



2024 Annual Review

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

Reaching students for Christ,
changing students for life.

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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.

The **Annual Review** is for those who partner with us in our vision and mission to reach students for Christ. It reports on what God has accomplished through TSCF in the previous calendar year, as well as looking to what he is building for the future. This work is made possible by the grace of God and the generosity of our partners. This is a review of the 2024 year.

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NOTES from A SMALL island

As a Wellingtonian, it was somewhat unforgiveable that, until this summer, I had never visited Matiu / Somes Island. Despite seeing it most days on my commute into the capital, I had never made the trek across the harbour to the largest of three small islands in Wellington Harbour.

While I knew a little about the island and its compelling history, it wasn't until I visited that I began to understand its significance in both Wellington and NZ's story. As I meandered round the island, it got me musing on some of its similarities with TSCF.

A Place of Welcome

For those who've never been to Matiu / Somes Island, you've probably seen it when arriving into Wellington. Whether you arrive by boat, plane or car, the island is one of the first things you see. It stands as an initial place of welcome into our capital.

Each year, around 50,000 new students arrive on our tertiary campuses beginning their first year of studies and a new season of life. We long that TSCF would be a place of welcome to all students arriving on campus, as they await the adventures of their student years. Many arrive with a sense of trepidation and anticipation. Time and again, we have seen that the first few weeks of the student year are significant in setting foundations of faith and explorations in it over the coming years.

Our hope and prayer is that we would give the warmest reception to those who are arriving, and for many, this is at the crucial Clubs Day and Orientation events at the start of each year. We are continuing to think about how we maximise the opportunity these present, and this year's Student Welcome Packs were a great addition to our resources.

A Sanctuary for Refuge

Matiu / Somes Island is not just a welcoming place, but a place of refuge too. Before European settlement, the island was a base used by Māori for many generations. In a similar vein, our desire is that TSCF student groups are not just a place where students arrive, but also stay, making it their home during their student years. In an age of so much turmoil, TSCF groups are a place where students can safely explore the big questions of life with other likeminded friends. Our hope is that



Ben Carswell
National Director

students become part of a local church and make the most of the unique opportunity that a group of students from different backgrounds joining together in student mission affords.

A Haven for the Hostile

During both World War I and World War II, 'enemy aliens'—including long-term residents of New Zealand who originated from enemy countries—were interned on the island and form a significant part of the island's story.

For TSCF, there are people who are hostile to, even 'enemies' of, the gospel. Unlike those who were interned on Matiu / Somes Island out of fear of the harm they might do, TSCF welcomes those who are hostile to what we believe. The idea of those who are aliens and enemies being reconciled to God (Colossians 1:21-23) is at the heart of what we're about. Over the years, some of the exciting stories we hear are those of students who were most hostile to God, but who unexpectedly encountered Him during their student days.

A Shelter for the Sick

In the late 1800s and early 1900s Matiu / Somes Island was used on various occasions to quarantine people who were carrying smallpox, influenza



Group shot from Summit 2024 in Queenstown



or scarlet fever. TSCF groups are a place where those who are 'ill' can come: not to be quarantined but to receive life-giving restoration in Jesus.

As Jesus said to those complaining about Him eating with tax collectors and sinners, *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* (Mark 2:17)

A Light in the Dark

One of the less obvious features of Matiu / Somes island is tucked away on the Southern side of the island, facing the harbour entrance. In the late 1850s, city leaders in Wellington realised that the harbour had become a busy port and that safe navigation into the harbour required a light. In 1866, the original lighthouse was built and became fully operational. Despite being updated and changed in 1900, a lighthouse still operates on the island, guiding incoming ships to a place of safety.

I'm frequently asked 'what does TSCF do?' Really, the answer is quite simple, and our vision remains the same—we are 'the light of the world.' Together, we let our 'light shine before others, that they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven.' For nearly

ninety years, TSCF has been shining the light of Jesus, warning of impending danger and helping guide students in the right direction. I remain convinced of the need to keep shining, albeit more brightly in the darkness of the world around us.

A Stronghold for Battle

However, another aspect of the island highlights the reality of TSCF's mission. During World War II, a Heavy Anti-Aircraft Artillery position was established near the summit of the island. A command post and four gun positions were put in place and fifty soldiers were stationed on the island. Although the emplacements were built and ready to engage in warfare, their guns were never fired against enemy warcraft. It can be easy to forget that we are actively involved in a spiritual battle. As a student mission, we are at the front line of enemy warfare, seeking to rescue students from darkness into light. We need to remember our *'enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.'* (1 Peter 5:8). Please pray for students and staff, involved in this active spiritual warfare and pray for our protection as we fight in this battle, which has already been won.

A Dwelling for Unity and Diversity

In recent years, ownership of the island has

transferred to a Māori collective, Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, as part of the claim settlements for breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi. As you arrive on the island, a waharoa (carved gateway) demonstrates a commitment to bi-cultural partnership in the ongoing affairs of the island. As we prepare for the bicentenary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, we recognise NZ stands at the doorway of a significant moment in its history. As TSCF, we are committed to and positive about both bi-culturalism and multi-culturalism and continue to explore what those should look like in Christian mission in 21st century New Zealand. One of the highlights of the year was hearing Rev Keri-Ann Hokianga share through waiata, word and haka, the story of Te Rongopai arriving in Aotearoa and the impact of the gospel on our bi-cultural foundations. We want to continue to grow in our reach to all students in NZ and would particularly ask for your prayers to make connections with those in the polytechs and wānanga, where our student witness is currently so small.

A Home for a Season

The island is also a place of great significance for the Te Atiawa people. It is from the island that Ngāti Mutunga departed for the Chatham Islands in 1835. While TSCF is a place where we receive students arriving at tertiary campuses across



NZ, our vision is that it would be a place from which we send students and graduates to the ends of the earth. This past year, as part of our Global Reach strategy, a group of students and staff served as a team in Vanuatu, working with the IFES student movement, Gud Nius Yunivesiti Felosip. We also had IFES visitors from around the South Pacific joining us for our Staff Training, as well as some staff visiting UESI in India and the Lausanne Congress.

The students of today are the graduates of tomorrow and they have the potential to be future leaders in society, communities, churches and countries all over the world. Interestingly, the Island has never been a place of permanent settlement, rather, it is a place that people come to be part of for a time. And in a similar way, our vision is that TSCF students are with us for a season – one that transforms, enriches and prepares them for the life they will lead as graduates beyond their student years. It is as each generation of students transition into the graduate world, that they take our aims of True Witness, Undivided Life, Deep Thought and Global Reach into the working world, their churches, families and communities. We long for life-long investment, involvement and impact.

A Centre of Learning

Like Matiu / Somes Island, which has become a place of scientific learning, we want to be a place of ongoing exploration and discovery. In an ever-changing world, we seek to be creative in our methods of communication, whilst remaining unashamedly committed to being confident and clear in our message of the good news of Jesus. Our continued involvement in the *Mark Drama*, demonstrates the best of this creative communication of the crux of our message. We continue to use it as a brilliant tool for helping students open the pages of Scripture, meet Jesus and engage with all He has said and done. It remains an effective initiative for both outreach and discipleship, which is both remarkably disarming and winsome. As part of our focus on Mark, we are in the process of producing a Mark's Gospel, for distribution and use on campus and particularly to help students read the Bible with unbelieving friends.

At our *Summit Conference*, where we focussed on Mark's Gospel, it was terrific to hear students sharing stories (both 'successful' and 'unsuccessful') of inviting their friends to read and study a Gospel together. It is not rocket science, but is part of our belief that **'faith**



Top: Auckland OCF and CU combined outreach
Bottom: The Well residents getaway

comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God' (Romans 10:17).

TSCF remains committed to 'Deep Thought' as one of our priorities. All too frequently in the church, we 'dumb down' our expectations of engagement with the depth of Scripture. Across TSCF, we continue to engage students in conversations about the implications of their studies and the connections and challenges with the gospel. This commitment to discipleship of the mind is a key distinctive of TSCF and our discipleship of students.

An Investment that Multiplies

For many years, the island had fallen into a state of disregard and disrepair. With the investment of committed supporters, the island has seen an increased commitment to regrowth and revitalisation, particularly through a deliberate revegetation programme. Since the late 1980s, it has been pest-free and in recent years, there has been an increase in the planting of native flora and fauna.

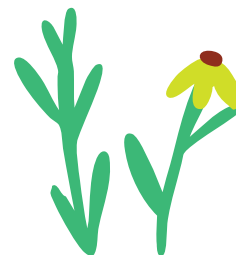
One of the real encouragements of TSCF in recent years has been to see a growth in domestic students involved in and leading our groups. We want to be part of the development of Kiwi student leaders, as well as internationals,

who will go on to spiritually shape our nation and the world, as men and women of influence. As part of this, we have undertaken a review of our MINTY internship programme and made some necessary changes. We're relaunching a graduate discipleship year and calling it *Formation*, which expresses our desire to see students formed into life-long disciples of Jesus.

We have been delighted in recent years, to see a growing sense of partnership with graduates and TSCF alumni, investing into God's Kingdom. Our Board has taken specific steps to examine its work and remit and seek to grow in its governance capability. For years, we have been praying specifically for the work in Auckland, where 'the harvest was plentiful, but the labourers were few'. In the last couple of years, we have seen answered prayer as a growing team has developed, under the leadership of Josh Irving. We give thanks too for a growing number of New Zealanders joining our staff team, bolstered by experienced staff joining the TSCF team from IFES movements overseas. As part of a refreshed strategy, we are seeking to double our staff team size, double the number of students involved in TSCF and double our income in the next five years. There is much still to do, and we remain thankful for everyone who stands together with us in this mission.

At times, writing about what God is doing here in NZ, which to some is just 'a little comma at the bottom corner of the global page' feels like we're sharing just notes from a small island. But as Isaiah 42 commands and reminds us, *"Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them...let them give glory to the Lord and proclaim His praise in the islands. The Lord will march out like a champion, like a warrior He will stir up His zeal; with a shout He will raise the battle cry and will triumph over His enemies."* They may just be notes from a small island, but they do share something of our part in bringing glory to God and proclaiming His praise in the islands!

Thank you for your part in God's work.





Top Left: Spikeball at AUTCF Leaders Retreat

Top Middle: Auckland Student Leaders 2024

Bottom Left: Staff and Families 2024 in Bridge Valley, Nelson

Top Right: Otago camp 2024

Bottom Right: Leaders of the new Unitec Waitākere group