

tertiary students christian fellowship quarterly magazine

# canvas

ISSUE 75 | WINTER 2015

## SERVICE & SACRIFICE

*the joys of an ordinary life well lost » 8*



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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.



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**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.

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## canvasnotables

### Born

James Stowell, who was part of Lincoln University CF, and his wife, Jenny, welcomed Esta Hannah Stowell on 17 March.

Rosie and Steve Hoskin, who was a ministry intern in the 1990s, welcomed their fourth child, Eden Maia, on 4 June. The family now live in Te Anau.

### Awarded

Nigel Pollock, TSCF's national director, has had a successful year with his hockey coaching. Nigel coordinates the hockey development at Wellington College and has just coached his tenth Wellington Representative Team. In October the Wellington U15 team won the National Premier title. The team was named Wellington Hockey Team of the Year and Nigel received Wellington Hockey Coach of the Year from the Wellington Hockey Association on 18 March.



Nigel with the cups for the National U15, the Miskimmin Cup for Wellington U15 schools, the Wellington Hockey Team of the Year and Wellington Hockey Coach of the Year.

This year Nigel coached the Wellington U18 Men, who finished with the silver medal after a superb final with Auckland.

"I have learned a huge amount coaching in NZ," Nigel said. "It was humbling to be recognized publicly for last season's efforts."

## canvaswanted

### STAFF WORKERS & TEAM LEADERS

**A**re 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](mailto:info@tscf.org.nz) for an application form and job description, or telephone (04) 384 7274.**



## A portrait of service

Elisabeth Elliot was one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most iconic missionaries, though she probably didn't want to be remembered that way. When she died on 15 June, tributes sprinkled my Facebook feed and gave a glimpse of how many lives her testimony shaped.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose," wrote her first husband, Jim Elliot. The two of them put this to the test as newlyweds, setting out to reach a remote Ecuadorian tribe with the gospel. In *Through Gates of Splendor* Elisabeth recorded their story. It ends with the ultimate sacrifice – tribesmen murdered Jim and four other missionaries in 1956.

Elisabeth did not change the course of her service, however. In fact she and another widow spent two years living with that very tribe, and some of the people who killed their husbands became believers.

The rest of Elisabeth's life was no less significant, though it wasn't marked by outright bravery. She returned to the U.S. in 1963, remarried, wrote books, was widowed again, married a third time, and spent her final decade in growing seclusion as dementia clouded her mind.

Her books are some of the truest you'll find on

loneliness, discipline, contentment, obedience – biblical wisdom for day-to-day faithfulness. I heard her speak once near the end of her 40 or so years as a public figure, a public figure who shunned the spotlight. There stood a woman who could have legitimately retired years earlier, but had travelled a great distance to speak to clueless young adults who asked her variations of the same questions over and over. And we listened to her.

Reading Jim and Elisabeth's story gave me the first inkling that I had (so very incorrectly) pre-determined what God would and would not expect of me, an "ordinary" Christian. The Elliots weren't super-Christians, surprisingly enough. Read Elisabeth's books and you discover they didn't have everything figured out, they struggled with decisions, things went wrong. But they trusted God to the point that they were willing to give whatever he asked of them to serve however they were able.

It didn't fully dawn on me then that if I trust God, I should have that same attitude here, now, living in my comfortable world. I forget that we don't need a Damascus Road experience to flip the switch, to sign us up for service. Extravagant obedience comes simply from this: clearly seeing and hearing the call to follow the One whose sacrifice freed us to serve. We're all candidates.

So in this edition we meet people who are serving sacrificially, particularly in NZ, Vanuatu, Nepal and Kenya. We may owe a debt of gratitude to the soldiers and martyrs immortalised in books and museums, but we're probably more indebted to faithful mums, engineers, student leaders or coaches. The value of our service isn't determined by its content, but by Who we're doing it for.

**Maryanne Wardlaw**  
Communications Manager



## Flat in the works for Otago students

Plans are underway for a student flat at a property near the University of Otago. TSCF has signed a lease with an option to purchase if enough funds have been raised by May 2016.

Students living there will be part of an intentional community, gathering for meals and for prayers and other spiritual practices regularly. They will also find ways to serve in the neighbourhood, which includes a retirement home and other student housing.

Along with providing accommodation for eight or nine students, the house will allow student groups to have a permanent place to meet and to invite friends – space that is becoming harder to secure on New Zealand's campuses. In future, it could also help support the work in Dunedin and fund other projects in New Zealand.

James and Jen Allaway, Dunedin staff workers, are overseeing the setup and running of the home. For more information about joining the flat or about giving to the purchase fund (which is a tax deductible donation), email [james@tskf.org.nz](mailto:james@tskf.org.nz).



## Dunedin dances

Students in Dunedin held a barn dance that exceeded their expectations. They were prepared for 75 attendees, but 150 came. They charged \$10 to cover costs, but made a profit and donated it to earthquake relief in Nepal.

Leaders were both encouraged and saddened to hear some students say it was the most fun they'd had in Dunedin without getting drunk. Nigel Pollock spoke, and some students took away copies of Luke's gospels. The groups in Dunedin are praying that they continue to read them, and that the event planted some seeds that will grow.

The Dunedin CMF group also held an Easter outreach. They offered people a warm, buttered hot cross bun and asked if they knew the Easter story. Those who didn't were offered a copy of Luke to read over the break. The interest was so high that CMF plans to offer a follow-up Bible next time.

## Canterbury staffer moves on

The Canterbury team said goodbye to Paul Denmead earlier this year, after nine years of involvement since his student days. He has resigned from the staff team to do structural engineering alongside a part-time position with Cornerstone Church.



## New student representatives begin their term

The student leaders elected the coming year's student representatives at Summit in July. The representatives sit on TSCF's national board.



**Jemima Snook**, from Timaru, is

studying commerce and agriculture at Lincoln University. She plans to graduate into rural accounting/consultancy.

She has been a member of CF, and is looking forward to getting to know and encourage students from around the country.

**Brydon Sundgren** is a born and bred Wellingtonian now studying a conjoint degree in engineering and commerce at the University of Auckland. He is in his third of five years.

He has been involved in the leadership of both the Evangelical Union and Overseas Christian Fellowship at the University of Auckland. "I wanted to really grow and develop in my faith whilst at uni and be amongst like-minded believers, who want to be evangelical witnesses to those who are yet to



accept Christ," he said. "TSCF's aims really resonate with me, particularly 'Undivided Life.' Being involved challenged me to live this out both during uni and also for the rest of my life."

He is hoping to see greater collaboration between groups, both practically and in prayer between groups, so they might support and encourage each other.



**Hannah Sim** grew up in

Southland but spent her high school years in Khartoum, Sudan. She is half Kiwi, half Sri Lankan. Hannah is in her second year of medicine at the

University of Otago.

"I joined the Overseas Christian Fellowship in my first few weeks of uni, and found it to be a really welcoming group of people who loved learning about God and using their time at uni to be a light for him on campus," she said. "I love the community that TSCF is and want to make sure that everyone feels a part of it."

## IFES World Assembly

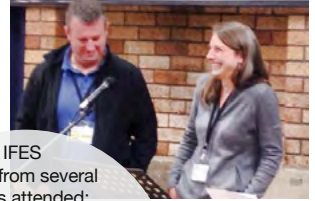
As Canvas is going to press, four students and seven TSCF staff have travelled to Mexico to take part in the IFES World Assembly. They join 1600 others from IFES student groups in 159 countries, as this pin board from the first day of the assembly illustrates. We'll have a report back in the spring edition of *Canvas*.





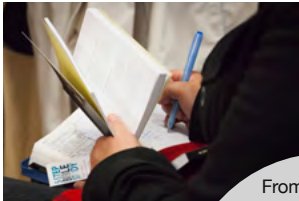
## Summit 2015

More than 70 students attended the student leadership conference in July. They joined staff from TSCF and other IFES organisations, connected with other leaders from around the country, and attended courses to help apply biblical knowledge to life and witness. This year's speakers were Nigel Pollock, TSCF's National Director, and Dr John Stackhouse from Regent College, Canada.



IFES staff from several countries attended:

David and Cathy Walters, above right, from Australia; Zachary Smith, headed for Italy; Vlad, originally from Ukraine; and Max & Mei Rideout, left, from Canada. Far left, Mark Grace prays for Andy Shudall as he prepares to leave staff.



From upper left: digging into Rongopai – the gospel of Luke; John Stackhouse leads the morning sessions; Summit's version of a beach party; Chris Hay models items in the Ugly Jumper Auction, which raised money for USP students to attend the 2016 regional conference.



# Healing for the lepers

**T**hird year medical student Anna Thompson has seen exactly what she'd like to change. And even though she still has years of study left, she has found a way to make a start.

The University of Auckland student, who hails from Whangarei, travelled to Nepal with the Leprosy Mission this year on a Youth Advocate Scholarship. Her team are raising funds for the Anadaban Hospital and advocating for help for leprosy sufferers, something they are doing with more urgency having spent some time in their world.

"It wasn't until I was able to smile at them and hug them that it made their stories touch me in an emotional way," Anna wrote in her reflections of the trip. "They made such an effort to make me feel welcomed and privileged enough to hear what they had been through. Listening to what they shared tore my heart, as it is not just the pain that they feel through their illness, it is the continuation of treating the disease that can cause so much suffering."

Anna also met Esther, a young woman who wants to attend medical school but can't afford it. And Moona, who suffers socially as well as physically due to the disease and its treatment. She wrote about the way children and communities are impacted by parents who are debilitated by leprosy.

On the positive side, she met people who traced the beginnings of their faith in Jesus to the witness of Christian staff at Anadaban Hospital – some,



**Anna with a leprosy patient and her daughter at Anadaban Hospital**

decades ago – and experienced the community of a staff team committed to praying together before they do anything else.

"I was so surprised when Deanna explained to us [that] the words 'forgiveness' and 'repentance' had never been heard of by the Nepali people before the introduction of Christianity," Anna wrote. She considered how challenging this would be for Christians there, who make up only 2% of the population.

Anna also realised she took everyday things for granted in New Zealand, from the availability of health care to access to electricity. Once she finishes her studies, her goal then is to work in countries that have limited medical services.

**More information about the youth advocacy programme Anna participated in is available at [www.leprosymission.org.nz](http://www.leprosymission.org.nz).**





Anzac memorials in Turkey. Photo by Hayden Spurdle.

I had the privilege of speaking about Anzac Day at church services either side of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli. In between those I attended the dawn parade and service at Pukeahu, the most moving one I've attended.

Anzac has an important place in our national identity and it also has gospel resonance. It is always a complex task to extract lessons from history because we view events with the benefit of hindsight and with a cultural perspective that is very different from our forebears.

However Anzac is still profoundly significant as we seek to raise up and encourage a new generation of leaders in New Zealand.

I suggest we can learn these lessons from those young men who marched off with enthusiasm and, in many cases, were killed or returned marred by the horror of their experiences.

## The importance of sacrifice

One of the most cited verses at Anzac services is, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." It comes from John 15:11-17 where Jesus is talking to his mates about love, sacrifice, calling and obedience.

A famous recruiting poster for the British army in World War I had the pointing Lord Kitchener with the words "Your Country Needs You" boldly emblazoned below. The last recruiting poster I saw for the British Army had the tag line "You need the Army." This move from service to self-actualisation has huge implications for the way we think about life, work and relationships today.

Jesus is looking forward to his own death and is laying down a marker for the disciples. Discipleship is all about living as Jesus lived, in relationship with him. One of the things this lost generation reminds us of is the cost of service. Of the 100,444 troops and nurses who served overseas in World War



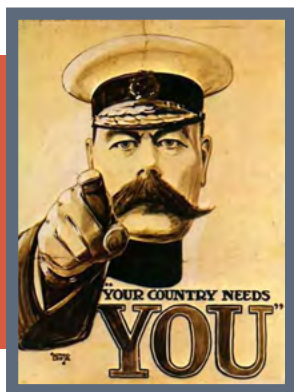
I, 18,697 were killed and 41,317 wounded. This 58% casualty rate is in the context of a NZ population around 1 million.

The Otago Settlers Museum has two exhibits that helped me understand the loss. They have a Dunedin street map from WWI with a cross on each household where someone died, a different colour for each year of the war. They also have a couple of photographs tracking what happened to local groups of soldiers. A photo of The Port Chalmers Boys has marked on it who was killed and who was wounded. Virtually no one got through unscathed.

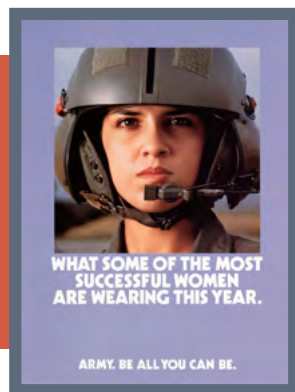
Martin Luther King, Jr said, “If a man hasn’t dis-

covered something that he will die for, he isn’t fit to live.” I would amend this to say “someone who he will die for.” We have been reminded by brothers and sisters in Nigeria, Kenya, North Africa and other places that people are dying for Jesus today.

Howard Guinness, who helped found what became TSCF during the 1930s, wrote a booklet called **Sacrifice** that inspired a generation – quoted in part below. I believe it describes some current students and recent graduates of TSCF. I think we are seeing a quiet resurgence in biblical discipleship and a new generation of leaders contending for the gospel on campus, in the workplace and in the world.



**This move from service to self-actualisation has huge implications for the way we think about life, work and relationships today.**



*Where are the young men and women of this generation who will be faithful even unto death?*

*Where are those who will live dangerously, and be reckless in his service?*

*Where are the men who say “no” to self, who take up Christ’s cross to bear it after him, who are willing to be nailed to it in college or office, home or mission field?*

*Where are the men and women who have seen the King in his beauty, by whom all else is counted but refuse that they may win Christ?*

*Where are the adventurers, the explorers, the buccaneers for God who count one human soul of far greater value than the rise or fall of an empire?*

*Where are the men who glory in God-sent loneliness, difficulties, persecutions, misunderstandings, discipline, sacrifice, death?*

*Where are the men and women of prayer?*

*Where are the men and women who, like the Psalmist of old, count God’s word of more importance to them than their daily food?*

– Howard Guinness

## The difficulty of understanding the times

In the first week after war was declared in New Zealand, 14,000 volunteered. The enthusiasm for adventure, fuelled by patriotism, was encouraged in many churches and Christian publications. As people began to understand destruction and death in the trenches, they had to re-evaluate the old idea that it was a brave and noble thing to die for one's country.

Of those who did not share the enthusiasm for war were 2,500 New Zealanders who objected to military conscription on the grounds of conscience. Some served in noncombatant roles. Others refused to have anything to do with what they regarded as an immoral war; 250 were imprisoned and 14 were transported to Europe and forced to endure field punishment in an attempt to break their spirits.

Many who objected did so from Christian convictions but their stand was rarely supported by the church of the day.

Where was God in this spectrum of engagement? How did being a child of the British Empire shape and inform a world view? How do we decide our response to the big issues of our day?

Some of the things people passionately believe at one point in time may be seen as untrue with the benefit of hindsight. We need to beware of an accommodating faith that gives a disbelieving world less and less to disbelieve in, and seek wisdom to engage with faith and compassion on issues of justice and equality.

We need more prophets and poets who can help us see beyond the near horizon. We need leaders who, like the men of Issachar, "understood the times and knew what to do." Proper biblical engagement is at the heart of this process and

we need help from the global community of God's people to see beyond our own cultural blind spots and ideologies.

At this year's Summit, it was encouraging to see students and graduates from NZ and the South Pacific interacting with John Stackhouse. He helped us think beyond piety and contemporary Christian mythology to what authentic faith looks like as we serve God's purposes in the world.

## The reality of the presence of God

Inside the National War Memorial Carillion, an inscription in blue and gold from Psalm 139 sits high up at the front.

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*

*If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*

*If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*

It is an awesome reminder that no matter what, no matter where, God will shield, comfort, protect, illuminate and ultimately overcome. As we continue to take the Good News to the world, Jesus is with us. Service goes beyond seeking God's help in the midst of chaos. It is also being aligned with God's purposes. God is sovereign and we serve one who knows what he is doing and what he has called us to participate in as he builds his Kingdom.

For all the rhetoric, those who died in World War I did not achieve a legacy of peace and freedom. As many of the Great War memorials were being consecrated, clouds of a new war were already

## Why did the cross become the symbol of the Christian faith? It is quite unusual for a method of criminal execution to become a religious symbol.

darkening the horizon. Numerous wars, conflicts, genocides and terrorism have followed.

The Cenotaph War Memorial near Parliament has a series of plaques, each with a single word – “Valour,” “Honour” and ideas less frequently found on war memorials such as “Security,” “Wisdom,” “Justice,” “Peace,” “Purity” and “Sacrifice.” They represent aspects of the character of God. Some of the iconography is drawn straight from the Christian story; “Peace” has a dove with an olive branch in its beak and “Sacrifice” a cross with a crown of thorns.

When Te Papa erected a cross in the entrance hall for the World War I centenary, it received complaints such as: “I find it deeply offensive to see a cross used in this way, many atheists and people of other faiths died in the Great War.” When I mentioned this in a talk on Anzac, someone said to me afterwards, “But it was only because Christianity was the dominant faith that they used the cross.”

True, but why did the cross become the symbol of the Christian faith? It is quite unusual for a method of criminal execution to become a religious symbol. But the cross is the place where Jesus accomplished his mission and defeated sin and death. Ultimately, it is not a symbol of death but of life and hope. All those cemeteries of white crosses point to the hope of resurrection.

At the heart of service and sacrifice is an unshakeable conviction that the only hope for peace and reconciliation in the world is Jesus. Being and sharing this Shalom is where

wholeness, health, peace and integrity connect.

There were clues of this through our remembrances of Anzac. This year there was a light show on the old Dominion Museum Building, which now houses the Peter Jackson Great War exhibition. At the end of the light show three projections had Maori and English words. “Rangimarie – Peace,” “Aroha – Grace,” and “Tūmanako – Hope.” It would be hard to think of three words that better encapsulate the presence of God and the central message of the Good News.

Next year TSCF will celebrate 80 years of sharing the good news in the campuses of Aotearoa New Zealand. At our recent board retreat we were encouraged to hear some who had studied in the 1960s and 1970s share what TSCF has meant to them.

As current students also shared, a common theme emerged. It was transformation. Involvement with TSCF as students had a lasting effect, encouraged biblical thinking, whole life discipleship and early steps in leadership.

I am profoundly grateful for where we have come from but I am even more interested in where we are going. Ultimately, Anzac is not just about our history and our identity but about our future. Who will follow in the footsteps of that generation forging a future for NZ, the Pacific, and the world?

We work to grow people of influence who will participate in what God is doing through history for eternity – leaders who will serve and sacrifice, who will battle as loyal soldiers and will be men and women of peace.

**Nigel Pollock**  
National Director







A cross watches over Anzac memorials in Turkey. Photo by Hayden Spurdle.

# THE GOSPEL & THE ANZAC TRADITION



**T**he Anzac tradition is now a national “collective memory” rigorously distilled in our consciousness, specific events that “forged a nation” through particular men “fighting for freedom, democracy and our way of life” and remembering their “sacrifice.”

Through the lens of the gospel, we have the ability to see the good in our evolving national tradition. It is good to remember fallen service men and women. It is good to honour those who have served or

## **To engage national commemorations redemptively, we must continue to reflect on past sacrifice while getting our hands dirty with current service.**

are serving. It is good, but it is not all good. To accept uncritically evolving national traditions as the people of God is a path towards syncretism.

The gospel enables us to see the constant reality of our human brokenness, falseness and fickleness. We see commemorations co-opted for contemporary political gain. We see the creation of a secular sacredness, historical events contorted into civic religion. But these deficiencies do not lead to an uncritical rejection – a path towards Christian ghettoization.

To engage national commemorations redemptively, we must continue to reflect on past sacrifice while getting our hands dirty with current service.

We remember the impact that the huge loss of life at Gallipoli had on our national identity. But as the people of God, we recognise that the coming of the gospel in 1814 left a far greater mark on the New Zealand landscape, character and economy.

Through the Anzac tradition we remember with real appreciation those men and women who have served in our armed forces. At the same time, we recognise that our government’s earliest military interventions were against its own indigenous people, many of whom were Christians. We need to work to broaden our commemoration of the fallen to include the Maori and Pakeha killed in the New Zealand Wars.

On 25 April we remember our young men who landed at Anzac Cove. But we also remember that on 24 April 1915, the Ottoman government

unleashed hell on its Armenian population, massacring 1.5 million, many of whom were Christians. Raphael Lemkin was so moved by the scale he invented the word “genocide” to describe it.

James Robins writes, “These two events – The Gallipoli campaign and the genocide of the Armenians, Assyrians and Hellenes – are inexorably tied, bound together in history. Yet the latter simply does not exist in New Zealand’s narrative of World War One.” New Zealand papers reported on the genocide throughout 1915-18. New Zealand servicemen wrote eye-witness accounts of the death marches and the state sponsored cruelty and carnage.

As the people of God, we will work to include in our Anzac engagement an invitation to Turkey’s leaders to experience the life-giving freedom and reconciliation that truth telling can bring. We will work constructively to invite the New Zealand government to engage in remembering our fallen and acknowledge the reality of genocides.

New Zealand has a rich tradition of conscientious objection. Men and women of courage and character, often animated by deep Christian convictions, fought for peace. We need to find ways of giving these men and women a larger place in our national narrative. Our commemorations will remember those who fought in the wars for peace and the reality of those who fought against war for peace.

## We need to continue to serve

My church’s buildings are within easy walking distance of our town’s Anzac dawn service. We provided a hearty breakfast for friends and participants, held a guest service on the Sunday morning, and worked hard to respect the sacrifice of fallen soldiers without glorifying war. We worked at the same time to point everyone simply and clearly to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Our Facebook page also engaged with some of the

**Our young men willingly signed up for the Gallipoli campaign; we follow another young man who willingly signed himself up for the ultimate sacrifice.**

wider historical issues and more personal ones.

## We need to draw out the redemptive elements of the Anzac tradition

Our young men willingly signed up for the Gallipoli campaign; we follow another young man who willingly signed himself up for the ultimate sacrifice. Our Anzac services commemorate an ignominious defeat. At the end his own life this young man hung “defeated.” But we know that in his death he defeated the powers of evil and reconciled us and creation to God.

The good news at the heart of the gospel is that we are known by God, who in his grace sent his Son to die as our substitute, paying the penalty for our sin so that we can know God. This profound reality is pointed to on many of the cenotaphs, where you’ll often see John 15:13: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” The immediate reference is to those who died serving New Zealand; the ultimate reference is to Jesus’ substitutionary sacrifice for us.

These threads, along with others – our national anthem, the personal stories and poems of soldiers, the white crosses – can all be woven in a way to give the gospel a fresh hearing.

**Mark Grace**  
Head of Ministry  
Development





# Kenyan student group mourns those lost in terrorist attack

**O**n 2 April, Maundy Thursday, terrorists attacked Garissa University College in Kenya. They killed 148 people, targeting non-Muslims. Twenty two were part of the IFES campus ministry, FOCUS. Many were in an early morning prayer meeting when the attack occurred.

On Easter Sunday, in FOCUS groups across the country, students were praying and collecting offerings. Messages of solidarity and prayers from IFES movements across the globe flooded in.

George Odhiambo Ogalo, General Secretary of FOCUS, complimented the response of prayer ministry, emotional support, and basic accommodation in the wake of the murders.

“In the midst of this appearance of darkness, the light of the Lord shines as we get to hear bits of accounts of survival,” he said. “Even more, the joy of knowing that the Christian students are not lost, but are resting peacefully with their maker whom they loved so much, some of whom had gone to seek his face in the prayer meeting on that tragic day.”

In a message at a memorial service organised by FOCUS for the victims, Bishop David Oginde encouraged survivors not to fear or hate the terrorists. He urged them to fully trust God, who controls all things.

Rogers Wambua, who worked for FOCUS at the time, reported on the service. He wrote, “Our trust in God should not only focus on our personal safety and eternal security, but also on the reality of his sovereign hand that guides history. ... We must



trust God to still enable us to love the terrorists and their sympathizers enough to pray for and witness to them if and when he grants us the opportunity.”

**More information is online at [ifesworld.org](http://ifesworld.org) and [focuskenya.org](http://focuskenya.org). IFES has been organising support for students with spinal injuries, funeral costs and other expenses. For details, email [info@ifesworld.org](mailto:info@ifesworld.org).**

# Comfort in the storm

Pacific students &  
workers weather  
Cyclone Pam  
in Vanuatu

Tanna Island, after the storm. Photo by Peter Brown.

**O**n 6 March, Cyclone Pam started its slow, destructive path through the South Pacific. It first battered the Solomon Islands, then slowed down and built to a Category 5 on 12 March as it swung straight through Vanuatu.

The Republic of Vanuatu is a narrow strip of islands, 65 of them inhabited, about 1300km north to south. The capital, Port Vila, is home to the University of the South Pacific's Emalus campus.

Five law students from USP's Christian Fellowship attended TSCF's Summit conference in July. Nigel Pollock asked Beatrice Tabangcora, from Samoa, to share her experience of Pam. Beatrice related how she and her friends went from feeling optimistic and prepared to realising that the worst-case scenario was unfolding. They spent a sleepless night in a room flooding with water and a building threatening to give way to the winds; she laughed and wept simultaneously as she recalled that night.

Beatrice said she still has trouble sleeping, months later; she dreams of water pouring in under the door.

Darley Belapitu, from the Solomon Islands, is another student from the CF who was in Port Vila that night. "Water started coming in through the door, especially on the sides of the door," she wrote a couple months later. "We basically spent the whole night trying to clear the water out. The clock strikes 12 in the middle of the night, and my housemates started singing happy birthday to me while holding on to the door and the window and even while mopping the floor with rugs."

The CF at USP is led by Tupou Capha, who comes from the Kingdom of Tonga. She has been through cyclones before, but none as devastating as Pam. When her dorm was evacuated in the early morning hours, they gathered in one of the classrooms. "The girls and I also had a devotion

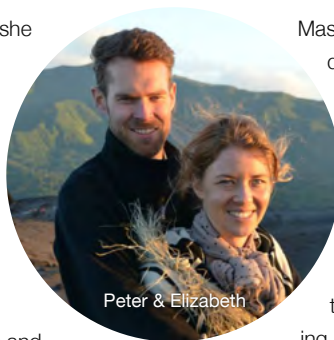
about Jesus and how he calmed the storm,” she said. “I reminded them to put their trust in Jesus, the God who controls the storm. We prayed for not only Vanuatu but also Tuvalu and Kiribati.”

Afterwards, Tupou said that she wanted to do more both physically and financially to help with the recovery, but their studies had to continue.

“We did manage to pray a lot, donate clothes and help clean up at USP and the Scripture Union campsite,” she said. “A relationship with Jesus does make a difference. [It] was what got me and a lot of the students through Pam courageously and it is also what prompts us to reach out to those in need of help after Pam.”

As Cyclone Pam spun southward that night, it crossed directly over Tanna. About 29,000 people live on the island 40 minutes’ flight from the capital.

Kiwis Peter and Elizabeth Brown moved there in 2013 to work with World Vision. Elizabeth happened to be in Port Vila as the storm approached. Peter, a wastewater engineer who was part of



Peter & Elizabeth

Massey University CF during uni, remained on Tanna.

In his last blog before the storm, he wrote, “World Vision staff are busy preparing the office for the onslaught – boarding up windows, securing materials, sandbagging the roof,

removing the satellite internet. ... The birds are chirping and people are going about their daily routines. I wonder what this place will look like in 48 hours time.”

For the next two days, no one heard from Peter. Communication to the island was down, and even small planes couldn’t land at first.

Elizabeth flew back four days later, followed by a reporter from Seven Sharp. The news crew recorded their reunion, which was a relief to their friends waiting for news back home.

Peter blogged about that night a month later.

**“The girls and I also had a devotion about Jesus and how he calmed the storm. I reminded them to put their trust in Jesus, the God who controls the storm. We prayed for not only Vanuatu but also Tuvalu and Kiribati.”**



Darley, left, and Tupou, right, at the South Pacific conference in Fiji in 2013.





Kiwi students pray with and for the students involved in the USP CF at Summit in July.



Beatrice, centre, and other law students from USP lead worship at Summit.

*Pirrin, Lorenzo [their dog and parrot], myself and my neighbours – Marko and dog Zoe – all relocated to the Public Works Department building. ... At around 9:30pm we lost all communication with the outside world. ... Sleep was almost impossible. The wind was building in intensity and we could hear parts of buildings around us starting to creak. ...*

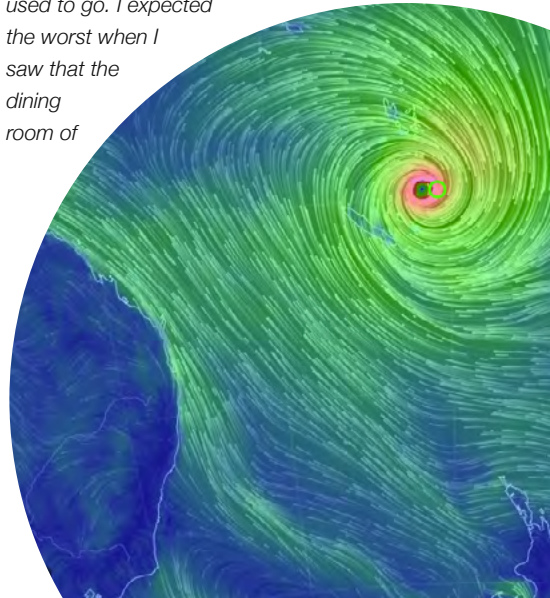
*At around 5.20am on Saturday 14 March 2015 I was startled out of my bed by water dripping close to my head. ... A small piece of roof had been ripped off and our building was now slowly filling with water. The wind was coming from the east and the doors on that side started to pop open. The steel latch that was holding the door shut had bent and was coming loose. We placed a low wooden cabinet in front of the door but that was also pushed by the wind. Marko and I then grabbed three big filing cabinets and also stacked them up in front of the door. That seemed to do the trick. Marko commented that this was what they used to do during the war in Croatia to stop bombs destroying their house.*

*Sometime between 6am and 7am Pirrin startled us with a bark. He had heard a knock at the door. We opened it up to find a man drenched and holding a*

*tiny baby. He came inside then stood at the doorway and called out. Soon after another 15 people came filing through the door – men, women and children. They had come up from the Department of Agriculture housing area. Their entire village had been destroyed. Over the course of the next few hours other people arrived who had a similar story.*

*Their building held up, but Peter could hear one nearby being ripped apart. They first ventured out at 3.30pm to find destruction everywhere.*

*I couldn't even recognise where the road used to go. I expected the worst when I saw that the dining room of*





Alice Banfield, right, meets with a worker from TEAR Fund's partner organisation on Tanna days after the cyclone.

*Apera didn't exist anymore. By some small miracle our houses were still standing.*

Alice Banfield, who lived on Tanna when she worked with World Vision in 2013 and 2014, returned to Vanuatu after the storm in her role as a humanitarian officer with TEAR Fund.

"I think what struck me the most when I arrived, when I came in on a Hercules less than 72 hours after the storm had passed through Port Vila, was how quickly people were rebuilding," she said. "Our partner organisation took us to an urban settlement shortly after we landed, and it was a hive of activity: people were clearing debris, nailing roofs back on, there was a lot of wet laundry hanging out to dry."

The Government of Vanuatu estimated that 70% of the

nation's 272,000 residents were affected by the cyclone, and at least 11 people lost their lives. In the immediate aftermath, clean water and shelter were the most pressing needs. TEAR Fund's local partner, a Christian community development organisation, has been involved in early recovery work such as helping farmers get their crops going again.

They, and the other government and NGO workers, are beginning the long-term recovery phase now. Alice said that TEAR Fund is continuing to accept donations for their partner in Vanuatu. Please pray that the available resources will be used wisely to restore and even improve the infrastructure in Vanuatu and the other affected nations.

**TSCF is raising funds to enable some students from Vanuatu to attend next year's IFES South Pacific regional conference in Auckland. Email [info@tscf.org.nz](mailto:info@tscf.org.nz) for more information, or choose "internet banking" at [tscf.org.nz/get\\_involved/give](http://tscf.org.nz/get_involved/give) and enter "Vanuatu" as your reference.**



Students preparing to pick up trash; students distributing supplies; and a student in front of her devastated home.

# Students pull together in Nepal

**S**tudents in NBCBS Nepal may not be specialists in disaster relief. But when two massive earthquakes hit their country in quick succession last April, they expressed their love for their neighbours by helping in any way they could.

“We focused on hygiene in the beginning phase, because many NGOs had been supplying food and water before we started work,” said Ram Kumar Lama, the General Secretary of NBCBS. “Forty students and youth were mobilized to collect rubbish around the camps, and to provide food and items to help with hygiene in three places in Kathmandu valley.”

These students didn’t escape the damage themselves. He said that the homes of 71 student leaders and five staff were completely destroyed. The top floor of the NBCBS building is cracked and a boundary wall is damaged.

And yet Ram Kumar sees good things that have happened through this earthquake. Since democracy was reinstated in 2006, Nepal has been divided into many groups, each trying to ensure their own rights. But now, he says, “We are united,

**“We are united, we have started to help one another. ... This massive earthquake has made us come together emotionally.”**

we have started to help one another. And we are crying for one another. This massive earthquake has made us come together emotionally.”

There is still great grief. One NBCBS staff worker commented on the loss of his house. “We had to spend many years’ income to build this house. Within a minute we became homeless and now we are in the street. I can’t express the pain which is in my heart. Still, I have not lost hope. I will start from whatever is left.”

*For the full article by Penny Vinden, IFES Community Manager, visit [ifesworld.org](http://ifesworld.org) and check out the blog from 14 May.*

**IFES has set up a fund for the NBCBS offices and staff homes, and also to assist in the relief efforts of students. For more information, email [info@ifesworld.org](mailto:info@ifesworld.org).**



## LIFE OF A GRADUATE:

# Perfectly imperfect

In my world, things have to be done in certain ways. The decorations in my flat have to be put up my way, the stationery in my office has to be arranged my way, even my coffee has to be made my way. My way is the perfect way.

I know intellectually that there is no perfect Christian, but my flesh tells me I have to be one. My year in Auckland shook this paradigm.

I had passed the bottleneck at my new job. I mastered my work more easily. My team bonded well, our managers treated us with respect. I even gathered a loyal following of customers. Things were working out exactly the way I wanted! But then one day my manager called me into his office and broke the news: There was a problem with my visa. We sought all the help we could, but the response was the same every time. Soon, nothing else we could do would extend my visa. I had to leave New Zealand.

Desperate and dismayed, I dragged myself to a cathedral. For the first time in a long time, I was still before God. The moment when the Lord's Supper was celebrated, my tears dropped. This was not because of my predicament but because I realised how far I'd been carried away. I became proud for my service at work, took pleasure from earthly gains, and prioritised things before God. With Jesus it was the opposite. He served me humbly by sacrificing himself, rejoiced in his intimacy with the Father,

**No matter where my next destination is, his perfect grace is sufficient for the imperfect me.**

and always prayed for God's will to be done before his own.

At that moment I saw once again how inadequate I was. I could fool myself into thinking I knew God well in my head, yet my heart could still be in the wrong place. I am extremely thankful for the indescribable adventure God blessed me with in Auckland. More so, I am thankful for the revelation I learnt on top of it all: He is the only perfect Way that can satisfy my soul. If I had all the blessings in the world and had not God himself, I would still be empty.

He opened my eyes to see that I will never be perfect, and it is okay. No matter where my next destination is, his perfect grace is sufficient for the imperfect me.



**Joyce Yip is a graduate of the University of Otago. After submitting her final column to *Canvas*, Joyce received word that she has been accepted to study a MSc in Media and Communications Governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science.**



# Waikato wanderings



Lots has happened in Waikato since the beginning of the year. At Orientation, we sold books from the TSCF's Catalyst Books and organised a Limiting Lamingtons Challenge. At Clubs Day, we asked people "What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?" and compiled them in a video called "50 people 1 question."

"Listening to people answering one question was an amazing experience," said Nick Aw, who made the video. "It was a great way to meet new friends, but above that, hearing their different wants and dreams gave me a sense of how diverse and how vast the world really is. While we were filming we had rejections, awkward pauses, good laughs. But most of all we were inspired, and able to appreciate each and every person's uniqueness."

Katherine Harrison said, "Limiting Lamingtons

demonstrates how in life we have obstacles and limitations. Without God we can only focus on our limits – we can't do anything about them. It makes us think about God's will and his purposes in our lives more"

The videos of both events are on the Hamilton TSCF channel on YouTube.

HCFer Anna O'Dea organised a scavenger hunt for the group to identify bits of nature at idyllic Blue Springs. "It was a great opportunity to catch up with people," she said. "Organising the scavenger hunt wasn't as hard as I thought it might be."

HCF has also held student forums for people to explore any "God" issues. So far they have talked about crimes by Christianity, crimes against Christianity, dating, and communicating with God.

The Wintec TSCF has also been exploring



Searching for Charissa's phone. Photo by Nick Aw.

questions students have. Esther Liu, who has been volunteering with TSCF, said, "The Wintec group is a fun way to bring out topics which are interesting. Leading it was more challenging than I thought it would be but everyone seemed interested in contributing to the questions I prepared."

## The story of the lost phone

During an outing to Raglan, an hour from Hamilton, Charissa lost her phone. The president of HCF began to give up after the group searched for more than an hour, up and down the hill where it had disappeared.

"I comforted myself with thoughts that I was too connected to technology, that God would use the experience for something better, that I lost my phone but I found true friendship in the grace of those with me," she said. "I tried persuading my friends to drop the hunt and start the hike, but they

did not listen. Instead, they mimicked me running down the fields and threw their phones exaggeratedly to make me laugh."

She went home phone-less.

A week later, a group of people they had never met visited the same hill. "I went to Raglan with my friends, and we were just lying on the grass because it was fun," said Ashlea. "We were actually lying there praying together, because what else can you do in a place so beautiful than to worship its creator God. And when we got up to go, guess what we found by our feet?"

Sam, Charissa's flatmate, said the event encouraged his faith. "I couldn't understand why I had such conviction that God was going to find your phone, and we had to go home without it. And then this happened."



**“HE IS NO FOOL WHO  
GIVES WHAT HE CANNOT  
KEEP TO GAIN THAT  
WHICH HE CANNOT LOSE.”**

**— JIM ELLIOT**



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