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Koinonia

Association of Christians in Student
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Koinonia

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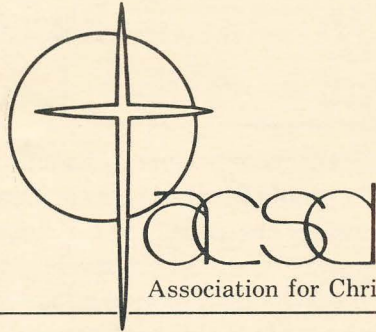


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Association for Christians in Student Development

KOINONIA

FELLOWSHIP

September 1986

A COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO RULES

by Chris Ramsey, Men's Resident Director
Southern California College

I opened up my Bible to Colossians for my devotional reading this morning, and as I went through the second chapter I came across the words which Brian Cain quoted as his life verse as an RA. We were at the RA Orals when Brian's time came to share about what he had learned this year, as we all became shockingly vulnerable and spoke of the pain and the potentials of our year we had just completed. Solemnly and deliberately Brian turned to Colossians 2:21 and said, "This verse sums up my year as an RA: Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"

The group exploded in laughter as we all identified with the irony and the reality of what that statement symbolized; because in a very real sense it was true! At one time or another we had all felt like the spiritual watchdogs of the campus, mechanically chanting our rules of forbiddance: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"

Yet isn't this really the essence of what happens when we try to pass on the values and standards of our Christian community? How many of us have also felt the helplessness of trying to enforce rules that not only have a neutral impact on the lifestyles of students, but which seem to have the effect of trying to push together two magnets of like magnetic field. The harder you push one side, the farther the other side goes.

Paul speaks an encouraging word to us as Student Development professionals as a commentary on what happens to this approach: "These are all based on human commands and teachings." We know it's true! We all stand frustrated as the Vanguards of a doomed system if we try and live by the philosophy, "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" Maybe Camus was right. There are no standards, there are no absolutes. Each man must find his own good.

However, something inside of me explodes with conviction and screams "It's not true! There is a standard of holiness and purity which God is calling us to. He is also calling us to set an example to the students and peers at the institutions which God has called all of us to serve. We must have solid guidelines that speak of the lifestyle which reflects the mission and purpose of our colleges and centers for Christian education.

Then what is the key? Why can't we set out a list of lifestyle guidelines and moral conduct and see the observance

of these principles as a pathway to facilitating the moral and faith development of our students? Because there must be something more than an empty set of rules and the unspoken, but clearly heard, "blind obedience" which we enforce on our students as part of their expectations of being a part of our respective communities. We must go beyond the written standard and communicate, exemplify and believe in the higher law. It's time we move from ceremonialism to spirituality expressed in our lifestyles, beyond the form to the foundation!

Listen to what Paul says: "These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations (and student handbooks) indeed have an appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship ("all students are required to be at Chapel 10:00 am Tue-Thur.") and their harsh treatment of the body (no drinking, use of drugs, tobacco or social dancing are allowed) BUT THEY LACK ANY VALUE IN RESTRAINING SENSUAL INDULGENCE!"

It's time we face the reality of what applies to us as the "watchdogs of the Institution. There must be a higher standard than the rules which can facilitate the spiritual growth which we hunger and pray for. Holiness begins in the heart. So am I saying that we must throw out our handbooks and let each student find his own pattern for godliness? You and I both know how quickly anarchy would follow. The sociological principle of the Lowest Common Denominator would quickly be the standard of our community. And, then LCD on the Christian campus is the same factor which is a reality on the secular campus: SIN. No, the answer is not the abandonment of our rules and regulations (although there may be room for some serious evaluation of what we are saying and trying to enforce), but by taking the challenge which Paul took in Colossians 3. The higher standard we must appeal to in challenging our students towards godliness is the model and the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Moving our mentality towards the model of Jesus Christ is the highest standard we could ever think to evoke on our campuses. But instead of placing the responsibility on a set of standards and the strong arm of the Dean, the responsibility moves to its proper position; in the life of the student. Listen to what Paul says: Verses 1-3 Paul speaks of the

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philosophy of kingdom living; verses 3-11, the strategy for living in a sinful world; verses 12-14, interpersonal dynamics of kingdom living; verses 15-18, practical insights to living godly. The result: a standard which is higher than anything we would dare to draw out. Yet instead of a dead system which bears a fruit of rebellion and cynicism, we can see the fruit godliness and the wonderful energizing synergy of the body of Christ in action.

Where does it begin? With you and me! Whenever we look at our students and say, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." They may ask, "How? . . . and we must show them with our lives!

OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PUBLICATION AWARD

In order to stimulate research and writing at a professional level ACSD is offering an Outstanding Research Publication award. This award will be determined by the Executive Committee and presented at the national conference. The award will consist of a \$100 gift and personalized plaque. Topics should be within the area of student personnel work and should be of professional content and quality. Anyone interested in submitting a project should contact the editor by February 15, 1987, and have the completed project submitted by April 30, 1987. If you would have any further questions please direct them to the ACSD editor.

We all have experienced the recent decreases in enrollment because of the smaller pool of traditional aged college students. Quite accurately the college is becoming a Road Less Traveled for many of us. As a response, we in Student Development need to begin to gain expertise in retention skills. One of the goals of this conference will be for you to develop successful retention skills and program ideas. Dr. Lee Noel (from the consulting firm of Noel/Levitz National Center for Student Retention) will lead a four-hour pre-conference workshop: "*Becoming Retention Agents*". He also will address the entire organization as a keynote speaker and have a follow-up workshop.

Another issue that faces Christian Higher Education is secularization. We are in an age where materialism, pro-abortion, militarism, hedonism, power and pluralism are the norm. We need to be institutions that are salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) to the world. Henri Nouwen challenges us when he states:

You are a Christian only so long as you constantly pose critical questions to the society you live in . . . so long as you stay unsatisfied with the status quo and keep saying that a new world is yet to come.

Our institutions should be transformed by Christ, rather, than being conformed to culture. Are we subtly adopting the values of the world and losing our taste? At this conference we will critically look at this issue and develop ways that we can challenge students that as Christians we walk the narrow path (Matt. 7:13,14) and are sojourners in an alien world (I Peter 2:11).

Finally, a distinctive of ACSD is our integration of Theology with Student Development. But often times this too is a Road Less Traveled. Scripture is rich with applications for Student Development which we have not yet realized. One area is in identity development. Dr. William T. Kirwan (who has Ph.Ds. in Theology and Psychology) has done extensive writing (*Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling*) and has vast clinical experience in this area. He will have three keynote sessions and several workshops on integrating the doctrines of soteriology and hamartology with identity development on the Christian college campus.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

FLOYD SHAFFER: Floyd will be our banquet speaker, and his address will be "*The Clown . . . Another Fool for Christ's Sake*". He will be exploring the spirituality of laughter, the humor in faith and life, dying

ference — *THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED*

Updates on the 1987 ACSD National Conference

Marion College — June 1 - 4, 1987

to oneself, and the most powerful act of giving your power away (servant leadership). Floyd has developed clown ministries for the past 17 years in numerous contexts from college campuses to churches to overseas ministries in New Zealand. His follow up workshops will focus on "*Practical Applications of Clowning in Campus Ministry*".

PHYLLIS MABLE: Phyllis is most noted for co-editing *Personal Education and Community Development in College Residence Halls*. She has also been a past president of ACPA; on the Journal Editorial Board of NASPA; and a national consultant in student development. She will present as her keynote address: "*Residence Halls of Our Future: The Road Less Traveled*". This will be followed with workshops on the theory and practice of community development.

WILLIAM KIRWAN: See preceding page

LEE NOEL: See preceding page

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

"WELLNESS AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS": Dr. Dave Emerling, Director of The National Wellness Institute will be with us to discuss the theory of Wellness and how to implement a successful program on your campus. Dave has had ten years of experience in Student Development from being the staff psychologist at Wake Forest to the Director of the Counseling Center at Northern Illinois. He also will be doing a workshop at the conference call, "*Wellness as a Development Model for Staff and Students.*" The National Wellness Institute is a non-profit, self-supporting organization of the University of Wisconsin — Stevens Point Foundation which is dedicated to meeting the wellness needs of individuals, organizations, communities, governments and the Wellness Movement. They also will be a part of our display area and will have the latest wellness software (e.g.LAQ) and other materials.

"I'VE ESTABLISHED RAPPORT, NOW WHAT DO I DO?": Dr. David Aycok. Effective counseling demands that attention be directed to relationship skill building; but this is not enough.

Psychological change strategies (e.g. cognitive restructuring, behavioral techniques, role playing methods for affective change) are effective tools in the counselor's repertoire. In this workshop practical counseling techniques will be discussed and demonstrated. These skills are effective for students struggling with self-esteem deficits, unmanaged stress and anxiety, unresolved Psychologist and Director of the Counseling Center at Taylor University. He has also authored several articles in publications such as the Counseling Psychologist, Journal of American Scientific Affiliation and Journal of Psychology and Theology. He has served as a Stress Management consultant, co-authored *The Coping Resources Inventory* and is working on a book for Victor Books.

"BECOMING RETENTION AGENTS": Dr. Lee Noel. Lee has worked in consultation with over 375 colleges. In his recently co-authored book, *Increasing Student Retention*, he states that there are few institutions who could not reduce their freshman-to-sophomore attrition rate by one third in applying his principles. He will help us zero in on those groups most at risk, how to assess their needs and then to create campus-wide programs that improve student learning satisfaction and retention.

SPECIAL MID-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

"CURRENT LEGAL ISSUES IN STUDENT DEVELOPMENT": Gary Pavela, J.D.: This workshop is designed to provide the latest analysis of the most significant campus legal concerns (e.g. disciplinary due process, is cheating an academic or disciplinary problem, 'AIDS, liability of rape or assault, legal protection of mentally disturbed students) and implications for campus policies. Gary is the Director of Judicial Programs at the University of Maryland — College Park where he also teaches courses in constitutional and administrative law. He is a member of the New York bar, has been a law clerk to a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals and a consultant to the Federal Judicial Center of Washington, D.C. He has written *Dismissal of Students with Mental Disorders: Legal Issues, Policy Considerations and Alternative Responses* and *Administering College and University Housing: A Legal Perspective*.

STUDENT PERSONNEL SURVEY

As editor of *Koinonia* I am interested in drawing from you the valuable information many of you have developed during your work in student affairs. Please take a few minutes to fill out the following questionnaire and return it to me.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____

1. Title of your masters thesis _____

(Two sentence abstract) _____

2. Title of your dissertation _____

(Two sentence abstract) _____

3. Titles of reports you have written or presentations given during the last two years that relate to student development

4. Current areas of interest to you in student development _____

5. What student development programs are you currently using? _____

6. Are you interested in writing an article for publication in the *Koinonia*? Yes No

7. Would you be interested in critiquing articles submitted to the *Koinonia*? Yes No

8. Would you be interested in writing a two paragraph book review for the *Koinonia*? Yes No

Return survey to: Darrel Shaver, Columbia Bible College, Box 3122, Columbia, SC 29230

KOINONIA

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