

Student Soul update

Kia ora friends at Leith, Flagstaff, Emmanuel, and to all the various churches around Dunedin and the south who are receiving this, especially you Southern Presbyterians who we belong to in a special way.

I hope you are well!

I'd like to take a minute to update you on what's been happening with [Student Soul](#).

1. Short debrief of 2021
2. Oaken cafe opportunity
3. Vision night & growing a stronger team
4. Focusing on the main thing for 2022
5. Prayer points in summary

The year that has been 2021

The old days before lockdown

This year has been a strange mix of fast and slow, as seems to be a regular experience. In some ways, it doesn't seem long ago that we were just kicking into things. But at a staff micro-retreat a couple of weeks ago, it was crazy to reflect on how much water has gone under the bridge.

We started off the year with a mini-series in Song of Songs called "**Benefits of Kissing.**" Next, after Easter + mid-semester combo, we did a mini-series in Mark called "**So Long, Hipster Jesus.**" To round off Semester One, we had a single release party for our song Shout Your Praises.

Energy was pretty low by that point with winter setting in and exams,= and I had the sense the we needed to recharge some batteries and lean into prayer. So at the beginning of semester 2, we had three weeks of minimalist church. One favourite activity emerging out of that was "blackout poetry".

(Faces)

Tiana (top row, second from the left) has been taking photos of some of our crew. We're working on a "stories" project to kick off 2022, and this is a visual demo of that. It's finding the mix between sharing who we are and reaching out in an invitational way to new people to come on the journey with us. I think it could become a rolling theme and way of integrating message and media in a way which is both compelling and honest.



Lockdown and beyond

We were just about to host a combined churches worship night at Polytech before kicking off a series called "The House Party Season" when we found ourselves back in lockdown. We continued on with ministry online, hosting guest speakers on Sunday nights and exploring a platform called [Gather](#) which is like a mix between Pokemon and Zoom.

(I made [this 30-second video](#) for the PCANZ General Assembly about our experience in lockdown.)

We came out of lockdown with 4-weeks of gatherings remaining before exams kicked in. I was praying that we would be able to harness the energy of Student Soul into a strong, exciting finish. We had at least one guest each week, and finished with a bang, farewelling the year, sending graduates out, saying thanks to Tessa who finished up in her staff role. It was quirky, worshipful, creative, funny, and seemed to leave a good taste in everyone's mouths. Honestly, it was kind of epic! So we were happy with that :-)

And now we are moving forward to 2022.

Oaken cafe

Oaken has been our place for the last 18-months. It has been a great base for Student Soul, and we're so grateful to Linda who has allowed us access, purely through relationship and grace.

Now Oaken is for sale.

So I thought I would just throw it out there to see if there is anyone around who might be interested to get in on a kingdom opportunity.

This is a profitable business with room for growth. With the right approach and people, it could be something like a beach-head for kingdom growth in the tertiary space, much of which is quite hard to access.

Feel free to pass the image on if you know anyone, or reach out to me if you're wondering about it.



FOR SALE



Oaken cafe is for sale.
If anyone is interested in
collaborating on a kingdom
venture, contact Tom Mepham



027 337 1703
tom@studentsoul.org.nz

Vision night & growing a stronger team

Next Wednesday I am running a vision night for Student Soul. I have invited people who are friends, who are invested somewhat in the student ministry space, who are interested, to come be a part of it.

I am going to outline the WHY? about student ministry, what we are here for. Which when you get down to it is the fact that Dunedin is home to 25,000 students who are locally based and globally connected. This is a MASSIVE mission field. We are here for this.

I am going to outline a few principles of ministry that matter to us, as we have developed our priorities, culture, and direction as Student Soul. And in the midst of some food, and chat, interaction, and fun, I'm going to invite people to consider coming on board the team to do ministry in this space in 2022.

We need a wider support base, and so that is what I'm seeking to do - grow a stronger team. It will include some of my students, but I'm hopeful for a few extra folks who can properly commit to partnering or collaborating in a deeper way.

Student Soul

Vision Night
MISSION / ON PURPOSE

www.studentsoul.org.nz

Scope
Play
Food
Imagination

2022

7:30pm

Wed. 24th Nov.
www.studentsoul.org.nz

Student Soul office
15 St David St

THE STRATEGIC FUTURISTIC VIEW

What's it about?
There are 25,000 students in Dunedin. They are locally based and globally connected. The majority are unreached with the gospel. Student Soul is here for this reason.

In a world like ours, on a day like this, it's time to ...

Awaken to your creative power

Focusing on the main thing for 2022

With Oaken for sale, we are again unsure as to where we will meet again. But this is not an uncommon experience! Sure, there are limits with not having a fit-for-purpose base to do ministry from. It can be a challenge.

HOWEVER. We are not mainly here to inhabit a building. We are mainly here in response to the call of Jesus upon our lives:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

We are here to proclaim with words and lives that Jesus is Lord. We are here to invite students to begin a journey of becoming more like Jesus. We are here so that the lost might be found, the blind might see, and those who are asleep would be awakened to life, and life to the full.

Our task is the spiritual formation of students and young adults in the Way of Jesus. It is the formation of a community of light and life, that can witness to an alternative way of being to the culture around. It is to push the bounds of creativity, bravery, risk, innovation, and agility in our pursuit of God and in faithfulness to the call of the Spirit.

This is the WHY.

There are certain priorities that flow out of this that shape the contours of ministry practice. Without a guaranteed venue for 2022, the HOW is perhaps uncertain. But we have our WHY and WHAT all lined up. Following on from vision night, I will take my ministry strike team, those who have said YES. And we will look at our strengths, assess the resources at hand, and DESIGN the how, together.

And then like any good mission team, we will land in 2022 and see what pathways the Lord leads us onto.

Finally - prayer focus points

Thank you for reading. For you praying people out there, here's a few prayer points for you to get your teeth into.

1. Thanks for the year that has been, the blessing of life, and the joy of ministry with and among students
2. For Linda, the owner of Oaken - blessing upon her as she seeks to move into the next stage. Appreciatively for her friendship and kindness that has enabled ministry to flourish over the past 18 months. And the possibility of Oaken. Should we buy it?

3. In my preparation for Vision Night, that I would compellingly communicate the WHY and WHAT. That people would come who have been invited. And that God would build a stronger team to enable student ministry to flourish more strongly, for Christ's sake.
4. That regardless of buildings, regardless of what happens next with Covid (for the disruption may well continue), that we would become increasingly skilled and competent as an organisation at our main tasks of discipleship/spiritual formation and growing as a community in ways that work suit both our local-global / offline-online realities.

God bless you all. Greetings from Student Soul to each one of you and the various churches and Christian networks you represent.

Please send your updates and anything that we can be praying for on your behalf.

Grace & peace in the Lord

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