



SU News

AUTUMN EDITION 2022

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The Certainty of the Gospel

If you ever go on a road trip with me, you will need to be prepared to listen to music from the '80s and '90s. One of the songs you will hear is from the band Powderfinger, who wrote the song "These Days". Although written in 1999, the lyrics speak to the uncertainty that many are feeling today in the face of a global pandemic. The chorus repeats like a lament:

*These days turned out nothing like I had planned;
Control well it's slipping right through my hand;
These days turned out nothing like I had planned.*

None of us could have imagined the days we find ourselves in. There are many things that seem uncertain today; it is hard to make plans when our days constantly feel unsteady and unsure.

Amid uncertainty and in the face of suffering, the Apostle Paul asks an important question:

"Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?" (Romans 8:35)

Paul answers his question with unswerving certainty:

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)

"Like Paul, I am convinced about the certainty of Jesus, the assurance of the Good News of Jesus and that nothing, not one thing, can separate us from the love of God and all that we have in Jesus."

For this reason, all of us at SUNSW are committed to making the Good News of Jesus known to children, young people, and families. It is the one thing we can be sure of.



Ian Altman
SUNSW State Director

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The Good News going out across NSW this Summer



Written by:
Nathan Milham,
Missions Chair

“ We are thankful to God for the Missions movement and doors that He opened this summer season. ”

Sometimes, God works in mysterious ways. This was not necessarily the season we had hoped for, but it was the season God had planned.

Some teams had a remarkably fruitful year as they reconnected with their communities and forged new relationships. Some teams were forced to come home early as COVID cases emerged in their communities. Others couldn't travel at all but committed instead to planning and praying for their next opportunity.

Yet every team was faithful, whether being forced home or running a program, and this is what God calls us to be.

We are especially thankful for the faithfulness of our team Directors. They led through uncertainty, anxiety, opportunity and disappointment. They were committed to loving their teams and their communities. They represented the Lord Jesus well.

There are many stories of God working through His Gospel and this movement. I met a woman who grew up in a Muslim family but attended SUFM on holidays as a child.

She told us how the SUFM team faithfully shared the gospel with her during those years. She is now a Christian and joined us at the adult's coffee cart just to share her story!

I hope all these stories give you just a glimpse of the Good News going out this summer.

Join us in thanking God for all the Directors and team members who were able to step out in faith this summer. If you are one of them, then thank you!





Georgia and Adam Condie at Huskisson Beach Mission.



Great Expectations as Beach Missions return

Eternity News published a piece on Beach Missions, interviewing some of our amazing SUNSW volunteers as they prepared to reach campers with a clear presentation of the gospel.



Written by:
Anne Lim for
Eternity News

“ We pray, we prepare our testimonies and talks, and we’re always surprised year to year by what God’s been doing in people’s hearts in the year. It’s very, very humbling in that respect. ”
– Adam Condie

Beach Mission leaders have great expectations as this year’s summer camps kick off in NSW.

Adam Condie, who has been a leader at the Huskisson Beach Missions since he was in Year 10 in 2007, says he is “eternally grateful” that his parents took their family camping holiday at Beach Mission.

“It’s just great having older Christians to look up to and see what it means to follow Jesus,” says Adam, a primary school teacher who is now studying at Moore College in Sydney.

Now as a Leader, Adam said his excitement about Beach Mission comes from seeing God at work every year.

Nathan Milham, SUNSW Missions Chair confirms that Scripture Union breaks down barriers with people because it’s not associated with the institutional church.

“We’re looking ahead to this summer with great expectation. You know, people are looking for good news, they’re open to spiritual conversations. We have the best news. So now’s the time to kind of embrace God’s call to mission and give it a go.

“Even if people have gone away from the institutional church, which is the trend we see in Australia, they haven’t gone away from a belief in a higher power or in a desire to pursue their own spirituality.

“And this is the space that Scripture Union really thrives in because we don’t have the image of the institutional church. We’re just average everyday Christians – we’re the mums and dads and uni students who actually believe this, and we come together under a neutral banner to have spiritual conversations.”

The article first appeared in Eternity News on the 29th December 2021 and is used with permission.

READ
THE FULL
ETERNITY
NEWS
ARTICLE





Meet some of our amazing volunteers!



GRACE KIEFER
Summer Life Mission, Port Macquarie

"I have really grown to love serving in this ministry. I love being able to meet people from different walks of life. To hear their stories and be able to share my faith and the Gospel message with them.

Being on Beach Mission has changed the way I think about evangelism. I originally thought it was simply getting up the front, presenting the Gospel and then inviting people to become a Christian... and that's it. Over the years, I've learned a lot about how relational evangelism is and how much God works through our weaknesses and brings people to himself in ways that is so unexpected."



PIERRE BLONDEL
Canton Beach SUFM

"I've been directing missions for about 20 years. Every year God goes before us and prepares the way to share the Gospel. This year we faced obvious uncertainties but, yet again, we saw amazing provision from God and the new management team welcomed us warmly.

It was encouraging to see the local community respond positively. I had to call in the Portaloo worker to come in on his day off and when I stopped to thank him, he commented - 'It's so great to see your team here bringing the name of the Lord into these young people's lives. I'm even more than happy to help you.'"



Interview with John Dickson

John Dickson and his wife Buff, have had a long history with Scripture Union. Get a sneak-peak into their Beach Mission love story, what he loves about SU and his thoughts on the 'Certainty of the Gospel'.

We recently had the privilege of interviewing John Dickson, an Australian writer, speaker, academic, and public advocate for the Christian faith.

How did you first hear about Scripture Union?

My very first contact with Scripture Union was upon my conversion as a 16-year-old at Mosman High School. I'd never been inside a church and had no experience of Christianity. I became a Christian at school and soon discovered there was this weird thing called ISCF. I heard it was for Christians, and I'd just become one of those, so I went along! The group that I met with at ISCF were incredibly encouraging and became my first Christian community.

A little birdie told me that you met your wife serving on Scripture Union Beach Mission. Tell us a little bit more about that.

Well, I was in a band and we used to get invited by the various Beach Missions that SU ran up and down the coast. One of those nights was at Evans Head up near Byron. The head of the teenager group at this Beach Mission was this gorgeous, unbelievably wonderful, articulate, godly woman.

I was introduced to her because she's the one who'd booked the band and wanted us to perform and preach the Gospel at Evans Head Caravan Park. This was Buff. And honestly, within about half an hour of meeting her, I said, privately, "Dear Lord, please, can I have this girl?" Terrible prayer – I don't advise it!

In those days, I was on the road nearly 10 months of the year, but we wrote letters backwards and forwards after meeting each other. Six months later it was clear that we liked each other so went on our first date.

For Buff and her family, those Beach Missions were part of their regular pattern, for decades. For me to find my wife at Evans Head was obviously gorgeous! But I have an even older connection that I never even knew with SU. Buff's father had been the president of the New South Wales Scripture Union many years before I ever met them. So, SU is in Buff's blood in a big way and mine as well.

Scripture Union has a massive impact in sharing the Good News to young people. Is there an aspect of what SU does that you particularly love?

Well, I think I'm going to have to say TWO. One is that they are into the Bible. And they really are! They are Scriptural. And sometimes Christian organisations that have been around a long time can sometimes lose that. They drift. Not SU!

The other is they've always had this very down-to-earth approach to things, whether that's in state schools, doing the ISCFs or Beach Mission.

“Going to where people are and trying to engage them in a way that points them to the truth of scripture.”

What would you say to someone who's considering serving with SU?



Do it! You won't regret it because it's an organisation that is scriptural. You'll be drawn into a community that is, as I said, down-to-earth, but also loving. I have nothing but high praise for the work of SU.

The theme for this Autumn Edition of SU News is on 'The Certainty of the Gospel'. I think this is a timely topic, particularly in this season where many things seem uncertain due to COVID.

What would you like to say about the certainty of the Gospel?

Well, the opening paragraph of Luke's Gospel uses this word 'certainty'. Luke says: "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been filled among us. Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first, were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word. And since I've investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good to me also, dear Theophilus, to give you an account of the certainty of the things you have been taught."

Luke uses this word 'certainty' intentionally. This word in Greek is 'asfáltos', which is the word we get *asphalt* from. The stuff you make roads out of, because it's solid stuff. And that's really what it means.

So, when Luke opens his Gospel this way, he's saying he wants them to know the certainty (the 'asfáltos') of the things you have been taught. How solid it is, how secure it is. It isn't so much about not having any doubts or having answered every question intellectually.

“When you know the Gospel, you end up knowing the most secure, the most stable thing in the world. And that is Jesus himself. You can rely on Him. He is the ultimate certainty.”

What do you see as the possibilities of the impact that a movement like SU can have?

I think a movement like SU has the capacity to surprise people. Although I am a huge believer

in the local church, as I know SU is as well, church is a little bit on the nose for many Australians. Many Australians have a very low view of the church. It seems institutional.

“SU is able to surprise because it's nimbler and more flexible. It's out there in the schools. It's doing the camps. It's out there on the Beach Missions, on the coal face, getting its hands dirty.”

And I think SU can bypass the scepticism people have toward the institutional church, just by the very nature of its activity and ministry. And as people respond to it, SU can then point back to the local church and say 'that's a beautiful thing over there'.

John as we close off, I wanted to thank you for partnering with us with the Hope Project boxes. As you're aware, the Hope Project is an SUNSW initiative which is all about supporting, encouraging and sharing the Good News with students, predominately senior high students approaching their final HSC exams.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. It meant so much to individuals to know that in one of the most stressful times of their lives, someone was praying for them by name. Students were also blessed by their box of goodies delivered in the mail with your book 'A Sneaking Suspicion'. We're doing it again this year with the hope that Churches might also come alongside and partner with us in a big way. Thank you for joining us.

It was a privilege to be involved. It's great, just great, to be able to arm people with good resources to help them on their discipleship journey.



The Hope Project by numbers.

**YOUR
IMPACT
IN 2021:**



170+
Students
reached



150+
Prayer
partners



100+
Donors

Ministry in NSW Schools

We believe Christians who serve in our local schools have a unique (and challenging) missional opportunity that needs supporting, resourcing, and encouragement. Scripture Union NSW is committed to walking alongside you in the year that lies ahead.

As the start of another school year begins, all of us at Scripture Union NSW wanted to reach out and let you know that **we are committed to praying for you and supporting you throughout the year ahead.**

We know that 2022 may have already started with considerable anxiety and uncertainty due to a significant rise in COVID cases. You may be starting another teaching year with less certainty than you had hoped for and added pressure you did not expect.

In the midst of all that is happening, we will be praying that God gives you all that you need to serve him in the year ahead.

Specifically, we will be praying Paul's prayer in Ephesians for you:

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God". (Ephesians 3:16-19)

In addition to praying, we are committed to serving and supporting you.

To this end, we have appointed Cheryl Burton as our new Schools Ministry Team Leader.

Cheryl has a background in teaching and certainly understands the unique challenges that Christian teachers face, especially in our government schools. One of Cheryl's main roles will be to support you and the many volunteers connected to our schools in NSW.

Christian Teachers Connect (CTC) is happening again this year on 16 March. Please come for Bible encouragement, testimonies of God at work in schools, fellowship and prayer! We have listened and ensured the new dates are not too close to busy report-writing times. More information about CTC will be available soon.



If there is any way that SUNSW can support you or if you would like someone to pray with and for you directly, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@sunsw.org.au





Meet Cheryl Burton and her heart for SUNSW's Ministry in Schools

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of our movement, so they deserve the best support, training and opportunities.

In 2022 we will invite our school volunteers to connect with each other, to pray, to share ideas and stories and, importantly, to be encouraged in the Word.

We are keen to bring together students and young adults in a Youth Council to listen and be creative together. We aim to serve and equip student leaders.

Our young adult intern program will include serving and visiting school groups, creating new resources and supporting volunteers.

Through our volunteers, our SUNSW family has a unique ministry in schools with students, teachers and parents. We long to see every school covered in prayer in a local Prayer Network group.

We value every volunteer, prayer supporter and donor and thank you for your 2022 contribution to Gospel work in schools!

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others." (2 Timothy 2:2)

Christian Teachers Connect
Wednesday 16 March 2022
7:30–8:30pm | Online

“Our passion at SUNSW is to reach out to students with the Good News of Jesus and to intentionally develop disciples who can grow and serve in the context of the local church.”

2022 Vision for Schools Ministry



Supporting Christian teachers in public schools



A stronger online presence with effective digital engagement



Effective student discipleship/leadership development to effectively serve in their school or local church



Equipping and empowering our emerging First Nation leaders in schools and developing authentic indigenous ministry resources



What do YOU think about the Gospel?

Ellie, a regular camper for 18 years at Brooms Head SUFM, shares how she came to meet Jesus when a leader asked her this simple question.

My name is Ellie, and I'm one of the regular campers at Brooms Head Caravan Park. I'm also one of the regulars to the Brooms Head SUFM Program. Believe it or not, I started going to this program 18 years ago now! I started out as a Minimite, but I've kept going all the way through until I was a Teen and as a Young Adult. When I first started attending the program, it was mainly for the fun activities and the messy games night. I also really loved meeting other people that were my age. More importantly, I really loved to learn about God and the Bible.

When I was going through the Minimite and the Keenite program, they'd often build the Bible lessons around a central memory verse. I was always trying hard to have the verse memorised before the end of the program. I even sent letters to some of the leaders halfway through the year, just to let them know that I still remembered the verse.

I remember one afternoon when I was about to start year 8. We had finished the afternoon activities in the Teens Program. I was talking to one of the leaders and she asked me this question: **What do you think about the Gospel?**

I remember not knowing how to answer because I didn't really know what 'the Gospel' was. Of course, I didn't want to let on, so I played it cool and said, "Yeah, it's pretty good!" She saw straight through my response and began drawing on a piece of paper diagrams from the *Two Ways to Live* booklet and explained to me about Jesus and why Jesus had to die on the cross.

And at that moment, it all just started to make sense. Everything I'd learned from Minimites and as a Keenite and all the memory verses over the years. They all fell together.

“ **I finally understood who God was and how He loved me. It was a few days later that I officially gave my heart to the Lord and I became a Christian.** ”

I started to attend church and then a youth group. But every year, I always came back to SUFM because I got so much out of the programs. I became close friends with a lot of the leaders.

I was so inspired by the work that they did on Mission that I, in turn, was inspired to take on more leadership roles in my own church.

I started working towards becoming a youth leader and even went on a few mission trips myself. All of which has left me so incredibly blessed.

“ **One of the things that really stands out to me within my own testimony is how God uses even the littlest things to make a big impact in someone else's life. Little things, like sending a letter, or asking a question.** ”

If you're considering volunteering with SUNSW I want to encourage you to go for it! It's such a great program, and I can honestly say that my life could be totally different without it. You'll be working alongside some great people, and you'll go to some amazing beaches. I know the community at Brooms Head really appreciates the work that SUFM does. And I know that God will bless you in volunteering with them just as much as it's been a blessing for me and for the community to have you guys come in and share the word with us.

**WATCH
THE FULL
INTERVIEW
WITH ELLIE!**



E100 Challenge

Want to strengthen your spiritual muscles in 2022?
Join us for the E100 challenge and be prepared to
plunge into the greatest story ever told.



Written by:
Jasmine Ruigrok,
Hunter Regional Coordinator

For over 150 years, Scripture Union has passionately proclaimed the truth that scripture is the fundamental means by which God speaks to people today. From the simplicity of writing “God is love” (1 John 4:16) on a beach in NSW sparking the very first Beach Mission, to now providing extensive Bible resources for all ages, scripture remains the central focus of what Scripture Union is – and has always been – about: making God’s Good News known to children, young people and families.

Yet for many people, reading the Bible can be a daunting task.

Where do I start?

How long do I read for?

What about the parts I don’t

understand, or don’t make sense?

Who can help me?

SUNSW is excited to announce the relaunch of the E100 Bible reading plan.

This plan features 100 carefully selected excerpts from both the Old and New Testaments to help bring clarity to the Bible story. It also includes reflections on the passages to further engage with their meaning and recognise their relevance for your life today.

Can you commit to reading the Bible everyday for 100 days? Are you up for the challenge?

It’s no easy feat, which is why you shouldn’t do it alone. We want to invite you, your church, your youth group, your Bible study group, your friend group from school or work to join in on this challenge!



We are going to commit to reading 100 passages in the Bible, together.

Starting at Easter, you will be inspired to follow along the journey with others over Instagram and Facebook, being encouraged to share your experience and thoughts on each passage every day through hashtags and stories to spur one another along.

There will also be incentives along the way: various prizes when you reach a milestone on your quest to read 100 passages so you might be encouraged to persevere.

If you have been discouraged in your Bible reading of late, or if you have been curious about the Bible but never knew where to start; if you could use something fresh to add to your rhythm of being in the Word daily, or you’re sceptical of what the Bible might even have to say, this is your chance to try something new.

This is an opportunity for you to meet with God in a whole new way, and to do it together with people from all over NSW. **How different could your life be in 100 days? There’s only one way to find out!**



**REGISTER NOW, AND
GET READY TO JOIN THE
CHALLENGE:
EASTER, APRIL 18TH, 2022**

sunsw.org.au/e100-challenge

Autumn Camps

School-aged children's holiday camps coming up this Autumn!

SURGE Camp Riverina

Wagga Wagga | 4–6 March

Glenbawn Fishing Camp

Near Scone | 18–20 March

Above & Beyond

Mudgee | 19 March

Dare 2B Different

Wedderburn, near Campbelltown
Date TBA

SUPAg Camp

Eurimbla, near Orange | 12–14 April

Fishing & Diving Camp

Tathra, near Bega | 10–15 April



Outback Adventure Camp

Ashford | 10–14 April

Camp Conqueror

NSW South Coast | 17–23 April

Rugby League Camp

Tamworth | 20–22 April

Senior Ag Camp

Eurimbla, near Orange
22–25 April

Bake Off! Camp

Tamworth | 20–22 May



BOOK NOW!

[sunsw.org.au/
events](https://sunsw.org.au/events)



Meet the new SUNSW staff!

We are super excited to have over 10 new staff members join our team in the first quarter of 2022! Here are some of them below.

Read more about our new staff & 2022 interns on our website!



Shelley Cattell

Executive Assistant



Kate Watson

Operations Manager



Jo Parkinson

Missions Admin



Kylie Letcher

Western District Regional Worker



Joanne Faletose

Southern Regional Coordinator



Kelly Payne

Far North Coast Regional Worker