

Since the last time we met. . .

Whenever we gather for retreat, we always start by hearing from one another and asking, "How have you been since the last time we met?" Here is a little update about us and a glimpse of how things have been going since the last time we sent out a newsletter.



Cloud of Witnesses

During orientation we ask our volunteers to participate in an activity we call Cloud

of Witnesses which is based on Hebrews 12:1-3. We ask them to write down the names of all the people who they consider to be their cloud of witnesses. These are the heroes of their faith, the people who have encouraged them, supported them financially, are praying for them. These names could be family members, friends, school mates, or colleagues. We ask them to write down pastor's names and churches that have sent them, university faith-based groups, and anyone who has encouraged their faith. The volunteers fill up a piece of butcher paper with these names that are important to them.

Then mid-way through the year we pull out the Cloud of Witnesses list and ask them to add names to it. We encourage them to include anyone they have met here in Australia who is cheering them on in their faith. We ask them to think about people back in the US who have been particularly helpful in ways they may not have expected in the beginning.

Above is a picture of our group adding to the cloud of witnesses last week. When we are finished with the activity we pray over these names, thanking God for their presence in our lives - a most helpful gift.

If you are reading this newsletter than you are part of our cloud of witnesses. You are the ones who encourage us in our call, support our ministry, and help shape our faith. As we express our gratitude to you we ask you to consider who is in your cloud of witnesses? What names would you write down on the butcher paper?

Click on our picture for a (very amateur) video about our ministry and the YAGM program here in Australia. Enjoy!

Some Bittersweetness

One important thing to note is that this YAGM cohort started as a group of 9 and is now down to 7. This is not the place to share the details surrounding these changes but know that it has added a level of difficulty and heartache for us as coordinators and has shaped the identity of this group. Meeting for retreat last week was bittersweet - a time to share, reflect, be challenged, relax, and bond but also recognize that we are not the group that started back in August. Please continue to pray for this group and for us as we lead them this year.



We spent a little over 4 days together in Melbourne for our March retreat. What you don't see in this picture is that when it was taken we could barely hear each other as the sounds of a city at work filled the atmosphere.



Family Life and Prayer Requests

- Join us in thanking God for a wonderful retreat last week in Melbourne as well as some fun family time together after the retreat! We are thankful for safe travel, honest conversations, relaxing time for the volunteers, and the chance to reconnect.
- Kim leaves in one week for a trip to the US. While she is there she will visit churches, friends, and family. The bulk of her time will be attending the Discernment-Interview-Placement event where we meet with volunteer candidates for the next cohort as well as have annual meetings with colleagues.
- Please pray for volunteers who are in the candidate process and are currently discerning their participation in the YAGM program.
- Pray for current volunteers who are heading in to the last stretch of their YAGM year. Pray that they will have stamina, energy, encouraged spirits, and deeper connections with each other and those they serve.
- Please pray for Henry and the boys as Kim will be gone for most of April and will be missing some major family events. Pray strength and encouragement for Henry and safety for all!