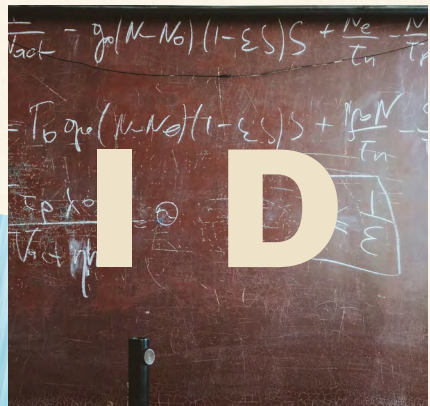
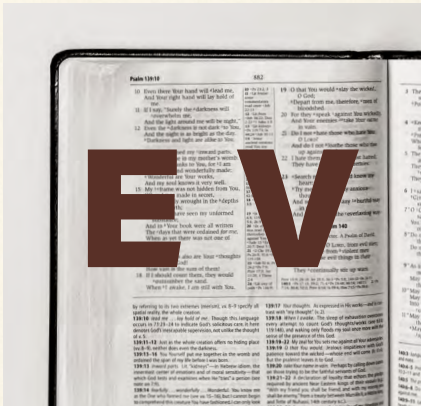


ISSUE 84 | SPRING 2018

canvas

TERTIARY STUDENTS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP'S MAGAZINE



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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 three 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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Summit '18

Every winter, students gather for five days of learning how to study the Bible and apply it to life. Summit is a great chance to build friendships with others from around the country, attend workshops led by staff, and have some fun between terms.

At the beginning of July, students and staff met at Narrows Park, Hamilton. Emma Brewster, who works in South Africa as the head of the university outreach programme for SIM, spoke each day about how our eternal hope impacts our lives today. A team from InterVarsity in California also attended, and we welcomed missions organisations one evening. The group was also privileged to be hosted by Nga Hau E Wha community marae in Cambridge, above, on one crisp winter day.



Changing students for life

After Summit, Dave Hodgkinson received this message from Tauranga student Amelia Tagica. Amelia was a Creative Arts and Design student at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology.

Bula and kia ora,

This week of fellowship has been incredible! Thank you for all that you have serviced us with. It was a wonderful time coming together with tertiary students from all walks of life and different ethnic backgrounds to fellowship together before God.

Summit has really encouraged me to step up in faith, looking deeper into God's Word and committing myself to a life of prayer as I leave uni and prepare myself for my career and life in general.

This has also challenged me to step up in faith as a young Pacific Islander who had been feeling lost for quite a while. I felt isolated within the cultures of New Zealand as I recently moved here seeking a fresh start. Coming from Fiji and a shy, keep-to-your-comfort-zone mentality, I had to learn new ways. It was very different living on new soil, let alone as a young Christian surrounded by interesting modern culture.

During these five days of fellowship, I observed how my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ praised and worshipped God with a fearless, yet God-fearing heart. It amazed me more that these students were young but still passionate about God, passionate about learning His Word, passionate about prayer. They were spiritually rooted in Christ, open, happy and free. And that was something I had wanted to feel for a very long time—a real taste of what it is like to follow God, at a young age, with confidence as an (introverted)



Amelia, right, with Otago student Sheryl Raju at Summit.

Islander living out of my comfort zone.

Thank you for reaching out to the youth and moulding them to be God-fearing Christians, and thank you for showing me how to stand firm and be bold and courageous before God. God is good! I pray that God will continue to mould me and help strengthen my faith in him, and continue to speak to me through his Word as I continue living life fresh and renewed.

May God continue to bless the team, may God continue to bless the work you do for the students, may God continue to guide you and work with you. I'm praying that through you, God will work amongst this young generation, touching hearts and changing lives, just as you have changed mine. I do not know where God plans to take me yet, but I'm excited. And I do pray I get to see you again.

Kalougata tiko nomuni qaravi tavi TSCF and vinaka vakalevu. God bless you and thank you.

A new era for TSCF leadership

National Director Nigel Pollock has accepted the call to lead another IFES movement—InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Canada. In May its board invited him to share the vision and energy that he has invested into the role here.

"It has been an absolute honour to spend the last 12 years in New Zealand," Nigel said. He left at the end of August to begin work in Canada, but will return in October for scheduled commitments and some farewell events, details of which are on TSCF's website.

"This is a great privilege that has been entrusted to us and is an enormous challenge as well as a huge opportunity," Nigel said. While there are similarities between the history and operations of the two organisations, InterVarsity Canada has 200 staff, 9 camps, and high school ministries in addition to university work.

Nigel and his wife, Ailsa, see this as an opportunity



From left, Nigel Pollock, Caitlin Ormiston (Chief Operating Officer), and Ben Carswell.

to do more work together, both in hospitality and in travel. "We will miss NZ enormously but will definitely be back and hope to host some Kiwis in Canada," Nigel said.

His role here officially ends in the new year. The board has appointed Ben Carswell, Head of Student Ministries, to be the next National Director. Ben was part of UCCF in the UK before he moved to Wellington 10 years ago with his wife, Jenni, to join the student ministry here.

Goodbye EU, hello CU

After 91 years, one of TSCF's oldest groups has adopted a new name. When Auckland's Evangelical Union formed in 1927—one of TSCF's four original "EUs"—the word "evangelical" had different connotations. After several semesters of discussions, members voted in August to rename the group "Christian Union." It's a name used by another former EU, the University of Canterbury's CU.

Judge Andrew Becroft, who joined EU as a student in the late 1970s, welcomed the change. "The name Evangelical Union should be understood in the context of its own time," he said. "It emphasised

the centrality of the 'Evangel'—a risen Lord Jesus Christ. The name carried with it strong conviction that the Bible was God's inspired and reliable word."

Andrew recalled how a vote in 1980 to change the name failed due to a technicality; he's been waiting a long time to see the historic EU moniker replaced. "These days the word is misunderstood, confused with the word 'evangelistic,' and is laden with unhelpful stereotypes," he said. "At least most New Zealanders have a passing understanding of what the word 'Christian' might mean. But even then we have some work to do!"

Growing TSCF's capacity

Each time Caitlin Ormiston arrives in New Zealand, she brings a little more of her life with her. As a teenager, she left the UK to spend a year in Ngaruawahia working at Christian Youth Camps. She had been drawn to NZ's beauty and the opportunity to participate in mission to young people, as a young person who had benefitted from discipleship herself.

During university, she returned with a UCCF team from the UK to take part in university missions in Wellington and Lincoln with TSCF.

Eight years after Caitlin's first visit, while on staff with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, she visited again to join TSCF staff and students at the midyear conference.

And then this May, Caitlin returned with an MBA and a three-year work visa. She has settled in Wellington and taken up the role of TSCF's first Chief Operating Officer. Over the past decade, while she was learning more about student ministry and organisational management, TSCF's staff team nearly doubled and the turnover quadrupled. TSCF began looking for someone who could help grow the capacity of its stretched support team at the same time that Caitlin was considering where to invest her time and training.

"I've arrived at an interesting time in the movement's history," Caitlin said, as TSCF prepares to farewell Nigel Pollock after 12 years as National Director. "As he wrote in the annual review, we can have courage that God goes before us and the next era under new leadership will be an exciting one."



Caitlin is particularly looking forward to seeing TSCF continue to develop a greater connection with Māori and Pasifika students, and find ways for the ministry to further reflect the multi-ethnic nature of the New Zealand church.

Her calling to student ministry has been a clear one. As a student in Nottingham, England, she served in the Christian Union. She was particularly focused on finding ways to reach international students and on encouraging the CU to share Christ around the globe.

After university, she worked with UCCF and then ChSA in Poland before taking up a role with IFES in Oxford.

"All the while, I stayed in touch with staff and students in New Zealand and expanded my global picture of the impact of student ministry," she said. "It's been encouraging to look back and see God's hand in my development and direction to the point where I have the opportunity to serve in a way that combines my heart, experience and studies."

God's provision for every detail extended to a work visa that was approved in just a couple of days, and many people who have made the move possible. Like most staff, Caitlin must raise the funds for her salary. "I'm thankful for a team of supporters around the world who are praying for me and contributing sacrificially towards ministry in a country they may never visit," Caitlin said.



Dunedin students and staff at Otago VCF's annual barn dance.

DUNEDIN

VCF

Students from VCF were involved with welcoming a visiting team from InterVarsity USA. Many of us who have never started conversations with random students about God had a chance to partner with them in an outreach.

We also helped run the annual barn dance, which is always a lot of fun. Along with dancing and eating there are also good conversations and a chance to connect with students outside the group.

We fundraised for students attending SPARC by "travelling" the 3,406km distance between Dunedin and Vanuatu through exercise. This was a great chance to support them while also getting fit!

– Daniel Sim

BAY OF PLENTY

Summit conference helps students on separate campuses across New Zealand partner together around the Gospel and mission. Conference

and travel costs can be a barrier to students attending. This year Bay of Plenty students fundraised to reciprocate Lincoln University Christian Fellowship's wonderful initiative last year, when they gifted money to North Island-based students who were heading to the Summit 2017 conference in Christchurch.

– Dave Hodgkinson

LINCOLN

Can God help me pass my exams?
What is God's biggest goal?
Why should I believe in Christ?
And how do you stay positive about God's presence with so many bad things in the world?

These are just some of the questions that Lincoln CF students asked us at one of our outreach events, "Ask a question about Christianity and get a free piece of cake." These events seem to work well, however this time we got students to write down their questions anonymously. The result, on the whole, was more engaging, challenging questions. It was quite revealing that, when given time

to think and write, people do have questions about Christianity, and those questions are not easy.

TSCF has four aims that direct us as we reach students for Christ. This term we're focusing on Deep Thought: being a Christian does not mean you abandon your brain. Our faith involves thinking deeply about who God is, what he says in scripture and how that applies to the world we live in.

Please pray for CF students as they wrestle with these questions, that it would deepen their relationship with God and their understanding of who he is. Please also pray that the students who asked the questions would seek answers, first in God's scriptures, but also through the CF and other Christians around them.

– Chris Hay

AUCKLAND

AUTCF

AUTCF now maintains an active presence on all three campuses. Each campus has a small group that operates independently. Over the past semester we held weekly Bible studies to discover more about who God is, and occasionally hosted other fun events to bond with one another.

– Nick Choo and Dorcas Choo



Staff worker May Lee, centre, with AUT student leaders Mel Hennessy and Nick Choo.

Massey Albany international student ministry

The second semester got off to a good start with more than 100 international students signing up, most of them in a WeChat group. While a smaller number have ended up coming to English Corner and the meal and study Annette and I host, it is good to have a mix of old and new students.

– Jeff Lane



Waikato staff and students at Summit in July.

HAMILTON

University of Waikato CF

We had lots of good conversations at a prayer station during the Waikato Student Union's UN International Youth Day. We contributed to a combined worship service that day with the other Christian clubs on campus. Fifty people attended, including some nonbelievers.

At the end of first semester, we had a well-attended quiz night.

Amy Harrison attended the Lausanne/WEA Oceania Creation Care Consultation in Australia earlier this year, representing TSCF along with Jen Allaway, staff from Otago.

– Felicia Tjung and Amy Harrison

Evidence and opinions

The hunches we have about Christianity's place in society have some fresh statistics to inform them. In May, the Wilberforce Foundation published *Faith and Belief in New Zealand*. It's a national survey of 1,007 Kiwis and in-depth interviews with 26 focus group participants by McCrindle.

They reported that the largest segments are:

35% = no religion or spiritual belief

33% = Christian (only 9% "active practitioners")

20% = spiritual but not religious

Of the largest segment, **43% say their reason for identifying with no spiritual belief is that they "prefer a scientific and evidence-based approach."**

There it is, that common lie: Science is our source of absolute truth; faith is blind. And who wants to be the idiot going around ignoring the evidence?

We all believe in a myriad of things unseen. We trust the messages of books, websites, friends and reporters. Believing the Bible, with historical credentials that set the gold standard for ancient texts, is no great leap into fantasy. Faith in such a comprehensive worldview is tested every day by all we experience in life, and the gospel's impact on societies past and present is not difficult to trace. This is no blind faith.

In the world of science, practitioners often report results that add to—and frequently correct or contradict—prior information. We'd like to assume

that our health choices and weekend plans are informed by infallible doctors and meteorologists, but experience has proven otherwise.

Far from being at odds, Christian faith and scientific enquiry have long worked together to describe and discover God's intricate creation. The following articles and resources show how thinking deeply about both faith and the world go hand in hand. As Dr Graeme Finlay points out, it's common to find committed Christians in universities' science departments—sometimes in higher proportions than among the general population.

For those willing to see it, and even for some who once resisted seeing it, the evidence points to the Bible's historical relevance, to the God it represents, and to a world that only he could have created.

Evidence is crucial, but we know it isn't everything. The survey also suggests that Christians who live out their faith with consistency and kindness are the most persuasive ambassadors. "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples," Jesus said, "if you love one another." And those whose faith is in Jesus have found that knowing him—not simply historic facts or philosophical ideas—is the necessary first step. The best arguments in the world cannot replace this.

Maryanne Wardlaw
Editor



Living by the book

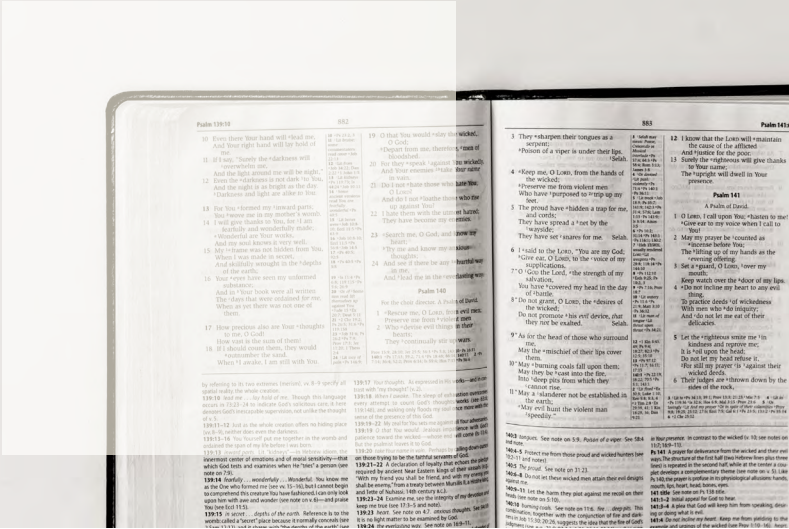
Over the last few months, I've been thinking a lot about the evidence for Christianity. Specifically, I've been pondering just how far the historical evidence can take us—in our own faith, and in our evangelism.

This isn't about questioning the quality of the evidence. I'm as deeply persuaded as ever that the historical evidence for Christianity is credible and compelling. To give a brief sketch of what I mean, I usually think about this in four categories: external, internal, archaeological and bibliographical.

The external evidence test looks to non-Christian ancient historians like Josephus, Pliny, Tacitus, and Thallus. Just from these writers alone, we can conclude that Jesus existed, died

on a cross under Pontius Pilate (during a strange mid-afternoon bout of darkness), was proclaimed as having risen again, gained a large number of followers who made a major impact across the Roman Empire, and was proclaimed as divine.

The internal evidence test examines the Bible itself and asks whether it's internally consistent. Charges of contradiction can be explained by carefully applying the normal rules of reading—for example, how we harmonise different accounts of the same event. In fact, just the right amount of difference tells us we're reading real history written with various points of emphasis, not the work of charlatans who've gotten together and cooked the books.



The archaeological evidence test asks whether discoveries in the ancient world match the details described in the Bible. Again and again, archaeological finds have supported the Bible's references to real times, places and people. To take just one example, the discovery of the "Pool of Bethesda" mentioned in John 5 upheld the reliability of John's account and ended many years of conjecture and scepticism.

And finally, the bibliographical evidence test looks at the number of manuscript copies and the gap in time between the originals and the earliest copies. The more copies the better, as it allows for careful cross-checking; the smaller the time gap the better, as there's less time for errors to creep in. In both cases, the Bible doesn't just pass the test or meet the standard; it obliterates

the standard and dramatically raises the bar. For example, the gold standard in ancient history is Homer's Iliad, with 643 manuscript copies and a time gap of 500 years between the original and the earliest existing copy. When it comes to the New Testament, we have over 5,800 copies (in Greek alone!), with a time gap of somewhere between 50 and 100 years between the original and the earliest existing copy. When it comes to the reliability of ancient documents, it's the New Testament first, daylight second.

Of course, that's the briefest possible sketch of the evidence for the Bible, but it hints at what I (and countless other Christians) have found. (For more detail, I'd recommend *Is The New Testament History?* by Paul Barnett, or—humbly, and not in Paul Barnett's league—my own *The*

NT transmissional reliability compared to other ancient texts

AUTHOR/TEXT	EXISTING COPIES	TIME GAP*
NEW TESTAMENT: GREEK TRANSLATIONS	5795 17974	40 250–300
HOMER / <i>Iliad</i>	1157	400
DEMOSTHENES/ Speeches	340	1100+
CAESAR / <i>Galic Wars</i>	251	950
PLATO / <i>Tetralogies</i>	210	1300
PLINY / <i>Natural History</i>	200	400
SOPHOCLES / Plays	193	100–200
HERODOTUS / <i>History</i>	109	1350
THUCYDIDES / <i>History</i>	96	200
TACITUS / <i>Annals</i>	33	750–950

* Years between original text and earliest surviving copies
Statistics cited by Mark Barry, taken from *The Bibliographical Test Updated*, Christian Research Journal, 35:3 (2012)



The human desire for autonomy shapes our ability – and our willingness – to consider the evidence properly. Spiritual blindness is real.

Book of Books.) Being a Christian doesn't mean checking your brain at the door and believing the unbelievable—"blind faith" and all that nonsense. On the contrary, we have good, logical reasons for believing what we do.

But here's the question: how far can this evidence get us? Can it sustain our faith in Jesus? Can it bring someone to faith in Jesus?

In 1 Corinthians 2:12–14, Paul writes about the essential role of the Spirit in allowing us to grasp the truth about God:

What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

Ever sat through an evangelistic talk with a non-Christian friend and thought, "How can they not get it?!" only to have them respond, "Meh"? Ever presented the kind of evidence I described above, only to have your friend seem uninterested and unmoved? That's because the Bible's message is about so much more than the intellect. The heart and the emotions are intimately

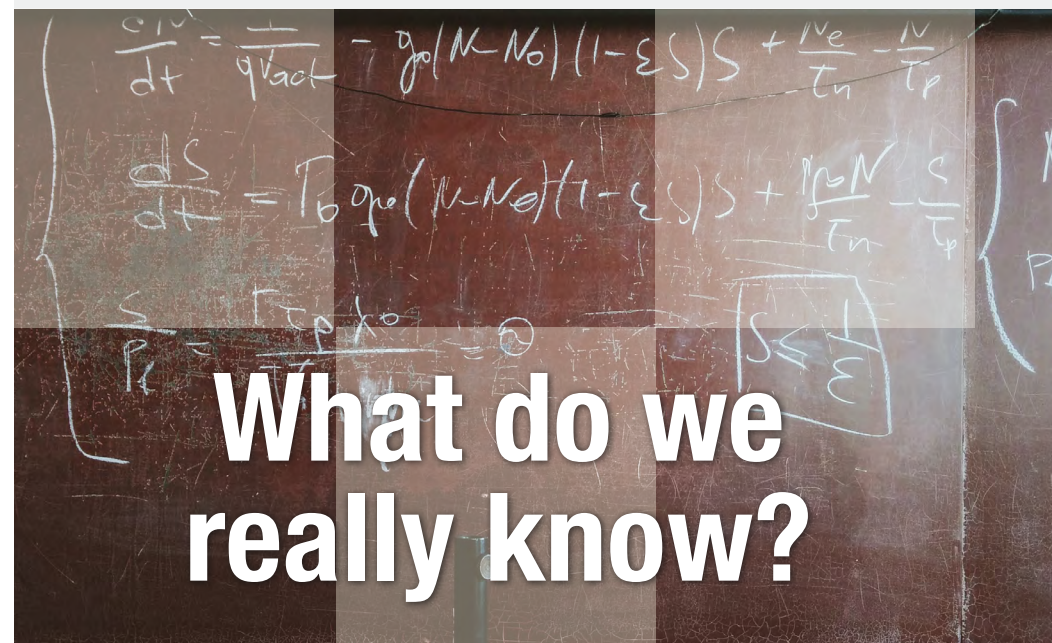
involved. The human desire for autonomy shapes our ability—and our willingness—to consider the evidence properly. Spiritual blindness is real (2 Corinthians 4:3–4).

Of course, God can and does open blind eyes, but he does that through the good news of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4:5–6). To put it another way: he doesn't save people through a message about the Bible, but through a message from the Bible.

That doesn't mean we ignore historical evidence. Far from it. Just like good foundations are indispensable to a solid home, the historical evidence for the Bible is indispensable for our evangelism and our discipleship. But just like it would be weird for me to move out of my home and set up camp underneath in the home's foundations, it makes no sense to spend lots of time dwelling on the truth about the Bible without focusing on the Bible's content.

We need to get the foundations in place, and we should be ready to share them with anyone who asks. But our real task is to get on with preaching the Bible's message about the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen for our sins. An earth-shattering, life-changing message with a foundation strong enough to hold it up—that's a mighty combination.

Geoff Robson
Canterbury Staff Worker



The truth is out there." That famous line came to define a show that captivated me at secondary school. In *The X-Files*, FBI agents Mulder and Scully spent 202 episodes chasing conspiracy theories and paranormal activity all over America. Regardless of the danger, hardship, futility, cost, time, or any other obstacle, they continued—because "the truth is out there."

The show resonated with me, as I have always been a truth seeker. I want to know why things are, how they came to be, and how we know. My past is littered with things I've broken by investigating how they work and with useless trivia gleaned in my searches. But it also contains a helpful understanding of how investigation itself functions.

Curiosity led me to undertake research in the field of molecular neuroscience, where I investigated things far too small to be seen. I relied on tools that help visualise the objects under investigation.

Every tool must be carefully chosen in order to show something real and not to produce false positives and negatives. In fact, more than half of every experiment involved control tests, not direct investigation, that asked, "how much do we trust the result and how can we show others that the result is trustworthy?"

Any research done well requires a genuine desire to know truth, testing that what we know is trustworthy. No matter the subject, we need to understand how our tools work and what kind of results they can safely deliver.

This is true of any investigation of truth, not just within academic research. As Ludwig Wittgenstein famously said, "Tell me how you are searching, and I will tell you what you are searching for." He understood that the results of an investigation are determined more by the terms of investigation than the desire of the researcher.

TSCF aims to equip people with tools to understand Scripture and to be more confident in how they came to understand it. We want to learn to use the tools well in order to continue growing in knowledge and truth.

In other words, if my wife asks me how she looks, she may only learn how much I love her.

How we know about God and how we investigate truth about God is now my field as a TSCF staff worker and pastor of a church. Every time I speak, I make truth claims about who God is and how we know.

Last year a student in the Otago Law Christian Fellowship asked why there were many competing truth claims made by Christians about same-sex attraction. Was it possible that all truth was simply relative to the position of the speaker? In order to answer the question of whether truth is relative, we had to investigate how people holding different positions came to their conclusions. Only then could we begin to investigate how tenable we found those positions.

It took a whole semester, but Law CF chugged through Charles Wesley's four sources of Christian knowledge—Bible, tradition, reason and experience—and investigated the ways each contributed to the positions held by prominent voices on the topic.

Wesley advocated the supremacy of Scripture as the primary means of knowing God and knowing about God. Studying Scripture is a tool for discovering truth, and as such it can be used both well and poorly. TSCF aims to equip people with tools to understand Scripture and to be more confident in how they came to understand it. We want to learn to use the tools well in order to

continue growing in knowledge and truth. (If you want a succinct collection of tools for Bible study, I recommend Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sachs' book *Dig Deeper*.)

We also have other faculties that allow us to determine truth. Our ability to reason, to work collaboratively through the ages, and our own experience of the world and God's work within it cause us to learn and advocate for truth. As with Bible study, we need to be aware of how these forms of investigation function, both their strengths and weaknesses.

Too often tradition becomes tribalism. We seek to express truth in a way that delineates who is "us" and who is "them." Too often reason becomes acquiescence to current thought fashions, regardless of how logical or illogical they are. Too often experience becomes a way of rejecting millennia of careful Christian investigation.

Fox TV was right; "the truth is out there." How we investigate it is as important as what we come to believe. Academic investigation has a lot to teach us about the tools for discovering truth, and those tools ought to leave us more confident in what we know. But getting to that point—understanding how we think we know—does take some work.

Mike Summerfield
Otago Staff Worker



Faith meets science

Graeme Finlay's two passions are not, as new atheists would have us believe, mutually exclusive. He is a respected academic with a PhD in cell biology. He is also a Christian who has completed theological study and written a book dealing with, among other things, the historical foundations for Christianity.

Graeme has been teaching scientific pathology at the University of Auckland since 2000 and has spent four decades working in cancer research.

Here he shares a scientist's perspective on the evidence for a Christian faith.

How did you come to believe in Jesus?

I had the good fortune of having Christian parents. I was able to observe first-hand what I feel was an authentic Christian faith. Obviously Christianity is a difficult word, because a lot of it is authentic and it goes through to a lot of things that I don't want to associate with it particularly. I'd rather use "christian" with a small "c," which means it's

an adjective pertaining to Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, in his work and his death and his resurrection and his ethical demands.

As I grew up, I had many opportunities to learn of other approaches to living. But the key thing is day after day, as an adult, I have seen that following Jesus is the best way to live. It's not becoming a Christian that was, to me, my great crisis, but the daily crisis of following Jesus amidst the myriad alternative voices that we hear.

When you went to university, were there points of conflict with your lecturers or other students?

There were a few lecturers who ridiculed Christian faith. I remember one of my zoology professors speaking of the sweep of evolution up to the evolution of God. And I found that irritating, but not a challenge, because I felt he was ignorant. Because I found that for me as a Christian, we are taken by surprise when we encounter God. And so much good scientific work, scientific discoveries,



takes us by surprise—"I didn't expect that!" It's not of my making.

I feel like it's that with our knowledge of God, too. It takes us by surprise. The Trinity is not of our making. People often say we make god in our image. But the God of Jesus, who comes to us in weakness, who comes to us in the cross, totally takes us by surprise. And therefore I felt this is authentic, this is not of my making. My mindset as a scientist and my mindset as a Christian were really one of a piece. We stumble upon reality, we don't make it.

What helps undo assumptions that Christianity is conflicted?

The first thing is that science is a Christian way of thinking. The likes of Dawkins loudly proclaim their love of the Greeks, the rationality of the Greeks, as opposed to the "blind faith" of the Christians. It's not like that. If you love the Greeks you've got to love their astrology, their fortune telling. Dawkins loathes the Hebrews for their animal sacrifices, but the Greeks and the Romans had their sacrifices, their temples adorned every corner.

The only difference is that Hebrew sacrifice was dealing with the issue of sin, and with Christians



My mindset as a scientist and my mindset as a Christian were really one of a piece. We stumble upon reality, we don't make it.

sacrifice has ended. God himself provided the Lamb, who was Jesus.

If you look at biblical faith, God is a God of faithfulness. He is peerless, he never had to fight against other gods. He is consistent. The consistency of God underlies natural law, because God is faithful, he doesn't change. Therefore his laws won't change. In so many ways, the biblical viewpoint underlies the possibility of science.

How does the Bible stack up as a historical record?

It's fantastic. Religions can be based on self-help, like Buddhism, they can be based on wisdom like Confucianism, or on trying to please the gods or on ethics.

Biblical religion is different. Biblical religion is an interpretation of history. The Jews in the Old Testament interpreted their history, the formation of their nation, the giving of the law, the blessings



when they were obedient to the covenant, the curses when they were disobedient to the covenant. They just looked at their history all the time.

And the amazing thing is when they were expelled from their land and taken to Babylon, that's the ultimate disaster. But it strengthened their faith because they interpreted their history and said, "This is a result of infidelity."

And the first Christians were like that. They interpreted their history, they interpreted what they saw of Jesus the Messiah. His death should have been the end of the movement but there was something that, following his death, gave them the confidence that they were proclaiming an actual event in history. Of course, that was the resurrection.

How well are Christians represented in academia?

There are so many Christians around. In the cancer lab, I can think of 8 or 10 of us who are PhD Christians, and that's out of 60 or 70. So we are better represented than in the general population.

So the impression that it'd be tough to be a scientist and a Christian ...?

I don't find that. In some departments it might be harder than others, there aren't so many Christians

in physics or in biology, at least in Auckland, but certainly in the medical school there are Christians at all levels.

For Christians who come with their mind open, who adhere strongly to their faith, there is no reason to backtrack on the central elements of their faith. Certainly some of the peripheral things may need to be critiqued, but that's natural at university.

Was Jesus a real person? Of course. Did he die? Absolutely. The first generation of Christians insisted that he had risen from the dead. Can we allow for the resurrection in a scientific and Christian worldview? Yes, if you believe in a Creator God.

Which way do you see the trends going as far as science and faith?

There is a tremendous amount of wonderful scholarship these days. And there are so many journals reflecting on the science-theology interface. There used to be two or three, but now there are many that are, in a scholarly way, investigating the interaction between Christianity and science.

I worry a little more at the popular level. There are unsaid pressures that are silencing Christians a little. There seems to be a little more antipathy now in some quarters—not in all.

I think back to when I was a student, and Evangelical Union was very open and very public. Although I was never deeply involved in it, I'd go to a lunchtime meeting where there were perhaps 100 students and top people like E.M. Blaiklock would speak. TSCF now seems to be less obvious.

When I look around university and see so many Christian staff members—there are dozens of senior professors who are Christians—they probably hale from the '70s and '80s, when EU was very public. And I just wish that Christians

could be more public. You're doing a great job; TSCF needs to wave the flag in that regard, so that future generations of Christians will continue with that sense of confidence.

Is the word "science" thrown around carelessly?

Absolutely. Look at all the "scientifically proven" cosmetics. We think we live in a scientific age, but we don't really.

Even more than that, some aspects of science are running into big trouble, such as biomedical science. If you speak to senior editors and senior professors, there's an enormous concern at the volume of fabricated data that is coming out for publication. It's not as trustworthy as it used to be. If you want to get published, if you want to get promoted, if you want tenure, if you want prestige, if you want a professorship, if you want funding for your research, there are such incredible pressures.

A lot of people are publishing stuff that isn't really reliable, certainly which isn't reproducible. If something works you publish it, you don't sit back and say, "Can I do the same experiment with other types of cell lines?" You just publish.

So science has got big problems. Science cannot operate in a metaphysical vacuum. The metaphysical ambience for science has been Christianity.

I was brought up in Asia, and I remember one of my Chinese teachers speaking to largely Chinese students. He said if, in China, you knew ten karate tricks, you'd teach nine to your students so you'd still be number one. But he said the difference in Europe was that you taught your students everything you knew. Now when he said Europe, he didn't mean Caucasian, he meant "Christian." Science requires a Christian ethic to operate—an ethic of cooperation, not competition; an ethic of truth, not fabrication; an ethic of obedience to the

Science has got big problems. Science cannot operate in a metaphysical vacuum. The metaphysical ambience for science has been Christianity.

facts, not prejudice.

And I'm pretty sure that's one of the reasons why science did flourish in a European environment. Europeans are not superior. It was the Christian ethic that enabled science to flourish, as it did amazingly in the high Middle Ages.

And then in the so-called Scientific Revolution of the 17th century, the Royal Society was largely Bible-believing Christians—many of them were theologians. In the 19th century, again, even though science was becoming secularized, it was still running on a Christian ethic.

So there is an element of faith in accepting what science says?

There is indeed.

Are there legitimate problems to accepting the God of the Bible?

The great stumbling block to so many students is the problem of suffering. (Cancer biology, genetic disease, the evolution of pathogens—these things are always issues facing somebody in my business.)

The solution to that problem is that God is a suffering God. He has come to us in Jesus—again, to our surprise, we couldn't have dreamt this up—and God suffered in Jesus to remove sin, to remove human evil. And I believe in a new creation to remove—to deal with—the problem of sickness and pain and death.

So the ultimate solution to the problem of suffering is in the cross and the resurrection of Jesus.



In 2016, Paul Windsor and former TSCF staff worker Elliot Ng joined Billy Rajaratnem (front row, fourth, fifth and sixth from the right) to train local leaders in India.

Billy of UESI

slipped into the back row. A few students were scattered around the room. This man was moving among them, an open Bible in his hands, working his way through Habakkuk 1 with such a warmth, an urgency, a gentleness, and an accuracy. Unforgettable.

From that day this man, Billy, and I have become friends. We have collaborated on three annual week long seminars on preaching for UESI staff and graduates in Kotagiri, Indore, and Hyderabad. (UESI is the IFES student movement in India.) This year we plan to be in Mumbai together doing it

all again. We have discovered a rhythm together. I do the training, he provides me with shining examples of biblical preaching in his devotions each morning, to which I refer frequently.



Billy Rajaratnem was born the year after the momentous Billy Graham meetings in India in 1955. He is named after the famous evangelist and his cousin, born the same year, is named Graham. After a strong Christian upbringing, Billy drifted away from Christ during his first two years at university. Then he was drawn to some meetings with the Weeping Prophet of

India, Augustine Salins, where he was “touched miraculously by Christ.” He joined a UESI group on campus and was with UESI until he retired in May 2017.

In the midst of a commerce degree Billy experienced the call of God into “full-time ministry.” On the same day, he received two invitations—one to be involved in rural evangelistic ministry, and the other for campus-based student work. He took both letters to the altar of his church, praying and weeping through the night. He was an insecure young man with poor self esteem and no money. This was a battle. Through that long night God enabled him to decide for student work and to depend on God for all his financial needs.

Billy applied to UESI for a sponsorship to attend the Union Biblical Seminary (UBS), and they said yes. The full sponsorship was provided through gifts from students in either Australia, with AFES, or New Zealand, with TSCF. (We have not been able to confirm which country it was, but an account of TSCF’s support for UESI students during this time follows on the next page.) This period of study gave Billy the theological foundations which enabled him to be counter-cultural, starting with taking a stand against the caste system and against receiving a dowry from the family of his bride, Persis.

He wanted to be a missionary to the Andaman Islands, but it was a lifetime in UESI that beckoned for Billy and Persis. State-based roles like leading the work in Tamil Nadu were mixed with strategic national leadership roles in missions and then in administration. On the day when we first met, Billy was in his final chapter with UESI, overseeing their Study Centre in Kotagiri. He stumbled into teaching preaching as recently as 2012, when the teacher assigned to the module at the centre was unable to come at the last minute.

As Billy remembers, “I was always known as

Two generations ago, a bunch of resource-poor tertiary students “Down Under” contributed their coins to support a young UESI man they didn’t know and would never meet. But under God’s hand, the dividends from that investment are immense and still growing.

the ‘missions-man’ in UESI, but now I am also known as the ‘preaching-man.’” In his retirement, opportunities are opening up. Increasingly, Billy finds himself mentoring others in preaching. He has been invited to be a trainer with Langham Preaching as they look to commence a work among Tamil speakers. My own role has been minimal. “My dear and loving brother,” as he starts his letters to me, “you affirmed that what I am doing with my preaching is right and that has given me greater confidence.”

Two generations ago, a bunch of resource-poor tertiary students “Down Under” contributed their coins to support a young UESI man they didn’t know and would never meet. But under God’s hand, the dividends from that investment are immense and still growing.

I thank the dear brothers and sisters in TSCF and AFES for your love and concern towards the development of the servants of God in India through UESI. Only eternity will reveal the reward of your sacrificial giving.

My “dear and loving brother,” Billy.

Paul Windsor is the International Programme Director for Langham Preaching, based in India. He is a former TSCF student leader, board member and president.



Shared history

TSCF board vice chairperson Dennis Fountain was a student leader in NZ around the time that Billy was a student in India. He shares his memories of how students in NZ began supporting theological education for their counterparts in UESI.

After Bruce Nicholls went to India in the mid-1950s to teach at Yeotmal with BMMF/Interserve, he recommended that NZ students sponsor students at Union Biblical Seminary at Yeotmal (now in Pune) for their theological studies. He himself had been an early staff member of TSCF (then called InterVarsity Fellowship).

TSCF ties with UBS were also strengthened through Ian and Elizabeth Kemp. Ian was another early staff member, and he also taught at UBS for many years.

The scholarships were provided through UESI, the Union of Evangelical Students of India. Many graduates completed BDs and not a few later became UESI staff members.

Each year, student groups in NZ committed to raise a certain amount of money for the South East Asia Fund. For some 50 years TSCF has this ongoing and influential relationship.

When I was working in India with UESI, I met a staff worker named C.S. Dutt. He had received one of these scholarships in 1969, which was the year I was president at Victoria CU. We had asked that our SEA contributions support these scholarships. He and I became good friends. Dutt said that when he was receiving the scholarship he could live on much less, so he chose to split his scholarship with another student. The last I heard, C.S. Dutt had become a missionary to the Middle East.

Student groups would raise money by mowing lawns, having working bees and in other ways. Ariadne, my wife, was on Waikato University’s Student Union Executive in the early stages of the university. In the late 1960s, the executive was asked what they should do about cleaning the cafeteria. Ariadne suggested to the Christian fellowship that they contract for the task. For many years they raised money through this contract.



Dennis and Ariadne’s involvement with TSCF and UESI has been lifelong. They taught at the UESI Bible Study Centre at Kotagiri in the 1970s and have visited it as

recently as 2016. Dennis or Ariadne may have packed this copy of Canvas into an envelope ready to post to you; they faithfully volunteer behind the scenes.

TSCF’s student groups still raise funds for students in IFES sister movements to study or attend conferences. The annual pledges support the work in India as well as PSFC in the South Pacific and CECE in Ecuador—all of which share long-term, personal connections with TSCF.



Students at the national conference in 1970.

Stewarding creation

I'm not embarrassed for people to know that I'm a Christian."

Amy Harrison, a third year engineering student, wasn't always bold about her faith. She became a Christian at the age of 6, when her family lived in rural Taranaki. Her family moved to Waikato, and a new church, when she was in intermediate school. There she began to understand what faith in Christ means.

"The church we went to showed me you can think about things deeply," Amy recalled. "I became less ashamed of my faith. I started beginning to own it."

So when Amy began studying at the University of Waikato, the quiet thinker gravitated to a group of Christian students who met to tackle tough questions. The Christian Fellowship gained a staff worker when Nick Goodwin joined the team last year, and Amy is now the group's president.

She shows intentionality with her involvement in the group and with her study goals.

"I have a desire to make things the way they're supposed to be," she said. "Some of my motivation behind wanting to be an environmental engineer and being concerned with these kinds of issues is that Christianity has hope. It gives us the motivation to work for it and yet the relief that we're not ultimately responsible for making that succeed. God can move in ways that we can't ... God will restore things to the way they're supposed to be."

In April an opportunity opened up for Amy to meet with like-minded people from around the Pacific, many of whom have years of experience applying

their faith to environmental sciences. She spent five days at the Lausanne/WEA Creation Care Consultation Oceania in Australia, where she was joined by Otago staff worker Jen Allaway.

It was the first time going overseas alone for Amy. ("Mum was a bit concerned about me travelling by myself because I'm a bit of a scatterbrain sometimes," she said.) Despite flight delays, she arrived in Port Stephens just in time and found a great sense of community there.

"I'm not just this one person thinking about this in isolation," she said. "We can come together and bring our experiences, our faith, our skills and talents. We can get in touch with people who have strengths that we don't have."

It was an encouraging place for a young professional who is focused on finding solutions and not just describing problems.



Amy Harrison, photographed here attending Summit in July, and some of the attendees of the Creation Care Consultation below left.

"One of the major contributions of faith to environmental thought is that Christianity has hope, which stands in stark contrast to many, many ecologists, environmentalists, and conservation groups," she said. "The message is death and darkness—we're losing this and we're losing that, we're never going to get this back and we're awful."

"With faith you have—yes, times are dark. Yes, humans are doing lots of not very nice stuff. But we have this ultimate hope in the new creation. God's a God of restoration. That's how I feel being a Christian feeds into that. You're an agent of the things God wants to do in the world. You're an agent of the restoration."

The Lausanne gathering also helped Amy see more clearly how caring for creation is a legitimate Christian concern.

"Often you're like, 'Oh, those crazy, wacky green people,'" she said candidly. "But [care for the environment] can stand up to scrutiny from a Christian perspective. It is rooted in the Scripture—the earth is God's."

"We should reflect God's character, how God relates to things. We shouldn't treat it like it's junk."

Amy is thinking through how she might be able to apply her skills overseas in a mission context in the future. And that process starts now with opportunities on campus and in her life in Hamilton.

"The next step I'm looking to grow in is to be more comfortable being proactive about my faith," she said, "looking for those opportunities to evangelise and say, 'this is what I believe.'"



In May, Canterbury CU co-hosted a public forum on matters of faith, science and religion in the public square.

Engaging with Dawkins

When Richard Dawkins visited Christchurch on May 11, we thought it would be a good opportunity to challenge some of the apathy regarding God that is common on campus and around the city. Geoff Robson, who also works with Canterbury CU students for TSCF, wrote an article, *Why Richard Dawkins is wrong about Christianity*. It was published in NZ papers prior to Dawkins' visit and received both positive and negative responses—including a mention from Dawkins himself on Twitter. As hoped, it got people talking.

Christian Union, three other Christian groups and two Christian faculty members joined with PhilSoc, the philosophy club on campus, for an evening of public discussion on campus.

More than 200 students came along to the panel discussion and Q&A in the University Undercroft. The night started by framing the discussion with a short talk: "How to have an argument in good faith." That was followed by three key issues raised by Dawkins: "The value of science, and the science of values," "The role of religion in the

public square," and "The rage against God." A speaker spent 5 minutes presenting each topic, followed by a 10-minute panel discussion. There was also time for Q&A, but more questions were asked via text than we had time to answer.

The panelists modelled well how to have a good discussion while disagreeing on certain points. The PhilSoc and the philosophy lecturer on the panel were encouraged to have some public discourse on significant issues.

We hope to have more of these types of events on campus in future, encouraging students to engage with one another on areas of thought and belief. Please pray for ongoing conversations between Christians on campus with their friends, that there would be further opportunities to speak about Jesus.

Mark Santich
Canterbury Team Leader



Further reading

The book reviews on the following page represent just a few of the many resources that address topics of faith, reason and science. A more extensive list is online here: www.tscf.org.nz/science-and-faith.

The list will continue to grow. Be aware that viewpoints on secondary issues do vary from source to source; unlike the Bible, they are all fallible. However if you are motivated to better understand and express the hope of the gospel in academic contexts, they will be helpful.

Highlights of the "Faith and Belief in NZ" report

Younger generations know the least about the church

Those who report knowing "nothing":

Generation Z = 33%

Generation Y = 26%

Generation X = 23%

Baby Boomers = 18%

Builders = 11%

There's a place for discussion

Half of participants said **philosophical discussion and debating ideas** attracts them to investigating religion, while the other half are repelled by that.

The two influences most likely to prompt people to think about spiritual, religious or metaphysical topics are a death in the family and conversations with friends, neighbour or colleagues. Each influence was named by 27% of participants.

Engaging and disengaging

For Gen Z, **the Bible's reliability and validity** is a significant issue; 35% cite this as a complete or significant block to faith. It didn't make any other demographic's top three.

Overall, participants were only marginally more

likely to say that the Bible's reliability was problematic (52%) than to say it was a topic which would encourage them to engage (48%).

On the topic of **science and evolution**, the split was similar; 53% reported that it made them less likely and 47% more likely to engage. The sentiment was stronger at the margins, however; 22% said the topic would "block completely" any engagement, while only 7% responded they would "engage completely."

Faith still matters

Gen Y are the **most likely demographic to discuss spirituality and religion** with friends "often" (16%) and "occasionally" (53%). Only 31% never discuss it, while 50% of Builders—the oldest demographic—said the same.

Open to change

More than half of participants were open to changing current religious views—5% "extremely," 7% "significantly," 15% "somewhat" and 28% "slightly."

Many already have changed at least once, usually away from faith: 5% from nonreligious to religious, 7% to another religion, and 23% were raised religious but are no longer.



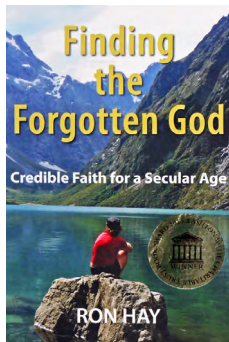
On Guard

By William Lane Craig

This readable book, subtitled "Defending your faith with reason and precision," is a practical introduction to apologetics that includes the key defences for the Christian faith. It is filled with illustrations and step-by-step summaries to help the reader master the arguments. Craig covers four arguments for God's existence, defends the historicity of Jesus' personal claims and resurrection, addresses the problem of suffering, and shows why religious relativism doesn't work. This book will equip you with the core arguments you need to share what and why you believe.

Also check out the more seeker-friendly *On Guard for Students*, the more in-depth *Reasonable Faith*, and Craig's accompanying Defenders podcasts at www.reasonablefaith.org.

– Guido Stark



Finding the Forgotten God

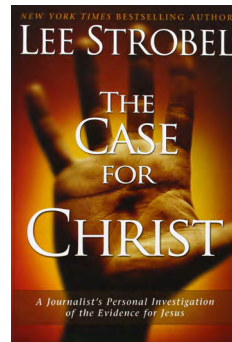
By Ron Hay

This is a rare beast: a book that explains the Christian faith written for Kiwis, by a Kiwi, using Kiwi illustrations. It's an excellent book to give to friends both Christian and not yet Christian.

Cantabrian Ron Hay suggests that in NZ we haven't forgotten who God is; we've forgotten that we've forgotten. His book is an attempt to engage with the thoughtful Kiwi, demonstrating that there are good reasons for a credible faith in Jesus in 21st century NZ. It is well referenced, and reminds me of a Kiwi version of Tim Keller or C.S. Lewis.

Ron has helpfully talked about these issues at TSCF staff and student events, and we're grateful to him.

– Tim Hodge



The Case for Christ

By Lee Strobel

The Case for Christ is my favourite evangelistic book. It's become quite the franchise, spawning further books, millions of sales, and even "a major motion picture." It's no surprise former journalist Lee Strobel knows how to write. And because it's based around interviews on key issues, you're not just getting Strobel's perspective. You're hearing from more than a dozen theologians and evangelists—luminaries like Don Carson, Bruce Metzger and Gary Habermas.

The most compelling aspect is that it chronicles Strobel's conversion from atheism to Christianity, told after the fact but with heart. Twenty years after its release, *The Case For Christ* hasn't dated. It's worth having multiple copies on your shelf.

– Geoff Robson

A Theology for your Calling

Vocational Theology at Laidlaw College

How does your faith relate to your work? How are you called to outwork Christian hope in the world? What theological issues and insights arise in your profession, and how will you resource yourself for lifelong faithfulness?

Studying Vocational Theology at Laidlaw College, towards a Postgraduate Diploma, or for interest, is a way for you to deepen your journey of faith and find ways to integrate the Gospel into your whole life.



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He akonga ki nga akonga hei ara whakawhiti mo to Karaiti
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