

# THE CARSON COLLECTIVE

February 2025 Update

## Yonas from Grove

Yonas (name changed for privacy) grew up in an Ethiopian Orthodox church where questioning faith was discouraged. As a freshman, he got involved with us and even joined the student board, but by his sophomore year, he drifted away.

Earlier this year, I reached out to Yonas to reconnect. When I asked if he wanted to meet up, he declined, saying he was content living without religion. He told me, *"After about eight months of really delving into religion and Christianity, I decided it's not really for me."* He wrestled with tough questions about the Old Testament—issues of violence, justice, and miracles that seemed mythical. He wasn't interested in further conversations. On January 9th, I asked my boys, Cayden and Andren, to pray for him. Just two weeks later, on January 22nd, he messaged me out of the blue: *"Hey man, I'd like to accept that offer of a discussion with some boba tea!"*

Since then, we've been meeting regularly. He loves our meetups and shared, *"These conversations are really the highlight of my day."* For the first time, he's able to ask hard questions in a space where he feels heard, not judged. He's open to believing in God but still struggles with the tough parts of Scripture. My role isn't to debate him, but to share how good God has been in my life and help him process his questions.

Pray for Yonas. He is deeply kind, an excellent communicator, and genuinely cares about people. Beyond his character, he is incredibly bright! He placed 2nd in the OC Science Fair last year for his small modular nuclear reaction that he designed! He has already passed six AP classes and is currently taking four more, along with summer college courses, putting him on track to start college with over 45 credits completed. He hopes to attend UC Berkeley, pursuing a double major in Aerospace Engineering and Astrophysics!



Students have been helping to lead Bible studies at Garden Grove for the past month!

## Panama

We're also gearing up for our third annual Panama Mission Trip this summer! Last year's trip was life-changing for both LA and Panamanian students, and we're praying for another powerful experience. Please pray as we prepare, build our team, and trust God to work in ways beyond what we can imagine. We love you and thank you for praying!



Our staff team visited NYC for a prayer conference in January



Jessica and her Panama leadership team attended a missions conference in Texas

## Prayer Request

- Pray for Yonas, that he continues to seek truth and that God meets him in his questions.
- Pray for our staff and students as they are finishing the application process for Panama.
- Pray for the Panama team as they begin the support raising journey.



While in New York, I met with my former student, Caleb at Fordham!



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