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# canvas

TERTIARY STUDENTS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP'S MAGAZINE



GLORIOUS HOPE

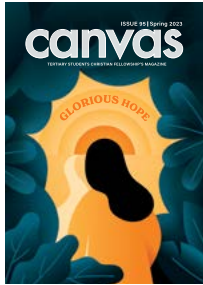
A stylized illustration featuring a person with a black silhouette head and an orange body, seen from behind. They are standing in a forest of dark teal trees, looking towards a bright orange and yellow sunrise or sunset. The words "GLORIOUS HOPE" are written in a curved, orange font across the upper part of the sun.



**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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Kate Irving  
Rachel Turner

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Tessa Baty

**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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# A new season



**Rachel Turner**  
Communications  
Manager 2009-2012

Fifteen years ago, I arrived in Wellington  
ready to serve TSCF on what was the next  
step of the journey with student ministry.  
The Lord had used the Christian Union sig-  
nificantly in my student days. I had worked  
with IFES in the UK for five years and now  
arrived in Aotearoa, New Zealand, excited to  
be part of this team.

My husband and I spent four years in New  
Zealand, and though it has been eleven  
years since we returned to the UK, New  
Zealand and TSCF changed us in many  
ways for which we are thankful. My part-  
nership with TSCF has continued over  
these years in various ways, and for the  
past eighteen months I have been glad  
to help with TSCF's publications while we  
have sought and prayed for a permanent  
Communications Manager.

It is an absolute joy to see the Lord answer  
our prayers in providing Kate. Having  
worked together when Kate was a Minter-  
n, I am delighted to be able to work with her  
again, she brings fresh ideas and a deep  
love and understanding of student ministry  
that will serve TSCF so well.



**Ben Carswell**  
National Director

It is a joy when Christian students become  
graduates who continue to follow and  
serve Jesus. It is particularly thrilling when  
those who have been invested in are  
encouraged to use their gifts to bring glory  
to God. Kate is one such example of what  
TSCF is about and we're thankful for the  
many staff who invested in Kate as a stu-  
dent and Minter-n, including Rachel. We're  
delighted to have Kate join the team and  
look forward to investing in and encourag-  
ing the next generations.



**Kate Irving**  
New Communications  
Manager

The last time I wrote for *Canvas* was twelve  
years ago, when I introduced myself as a  
Communications Minter-n. It is a true priv-  
ilege to re-introduce myself as the new  
Communications Manager for TSCF, and  
hunter-gatherer of stories across the motu.  
I am married to Josh Irving, who happens to  
be leading our Auckland staff team, and we  
have two little chimps, Eliana (4) and Miles  
(2), who keep us on our toes.

God is at work, whether we are conscious of  
it or not. Sometimes, in the daily scurry and  
onslaught of news, it is easy to forget that as  
Christians, we have timeless, eternal hope.  
There is no best before date, no conditions  
to be subject to – it is freely offered, for all  
time. It is easy to forget to lift our eyes to  
the One who holds all power and authority.  
In this issue, we take a deep dive into  
what it means to have hope, we hear from  
a couple of students as they reflect on their  
time at Summit, and we shine the spotlight  
on Auckland.

# Glorious hope



**Scott MacKay**  
Manawātū Team Leader

**In a fascinating doctoral project, Matthew Westerholm analysed the eschatology of the 100 most-sung CCLI worship songs. The conclusion: contemporary Christian music reinforces the belief that the kingdom of God is right here, right now, and it feels good. Whereas older hymns contained a balance between the ‘now’ and the ‘not yet’, Westerholm noted themes that “have almost completely disappeared: death, revival, confession, anxiety, and pilgrimage (to a better location).”<sup>1</sup>**

Arguably, we are being shaped by a spirituality of the here and now. But at the same time, our world is desperate for hope. We want a message about the future. We want to know things can get better. Our broader culture is currently experiencing increasing angst and uncertainty. Economic pressures, the increasing polarisation and tribalisation of Western societies, the impact of social media, the rise of AI, global political instability, all of these are contributing to a growing sense of unease in our generation. Is there any hope?

**How can we speak hope into a hopeless world? We need a gospel which addresses reality. We need a genuine hope that is robust in the face of uncertainty and even despair.**

One part of the Bible which explores the dynamics of hope and despair with incredible courage is the book of Job. This deep exploration of human longing has an underlying gospel shape.

Of what does genuine hope consist? The three cycles of speeches (Job 3-13, 14-20, 21-27) roughly cover three dimensions of hope:

Firstly, **hope involves believing there is someone who hears my complaint and cares about our concerns.** In the first cycle of speeches, Job lurches from hope to despair (chs 3-13). In the spaces between his deep agony, he hatches a plan to bring his complaint before God. However, Job is terrified at the idea of facing a God who is so unpredictable, at least based on his current experience. But despite this uncertainty, he forges ahead in the belief that God will listen to his cry.

As Christian readers, we hear the unmistakable echoes of Jesus' suffering: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death"<sup>2</sup> Jesus understood from the Hebrew Scriptures the reason for his situation. Yet he cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"<sup>3</sup> What does this mean? If the very Son of God can utter such words, then God is clearly comfortable with us expressing our pain and confusion. In fact, the incarnation shows us a God who is so filled with compassion for us that he was willing to identify with our sorrow at the deepest level.

Christopher Luxon recently claimed New Zealand has become a "wet, whiny, inward-looking country". Whether or not Kiwis do complain too much (I'll leave that assessment to the reader), the Scriptures help us to see that our hopelessness, despair and grumbling can't just be suppressed. It needs to turn into lament. In fact, the distinction between grumbling and lament is crucial in the Scriptures. Israel grumbled about God in the wilderness because they didn't believe God himself would listen to their cry. But the saints take their complaint directly to God, because they are convinced that God does listen to the cry of the downcast.

Secondly, **hope involves believing there is someone who can do something about my situation, even when I cannot.**

In the second cycle of speeches, Job looks around for support in his seemingly hopeless cause (chs. 14-20). Who will mediate between him and God? Who will advocate for him? Abandoned by his friends, and with no one to fight for him, he looks to a heavenly advocate who will take up his cause and fight for him. Remarkably, Job somehow believes that this advocate-redeemer will have the power to vindicate him even



after his death, and that he will be enabled to see that vindication with his own eyes (ch. 19). It is essentially a hope of resurrection.

The defeat of death is a uniquely Christian hope. It should be something we celebrate frequently. A Chinese student shared with me her impressions of the Royal funeral last year. She was surprised by the consistent note of hope throughout the service, compared to the completely bleak and mournful funerals she had experienced in her home country. In particular, she was struck by the reading from First Corinthians, which the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth performed with such gravitas:

*Death is swallowed up in victory.  
O death, where is thy sting?  
O grave, where is thy victory?  
The sting of death is sin; and the strength  
of sin is the law. But thanks be to God,  
which giveth us the victory through our  
Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>*

Christian hope is not the vague sense that things may get better. It is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus, who is now reigning until he puts all enemies under his feet. Christian hope still works even if my current situation gets worse and if the world all around me is falling apart. It is secure because Christ has been raised.

Thirdly, **hope involves believing that the Almighty will one day bring a resolution to the chaos and injustice I observe in the world.**

The third cycle of speeches in the book of Job raises the problem of God's seeming indifference to the causes that we feel most strongly about (chs 21-27). Why does God seem to stand idly by when there is so much chaos around me? Surely the Most High sees and cares about the cause of the vulnerable and the needy? Believers hold

on to the conviction that God will bring the wrongs of this world to right and vindicate his people, who long for his appearing.

Paul proclaimed to the philosophers at the Areopagus, "God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."<sup>5</sup> Again, it is the events of the gospel in which Christian hope is grounded. There is a day when our longings will be satisfied, and when all things will be made new.

**The Christian hope is glorious. But it also must be real. It is a hard-won hope. It is a hope that confronts the tragedies of life, and the doubts of even the most devoted believer. And a hope like that is a hope worth sharing.**

1 Westerholm, M. D. (2016). "The hour is coming and is now here": the doctrine of inaugurated eschatology in contemporary evangelical worship music [Doctoral thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary]. Boyce Digital Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10392/5172>, p 170.

2 Matthew 26:38 (ESV)

3 Matthew 27:46 (NIV)

4 1 Corinthians 15:54-57 (KJV, as per the funeral service)

5 Acts 17:31 (NIV)

# The Crossing update



**Kim Shaw**  
Global Reach Coordinator

We are over halfway through our Crossing '23 Global Reach Initiative! We've had some great kōrero amongst students, graduates, staff and mission speakers who have gathered online over the past three months. We've dived into some theology of mission with lecturer, Rebecca de Jong, from Laidlaw College; acquired tools for building intercultural connections with OMF; and heard powerful stories of holistic mission

from Tearfund, Interserve and Pioneers. Students are sharing their own stories of building friendships on campus, and graduates are being stretched to consider how God can use them to show his love in their places of work. Please pray that bridges will continue to be built, and that these connections will help many to encounter Jesus and His transforming love!

## Want to serve overseas?

Summer is a great time to get away and witness God at work in the diverse communities of our world. If you would like to know what opportunities are available and most suited to you, please get in touch with Kim ([kims@tscf.org.nz](mailto:kims@tscf.org.nz)).





# Summit 2023

**In June, 80 students and staff from across New Zealand gathered together for a week of Bible teaching, fellowship and fun. Emilie and Samara, both students from Canterbury CU, share their highlights from the week and how it has impacted them. Cassells and Hazel Morrell were our main speakers and they share some thoughts on 50+ years of student ministry.**



**Samara Winslade**  
Communications student

Every year, TSCF groups from around New Zealand gather for the annual *Summit* conference. This week-long retreat is made up of biblical teaching, encouraging conversations with peers, and fun activities. I heard about *Summit* from some graduates at my church who had attended in previous years and encouraged me to go along. Even though I hadn't yet connected with the TSCF group at my campus, I decided to sign up regardless. After attending *Summit* for the first time this year, I came away from the conference with three main reflections.

Firstly, I was encouraged through the edifying conversations I had with fellow students. I arrived on Monday without knowing a single person attending, and feeling accordingly nervous. However, the welcoming nature of *Summit* attendees was overwhelming. Each person was friendly and open to meaningful discussion. While there will always be differences amongst people, it was rejuvenating to be amongst like-minded peers. I was able to meet and connect with students from Christian Union, who spurred me on in my faith as a Christian university student. I

returned from *Summit* being strengthened in my Christian walk and in being a witness for Christ, from these conversations with others.

Secondly, I was inspired by the biblical teaching I received at *Summit*. The entire week was based primarily around the book of Galatians, and specifically the theme of grace. The workshops and messages were catered perfectly to my season as a university student. I was reminded of God's saving grace, and motivated to share this grace with unbelieving students at my university. In my own personal journey, I find that my walk with Christ often becomes smothered by busy student life. The teaching at *Summit* gave me fresh perspective on my overall mission as a Christian. I was compelled to use this often-chaotic season of study to connect with other unbelieving students.

Thirdly, the emphasis on connecting with your TSCF campus group was invaluable. In several of the interactive sessions, campus groups gathered and discussed ways to reach others at their universities. This eliminates the very real potential for a

'camp high' after the conference, followed by becoming demotivated to share my faith. Instead, this connection to my campus group ensures accountability, support, and a means through which I can reach other students with the gospel.

**Altogether, *Summit 2023* gave me new connections and friendships, and I was built up through solid teaching and a greater connection with my TSCF campus group. It gave me the renewed confidence to be a light for Christ. I feel excited for the comradery I have found in other students. Going forward, I am excited to continue growing in my faith and sharing it with other students around me.**





**Emilie Boeke**  
Postgraduate psychology student

**If you had spoken to me three years ago, I would never have believed that I would be attending a Christian camp, let alone calling myself a Christian today. Praise God!**

I joined TSCF in Wellington two years ago when Christians in my life convinced me to attend the Bible study. I really enjoyed being part of the community and found myself asking some big questions. In time, I was attending every week.

Praying, reading God's word one-to-one, asking questions, and being part of a Christian community is what drew me to becoming a Christian. I firmly believe that without God's work through TSCF and those around me, I would not be a Christian today.



Now that I have received the good news, why wouldn't I be ambitious to share this with others?

Fast forward to the beginning of 2023, I became connected with the Canterbury TSCF group and was excited to attend my first TSCF camp.

*Summit 2023* was an amazing opportunity to congregate with students from across

A fashion challenge is posed to the teams as part of the annual battle for the TSCF Shield.

Students praying for each other during the evening session.

New Zealand and meet individuals from the Pacifica community. I was amazed at how many students attended this year and the immense passion for God that poured out of everyone, lighting up the room. Many I spoke to were very enthusiastic about mission on campus. It was wonderful to be amongst such like-minded people who all have a big passion for the gospel.

During *Summit*, Hazel Morrell spoke openly at the start of her sermon about still being nervous when she speaks about Jesus. She has spoken about Jesus around the world, yet it struck me how to this day she still feels this way. Hazel went on to say that people in her life had told her that nerves meant she had weak faith. "If you are nervous then clearly your faith in Jesus is weak", they said. Yet Hazel refuted this. "If my faith is weak, then I would not be speaking about Jesus at all. I would let the nerves take over completely and be silent. However, here I am speaking about Jesus, so I must have a little faith."

I am so glad Hazel opened with these words as I have felt the same way when it comes to

sharing the gospel. It can be nerve-wracking, intimidating, and difficult to share the gospel with non-believers.

Roman 10:14 speaks on this: "And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them?"

**Summit 2023 highlighted that it is normal to be nervous and anxious when sharing the gospel with non-believers. Part of being faithful is pushing past these nerves and believing that God will be at work through you.**

Reflecting on *Summit*, I am looking forward to having conversations about Jesus and His word with non-believers around me while pushing past the nerves and having faith in God's guidance.



## National

### The Well

- Thank God for those who have prayed and donated to make *The Well* a reality.
- Thank God for the team of 2023, the second cohort of *The Well* residents.
- Ask God to continue to guide and embolden residents as they use their home as a place of hospitality, evangelism and discipleship.
- Ask God to bring together a great group for the 2024 cohort of residents.

### Resource Team

- Thank God for new staff. Pray for provision of staff to fill remaining roles.
- Ask God for wisdom and discernment around the 2024 budgeting process starting soon.
- Ask God for patience and perseverance working with ongoing building construction next door.

### Global Reach

- Pray for students and graduates participating in *The Crossing* to grow in passion and confidence to build intercultural, gospel-centred friendships.
- Pray for those who have attended *World Assembly* to come back with a vision for global student ministry that will act as a catalyst for our future global connections.
- Pray for students who connected with mission organisations at the *Summit Missions Expo*, to

continue to reflect on those conversations and to listen to how the Holy Spirit is leading.

- Pray for all TSCF groups to be places of hospitality to students from all cultural groups, and that many would experience the love of Jesus through the unconditional welcome they receive.

### Minty

- We are in the middle of a thorough review of the Minty program. We are looking at the purpose, policy and program of Minty. Please pray that God would guide us in this process.
- Please pray that Minty would be a year which invests in graduates well and helps them to be faithful and fruitful for God for a lifetime.

## Regional

### Auckland

- Give thanks for the Knights (see p20). Pray for them as they adjust to life and ministry here.
- Give thanks for an encouraging number of sign-ups since the start of Semester 2, both international and domestic students. Pray especially for those exploring Christianity for the first time.
- Pray for our outgoing and incoming student leaders, and that God would sustain each campus group through the transition in leadership.

### Waikato & Bay of Plenty

- Pray that we would continue to develop welcoming, Christ-centred gatherings that are anchored in Scripture and led by the Holy Spirit.

- Pray that we would develop a culture of consistent intercessory prayer in our TSCF campus groups in Hamilton and Tauranga: may students continue to hear and respond to the gospel.
- Three people from our region attended *World Assembly*. Pray for God's guidance and helpful discussions, as we consider how to share and apply our learnings we plan for 2024.

### Manawatū

- Thank God for our *Hope Explored* course and for the non-Christian students who attended. Pray for good follow up.
- Pray for our international group which is struggling to grow to a healthy size.
- Pray for Marina, who is training in ministry with the CF this year, that she will grow in her love and knowledge of Jesus and ability to teach others the word.

### Wellington

- Pray for the new students who have connected with VCF this trimester to build a strong community with a clear vision.
- Pray for a new leadership team to step up and take the group forward in the coming year.
- Thank God for those who are seeking truth and pray for them to discover this in Jesus.
- Pray for opportunities to connect with international students. We are grateful for the culturally diverse group that is forming this trimester.

### Christchurch

- Thank God for the nine students investigating Jesus through the *Christianity Explored* course this semester. Pray that they would come to know Jesus and put their trust in Him.

- Pray for the new student leaders for 2024 and the new exec being elected at our AGM on 13 September. Pray, too, for the South Island student leaders training, mentioned above.
- Pray that the *Mark Drama* will go ahead at Canterbury and Lincoln Unis on 25-26 September and that students will invite friends.
- Pray for KJ as she finishes her time serving students at Canterbury and prepares to move to Auckland in 2024 to continue with TSCF.

### Lincoln

- Please pray for the new student leadership team: that God would place a passion and vision on their hearts, and for the ability to execute the plans. Pray that students would be reached for Christ and changed for life.
- Please pray for the students who are finishing university this year and moving onto what's next. Please pray that they would seek God's kingdom first and that they would continue serving God for a lifetime.

### Otago

- Please pray for the three groups at Otago (OCF, CMF, Dentistry) as they elect new student leaders to lead the group next year. Praise God for the students who have led faithfully this year and pray that God will raise up new leaders with a heart for mission on campus.
- Please pray for the South Island student leadership training weekend (8-10 September), joining students from Canterbury and Lincoln.
- Please pray for the Otago Christian Fellowship (OCF) as they seek to grow the group for next year, with several key students graduating and finishing up at the end of this year.

**Pull me out and put me on the fridge  
to keep TSCF in your prayers!**



# Messengers of Hope

Cassells Morrell

**Condensing 50+ years of involvement with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) into 500 words is a challenge for a verbal processor, but I have to start by saying that if I was 25 I would do it all over again.**

It's been such a privilege to be involved in student ministry over all this time. Obviously there have been major changes but it is surprising how many of the issues students face are similar if not quite the same – identity and self-esteem, anxiety, exam pressure, relationships, what should I do with my life?

When the Irish student movement became independent from UCCF Britain in 1997 Ireland was still in the middle of what was euphemistically called “the troubles”. The Good Friday agreement had not yet been signed and things on the island were still quite tense. One of the phrases we chose to reflect our vision for the new movement as we affiliated to IFES as IFES Ireland at the World Assembly in South Korea in 1999 was “builders of hope”. 20 years later at the *IFES World Assembly* in South Africa the strapline was “messengers of hope”. The good news about Jesus brings hope into our

brokenness, because we can look into the hidden corners of our lives and know that the Saviour has brought us forgiveness and new life by his death and resurrection.

The title for our Galatians talks at the recent *Summit* conference was “Grace – freedom in a restless world”. I became a follower of Jesus as a thirteen year-old and had been campus staff and team leader in Ireland for thirteen years before beginning to grasp the freedom part of understanding grace. I was too concerned about my reputation and afraid to let people up close and personal in case they saw how needy and self-righteous I was. What I didn't realise was that they already saw it and knew it – family, friends, and people in church, colleagues in IFES.... One of the phrases which enabled me to begin living with a greater sense of freedom and confidence is, “cheer up you're worse that you think, but the cross of Jesus is bigger than you ever imagined. Whether we are first-year students, or in our retirement, the message of hope is still the same – I'm needy and broken, but I've found a great Saviour who by his grace (getting what I don't deserve) and mercy (not getting what I do deserve) has adopted me into his family, made me his child. He set me free to live with freedom and confidence, letting people up close and personal, letting them see where I go for life.



My student ministry verse for all these years has been 1 Thessalonians 2:8. Paul says,

**“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”**

Student ministry continues to be an amazing opportunity for followers of Jesus to live and speak for Him as they live alongside fellow students. Back in 1947 when ten national movements (including New Zealand) constituted IFES in Harvard University in USA, the goal was to see a faithful witness to Christ in every university in the world – not a bad vision! Now 75 years later the goal is basically the same – “to see students thriving together as communities of disciples, transformed by the gospel and impacting the university, the church and society for the glory of Christ”. By the time you read this

*IFES World Assembly* in Indonesia will have taken place, not sure how many countries will have managed to make it, but IFES now has 164 affiliated national movements and work in another 21 countries. For students and supporters in TSCF, that's your family... is that a big enough vision?



*Hazel and Cassells have been involved with IFES in a variety of capacities since starting as students in 1971. Cassells served on staff with the Irish movement and IFES Europe for 36 years and they are now both honorary vice-presidents of IFES.*



# Introducing our Auckland staff



**Josh Irving** Team Leader

Josh was first involved with TSCF in 2009 as a student exploring Christianity. After six years of school teaching and three years of theological study, Josh is thrilled to be back in the ministry that helped lead him to Christ.



**Robyn Drake** Head of Resource Development

Robyn has served in various roles with TSCF for twelve years, previously working as a medical research statistician. She loves seeing students come to know God, and to grow in their knowledge of and love for him. Robyn is currently on a well-deserved sabbatical until October.



**Katie Knight** Staff Worker

Katie is passionate about helping students encounter Jesus and grow in faith. She came on staff with IFES in 2013, first serving in the US, then in Trinidad and Tobago, and now here in Aotearoa, New Zealand!



**Lance Knight** Staff Worker

Lance has been involved in student ministry since 2018 and has served in several IFES movements. He is passionate about discipling students and helping them grow in their faith.



**Jeff Lane** Associate Staff Worker

Jeff has been part of the TSCF team since 2005. He has taught English in China and NZ. Jeff enjoys offering Bible studies and English conversation classes to international students.



**Annette Lane** Associate Staff Worker

Annette has been serving with TSCF since 2008, alongside working as an occupational therapist. Annette enjoys showing students and graduates hospitality and encouraging them in their faith.



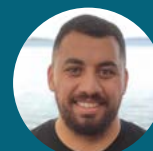
**Michael Drake** Associate Staff Worker

Michael has served with TSCF since 2009, on top of his teaching, education oversight, and pastoral work. He loves to see students know Christ more, be shaped by him, and share their delight in him.



**Hanli Liu** Associate Staff Worker

Hanli became a Christian while at university, and after working in food technology, became a full-time pastor. He began serving with TSCF in 2016 and loves seeing God draw students closer to himself.



**Dwayne Tongamohenoa** Associate Staff Worker

Dwayne, also a full-time pastor, joined the TSCF team in 2021. A significant motivation was seeing the ministry's impact on some close friends of his, as well as his deep commitment to evangelism.



**Rabena Tanielu** Associate Staff Worker

Bena began with TSCF in 2019, after she and her husband Ronji returned from overseas mission. She loves seeing students grow in their confidence in God's word and become "doers" of it.



**Andrew Wilks** Associate Staff Worker

Andrew surrendered his life to Jesus as a student in the 80s. He has worked in law, mission, mediation, and chaplaincy. He enjoys helping students through the challenges of growing and maintaining a strong faith.

## TSCF Auckland Campus Groups

### Auckland University of Technology: City, North, and South Campuses

- AUT Christian Fellowship

### Massey University: Albany Campus

- TSCF Massey
- International Student Ministry

### Unitec: Mt Albert Campus

- Connect: Christians at Unitec

### University of Auckland: City Campus

- Christian Union
- Overseas Christian Fellowship
- Sola Scriptura
- Veritas: Christians at Law School

### University of Auckland: Grafton Campus

- Christian Medical Fellowship

# What's happening on campus



**Josh Irving**  
Auckland Team Leader

## Whenever someone asks me about student mission in Auckland, I'm tempted to respond, "Which Auckland are we talking about?"

The seven Auckland campuses with current TSCF groups all differ significantly: they're geographically scattered, some more central and some further out; they're different in size and in the number and type of subjects offered; and, for all those reasons and more, each campus has its own distinct student culture.

The key challenge of student mission in Auckland is to know which "Auckland" we're in and what opportunities that presents for students wanting to live out their faith in Jesus. So far this year, the major encouragements for me have come from students who are engaging prayerfully and creatively with their contexts.

## Spikeball, anyone?

After some years without a TSCF presence at AUT North Campus, it's been exciting to see a new group form. This "Auckland" has a growing concentration of students in health sciences, education, and sport and recreation. To put it another way, it's a mix of nursing uniforms and activewear.

The new group started with two willing students—one training in occupational therapy, the other in podiatry. Even before their first official meeting, they were joined by a nursing student who saw them praying and wanted to join a Bible study! Throughout the course of the semester, mainly through hostel connections, the group has grown to involve students in paramedicine, physiotherapy, and psychology. In short, two students have become ten, and a few are revisiting Christian faith or considering it for the first time.

So, what does mission in that context look like? In addition to reading Luke's Gospel together, the students decided their missional rhythm had to involve spikeball (think volleyball but hitting down against a mini trampoline-like net). The hope is to be more visible on campus, to make it easier for others to join in, and to build community. And while it's early days, spikeball has already created space for new students to connect, and one seeker who's committed to journeying through Luke this semester.



Spikeball session at AUT North



## The world on our campuses

One of the many things Covid has to answer for is the drop in international student numbers in recent years. Steadily, however, our international friends are returning. At the beginning of Semester Two, the influx was so great, and sign-ups so plentiful, that a couple of our student groups had to re-think their plans. The "Auckland" they're now engaging with on their campuses is quite often Chinese, and also Indian, South American, and Pasifika.

Remarkably, TSCF's international student ministry at Massey Albany alone saw 101 international students sign up for our English Corner, Bible study, and/or field-trips—many coming with little or no understanding of Jesus. In view of this, it's been heartening to see TSCF Massey (another student group from the same campus) also getting involved with the international student community. TSCF Massey are now trialling an interactive evening gathering, led by two Christian international students, to complement their existing lunch-time Bible study.

The Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF), based at the University of Auckland's city campus, are also rediscovering the "O" in their name. While signups were modest in number, the opportunity before them was

clear enough during re-orientation week as more translation happened at the club stall. So, they decided to shift their study through the book of Daniel to another day, opening their usual Friday slot for a more accessible exploration of the "I am" statements in John's Gospel.

## The re-build continues

God is evidently working in and through our Auckland student groups. The missional impetus and stories of growth are deeply encouraging. Yet, significant challenges remain for staff and students as we re-build following the pandemic.

For one thing, there is another "Auckland" that exists in large part online and may only venture to campus for compulsory tutorials. We need wisdom as we respond to the still-changing campus contexts in our region.

Finally, the sheer size of Tāmaki Makaurau continues to stretch our staff team. For this reason, we give all praise to God for sending us two new staff in Lance and Katie Knight; their appointment is a tremendous answer to years of prayer for our region. And I invite you to continue praying for Auckland—that God would build our team and lead us forward, that more students will come to know, love, and worship God with their whole lives.



# Nau mai, haere mai: welcome to the Knights

*TSCF and the Auckland team are so thankful for God's provision of Lance and Katie Knight. Incredibly, after months of waiting, their visas were approved just in time for them to attend Summit. Here's a bit of what they shared in an interview with Josh Irving.*

**JOSH:** You know we're big on sheep and pavlova in this part of the world. What can you share with us about where you're from?

**KATIE:** You might think you have a lot of sheep in NZ. About 5 to 1, is it? But I'm from Iowa, where pigs outnumber people 7 to 1! We really like pork, especially the extra thick "Iowa chops."

**LANCE:** I'm from Colorado—that's where I was born. But my parents are from Georgia, in the deep south of the US, so I grew up making lots of visits there and enjoying all the boiled peanuts! That's a real taste of home.

**JOSH:** How'd you get into student mission?

**KATIE:** I felt called to ministry at a young age, so I eventually studied Christian Ministry to figure out how that could look. In my final year of study, when googling for opportunities, I stumbled across InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Right away, I was captured by the mission to reach uni students for Christ. And now it's ten years that I've been in student mission. As for Lance, he came on board five years ago, and we were content to serve students in the US. But, one day, I sensed God saying, "No, you're going overseas." And I kept hearing his voice, "You need to go!" After sharing that with Lance, he said, "Let's do it!" The next year, we were called to Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean.

**JOSH:** Trinidad's quite far from us. How'd you end up here in Aotearoa?

**LANCE:** For reasons we still don't know, we weren't able to extend our work visas in Trinidad. Although we'd planned to be there much longer, our time ended after just a few years. We returned to the US in March 2022, unsure of where to go. Yet, we knew that God had called us to work with students. And as we looked for new opportunities, we were told about NZ. After several months of prayer and learning more about TSCF's staffing needs as well as the broader NZ context, we sent in our applications. In short, God had closed one door, but he opened another, and we are delighted to be here!



*Lance and Katie are working with several student groups as they settle in and learn the campus contexts. At the University of Auckland, Katie is working with the Christian Union, while she and Lance are both supporting the Overseas Christian Fellowship. At Auckland University of Technology, Lance is overseeing the Christian Fellowship at the City Campus, and Katie is encouraging a fledgling group at the North Campus. Would you pray for the Knights as they get alongside students in this new season of ministry?*



## IFES World Assembly 2023

A team of fourteen Kiwi delegates attended the *IFES World Assembly 2023* held in Jakarta, Indonesia, 2-10 August. Here are some highlights captured by Dave Hodgkinson, our Waikato/Bay of Plenty Team Leader.

**1** Every break and mealtime was an opportunity to meet people from all over the globe! Team TSCF had lunch one day with the CECE Ecuadorian contingent, swapping stories of student mission in very different contexts. I learnt a new Spanish phrase: "Dios te bendiga u te guarde" – "May the Lord bless you and keep you!"

**2** An excursion day was held mid-way through World Assembly. There were a multitude of options. I went with about 50 delegates to Princess Island, a 90-minute boat trip from Jakarta. In this photo, Jai (UK), Tofte (Sweden), Joel (Netherlands), fellow Kiwi and TSCFer Liam Hunter & myself are enjoying a stroll around the island.

**3** "Witnesses in the University and beyond" was the theme of World Assembly 2023. Strength & Resilience ('Tabah & Tangguh') comes from the Lord. Our TSCF staffer Kate McClelland was on the World Assembly planning team and she did a great job introducing one of the evening sessions – with Sofia, her daughter!

**4** An important ethos of TSCF is to train, equip and encourage students in leadership. It was great to experience World Assembly with Waikato University students Ethan Tattersall and Christina Bateson, who have served in recent years in the TSCF Hamilton group. It was a challenging and inspiring time for them too!

We look forward to further reflection from our *World Assembly 2023* delegates in the next issue of Canvas.

## Staff Updates

### Comings and Goings

At the start of 2023 we farewelled Maggie Barker and later Italia Tiatia. Maggie served faithfully as Ben's PA for three years and has retired to spend more time with her family. Italia, who served as an Office Administrator, has gone on to pursue a career in line with her degree, at the Ministry of Social Development. We thank you Maggie and Italia, for all you have given to TSCF during your time with us!

We have been thrilled to see some new additions to the team this year - Kate Irving (Communications Manager), Leisha Rhianon (Admin and Projects Officer), Katie and Lance Knight (Auckland Regional Staff, seconded by InterVarsity Link). We also want to thank Sarah Stark for coming to help us in a time of through May and June when we were short staffed - a true gift from God in a challenging season.

## Job vacancies

### Come and join the team!

#### Wellington Team Leader

We are looking to appoint a new person to lead our Wellington Team. Leading the ministry amongst students at Victoria University and Massey Wellington, we are looking to grow our reach among local students and continue to develop the work amongst international students, especially as we begin to see new international students arrive in New Zealand again. The Team Leader is responsible for a small team of staff and volunteers in the region, but also plays a role on the National Leadership Team of TSCF which meets a few times a year.

#### Staff workers – Nationwide

We are looking to recruit staff workers nationally, but especially in Wellington, Lincoln and Dunedin. Working alongside a local team of TSCF staff and supported by the National Resource team, our staff workers meet with students to study the Bible, to equip them to be lights in their communities and to support them as they walk alongside one another as disciples in their student years. If you're wanting to join a vibrant, friendly and dynamic team – we'd love to chat!

Please contact [personnel@tscf.org.nz](mailto:personnel@tscf.org.nz) to find out more.



*Clockwise from left: Nigel Pollock, former National Director of TSCF, Chris Grantham, former General Secretary of TSCF, Ben Carswell, National Director of TSCF and Robert Withycombe, former General Secretary of TSCF*

## Dr Robert Withycombe 1939-2023



**Felicia Edgecombe  
(née Auld)**

I had the privilege of working from 1970-71, alongside Charles Waldegrave and Michael Powell, as a Travelling Secretary for the New Zealand Inter Varsity Fellowship (now TSCF), under the leadership of Robert Withycombe. Robert was a gently spoken, academic man, who certainly had his challenges in those years. He was navigating a new country, a new marriage, a new baby son, Hugh, and the unique, new impacts of the charismatic movement, then sweeping through all the tertiary groups in NZ. All this alongside directing his staff, known by the students as the "Travelling Secs". We were gloriously unaware of the headaches he must have had in those years, particularly interpreting the ways of God — and students — to the IVF aristocracy in the north, but his calm,

reasoned approach to matters theological and spiritual contributed significantly to the balanced way that this new growth was received and absorbed.

Susan Mary, his sparkling and very intelligent wife, lectured at Victoria University in English, and was a wonderful partner to a gracious and learned man. It was a moving experience for me to meet them both again in 2018, this time with Susan Mary clearly supporting her now disabled husband. I am so grateful for the freedom that Robert allowed us in those very special years, which were life-changing for me and for many others. He was an Anglican officer and a thorough-going gentleman.





Reaching students for Christ, changing students for life.  
**He ākonga ki ngā ākonga hei ara whakawhiti mō te Karaiti.**



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