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# canvas

TERTIARY STUDENTS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP'S MAGAZINE

TRUE WITNESS





**He ākonga ki ngā ākonga hei  
ara whakawhiti mō te Karaiti.**

Reaching students for Christ,  
changing students for life.

TSCF's vision is to help students in  
New Zealand become servant leaders  
of character through the transforming  
gospel of Christ. TSCF is a founding  
member of the International Fellowship  
of Evangelical Students (IFES).



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**Canvas** is for all who are interested in  
the work of TSCF in helping students  
reach students for Christ. It seeks to  
stimulate deep thought and provide  
encouragement in the undivided  
Christian life, promoting true witness  
and the global reach of the gospel.

Send your thoughts, comments and  
questions to us at:  
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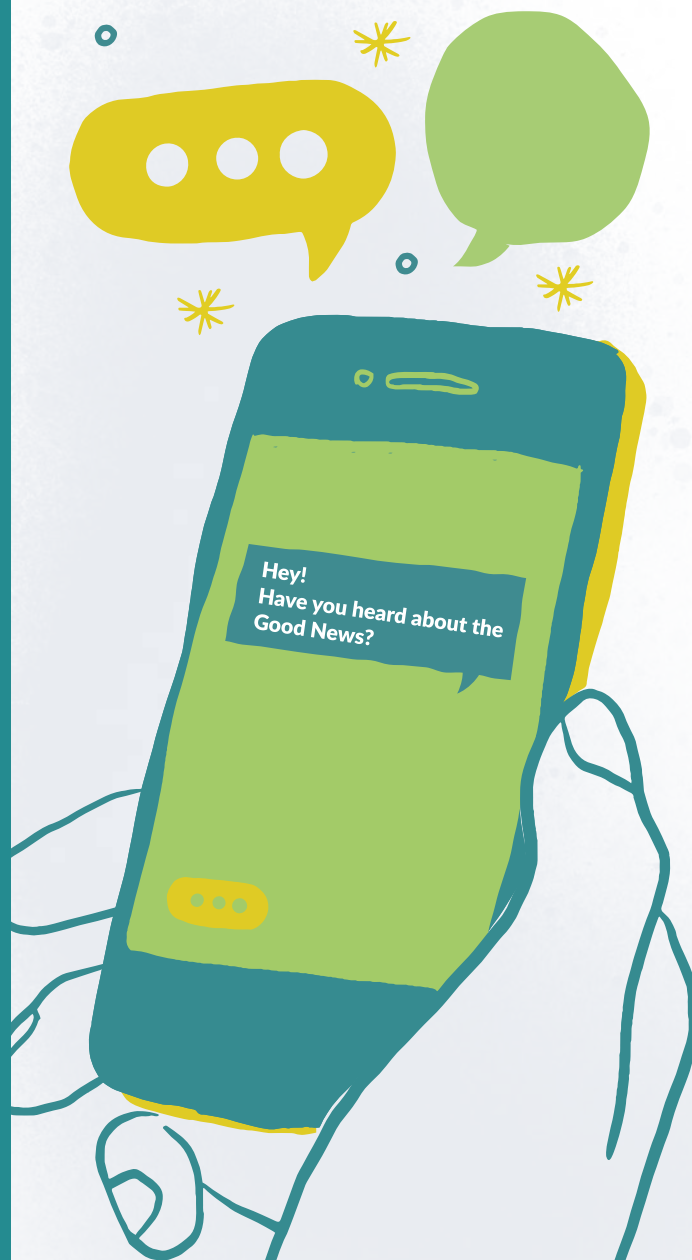
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# AMAZED BY JESUS

Mark Santich



Since the beginning of the year, TSCF  
groups have been meeting students all over  
NZ. Many students don't know much at all  
about Jesus. In a survey run this year by  
the University of Canterbury (UC) Christian  
Union, 59% of students believed Jesus was  
simply a good teacher, 27% believed he  
was a myth or legend, less than 1% believed  
he was a prophet, and the remaining 13%  
believed he was God and Saviour. Most stu-  
dents seem to think they can either take or  
leave Jesus – it doesn't really matter what  
we think about him, after all, what differ-  
ence will it make? This raises a significant  
question – *Are we amazed by Jesus?*

To anyone, Christian or non-Christian, Jesus  
should be a remarkable and confronting  
person. Everyone who meets Jesus in the  
gospel accounts is gob-smacked – amazed  
at his teaching, astounded by his author-  
ity in healing, in casting out demons, even  
over creation itself. They can't help but tell  
everyone about Jesus, even though they  
can't quite understand who he is. Have we,  
as Christians, lost our amazement in Jesus?  
I have been asking myself this question as  
I keep meeting students who don't know  
Jesus, but are curious about him. What  
would you say to someone to pique their  
curiosity? What amazes you about him?

After 20 years in student ministry at UC,  
I've noticed some things remain the same.  
Many people still have a vague idea about  
Jesus but have never read about him first-  
hand in the Bible, and everyone is different  
so it's best not to put people in a box. A big  
difference I've noticed is that brokenness is  
now more a part of everyone's lives, so it's  
important to listen well and care for those  
we meet, just as Jesus did. People still seem  
to have a positive view of Jesus, even if they  
have a more negative view of Christians, so  
we need to keep telling people about him!

Students continue to be surprised by  
Jesus as they read about him in the gospel  
accounts. Jesus doesn't just have amazing  
authority and power, he is humble, and

**“How can we help those around  
us to get a glimpse of Jesus that  
amazes them, intrigues them  
and stirs them to know more?”**

loves and cares for those around him. He  
proclaims the coming of God's kingdom,  
and in compassion, he draws others into  
the kingdom as they see their own broken-  
ness and failings before God. But Jesus still  
takes sin seriously. People confronted by  
him know they are unworthy and broken,  
but that they are also loved and accepted  
by God. Ultimately this all comes together  
in Jesus' death and resurrection, bringing  
forgiveness of sin, the offer of new life and  
the hope of the new creation when pain,  
suffering and sin will be no more. This truly  
is amazing news because, to those who  
acknowledge him, Jesus is life-changing.

How can we help those around us to get a  
glimpse of Jesus that amazes them, intrigues  
them and stirs them to know more?

This amazement about Jesus, leading to  
our desire to reach tertiary students all over  
NZ, is reflected in our core aim as TSCF: True  
Witness. Wanting others to know Jesus has  
always been central to our DNA. Our prayer  
for our whole TSCF community is that this  
continues, not just on campus, but in every  
area throughout our lives, as graduates and  
partners with TSCF. Let's partner together in  
the amazing gospel of Jesus. 🙌

Mark Santich serves as True  
Witness Coordinator for TSCF and  
Canterbury Team Leader.





# SHARING: IDEAS & IMAGES

Bex Allen

When we're amazed by Jesus, we naturally want to share him with others. However, our world and culture are changing as society reconsiders what is just, equal, and acceptable. Sadly, from the outside, Christianity is often misunderstood; the message of the gospel of grace and hope is little known in the secular sphere.

Robin Ham, minister of St Paul's and Grace Church Barrow, writes in his blog *That Happy Certainty*: "Communicating the good news of Jesus in the West in 2020 is challenging. Christianity is often portrayed as irrelevant, out-of-touch, even unjust and toxic. And like it or not, that's got to shape how we communicate the Christian faith." As such, the more direct approaches we've used in the past may no longer be helpful; we may need to tread more carefully.

As we find ourselves in an increasingly polarised social climate, the words of the apostle Peter, written hundreds of years ago, remain true for us today: "You must worship

Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ." (1 Peter 3:15–16)

In keeping with these principles, in his book *God Space*, author, speaker and chaplain Doug Pollock explains the need to create a safe space for spiritual conversations to take place. This means we must be safe people who create a "low risk, high grace" environment. We need to listen respectfully, and ask for permission to share our experiences.

Additionally, Ham offers some helpful images for "connecting and confronting" in our current climate, to encourage people to "consider the relevance and goodness of the gospel and the Christian worldview." Let's look at four of his images:<sup>1</sup>

## 1. The Stone in the Shoe

When having spiritual conversations, Ham says, "we want to provoke in such a way that people can't carry on the same as a result." We need to offer truth they cannot ignore – truth that gently challenges and leaves them pondering. Jesus was often provocative in his teaching and way of life. He did not always adhere to what people of the time had been taught about God and faith. People could not ignore that the way of life he invited them to was radically different.

**"We need to help people to see what the Christian life is actually like."  
~ Robin Ham**

## 2. Opening the Curtains

Ham suggests we need to "open the curtains" on the Christian life. He writes, "There are so many unhelpful stereotypes out there about Christianity, which means we need to help people to see what the Christian life is actually like. What difference does it make to believe in Jesus?" How does following Jesus influence the way we relate to others? How we seek guidance for the future? How we cope with conflict, and suffering?

Ham indicates that it's important our experience is relatable. Pollock echoes this, expressing the need for Christians to offer *spiritual appetisers* or *gospel snacks*: "personal stories, no more than two minutes long, intended to stimulate spiritual thirst, keep the dialogue going, and demonstrate the relevance of Christ in our daily lives." Preparing these specific stories of how following Jesus shapes our lives, and how he has "shown up" for us is an important part of being ready to explain our hope to others.

## 3. Tracing the Sunbeam

As Christians, we understand that everything good in life – such as freedom, love, justice, beauty, joy – is given to us by God. The apostle James writes, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights." (James 1:17) Ham explains that people tend to use these gifts – or sunbeams – as idols, pursuing and worshipping them as "ends in themselves, as if they would truly satisfy," rather than pursuing the "Giver." However, we can help them "trace the sunbeam back to the [Source], to their Triune Creator, the One who alone is worthy of all worship."

## 4. Capturing the Longing

Each human being has a sense of longing deep inside, sometimes referred to as an "emptiness that only God can fill." Ecclesiastes 3:11 says God has "planted eternity in the human heart." This is often what seekers identify as fuelling their quest for spiritual fulfilment. St Augustine describes this as restlessness.

Ham also refers to smaller longings – for justice, relationship, or life after death. He explains, "These desires reflect the divine purposes for which we were made... Surely part of our calling is to articulate those longings, so that people can identify that within themselves – and [to] show how the Christian gospel makes sense of them."

If we use these images in our spiritual conversations, in an environment where people feel safe to share and explore their questions, doubts, and hurts, we may earn the right to speak the truth, love, and hope of the gospel into their lives. 🍂



<sup>1</sup>This is an edited version of an article which first appeared on the author's blog: <http://thathappycertainty.com/preaching-ministry/5-images-to-keep-in-mind-as-we-share-the-gospel-in-the-2020s>



## National:

### General Ministry:

- Praise God that our Launch events could go ahead, especially in Auckland (the day before lockdown started!).
- Thank God that our regional groups were able to connect with new students at Orientation.
- Pray for the TSCF Student Council as we develop this new initiative to maintain a strong student voice in our ministry.

### Global Reach:

Pray for "The Crossing: A Global Reach initiative," in which students are meeting online from around the country to be equipped for cross-cultural ministry with international students on their campuses.

### Minty:

Pray for our five interns as they adjust to their internship year, which can feel a bit overwhelming. Pray that they would establish good routines and rhythms.

### The Well:

Thank God for council consent being granted before Easter, a major milestone. Please pray for legal clarity around contracts so that construction can start next month.

### Resource Team:

Pray that God would energise and sustain our National Resource Team (consisting of the Office Team in Wellington and the Comms Team in Christchurch) after a busy start to 2021.

**Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.**

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NIV)

## Regional:

### Auckland:

Pray our student leaders will trust God to continue to be at work, despite earlier lockdown disruptions in Auckland, and that students would continue to grow in the gospel and share it boldly.

### Waikato & Bay of Plenty:

Pray for the formation of friendships and missional TSCF campus groups. Pray our students grow in leading others and modelling undivided lives of Christian discipleship amongst their peers.

### Manawātū:

Pray for the halls students we connected with over Orientation, including several interested in exploring the good news of Jesus. Pray for the leaders of our halls groups.

### Wellington:

Give thanks for our outreach events, where we've tackled the topics of identity and sexuality so far. We've had a good turn-out. Pray the seeds of the gospel would bear fruit in the lives of the unbelievers coming along.

### Canterbury:

Pray for CU as we kick off a new term, continuing to follow up and welcome new people who don't know Jesus, and encourage those who do. Pray too for an invitation evening planned for early May.

### Lincoln:

Give thanks for the new students who have connected with the group this year. Please pray for opportunities to meet and reach halls students, in friendship and with the gospel.

### Otago:

Pray for the staff and students at the Harbour Light Base as they seek to grow and build community, and support one another through the ups and downs of doing life together.

## NOTICEBOARD

## FEATURE

# The Well Update

The Well is a planned student residential community in Lincoln, right opposite the university. Owned by TSCF, we hope it will be a place of hospitality, evangelism and discipleship for decades to come, with an income stream for student mission across the nation.

In late March a major milestone was achieved, with building consent granted by the council. Contracts are being drawn up with RPC builders for construction to start soon. We praise God for progress to this

point, always with the vision of reaching students for Christ in view.

The Well is so-named because it's on Springs Road in Lincoln, and more importantly, because we pray and plan for it to be a place where people encounter Jesus, just like the woman at the well in John chapter 4.

Donations are still welcome, and can be made on our website: [www.tscf.org.nz/give](http://www.tscf.org.nz/give). For enquiries, contact our project lead, Tim Hodge at: [tim@tscf.org.nz](mailto:tim@tscf.org.nz).



## Staff Profiles

### Scott Mackay | Manawātū Team Leader [scottm@tscf.org.nz](mailto:scottm@tscf.org.nz)

Scott is currently the only full-time staff worker in Palmerston North, beginning this role in mid-2019. He has been involved with TSCF since his days studying engineering at Massey University in the early 2000s. He grew up in Palmerston North, and after attending Massey, he and Jess moved to Christchurch, where he worked with TSCF at the University of Canterbury for four years. Following this, Scott pursued theological studies in Australia. He then had

the joy of working as an assistant pastor in Christchurch for more than five years. Although his recent experience has been in a local church setting, the opportunities of student ministry in the Manawātū have lured him back to work with TSCF.

Scott enjoys making music in his spare time – jazz piano when he's feeling creative, and classical when life is more chaotic. Scott and Jess have four children. 🍌

### Ian Reid | Special Projects [ianr@tscf.org.nz](mailto:ianr@tscf.org.nz)

Originally from "across the ditch," Ian studied commerce, and later trained in theology. He and Erin moved to Palmerston North at the end of 2010, when Ian took on the role of Manawātū staff worker and team leader.

In mid-2019 Ian began pastoring a local church, but stayed involved with TSCF working on special projects. Ian loves hanging out with students and seeing how God uses

them, both while they study and when they graduate.

Ian loves to swim, spend time on the little farm he and Erin own, and holiday with the family in their caravan. Ian and Erin have five children. 🍌

**If you'd like to support Scott or the Manawātū region, go to [tscf.org.nz](https://tscf.org.nz)/give and select SS-SMC or RS-MAN.**



## TSCF Groups

### Massey University Christian Fellowship (MUCF)

MUCF was established in 1948. It aims to reach domestic students from any discipline. Currently CF has outreach groups in the residential halls, a daytime weekly training gathering for Christian students, and a semi-regular outreach event called "Big Ideas Night." Students also meet one-to-one for Bible studies with other students. MUCF also run "Grill a Christian" events in the Massey halls, presenting the gospel in the context of a provocative Q&A discussion. 🍌

### Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF)

OCF was established in the 1960s. It generally consists of international students from a range of different countries. Currently the group runs a weekly Bible study combined with dinner on campus on a Friday night. The group has lost some momentum in recent years due to a large cohort of students in leadership moving on. OCF and MUCF now have a combined leadership team, which has enabled them to work together on various aspects of campus ministry. 🍌

## Were you involved with MUCF or OCF as a student?

We'd love to hear your stories! Email us at [canvas@tscf.org.nz](mailto:canvas@tscf.org.nz).





## Story of Change

*Finlay is a recent graduate of Massey University, who made a commitment to follow Christ in his final year as a student. He shares some of his journey with us.*

**Tell us a bit about yourself...** I grew up in Christchurch, where I attended both primary and high school. At the end of last year I completed my three-year pilot's degree in Palmerston North. After that I moved back home during these uncertain times to keep rent low, work hard and continue my flying. I hope to shortly join the Air Force as a pilot, or continue in general aviation to be a flight instructor, with a penultimate career path as an airline pilot.

**How did you first hear about Jesus?** I attended a Christian primary school as a child, and was baptised, as well as receiving communion. I grew up with traditional Christian festivities, where going to church

with grandma at Easter was an exciting event to look forward to.

**Growing up, did you believe in God and Jesus?** As a young boy I did believe in God and Jesus. However my teenage years tested this faith with the introduction of hormones, as well as physics and other science classes, and general teenage boy antics.

**What made you decide to commit your life to following Jesus?** It wasn't until my third year of university that I answered the questions I had been bottling up for many years. I had a friend from my time in the university halls who was a Christian and part of the Massey Uni Christian Fellowship. I asked her lots of these questions and she also invited me to attend her church. When I moved home to Christchurch, I also had some experiences which confirmed to me the reality of God.

Finlay (left) and friend

All of this led me to commit my life to Jesus. As I keep learning more, I can't help but think about the privilege I have to even be here on this planet. I have reclaimed my Christian faith permanently, and want to continue to learn the teachings of the Bible, and make better decisions with the life God has laid before me.

**How has the witness of other students influenced you?** It was my friend from CF who initially invited me to church. But since then, I found that I was drawn by the teaching of Jesus himself, and became eager to learn more. When I moved home to Christchurch, I began attending a church near the University of Canterbury, and I have rekindled dozens of old friendships with my high school mates who I found also attend

there. I've also been influenced by many other positive people around me.

**How has your life changed since you made the decision to follow Jesus?** My life has become more certain out of previous uncertainty. I have direction once more, I have faith, willpower and Christian family. I have become more aware of myself and others, as well as having made many notes in church to see the deeper truths from life and Jesus' teachings. I can wholeheartedly say that I have grown into a new person since my last year at university, and I am looking forward to living out the life God has for me. ✝

*Please pray for Finlay, MUCF and OCF as they seek to follow Christ and share his love.*

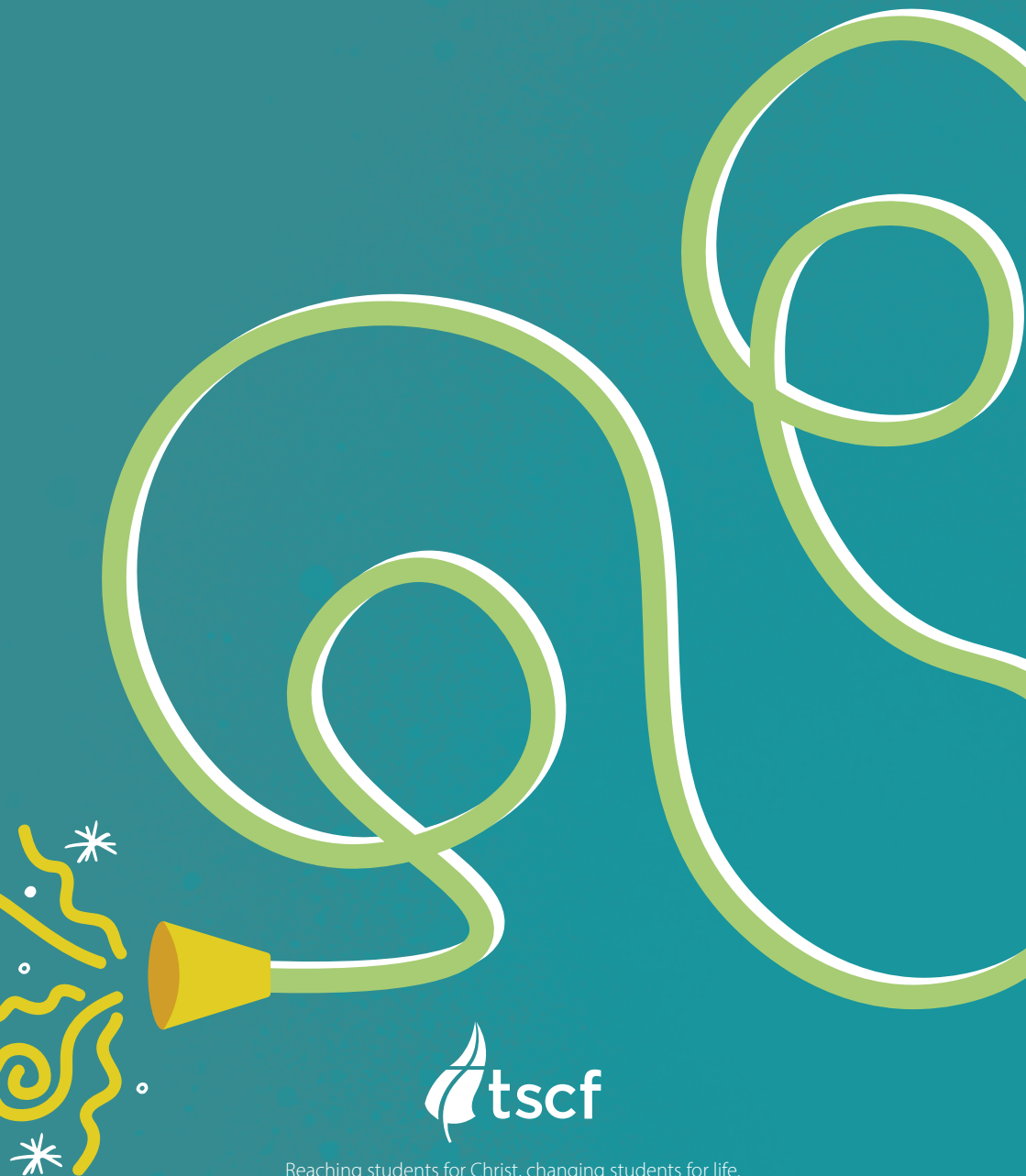
## What's Happening on Campus?



The format of the evening is simple. It begins with informal conversation over supper or dessert. Student leaders MC the event, starting with a quiz or similar icebreaker which introduces the topic. Then there is a combination of discussion around tables and presentation from the front. The evening finishes with a Q&A time.

This year MUCF and OCF are pioneering a new outreach initiative called "Big Ideas Night." It's an event that runs six times throughout the year, and it aims to bridge the gap between individual evangelism and the life of CF as a whole. Big Ideas Night combines good food, conversation, and an engaging discussion on a topic related to the Christian faith.

Our first event had around 40 students, with just a handful of non-Christians attending. The topic was "Life after death?" People really seemed to enjoy themselves, and we're hoping that over time the CF and OCF students will have greater confidence in inviting more of their friends into the conversation.



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