



Our amazing team with 6 nationalities: Australia, Hong Kong, U.S., Brazil, Korea, & the Philippines!

Internationals Encountering Jesus

Over the past two months our team has seen students take significant steps in their faith journey with Jesus. One student from East Asia who attends my Bible study went from being completely against the idea of following Jesus to seriously considering trusting in Him. He now reads the Bible passage before we meet so he can be prepared for our discussion! Recently he shared that he now believes in the events of Jesus' death and resurrection and is considering what it might look like to trust in Him.

Mohammad, a student from the Middle East who is here just one semester, amazingly made a decision to follow Jesus! After reading the story of the two thieves on the cross, he knew he needed to make a decision of whether or not to follow Jesus, even though it would cost him. In his words, *"It's time for me to make a decision, but I know it's not going to be easy if I say yes to Jesus. But I also know life isn't about staying in my comfort zone."* This past Sunday, *Mohammad* came to church with our family and afterward, over lunch at our home, he declared his trust in Jesus. He will return home in June and Blake will continue to meet with him online. Prayerfully he will get connected to a local believer through Cru's global network.

Sometimes we walk up to students on campus we don't know yet in order to surface anyone interested in learning about God. If we meet spiritually interested students, our hope is to share the gospel and then invite them to join one of our weekly investigative Bible studies. *Hao*, a Chinese student we met in this way mentioned he had been looking for an opportunity to learn about Christianity since he arrived. The next day I was able to walk through the gospel with him for his first time. Another student we approached named *Xin* was also eager to learn about Jesus. It turns out some Christians shared the very same message about Christ with him in the same spot on campus just the day before. It was clear to *Xin* (and us) that these encounters were not random, and that God is pursuing him. It is such a privilege to witness students taking steps toward Jesus, no matter how big or small.



Our family enjoyed having students over for pancakes! The kids are always excited when students come over.

Some of our teammates are also seeing students trust in Jesus. Shirley, a team member from Brazil, reported that a student China declared to everyone during her Bible study that he now believes in Jesus. He even bought a Bible on his own to start reading it for himself. One of our Australian teammates also reported that after going through a 6 week Bible study called Christianity Explained with a student from China, he trusted Christ and immediately started sharing with friends and family about his decision. Praise God!

Mobilizing Christians

Several of the Christian students we trained in sharing the gospel are taking steps to communicate Christ with their friends. We challenged these students to share the gospel in their discussion groups at our regular campus event (called Family Dinner) that gathers between 50-80 international students. At one of our latest Family Dinners we discussed the story of the Prodigal Son. Anna, a Canadian student, shared how easy it was for her to bridge to the gospel and share Christ with a Chinese friend at her table as a result of the training. *Hannah*, another student from East Asia who trusted Christ 4 months ago also took a step of faith and shared with her roommate. After sharing the gospel, *Hannah's* roommate said, "Why did you choose to follow Jesus?" *Hannah* started to share her testimony by saying, "Why not! He did everything for us to be able to know God!"

Praise God for all the He is doing in pursuing the nations! Our prayer is to see a movement of international students reaching the nearly 45,000 international students on these two campuses (USYD & UTS) with the good news of Christ!

One Year, Down Under

God's goodness to our family has been overwhelming as we look back over this past year since arriving in Sydney. Thank you for being on this journey with us! We are continually amazed at the numerous opportunities to make Christ known to the nations. Your partnership and friendship means more than you could ever know. We love you.

Blake & Emily Ackerson



Celebrating Nathaniel's 4th birthday with church friends and neighbors!

Praise & Prayer Requests

- Praise God for all the ways we are seeing Him work to bring international students to Himself. 11 students came to Christ this semester (1 from France, 1 from the Middle East, 2 from Korea, and 7 from East Asia)!
- Praise God for bringing *Mohammad into His family*. Please pray for God to protect and provide for him as he begins his walk with Christ and as he returns home. Pray that we can find local believers to walk with him as it will be a costly journey for *Mohammad* to faithfully follow Jesus.
- Pray for God to raise up a missional community of Christian international students who are on fire to share Christ and make disciples of all nations.
- Pray for our very diverse team as we enter into our mid-year evaluation and planning time, that God would continue to unify us and that we would be a team dependent on Him and each other.
- Pray for the Winter Conference from July 1st-5th near Brisbane, that many believers will be motivated to live for God and that many seekers will encounter Jesus.
- Pray for our family as we take a couple weeks vacation over the winter break that it would be a special time of rest.