

BSU Summer Missions: Planting Gospel seeds in Thailand

Editor's Note: This summer, 120 Mississippi Baptist Student Union (BSU) students served in 20 countries, 14 states, and two U.S. territories. This is the second in a series of articles illustrating that what the summer missionaries had comprehended on paper, they now experienced for themselves: the power of the Gospel.

*By Lindsey Williams
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Nathanael Roark, BSU Summer Missionary from Delta State University, taught English to university students in Songkhla, Thailand, alongside Isaac Sivils from Mississippi State University, Jenna Landers from Blue Mountain Christian University, and Julia-Ruth Luter from William Carey University. Through group activities, movie nights, cooking, paddle boarding, shopping, and playing sports, the summer missionaries befriended and engaged in Gospel conversations with the students. In addition, they taught English classes to a few hundred elementary and middle school students and served in prison ministry and elderly care ministry.

“One way that I saw God at work most of all,” Roark shared, “was through a student named Mark. He was the person we felt we had an impact on the most. God really used us to show the love of Christ to him. Over time, we got to know Mark very well and shared the Gospel with him many times. Mark was very curious about the Gospel and was even considering converting from Buddhism to Christianity.

“One of our last days, we had a study with Mark on the story of Joseph.”



Nathanael Roark (right), Mississippi BSU summer missionary from Delta State University, serves alongside (from left) a Julia-Ruth Luter, Jenna Landers, and Isaac Sivils. (Photo credit: Nathanael Roark)

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Amid ministering to the students, Roark recognized the various challenges which attempted to deter his obedience. “One of the biggest challenges was my own self-doubt. I experienced a lot of doubt in my own abilities, which at least in part was due to spiritual warfare. I also struggled adjusting to the different living conditions. Another difficult challenge for me was just how much socializing was necessary, but God helped me a lot with that! I was able to have deep and meaningful

conversations with many students. I told them about the many struggles of mine, which helped them to open up to me in return. It also helped a lot that I enjoy sports, so the students and I had a common interest where I could get to know them better.

“I consider it of the utmost importance as a follower of Christ that we serve on at least one student missionary trip in our lifetime because it is foundational for our relationship with God. I grew more this summer than I ever have in my entire life. I am eternally grateful to have witnessed God at work in a place as dark as Songkhla. It is amazing to receive a chance to serve our incredible God overseas, in places which remain unreached. It also allows us to see that there is a greater purpose for our lives than just pursuing a career. After this summer, my mindset on my life is completely changed.”

Pray that God will break the barriers within the university students, that the Spirit will draw them to Himself so that they may come to know Christ as their personal Savior. Pray for Mark to continue studying Scripture, accept Christ as his Lord, and become a disciple who makes disciples.