

ISSUE 86 | AUTUMN 2019

# canvas

TERTIARY STUDENTS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP'S MAGAZINE

true witness  
deep thought  
*living aims*  
undivided life  
global reach

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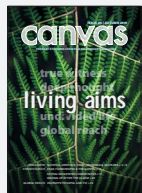
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CANVAS aims to inform and encourage all who are interested in reaching students for Christ, and in thinking Christianly about their life and work. It is published three times a year by TSCF.



**Canvas Issue 86**  
Autumn 2019

**Design**  
Maryanne Wardlaw

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](mailto:canvas@tscf.org.nz).

## TSCF

PO Box 9672, Marion Square,  
Wellington 6141  
+64 4 384 7274  
[www.tscf.org.nz](http://www.tscf.org.nz)

## canvasgreen

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# Four aims, one end

The stories here in *Canvas* reflect one or more of TSCF's aims: True witness. Deep thought. Undivided life. Global reach. The aims are both means and ends in our call to reach students for Christ and change students for life.

This season's stories are particularly poignant. Over the past few months our lives—especially those in Christchurch—have been more likely to intersect with the lives of people who are suffering, angry, scared or disillusioned post-March 15.

Ani's story is one of several that illustrate an undivided life and true witness. She continued to minister to students, support grieving members of the Indonesian community, and arrange practical care for victims—all while mourning the death of a close friend who had been in one of the mosques.

Geoff, through his words, encourages us to think deeply. This counter-cultural engagement with the Word challenges us to pray for our enemies and trust God's hand through the darkness.

"Global reach" means more than coming alongside those who have made a new home in NZ. Kim writes about the opportunity students have this year to step out of their comfort zones and into the lives of students in Nepal and Fiji. Kat, who has left family in NZ for long-term service in Nepal, tells the story of her transition to this new life and calling.

Finally, a personal note; 21 issues of *Canvas* ago I became TSCF's communications manager. Mid-year, I will finish this season. As I return to being "just" a supporter, let me say what a joy it's been to share the stories of God's kingdom coming with you givers, encouragers, pray-ers and thinkers who are part of the wider TSCF family. Many aspects of this job have warmed and enthused me—particularly seeing regular proof of the faithfulness of God's people.

Borrowing a line from someone who knew all about the encouragement of gospel partners, "I thank my God every time I remember you."

And here's my chance to thank you.

— Maryanne Wardlaw, editor



This year's ministry interns are, from left, Michael Bresler, Renee Posthuma and David Beukes.

# Meet the Minterns

TSCF offers a ministry internship year—"Minty," for short—for recent grads. It's a rare opportunity to receive training in knowing and sharing the gospel, be discipled and supported in practical ministry, and start work part-time. More than just a ministry taster, the programme requires the daily exercise of applying faith in Christ to vocation and to community. This year, these three TSCF grads are part of our student ministry at Otago, Canterbury and Lincoln universities.

## Renee Posthuma

I am Christchurch born, was raised in a Christian family, and have five siblings. When I went to the University of Canterbury to study commerce, I looked to join a Christian group as my brother had, and he recommended it.

I joined Christian Union due to a student's friendly

invitation to an event at clubs day. CU was a great encouragement and help during my studies. It was also where I met many great friends and learnt a lot, including how to lead Bible studies, what a Christian looks like, and how to apply all parts of Scripture to life.

While at SPARC in Vanuatu last year, I was convicted by the passion of other students for

building Christian groups at their campuses and teaching the Bible. I realised the importance of Bible-centred student groups, and that I had the option to not work in my field straight away, so I started considering Minty. The more I thought about it, the more excited I became.

I am doing Minty to tell students about the truth of the gospel, to help students to grow in their faith as others in CU helped me, and to learn more about God. I look forward to all that God will teach me through this.

### Michael Bresler

Kia ora! My family and I moved from South Africa in 2009 and have called the plains of Canterbury home ever since. I love being active, whether sports, tenting or fishing. For the last three years I have studied food and resource economics at Lincoln University, and graduated in May. During my time there I became involved with the Christian Fellowship, and also had the privilege of being a student representative on the TSCF board.

While trying to decide what would come after my studies, I realised that I got the most joy in life when engaged with student ministry on campus. Minty is an opportunity to dip my toes further into

student ministry and to spend a year discerning where I can use my skills for the glory of God.

I decided to push myself out of my comfort zone by doing Minty in Dunedin, away from my home. I welcome this challenge and am excited to see how God humbles me and refines me for his glory.

### David Beukes

I was born in South Africa and moved over to the beautiful town of Whakatane in the North Island when I was four, where I have spent the majority of my life. I have always been passionate about sports, outdoors, animals and music.

I grew up in a strong Christian family, which has helped grow my passion for God and his word.

In 2016 I moved to Lincoln University on a rowing scholarship to study animal science. I loved the time with the Christian Fellowship on campus and grew a lot in my knowledge and understanding of God's word.

I'm doing Minty because, even though I was very involved in CF, I felt I didn't invest in my relationship with God and grow in my faith properly. I want to build a strong foundational faith in God that will support me wherever God calls me to be.

Would you prayerfully consider joining a new (or not-so-new) staff worker's support team, or donating to the fund for gospel work in your region? Details are online at [www.tscf.org.nz/give](http://www.tscf.org.nz/give).

We are encouraged by God's gracious provision, enabled by the sacrificial giving and gracious prayers of his people. As we seek to grow the team, we continue to trust him. Thank you for partnering with us as we reach students for Christ.

— Caitlin Ormiston, COO

## Financial update

A number of staff recently finished their time with TSCF, and some are in the process of joining, so we are in an exciting phase of ministry. Financially, based on the first quarter, we are cautiously optimistic that we can meet our commitments over the coming months.

As some long-term staff are moving on to new areas of ministry, we have a more urgent need to increase funding over the next year to get new staff started well and plan for growth.

# Fresh faces advise TSCF

Student representatives Jenny Huang and Michael Bresler finished up their term serving on TSCF's board in 2018, and two new students joined current representative Annelise Chan.

**Annelise Bond** was part of Lincoln University's CF in 2017, and is now with the group at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology in Tauranga—her home city. Her academic focus is marine studies.



**Daniel Sim** grew up in Southland to parents involved in ministry. Their work took the family to Sudan, where Daniel saw Christians with a greater dependence on God. He is an accounting student at the University of Otago who has served with Varsity Christian Fellowship and been involved in TSCF's Business Fellowship.



TSCF's board welcomed two other members in 2018. **Aimee Mai** has spent the past decade working with Christians Against Poverty, and has led the organisation as its CEO since 2013. She is passionate about living a life of purpose not comfort, and considers it a privilege to work in partnership with local churches to serve those who are struggling in our nation, providing practical help and sharing the transforming love of Jesus. She grew up on a dairy farm just outside of Gisborne, and now lives in South Auckland with her husband, Ben.



**Ronji Tanielu** is a lawyer and advisor for The Salvation Army. He and his wife, Rabena, have

worked as "tent-maker" missionaries in countries where Christians are being persecuted. They came back to NZ in 2017, and intend to return overseas. Both were part of student ministry during their studies, Rabena at the University of Otago and Ronji at the University of Auckland, where he studied law and politics.



Ronji was born in Samoa, has Samoan and Tokelauan heritage, and was raised in South Auckland. He has a special interest in how TSCF can better connect with Māori and Pacific students on campus, and considers the overall work to be particularly strategic: "I am passionate about student ministry and declaring and demonstrating the reality of Christ and the gospel message in a secular, postmodern and pluralistic Kiwi society that is often apathetic or cold towards God."

TSCF has also welcomed a new vice president, **Jessica Palmer**. Jessica is a law professor and dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Otago. She studied law and accounting at the University of Auckland and worked briefly in practice and as a judges' clerk before receiving an LLM from the University of Cambridge.



She supports the Law Students' Christian Fellowship at Otago and has been involved in governance of not-for-profit organisations for several years.

Jessica is married to Nick and they have four young children.



## OTAGO

TSCF gathered the various healthcare-related student groups to a two-day camp, “Called to Care,” to explore how faith, work and health all interact. It was a diverse group with 30 medical, nursing, physiotherapy, dental, social work and pharmacy students who want to better serve God and people. We were especially blessed to have Anthony Hill, NZ’s Health and Disabilities Commissioner, speak on his role and his journey with Jesus, along with Gareth Jones, a Christian working in the field of bioethics.

Rebecca Thew, who leads the Pharmacy Christian Fellowship, found it a great way to start the year off on a personal and intentional note. “It was an amazing way to bond together with people from a variety of professions on a united front,” she said. “We share a common bond with our main goal of helping our brothers and sisters, but as Christians we also live out our work as a way of desiring God and loving one another.”

– *Simon and Rosie Sim, Dunedin staff team*

## Red Frogs

Each Thursday evening a small team of TSCF students and staff head along to Aquinas College (a hall of residence for first year students) to cook pancakes for the students and fellowship with them. We do all this through Red Frogs, which started in Australia and is now in several countries. It provides a positive presence in drug- and alcohol-fuelled environments where students gather.

One Thursday, I was blown away when two first-year students came and asked our team for prayer. These two young men were not Christians, yet they both had the faith and confidence to seek prayer for some things they have been dealing with.

A student and I spent some time getting to know these guys and praying with them. They were

interested in catching up again over some coffee to chat further. Please join with me in praying for these young guys. Their hearts are open and I am praying that God will keep working in them.

– *Michael Bresler, ministry intern*

## LINCOLN

It was a joy to join in with Christian students at Lincoln University, from at least 10 local churches and several nations, praying before lectures in a public place on the Monday after March 15, as well as supporting the Muslim student association.

– *Tim Hodge, Lincoln staff*

## CANTERBURY CU

For the University of Canterbury Christian Union, the weeks following the shootings have been more challenging than usual. It is difficult to comprehend what has happened in our beautiful city, but reassuring to know that we have a God who is control. While we often foolishly look to prayer as a last resort, we have been reminded that we have not been given a spirit of fear and timidity and that prayer is a powerful thing.

A real encouragement has been how the Christian clubs on campus have banded together. We collectively manned the safe space room on campus, a place where people can relax and escape the stress. This led to greater discussion about how the clubs can collaborate throughout the year, which is exciting to consider.

We are also grateful for our TSCF family who has faithfully prayed for us and our city. It is encouraging to know we have so many people who care about us. Please continue to pray that God will guide us and reveal the best way we can show Christ’s love on campus.

– *Charlotte Keir, student leader*



Students discuss whether the resurrection is “hoax or history” at the new University of Waikato campus in Tauranga.

## BAY OF PLENTY

### UoW CF

Tauranga now has its much longed-for university campus. The new University of Waikato campus opened in March in the heart of Tauranga’s CBD, and TSCF is pioneering a student group there.

To welcome students back from the Easter break, the fledgling Christian Fellowship group ran a “Resurrection: Hoax or History” display on campus—supplemented with hot cross buns and a quiz.

Easter provides a great opportunity for students to present and share the compelling evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was a privilege to share the three resurrection themes on display and invite them to consider them as they munched on a hot cross bun:

- The resurrection was prophetically predicted
- The resurrection was credibly confirmed
- The resurrection is eternally experienced

(through believer testimonies)

Our purpose was two-fold—to present an evangelistic display, and to raise awareness of the Christian Fellowship.

Tauranga collaborated with the local Steiger mission movement, aimed at reaching global youth. A big “thank you” for their support!

Please pray for the growth of TSCF’s mission to students on the new Tauranga CBD campus and at Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology.

– *Dave Hodgkinson, Waikato/Bay of Plenty team leader*

## AUCKLAND

Professor Peter Lineham, a former TSCF and IFES Board member, has been made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to religious history and the community. He recently retired from his position at Massey University.



# Auckland team grows

Candy Grice was a teenager when she first heard about Jesus, and that has defined the course of her life. She has a desire for young adults to hear the gospel and, once they know it, to tell others.

"My goal is to give them the confidence and experience to share the gospel," she said "—to so know and love the gospel, that they would feel it's something they want to share with other people. And they're confident knowing how they can do that."

Candy disciples students at the Auckland University of Technology City Campus CF and the Overseas Christian Fellowship at the University of Auckland. She herself has experienced what it's like being from overseas. Candy's family moved from Hong Kong to Australia when she was 10, and she has been in New Zealand just over a year.

Candy's first contact with church was "a bit of an accident—or God's planning," she said. Her sister had been invited to church by someone going through a "church phase," and through that became a believer and a regular at that church. As it happened, Candy had a weekly appointment nearby before the service, and her sister was her best option for a lift home. So, for practical reasons, Candy began attending church too.

"I thought it didn't make sense, and I thought it was kind of boring," she recalled. "But then I read the Bible." She soon realised that her assumptions about Christianity had been entirely wrong.

"The Bible's very countercultural, and it's pretty shocking for most people—even if you think you know it," she said. "It isn't what you think it is. Jesus isn't who you think he is. He's not some friendly

do-gooder who just wants you to be a good person."

After 6 months of attending church and reading Scripture, she realised that she knew all she needed to make a call, and that if she didn't

accept it on the basis of that, then she was saying "no" to the gospel. But she didn't want to reject Jesus.

"I realised I need to trust him, I need to wait to see what happens after I trust him rather than try to secure everything before I do."

She studied commerce and science at the University of Sydney, where she was part of the Chinese Christian Fellowship on campus.

Her first career was in banking, before God led her back into student ministry. In 2012, Candy became an apprentice at her Sydney church and was seconded to start an AFES group in Parramatta.

After that, she studied at a Bible college in Australia and became part of a Cantonese university church. At college, she met Lachlan. The couple married in 2017 and left Australia when Lachlan became a pastor at Auckland EV church.

Candy also serves at their church, discipling apprentices and supporting Lachlan in his role encouraging missions engagement and growth in the faith.

"I love student ministry," Candy said. "I want to get to know people from different churches, and equip them to serve and grow and be a part of their local church."

—Marianne Wardlaw



# Springs Road gets a boost

By meeting Jesus at the well in John 4, the lives of the unnamed woman and many others were completely transformed. Under God's good hand and the generosity of his people, TSCF has purchased a section of land on Springs Road opposite Lincoln University, dubbed "The Well."

We are planning and praying about a residential community on this site, similar to TSCF's Rongopai in Wellington and The Quarters in Dunedin. Our desire is for generations of students to have their lives transformed by meeting Jesus at The Well, just as the woman in John 4 did. The vision is for Christian students to live in community for their own discipleship and to form a base for evangelism. Owning the land and future building means we could generate passive income from rent that could help gospel projects and staffing costs for decades.

We are delighted that a generous couple has offered to donate \$2 for every \$1 donated up until 1 September 2019, to a limit of \$150,000. So even a small donation can have a massive impact. If together we raise \$75,000, their matching gift of \$150,000 will add \$225,000 to donations already made. This will allow us to engage architects and builders, and further spread the gospel.

Would you consider making a donation?  
\$10 becomes \$30. \$1000 becomes \$3000.  
\$10,000 becomes \$30,000.

The woman who met Jesus at the well left with her life transformed. We pray that many men and women will meet Jesus at The Well in Lincoln, and leave transformed too.

—Tim Hodge, head of training and development

## SITUATIONS VACANT

### Communications manager

TSCF is in need of a communications manager with experience in print and digital communications, to keep in touch with our wider network through *Canvas* and other channels, and to support our staff team and 35+ student groups.

We'd like to find a person and develop a team with excellent writing, editing and graphic design skills and WordPress and social media experience. An understanding of brand management and the issues facing Christians and students would also be an advantage. Further details are on [www.tscf.org.nz/vacancies](http://www.tscf.org.nz/vacancies).



### Practical help in Wellington

Does the thought of building repairs excite you, or someone you know? TSCF's Wellington building needs a volunteer project manager to deal with an urgent fix or two and get on top of some other jobs. This person will be available to volunteer, on average, 1 or 2 hours each week to free up staff who have been managing building maintenance at the expense of their own ministry work.

### Field staff

We are particularly looking for workers to join teams in Auckland, Manawatu and Otago.

Contact Caitlin Ormiston if you'd like to chat about these opportunities to be part of the team, on [caitlino@tscf.org.nz](mailto:caitlino@tscf.org.nz) or (04) 384 7274.

# New TSCF leader brings fresh vision

The new year heralded a new chapter for both TSCF and Ben Carswell, who began as National Director in January. Not everything is new, however—Ben has been part of the TSCF team for more than a decade.

“Our vision for TSCF is the same as it’s always been: reaching students for Christ and changing students for life,” he said. “The good news of Jesus is at the heart of who we are and what we do.”

Ben was raised in Leeds, England, and identifies as a Yorkshire Kiwi. Given the opportunity, he asked (almost rhetorically), “Have I mentioned that I come from the same village as Samuel Marsden?”

New Zealand’s first missionary often finds his way into Ben’s conversations, not just because of where he came from but because of what he did.

“The fact that Marsden played such a significant part in NZ’s Christian history resonates strongly with myself and my wife, Jen—that sense of call and following in his footsteps,” Ben said. “I’d articulate what he famously preached on from Luke 2:10 as *te rongopai*, the gospel message we proclaim—good news of great joy for all people, a Saviour has been born, Christ the Lord.”

Ben studied at a Bible college in the USA and university in the UK, completing a degree in business management and marketing. He was part of Christian Unions in Aberystwyth and Aberdeen, leading mission weeks and serving on

student committees. He said that those experiences were formational.

Ben worked briefly in marketing and for a government agency before recognising a call to enter student ministry. The UCCF staff member who interviewed him for his job in Britain’s IFES movement in 2004 was Nigel Pollock. The following year, Nigel accepted the role as National Director at TSCF.

“He asked why I wanted the job with UCCF, and I said, ‘I don’t, but I think God might want me to,’” Ben said. In 2006 he brought a small team of UK students on a mission trip to NZ, working with TSCF groups in Palmerston North and attending a student conference.

Before Ben left the UK, his then-girlfriend Jen joked, “Don’t you go and get offered a job in New Zealand.”

“I said, ‘Don’t worry, even if I was offered it, I wouldn’t take it,’” Ben recalled.

But by the time he returned, he had felt the call of God (with the help of Nigel and Andrew Becroft, board chair). Ben and Jen began to change their minds.

“I had no sense of coming back long term, but I saw the needs of people to have confidence in the Bible and have confidence in the gospel,” Ben said. “So, three months after we married, in 2008, we moved to New Zealand with two suitcases each.”



Ben Carswell speaks to Auckland students at Launch in March.

Their three children, Sam, Josh and Hannah, were born in Hutt Hospital, and in 2014 Ben and Jen became NZ citizens.

With TSCF, Ben has worked as national outreach coordinator, with students in Wellington, and most recently as the head of student ministries.

“I believe in the mission. I believe students are best placed to reach students for the gospel,” he said. “We have already seen a steady stream of students coming to Christ in recent years, but the task is not completed. Seeing students applying the gospel in all areas of life, from teaching in schools to working in architecture to playing for the All Blacks—I’d love to see that happen in the next generations of students.”

Ben’s three top priorities as he begins the role are strengthening the work in Auckland, growing the work with Maori and Pasifika, and developing TSCF’s succession planning.

“The work in Auckland is terrific, but we are stretched,” Ben said. “We need more workers. That’s staff, students and volunteers. We need to think about how we grow the work in New Zealand’s biggest city.”

This includes developing partnerships with churches and gospel-minded agencies that also want to disciple students. While new staff and partnerships are important around the country, they are critical in a city that has about half of the nation’s students and just a fraction of TSCF’s staff.



"We need to be creative and generous in the way that we do that, thinking collaboratively for the sake of the gospel," Ben said. "I'm keen to chat to church leaders and anyone interested in having that kind of conversation."

In terms of diversity, TSCF's work incorporates the Overseas Christian Fellowship groups and international student work. However, "we need to work hard on our bicultural heritage and our bicultural engagement, as well as our multicultural engagement," Ben said. "We are not connecting in the way that we would like with many Māori students and students from Pacific islands."

The third strategic focus is a part of TSCF's approach to raising up student leaders who in

turn disciple others. Several staff have themselves been student leaders, then Minterns, and after beginning their working lives have returned to invest in other students themselves.



"Student ministry is dynamic, it's always moving," Ben said. "We need to constantly be growing and developing new staff, new students, new student leaders, and asking who the next generation are. We need to be developing them and giving them new opportunities."

"Nigel has left TSCF in a good place.

There are some systems and structures that need development for the next stage of growth, but we don't need to make radical changes. We need to build for the next phase of ministry. And we need to be listening to where God is leading us."

## Getting to know Ben quick-fire:

### England vs All Blacks

The attacking team. (It's complicated.)

### Favourite film

A tough call between *The Great Escape* and *Chariots of Fire*. I have easily seen them both 20 times or more.

### Favourite food

You'll never find me more content than when I am in a sweet shop.

### Significant books

I really love most books by Jerry Bridges and Bill Bryson. Influential books for me have been *Hudson Taylor: Man in Christ* by Roger Steer and *Disciples are Made Not Born* by Walt Henrichson. In the Bible, I particularly love 1 and 2 Timothy

and Titus.

### People I'd like to have dinner with

Billy Graham, Eric Liddell, Helen Roseveare, Winston Churchill and Howard Guinness.

### Favourite NZ locations

Tekapo, Abel Tasman, and you can't beat Wellington on a good day.

### Places to visit

Stewart Island, Zimbabwe, Argentina and Antarctica.

### Heroes

Sir Michael Jones, Helen Roseveare and George Beverley Shea.

### I'm happiest when ...

Aside from being in a sweet shop, when I'm with my family, travelling, or with a good book, good coffee and good food.

# Leading Wellington

It took 15 years, but Matthias Loong is back "home." The new Wellington Team Leader moved back to his home city at the beginning of the year with his wife, Pauline, and their 2-year-old son, Josiah.

Matthias has been on staff with TSCF for the past five years. For the first two, he worked with students at Canterbury University, where he and Pauline had first connected with TSCF during their uni days. For the last three, they lived in Sydney while Matthias completed a theology degree at Sydney Missionary Bible College.

"If you'd asked me when I was starting off as an engineer after university whether I'd be in TSCF work, I'd probably say no, that wasn't the plan," Matthias said.

He has a degree in physics and Pauline in speech and language therapy. When they graduated, Matthias became an engineer for Aurecon and Pauline began working as a speech and language therapist. However they never entirely left the community that they say shaped their faith.

"Even as graduates, we were very much connected to the TSCF scene—either leading groups or following up with students, staying in touch and partnering with staff workers," Matthias said. "Mark Santich always kept in touch with me, and as Mark does, he just keeps planting those seeds and encouraging people to consider gospel ministry."

Both Matthias and Pauline grew up going to church, and their faith grew stronger through their time at CU. They also have close friends who aren't



Christians, and see the unique opportunities that campus life presents.

"University is a pivotal time," Matthias said. "The opportunities for evangelism on campus are just massive. I have a huge passion for reaching Kiwi students for Christ; my heart breaks for people who don't know Jesus."

Although Matthias was born and bred in the capital, he has spent most of his adult life elsewhere. He and Pauline are looking forward to getting to know the city, from campus culture to cafes, and a new generation of students.

"I now have the privilege of being the person that Mark and Renee were to me and to Pauline," he said.

Kim Shaw, who led the Wellington team for the past two years, is now heading up missions for TSCF. If you are in Wellington and have a heart for evangelism amongst students, get in touch with Matthias on [matthiasl@tscf.org.nz](mailto:matthiasl@tscf.org.nz) to discuss getting involved.

# Fear, forgiveness and the gospel

New Zealand is a country saturated in God's common grace. Sure, we have our problems, but we're served by stable and accountable government that has ensured religious freedom, prosperous without being ostentatious in our wealth, filled with astounding natural beauty, a place that people from all over the world choose as their home. We're a peaceful nation. Christchurch, my home since I moved here from Australia nine years ago, is as friendly and tranquil as any small city on earth.

But heaven on earth is an illusion, as we were reminded in a shocking and horrendous way on March 15: we experienced a flash of unrestrained evil when a heavily armed white supremacist entered two mosques and killed 51 people in a horrendous, calculated terrorist attack.

We are left shell-shocked, angry, confused, and fearful. But most of all, it's left us grief-stricken. We are still a nation in mourning—for the dead, but also for our shattered sense of peace. In a place of such abundant blessings, it's rare to be confronted with such unfettered evil.

We know that the distinctive Christian reaction must be gospel-centred and Christ-glorifying, which is easier said than done. To be swept along with the tide of public response wouldn't necessarily be a disaster, because it has been everything we'd hope for: decisive and compassionate leadership from our Prime Minister; universal condemnation of acts of violence; outpourings of collective grief expressed with peace and

sympathy; an affirmation that Muslims are equally deserving of a safe home here; a desire to preserve freedom of religion; perhaps even an awakening to the truth that religion hasn't been blotted from the landscape.

But as disciples of Jesus Christ in Aotearoa, we must also respond in ways that only we can.

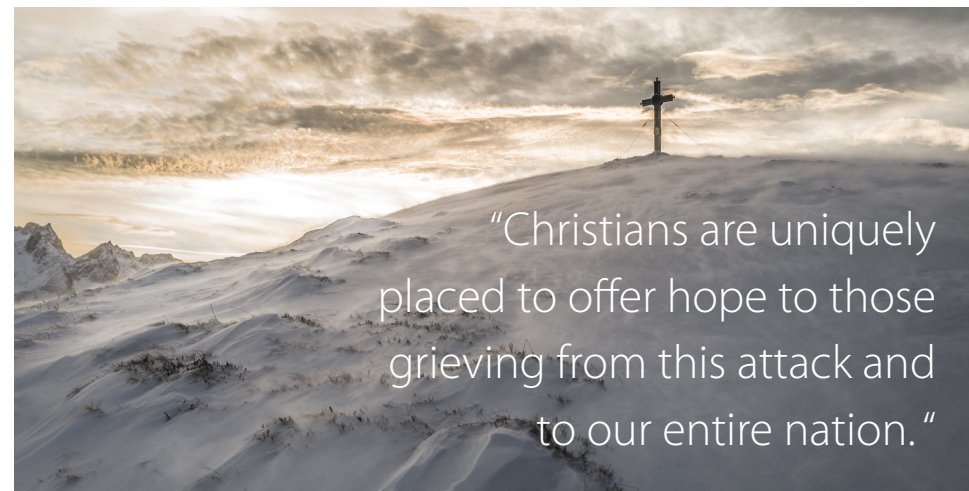
That should begin, of course, with fervent prayer. We've prayed for the victims' family members and loved ones, for first responders, for our Prime Minister and our government, and for each other. We've prayed that God would ease the fears of our Muslim friends, and we've prayed more earnestly than usual, "Come Lord Jesus."

Perhaps we've even prayed for the terrorist.

I find this last prayer almost impossibly hard. I've never felt the weight of Jesus' words, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," more than in these last few months. Christopher Hitchens felt the weight of these words, and utterly rejected them. He called it "perhaps the most immoral [injunction] of all."

"I know who my enemies are. ... I'm not going to love them," he insisted. "You go love them if you want; don't love them on my behalf. I'll get on with killing them and destroying them, erasing them, and you can love them. But the idea that you ought to love them is not a moral idea at all. It's a wicked idea and I hope it doesn't take hold."

He's right, of course—if there isn't a loving God at



"Christians are uniquely placed to offer hope to those grieving from this attack and to our entire nation."

the heart of the universe. But if God saved a rebel like me, and if God saved a committed persecutor like the apostle Paul, who am I to decide who's beyond the bounds of God's mercy?

It's time for Christians in New Zealand to ask whether we're willing to take Jesus at his word and love our enemy. How could we love a person who's so filled with hate, who sought to inspire hatred in others, who has committed such evil and caused so much pain? Only by remembering that while we were still sinners—while we were God's enemies—Christ died for us. The hardness of the terrorist's heart must be unimaginable, but we believe in a God who brings life from death and can break even the hardest of hearts.

As we reflect deeply on the gospel of God's grace, our thoughts also turn to our Muslim friends. And make no mistake: they are our friends. They have been targeted in a truly horrific way, and Christians should be the first to stand up against any form of hatred that would target a person or a group of people because of their religious beliefs. The victims weren't just Muslims; they were also fellow human beings, made in the image of God and

precious to him. We long for freedom of religion and safety for all people. We long for friendship with Muslims.

Christians and Muslims disagree about ultimate truth. We long for opportunities to discuss those differences, proclaiming the truth about Jesus and the grace he offers. We pray that God would use these events to draw people from all walks of life—including the Muslim community—to a saving knowledge of his Son. We do this out of love; none of this means that we want to hurt each other or that we need to fear each other.

Christians are uniquely placed to offer hope to those grieving from this attack and to our entire nation. We have a hope secured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, freely available to our friends and neighbours. In the coming months, we must remain prepared to give an answer to everyone who questions the reason for our hope (1 Peter 3:15). This begins with fixing our hearts and minds firmly on our Saviour.

As we revere Christ as Lord, we'll be grief-stricken but not crushed, remembering our hope and experiencing God's sustaining grace. We won't



simply ride the tide of secular love and support, as real and wonderful as that may be. We'll meet the challenges of this moment if we revere Christ as Lord—if we remember that he alone is our salvation, that he alone is the ultimate hope for a broken and hurting country.

For as much common grace as Aotearoa has experienced, we are sorely in need of God's saving grace. This bountiful land is spiritually arid. Secularism and spiritual apathy hold sway in these islands; we've received so many good gifts from the hand of our Creator, but we've turned our back on him.

In less than a decade, tranquil Christchurch has experienced two moments of devastation. This is no evidence that we're facing any specific judgement. Yet these moments have shocked us to the core. How will we respond? The outpourings of common grace within the first

"Will we find not just the relief that we want, but the hope that we need?"

months after this tragedy are abundant, and for that we can be enormously thankful to God. But will we also experience God's saving grace?

Will we find not just the relief that we want, but the hope that we need? Will we, as the people of God, add to the physical outpourings of love with the most loving acts possible—prayers to a mighty God, and words of gospel hope to our lost neighbours?

*Geoff Robson is a staff worker with TSCF in Canterbury and the author of "The Book of Books: A Short Guide to Reading the Bible." He blogs at [geoffrobson.com](http://geoffrobson.com).*



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# Love my neighbour



Like many in Christchurch's Indonesian community, associate staff worker Ani Kartikasari lost a friend on March 15. In the days that followed the massacre, the lecturer at Lincoln University supported students, victims and their families as they came to terms with the extent of the tragedy. Ani's place in various communities opened up many opportunities to serve her neighbours. She shares her own experience of those days; the names of her friends have been changed.

The Grounded Café, a new student hang-out at Lincoln University, was quiet shortly after 2pm on that Friday. I was in the middle of a discussion with three international postgrads who were struggling with their assignment when the alarm went off. I tried to figure out if it was a fire alarm or a lockdown. The lights in the library opposite were switched off, so I told the students to get under the table.

Soon after, police officers came and told the 30 or so of us in the café to stay put until further notice. The alarm continued for more than 15 minutes—deafening and causing worries. We

whispered speculations to each other. Then one of the students told us about the live stream on Facebook showing the shooting that was happening at the Dean Avenue mosque. They became even more scared. I heard people sob as they huddled together and tried to comfort each other, and those who had cell phones watched the news updates. The atmosphere of fear, bewilderment and disbelief was palpable. The hour that passed seemed like an eternity.

Around 4pm, we were allowed to leave. My phone was dead, so when I got back to my office I



plugged it in and found a text from my son, Jon. He had been working in a lab in another building. He said, "We need to get out and go home asap. Where are you Mum, why are you not answering my texts?" Soon afterward he appeared in my office. His face was worried but he was relieved that I was okay.

As we drove home, I knew that the days ahead would be hard. The shock and distress that the students and staff felt would require enormous energy on my part as a chaplain. The effects of the earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 came to mind. Then I thought about my Indonesian community, as many of them are devout Muslims. I texted some of them, but no reply. I checked my Facebook news stream (something I hardly do!) and saw a message: the whereabouts of my friend Rina's husband Hasan was not known.

It was a hard evening. Even cooking a simple meal seemed incongruous. I felt grateful that my son, who lives with me, my older son who is flatting in the city, and my ex-husband were safe. After the 6pm news was over, I drove to Rina's place. Several Indonesian friends were there already. Rina was still in shock. She was almost sure that her husband was at the mosque as he is every Friday. Others had checked at Christchurch Hospital but he was not on the list.

Around 9pm we got hold of one of the six Indonesian students who were at the main mosque and escaped uninjured. Idrus, a PhD student, confirmed that Hasan was at the mosque, two rows in front of them. Rina's hope diminished. We waited for the news from the police until midnight. Friends started to say words of comfort and encouragement. Rina was numb.

Rina and Hasan arrived in Christchurch in 2003, a few months before my young family did. They were the first Indonesian family I met, when they held a gathering at their home. They were generous in their hospitality, their home a

gathering place for the Indonesian community. As I became more involved with the community, Hasan and I were regarded as community leaders and surrogate parents to many young Indonesians, particularly students. Rina's culinary skills and generosity meant that no one ever left their house without being fed yummy Indonesian food. They have an open home each Eid at the end of a month of fasting, where around 100 people come throughout the day to share a feast.

On Sunday night, the police confirmed Hasan's death. I lost a friend I deeply respect, and many Indonesians felt a big hole in their hearts. Rina's world crumbled, and that of their two young adult children.

On Saturday morning, I had received a phone call from the Indonesian Embassy, asking if I could visit an Indonesian man and his 2-year-old son who were badly injured in the Linwood shooting. I texted the wife to check if it was okay to visit them in the hospital.

It was strange to see police officers with guns around the hospital entrance. I went through a polite but thorough check before I was allowed in. It was a surprisingly easy entry to the conversation with Marin and her son, who immediately warmed up to me as I sang Indonesian children's songs and spoke to him in Indonesian. She told me that her family just arrived in the city six weeks earlier, so they were not yet connected with other Indonesians. What I thought was going to be an hour visit ended up a whole day of listening to her crashed dream of raising a family in this beautiful city, her fear of the impacts on both her husband and son. Another family's world crumbled in front of me.

I felt helpless but was able to glean practical strategies to help, like organising babysitting rosters so Marin could sleep. I was so encouraged when my church family responded willingly. I also organised fundraising among my circle of friends

"I did not have time to grieve the three victims I knew personally during those intense days. The emotional and mental exhaustion hit after the bodies were buried. I learned to withdraw regularly to seek God's direction as to what was most important because I could not do everything that came my way."

as she is the breadwinner but can't work while her husband and son are recovering.

In the following days, I was shocked to hear from Marin the pressure she was under from the media wanting her family's story. She was strong with boundaries, but it was draining for her. I became a surrogate aunty; what a privilege.

As I left the hospital during that first visit, I saw an email from work stating that an international student who had recently defended his PhD was one of the victims who died. I know him, his wife, Qory, and two young children well. We often chatted about overcoming challenges of studying and raising children on a student budget. I called Qory, who still had not heard from the police. I visited her family on Sunday at lunchtime; still no news. I was able to talk to other students from the same country and we identified immediate needs to meet. I forwarded them to the university leadership team. The final dreaded news came late that night.

By this time, we knew four international students who had died.

Back at uni on Monday, I realised that one of the victims was in my class in 2018. The classmates, some of whom are in my class this semester, were shocked and fearful. That week's assignments were cancelled. Meetings with student support

and services staff were held to ensure not just immediate families of victims received quick and appropriate support but also students and staff who know the victims. It was lovely to see the Christian groups on campus offering to be around the Musalla every Friday at midday prayer time in a show of support for a grieving community.

I did not have time to grieve the three victims I knew personally during those intense days. The emotional and mental exhaustion hit after the bodies were buried. I learned to withdraw regularly to seek God's direction as to what was most important because I could not do everything that came my way. God always has amazing ways to show how much he cares, is able and available.

In the midst of the chaos, I saw many opportunities for everyone, individually and collectively, to show love and compassion in practical ways: offering food, rides, listening ears, friendship, financial support, quick assistance, and filling in various forms for families to get help.

The whole shocking event begs me to answer this question: How much do I know my "neighbour," and do I love them as Jesus commands me to?

*Ani pioneered TSCF's work with postgraduate students at Lincoln University in 2010. She is a lecturer there in International Rural Development.*





What happened when you heard the lockdown alarm? The question repeated all week. Where were you during the Christchurch shooting? The story will be told to our grandchildren.

I poured the tea for my friend and sat down cross-legged on the window seat of our student cafe, Bibles beside us in preparation for next week's study. We barely noticed the noise. Three beeps, then a pause. Was a fridge left open, or a truck reversing? It continued and so did our chatting, until a staff member informed us: "This is a lockdown alarm. Everyone please move away from the windows and sit where you cannot be seen from outside."

We realised this was not a test. A serious shooting had been reported in Christchurch and this was a real alarm.

So much for our Bible study, or getting home any time soon. I haven't hid behind couches since playing hide and seek as a child, and here were a dozen of us adults, crouching on the floor. People walked by, unaware of the warning, looking at us a bit strangely.

In this state of emergency, it would have been the perfect time to ask, "Does anyone mind if I pray aloud?" But I kept it inside, shy of making anyone more uncomfortable than we were already. I wished I had, though, especially when the lady next to me started crying as information about the tragic attack came through.

We felt alarm and relief when an armed policeman entered the building—alarmed that this was serious, relieved that security was in place. After two hours of sitting still (interrupted by tiptoed bathroom breaks and shared pieces of carrot cake), we were excused. Safe but shaken, we dispersed to make our way home, the lockdown alarm still sounding its three beeps, then a pause. We knew what it meant now.

The adrenaline of those two strange hours faded with further news. The violence stung our hearts, froze our minds, and made us both rejoice to be alive and grieve for those who weren't. Pulled in a hundred directions at once from the inside, unsure what to express on the outside.

How do we respond when New Zealand as we have known it is shattered? Do we weep with

those who weep? Do we keep calm and carry on? Or somehow do both as we tiptoe our way together towards recovery?

One of the men I most respect surprised me by his response to a similar situation where people were brutally killed as they worshipped. "Do you think these people were worse sinners than the others because they suffered this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

That comment seems so callous.

But what if your neighbour was telling you about the recent Nelson fires, and behind him you saw a black cloud of smoke as flames licked up dry pasture on its way towards his house. Would you simply stand and be a good listener, or tell him to run? And would that be callous or kind?

As the wake of this tragedy rocks our nation, and the world, I do not want to stay silent, simply shy of making people feel uncomfortable, if another alarm needs sounding. Whether we find ourselves brokenhearted by the helplessness of the victims, outraged by the lawlessness of the killer, or simply

upset that this would happen in the place we call home, life and death situations wake us up.

What if this event points us to bigger realities that we normally live blind to? Like the fact that our daily existence depends on things outside of us. That we live as if we control our own lives but we really don't. That God is actually in charge of the world; we are just his visitors. Or the fact that we desperately need a warning to wake us up so we live to please him and not ourselves.

God is not ignorant of us as we often are of him. Into our helpless rebellion he speaks. The Bible page left unattended by the student cafe window when the lockdown alarm rang pulled my attention this morning, speaking lasting hope into tragic but temporary suffering of a shattered city full of hurting hearts.

Weakness, enemies, death, life, reconciliation ... God uses our vocabulary here.

"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for



a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

“Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

“More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” (Romans 5:6–11)

God does not keep silent about his love. He speaks it by arriving in our world in the person of his Son on a sacrificial rescue mission. He comes himself to make peace with weak and sinful enemies like me, and like you. He reaches out a strong hand of grace in rescue so that those in need can be lifted up from death to live. And in case you are wondering, there is no alternative safety strategy available—only Jesus. (Acts 4:12)

Maybe you’re hearing something now. Not a lockdown alarm, but a call to prayer. A command not to phone 111, but to ask for the heavenly emergency department, please. For there we find the Rescuer who attends our deepest need when we reach the end of ourselves.

What happens when you hear the warning? Do you snooze through the sounding smoke alarm and wake up too late? Or do you respond to the siren while there is still time to be saved?

And if you have already been saved by Jesus, then for God’s sake, don’t be silent about it! Point other people in the direction of the Rescuer. This is not a safety system test, this is the real deal. We need to pay attention before time runs out for people to be saved and the Ruler of the world arrives to judge whether we have put our hope for rescue in him or not.

If you’ll excuse me, I think I hear a call to pray and I don’t want to ignore it this time. Does anyone mind if I pray aloud?

O God, Creator and Sustainer of every person and every molecule of the universe in which we live as your guests, we cry to you in our time of need.

We don’t even know what to say when our hearts hurt—world broken, friends suffering, and minds reeling from the impact of the violence witnessed.

So we just say, “Please help us.”

We take comfort that you know our needs. You know how to help us and we trust that you will. For those of us who have not made peace with you, but still live as if we rule our own world, we pray that this tragedy may be a wake-up call to the reality of life and death and our desperate dependence on your mercy. May we be saved by the rescue mission of Jesus, who is ready for all who call on him.

For those of us who know what it is to surrender our lives to our Life-Giver and find mercy, we pray that you would wake us up to speak boldly and love bravely by the power of the Lord Jesus living in us, so that we may bring light to shine lasting hope in this temporary time of darkness.

And for all of us, we ask that you would overflow us with your compassion in a thirsty world.

In the name of him who shows us ultimate sacrificial love, our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray, knowing that you hear and respond to our cries.

Thank you for being with us in our time of need.

Amen.

*Angela Robb is in her second year at Lincoln University and is a leader in the Christian Fellowship. Her reflection was written for and published in the student magazine, “RAM.”*



Hanli and Sarah Liu, left, receive prayer from congregants and Stephen Turner, right, at Hanli’s ordination.

# Hearing the call

The grey-haired pastor spoke directly to Hanli Liu as he preached: You have to be absolutely sure of the gospel; you have nothing else to bring. You have to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit; nothing will happen without the Holy Spirit.

Stephen Turner’s commissioning message was brief and passionate, and then he and other church members prayed over Hanli and his wife, Sarah. That gathering on a late summer morning in a community hall in New Lynn, West Auckland, marked a new era for both men and for young West Church. Steve retired from full-time ministry in 2015; Hanli, at 25 years of age, is beginning that journey.

Hanli was born in Dalian, China, a port city in the northeast. In 2000, when he was 8, he and his parents emigrated to NZ. Christianity was foreign

to Hanli’s family, but when he was in seventh form a friend invited him to Easter Camp. He enjoyed the social aspect and became a regular at his friend’s Chinese congregation. A year later, they asked if he wanted to be baptised. He said, “Sure.”

So in 2011 he publicly confessed faith, but he now says that nothing had changed in his heart—“You just kind of pick up stuff. I knew the right answers because it was really easy.”

The following September, God grabbed his full attention. Hanli said it was a culmination of things,



with the foundation being gospel preaching he heard online. The clincher, however, came through some aimless procrastinating watching YouTube videos.

"I got to one with a narration of this guy's near-death experience," he said. "He was a pastor in America who said he came before the throne of God, and he says, 'Lord, give me more time to live. Look at all I've done to serve you. Look at all the good I can still do.' And God replied in a voice of wrath, 'You've done everything for yourself and your own glory and your own kingdom, and for me secondarily, because you felt guilty.'"

"I don't know if it's legit or not, but I remember sitting there shocked because it felt like God was speaking to me. That was the way I was living my life—everything for me, God second. And I knew that I was not really trusting him. I was sinning all the time and doing whatever I wanted. I didn't care one bit about what he had to say. So I felt deeply convicted about my sins. That led me to cry out to him for mercy and for salvation. Really funny—through that weird YouTube video."

Within the week, Hanli said that his whole life had changed. "I found new desires within myself. I was ashamed of all I had enjoyed. I had such a desire to soak up the Bible and find out more about this wonderful God who saved me."

One effect of God's claim on Hanli's life was an interest in meeting other Christians at Massey University in Albany, on Auckland's North Shore. In 2013 Hanli was starting the third of a four-year food technology degree. He quit the basketball club and other campus commitments and found the one Christian group on campus. TSCF's group was made up of one girl and five other guys when Hanli joined. It was supported by Steve, who is also an associate staff worker with TSCF.

"As a young Christian, I had heaps to learn," Hanli said. "I wanted to know more about the Bible. I

also wanted to be with other Christians. ... So I was really grateful that I found that group, even though it was quite small. I was there every week."

He was also grateful for the way that Steve built into his life.

"He would meet me on campus for coffee maybe once a month," Hanli said. "I was thankful for his patience, his discipleship. I think that made a big difference, having that weekly meeting with other students and having that person there who was able to encourage me."

In his fourth year, Hanli began to lead the group and proactively invited others along. Soon the average attendance was 15 to 20, and they were blessed with a new, highly visible meeting space.

Hanli had friends involved in Student Life on other campuses, and he joined their conferences. There he met his wife, Sarah. She was born in Indonesia, and her family also immigrated when she was 8 years old. They married in 2015, a year before Sarah finished her nursing degree and a year into Hanli's first professional job, with Tegel.

They left their respective churches and looked for one together. At that time, Steve had just retired from pastoring Shore Baptist after 33 years and was about to plant West Church with Shore's support. The young couple became part of West Church, bought a house in the area, and got involved.

In 2017, Steve challenged Hanli to consider whether he might be called to full-time ministry.

"I said, 'No, no way,'" Hanli recalled. "I thought about it and prayed about it for three months, and talked about it with Sarah and other friends."

They also thought that the young professional would make a good shepherd. Hanli recognised that he'd already been given many opportunities to speak into people's lives through preaching at

youth services and Easter Camp.

"When I think back to how I preached then, I kind of cringe," Hanli said. "But all of this seemed to be God leading me along this path."

To verify the external call, Hanli began an internship three days a week with their church and cut his hours at work. He preached every second week, met with people, led Bible studies and spent half a day each week as associate staff with TSCF's group at Unitec. And every week, he met with Steve.

Two years later, Hanli is convinced this is what God is calling him to. West Church became self-governing in July 2018 and, soon after, the congregation called him to be their pastor. He began officially in February. When he's seen out his remaining projects with Tegel, his corporate chapter will be over.

Only two people initially discouraged Hanli and Sarah from pursuing ministry. Hanli's mother, who became a Christian around the same time he did, struggled to accept that her only son was going to give up a promising career for the uncertainty of ministry. He said his father has been a bit more open, having "already made peace" with the fact that his son had decided to follow Christ. They have adjusted to the idea; "I think having a grandkid helped," Hanli said.

Their first daughter, Amelia, is one year old, and Sarah is pregnant with their second.

Hanli continues to include the work with Unitec with his pastoral responsibilities, investing in students' lives the way Steve invested in his.



"One really great thing about TSCF is that you're connected with an entirely outside world," Hanli said. "You're on the university campus, which is the hippest place of today's world, right? There, the ministry of the word is the same as in the church, but your view is expanded, your horizon is lifted. You're thinking about more than just your suburb, just your community, just your little church. You're mind is open to—hey, God is doing wonderful things everywhere."

"The other thing is that there's a real need. At Unitec, there wasn't really a Christian group. It's a great reason for pastors to get stuck in."

When Hanli started showing up at Unitec, Christian students hadn't met in more than a year so he was practically starting from scratch. After handing out flyers and talking with students, the group revived with eight core members carrying things for the semester.

"I was influenced by TSCF at Massey," he said. "I saw the absolute wonders that God did through it, how encouraging it was for me, so I was really keen to get started."

Hanli said that being able to share God's work on campus with his church strengthens the faith of those there, too.

"As you hear about God working in other people's lives, inevitably you feel encouraged," he said. "You're led to thank him, and you're led to ask him, 'Lord, will you do the same in my life and the life of my friends?' ... There's a greater mission that we're all part of."

—Marianne Wardlaw



# A heart for Nepal

Kat is a Malaysian-born Aucklander who moved to Nepal in 2017 to work with SIM. She served the IFES student ministry there during her first stint. In July, she is returning to make Nepal her home, and to take up the growth of its believers as her calling.

## What is your work background?

I was always into science. I completed a bachelor's degree and postgraduate diploma in medical science at the University of Auckland. After finding out my passion was not in research, I went to Melbourne and studied lab medicine at RMIT, then worked in a diagnostic pathology lab as a haematology scientist.

## Why Nepal?

In my adolescent years, I thought perhaps I'd become a missionary in my 50s. I wanted to build a career and a family first. However, after working full-time for 3 years, God gave me the conviction

and courage to pursue cross-cultural mission as a single woman. It made perfect sense (not that it had to) that while I'm still reasonably young and fit, without a spouse or children, it would be easier to fully focus on serving on the field.

I didn't have a specific place in mind. Not long after submitting my interest with a mission organisation in Australia, they told me of an opportunity to use my medical skills in rural Nepal. I didn't hesitate to say yes.

## Why student ministry?

Originally, the plan was to make good use of my medical skills in a rural hospital. I was hoping to

teach them new skills and help improve their diagnoses. I'd be serving people, but indirectly.

What I didn't voice out loud is that I am deeply passionate about discipleship. My spiritual life matured a great deal as a teenager and into adulthood because of older Christians mentoring and discipling me in the Word. They invested in me, and a desire to invest in others was stirring in me.

On the morning of my first interview, my mobiliser asked if I would consider working with students through IFES in Nepal. My heart burst with joy; I knew the Father had seen this secret desire in my heart and answered it.

Later on, I found out that the student movement had been praying for volunteer staff for some time. I praise God for the timing and provision that only he can orchestrate, for his purpose and glory.

## What are the challenges for student ministry there?

There are quite a few. I'll narrow it down to the political scene, the culture of learning, and work ethic.

Persecution of Christians in Nepal is ongoing, however the degree varies from place to place. There is an anti-conversion law that states any activity influencing the beliefs of a person will result in imprisonment. Evangelism is banned in this Hindu nation. As a foreign volunteer worker, I have to be discerning about the sort of activities I'm involved in so I don't get in trouble with the authorities.

So for all of us, outreach on a university campus isn't ideal. IFES in Nepal has always focused on developing the spiritual growth of students who are already, by their own admission, believers. We hold camps, conferences and leadership training to impact the current generation of students for the next. We train them in the knowledge of the Bible so they can take the gospel to their colleges,

"What I didn't voice out loud is that I am deeply passionate about discipleship. My spiritual life matured a great deal as a teenager and into adulthood because of older Christians mentoring and discipling me in the Word. They invested in me, and a desire to invest in others was stirring in me."

campuses, workplaces and homes. Non-believers become curious about Christians when they see how we live in a thriving community or as selfless individuals. They wonder what kind of God we worship, and some start attending church of their own free will.

Another challenge is the way the education system promotes rote learning. It's difficult for students to think critically; that's out of the norm as they aren't meant to question what is taught. So Bible study and group discussions need a lot of drive from the facilitator to help them think more deeply and draw conclusions for themselves. I think this is one of the reasons students struggle to do Bible study on their own; they don't know where to begin.

In their work culture, everything is laid back. There's little planning in advance and a go-with-the-flow mentality. Many of them experience hardship. Life is not easy, and making a comfortable wage is a dream for most. It's easier to struggle less and enjoy whatever you've got.

Nepalis value relationships more than schedules. They know how to live in community very well and reach out to whoever is in need. Nepalis naturally know how to love people with their time. I struggled quite a bit at the beginning; there's this inbuilt mechanism in me that says "time is money," so we gotta do things quick and be productive.





And “give me plenty of notice,” so I can do a quality job when, for example, preparing a talk.

However, there you have to be extremely flexible and resourceful. This has challenged me, but taught me to be less rigid. After all, ministry is all about ministering to people, so you have to know how to love people and invest in relationships.

For me, another challenge has been to learn their language. For a while I couldn’t do that, which was hard. I’ve found being able to understand and speak Nepali helped immerse me into their culture. When they see that I can communicate to them (or at least attempt to), they become less shy. Speaking their language is one way of building trust.

### What do you find encouraging about working with Nepali students?

They are incredibly patient and dedicated. I believe they are serious about the God they worship, and hunger after him. They are willing to travel for hours on public transport to attend a group discussion. In the rural villages, students as young as 12 walk for 2 days to attend a camp that we run. I love their willingness and positive attitude.

### What can we be praying for our Nepalese brothers and sisters?

Some students are being condemned by their families and kicked out of home for declaring their faith in Jesus. Please pray for them to remain faithful and trust God for their future. Pray that their families’ hearts would soften and that they come to know Jesus themselves. Pray for our staff involved in pastoral care at these difficult times, that they will have God’s wisdom.

### How has your cross-cultural experience changed you?

Oh ... where do I begin. In so many ways. I was stretched, twisted, and reshaped into another me. I grew in my worldview, learnt new things, gained new skills. This was only possible because everything was out of my comfort zone. I’m thankful for every bit of it.

*For security reasons, we can’t make Kat’s full name public. If you would like to receive updates from her about the ministry in Nepal, sign up at <http://eepurl.com/gmVNNn>.*

# Global Reach journeys

TSCF is offering students the opportunity to join one of two Global Reach journeys this year. Students will not only travel on a physical journey, but will also be mentored as they journey with God to have their worldview re-shaped, their hearts aligned with his heart for the nations, their understanding of holistic mission expanded, and their personal commitment to seeing God’s kingdom come in all the nations strengthened. Each will take place over two weeks from late November.

## Nepal

At the invitation of the IFES movement in Nepal, a group of TSCF students will have the opportunity to travel to Kathmandu, Gorkha and Pokhara later this year. We will be partnering with International Nepal Fellowship (INF) and our IFES counterparts in student ministry.

We’ll journey into this country that is historically and geographically connected to New Zealanders through Sir Edmund Hillary, and will spend time learning about the spiritual and physical needs of the Nepali people. A week will be spent exploring the spiritual diversity of Nepal, and how Christian students live and respond in this context. The second week will take us to visit the work of INF to learn how community development and medical work creates change in people’s lives.

Email [kims@tscf.org.nz](mailto:kims@tscf.org.nz) for more information.

TSCF has a Global Reach scholarship fund for students joining our journeys. If you would like to donate to this fund, please email [tscf@tscf.org.nz](mailto:tscf@tscf.org.nz).

## Fiji

We will spend two weeks in Fiji both learning and serving. Beyond fruit, clothing and greetings, we will look at how different cultures serve, worship and tell others about Jesus.



We’ll ask, “What does this tell us about God?” “How does God want us to deal with injustice and poverty?” And, “How can our studies as Christians in NZ serve the rest of the world?”

Christina, who was part of the 2017 Fiji journey, shared this reflection:

“My greatest fear is not pursuing a life of service to God because I’m too scared to travel to the people and places he calls me to serve. Signing up was saying ‘not through my strength but yours alone, Lord.’”

Email [chrish@tscf.org.nz](mailto:chrish@tscf.org.nz) for more information.

## Intentional

By Paul Williams

Subtitled “Evangelism that takes people to Jesus,” this book provides a simple guide to overcoming our fear of talking to people and to finding joy and freedom in sharing the gospel.

Paul Williams asks challenging questions to get to the root cause of the fears that hold us back, showing how irrelevant they are in the light of the glory of the gospel message. “Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord” (1 Peter 3:14-15).

To overcome our fear of people, we need to fear God more, have confidence in the gospel message, and be prepared to answer questions. Williams is gentle in his approach to evangelism, not wishing us to have perfectly crafted messages.

He reminds us that it is not by our own ability that someone is saved, but only through Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 4:5 we read, “we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord.”

Evangelism can be simple. It all starts with introducing non-Christians to the very thing they need most—Jesus. Since Jesus has revealed himself through the Bible, we can use it to point people to him.

Williams finishes his book with examples of questions that Christians face from their friends. He shows how to answer these questions not by our own knowledge, but by using scriptures that are fully trustworthy and point people to Jesus and the gospel.

Intentional is an easy, short read that has been clearly written. Williams powerfully yet gracefully debunks fears and excuses that hold us back from sharing the gospel, and offers a simple approach grounded in the Bible.

If you or someone you know struggles with having the confidence to talk about the gospel of Jesus, this book is a great place to start.

— Michael Bresler

### Intentional

Evangelism that takes people to Jesus

Paul Williams

Series editor: Michael Reeves

# Deepen your faith Pursue your calling



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He akonga ki nga akonga hei ara whakawhiti mo to Karaiti