

tertiary students christian fellowship quarterly magazine

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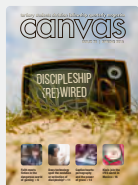
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canvas

CANVAS aims to inform and encourage all who are interested in reaching students for Christ, and in thinking Christianly about their life and work. It is published four times a year by TSCF.



Canvas Issue 76

Spring 2015

Cover Design

Maryanne Wardlaw

TSCF is a founding member of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. It serves to help students reach students for Christ nationwide by enabling them to reach maturity in Christ, so that they understand and proclaim the truth about Christ and serve God by showing his love in the student world.

Send your thoughts, comments, questions and letters to us at canvas@tscf.org.nz

TSCF

PO Box 9672, Marion Square,
Wellington 6141

+64 04 3847274

www.tscf.org.nz | tscf@tscf.org.nz

Editorial team

Robyn Drake, Mark Grace,
Nigel Pollock, Geoff Robson,
Andy Shudall, Maryanne Wardlaw

Design

Maryanne Wardlaw

canvasgreen

If you would prefer to receive a PDF version of Canvas, or an email reminder when it is available on the website please email canvas@tscf.org.nz

canvasnews

New VP

TSCF has welcomed Andrew Saunders as the newest vice president. He is not new to TSCF, however, having served as national director from 1991 to 2001. He is a deputy principal at Selwyn College in Auckland.



Dunedin

This semester, Dunedin OCF and VCF have held two fundraisers, a movie night and a cook-off for our IFES pledge. We also had a great mid-semester combined retreat where we learnt about caring for creation.

Palmerston North

PNOCF has a new team of leaders on board who are eager to explore more about what it means to lead, serve and be in partnership in God's ministry.

We also had a combined prayer meeting with Welliington CF to pray for our campuses, CFs and those in the world. It was uplifting and reminded us to never stop supporting each other.

In the last week of classes, we will host a workshop with three different topics: Church history, the Bible at work in our lives, and current issues.

Auckland

Veritas, a group of law students at the University of Auckland, has been exploring the various ways of combining Christ with culture. We have heard from various speakers. Lyndon Drake (morning pastor at the Baptist Tabernacle and former investment banker) shared with us about a biblical perception of wealth, and Blair Franklin (lawyer and former Veritas leader) gave us his reflections on life as a Christian lawyer.

We were also able to combine with CMF and Nurses Christian Fellowship for an evening event with Health and Disability Commissioner Anthony Hill. He spoke about the correlation between faith and professionalism, and inspired us to think differently about how we can make an impact in our future careers.

Once upon a time, as recently as my childhood, your average family had bookshelves, two TV channels, and a radio or three. The only “escapes” from real life were those limited options in the study or living room.

No one checked their phone during school or church or dinner; it was wired to a wall in the kitchen. We were stuck talking to each other most of the time.

I don’t want to admit that the iPhone I snagged cheap on TradeMe is rewiring me. It was a practical purchase – a necessary one, even (if you look at my job description and squint a little). But watch me leave it at home accidentally and wait for the withdrawal symptoms.

So what does discipleship look like with the new temptations that constant access to everyone and everything – helpful and damning – brings? What

potential is there for the gospel to permeate a culture saturated by self-centredness (at the shallow end), and as we wade further into virtual reality, slander, violence and pornography?

The technology that enables our me-centric connectedness isn’t really “redeemable,” because it was never lost. It just is. We are the ones whose vast capacity for both evil and for reflecting Christ’s creative goodness are amplified by our new tools.

So in this issue Nigel Pollock helps us take an honest look at how we’re using them, and Ian Reid gives hope to those struggling with the most toxic digital idol of all, pornography. And if you’re curious what Narnia looks like in the 21st century, meet some Kiwi game developers who are telling the old story a brand new way.

– Maryanne Wardlaw

LAUNCH 2016

Counting on discipleship

February 8-12 • El Rancho, Kapiti Coast

a camp for new & returning students & recent grads

www.tscf.org.nz/launch

www.facebook.com/tscf.nz/events



Born



Inge Flinte and her husband, former Dunedin staff worker Nick Brennan, welcomed their third child, **Aya Brennan**, on 15 July.

Emily Grace Reynolds was born on 4 August to Rob, former Lincoln CF and Lincoln Mintern, and Jenna. Her older brothers are James and John.

Jonny Wilson, former Lincoln CF, and Emily welcomed **Evelyn Wilson** on 9 September.

Anna Holmes, who used to work in the Wellington TSCF office, and her husband, Alistair, welcomed a son, **Elijah Holmes**, in September.

Peter and Elizabeth Brown, whose experience of Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu featured in the last *Canvas*, have returned to Auckland, and on 4 October Elizabeth gave birth to **S raphine H l ne Iesua Brown**. Peter was also part of Massey CF.

Rachel Turner, former communications manager for TSCF, gave birth to **Phoebe** and **Joel** on 14 October. Rachel and David have two older sons, and the family of six reside in the UK now.

Died

Elaine Scott, a longtime supporter of OCF in Wellington, died on 13 August. She is the mother of Matt Scott, former assistant general secretary and general secretary 2002-2004, and the mother-in-law of Chris Collins, IFES chairperson.

Engaged

Jonathan Camp, former student leader of AU-TCF, and **Amanda Clinton** are now engaged.

Simon Sim, staff worker at the University of Otago, is engaged to **Rosie Pettigrew**.

Hanli Liu, former president of TSCF Massey in Auckland, and **Sarah Ong** are engaged to be married in December.

Married

Caleb Saunders has married **Eve Decker**. Caleb was part of Love Shack (renamed Veritas) at the University of Auckland's law school. His parents are Andrew Saunders, former national director of TSCF, and Helen Saunders, current chair of CMF.

Awarded

Three TSCF staff members took the top spots in two categories at the Australasian Religious Press Association's annual conference in August, making *Canvas* the most highly awarded Kiwi publication.



In the Faith Reflection category, Robyn Drake received gold for "Hard Mercies," spring 2014. She writes of seeing God's grace through chronic pain, and applies this to all suffering we face.

Geoff Robson received silver for "Informed Decisions" in the same category, winter 2014. The summary of his blog series on engaging in the political world as a Christian is a helpful study of the intersection between faith and politics.

In the Theological Article category, Maryanne Wardlaw received gold for "Advent, Suffering & Salvation" in spring 2014. She looks at Christ fully entering into futility, loss and rejection, both sharing in our suffering and conquering its cause.

Robyn is Auckland's interim team leader, Geoff is a Canterbury staff worker, and Maryanne is **Canvas** editor and communications manager for TSCF.



Dietitian Dr Winsome Parnell, the chair of Dunedin's TSCF support committee and a long-time TSCF supporter, received the Dietitians New Zealand's award for excellence. She

is a human nutrition associate professor at the University of Otago.

In a press release, Dietitians NZ praised Dr Parnell for cutting through jargon, and said that "her unwavering focus on food, nutritional adequacy, rigorous science and social justice has driven her commitment to offer postgraduate education to students at a distance, undertake research with Pasifika people and the food insecure and lead national nutrition surveys."

canvaswanted



STUDENTS FOR DUNEDIN HOUSE

TSCF is setting up a student community house in Dunedin for 2016. Participation in the community comes with a commitment to doing life together, which will include regular shared meals, regular shared spiritual practices, and exploring how we will serve the neighbourhood and invite others to meet Jesus. We have one place remaining for a male student – new or returning. For more information contact, James Allaway on james@tscf.org.nz.

STAFF WORKERS & TEAM LEADERS

Are you committed to seeing the gospel

worked out in every area of life? Are you excited by the challenges and opportunities that young adults face? TSCF is looking for staff workers in Auckland and Wellington, a team leader in Wellington, and a Catalyst team leader to move the graduate ministry forward nationally.

Please email info@tscf.org.nz for an application form and job description, or telephone (04) 384 7274.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE TSCF NATIONAL DIRECTOR

TSCF is looking for an exceptional individual to work alongside its National Director, Nigel Pollock, in Wellington. The ideal candidate has PA experience and can relate to people from various agencies while promoting relationships with students, staff and supporters.

TSCF is looking for a committed Christian who is in agreement with its values, and ideally has prior knowledge of the ministry. They will also need a sense of humour and a sense of call.

The role commences February 2016.

Please send CV and a cover letter to estherv@tscf.org.nz or post to TSCF (ND PA), PO Box 9672, Marion Square, Wellington 6141.



Faith meets fiction

The gaming industry is a story of growing profits, addictive design, and virtual violence. One Kiwi studio is redeeming the genre, introducing the digital generation to a “new Narnia.”

“I have a small gaming problem I need to address.”

That wasn’t the point of our meeting, but it was bound to come up.

Paul Dunn’s confession came in a central Auckland café just down the road from Scarlet City Studios, where he works as a game developer.

Gaming is a double-edged sword. Paul lights up as he describes its vast storytelling potential one moment, and the next he sheepishly admits to getting sucked further into life behind the screen than he’d like.

The former pastor and storyteller is part of a team of 20 or so artists, developers and designers – all gamers – who are creating a biblical allegory. It’s a dream job for Paul, using new technology to tell the old, old story. Both gaming and fleshing out biblical narratives equal legitimate research.

But the reason for this adventure they’re on, Paul said, is that it’s incredibly strategic. “Someone asked a philosopher, ‘How do you change a society?’ He said, ‘You tell a different story.’ It’s not about power or control – it’s the stories that shape us,” Paul said. “This is how we make sense of ourselves and our world. And that’s why we’ve



Artwork courtesy of Scarlet City Studios

“We’ve chosen to tell the Bible as a story, because we believe it’s compelling and it shapes us. It reads us as much as we read it.”

– Paul Dunn



chosen to tell the Bible as a story, because we believe it’s compelling and it shapes us.

“It reads us as much as we read it.”

Paul joined the studio in early 2014, bringing with him a degree in theology from Carey Baptist College and media from Massey University, and years of experience in both fields.

Although the studio was just a couple years old at the time, the trust that set it up was born in the days of mail-order catalogues and telegrams – the Postal Sunday School Movement. Robert Laidlaw, founder of Farmers, established it 80 years ago. He was an outspoken Christian and generous backer of many evangelical endeavours, such as the Bible college that now bears his name.

The PSSM trustees seem to be as forward-thinking as Laidlaw was. Paul said that as the demand for printed Bible materials declined, they decided to pour resources into teaching the Word using contemporary media. And so the idea for *The Aetherlight: Chronicles of the Resistance* was born.

“We like to think of ourselves as more than a game,” said Tim Cleary, the lead world builder. He and Paul Abrahams, the lead designer, had just ducked into the café on their way to get milkshakes. (They really are living the dream.) “It’s a whole edu-tainment property that, like Narnia did for a generation that just read books, can do in a generation that isn’t content with a single screen.” Unlike most games, *The Aetherlight* is not an end in itself; its ultimate purpose is to get people into the Bible.

It is also not *Super Mario Bros go to Nazareth*. In addition to realistic visuals, narrative games have well-developed plots and characters, which involve more than a goal to be won with a bit of dexterity and strategy.

“The stories being told in games are phenomenal,” Paul said of the genre they’re contributing to. “The

themes being addressed, and the way people are writing these games – it's incredible storytelling, and there are incredible resources going into it."

Kiwis spent \$347 million on gaming in 2014, according to the latest data by the Interactive Games & Entertainment Association, published as the *Digital New Zealand Report 2016*. That's nearly \$80 per person, an 18% increase from the previous year. It reports \$78.7 million in revenue, with 568 Kiwis employed full-time as developers.

Overseas, the industry has already surpassed the film industry's box office revenues. Last year, games took in US\$15.4 billion in the United States while cinemas generated just US\$10.4 billion. For an increasing number of people, gaming is their entertainment of choice.

The average age of gamers, percentage of population playing, and time spent playing all continue to rise. *Digital New Zealand* says that time spent can vary from a few minutes several times a day on a hand-held device to hours a day on a computer.

The industry paints a rosy picture of itself in the *Digital New Zealand* report, one where games are developed to help mental health and battle memory loss. However the most mentioned reason for gaming is "to relieve boredom," 75% play alone, and many of the remaining 25% are not physically present with those they play with.

Sexual predators, sexual content, violence, and harassment are among the most common concerns that *Digital New Zealand* lists for gamers and their parents.

This may not be real life, but it is real. Characters in the games take on the characteristics of the humans controlling them. In multi-player games, they interact with each other in a virtual universe that mirrors our own. But without real-life consequences, inhibitions are lower and moral choices



88 minutes
average daily play

67%
of Kiwis
regularly game

"Immersing ourselves in a fiction – whether a book or a movie or whatever – is aspirational. There's a little bit of 'how I want to be' in this."

greyer. These digital realms also exist within a reality created by storytellers with their own world views, ones often opposed to the biblical one.

"Some games deliberately and gratuitously encourage unhealthy behaviour," Paul said. "Some would say, 'it's just a game.' But if there was no context for this behaviour in which you can understand it in a wider sense, then it's just gratuitous. If it's just gratuitously violent, gratuitously vicious or mean or debasing, like *Grand Theft Auto* – pick up a hooker, take her behind the building, kill her, get points – there is nothing redeeming in that."

These games will either warp the player's understanding of reality – God's reality – or enhance it.

"It's the themes and the meaning that we draw from them which should shape our thinking in terms of 'is this healthy for me, is this reflective of the kind of person I am or I want to be?'" Paul said. "Immersing ourselves in a fiction – whether

34
years
average age of
gamers

\$347
million
spent by Kiwi
gamers last year

a book or a movie or whatever – is aspirational. There's a little bit of 'how I want to be' in this. There's a little bit of how I'd like the world to be.

"... So you need to question, is what's depicted on the screen or in this environment aspirational in an appropriate way?"

The content of the games is only one concern for gamers and their parents. There are those who find living in a fictional world more comfortable or safe or



exciting than the physical world they're part of. The games are designed to be addictive, and the most successful ones succeed in hooking people.

"There are all these games that are encapsulated, that you think you can play for a short period," Paul said. "But you don't. It's an incredible game design – they've made them really compelling."

Finish a book, and you're present again. But a game doesn't end, and it's available 24-7 – "so I'm going to need really good internal constraints or I'm going to get lost."

Paul's not-universally-successful constraints include a commitment to maintaining his relationships with his wife, Kate, and their three children. This means he doesn't sit down at the computer if there are dishes in the sink or conversations waiting to be had. He said that he and his colleagues have learned that, however well they control their gaming, there is always a real-life cost.

On one level, it helps that Paul's children, brother, and brother's children are gamers too. For them, gaming is an activity that builds their relationships. In fact Paul said that he and his brother weren't close at all before they started gaming together a couple years ago.

But there are still plenty of risks, especially for children. Paul has developed a few guidelines for his, who are between the ages of 8 and 14.

- They only play games he's played first
- He is cautious about online games – it's an "uncontrolled window into humanity"
- Younger children don't play in adult communities
- The degree of gore factors in; there are no first-person shooters for younger children
- Each child is allowed 4.5 computer entertainment hours a week, as and when they like, to teach them to manage time gaming



“We want kids to play it because we believe that they’re engaging with a story that will shape their world for eternity.”

“We are unashamedly designing our game so that kids want to play it,” Paul said of *The Aetherlight*. “Now we have a different reason – we don’t want kids to play it so we can bankroll ourselves, we want kids to play it because we believe that they’re engaging with a story that will shape their world for eternity. So we want to make it compelling.”

Paul said that many “Christian” games he’s seen are anything but compelling, like some derivative counterparts in music and the arts that are thinly veiled tracts or sermons.

There are exceptions, however, and *The Aetherlight* isn’t the only one to attempt something greater. We had both read rave reviews of *That Dragon, Cancer*, which by all accounts has hit the mark. Ryan Green, a Christian, developed the game while he nursed his toddler son Joel through terminal cancer. Players explore the world he’s created to experience Joel’s real-life story, going through the highs and lows of sacrificially caring for a virtual child who will not survive.

Despite taking death seriously – unlike the majority of video games – and despite leading players

through a story of ultimate failure, the truth in its narrative has won unlikely fans. Andy Robertson, a reviewer from secular tech magazine *Wired*, wrote, “The unusual decision to create a video game about this topic is matched by the inclusion of Green’s Christian faith. The risk of alienating gamers not usually receptive to mixing faith and entertainment, along with perplexing non-gamers on how a game can address such a sensitive subject, is very real.

“Play the game though, even a few early levels as I did recently, and it makes surprising emotional sense.”

Andy asked Ryan about the experience’s impact on his faith, and he replied, “when Joel was alive we were still hoping for the miracle, but I think the real challenge is to find the beauty when the story doesn’t turn out how you were hoping to write it. ... Through this experience God has become bigger and more mysterious to me.”

The developers at Scarlet City Studios are also intentionally trying to reveal the nature and purpose of God through retelling his story.

“Something that’s guiding us very strongly is what we call the ‘grammar of the Gospel,’ drawing on Paul’s teaching in Corinthians about faith, hope and love,” Paul said. “If faith is identifying yourself with the story of God, and love is engaging with people in the manner that God engages within the Trinity and with humanity, hope is the expectation that God brings life out of death and new things out of nothing.

“I hope to see more games that express that.”

The Aetherlight: Chronicles of the Resistance is due to be released by mid-2016. It is currently in closed beta; more information is online at theaetherlight.com.

Maryanne Wardlaw
Communications Manager





TECHNOLOGY & DISCIPLESHP: Evolution or extinction?

I like technology. I grew up in a generation where science fiction became mainstream. Captain Kirk and Luke Skywalker were my friends, but the gap between what was available to them and me was centuries apart. They travelled in the Starship Enterprise and the Millennium Falcon; I went on a double decker bus and a Triumph 1500. The Empire had access to a flying 74-Z Speeder Bike; I yearned for a Raleigh Chopper. The Federation used hand-held communicators to signal their intention to beam up. I had access to a telephone, bolted to the hall wall, with a dial that took longer to return from the number nine than it took Kirk and Spock to materialise on a new planet.

But during my lifetime the gap has closed. I had a pager before my first mobile phone, which was the size of a house brick. Today, my Samsung Galaxy has more computing power than what it took to put the first Apollo astronauts on the moon. Kirk

Captain Kirk and Luke Skywalker were my friends, but the gap between what was available to them and me was centuries apart.

had an early version of Facebook called Captains Log, but there was no way to “like” or “share” his status updates. The technology I have access to today is fantastic. So it pains me to say anything critical about it, and most of my friends are the same. Wikipedia delivers more than the Encyclopaedia Britannica was ever able to. While we are able to understand the concerns about playing *Call of Duty* or *Grand Theft Auto* for days on end, we remember *Pong* and *Pac-Man* and look at today’s games with a little envy and awe.

But the uncomfortable truth is that all this wonderful technology is not just changing how we live, it is shaping who we are. And not always for the better.

This is more pronounced for those “digital natives” who have grown up connected and are wired differently from the “digital evolutionaries” whose relationship with technology has changed over time. The evolutionaries accept there might be potential problems but they have some immunity; the natives don’t see that there could be any problems. This leads to a lack of critical thinking about our use of technology. So here are a few concerns that I am mostly in denial about.

1. THE ALWAYS “ON” NATURE OF OUR CONNECTION TO THE WORLD.

The news, our interests and our community of friends are always on tap, mixed with a heavy cocktail of the interesting and the esoteric. This constant buzz can drive out the sound of silence. Time and space for reflection, recreation and renewal is easily squeezed. Creativity and imagination are shaped and channelled through a particular lens. This seeing so much yet hearing so little can blunt our creative edge. Although we know that God is always with us, his still, small voice often seems to be on a different frequency to that which we have become attuned.

2. THE WAY RELATIONSHIPS ARE SHAPED.

It is great that we can be in touch with a variety of friends unhindered by geographical limitations. But this network can prevent us from ever being fully present with physical friends. I don’t like the idea of “real life” because everything we experience, whether in the flesh or online, is real. But there is a danger that we sacrifice quality relationships for quantity.

We need relationships of quality and depth if we are to grow and mature. This involves learning to listen as well as broadcast, to converse as well as tweet, to resolve conflict rather than “unfriend-ing,” and to see our primary place of engagement



as where we are. God did not send a status update, he sent his son. The challenge of authentic incarnation must not be eroded by the tide of superficiality.

In the movie *Waves*, which charts the lives of a number of international students in Wellington, one of the characters keeps her watch on “Beijing time.” Her friends in New Zealand consider her quiet and reserved but in Beijing she is the life and soul of the party. Most of her emotional energy while she is in Wellington is expended maintaining relationships in China rather than developing new friendships locally. This is a tension that we see all students facing as we seek to build community on campus.

3. THE NATURE OF GAMING, NEWS FEEDS AND UPDATES FROM FRIENDS CAN BE ADDITIVE.

I was talking to a student recently who confessed he would never go anywhere that didn’t have free, high speed Wi-Fi. The opportunity to connect can easily become behaviour that we cannot control. There is nothing inherently wrong with *Candy Crush* but it was intended to be a game, not a life-style. The amount of time and energy that things of

But the uncomfortable truth is that all this wonderful technology is not just changing how we live, it is shaping who we are.

And not always for the better.



limited value can consume needs to be monitored. Technology should serve us, not the reverse. We can also become addicted to having the latest and best hardware at our disposal.

4. OUR USE OF TECHNOLOGY HAS PHYSICAL IMPACT.

Sleep is disrupted by looking at screens before bed-time, and eyesight is deteriorating with technology almost certainly a contributing factor. Many schools now have a BYOD (bring your own device) expectation, and the obvious educational benefits are offset by empty playgrounds as children sit in corridors playing games and sharing YouTube clips.

5. TECHNOLOGY PUTS US AT THE CENTRE OF THE ACTION.

In a game, you are in control of what happens. Within that game world there are challenges and resolution, which can be achieved through practice with no negative consequences. This does not reflect the rest of life. Research indicates that young men who are native gamers find it difficult to adapt to situations in family, school and work where they encounter things beyond their control. The same study identified a generation of young men growing up whose experience of sexuality

on the internet is leaving them disappointed and frustrated with the real thing.

The movie *Don Jon* explores this idea with the central character preferring online viewing to being with his girlfriend. I was speaking to a counsellor at a Californian university who said that the incidents of erectile dysfunction in male students had increased 500% in the last three years. In almost every case, they were accessing “point of view” porn on the Internet. Like gaming, porn literally alters the way these young men are developing. These issues affect young women as well, but it is increasingly clear that a significant percentage of young men need more of our help gaining maturity in life and faith.

The answer to these issues is not to say, “everything is fine but in moderation.” We need to work out how we worship, do discipleship, reach out to those who are not yet Christians and participate in God’s global mission in this brave new world. We need to be realistic about the issues that technology continues to create for church and society. It has opened massive opportunities in the way that we engage as well, but there a downside that we need to talk about.

We could do this online but perhaps we need to start by putting aside our devices occasionally and talking at dinner or over coffee or in our small groups. We need thoughtful application of the Bible here as in every area of life.

I don’t want to sound like a Luddite. I like technology. But there are times I wish for that old future option: “Beam me up, Scottie.” And if you’re a digital native who has no idea who Scottie is, Google him. Google is great!

Nigel Pollock
National Director



PORNOGRAPHY & GRACE:

Captivating hearts

“Can I be honest with you?” I know what’s coming. The student doesn’t know that I know. He thinks that this is the first time that

I have had this conversation. It’s the first time I’ve had this conversation this week, but probably the fifth time this year. We’ve been meeting for a few weeks to read the Bible together and I know this conversation is coming; I don’t need to bring it up. The student’s face is red, he’s fumbling over his words, and I know he’s embarrassed.

“I have a real problem with P.” How does one react? Surprised? Disgusted? Disappointed? I’ve heard it all before, so I reply in my usual way, “I know.”

The student is surprised, thinking that I’ve been stalking him.

The reason I know is because I assume this is the case about every young guy. I’m happily surprised when I come across a young guy who isn’t

addicted to P. It’s sad, but for most (not all) young guys this is reality. I feel how relieved he is now that he’s let someone know about his sin. And we start to chat about what next.

Now I’m not talking about methamphetamines, I’m talking about porn. But what if we saw porn as a drug? As an addiction. As something that consumes lives.

Porn is one of the worst things that has proliferated since the dawn of the Internet. A recent study showed that 90% of 12- to 17-year-old males have been exposed to hard-core pornography. Their ideas of sex and relationships are being shaped by an industry that uses and abuses others for self-gratification. A generation of young men are growing up being told that their happiness is found in taking something from someone else. For many, porn is a drug whose grip they cannot escape even when they try. Its addictive nature and cycle of guilt and depression continually drag them down.



If we don't have Jesus as our foundation, then we will just cover this sin over with another. When the Gospel is at the centre, we stay humble in success and see hope when we fail.

Many beyond the Christian community are concerned about the implications. Secular psychologists and feminists have also expressed concern that we are losing a generation of young men, a generation that will grow up not knowing how to love or be loved in a sexual union.

So how do we respond to young men – and women?

FIRST, WE REMIND THEM OF THE GOSPEL.

The good news that Jesus is Lord and their salvation is in him. Remind them that no amount of

masturbation or pornography will separate them from God. But no amount will make them happy, either. True contentment can only be found in knowing Jesus. If we don't have Jesus as our foundation, then we will just cover this sin over with another. When the gospel is at the centre, we stay humble in success and see hope when we fail.

THE NEXT STEP IS FINDING SOMEONE TO CONFIDE IN.

I'm not a big fan of accountability partners, but having someone to talk to without feeling judged brings huge relief. This is a sin that grows in the dark. By exposing it to others and confessing it to God, we are freed from guilt and reduce sin's hold on us.

DO SOME RESEARCH.

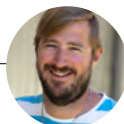
There are plenty of good websites discussing this topic and its pervasiveness. Fight the New Drug has great articles on the science of the brain and some helpful tips on how to help others (or yourself).

GET SOME SOFTWARE.

There are programs that can record dubious sites visited on your phone or computer. You can nominate a friend to receive an email of this list – a great way to help resist temptation and allow others to help you.

Relieved, the student says, "I feel like I've been struggling with this for so long and I've tried so hard to stop but I can't." I reply, "I know. The problem is not that you are struggling with this. That's actually a great thing. The problem comes when you are not struggling with it. God still has a hold of your life and it's not an easy journey, but there is hope."

Ian Reid
Palmerston North Team Leader





The Kiwi contingent at IFES World Assembly 2015 in July.

Meeting the IFES world

Every four years, a few TSCF students and staff meet, in person, with others from the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. In July, a team headed to Mexico for the 2015 IFES World Assembly. During the event, nine regions became affiliated with IFES, including CSPU Palestine, FOCUS South Sudan, FCS Macao, and FCS Mongolia. The names of the others cannot be published, because they are in countries where it is even more dangerous to be a Christian.

Another first for World Assembly – a student presented one of the messages. Ben Johnston, a music student at the University of Auckland, spoke from Daniel 1 to around 1000 people the day before his 21st birthday. That, and other sessions, are on YouTube – http://youtu.be/fJRq5_MhAGk.

The biggest highlight of the last year was the opportunity to attend World Assembly in Oaxtepec, Mexico. I was privileged to be part of the 15-strong New Zealand delegation and to join with 1,000 other delegates from 150 different nations.

I spoke to delegates from more than 50 countries and shared what ministry on campus was like in our different cultures. I heard stories of extreme persecution, extreme difficulty, extreme isolation, extreme growth, extreme provision, and many more stories of normal people striving to reach students in universities.

It was a moving experience to hear Christ preached and praised in many languages, and to see new member movements from some very



University of Auckland student Ben Johnston speaking from Daniel 1.

difficult situations become affiliated with IFES. Their stories of change and growth in the lives of students often brought the auditorium to standing ovations. It was incredible to see people who are used to being in such minority positions being welcomed and applauded by 1000 brothers and sisters.

I have returned with a new commitment to invite people into the vastness of God's global family where all nations are privileged to call on the same God as Lord and Father.

– Mike Summerfield, Dunedin staff worker

Looking into World Assembly, I quickly realised that this was a conference like no other: Christian students gathering from all over the world to praise God and pray for the future. The one-on-one conversations had the greatest impact on me, whether over a meal or sitting atop an Aztec temple. These were opportunities to understand what living as a Christian means for university students and IFES staff around the world.

The conversations and teaching have made

me more aware of the difficulties that Christians face around the world. They have also given me glimpses of the work that God is doing in the world's universities. This year, World Student Day (an international day of prayer for IFES students and staff) will be especially significant as I pray for students worldwide, in particular the friends I made at World Assembly.

– Reuel Baptista, University of Auckland student and former student representative

To describe World Assembly in a few sentences, I would need to tell you about the vibrant Mexican culture and gracious “mi casa es tu casa” hospitality, describe the overwhelming sense of both unity and momentous diversity in the multitude of Christ-loving staff and students, and capture the poignant and profound dialogue between delegates as they sought to ripen their insight into God's world.

I would convey the encouragement of movements gaining momentum, juxtapose it with the pain and suffering in conflicted areas of the world – and then tell you that they are often talking about the same place.

There were powerful speakers from all over the globe. They spoke from the authoritative Word about unity, about living for Christ, about Paul's letter to the Philippians, and about Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They brought home the fact that the Good News is understated by the modern usage of the word “good.” This News is absolutely saving and must be shared.

Student representatives spoke of the requirement to love God with your mind and to engage with scripture and God-given reason. It challenged us to challenge our professors, peers and culture



in which we live, to live for a God greater than ourselves.

– Tessa King, Veritas, University of Auckland

By 2025, there will be an estimated 225 million students globally. These same students will go on to lead, shape and influence nations, businesses and their communities – this is a huge mission field.

Delegates at World Assembly reflected the diversity alongside a strong sense of unity in Christ. Four students in Eurasia (the country cannot be named for security reasons) study in a university where, to get a good grade, one simply pays the teachers a sum of money. These four students stood together in the gospel to say, “This is not okay. I will not bow down to the lecturers of this university, even if that means I get a below average grade or don’t pass my paper.” Their story resembles Daniel’s. Like my friends from Eurasia, Daniel was prepared to accept the consequences of serving God first.

– Kate Street, Lincoln University staff worker

Imagine it’s illegal to meet as Christians. Actually, it’s illegal to even be a Christian. How do you organise training? You can’t book a public venue. You can’t spread the word on Facebook. You can’t even openly talk about a training event because you don’t know who might overhear.

Here’s how it looks in one country: They do a background check on every student they’d like to invite to find out if they’re likely to report it to the police. Each student is picked up from a different location by a van that has all its back windows blacked out, so the students can’t see where they’re going. Then they drive around the city so they really don’t know where they are, in case they’re arrested and questioned.

The 12 or so students are dropped off at a



Some attendees’ photos and presentations could not be shared digitally because of security concerns in countries where the church is persecuted.

2-bedroom apartment, one room for men, one for women. They can’t sing or make any noise that might lead the neighbours to realise how many of them are there, in case they ring the police. What a privilege living in a free country is.

But it was actually the more mundane conversations at World Assembly that helped me the most. I don’t need to worry about having to do things in a way I think is far from ideal because of the lack of staff, I don’t have to worry about having to do things differently because of the unique challenges of Auckland, I don’t have to worry about my ill health limiting how many hours I can work. God is at work and will continue to work through all that for the growth of his kingdom.

– Robyn Drake, Auckland team leader

Canterbury tales

Term 4 is usually when things settle down as students focus on looming exams. But here at Canterbury it's already been a busy term.

SCIENCE AND GOD

People expect tension between science and faith. CU invited three Christian academics to share their testimonies and answer questions dispelling this. David Wareham (civil engineering), Stefanie Gutschmidt (mechanical engineering) and Philippa Gourdie (mathematics) shared about struggles and suffering in their own lives and how their faith in God enabled them to endure. They spoke about investigating Christianity with scientific minds, and demonstrated the credibility of Jesus' resurrection.

Students from CU, Student Life and The Navigators invited their friends to consider the Christian claims about Jesus. More than 100 students attended, texted great questions, and devoured pizzas afterwards as they chatted. Please pray as students continue to have conversations with friends who came, and for the students who have already started reading Luke's gospel as a result.

LEADERS TRAINING: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND MISSION

Discussions on God's sovereignty and the "p" word – predestination – are common tangents in Bible studies. So we tackled it head on with our CU leaders. More than 30 students met over

a weekend in September to think about God's sovereignty and mission and ministry on campus.

It was a great reminder of God's work in this world and his love for people, supremely expressed in Jesus. And God, while having supreme authority, still chooses to use us to tell people about Jesus and call them to repent. It was a great reminder to pray for all we do and for friends who don't yet know Jesus. We are inviting friends to read Luke

with us as we keep trusting in our great God and Saviour.

INTERNATIONAL MISSION NIGHT

We invited grads to join us for an International Mission Night. We were reminded of God's great commission, calling people from every nation to become disciples of Jesus. Geoff gave a report on his time at IFES World Assembly. It was great to be able to pray for other countries, and for the spread of the gospel even in the midst of opposition.



STUDENTS AND REFUGEES

A number of CU students have been gripped by the global refugee crisis, especially in Syria and Iraq. Peter Brown and Matt Joils organised an event to inform people and think of responses. Julian Price, a Canterbury grad, spoke about his work in Iraq with refugees and the opportunities for aid and the hope of the gospel. Please continue to pray for those in Syria and Iraq, and for opportunities to care for people and offer them hope in Jesus.

Taking God at his Word

He named himself “Samson.” His Chinese name also means “bright sun,” so Samson Cheng thought it was appropriate.

The new immigrant didn’t have anything else in common with his biblical namesake back in March, when he picked up a Christian group’s leaflet during orientation at Auckland University of Technology. He had come across bits of the Bible during his undergraduate English studies in China, but never owned one.

Samson rediscovered the crumpled leaflet as he cleaned out his bag a month later. He wanted to become part of Kiwi culture, and he recognized the Bible was a fundamental part of it, so the leaflet prompted him to search the web for churches.

The screen filled with church name after church name; the choices were bewildering.

The next day, Samson headed into central Auckland as a volunteer with the Red Puppy Appeal. One of the people he met, a man named Jonathan, was intrigued when he heard his name and asked, “Are you a Christian?”

No, Sampson replied – but he was curious. Jonathan invited him along to Horizon Church in Mt Wellington, and Samson accepted.

“It was amazing, because the night before that day I was thinking about finding a church, and I had no idea,” Samson said.

He said it was also no coincidence that, soon after, another friend invited him to the international



Samson Cheng left a promising career in China to do further study in New Zealand.

student lunch at St Paul’s Anglican Church, near his central Auckland home.

“At first, I didn’t believe in anything,” Samson said. His philosophy was to do whatever worked best for him, with no reference a higher authority. But two things began to change Samson’s mind – he recognised God arranging events in his life to reveal himself, and he observed the way Christians welcomed him and showed their love for each other.

Through the St Paul’s lunches that TSCF staff help with, he joined a small group at the church and a Bible study with TSCF’s international student ministry. When he decided to get his own Bible, he found the Internet was as unhelpful as it had been finding churches – he wanted to see the Bible

for himself before he chose a copy. So his friend James, from St Paul's, took him to a bookshop and helped him pick one out.

"The Bible isn't like the iPhone," Samson said. "You can't get maybe Bible 1, Bible 2, Bible 3 – you can use the Bible for your whole life. You can pass it to the generations. It's something really precious."

And what he has been learning from the Bible resonates with him. In Samson's words, "I can feel my heart beating." His conviction of its truth is proved by the way he takes every opportunity to talk about the ways he is learning about God. Samson volunteered to share his testimony at Horizon, accepted an invitation to tell his story at St Paul's, and didn't need persuading to repeat it for *Canvas*.

He used to be afraid of speaking in public and opening up to people – especially in English, which



is his third language. The reason he didn't think twice about speaking at church? "Because we are sisters and brothers," he said. "That is God's influence on me; I don't need to be shy ... you won't be afraid if you're speaking in front of your family."

Most of his audience were strangers to him when he went from sitting in the back row to speaking in front of them. But after telling them his story, Samson has found people reaching out to him, people of all ages and backgrounds.

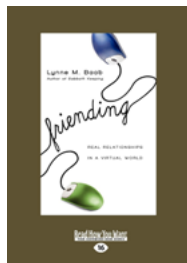
Samson's reliance on God's guidance extends to the details of his life. In September, some St Paul's and TSCF staff took international students on a trip to Tongariro National Park. When his group returned from a tramp, they piled into the car only to find that the battery had died.

They were in a remote place, and it was getting late. Conrad Bace, the group's leader, pulled out his phone to find out if anyone they knew could come help them. When Samson suggested they pray about the situation, Conrad complied, but he expected help to come at the end of a phone call. Everyone bowed their head, Conrad began to pray, and before he was done his phone buzzed. This made him look up and see what no one had spotted seconds before – a police car heading their way.

"Conrad suddenly shouted, 'Stop that car! Stop that car!' And at first I didn't know why. I mean, normally you don't have the cables." But police cars carry jump leads, so they were on their way a minute later; Samson calls it a miracle.

Back in China, Samson had a flatmate who the rest of them teased because he attended church, and sometimes they would find him praying. Now, he doesn't mind being seen as the "odd" one. What some of his friends write off as coincidences, he sees as God's hand on his life.

Samson chose his name because it has the same meaning as his birth name, but it is also the name of a man remembered for his strong faith. And there are no coincidences with Samson's God.



Friending

by Lynne Baab

Whether we view online community in a positive or negative light, our friendships are influenced by technology. Friending has helped me engage with the impact of social media on friendships, challenging me on many levels in my initiation and listening behaviours, both in person and online. Lynne's perspective covers both technology in

friendship and more general concerns of real, intentional friendship. She uses plenty of anecdotal, academic and personal elements to explore our relational nature. The book is helpfully reflective, with questions at the end of each chapter. Her insights reveal depths to friendship that we often do not appreciate. I will be circulating my copy of the book to everyone I can.

– Hamish Cartwright



The Next Story: Life & Faith after the Digital Explosion

by Tim Challies

"Each of us has had plenty of experience with technology, but few of us have the theoretical or theological tools to make sense of the consequences of our use of technology." – Tim Challies

It has only become more important for Christians to consider what place technology has in their faith and life

before God. We are inundated with devices that demand our attention and time. How do we handle the technological overload? Tim Challies unwraps how we should look at technology, how it affects us and our interactions with each other.

Challies (in a Neil Postmanesque way) gives thoughtful consideration to the role the new digital age plays in the Christian's life and faith. This is a must-read for all of us in the new digital age.

– Spencer Thornburg



Captured By A Better Vision

By Tim Chester

The porn industry uses new technology to captivate our hearts, minds and wallets. It is as much an issue for Christians as for anyone else, but often not dealt with because it is so difficult.

Tim Chester unpacks the issue with honesty, compassion and clarity. He speaks of sin in the lives of believers, compounded by addictive patterns, referencing good research. The truth is painful for those who are struggling

and those who support them, but it also offers real hope. Porn distorts life and reality, self and service. Tim points us to a better vision focused on God's self-revelation and our transformation by God's grace in Jesus.

While reading this book on a plane, my seat mate made no effort to hide that he was also reading it, over my shoulder, nodding when he'd finished the page. This is a book to read with others (not necessarily in public), to read for others, and to read for yourself.

– Andy Shudall



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“This seeing so much yet hearing so little can blunt our creative edge. Although we know that God is always with us, his still, small voice often seems to be on a different frequency to that which we have become attuned.”



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