



Chai and Chat - a new South Asian community

New semester. New steps of faith.

At the start of the semester, our team set a goal to see 14 students commit to leading small groups, where they seek to share Christ with their friends. By week 3 we had exceeded our goal! This semester we have been encouraged by the believers who have stepped up to lead in various ways. Some are leading a Life Group, where they walk through an overview of the Bible with those who have little to no understanding of Christianity, and other student leaders are facilitating table discussions each week at our Family Dinner with dozens of other internationals.

Most of the international student population on campus is from China or South East Asia. Increasingly, however, students from India are finding their way to Sydney to study. We started a group called Chai and Chat for our South Asian friends, and are seeking to share our lives in an environment that builds friendship and trust. Two christian students from India decided to take ownership of this group by making a plan to invite their friends. Their excitement to see God at work among the Indian community at the University of Sydney has been so encouraging to see.

At our first Chai and Chat gathering, we had around 12 Indian students crowded in a small

apartment eating Indian food, which somehow turned into a small talent show. Before the impromptu singing and dancing, one girl pulled me aside and asked me more questions about Christianity. She shared that she came from a small minority village in India where Buddhism is the primary practiced religion, and that her family's faith in Buddhism is strong. However, two of her aunties became followers of Christ, which has since opened her mind to explore the Bible on her own. Every so often she prays in Jesus' name when she feels sick and each time she's experienced some sort of help and healing, which has led her to be unsure if Buddhism is true, or if Christianity is true. She attends the University of New South Wales, and our ministry doesn't have a presence on her campus yet (see story below for an exciting development). It was amazing to see that through this small group and the initiation of our student leaders such a community could gather and significant conversations naturally arise. Pray for the South Asian community on Sydney's university campuses, as more and more of them are open to exploring Jesus. Pray that through this small group that has formed relationships of trust would lead to curiosity about Jesus.



Naomi and Swapnil are leading Chai and Chat and taking big steps of faith!

Exploring a New Campus

Last year, Pastor Victor emailed Power to Change (Cru's name in Australia) with a request for help. Next door to his small church, a 350 bed high-rise student accommodation was being built that, when finished, will house students from the University of New South Wales (UNSW). The vast majority of this building will house international students, and amazingly this campus and church is about 15 minutes from our home! For the past few months, I've been meeting Pastor Victor to pray and begin preparing for what could be an amazing opportunity for this church to engage in international student ministry. Not only does this church have a desire to make Christ known, but they are also passionate about making disciples who will then go out and make more disciples of Christ. This semester I've been spending one day a week exploring the campus, which has around 20,000 international students! God seems to be opening a door for us to consider launching a new ministry at UNSW, and excitingly it will be in partnership with a local church!

Our Family of Five!

Adeline is over 2 months old now! Your prayers and support for our family during this time has been so encouraging. We couldn't have made it without your prayer support and the help of family flying down to help for the first 6 weeks. Nathaniel and Elijah are learning what it means to be big brothers, and we are learning how to juggle

between three small kiddos. Life is full and God is good. Many of you are also wondering how Adeline is doing since we discovered her unique needs regarding her kidneys. Her doctors will continue to monitor her one functioning kidney with regular scans to see if things remain stable or if further action is needed. She is on a daily antibiotic to keep any urinary track infections at bay as this poses her greatest risk to her functioning kidney. Other than some extra doctor appointments and her need for an antibiotic she is a beautiful and happy baby. Thank you for your prayers. We are also so grateful that Emily has been recovering well. It's been so great to begin to get out in Sydney's beautiful nature as a family of five!



Praise God for His incredible faithfulness and goodness. Thank you for your love and care for our family and for your partnership in the gospel.

Blake & Emily Ackerson

Praise & Prayer Requests

- Praise God for the 14 students leading small groups. Pray for God to increase their faith in Him.
- Pray for the South Asian community along with our small Chai and Chat group. Pray that these students will
 form trusting relationships that will ultimately lead to exploring Jesus. Pray for Naomi and Swapnil as they
 lead.
- Pray for Pastor Victor and the opportunity to start an international student ministry at the student apartment next door. Pray for God's hand of favor. Pray also for wisdom on how to start a recognized student club at UNSW among the 20,000 international students.
- Pray for the hospitality program we are initiating between local families and internationals over the Easter weekend. 70 students from 10 nations are matched with 19 families from 12 churches! Check it out at http://friendsfordinner.com.au Pray for opportunities for international students to hear the gospel and put their trust in Jesus this Easter.
- Praise God for Adeline, and pray for her good kidney to be in full function and for protection from infection.
 Pray for our family as we have many joyful moments with being a family of 5 alongside times of exhaustion.