

Good Fruit

by Anthony Ogunbowale-Thomas



Good Fruit is an organisation that incubates gifted and enterprising young Christians from various fields and industries who seek to use their time, influence and talents for the welfare of others in a way that gives glory to God and makes an impact on our economy, society and culture. We support these young leaders in their endeavours towards this goal by creating an environment that supports, scales and accelerates ideas, projects and visions. To do this we help these emerging influencers and leaders to create meaningful relationships in both 'online' and 'offline' environments where they can share, support, learn and collaborate with peers, and in addition connect with senior leaders who may be helpful as mentors in such matters as funding or other relevant resources.

Good Fruit is not a group of *elite* Christians but a group of *diverse* Christians creating value in their chosen fields (eg art, music, film, enterprise, politics) and in society at large. They are concerned about social justice and Christian mission. Aged from 18 upwards, Good Fruit members vary in their level of achievement and success, but all of them share common traits which are typical of the Good Fruit culture. These are:

- They have an attitude of openness, sharing and willingness to help
- They are active and atypical
- They are making a valuable contribution
- They are tired of 'conventional' Christian living, seeking an adventure with Jesus, stepping out in faith and being bold in starting new things.
- They have a high regard for God, his gospel and the lives of people.

Good Fruit is not a mass market organisation, but consists of invited, emerging leaders who have had or are having impact in their field of work and are seeking to use their gifts, times, talents or influence faithfully in a way that honours God.

Members of Good Fruit, Good Fruit fellows, can build and continue relationships around the world through an online private network, which is accessible through a new website launched in October 2011, www.good-fruit.org. In addition, Good Fruit organises meet-ups and social dinners for fellows and interested individuals, bringing together and connecting like-minded people and senior leaders who are willing to pass on their knowledge. The next meet-up will be on November 24th in London, where an open dinner for Christians interested in Good Fruit can connect with others and hear about the importance of building relationships from Matt Bird, Managing Director of Make it Happen UK.

Good Fruit has recently launched a partnering mentoring scheme with Christian Business Executives (CABE), and will launch their new 'Christian Renegade Tour' exploring modern and historic Christians who used their influence to change societies, communities and industries. The first event will take place at SOAS (London University) Kings Cross campus on 17th November, with Dr. Peter Modern speaking on Charles Spurgeon.

I am a recent graduate from Kingston University London in Entrepreneurship and Management. The vision for Good Fruit came when I was experiencing difficulty in connecting with relevant people and resources within the Christian world at the time I was



As well as running Good Fruit, Anthony Ogunbowale-Thomas works part-time for Barclays Bank and for Emerging Students, a publication and media brand working to redefine university culture in the UK.



▶▶ embarking on a music project in 2008. This was when the idea of connecting Christian resources arose, but two years later a deeper conviction came about during my term as President of Kingston Entrepreneurs Society. This was a burden to see more Christians influencing and changing culture, business, politics and church. The number of Christians openly using their influence and talents in their field for the good of society seemed to be small compared with that of non-Christians. I asked myself how I would share the Gospel with friends who are dedicating their lives to devising new structures and processes that address social issues in developing countries. Of course Christ is the motivation, but there needed to be evidence of the Gospel that I stood for. I began to wonder if believers live in the same socio-economic times and are exposed to the same new technologies and opportunities.

Why were there no believers (at least that I knew) who were capitalising on them? There appeared to be an under-representation on the part of the church.

We are currently recruiting regional/city ambassadors and network managers as well as engaging writers to join the team.

Good Fruit also aims to work with Christian organisations and churches in helping form strategic compelling solutions for problems that they face, drawing on the expertise and knowledge of members with relevant experience.

To be a part of this team or to work with Good Fruit as an organisation, mentor, or investor in new start-ups please contact Anthony Ogunbowale-Thomas on aot@good-fruit.org. ■

E V E N T S	a look at what is happening in various organisations
<p>TWUK Saturday 26th November 10.00am - 2.30pm Southampton</p>	<p>Transform Work UK Conference: Does God Work Here? Speaker Chan Abraham, CEO Luminus; themes: Christian leadership in hard times, workplace stress, Christian Workplace Groups. Venue: New Community Church, Southampton; Cost: £15 includes a buffet lunch. Details at http://tw-southampton.eventbrite.com/.</p>
<p>TBN Saturday 3rd December 9.00am - 4.00pm Kingston-upon-Thames</p>	<p>Transformational Business Network Members Day Conference Theme: <i>Changing attitudes in the fight against poverty</i>: place of private for-profit sector in development, growth of the Social Venture Capital sector. Venue: Warren House, Warren Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, KT2 7HY Cost: £114 (members £78). Details at http://www.tbnetwork.org/</p>
<p>Premier Cercle Thursday 16th February 8.00am - 10.30am London</p>	<p>Premier Cercle The Rule of St Benedict - a Modern Treaty of Management Speakers: Stephen Green, Lord Griffiths, Herta Von Stiegel, Dermot Tredget OSB. Venue: London (exact location tba). Cost EUR 25.00 if booked before 31 Dec 2011. Details at http://www.premiercercle.com/</p>
<p>Faith in Business Conference Friday 30th March to Sunday 1st April Cambridge</p>	<p>Faith in Business Conference: Motivation in Business Speakers: Adventuring with God - Beverley Shepherd, Running a Social Enterprise - Andrew Tanswell, Motivational Differences - Graeme Codrington, Big Business and the Kingdom of God - Jim Wright, Success and Significance - Harald Holt, Motivation in China - Richard Higginson. Venue: Ridley Hall, Cambridge. Details will appear at www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/fibprogramme.html.</p>