



BCSA PARTNERSHIP DINNER 2022

SEEKING NEW SUPPORTERS FOR STRATEGIC GOSPEL MINISTRY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Partnership Dinner Address 2022

Ellen Burford, current student

I'm halfway through a Master of Divinity at BCSA. It's been quite a messy journey to arrive where I am today! My first experience of BCSA was undertaking two electives for my Bachelor of Arts in 2014. I loved it! And thought that I might like to complete a Graduate Diploma at BCSA in the future.

After completing my BA I moved home to the Yorke Peninsula where I worked for six years. During this time I completed another two subjects at BCSA - travelling to Adelaide for the night classes in 2019. I finally moved to Adelaide to study at BCSA fulltime in 2021. At this point I suspected I would complete Master of Divinity, as I had a lifelong love for studying the Bible and was considering entering vocational ministry. Wanting to take it one step at a time I enrolled in a Graduate Diploma, but had swapped to a Masters by the middle of the year!

What brought me back to BCSA was wanting to be intentional about growing in knowledge, character and exposure to ministry opportunities. From my previous experiences at BCSA I knew that it would be beneficial to be immersed in learning and community - rather than just dipping in and out. I could see how the electives I took in 2014 were pivotal in bringing the Bible to life for me. I had come to understand how different parts of the Bible contribute to the one narrative, and that understanding is continuing to deepen so that I have a new appreciation for the exciting truth that we are being caught up in God's cosmic story of salvation!

I also moved to Adelaide looking forward to being surrounded by like-minded peers. I'd been living in a small community and - while there were many faithful Christians there - I was quite alone in my enthusiasm for studying the Bible and entertaining the idea of vocational ministry. It has been a real joy to reconnect with old friends from uni, and to form new friendships with people I expect will remain important throughout life even as we part ways in the future. It has been a huge privilege to think through life and ministry decisions alongside people who also long to serve Jesus with their whole lives. I have been inspired and humbled by them!

Outside of college I'm working in uni ministry two days a week with Evangelical Students. I have the joy of discipling women who are studying Medicine and Dentistry - a new scene for me as an Arts student! This ministry has allowed me to translate my study into practice, as I'm required to articulate what I'm learning not simply to tell students information but to train them to read the Bible for themselves. My study at BCSA is informing how I read the Bible with them, think about evangelism, and my approach to wholistic discipleship.

During quieter times of the year I try to get home and visit an Aboriginal community not far from where I grew up. A couple of college mates are part of the same team who travel from Adelaide to Point Pearce on a regular basis to encourage the Christians living there. I'm challenged to consider how what I'm learning might translate to that context. While I can't be there very often, I've been super encouraged to have the chance to pray for Point Pearce and other rural and remote contexts with a cohort of students who are either from the country or looking to serve there. There are nine of us, and getting together to pray for people, places and future opportunities has become a highlight of the week!



After I graduate in 2024 I hope to serve in an under-resourced context - whether that be rural, remote or overseas. My heart for these places comes from my own experience of the contrast between being a Christian in a small community and in the city. There is great gospel potential in the country, through generations of faithful believers and the relationships that form when people do life together. But I've also experienced the rich resources of gospel workers and Bible teaching in the city. I would love to see passionate followers of Jesus in the country able to stay there and be equipped and encouraged for discipleship where they are.

In summary, I'm incredibly thankful that BCSA exists! Academically my time at BCSA has been intellectually stimulating, but also personally edifying. And the staff - both teaching and administration - model the Christian life authentically and cultivate sincere relationships with students. They offer both knowledge and wisdom!

While I've had to move a couple hundred kilometres to be here, I'm grateful I didn't have to move interstate! Studying in Adelaide has made it possible to remain connected to friends, family and ministries. Local Adelaide students have continued to serve in their churches. And we all have been able to explore opportunities to serve in SA in the future.

But the greatest outcome of studying at BCSA for me has been that I can honestly say I love God more. And I am more convicted - than ever before - that he deserves my whole life. So, I am thankful for those whose support makes it possible for BCSA to exist, and thank you for coming tonight to learn more!