



Our team of volunteers from a local Sydney church who led an English Corner at UNSW.

A student apartment, a church, and an open door.

Two years ago a pastor name Victor from a small church next to the University of New South Wales (UNSW) reached out to let us know there was a 350 bed student apartment being built next door to his church, and asked to meet up. What I didn't know when we first met was how God was not only making a way to reach international students on a new campus of 30,000 international students, he was also opening up potentially a new way to reach more international students across Sydney! In June of this year we were able to enlist volunteers from this small church to lead an English Corner for six weeks as an introduction to international student ministry. One volunteer said, "I had no idea how easy it was to interact with these students and to get into significant spiritual conversations." Since then Pastor Victor has gathered a team within his church who are leading the efforts to reach the many international students next door attending UNSW. My role has been to help coach and support any of their efforts as a church-based international student ministry.

What I love about this partnership is that it is led by a local church who is taking significant steps to engage international students.

For example, Pastor Victor took a step of faith recently and met with the apartment's community director to ask how the church can serve their students. Amazingly, he received incredible favor, so much so that they are willing to create a chaplain position in the apartment and potentially also in all 12 of their buildings across Sydney, which house thousands of international students! The apartment's community director is also willing to help students get connected to Victor's church, which will help provide tangible community support - something that international students often lack while they study in a foreign country.

It's exciting to see how God is at work through this small church who desires to see Jesus known among international students, most of whom have never had the chance to hear about Him. It's also very exciting to dream how God might continue to raise up local churches across Sydney to have a global impact as they pursue the nations in their midst with the gospel. If the Lord continues to open this door with the student apartments, we could potentially have a new way to mobilize other churches to engage international students across the city.



The first English Corner at UNSW with the team from Victor's church!

Family Update

She's home! Thank you for praying for Emily these past couple of months. She arrived home on July 30th after being in the hospital and rehab center for nearly 7 weeks recovering from two compressed fractures in her vertebrae. The fractures were from a rare but apparently not unheard of form of osteoporosis caused from pregnancy & breastfeeding. Praise God that her bones are healing well from the fractures and that we have a medical team to help us figure out the best treatment treatment for the osteoporosis once everything has healed completely.

We are grateful for all the ways God has showered his kindness and goodness upon us during this time, especially through your loving support and care for our family. It's been such a blessing to have Blake's mom around for extra support and quality time with the kids. Emily's parents will come sometime in September.

Thank you also for praying for Adeline. She loves exploring on the floor and loves her big brothers! She had an important test a week ago to determine if the pooling of urine in her ureter and kidney was caused from reflux, or back flow from her bladder. The good news is that it doesn't seem like that is the case. The plan is to have a follow-up appointment with her kidney specialist to see if she needs a different kind of test that will help determine what is going on, and the next steps. For now Adeline is happy and healthy!

Below: Addie with Blake's mom, and the kids welcoming Emily home!



We give thanks that you are on this journey with us as we join God in what He is doing among international students in Svdnev.

Blake & Emily Ackerson

Praise & Prayer Requests

- Praise God for the partnership with Pastor Victor and his church.
- Pray specifically for the relationship between the apartment leadership and Victor that the Lord would protect and grow that connection.
- Praise God we already have identified a church near another student apartment (with the same company) that is interested in starting a ministry among international students!
- Pray that the Lord will continue to open doors to start a new ministry at the University of New South Wales through Victor's church.
- Pray for the beginning of the semester at USYD, where we are trusting for the Lord to work among the 35,000 international students on this campus.
- Praise God Emily is home and that her bones are healing well. Pray for complete healing and that God would guide her medical team.
- Praise God that Adeline is doing well, and pray for her doctors as they determine her next steps.