



What's in This Newsletter?

Too much to say! Salvations, Answered Prayers, and Pastor's Smoking Cigars?

Living Waters Baptist Church: This September, the Lord gave me the opportunity to fill-in for Pastor Simeon Brazzell of Living Waters Baptist Church in Parramatta, NSW, and fellowship with the sweet folks there as well as distribute many gospel tracts.

In Sydney, I was also able to spend time with my fiancée, Ira, her family, and her church. I am thankful for the time getting to know her family better and to help out at her church through preaching, tract distribution, and assisting a youth event. I was even able to take advantage of a children's ministry seminar given by child evangelist, Tom Geer.

Speaking on Father's Day, September 1, I preached my **first Father's Day message** about God the Father: "The Best Father in the Universe." On September 21, my fiancée and I went with some young adults and teens from her church to a volleyball tournament and youth rally hosted by a church in Sydney. We also met up with a family of three from Living Waters, and they were able to join our group for volleyball. I'm happy to announce that our group got second place for the Bible quiz contest!

Being in Sydney gave me some time to prepare for future ministry. I spent time in prayer and study especially for a Bible study series on prayer which began in October. Speaking of prayer, I was praying passionately for the Lord to save a soul. As I remember, later that day or the following, a friend of mine from Melbourne called and told me that a teenager named Israel he had been mentoring **confessed Christ!** Immediately, my mind went back to my prayer, and I felt the confident that God had answered prayer. The more I have been emphasising prayer personally and learning how the Bible prescribes prayer the more I have seen God working in various ways. All glory be to God!

Calvary Baptist Church/National Baptist Fellowship: Calvary Baptist Church celebrated its 51st anniversary on September 29, 2024. I'm thankful for this ministry and the people it has influenced for Christ over the years; however, we need more churches in Australia. Following the anniversary, I attended the National Baptist Fellowship in Adelaide where I was able to fellowship with independent Baptists from all over Australia. According to one pastor, Australia has around 150 Independent Baptist churches. If my math is correct, that means there is roughly **one church for every 175,000 Aussies**. I recently listened to a ministry podcast of an Aussie church planting group, and one of the hosts said that **only 5% of Aussies go to Bible-believing churches**. Statistically, it seems things are on the decline, especially with a number of emigrants coming from non-Christian, 10-40 window nations. While these numbers are not good, there is a huge opportunity to reach countless souls for Christ. God is bringing the mission field to Australia! Please pray for God's Spirit to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgement and to draw people to Christ.

Graceway Baptist Church: In mid-October, a couple of friends (Caleb, Harper, and Josh) helped bring some people together for a Bible study. Our goal is to pray and consider if some of these individuals will become part of the core group of the church plant, which I've named **Graceway Baptist Church**. We've had around 5-10 people at our studies. Please pray that God would give clear direction and bless us as we move forward with the church plant in the coming months.

One blessing of the study group is the connections it provides with unbelievers. Through Josh, God gave me the chance to share a complete gospel presentation with three unsaved individuals: **Jamie, Jess, and Garry**. Jess's spouse, Jai, professes Christ, but both of them are struggling. It was a blessing to see Josh go out of his way to be a blessing in their time of need.

When I spoke to **Garry**, I gave him a couple apologetic booklets on the resurrection. Just yesterday as I write, Caleb told me that he followed up with him and that Garry told him he is convinced in the resurrection and even defended it to a friend who was trying to dissuade him! I'm so humbled and grateful when I think about how good God is. Please pray for Garry and his salvation as well as his wife.

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I am thankful that many have been praying regarding the church plant for a while, and I felt the Lord's leading toward Footscray, Melbourne's Inner West. Recently, I found out **another pastor in the northwest of Melbourne has been praying for a church in that area**, and he has offered assistance as we get started. Also, **Baptist Church Planting Ministry** has begun assisting with prayer and the planning aspects of church planting. There is much to do in the coming months, but I am excited to see what God has in store.

Miscellaneous Blessings: The last two months, the Lord has provided many blessings:

This is maybe more humorous than a blessing, but it makes me laugh. While distributing tracts one day with my fiancée, I met an elderly man in front of his apartment complex. After engaging in conversation, I told him that we had put a tract in his letterbox. He replied that he is not religious. **He said that preachers go around smoking cigars and driving Mercedes.** I replied, "Well, I'm a preacher, and I don't smoke or drive a Mercedes." I pray that the Lord will soften his heart to the gospel.

On the flight back from Sydney to Melbourne, I was conscious of witnessing opportunities, but I was put into the exit row by myself. However, right before the doors closed, a man in a suit came in. He was supposed to sit in the row behind me, but the seat was taken. The flight attendant said to sit in my row. Honestly, I was a little reluctant at first. He looked a bit rough. But I prayed for a conversation to happen, and I struck up a conversation about his suit. "You're wearing a suit on a Saturday?" I asked. He said he had just come from a wedding. From there, I asked him if he had any spiritual beliefs to which he responded, "Nope, not really. Just karma." But that was all the opening that was needed. I spent some time listening to his thoughts, but then he asked me what I believed. It amazes me that if I try to go up to someone and say, "May I share Jesus with you?" they will often say, "No, thanks." But if I ask them what they believe, most often they ask me what I believe which is the gospel of Jesus! I am thankful for this opportunity, especially when I learned later that he was not supposed to be on that flight. He was not supposed to be in my row. My fiancée was praying I would be able to witness to someone. **He was not there on accident.** God is good!

A week after I finished at LWBC, I heard an answer to prayer that one of the attendees, **Cielo, was saved!**

This year, I went to the NBF without anyone else from my church. Consequently, I didn't make any accommodation arrangements because I had hoped to stay with others who were going. Instead of booking accommodation, which I could have, I decided to follow Hudson Taylor's example and pray for God's provision as an exercise in faith-building. The first night, a friend's mum let me stay with them. But they lived an hour away from the meeting place. So I decided to move closer the next day. After ringing a couple hotels in the area and finding them pretty full, I left it to God in prayer. That night a friend randomly asked me where I was staying. When he found out I didn't have a place, he said I could stay at their Airbnb since one of their group had backed out for some reason. Praise God for answered prayer! On top of this, he didn't even ask any reimbursement because I had let him stay with me at the previous year's NBF. The Bible is true when it says that you reap what you sow. I'm excited to see the reality of **Scripture played out in real life!**

One of the young men at Calvary, **Jian**, has stepped up and spoken to the youth group in Sunday school twice in the last few weeks. He is praying about studying in Bible college.

Another of the young adults at Calvary has been seriously contemplating **music style**. He loves music but has typically enjoyed metal and pop music. Recently, I sent him an excellent presentation of music philosophy, and he told me that he needs to rethink his approach to music. I'm praying that he will continue to understand more about God-honouring music.

A couple weeks ago, circumstances put me in touch with the **Go Deaf Missions team** which has been staying in Australia for several months. In my interaction with them, I sensed that they may be short on funds, although I can't say for sure. Anyway, a friend of mine gave me a bunch of plastic bottles which can be returned for a ten-cent refund. So I took the bottles in thinking I could give the money to the team, and while I was there, a man dumped a huge load of

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bottles and left them for me. Long story short, I ended up with a significant refund which I was able to pass along to the team and a fellow church planter in Queensland. God is good!

The Lord has blessed me with an immigration lawyer to help assist with my paperwork because my visa expires in January. He has drawn up a plan which should be approved without issues, but I would appreciate your **prayers for a smooth transition of visas in the new year.**

I was able to go to Adelaide for the wedding of my Bible-study friend, JJ and his new bride, Hannah. During the wedding reception, God gave me a beautiful opportunity to witness to one of JJ's lost co-workers whom we have prayed for a number of times. I pray that what we have told him will penetrate his heart. Also, having driven to Adelaide twice in the last couple months, I feel a **burdened for the rural towns of Australia.** I took gospel tracts and did some tract distribution while I was passing through a few places, but these towns need churches and local gospel witnesses. **Please pray that God would raise up Australians to reach these out-of-the-way places.** God-willing, I would love to play a part in reaching these communities.

Upon returning to Melbourne, Calvary had its family camp, and I was blessed to attend and help out a little with the games and even teach the kids in one session. Once again, I am thankful for Calvary Baptist Church.

I know this was a long letter, but I am thankful to share a number of blessings with you. In a couple Sundays on November 17, we will have a youth service, and they will fill the roles of giving announcements, song leading, ushering, playing the music, etc. In the following months, God-willing, I will move forward in planting the church in Footscray. Thank God things are coming together, and the finances for the start-up should be taken care of. God is at work! I appreciate your fervent and persistent prayers. God bless!

Your fellow labourer,

Joshua Zacharias

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