



Sydney Summer Mission Team

Lives Changed by Christ

What if you spent your whole life as a Christian unsure whether or not you really had a relationship with God? How would that impact your life if you didn't have that assurance? When I first met Swapnil, an Indian architecture student at the University of Sydney, he shared enthusiastically about his excitement to join a Christian club. His family is part of strong church in a rural part of India where persecution for being a Christian is strong. As he became regularly involved, we started meeting on Thursdays to read the Bible together. Over the years in ministry I've learned to never assume a Christian has been discipled in core basic truths of the Bible. It turned out that no one had ever shown him in the Bible that our salvation comes from Christ alone, and there is nothing we need to add in our own strength to his work on the cross. While he trusted in Christ he thought maybe there was something else he was missing. After looking at several key passages that talks about our security in Christ and how we can have assurance of our salvation, you could visibly see a look of relief and joy in Swapnil that wasn't there before. He now shares how our times in God's word is changing his life. God's Word is so powerful!

This semester we have seen many Christians take steps to grow in their relationship with God. At our last Christian fellowship meeting, students shared how their lives have been impacted by Christ. Their love for God has overflowed to others as they've invited their friends to explore Christ this past semester. We have had 15 small group Bible studies consisting of mostly non-believers from countries including China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, and Korea. We thank God for 10 students who indicated trust in Christ this semester! Looking back over the entire year there have been 21 students who trusted Christ, many baptisms, and students being discipled to grow in the Lord and share the gospel with others.

Our vision is to see international students changed by Jesus who make disciples everywhere they go. As the year is wrapping up, our team met to dream about next year. We are praying to see 14 small group Bible studies completely led by students. As these students graduate we want to send them out as multiplying disciples who make disciples wherever they go. And the one thing that I know to be a fact, once international students graduate they are on the move. They go everywhere. We continue to be motivated to help students have a vision for how God could use their lives to help fulfill the Great



The boys loved meeting Swapnil at our home, where he taught us how to make authentic masala chai!

Missio Dei: The Mission of God

15 students joined a week long summer mission in Sydney where they explored the mission of God. Each morning we spent time in God's Word and in the afternoon we partnered with various churches and organizations who are actively pursuing God's mission to bring the light of Christ to the city. The days ended with times of reflection with the Lord and the team. Over the span of 5 days, students participated in initiative evangelism in partnership with a local church, giving groceries to seniors in a Chinese neighborhood, collecting community interviews for a local church who is seeking better ways to serve their neighbors, cross-cultural surveys in a South Asian community, and community service in partnership with a network of churches in an underserved neighborhood.

At the end of the exhausting week, many students were encouraged to think about how they can continue to be on mission with God in the future. Several of the students have shared how they feel more confident to take steps of faith to share Christ with others. One student, who only came to Christ a few months ago, is starting to communicate the gospel with her friends. Another student mentioned she is more aware of listening to the Holy Spirit's prompting to serve others around her, something that she would have been too afraid to do before. Praise God for an awesome week of mobilizing students to join His mission in the world.

Baby Girl Arriving in January!

Many of you may already know (sorry this announcement is so late), but we are expecting our third child to arrive on January 15th! We are so excited to meet her. Emily is overall doing well despite some extra nausea and pregnancy-related issues. She's currently having extra checkups with her doctors as we have discovered some issues

with the baby's kidneys. Overall baby girl is in good health, but it looks like she will need to have surgery most likely a few weeks after the delivery to save partial function of one of her kidneys. The other kidney also has some issues that they will monitor. We are so thankful to live in a city with excellent care and to ultimately know that she is in the care of God's loving hands. The boys are looking forward to meeting their baby sister. We also look forward to having lots of help from our parents who will give us a good 6 weeks of much needed help when baby arrives.



Springtime in Sydney is incredibly beautiful with these fun and crazy boys.

We thank God for you and all the ways you support our family. We give thanks that you are on this journey with us as together we join God in what He is doing among international students in Sydney. Merry Christmas from Down Under!

Blake & Emily Ackerson

Praise & Prayer Requests

- Praise God for all the students who trusted in Christ this year. Pray for their protection and growth in the Lord. An update about Mohammad: I'm in touch with him again. But he said he needed to distance himself because his family has pressured him to return to Islam. In his heart he says he is still seeking truth and that Islam isn't for him. Please pray that God would put other Christians in his life.
- Praise God for the week of mission in Sydney. Pray that God would empower students to continue to walk with Him and make Him known to others.
- Praise God for our baby girl. Pray for safety and health that God would preserve her life. Pray for Emily's health and the delivery scheduled on January 15th. Pray for energy as we are already exhausted parents! Pray for our boys as change is always so hard, especially for Nathaniel.