have inside?

In Michael Green's view, a very common response these days can be summarised by this statement: I'd like to believe, but...! Now that we have overcome the certainties of the new atheism, of which there were certainly not many (they were a faith in themselves), perhaps we feel deeply incentivised to believe, but we have uncertainties. We are still not convinced by some things, perhaps because of the hypocrisy of Christians, perhaps due to the absurdity of certain dogmas, perhaps because the apparent contrast with science needs to have some Christian answers or perhaps we have a strong desire for tangible answers...

As Christians who have taken this step, our response is to shout out spontaneously, it's true! Everything that God told us and did is true! And we have experienced it. But likewise, we do not want it to be our enthusiasm that is infectious but if anything, it should just encourage people to discuss the Bible in order to discover in how many ways it is true. It should show that God created the world and the Son's tomb was left empty and thus how true it is that the God of the Bible can save!

**Giacomo Carlo di Gaetano**

(Staff GBU Chieti/Pescara)

### from the Groups

#### // GBU Foggia

[foggia@gbu.it](mailto:foggia@gbu.it)

*Praise:*

- For Rossella, a new member of our group.
- For the meetings this year, where new participants have always turned up.

*Prayer:*

- For Francesca, a girl who has been coming to our events for a long time, that she would be involved in the meetings of particular interest to her.
- For all the contacts made this year.
- For a conference we would like to hold at the end of February with Giacomo Carlo di Gaetano (GBU staff Chieti) on the theme of the origin of sin. Pray for the application for a teaching room, for the organisation and that it would be well attended by students.

#### // GBU Roma

[roma@gbu.it](mailto:roma@gbu.it)

#### GRUPPO TOR VERGATA

*Praise:*

- Despite the fact that it is always harder for students to take part in GBU activities with the exam sessions approaching, we thank God that they were always well attended last semester.
- We have had non-Christian friends attending nearly all our meetings, and we also thank God for the additional Christian students this year. We ended the semester with a Christmas lunch which some of these friends came along to and showed an interest in the GBU.
- We thank God for being able to put on the Mark Drama this spring with GBU members in Rome.

*Prayer:*

- For the coming semester, that we will have some good opportunities, we will keep up our studies and perhaps arrange

some additional activities in which to involve our friends. We have set up a Facebook page so we can be visible to everyone, which we hope will be a way of making ourselves known to those who are interested and would like to follow us.

- For the non-Christian friends who attended our activities last semester and for those who showed an interest in being involved this semester, that they would return and carry on coming to our studies to get to know Jesus.
- For the group. Being quite spread out and having busy lives means that we are not able to meet up regularly to organise our activities and keep up our relationships.
- For the Mark Drama. For this time of preparation and organisation, and for the production which we hope will be very fruitful!

## GRUPPO ROMA TRE

This was my first week as coordinator of the GBU Roma Tre group. It has been a huge blessing.

- Please pray that our group will grow in numbers.
- Please pray I will be very good at running the group.
- Finally, pray that each person in the group would be restored by every single study.
- I thank the Lord that these meetings have been a way of growing individually as well as as a group.

(Alessandro Amico)



(GBU Roma Tre)

## // GBU Firenze

[firenze@gbu.it](mailto:firenze@gbu.it)

In the two GBU groups in Florence we can look back over the last term with the many challenges and blessings the Lord has given us, and feel hugely grateful to God.

*Praise:*

- We give thanks that a third little group has been set up in the Morgagni Complex in Florence.
- For the arrival of new young people in the little groups, who are keen to get to know Jesus.

- For the RESTART day on the theme of sin and grace that we held at Poggio Ubertini in November, where lots of young people joined in who were not yet believers!

*Prayer:*

- That the young people who approached us would become more eager to find out who Jesus is and that they would convert.
- That God would speak into the hearts of the young people who are searching for Him and that He would guide us in the evangelising events (particularly at the evenings with Andy Mayo and the Mark Drama in Florence).
- For us as guides/co-ordinators that we would grow in our running of operations and succeed in managing the linguistic differences in the groups.
- We could do with finding a new place to hold the meetings in the town centre. Where we are, we never manage to find anywhere to settle and we waste a great deal of time finding a suitable place. We know that God will provide!

## // GBU Milano

[milano@gbu.it](mailto:milano@gbu.it)

*Praise:*

- For the fact that there is a GBU group in Milan.
- For the freedom to meet and have a university room available.
- For the friendships which have developed in the group.

*Prayer:*

- For more people to take part.
- That people would give more of their time.
- For motivation and creativity to do more activities.

## // GBU Palermo

[palermo@gbu.it](mailto:palermo@gbu.it)

*Praise:*

- We thank God for enabling us to find somewhere new to hold the Bible studies – we have been allowed to use the bar next to the university.
- Anna Canzeri is preparing to graduate and has finished her time as GBU co-ordinator. She writes, "I praise God for enabling me to join a GBU group. It has been the best part of the whole time at university. I really have learned a lot and getting to know Jesus through the Bible studies has been very en-

riching for my life and has deepened my relationship with Him."

- We praise God that a girl called Barbara has said that she will help Shani-ze to co-ordinate the group on a regular basis.

*Prayer:*

- We are waiting for the go-ahead to hold film discussion evenings at a university hall of residence. Pray for doors to open so that we can reach a large number of students.
- Pray for the group leadership and that other GBU members would get involved and help regularly both with organising activities and participating in them.

## // GBU Bologna

[bologna@gbu.it](mailto:bologna@gbu.it)

We are grateful to God for the first semester of this year. Many new Italian- and international students have been attending, and God has been encouraging us and enabling us to do one-to-one studies with some of the students. It is a great joy to be able to see them growing in their knowledge of Christ. We are organising a mini Evangelistic Week for the second semester in March and we are busy organising it and feeling really enthusiastic.

*Praise:*

- For God's faithfulness which has allowed us to do a lot of events and meetings so far.
- For the large number of new students who attended in the first semester.
- That we have been able to do a one-to-one course with some of the students. Pray that they would come to believe through our testimony, and get to know Christ and the Father's love.

*Prayer:*

- For the mini Evangelistic Week in March.
- That students would be involved and participate regularly.
- For a new coordinator.

## // GBU Napoli

[napoli@gbu.it](mailto:napoli@gbu.it)

We have been really encouraged by what we have seen happening in the last part of 2014. The studies have been well attended by students and the events we have organised have been as successful as we hoped! We are immensely grateful for how the Lord arranged for two student girls to participate in the studies and events regu-

larly. In addition to being points for praise, these two girls, Isabel and Raffaella definitely also need to be prayed for so that they will know Jesus' love through their own personal experience. In addition, we are asking for prayer for an event which is as demanding as it is thrilling, the Evangelistic Week in March that we intend to organise! Please pray that it will arouse great interest in non-Christian students and be really well attended by them, and that all the Christian students we already know and those we will get to know will feel involved and will support the event.

Glory be to God!

## // GBU Torino

[torino@gbu.it](mailto:torino@gbu.it)

*Praise:*

- That after having spent two years applying for it, we have become an official association within the Polytechnic, enabling us to use many areas we were not able to use before.
- Delia, a girl who has been able to mentor some of the other students and has begun her own journey. She has helped us greatly in recent months, also with the logistics. And Damaris, a student girl who has felt called to continue being involved in the GBU for a longer period of time.
- For the international students who were an important contribution to the GBU, even though they have left us now.

*Prayer:*

- The new young people we have got to know this year through our activities (like Lucas and Thiago who helped us a lot while they were staying in Turin for a short while)
- For wisdom when considering possible collaborations which have kept springing up in recent months in other missions and with other churches.
- That Lorenz and Guido can be mentored while they are helping the group.
- That we will have confirmation of the teaching rooms in the Polytechnic, because even though we have become an association, the bureaucratic time scales are slow.

## // GBU Cosenza

[cosenza@gbu.it](mailto:cosenza@gbu.it)

- We praise God that the new academic year has begun well for our group. The Lord has graciously given us a teaching room in which to hold our meetings (to tell the truth it is very nice

and cosy!). Pray it will give us more visibility so we can become a point of reference in the university.

- Newcomers have joined the group and this has definitely been encouraging for us. Pray that the Lord will unite us more and more in His will!
- Pray for Andrea and Giovanna, two students who are attending the meetings – that the Lord will reveal himself to them in their hearts.

## // GBU Siena

[siena@gbu.it](mailto:siena@gbu.it)

*Praise:*

- For our group. The Lord, by His grace has given us a really compact, tight-knit group this year.
- For the venue made available by a local church for some of our activities.
- For the fact that the people running the canteen have allowed us to conduct our Bible studies and Language Exchange there.

*Prayer:*

- For the students who have been attending our group for a long time now, that they would believe and be able to truly profess their faith in Jesus Christ.
- For our activities, that the Lord would give us a spirit of evangelism and wisdom to proclaim the Gospel to the students.
- For the Evangelistic Week we would like to hold in March, that the Lord would guide us in our organisation and that all the students would give their support.

## // GBU Urbino

[urbino@gbu.it](mailto:urbino@gbu.it)

- We are grateful for the evening meetings that various students are taking part in. Knowing what the terrain is like in Urbino, it is really wonderful what God is doing!
- Pray the group would be united and for the love uniting us which we never take for granted, that it would be appealing to all non-believers.
- We would like to hold three days of evangelism (from March to May). Pray God would guide us and take charge of everything in accordance with His will.

## // GBU Staff

Hi everyone! I'm Gillian, an Australia girl from a small town called Armidale (half way between Sydney and Brisbane – look on Google Maps!).

Thanks to Jesus Christ, I arrived in Italy eight months ago to work with the GBU, in other words to share Jesus and His Gospel with university students. For the moment I am based in Siena where I am learning the language and loads of things about the culture. I am attending the GBU activities in Siena and I meet regularly with the other staff members, Hannah and Giovanni Donato who (along with the students) are teaching me a great number of things! I will move to another town in Italy in the future, but I do not yet know which one.

I cannot remember a time when I did not know Jesus as my Lord and Saviour – thanks to God and my parents who read the Bible to me and taught me the Gospel when I was little. All the same, when I was nine I left home to go to boarding school – at that time we lived in Nepal where my parents were missionaries, but the boarding school was in India. Even though I was very young (and therefore it was quite hard) it was an excellent time because I realised that being a Christian was not just a family tradition – I was not a believer just because of my parents' faith, but instead there is a deeply personal relationship between me and God, my Father because of the cross of Jesus.

I have a degree in Physiotherapy, but before I arrived here I worked with an evangelical church at the University. I am here in Italy in partnership with CMS Australia, a missionary organisation which supports me.

I have a brother and sister, both of whom are married and I have five nephews and nieces. All of them, including my parents live in various parts of Australia.

I would like to thank the Australian churches who support me, the Chiesa Cristiana Biblica di Siena [the Christian Bible Church of Siena] for making me welcome, the GBU staff and students and in particular our God who is rich in mercy, because of the great love He loved us with even while we were still dead in our sins, He made us alive in Christ. And for the grace by which you (we) were saved! (Ephesians 2: 4-5)



## News & Events

### GBU NATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE



When: **23-26 aprile 2015**  
Where: **Poggio Ubertini (FI)**  
Title: **It's true!**  
Speaker: **Michael Green (Oxford)**  
Cost: **100 euro (80 if you sign up before 15 February!)**

For info and to register [www.gbu.it](http://www.gbu.it)

### GBU MISSION TRIP TO MONTENEGRO 16-23 May 2015

**Dove?** Nikšić (second largest city in Montenegro)

**What?** An evangelistic week with various kinds of events taking place in the Faculty of Italian Language and Culture (English is NOT essential for the trip!)

**Why?** To help out one of the most under-developed student movements in Europe.

**Cost?** Around 160 Euros, flight from Rome included



for information contact [giovannidonato@gbu.it](mailto:giovannidonato@gbu.it)

### Would you like to invest in the future of Italy?

Professionals, politicians, teachers, professors and tomorrow's doctors are all at university. Do we want them to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour? Do we want their lives to be characterised by the will of God?

As a student you had the chance to witness, now you have the opportunity to support today's students in their witness. Your support will be used to pay the expenses of staff members and our office, to organise national training events and group meetings, and to support and help Italian staff to emerge who can continue the work of GBU.

#### What can I do?

Send us a gift made payable to Associazione Gruppo Biblici Universitari.

CCP number: 52472313

IBAN: IT32 D076 0102 8000 0005 2472 313

SWIFT/BIC: BPPIITRRXXX

As the beneficiary, you can write "Gift" and it will be used where most needed, or you can indicate "Gift for staff" or "Gift for the office"... or, you can become a regular supporter of GBU! A gift of €10, €20, €50 or €100 a month gives us the opportunity to plan our work more easily.

There are no strings attached, if you would like to know more about this, send us an email headed "gift-info" to [ufficio@gbu.it](mailto:ufficio@gbu.it). Thank you!

For more information go to [www.gbu.it/sostienici/](http://www.gbu.it/sostienici/)

## GBU staff

We encourage students to be enterprising and autonomous. This is the context within which the GBU Association is structured, aiming to form new groups and support existing groups.

The GBU Association is assisted by people all over the national territory of Italy who collaborate with us and whom you can contact for information.

### Johan Soderkvist (Firenze)

General Secretary

[johans@gbu.it](mailto:johans@gbu.it)

### Luisa Pasquale (Firenze)

Office Manager

[luisa@gbu.it](mailto:luisa@gbu.it)

### Giacomo Carlo Di Gaetano

Staff Chieti/Pescara

[giacomocarlo@gbu.it](mailto:giacomocarlo@gbu.it)

### Andrea Becciolini

Staff in training Firenze

[andrea@gbu.it](mailto:andrea@gbu.it)

### Andrew Lubbock

Staff Firenze

[andrew@gbu.it](mailto:andrew@gbu.it)

### Elisabetta & Chris Brown

Staff Bologna

[chris@gbu.it](mailto:chris@gbu.it)

[elisabetta@gbu.it](mailto:elisabetta@gbu.it)

### Federica Gramiccia

Staff Roma

[federica@gbu.it](mailto:federica@gbu.it)

### Sarah Breuel

Staff Roma

[sarah@gbu.it](mailto:sarah@gbu.it)

### Giovanni & Hannah Donato

Staff Siena

[hannah@gbu.it](mailto:hannah@gbu.it)

[giovanni@gbu.it](mailto:giovanni@gbu.it)

### Lorens Marklund

Staff Torino

[lorens@gbu.it](mailto:lorens@gbu.it)

### Francesco Schiano

Staff Napoli

[francesco@gbu.it](mailto:francesco@gbu.it)

### Gillian Law

Staff Siena

[gillian@gbu.it](mailto:gillian@gbu.it)



The GBU Newsletter is a publication of the Gruppi Biblici Universitari with the intent of supporting the local student groups and update all those who wish to support the witness of the Gospel in the Italian University.

News and information requests about the GBU Newsletter can be sent to the address: [ufficio@gbu.it](mailto:ufficio@gbu.it)

Translation from Italian: Rebecca J C Brown

Associazione Gruppi Biblici Universitari (GBU) – Via della Vigna Vecchia, 15 – 50122 Firenze

Tel: 055 417979 – [ufficio@gbu.it](mailto:ufficio@gbu.it)