



### Message from the Committee

Hello and welcome to our Christmas end of term newsletter. As we celebrate the season that Jesus came to us as a gift, we are reflecting on the gifts and encouragement that God has given us this year at Southampton University Christian Union. It has been a long term since September, but one that has been full of exciting events. We have welcomed a new intake of students, put on lunch time talks, carol services, an alpha course, a grub crawl, and many other things. We have run weekly events such as text a toastie, inside out, and international café. But more importantly this term we have told people about Jesus and the Good News that he brings. We thank you for your support and prayer for us, and we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### International

The academic year started with a prayer event for the welcome program for international students. We gave the whole thing over to the Lord and He is so faithful. As a CU we've continued to see His goodness every single day over this term. We met over 100 students in the international welcome week events; just a small number of these we've seen continuously at icafé every week. The interest from international students into spiritual things in the Bible has been really positive this semester; please do be praying for those who have been coming. Every week there are those who have never opened a Bible before reading about Jesus and engaging with His word. There are in particular two PhD students who are regular attenders of icafé and have close Christian friends on team who we would love to see come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus. Praise the Lord for an exchange student who became a Christian two weeks ago. She will return to China in February so do be praying for her growth and walk with the Lord. Additionally, we've just had a large number of 50-60 internationals attend a Christmas meal with a Christmas themed gospel talk during the final week of the semester. Thank the Lord for that successful and well-attended event. 16 of these filled out a follow-up and feedback form to say they are in Southampton over Christmas and would like to be contacted and invited to church. Susan, the staff worker for Friends International, is linking up these students with individuals and the churches in the city. Do pray for this work and contact that God would bless with much fruit at this time of year.

### Alpha

This term we have been running another Alpha course and it has been really exciting to see God working in

people's lives through this. We've had a mixture of students coming to speak, and using talks from a dvd, to explain more about what it means to be a Christian, and the people who have been coming along each week have taken the opportunity to ask lots of questions. People have been really receptive to the gospel, and seem excited by what it has to offer, which has led to people wanting to do uncover, and someone has given their life to Jesus. Please pray that relationships that have been built through this would continue to grow, and more people would come to know Jesus for themselves.

### Inside Out

Inside Out has continued serving clubbers this term, looking after them, chatting with them, and sharing the gospel. Two encouragements from the term. After conversations at Inside Out, A was invited to church and went for the first time this term. Two other students were found outside Portswood Church one Friday evening waiting for Inside Out to start so that they could have a chat with those serving there. They sat in while the team were having a short bible study and praying and interrupted during one prayer to ask what was meant by hope and grace.

### Freshers' Week

God did wonderful things in Freshers' week 2014. Many people came to hear of Jesus through the Christian Union, and Christians were able to get stuck in straight away to a welcoming community. Although the week was packed with events, we are so thankful that real friendships have emerged and Jesus is still being shared because of the week!

Six hundred and fifty washing up liquid bottles had event information labels stuck to them, eleven

thousand flyers of various sorts were ordered, and four hundred church crawl booklets were sent to print.

We were able to move in countless new students with their families, and had the opportunity to be at the brand new Mayflower halls in the city centre. We were greatly encouraged by the fantastic conversations that were had because of our presence there. One CU member had a conversation with over ten of the staff about Jesus. Praise God!

The BBQ's and Doughnuts was a great success. Montefiore and Glen Eyre had over one hundred and fifty people each.

The Chilled Night In was a new event for this year. It was a time for new students to have a quieter night with their flats if they wanted an alternative to going out clubbing. This was a really great time for going to older students houses and playing board games or just chatting!

For the first time, three lunch time talks were put on in parallel across the halls, with the third in the city centre for the new Mayflower Halls. We were able to share with Solent University and have students from both Universities engaging with the gospel. There may have been fewer people there than baguettes, but what a joy it was to chat and share with each person who came.

Pre-Unite Pizza was a wonderful way to finish a brilliant week. Over one hundred Freshers' came and spent time together. Praise God for the palpable excitement at Unite and for those who could hear what a wonderful gospel we share as a CU and why we do it. And who could forget the Mark Drama? God came through with a location for our rehearsals and performance last minute after a stressful room mix up, and one hundred and thirty people came to St Albans church to see Mark's gospel. Many people took bibles and wanted to find out more, including those of other faiths. What a brilliant God we have!

Please pray for the Freshers this year. Pray that those who haven't engaged with church yet would do so. Also pray for those who are searching, that they would find the courage to ask questions and find out more. Please pray for the friendships that Freshers' week brought about, and the continued ministry there. Please pray for the CU, that we would serve and love those we meet!

## Carol Services

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, four carol services were held at Highfield Church. Hundreds of students came and

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**united by Christ's LOVE // grounded in the BIBLE // excited about sharing the GOSPEL**  
*so that ALL may hear and respond to the Good News and Love of Jesus Christ.*

heard from Charlie Skrine, our speaker for Events week. The choir and orchestra sang and played beautifully, with "Mary did you know?" a particular favourite! Hall groups battled it out to make the most mince pies, and Charlie gave a great talk, showing how Jesus has to be talked about at Christmas time. Many were challenged and encouraged to find out more. So many people took Uncover John's, a six session bible study that helps people find out who Jesus is through John's gospel. Praise God for that! Please be praying that many conversations would come of it, and many people would come to know Jesus because of what they heard.

## Text-A-Toastie

Our Lord has a plan for each and every student in Southampton, and that has never been more evident than from hearing the joyful testimonies of TaT team members who have been witnessing how the Gospel message has been touching hearts this term. We have had people texting in some really good questions on things they are struggling with. What is the difference between one religion's terrorist and another's freedom fighters? What made you be certain that God exists? Why won't God answer my prayers? These questions have been challenging for team to answer, but God has His hand on our discussions and we can always rely on Him to reach in with His abounding grace.

Our prayer is that the people texting in to come away from Wednesday nights with more than just a toastie; we want them to be saved. And all things are possible with God's hand on them.

## Dates for the Diary

26 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Promo Week
2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Events Week
18 <sup>th</sup> Feb	SUCU AGM

## Could you support us financially?

As a CU we're in an incredibly privileged position to reach out to the students of the University of Southampton, and we're grateful to all those who support us so generously. However, there is a financial cost to almost all we do and we'd always appreciate more support of this kind. Gifts can be made via the CU's bank account (account number : 02493362, sort code: 30-97-80). Please contact Hannah Aird ([treasurer@sucu.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@sucu.org.uk)) with any giving related queries. Thank you!