

## SPURGEON'S COLLEGE



Not just a degree in Theology  
but a journey

Tim Bright gave up a good life to train for Baptist ministry at Spurgeon's. He is now in the final year of the Church-based course and tells his story to Pieter Lalleman.

At age 12, I drifted away from church but continued to attend Boys' Brigade at Burwell Baptist Church. I gave my heart to Jesus during a youth weekend and was later baptised at Burwell. I did a degree in electronics and when

I returned to Burwell, I became involved in house groups, the drop-in club and the worship group. I completed a youth leader's training course and then spent Friday evenings working with Histon Baptist on their bus project. I worked in electronics for four years but after a trip to Mostar, Bosnia, I wanted a job with more meaning. I trained to be a teacher of science and gained my PGCE in 1998.



### Career ... left

When Carolyn, a police officer, and I got married, we made our home in Suffolk and attended Mildenhall Baptist Church. We ran the youth group together and became involved in the worship group. I became a deacon and experienced the challenges of leading a church. We had two sons and I also became deputy head of the school.

In September 2009, I felt that God was perhaps saying 'go now'. I had always assumed that it would probably be Baptist ministry, and began to test this call. And all doors opened! I gave up my job and career, and moved our children out of private education. This was really difficult; it was a lovely school. We downsized the house, the cars and even the fridge freezer. It continues to be a challenge to adapt to this substantially lower income lifestyle, but God is good.

A wonderful, safe  
environment



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The family has been very supportive. In fact they have coped better than I have. After the initial excitement of College life I realised I did not know as much as I thought. I felt back at square one - a pupil. I did not like writing and wondered what I was doing at Spurgeon's. However, I have experienced fantastic support from the staff. There are always opportunities available to talk things through. The friendships that have developed in the student body enable me to vocalise, deal with and bounce around issues that have troubled me, all within a wonderful, safe environment. Meeting people from other cultures has enhanced my understanding of forces in my own culture that have shaped me.



**Spirituality**

One of my favourite modules is 'Spirituality'. The understanding of the different ways we can pray, worship and spend time with God; how we feed our own spiritual rhythms.

The module on 'Pastoral care and counselling' opened up areas of our own lives that needed working on. This is not just a degree in Theology but a journey, a journey where we learn so much, including about ourselves.

Church-based training involves three days work in a church and three days of study. Mildenhall Baptist Church stepped out in faith to fund me as 'Minister in Training'.

My role has included developing skills as a minister but I also set up and ran a community centre and food bank.

I have realised that I will never really be ready for ministry. It is an on-going learning experience that will take the rest of our lives to complete.

**Pieter Lalleman**  
Academic Dean,  
Spurgeon's College

**An ongoing learning experience**

**Please pray:**

- » For Tim, Carolyn and their family as they adjust to College life and the change in lifestyle
- » For Mildenhall Baptist Church funding and supporting Tim as a Minister in Training
- » For the students and staff of Spurgeon's College as they learn and grow together
- » For women and men testing their call to ministry and exploring the possibility of college study

For an introduction to Spurgeon's College, from the students and staff, have a look at the video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhdmknCWmXA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhdmknCWmXA)



Whilst our Baptist Colleges are not funded by Home Mission, their work has a huge impact on our Union through forming ministers, and making contributions to local churches, associations and the union as a whole.