

tertiary students christian fellowship quarterly magazine

canvas

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FRAMING HISTORY



Remembering the church's past helps us understand its present and work for its future. » 11-17

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 helps students reach students for Christ, so they will grow in faith and understand and communicate the truth about Christ, showing God's love in the student world.

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

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So what?

In a world where we can't always keep up with what's happened today, we don't often go to the trouble of wrapping our heads around the long ago. However at uni I was lucky enough to find lecturers with a gift for bringing old stories into the present, so I dabbled in history. Those storytellers didn't just shine a light on the past, they lit up current events as well.

Mr Caldwell taught world history and, to cram it all in, he taught it at speed. He would stalk from one side of the room to the other as he spoke with machine-gun rapidity, pausing his tall, angular frame just long enough to scratch key phrases on the white-board. Every so often he'd conclude a monologue, approach one of the phrases, and jab several lines under it with the marker. Then he'd turn, sweep his sharp gaze over the 20 or so students before him, and shrug: "So what?"

It usually took a few "so whats" and an arm flung at the board before one of us would answer—we needed a minute to bob back up from the latest wave of information and take in the view. We couldn't simply memorise names and dates; we had to tell him why they mattered. So we learned that every key event hangs on events that came before, and that, like all ancestors, they matter too. We won't know everything about them. We may disagree about what matters most. But they add perspective to our lives the way that The Remarkables frame Queenstown's vistas.

As a community of believers, parts of our collective history matter a great deal. What would our churches look like if Martin Luther hadn't called out the Roman Catholic Church in 1517? Would we have a treaty under which Māori could contest injustices if the Claphamites and the missionaries they sent had not pushed back against colonisation? Do we remember the great cost people paid to ensure that we have access to God's word?

We are marking a few key dates this season, both as a nation and as a church. These days provide an opportunity for us to stop, reflect on what's come before and ask ourselves: "So what?"

Maryanne Wardlaw
Editor



TSCF's first performance of *The Mark Drama* in Wellington in October.

Drama invites people into the gospel

Wellington staff worker Max Rideout took up the challenge to be part of the first two performances of The Mark Drama. It's an interactive, 90-minute performance of Jesus' life as recorded by Mark. The actors are not professionals. As invitations go out to groups around the country to host performances, some who participate may not even know the story themselves. The purpose of asking people to step into this gospel, as either actors or audience members, is to help them hear the story and ask whether it is true.

I was initially reticent—getting involved would take lots of time and distract me from meeting with students. But if I was involved, I thought, I could ask non-Christians I know to come watch. And I watched this video, and the performance was powerful: <http://themarkdrama.com/intro-video>.

In addition to that, only two students wanted to be actors so we needed more people. The cast included people from the Anglican Chaplaincy

group, Catholic Berrigan group, ISM and TSCF. We first memorized the overarching story of Mark using the paragraph headings. I just loved having an easy way to do this. I had studied Mark in community for 6 years without gaining this overview perspective. But it was really hard work; my ability to memorize ain't what it used to be!

The practice sessions were an intense spiritual experience. I had seven different roles—a leper, Jairus, a deaf man, the demon-possessed boy's father, God, a teacher of the law and the high priest. As the leper and Jairus I tried to experience their emotions, feeling the desperation and the joy, and I succeeded in some measure.

I did feel some confusion between Jack, who played Jesus, and the real Jesus—so much so that when I prayed afterwards a picture of Jack came to mind. (I had some serious prayer to get free from that.) But at the practice, when I came to play the high priest who kicked and spat on Jesus, I just couldn't do it. Later, when the nails started going in and Jack screamed, I felt awful.



This was good—the life, teaching and death of Jesus came alive. During the rehearsal and productions I could pray along with the script. I could really hear the word of God. Seeing the whole of Mark in one sitting made repeated themes stand out. I noticed that Jesus brought up the issue of money three or four times. I asked, was I going to be faithless like the stumbling disciples, or faithful like Jesus?

Over two evenings in Wellington, October 2–3, 340 people attended. Between 15 and 20 non-Christians came at the invitation of students in our TSCF and NewsWatch (international student) groups. Many children from Christian families attended.

DUNEDIN

VCF

VCF is finishing up the semester with a photo scavenger hunt. We have developed into a smaller, close-knit group this year.

We hope to kick off with a combined groups camp next year to get on the same page and get people excited. We had a cook-off in early October to raise the last of our pledge and there was lots of good food involved.

– Amy Archer

WELLINGTON

TSCF Wellington

The Mark Drama performed 9-10 October was a success, and it was great to see a range of Christian communities coming together to share the gospel in an interactive way.

We also enjoyed a prayer day with Palmerston North students 23 September. Massive props to

Our grandchildren were there, although they wisely slipped out during or before the crucifixion.

One student from Malaysia commented on the power of the imagery to communicate more powerfully than words on paper. The death of Jesus, for instance, felt so long; reading the Bible, it's over in a few seconds. She also said that the limited resurrection story of Mark generates curiosity—did Jesus really rise from the dead?—that can make people go and investigate.

To find out more about getting involved or hear about local performances, contact Ben Carswell, benc@tscf.org.nz, or phone 04 384 7274.

the Palmy team for organising it and for such a warm welcome. We were encouraged that some students were keen to attend and came back excitedly talking about it.

On 20 October we were involved with Breathe, a combined worship service, along with Vic Unite and other Christian groups on campus. Pray for those who were invited by their Christians friends, and most importantly that our worship will honour God.

– Victoria-Anne Webber

WAIKATO

TSCF Hamilton

We began a joint worship event bringing TSCF, Student Life, and the Catholic club together. This was well attended and we have plans to repeat this in the future. We also had a great final event to close up the year, farewelling students who are leaving and introducing some students to TSCF. TSCF Vice President Frank Scrimgeour spoke about being intentional in having a summer that

is productive and formative, not just regarding studies but also in spiritual and personal growth.

– David Billing

AUCKLAND

University of Auckland City Campus

During the last week in September, several Christian groups at the University of Auckland's city campus (including EU, OCF, KYCF and STOC) collaborated to put on the campus' annual Jesus Week.

This year's theme was "Story." We served hundreds of hot beverages to students through our free café in the University Quad.



We also hosted seven talks, exploring how the story of Jesus relates to topics ranging from music to cosmology, with an emphasis on personal testimonies. While many students simply came for free food and drinks, both the café and the talks spawned dozens of deep conversations with interested students, some of whom were introduced to the gospel for the first time.

– Annelise Chan

University of Auckland Grafton Campus

Jesus Week at Grafton Campus, called Crossroads, ran the week after Jesus Week at City Campus. We had an amazing turnout and were so excited to see so many of our Christian friends bring their friends who weren't Christian with them. Actually, we found out that sometimes, it was the

friend who wasn't Christian who dragged their Christian friend to hear that evening's talk! We had four evenings of expert panellists who spoke and answered questions on the subjects of Euthanasia, Evidence for Christianity, Science + Faith, and Suffering.

We also had a bookstall outside each event stacked up with books kindly donated for free, which we gave away to anyone interested. Most excitingly, the Bible Society gave us eleven gospels of Mark and five Bibles. These almost all disappeared by the end of the week, along with a good chunk of our remaining gospels of Luke. One agnostic girl, emerging from the Science + Faith talk, saw the Bibles sitting there and exclaimed delightedly, "Oh, a Bible! I've been looking for one!" She went away with her very own Bible in a readable translation, along with a Christian friend to read it with.

– Callum and Thealysa

STOC

This year's main event was a debate in May, "Atheism or Christianity: Which best accounts for reality?" It was run in conjunction with Thinking Matters and New Zealand Association of Rationalists and Humanists. About 400 students attended, with an overflow room for watching on the livestream. Dr Zachary Ardern and Tom Yates spoke for Christianity, and defending atheism was Prof Robert Nola from the University of Auckland and Peter Harrison, president of the NZARH. Students really engaged in the Q&A time and the Christian speakers presented a compelling case for the explanatory power of Christianity.

In our weekly STOC discussions, we have been discussing Protestantism, and ethics from Christian and non-Christian perspectives.

– Joy Britten

Faction of student association targets pro-life groups

The student association at the University of Auckland made headlines in August when it allowed a referendum that proposed disaffiliating ProLife Auckland and banning future affiliation by clubs with “similar ideologies.”

Pro-life groups have faced opposition from AUSA members before. Owen Posthuma, a member of both ProLife Auckland and Veritas, TSCF’s group for law students at the University of Auckland, said that ProLife Auckland first attempted to affiliate in 2010. Initially it was blocked by a policy created in 2005 to keep another pro-life group off campus, but then the AUSA acknowledged that the policy could run foul the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.

So ProLife Auckland affiliated, which allowed it to be recognised by Campus Life, the student services division of the University of Auckland, and to receive the same support as other clubs. Clubs retain their official recognition even if they leave the AUSA or are disaffiliated, however they must first affiliate with AUSA to gain recognition. In both 2012 and 2016 the group faced attempts to disaffiliate it—a symbolic gesture that failed each time.

This year, an anonymous AUSA member proposed another referendum to not just disaffiliate the group, but also to keep ideologically similar groups from affiliating. Members of the AUSA voted online 21–25 August, approving the referendum 1599 to 1021. Those who voted represented fewer than 4% of the student population; not everyone is an AUSA member, and not all AUSA members voted.

In October the AUSA nullified the vote after being



Joy Britten, a leader of TSCF Auckland’s Seeking Truth on Campus, speaks at the AUSA’s public forum in August to defend ProLife Auckland’s place on campus.

advised that the two halves of the question made it biased or leading. The original result would not have materially changed ProLife Auckland’s status on campus. However, if it had been ratified by the executive, then clubs deemed to have “similar ideologies” could have been blocked from gaining official recognition from the University of Auckland. The main impact of this would be limited or more expensive access to space on campus.

“For some groups, this would not be a big deal,” Owen said. However, “for a group that seeks social and political change, symbolic rejection undermines the very reason for existing in the first place.”

In a public forum in August, students who spoke against ProLife Auckland equated its ideological

foundation to religious beliefs. This referendum’s inclusion of clubs with “similar ideologies” attracted the attention of existing Christian clubs, which joined the pro-life club in opposing it. TSCF has seven student groups based at the University of Auckland aside from Veritas: the Evangelical Union, Christian Medical Fellowship, Overseas Christian Fellowship, Christian Nursing Students, Seeking Truth on Campus, and Korean Young Adults Christian Fellowship.

“One of the key reasons that ProLife Auckland has tenaciously opposed the disaffiliation is that this could affect other clubs,” Owen said. “We need to support dialogue.”

Owen said that the Campus Feminist Collective, which was behind the 2016 campaign to disaffiliate ProLife Auckland, resubmitted each of the two sections of August’s referendum separately for the vote in late October. A week before voting commenced, the AUSA dropped a resubmission of the second section, “Should AUSA prevent the future club affiliation of any group with a prolife ideology?” It said that the question is contrary to the AUSA constitution.

It also rejected a submission to disaffiliate the Young Nats on the same grounds, implicitly placing ProLife Auckland in a different category to political clubs. The first of several submissions that ask whether the AUSA should disaffiliate ProLife Auckland remained on October’s ballot.

If AUSA members approve the motion and the executive consider adopting it, Owen said that the pro-life group will challenge the decision.

Whether or not ProLife Auckland is disaffiliated, an element of the University of Auckland’s student body appears committed to marginalizing clubs on ideological grounds. The student association’s response will reveal the depth of its commitment to tolerance and inclusivity.

Born

Lawrence Elijah Sanson was born to Jeremy and Esther, both former UCCU, on 29 August in Christchurch.

Christina Denmead, Canterbury staff worker, and husband Nathan, former Canterbury CU, welcomed Theo James on 16 September.

Joel Mathéo Ehmann was born on 23 September in Germany to Anna (former LUCF) and Julius.

Fredrick Howard Bartlett was born 8 October to Rachel (TSCF staff in Christchurch) and James.

Engaged

Tim Gray and Emma Neilson, former EU leaders, got engaged in September.

Focus on fundraising

TSCF staff teams met regularly in October to pray about TSCF’s finances and take some action—both to raise staff funds and to increase TSCF’s general fund. As a nonprofit ministry, funding is always a challenge and some seasons require more belt-tightening than others.

For those individuals and churches who have partnered or would like to partner with TSCF financially, one-off gifts or standing donations before the end of the year will help TSCF meet its commitments for 2017.

Canvas subscribers will have a response card included in the envelope, and all giving options are online at www.tscf.org.nz/giving. Every donation is eligible for the charitable giving rebate in New Zealand.



Zach, second from left, was an emcee at the IFES European Student Evangelism Conference in Germany last Easter.

Investing a life in Italy

In the summer of 2013, Zach Smith was on the verge of entering student ministry. He told his story in *Canvas* that year—how he’d met IFES workers at an Urbana conference, had a burden for seeing a stronger gospel witness in Europe, and was applying for a two-year stint in Italy.

This spring he returned to New Zealand for a visit, followed by his Italian fiancée. Zach’s call to Italy has been confirmed, both through the encouragements and through the challenges of cross-cultural ministry.

“The first year was really difficult—definitely the first 6 months,” Zach said. He graduated from Victoria University in 2013 with degrees in Latin and Development Studies, and in 2015 headed to Italy. While the Latin degree and some pre-emptive language studies gave him a leg up, the language barrier still frustrated him.

“I was putting too much pressure on myself with how much I should be doing,” he said. “In Italy you really need Italian, you can’t get away with not speaking it.”

“There’s a big mix of Catholicism and superstition and occultism. You’re more likely to dabble in the occult than to read your Bible in Italy.”

He was able to disciple one student, a Catholic who wanted to read the Bible in English, but at first he spent most of his time on language courses and attended Bible studies with GBU (Gruppi Biblici Universitari).

At the end of those first, hard months, Zach’s team was part of mission weeks in Latvia and the city of Turin.

“We’d spend several hours at the university every day just talking to people, and being there every day, we’d build relationships,” he said. “I found that an incredibly encouraging experience, especially after 6 really hard months. I was really quite down about everything because I didn’t feel like I was doing much. But there I saw people quite open to the gospel.”

The following year they travelled to Malta for similar outreach. In the interim, Zach found his feet.

“I found myself fitting in really well and actually learned the language pretty quickly,” he said. During this time Ben Carswell, a TSCF staff member who had discipled Zach, visited him in Italy. “It looks like you’ve found home,” Zach recalled him saying.

During the past uni year, Zach has written and organized Bible studies and spoken to groups—

usually in English, but increasingly in Italian. Because there are so many international students in Siena, his English skills are useful for Bible studies, both translating Italian into English and vice versa.

Many of these international students are from Muslim countries, and they’ve come to Europe to study.

“They’re from countries that would be so hard to get into,” Zach said. “They’re the ones coming to the talks because they’re so interested. That was eye-opening.”

He has also found contact with staff from all over Europe and central Asia valuable. Last year he attended the IFES Impact programme for the region, which addressed the ways that Bible

impacts culture. Conversations with those in student ministry in Russia, Ukraine, Spain and elsewhere gave him a broader view of Christianity in that part of the world.

In his own context, most Italian students either aren’t Christians or say they believe in God but do not practice any faith.

“There’s a big mix of Catholicism and superstition and occultism,” Zach said. “You’re more likely

to dabble in the occult than to read your Bible in Italy.”

Another challenge for student ministry is the intensity of study in Italy. Zach said that students have oral exams, which they often have to re-sit, and large amounts to memorise. Most students begin university study later in life than Kiwi students, and often take more time to finish.



Alice and Zach

“It seems like students are a lot busier than in NZ,” Zach said. “Even the ones who would like to help out more, they literally have no time.”

He said students also tend to be disillusioned, facing high youth unemployment as the economy is poor and little cause for hope.

Zach’s approach to outreach is to show up wherever there are opportunities to meet people and share the gospel, which keeps him busy beyond the uni year. The contexts have ranged from a youth sports camp to concerts, where he has used his talent for writing and performing music. The concerts have given him the chance to share the gospel publicly.

Personally, of all the gatherings that Zach has participated in, the one that turned out to be most significant was a combined churches’ camp he signed up for in 2016.

“Little did I know when I arrived, it was a couples’ camp,” Zach said. “So it was okay, there were a few single people there—mostly older people. But there was a single girl from the other church who was helping out.”

Her name is Alice (“Aleech-ay”) Trinari. Alice and Zach plan to marry in New Zealand on 9 December, attend the wedding of Zach’s best friend the following weekend, and head back to Italy in January.

When they return, Alice will be completing a law degree and then beginning work with OM in the town of Pisa. The ministry she is involved in helps women who are in prostitution.

Moving to Pisa presents a few options for Zach. It has a student population of 50,000 with only 90,000 locals. He would be restarting a GBU group that hasn’t operated in several years, while still being in training himself, and he sees possibilities to collaborate with the OM team.



“In NZ we think we have a problem, but we have a church every block almost,” he said. “There’s so much need in Italy, it would be very hard to turn my back on that.”

GBU has an important role to play in a country where the Protestant church is small, lacks leaders and is often fragmented. It brings people together from different churches, encourages evangelism and develops new leaders.

Zach said he does find aspects of being away from New Zealand tough, but he knows he’s in the right place.

“In NZ we think we have a problem, but we have a church every block almost,” he said. “There’s so much need in Italy, it would be very hard to turn my back on that. As long as God doesn’t tell me to, I don’t think I would leave.”

If you’d like to receive Zach’s monthly newsletter, email him at smith.zgi@gmail.com.



Mike Summerfield and Roshan Allpress talk about how the church’s past does, and how it could, shape its present.

What lessons from history need to be re-learned in Kiwi churches today?

We have happily received the Reformation ideal that power ought to be placed in the hands of the masses, rather than concentrated at the top. We have happily received the Reformation ideal that each and every person is capable of thinking and expressing Christian thought, and that each and every person can speak with some authority (rather than just the man at the top). But we have neglected the fact that these ideals are based on a return to the sources, to be guided and shaped by God’s word. I would love to see the word taught well and deeply in more churches, and to see more students engaging with the Bible alongside their other areas of study.

– Mike Summerfield

New Zealand is a young country, and our collective cultural memory is relatively short and relatively thin. As a church especially, we are intensely pragmatic—we will do what works, and what gets

us through. These realities tend to make us short-sighted. As individuals and churches we make plans and strategies for a few years at most.

What we forget in doing this is that faithfulness is a long-haul thing. The young women of Jesus’ parable (Matthew 25) who were found faithful were those who stored up oil for the long run. Yet rarely do we consider how to deepen our own reserves so that we can sustain faith over many decades. When we make plans as churches, we often forget to consider how our churches will remain vibrant communities, supported by robust and well-resourced institutions, across the generations.

If we are to flourish as a community of the gospel rooted and faithful in these islands, we need to learn from Christian history that faithfulness is measured both in moments and across many lifetimes. Pragmatic solutions often look like fads to later generations.

– Roshan Allpress

Which historical church figures has modern Christianity undervalued or forgotten?

My favourite reformation figure is Hugh Latimer, almost solely for the bravery he showed at his martyrdom. While being burned at the stake with Nicholas Ridley, he famously encouraged the other by saying: "Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." The only martyrdom quip that beats this one is by St Lawrence of Rome (but you'll have to look that one up).

– MS

One of my heroes of faith, and an under-celebrated figure, is Henry Thornton (1760–1815): philanthropist, banker, leading political economist, and the founder of the Clapham Sect of evangelical reformers. Best known for the abolition of slavery, the Clapham Sect—which included Thornton's cousin William Wilberforce—was instrumental in the founding of more than 150 societies including the Bible Society, Church Missionary Society and RSPCA, and was directly responsible for sending the first missionaries to New Zealand.

Thornton diligently and brilliantly integrated his faith with his work. He grounded his economic research in a theological understanding of humans as relational beings bound together by trust and established the theory behind modern currency. He used his banking connections to develop innovative fundraising mechanisms that are still relied upon by most non-profits today. The devotional studies he wrote for his family were so popular that they sold hundreds of thousands of copies.

Thornton deserves remembering because he took seriously the totality of the gospel. He found ways to live out Christian hope in an integrated way amidst the busy life of an MP, businessman and activist in ways that brought redemption to countless communities. (For more information on Henry Thornton, email principal@laidlaw.ac.nz.)

– RA

What do you think future generations of Christian Kiwis will look back on, from our lifetimes, and say "this was significant"?

Ecumenism will be a significant advancement that our generation hands on to future generations. Denominations are the illegitimate child of

the Reformation where the modernist pursuit of certainty led to the explosion of a few churches into 40,000 denominations. As post-Christendom deepens, the sectarianism that blighted the last 500 years of Christianity in Western European-derived churches has given way to a new sense of co-operation amongst churches.

TSCF is often at the cutting edge of working with many denominations and chaplaincies on campuses, and I rejoice that we are able to work together where there is agreement and show grace where there is difference. This will be a significant development, regardless of how else the church evolves or devolves.

– MS

How do we avoid the trap of judging history through the lens of our own context?

We need to learn more to avoid what C.S. Lewis referred to as "chronological snobbery." I would love to see more church history taught from the pulpit as part of learning about our faith in sermons. Alister McGrath teaches theology in the context of a history of theology, which is a helpful container to carry the weight of theological thought

through the ages. It is so necessary to read church history within its own context before we attempt to critique it according to our own.

– MS



Dr Roshan Allpress is National Principal/CEO of Laidlaw College. His doctoral research at Oxford University focused on how intergenerational groups of Evangelical entrepreneurs in 18th and 19th century Britain shaped society and culture, most prominently the Clapham Sect. He helped found and led the Compass Foundation until 2011, now part of the Venn Foundation.



Mike Summerfield studied anatomy and neuroscience in Dunedin before working as a scientist at the University of Birmingham. He returned to New Zealand to study theology, and is now both a staff worker at Otago University and the pastor at Roslyn Baptist Church.



Rewriting history

Our current narrative about the founding of modern New Zealand—from the prioritising of colonial interests to scandals like Parihaka—has lost the true impact that the gospel had on not just religion, but race relations and politics. It suits our cultural climate, of course, to equate early missionaries' interests with those of the Crown and corporations. But they were significantly different. Both their defence of Māori rights and the faithful work of Māori missionaries—who were both more numerous and more "successful" than their Euro-

pean counterparts—have been long overlooked.

Keith Newman, author of *Bible and Treaty*, writes, "The reality is that while many of our foundational stories, before and after the Treaty, are profoundly Christian, other agendas quickly overtook best intentions as missionaries and Māori were progressively betrayed and land acquisition supplanted relationship building as the colonial priority. Regardless of the 2013 Census statistics confirming 'no religion' (1.6 million) as the area of biggest denominational growth alongside 'not stated/inadequately described'; and the suggestion we are now one of the most secular nations in the world, there's no reason to allow

our important Christian heritage to be further blurred, buried or dismissed by those who have no appetite for the raw material of our history or the role of faith." (*Get over it or get on with it?*, published by Mission Koru.)

Jeff Fountain, in "Jogging our memories" from *New Vision, New Zealand Vol. IV*, writes in the same vein: "rooted in God's past, we can focus on a future of *shalom* for our nations and for a planet God intends to renew, restore and recreate, rather than destroy. Finding our reference points in God's past and God's future, we are equipped to engage effectively in our present. This is why the past matters. This is why we need our memories jogged."

Bringing history home



Painting of the Deed of Disruption

THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, SIGNING THE ACT OF SEPARATION AND DEED OF DEMISSION AT TANFIELD, EDINBURGH, MAY, 1843

We have both the freedom to worship God, and his word to guide our lives and worship. Knowing how these priceless gifts reached us can help us—with God’s help—pass them on.

In the centre of the city of Dunedin is a museum called Toitū. In the centre of that museum is one of my favourite places in the city. A mad cottage sits next to a painting. The cottage is sparsely furnished with hand-made items that largely comprise sticks tied together with string.

The painting shows 457 Scots sitting in an Edinburgh hall, neatly summing up both the story behind the settlement of Dunedin and the cost of religious freedom won in the Reformation.

But our story must begin in a much, much grander

room, many years before. On the afternoon of 18 April 1521, Martin Luther appeared before Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, at the court assembled for what is now commonly known as the Diet of Worms (pronounced “dee-at of verm”). They had summoned him to recant what he had written in his books. In front of a crowded room, he refused to do so. Instead, he chose to exert the right of every individual to have their conscience shaped directly from God’s word, even when that was at odds with the proclamation of truth passed

down by church and state. In his own famous words (translated into English), “My conscience is a prisoner of God’s word. I cannot and will not recant, for to disobey one’s conscience is neither just nor safe. God help me. Amen.”

Luther had effectively signed his own death warrant with those words and immediately escaped into exile in Wartburg Castle. Many others who dared to follow in his footsteps suffered similarly, and worse. Luther’s stand before the church



Settlers' cottage at Toitū

and Emperor was a fight for religious freedom, a fight to allow the word of God to be heard by each and every individual.

To get us to a mud cottage in Dunedin, we must skip 322 years and 1,038 kilometres. There we find ourselves in Edinburgh at a meeting where the Free Church of Scotland was formed. It is a far less grand hall than where we left Luther. Large and with exposed beams, it is packed full of 1500 dissenters. They have just walked out of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on 18 May 1843.

They were opposed to the system of patronage, where a wealthy landowner had the right to install a minister of their choosing into a parish church on their land. The Scottish evangelicals opposed this practice on the grounds that it interfered with

the right of a congregation to call its own minister, and amounted to state interference in the spiritual freedom of the church. The Great Disruption of 1843 had been a long time in coming, but—as in Luther's day—finally a group of ministers were prepared to stand up to state and church and express their right to free religion.

And, as with Luther, the consequences were harsh. They immediately gave up their salaries, homes and church buildings to start an entirely new denomination from scratch. These homes had been the places where ministers had lived for decades and raised many children. These churches were where families had been baptised, married and buried for centuries.

Inspired by Luther, formed by John Knox and led by Thomas Chalmers, the dissenters prized

I have inherited (without cost to myself) a place in a church where I am free to follow the Bible and form my own mind within that community. I visit Toitū to remind me that I stand on the shoulders of giants, and to challenge me afresh not to squander what has been handed to me.

religious freedom over personal comfort, and treasured the ability to freely and faithfully serve Jesus as the sole Lord of the Church. The painting in Toitū is a print of one painted painstakingly over 23 years by David Octavius Hill, showing some of the participants at the First General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.

This nearly gets us to our mud cottage. The jump across the oceans from Edinburgh to Dunedin came fairly soon after the establishment of the Free Church. Thomas Burns and William Cargill organised a settlement in the area known to Māori as Ōtepoti. They dreamed of a free kirk where they could enjoy religion in the absence of state interference.

In 1848 a group of 344 pioneers travelled aboard the ships John Wickliffe and Philip Laing, and arrived in what is now known as Port Chalmers. Their great dream of religious freedom was about to cost more than ever.

So we finally arrive at our mud cottage. It is a replica of one constructed by John Buchanan, a passenger of the Philip Laing, for his wife Margaret and two daughters. They lived without glass in the windows, on beds made of sticks, in the damp bush, in an area called “Squatters Gully, Mud-edin.”

For me, this model brings home the cost for some people of declaring that Christ alone is Lord of the Church. It forces me to hold “good for them” in one hand as I hold “God help them” in the other. It makes me grateful that God raised up people of

conviction who sought to follow where scripture led their conscience, regardless of the cost.

It then challenges me in my situation. I have inherited (without cost to myself) a place in a church where I am free to follow the Bible and form my own mind within that community. I visit Toitū to remind me that I stand on the shoulders of giants, and to challenge me afresh not to squander what has been handed to me.

In church and student ministry we are called to live as faithful stewards of truth. We must be vigilant to ensure that we do not give up the freedom to be shaped by scripture—either deliberately or inadvertently—in order to avoid personal cost.

There are many groups, parties, and ideologies that claim some right to Christian support, both in New Zealand and abroad. The spirit of our times also puts pressure on us to conform our thinking. But we have inherited a tradition of basing our spiritual growth on the very word of God. There may well come a day when we or our descendants once again leave buildings and homes in defiance of heteronomy in order to remain faithful to Christ's calling to be Church.

As we pause this year and consider the place of the Reformation in our modern lives, will you join me in praying, “God help us.”

Mike Summerfield
Dunedin Staff Worker





Mustard-seed work

Fledgling groups in Rotorua and Tauranga encourage disciple-making students and staff in the Bay of Plenty.

Little did I know what putting up posters around campus would lead to. In October 2015 I started a group for Christian students and inquirers at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic in Tauranga. Since then it has been renamed Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology (merging with Rotorua's Waiariki Institute of Technology) and I've left its employment to begin serving with TSCF.

By the time you read this, we will have held TSCF's first Celebrate Bay of Plenty event. It's time to

reflect and take stock.

The parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32) comes to mind—a silent, almost unnoticed growth has been going on. God's kingdom grows from insignificant beginnings into something incredibly significant. I saw it happen when I was a student with TSCF, and I'm filled with hope that it will happen again, blessing the campus community, changing students for life, having eternal consequences.

“With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

Mark 4:30-32



The Tauranga group began with a handful of students in late 2015. Since then, through campus posters, orientation stalls, Facebook groups, social events and—

primarily—through word of mouth, it has grown. This work is all about relationships. The opportunity to come alongside and encourage students, to help them worship and serve Jesus with greater abandon, is precious. And they replicate this in other students' lives.

At the Tauranga campus, we meet weekly to read, discuss and apply the scriptures. This year, we've used the Swedish method to study Luke's gospel. We also pray for opportunities to share Jesus with other students and had an Easter outreach.

In July, we began connecting with students at Toi Ohomai's Mokoia campus in Rotorua with the aim of pioneering a campus group next year.

There's been collaboration too across the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. Students from both regions attended Launch in Tauranga to start the year, and they have headed to national conferences

together over the past two years. These

have introduced students to the national TSCF movement and inspired them to develop a vibrant campus group.

Toi Ohomai means “to aspire to reach great heights.” Students have faith that their pioneering work will also reach great heights. Please pray with us that this will happen across the Bay of Plenty, and that we'll be joined by new staff and Minterns.



Dave Hodgkinson
Waikato & Bay of Plenty Team Leader



Kotaro, left, with Wellington staff workers Max and Mei Rideout.

When I lived in Japan, I had never heard that Jesus Christ is the bridge to the Father. It concerned me that I never had the privilege to cross the bridge to God.

I came to NZ to learn English, but I couldn't find a church that suited me. When I was back in Japan for my sister's wedding, I met a lot of old friends and had a chance to go to church. They looked for a church near to my home in NZ, and after coming back to NZ I went to the church that they recommended, Lifepoint.

The members were like a family—I quickly felt at home. One day John Dennison, from my church, suggested I come to NewsWatch, an English conversation class that he directs. (It's a joint ministry of the Anglican Chaplaincy, TSCF and ISM.) There I met Max.

Max met with me for Bible study every week starting last October. I couldn't understand a lot of the English words. However, when I did understand the meaning of some difficult words, I felt very accomplished and thankful to God. Prayer and sometimes reading the Bible became part of my daily routine and I felt my faith growing stronger.

When I lived in Japan, I had never heard that Jesus Christ is the bridge to the Father. It concerned me that I never had the privilege to cross the bridge to God. I wanted peace and calmness in my heart. I wanted to be a calm person. At this time, my work was very busy and

one colleague was away for a month. I kept asking God, "Please help me, I don't want to be angry. I don't want to be complaining even though no one is here to help."

After that, I really felt calm. I really felt something change in my heart. I realised even more that God was real and that he cared for me. And this gave me confidence to believe in Jesus.

This is the reason why I decided to cross the bridge. It is very simple but it was very important to me. I really appreciated God. I felt the Holy Spirit coming into my heart after I prayed. I believe Jesus Christ has died for our sin.



Recently, I started crying during worship. Before this, I didn't understand why, when I went to church in Japan, one of my friends cried during the worship. Now I know how my friends were close to God!

When I do bad things I ask for his forgiveness. I pray for guidance. When I do small things wrong at work, I ask God if I should apologize. He shows me what to do.

When I look back at my past, I realise how God had helped me. In Japan I had a passion to learn English and work overseas. God had answered my prayers and guided me.

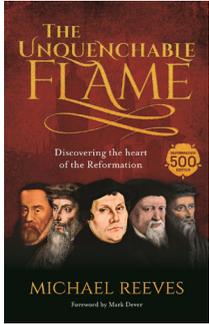
Leaving home to find it

I am Kotaro Sugimoto. This is the story of how I became a Christian.

My first contact with Christians was 6 years ago. I was living alone at the time. I really felt lonely because it was the first time I lived alone. One day, while I was working at a hotel in Japan, one of the cleaning staff invited me to go to her church. Eventually I was baptized, even though I really didn't know God and hardly even believed in him. I

stopped going to church soon after; I had my own problems and doubts about the church's pastor and people.

After this I moved back to my hometown, Tokyo. I developed a passion to learn English and work overseas. I found a free English conversation class near my house and joined it. I was surprised to find that almost everyone was a Christian. This was God caring about me, I believed.

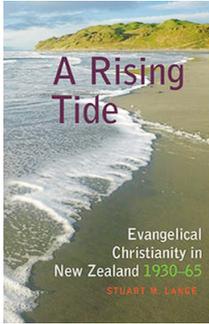


The Unquenchable Flame

By Michael Reeves

According to Google, 500 years ago the English invented the Theodolite, William Caxton starting the printing of books and posters, and some guy called Drake sailed around the world. But more importantly, on 31 October 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the Wittenburg Church door. *The Unquenchable Flame* records this rediscovery of grace in the Reformation. If you have not heard about the Reformation, I encourage you to read this book. It reminded me of the true beauty and simplicity in the good news of the gospel: grace alone by faith alone. And it reminded me that an altered gospel is no gospel at all and that, like the reformers, we are to not only cherish but also aggressively defend this great news. It's an easy and informative read.

— Chris Hay

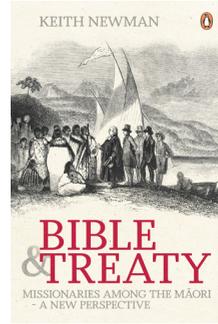


A Rising Tide

By Stuart Lange

Not many books have been written on New Zealand evangelical church history, even less with a focus on the history of TSCF. Stuart Lange in his understated and humble way has written a marvellous account of the rise of evangelicalism in New Zealand and how it affected both the churches and the student ministries at the time and right up to the present. What stands out in *A Rising Tide* is that the commitment to the gospel, preaching the cross of Christ and loving people changed the face of the New Zealand church forever. These continue to be the core values of our student ministry as we seek to bring the gospel to the next generation. To learn from the past and stand with our brothers and sisters who stood for those things is both an encouragement and an inspiration to do the same.

— Ian Reid



Bible and Treaty

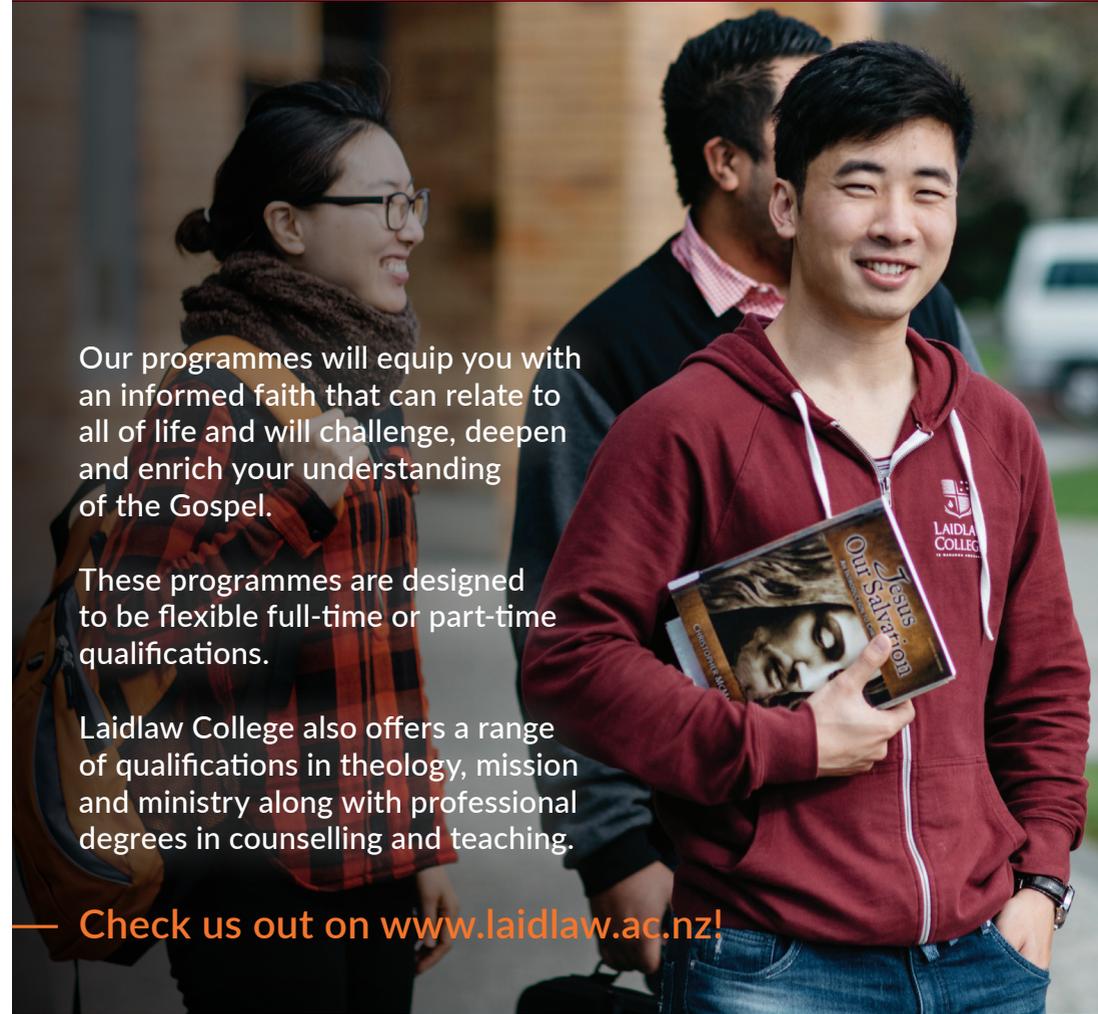
By Keith Newman

This is a compelling account of mission and church interaction with Māori in New Zealand's foundational years. Contrary to anti-Christian prejudice evident in many popular narratives, *Bible and Treaty* gives a thoroughly researched account of the men and women who sacrificed home comforts for hardship in a dangerous land. The impact of their Bible-led lives, message and ministry of peace, life, and light in Christ, seeded widespread conversion to Christ. It stimulated spontaneous evangelism by Māori, a dramatic dissemination of literacy among Māori, and expectations of a beneficent future for Māori through the Treaty. What was promised, however, as *Bible and Treaty* also recounts, was thwarted by an institutional Church collaborating with a Colonial government avaricious for land.

— Michael Drake

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