

The Arch

2014 Annual Ministry highlights



But **you** will RECEIVE POWER **The Acts of the**

when the **Holy Spirit**
comes on you; and YOU WILL BE MY
WITNESSES in **Jerusalem**, and in
all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and
to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8

Apostles has been a primary text in shaping ministry at Ryerson, the Bangladesh GUP team and my regional staff team this year. I've sat in these familiar texts with students reading them for the first time, translated into Bangla with our sister organization, and using it to shape ministry in the GTA with my

colleagues. And with each group of people, I've been impacted by the text in new ways. Acts 4 and the prayer for boldness, led GUP participants to boldly rely on God and try new things as they interacted with our Bengali brothers and sisters. During the winter semester, the Ryerson community was captivated by the Acts community, as they wrestled with what it meant to share all things in common and be a welcoming community that continues to have the Lord add to their number daily. While I was in Bangladesh, the Ryerson community continued to gather during the summer, and welcomed students from the OCAD community to study Paul's missionary journeys. We found ourselves living in the text as we grew close as a community and prayed and sent each other into local and global mission fields.



Partnership is something we seek as Campus Ministers with our students, colleagues on different campuses, and of course our supporters. This year, I've been especially blessed with moments of partnering with my supporters in new ways. I've been able to use homes for hosting students. I've had meals donated for our community dinners. And also I've had opportunities to creatively collaborate. One example that comes to mind is the Cooking Group's collaboration with Ainsley Boyd Photography. It was great to have Ainsley offer her photography skills at two of our cooking events and get to experience one of our thriving ministries.



New beginnings

This fall brought many new things my way: a new living situation, a new student leadership team, a new regional staff team configuration, and a new supervisor. The transitions have not all been smooth, but as I reflect on this fall I am grateful for each of these things. Here are a few thoughts on my living situation and student leadership team.

Living Situation:

Thank you to all of you who have been praying for housing. Amber, a good friend and former student leader, and I found an apartment at Mount Pleasant and Davisville. We've enjoyed settling in to this neighbourhood, getting to meet people in the community and hosting friends and family. I can't offer hospitality from my home to the students as I once did, but it's led me to find creative solutions. I also now have a 25 minute commute, but it's led to some great conversations with students while transiting together!

Student Leadership Team:

I said goodbye to my staff partner Dan and some of my key student leaders in April as they headed toward new roles and endeavours. I was left with a brand new team who were very new to leadership. The learning curve has been steep, but the fresh perspectives and new ideas and connections to previously unreached communities on campus like residence, grad students and South Asians has led to some exciting moments!



In some ways this summer was my summer for significant South Asian ministry. I directed the 2014 Bangladesh GUP, and here are a few of my reflections: Being the director of this GUP after serving as a staff for the past two years was a dramatic change. Suddenly, I was the one people looked to for answers; I was responsible for booking flights, determining program with our hosts and making sure our team raised all their funds. There were aspects that I loved and aspects that I hated.

LOVED

- Working with a new staff team and figuring out how to free them to lead with their strengths and grow in their weaknesses
- Renewing and deepening relationships with BSFB staff and students
- Relying on God in new ways and seeing the ways He would meet me and call me to trust and partner with Him

HATED

- Making tough decisions on behalf of the team and the ways that would affect relationships between the team and myself
- The all-consuming thoughts about the GUP and the loneliness of leadership
- Needing to always be thinking on my feet and making quick changes due to unforeseen variables

But, now as I look back on the experience, I am grateful for the things that our team learned and experienced, how well we partnered with BSFB, and the ways that I grew as a leader.

I also took two Ryerson students with me to the 3rd South Asian InterVarsity Leadership Institute hosted by InterVarsity USA in Boston this August. To be honest, I was not looking forward to this conference. I believed this would be a deeply enriching experience for the students, but I was tired from the GUP and other summer responsibilities and was sacrificing being part of some significant events in Toronto that week. But, our God is a gracious God. In all the places of need I felt, He met me with abundance. I felt a deep richness of partnership with my colleagues, I was empowered to lead and refueled after a long season of fruitful but tiring work.

And I was amazed at what happened for my students. S, a recent graduate, told me this story on the bus ride home: *"I'm a Pastor's son and have been a Christian my entire life but I NEVER talk about my faith with people. Even when my friends were thinking about becoming a Christian, I wouldn't talk to them until after they made a decision to follow Christ. I always found talking about my faith awkward. But when we were in Boston sharing our faith with strangers, I realized it's always awkward when you start but you have to get over it. So I did, and it was amazing!"* After S got home, he had started a new job, and within 20 minutes of meeting his supervisor he shared his faith and asked him to follow Jesus! And N (same one quoted in the coming pages) was so excited to reach out to South Asians on our campus. He felt inspired by the ways he can easily build relationships with non-believing South Asians and be a witness. Since returning to campus, we have had more South Asians be involved in our ministries than ever before! Praise God!



Some words from Students...

In April, the students found out my staff partner Dan would not be working at Ryerson in the fall. I asked the student leaders if they would put together a goodbye package for him. Little did I know, they had already something in the works, a goodbye package for him and a thank you package for me, which included personal notes and sentimental photos from a variety of students from our community. Here are a few of the messages I received:

“It was actually a tough year. A lot of that is thanks to you. You have challenged me in ways that I am not used to. And I have done a lot of things that have made me uncomfortable. Things like leading a Bible Study or evangelizing to total strangers. You have also shown me that being uncomfortable is good. You have shown me that we haven’t been called to comfort, but to commitment. Through the strangeness of the past school year, I’ve grown. I am deeply grateful for the ways that you have helped me grow spiritually. I’m looking forward to next year. I’m looking forward to you challenging me more. And I’m looking forward to more tough conversations over black coffee.” - N, 4th year Engineering student

“I have enjoyed very much helping with cooking group. Thank you for inviting me and accepting me with open arms. I think it was me who was more unsure about whether or not I would be accepted for not being a Christian. However, IVCF Ryerson has been about reaching out to others in the community, making people feel a part of something and gain an understanding of each other. Thank you for letting me be part of it. Through conversations at community movies and dinners, bible study and prayer group have helped me understand your point of view too. It has been an amazing experience.” - D, Food and Nutrition alumnus



Closing Words

Please keep me and the students in prayer, as we continue to reflect and apply the things we've learned this year. For more stories of this year, please visit my ministry blog: www.abalakumaran.com

Please continue to pray for my funding. To be fully funded, I currently need to raise an additional \$1000/month. To make a special one-time gift, please go here: ivcf.ca/donate

Thank you for your partnership. And enjoy this new favourite recipe from our cooking group (on the next page).



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



pineapple upside-down cake

3/4 cup butter, melted and cooled	3/4 cup dark brown sugar
1 1/2 cups flour	2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt	1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup milk	1 egg
1/2 tsp vanilla extract	7 pineapple slices (from a 20- ounce can)
1/4 cup pineapple juice (reserved from the can of pineapple)	

Preheat oven to 400F. Put 4 Tbsp melted butter in pan and grease pan with a brush. Sprinkle brown sugar evenly over melted butter. Arrange pineapple slices on brown sugar. In a large bowl, stir/ whisk flour, baking powder, salt and white sugar. Add milk, egg, vanilla, remaining melted butter and beat just until the batter is blended and smooth. Carefully spoon the batter over pineapple slices in the pan. Bake for 30 mins or until cake tester comes out clean (not inserted into a pineapple). Cool on wire rack for 10 mins. Cover with serving platter and flip. Serve warm or cool. Add dollops of unsweetened or lightly sweetened whipped cream (optional).

Yield: one 9- inch round cake

Recipe from: Great American Cakes by Lorraine-Bodger

Photo credit: Ainsley Boyd Photography