

Fall 2001

Koinonia

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Authors

Brent Ellis, Steve Austin, Randy Blackford, Brad Voyles, Sara Oyer, and Rob Loane

KONNONIA

Fall 2001

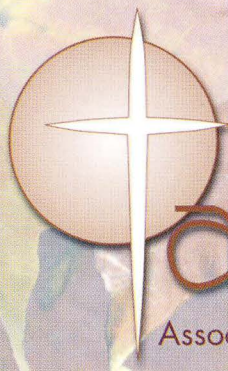


A New Perspective

Easy as 1-2-3

Forging Ahead

One Year Later



acsd

Association for Christians in Student Development

For all of you who are reading this — take heed — someday it could be your opportunity and responsibility to write approximately 500 words to fellow believers who you highly respect and who work in this exciting arena called Student Development!! Somehow, when Sam Shellhamer called me 2 1/2 years ago to ask me to run for president/elect, I didn't hear him say, "Oh, and you get to write words of challenge and encouragement to ACSD members three times each year." Maybe this task is such a challenge to me because of my view of ACSD. Now keep in mind — to me ACSD is not just an organization — it is people like you. People who are servants, scholars, mentors, leaders, learners, and most importantly — Christians! It is YOU! So pretend for the next few minutes that we are sharing a soda or cup of coffee while I share some thoughts with you.

First of all, I want to publicly thank the Northwestern College Student Life Staff for the fabulous job they did of hosting the 2001 Conference. I know not of a person that left Orange City, Iowa, without receiving a blessing. I also ask you to remember to pray for the Lee University Staff as they continue to prepare for the 2002 Conference. As each of you map out your travels for the next year — I hope you put Cleveland, Tennessee, on your schedule.

I am writing this while trying to still hire one more staff person, planning staff workshops, pondering what assuring words I will say to new students' parents, and preparing to send our youngest daughter "away" to college. I realize that by the time I see this in print, all of the previous sentence will be history. You can probably guess that of all those tasks — leaving my daughter with a group of strangers will be the hardest. My assurances come from thinking of all the ACSD members. When I think of our daughter leaving the safety of our home and church, I am thankful for the hundreds of Christians who work in Student Development and particularly those who will be influencing the life of our daughter. (Does that sound like a parent, or what?)

We, as student development professionals, are given fragile, sometimes hardened lives and asked to help mold and shape them into the people God has called them to be. What an awesome task!!

ACSD is not just an organization — it is people like you.

Some quick trivia facts on ACSD:

Current membership as of June 1, 2001 is 1104 members

Average growth per year in the last five years — 50 new members

% of turnover in membership — 25%

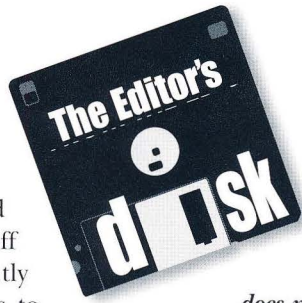
The Executive Committee continues to reflect on these statistics as we make decisions for the organization. If at any time during you have suggestions for the Executive Committee, please contact Skip, Ron, Mark, Susan, Tom, Steve, or me.

In the next two years as I serve as ACSD president, it is my prayer that just as Bruce Wilkinson wrote in *The Prayer of Jabez* (I Chronicles 4:10) that God will bless ACSD as an organization and also each member, that God will expand the territory of ACSD, and that God will protect us.

Judy Hiebert
President
Vice President
for Student
Development
Tabor College,
Hillsboro,
Kansas



Judy Hiebert



Sometimes I read a Scripture passage and its meaning jumps off the page and I instantly understand how it applies to my life. And other times, it is much more of a struggle to take a piece of Scripture and figure out how it should affect my daily living.

Occasionally I will re-write a piece of Scripture. I don't do this because I have studied Greek and Hebrew and think I can do a better job of translation than the NIV or NASB or KJV. I do it because forcing myself to say it another way and in my own words makes the meaning jump out at me, and the application is easier. So I offer the words below as a sample of this practice and encourage you to try it too!

I Corinthians 13 (for ASCD)

If I memorize all of the modern slang, and know whether to say "pop", or "soda", or "coke" when I want a drink, and if I can lead a Bible study or accountability group with hardly any effort, but have not love, I am only a loud, useless, and annoying noise.

If I can foresee every problem before it comes up, and can understand college freshmen... and have an answer for every World View question, and a solution for every troubled student that talks to me, and if I have a faith that can move resident halls (or build new ones...), but have not love, I am nothing.

If I work in Higher Education and earn less than I could in the corporate world, and commit myself to a lifestyle of middle to lower class America, and drive second hand cars, and watch every flick on video because I can't afford to go to the movies anymore, but have not love, what is the point? I gain nothing.

Love is patient when the phone rings at two in the morning. Love is kind to the student

no one else wants to hang out with. It does not envy the popularity of another staff member. It

does not boast about the number of students that come to the event. It is not proud of how many people it has led to Christ. It is not rude when people don't want to live by college policies. It is not always looking to protect its own interests when RA selections are being made. It is not easily angered even when the world says it has a "right" to be. It keeps no record of wrongs after serving on a judicial committee. It always protects the weak, always trusts the unworthy, always hopes in spite of dismal circumstances, always perseveres even when all the energy is gone.

And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Love never fails... But where there are chapels, they will cease; where there are leadership seminars, they will end; where there is memorization of the perfect Gospel presentation, it will pass away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when Christ returns, the imperfect will disappear.

When I was in college, I thought like a college student, I reasoned like a college student, I lived like a college student. When I graduated, I put student ways behind me.

Now we see but a poor reflection in a mirror. Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as God fully knows me.

And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

— Susan Moody, Editor
Director of Student Activities
Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA

KOINONIA

FALL 2001

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Vocational Education, A New Perspective

by Dr. Brent Ellis

“What on earth did God create me to be?”

In the fall of my freshmen year at Greenville College I surrendered my will to the Lord's and accepted Christ as my Savior. That decision was the most difficult decision I ever had to make. I was very comfortable with who I was, where I was going, and what I was going to do. Having already represented my country in the Soviet Union as a high school student and working with the Republican party during Reagan's last hurrah, I was certain that I wanted to be a politician. I would study history/political science, go to law school, and then into some level of government. Those plans, however, changed drastically after my decision to become a Christian. What scared me most was that I was going to have to change who I was and what I wanted to become. This decision and desire to change sent me on an exploration that has lasted for many years and has taken me in many different directions. The question that I sought after so diligently was, what and who does God want me to be?

I know that we have all had similar experiences, attempting to discover God's will for our lives, and if your students are anything like my students, they too are as much or even more curious about God's will for their lives than I was about God's will for mine. What can we tell them, how do we direct them? The typical cliché statements about finding God's will do more to dampen my spirit than give me direction. Is there something more to give our students? I believe there is, and it begins with the foundational component to living a Christian life: understanding the purpose of our existence. From this foundational discovery and understanding come a clarification of motive and then an enhanced understanding of vocation that allows us to live the lives we were created to live.

Purpose

There is an interesting quote by an elderly Rabbi that Parker J. Palmer records in his book, *Let Your Life Speak*. Rabbi Zusya, when he was nearing his death said, “In the coming world, they will not ask me: ‘Why were you not Moses?’ They will ask me: ‘Why were you not Zusya?’” This statement depicts, in a very profound way, the predicament of discovering one's vocation. As insecure as people are we are naturally drawn to people with great talents or great leadership ability. We want to be an evangelist like Billy Graham. We long to be as loving and sacrificial as Mother Theresa. We strive to be as deep and profound as C.S. Lewis. We desire to sing like Whitney Houston. We want to be like Mike. The reality of God's creation is that there is only one Billy Graham, only one Mother Theresa, only one C.S. Lewis, only one Whitney Houston, and only one Michael Jordan. The reason in Rabbi Zusya's statement is that we should not strive to be like anyone other than ourselves. Our striving should be to become who God created us to be. The difficulty here is answering the question, “What on earth did God create me to be?” I believe the essence of discovering this mystery is an understanding of three things: our purpose, our motivation, and our vocation.

In the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, a wonderful verse is recorded known in Hasidic circles as the *Shema*. The word *Shema*, in Hebrew, simply means *hear*. It is a command, asking the Jewish nation to *listen up* and pay attention to what is about to be said. The verse is a very familiar verse. Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you will love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all your might.” The last word, *might*, is actually translated from

the Hebrew most accurately by the phrase, and *with all your very much*. Unlike today, where our society has been influenced heavily by Greco-Roman thinking, the Jewish people believed that we existed of two basic elements, flesh and spirit. So when Moses writes that the people of Israel are to love God with all their heart and with all their soul, that comprised the totality of who they were. He added the third word, *very much*, to say if there is anything left, love God with that too.

The Shema was the purpose or mission statement for the nation of Israel. Whenever an Israelite heard the word *shema*, immediately that person would be reminded of why he or she existed, to love God with all that he or she was. We now, as God's people, find ourselves many millennia removed from when Moses, inspired by God, wrote these words, and we have forgotten our purpose, our mission, our calling. I believe that one reason we have such a difficult time attempting to discover God's will for our life is because we attempt to make his will so narrow. What is the purpose, the mission of a Christian? Let me suggest four words to ponder; *glorify, love, offer, and go*.

...our purpose in life still includes loving God with all that we are...

While Paul was writing his letter to the church in Philippi, he was in a precarious situation. At the core of his being Paul desired to be united with Christ in heaven, but he realized that the Philippians, and others still needed him on this earth to encourage and teach them about their newly found faith. He was torn between the two, knowing his

most fundamental desire, and yet recognizing the needs of his brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul, however, found himself unable to be united with Christ, and unable to attend to the needs of these new believers. Instead Paul was chained, night and day, to a guard in Rome. The Philippians had sent a young man to help care for Paul's needs in Rome, but instead of caring for Paul, the young man became ill and had to return to Philippi. Paul's letter is both a message explaining to the Philippians the return of Epaphroditus and an exhortation to his brothers and sisters in Christ to maintain an eternal perspective in the face of temporal suffering. His message boils down to a simple and yet profound message: continue to pursue righteousness through Christ Jesus, in the face of suffering, to glorify and praise God. Glorification of God is one of the paramount responsibilities of a Christian. One word to keep in mind is *glorify*.

The second word can be found in the gospel of Matthew. In chapter 22 of this book, a Pharisee, who was a lawyer, approached Jesus. This first century expert of Jewish law asked Jesus which commandment was the greatest. Jesus, knowing the prophets and the law of Israel better than any other person, stated, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and the greatest commandment, and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands all the law and all the prophets hang." In other words, Jesus stated that all of scripture found its foundation in this statement. According to God, our purpose in life still includes loving God with all that we are and also includes loving others as ourselves. A Christian can only honor God and walk according to his will if he or she is loving God and loving others. The second word to ponder is *love*.

A third word that I would like to suggest is the word *offer*. Paul's epistle to the church in Rome is one of my very favorite books. In this book Paul is attempting to

convince a church, dominated by Jewish custom and tradition, that it should not hold so stringently to the law and instead focus on the mercy and grace of God offered through Jesus Christ. Paul develops a wonderful argument beginning with the example of Abraham being declared righteous because of his faith and concluding with a song of praise at the end of chapter eleven. In chapter twelve, Paul then moves into the appropriate response of Christians to this grace and mercy he so eloquently explained in the preceding chapters. He writes in Romans 12:1-2, "Therefore, in view of God's mercy, *offer* your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the standards of this world, but be transformed by the

Understanding our purpose in existence, our motive for our actions, and our vocational calling leads to a freedom of life and ministry that all Christians should experience.

renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and prove what is the will of God, God's good, perfect, pleasing will." The appropriate response for a Christian, who has received the mercy of God, is to offer, or submit himself or herself to God. As Christians, we are to give up all that we are and ever hoped to be in order that God could move in us to do His work through us. A third word to think upon is *offer*.

The fourth word comes from the final chapter in the gospel of Matthew, chapter 28. As Jesus is preparing to ascend into heaven, he leaves his followers with a final word, a final commission. He first of all explains the nature of the position that he is claiming when making this statement. He says, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given

to me." By this statement Jesus is making sure that all who hear His words understand that He is not merely suggesting something, but is giving a command. He continues, "Therefore, go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." As Christians we must remain active in this great commission. This is not just the work of pastors and evangelists, it is the responsibility of all Christians. The final word, that I suggest, is *go*.

The first step in understanding what God's will for our lives is, is understanding the very purpose of our existence. God's word is fairly clear that we are to be about *glorifying* Him with our lives, *loving* God and others, *offering* ourselves as living sacrifices, and *going* to all people to influence them for the Kingdom of God. Whenever you hear the words glorify, love, offer, and go, remember your purpose in life.

Motive

Understanding the purpose for our existence allows us then to begin to assess the motivation we have for the various activities in which we participate and for the goals we set for our future. Bill, a former student of mine once sat in my office and began explaining to me his goals in life. He wanted to be a doctor, live in Chicago, and drive a convertible BMW. In asking him his reasoning for choosing to pursue the medical profession, he stated that he wanted to have Fridays off so he could play golf. Bill had spent many summers working on the grounds crew at a country club in a Chicago suburb. Every Friday he saw numerous doctors make their 12:30 p.m. tee times. He wanted that freedom, that luxury, that wealth. When I asked him how those goals fit into his understanding of the purpose of his existence, he realized that they did not. His motivation for pursuing his goals was not born out of his understanding for the purpose of his life.

The ACSD 2001 - 2002 Placement Bulletin

The ACSD 2001 - 2002 Placement Bulletin will again include both candidates seeking positions and institutions with positions available. Placement services are available only to current ACSD members prior to the annual ACSD conference in June.

All web-based edition entries will be posted within five business days. Those submitting should log onto www.acsdhome.org and then go to the placement section. Appropriate directions are included there. Submissions will remain in the Web-based listing until August 15, 2002, or until the submitter requests removal.

The only paper edition published will be distributed at the annual conference. The Conference edition will be a compilation of those individuals who register for the placement service at the conference.

Individuals may receive undated paper copies of the Web-based publication by sending requests to: **Dr. Stephen Beers, John Brown University, 2000 West University, Siloam Springs, AR 72761-2121.**

Another student, Andy, explained to me his desire to create, buy, and sell businesses. Andy was studying engineering and hoped to use his talents and savvy to become a successful entrepreneur. After asking him how his goals fit into his understanding for the purpose of his existence, he explained how he hoped to be excellent in his endeavors in order to glorify God and influence others for the Kingdom of God. Together Andy and I examined the relationship between Daniel and King Darius found in the book of Daniel. Daniel desired to be excellent in his work, in order to glorify God. Because of his excellent work, King Darius took notice of Daniel, and in Daniel 6:26 King Darius states, "I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; for He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one of which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever." Andy said, "I would love for people to respect the God of Andy because they respect the excellence and integrity that I pursue in my work." Andy's motivation for his goals was born out of his understanding of the purpose of his existence.

However, motivation is a very difficult thing to assess. In the 1996 Summer Olympic games in Atlanta, away from the world records of Michael Johnson and the amazing feat Carl Lewis achieved by winning a gold medal in the long jump, a very intriguing event took place. Sometime during the late night, early morning hours a backpack was discovered sitting at the base of a network television tower by a security guard named Richard Jewell. Jewell immediately acted on the situation, exactly as he was trained to do. He first reported the situation to headquarters and then he began to evacuate the area surrounding the backpack. Within minutes of the beginning of the evacuation process the bomb inside the backpack exploded, sending nails, screws, and metal scraps in all directions. In the blast 111 people were injured, one woman was killed, and a reporter died of a heart attack. At first Richard Jewell was

lauded as a hero. He made his rounds on the talk show circuit and was receiving the thanks and adoration from our nation and the world. Then an amazing thing happened: the investigation turned its eyes to the one lauded as a hero. Richard Jewell, the praised, soon became Richard Jewell, the despised. Authorities claimed that Richard Jewell met what was called the *lone bomber profile*. He was a middle-aged ex-police officer who lived at home with his parents and was not married. Our nation felt betrayed. As the investigation continued, however, Richard Jewell was exonerated. It turned out that he truly was the hero we all thought he was.

This illustrates in a marvelous way the difficulty in assessing motivation. If Jewell was acting with improper motives, he would have acted in the exact same manner he did during the bombing when he was acting with proper motives. Although it is hard to access motive, it is necessary. The assessment cannot, however, come from one person to another. I am unable to access another person's motivation, just as another person is not able to assess my motivation. Assessment of motivation must come from self-examination.

Our role, as educators, in this context is to be less of a director and more of a facilitator.

Vocation

After purpose and motive are in place, then vocation can be addressed. It is necessary to state early that vocation and occupation are not the same things. An occupation is something that you do to make a living. A vocation, on the other hand, is a calling. You can have various careers and have different occupations, but constantly remain in the same vocation. My vocation is ministry and teaching. I have taught school, been a youth

pastor, and worked in various areas of Christian higher education ranging from admissions to the classroom. Although my occupation has changed several times, my vocation has never changed. In all of those occupations I continued to be about ministry and teaching.

Vocation is born out of a proper understanding of our purpose for existence and our motivation for the actions we take. After those foundational components have been laid, identification of a vocation is possible.

It is interesting to examine the life of David, Israel's second king. David's occupations were on two different ends of the world's success continuum. At the one end, David was a lowly shepherd, caring for his father Jesse's few sheep. On the other end, David was a powerful and mighty king of the nation of Israel. What is amazing to see is that the unique qualities and characteristics that God created in David, allowed him to be successful in both areas. The love, care, and protection, that David provided for his father's sheep transferred into how he cared, loved and protected the nation of Israel.

At LeTourneau we have a general course for all freshman that is structured as an introduction to the university, a first year experience course. This course is a marvelous tool that allows access to every student early enough that they are not completely set in their views of themselves, the community, or the world. During this course students are asked to take time identifying the specific talents, abilities, and interests with which God has blessed them. Our desire is to help them: 1) *understand who God has created them to be*, 2) *understand what God has called them to do*, 3) *understand how to prepare for that purpose and calling*.

Our role, as educators, in this context is to be less of a director and more of a facilitator. There are always numerous ways for students to begin to exercise their unique vocational calling. Service learning opportunities, community service projects, volunteerism, and student

leadership involvement provide ample opportunities for our students. It makes little or no sense for us to ask them to become who God has created them to be and then to tell them exactly where they must serve to gain experience and begin to practice their specific calling. We must be intentional in providing them direction, within the context of their unique giftedness and calling. It is one thing to have the opportunity provided. It is an entirely different thing to aid the student in matching his or her identified abilities, passions, and gifts in specific ministry opportunities.

At this point we are doing more in helping students understand their role in the will of God than anything else we do.

As students begin to be exposed to various opportunities to express their callings beyond their curricular work they are beginning to experience true vocation. It is not just a job, it is a way of life, a calling. At this point we are doing more in helping students understand their role in the will of God than anything else we do. The steps seem rather simplistic, but the results are marvelous. Understanding our purpose in existence, our motive for our actions, and our vocational calling leads to a freedom of life and ministry that all Christians should experience.

Dr. Brent Ellis is the Director of the Center for the Development of Christian Leadership at LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas.

Submissions Sought

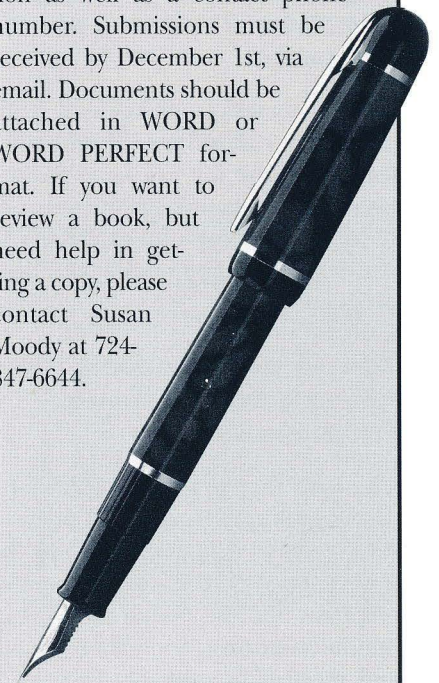
Report on a program of which you are proud!

Finish that research you have been avoiding and tell us about it!

Address an issue facing Student Development officers today!

Read a book and write a review!

We are currently seeking submissions for publication in the WINTER edition of the KOINONIA. Please submit book reviews, perspectives on life in Student Development, overviews of programs you have produced, reports of studies or other work you have done in the field of Student Development, etc. to semooddy@geneva.edu. Please be sure to include your name, title, and institution as well as a contact phone number. Submissions must be received by December 1st, via email. Documents should be attached in WORD or WORD PERFECT format. If you want to review a book, but need help in getting a copy, please contact Susan Moody at 724-847-6644.



Forging Ahead in Student Programs: Creating Dialogue for the 21st Century

by Steve Austin

The dynamics of student social interaction in many of our campuses have changed drastically in the last decade due to population growth and technology. Students themselves exude the changes of a decade, as they come to our universities and colleges being influenced more than ever by Christian subculture, popular culture, and high school and community leadership experiences. Their faith often suffers drastically from compartmentalization and weird disconnect when it comes to belief and behavior. So what does this all add up to for student programs? Have we changed enough to meet the needs of this new generation of students? Are we fulfilling our institutions' mission statements when it comes to Christian whole-person education? Are academic criticisms regarding our lack of thoughtful programming, over-programming, or guiding students away from their studies warranted? More importantly, are our programs helping prepare student leaders for living as a person of faith in the 21st century?

As with any serious dialogue, it requires more than one person. So, as your colleague, I throw out just some of the following thoughts and challenges in hopes of creating discussions that lead to a soul-searching of sorts, about why and how we program.

Zoo Keepers, Campus Entertainers or Campus Educators

The basis for student programs at any university should flow out of the university's mission statement. It seems paramount for each of us to craft our area's emphasis into the overall picture of the education process. Sounds easy enough, and most of us probably have student programs philosophy statements that

connect our offices to the main mission. But are we programming out of our philosophy or do our philosophy statements seem more idealistic than realistic (allowing us to ignore them until someone questions what we are about)? Hopefully we are all in dialogue with colleagues on the Student Affairs side of things who help provide some continual feedback. Maybe more important is proactive, non-defensive dialogue with our academic counterparts (and not with just student affairs-friendly faculty). These conversations could prove very beneficial, reveal areas that student programs could improve upon, or at the very least, allow us to see how our offices are being perceived. We might all be a little surprised. In my conversations, I have found that the office of student programs is perceived through three different lenses: Zoo Keeper, Campus Entertainer, and Campus Educator.

"Zoo Keeper" is a tough critique to swallow and we might be tempted to easily dismiss this to the nether regions of the

mind or chalk it up to another faculty member who just doesn't understand. When forced to think about this critique, however, we must ask if some of our programs simply exist to provide students with something — anything — to do. Like adding another obstacle in the polar bear cage for them to slide down, this may be a more fair critique that at first glance. In light of this critique, complaints of over-programming are certainly valid if our programs lack any educational significance.

Have we changed enough to meet the needs of this new generation of students?

"Campus Entertainer" sounds like a better critique, but is it? If all we are doing is providing sanitized entertainment, with little thought or purpose other than clean fun in mind, we might be missing out on opportunities to connect with our faith and what students are learning



inside the classroom. More directly, are we operating out of a philosophy to provide "sanitized entertainment", or are we helping students understand that our faith, intellect, and souls have a part to play in why we recreate, our integration of faith into our perspective of entertainment, and the communal joys of fellowship? I would argue that two very similar activities could have very different impacts on students if one is born out of a strong philosophy that student leaders understand and the other out of simply a "sanitized entertainment" mode.

"Campus Educator" is what our offices should aspire to be, not only in our literature but also our carrying out of those beliefs. Arthur Holmes, in *The Idea of a Christian College*, offers that the following characteristics should define an "educated Christian": spiritual virtues, moral virtues, a breadth of understanding and critical thinking skills, imagination, wisdom, discernment, conscientiousness, active involvement in community, knowledge of the world's issues and ideas, and self-knowledge. Do our programs foster such characteristics in our students? Shouldn't they? Whatever role represents the reality of our offices, it is important to keep in mind that how and why we carry out our programs will indicate if we are truly meeting students' needs.

"Syllabus" Training

One area I think we must all revisit is how we put our semester's worth of activities together. Traditional events aside, do our programs make sense in their arrangement in the campus calendar? I am not just asking if our programs are planned around other activities, which is a common practice. Do we, and the students we work with, arrange the events in a thoughtful manner that seeks to maximize the event's capacity for contributing to the above mentioned characteristics? We all talk about being a classroom outside of the classroom, but have we ever considered building our programs over the semester or year in a sort of "syllabus" fashion where programs lead into one another, working towards community

development and Holmes' list of characteristics? This would require more of a challenge in coordination, but it seems as if the benefits of a student programs syllabus mentality would help in the fleshing out of our philosophies into reality.

The "End Product"

Finally, it seems important that we emphasize what exactly our "end product" is in student programs. Sometimes those that we work for would think along more utilitarian lines and focus on the quality of our programs. While quality programming is a necessity, should the "program" be viewed as the final product? If so, then we might be tempted to rely on student attendance, things going according to planning, and no com-

...excellence in programming is not achieved through tunnel vision...

plaints as a measure of quality. But, like good educators, we must emphasize that our "end product" is truly the students and how they have been shaped, influenced and impacted by our programs; what have they been "taught" and what has been "caught" through our programs. This paradigm shift allows us to treat our offices as true experiences in leadership training, with the focus on educating our student leaders to help educate, challenge, and push their peers in growing into whole persons. Thus, excellence in programming is not achieved through tunnel vision, but an overall vision of how what we do contributes to the educational process at each of our universities and colleges.

The 21st century holds many more changes for student programs. However, if we continue to dialogue and keep our minds, hearts, and ears open we may not get left behind as an important piece of the educational process.

Steve Austin is the Director of Student Programs at Taylor University - Upland, in Upland, Indiana. He is submitting this article on behalf of the COCCA.

ACSD ACCOLADES

On September 30, 2001, Dr. David Guthrie was awarded the Excellence in Scholarship Award at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA.

"The Excellence in Scholarship Award is given each year to a faculty member who has demonstrated scholarly breadth and depth in their discipline, in a way which has significantly enhanced the intellectual climate of the College. The award winner should be a person whose contributions have helped advance their discipline, and received recognition beyond the Geneva campus."

The Vice President of Academic Affairs went on to read a page-long list of scholarly accomplishments from the 2000 - 2001 school year, including:

"He authored two articles for the *Koinonia*. He wrote an article which appeared in the *ACSD Journal*, a professional journal for student development officers in ... higher education."

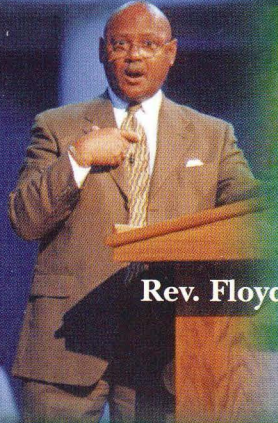
Congratulations Dave!

Has someone in ACSD been recognized at your institution? Submit their name and the details for future publications of "ACSD Accolades".

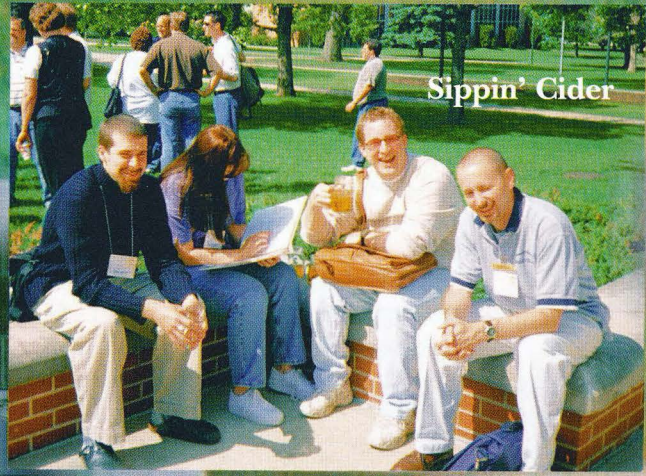
Contact Susan Moody at semoody@geneva.edu or 724-847-6644.



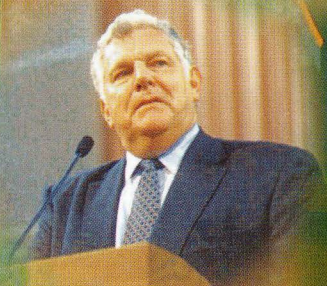
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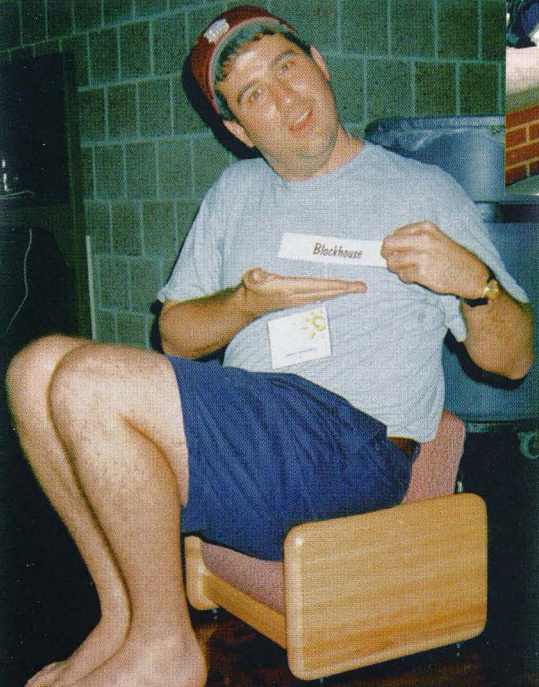
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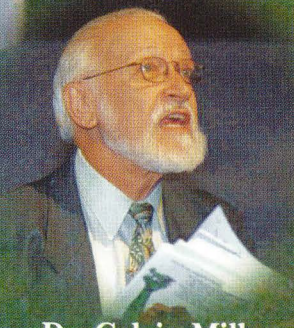
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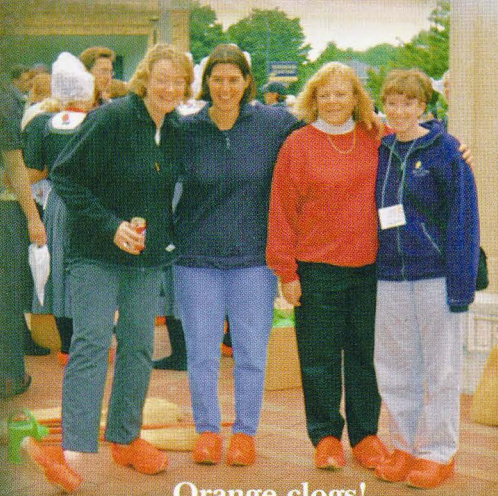
Dr. William Bennet



Mark Bryant wins a little chair from Blockhouse.



Dr. Calvin Miller



Orange clogs!

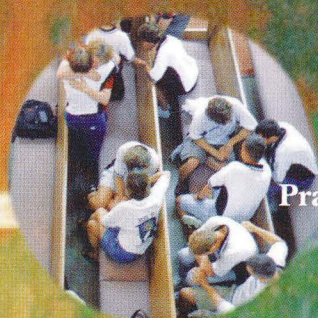
2001 University City, Iowa



Smiling Faces



Lee University brings a taste of Tennessee



Prayer Power



Virgil van Beek
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Home of Blue
Bunny Ice Cream



Trolley Rides



Award Winners



ACSD Friends

The Steps to Thinking Well are as Easy as 1-2-3

by Randy Blackford

If you respond to a student's question with an answer, she/he may get a question correct on a test, or at least stop bugging you for the moment. But if you choose to help a student think effectively, she/he may come up with answers that you have not yet explored.

Walking across Messiah College's campus this summer, I was stopped by two elderly individuals attending one of the many conferences held here each year. They had one question for me that hot July afternoon: "Are we going the right way?" As I paused to answer, I was reminded of how often I had heard similar questions. "Am I in the right major?" "Am I dating the right person?" "Should I drop this course?" "What should I do?" Wanting to empower students with the dignity of thinking for themselves, and humble enough to know I don't have all the answers, I merely responded that day to our two campus guests as I do to the students with whom I work: "I suppose it all depends on where you want to go."

As I was sitting in my office last year having a one-on-one meeting with a student staff member talking about programming or roommates or something, he was struggling to find "the answer" to his problem *du jour*. Getting out my trusty white board, the 80's version of the flannelgraph, I started jotting down his thoughts. It quickly became apparent that I had sketched out a way for him to think through the situation, without me having to merely provide "the answer," (which I doubt I even had at the time).



This article is the outcome of what we talked about that day in my office. I think it might help you and those with whom you work to think well, unless you happen to be much smarter than I am, and already have all the answers for yourself and others.

#1 What do we know?/What don't we know?

Too often in situations, we push quickly for action, for a response. *Should** I break up with this person or not? How should I respond to this student who wants more than I want to give? What type of program should I do to start the year? How should I respond to this staff person who hasn't been performing well? When we rush to

action, we rely too often on our gut. Trusty though it is (it got us this far didn't it?) our gut tends to get in a rut. While our instinctual response may be helpful in a good percentage of situations we encounter, rarely does it account for the many possibilities that exist within each situation.

If someone I supervise has not been performing well, I need to stop and think before I intervene. What do I know? I need to think of what kind of day I have been having; maybe it has been a long one, and I just want to rush in and get this encounter off my plate. I also know my style for dealing with conflict. Maybe I put this one off too long and the situation is bleaker than it could have been had I addressed it earlier.

But another important question is "What don't I know?" Do I know what has caused this lapse in performance? Do I stop and take into account how this person has handled

confrontation in the past? What about the importance of the project? If it is concerning the endowment of the college, that's one thing. But if it is about choosing a menu for a luncheon it is probably another.

Evaluating what I know and don't know takes the most time of the three steps and is most often overlooked. Take a moment and really examine all you know including your unanswered questions. These alone may affect how you choose to respond. But wait, step 2 is...

#2 Where do I want to go?

Wiser people than I coined the phrase "Begin with the end in mind." This is the

idea of step two. If a student wants to graduate with a degree, than serious consideration may need to be applied to the reality that over-involvement in cocurricular activities distracts him/her from homework.

Writing out where we want to go may also assist us in identifying conflicting goals. Perhaps the student in review is majoring in theatre, and the fall musical is dominating his/her schedule. The conflicting goals of stage experience and passing other classes or staying off chapel probation are ones we need to help him identify. Which is the greatest priority? Perhaps a decision to limit his difficult coursework to a semester when a college musical is not in the works could be helpful. When we consider our goal(s), combined with what we know and don't know about the situation, we are in a much better place to move forward. Consider step 3...

#3 What's the best way to get there?

This is the step most affected by how thoroughly we did the first two. Think back to this summer. I imagine most of

you went on some sort of vacation. Did you jump into your car and just start driving, hoping for some refreshment and sunshine? If you're like most of us, you did your own version of an informal 1-2-3. This is what my wife and I did.

We knew that we needed a break before August kicked in. We also recalled that when we spend vacation days visiting people, while we have fun, we often come back as exhausted as we were before we left. Finally, we also knew we did not want to travel in the traditional summer tourist crowd, but we wanted to see something new. After looking at what we knew from past experience and formulating what we did not want, we were then free to explore the many options that would meet our criteria. We decided to take the last weekend of July and make the trek up the coast to Maine. The vacation was more than what we had hoped.

I know what you're thinking. I, too, resist quick fixes and simplistic steps that promise easy success. This 1-2-3 stuff sounds corny even to me. Practicing writing it out the first few times may remind you of how awkward you felt when you first started to line dance. Stick with it, or

as one of my alumni staff offered, do not try to resist it. I am sure it will help you and those with whom you work think more effectively.

Randy Blackford is the Assistant Director of Residence Education for Campus Apartments & Special Interest Housing at Messiah College. He can be contacted at rblackfo@messiah.edu.

*On a brief sidenote, I never like to use the word *should*. Sorry Boomers and Millenials, maybe it is more of my GenX shining through. But I think I have got a real reason with which you might understand and relate. When we do something merely because we *should*, I think it connotes coercion: a response that is not only not our own, but one we don't fully understand or buy into. In living to be more like Christ, I do not want to do anything merely because I *should*. I want to do things because of who they make me to be, because of who I am and/or who God is, or the consequences, not merely because I *should*. But I digress. I will have to save that diatribe for another time.

Frisbee-Golf Fly-Off

Huntington College

ABOUT – Design an 18 hole, par 72 Frisbee-Golf course around campus. Start each foursome on a different hole. During closing ceremonies prizes go to the winning foursome, longest drive, closest to the pin, lowest score. Students sign up in fours. 18 total teams. Staff and faculty can be encouraged to play as well. Design rules also (i.e. flower beds = 1 stroke penalty).

WHEN – Last Friday of spring semester classes

SUPPLIES –

- Official "Frisbee" Disks – \$25.20 per Dozen from Kipp @ 1-800-428-1153. All participants used the same model.
- Prizes:
 - ◆ Green tee-shirts (i.e. The Masters) for the winning team
 - ◆ White tee-shirts for all participants
 - ◆ Better quality frisbees
 - ◆ Gift certificate to local golf course
- 18 bike flags or 18 yellow construction barrels for holes

- Number signs for each barrel
- Arrows indicating course
- Tape
- Golf pencils
- Score cards
- Course maps
- Golf carts for course officials

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Ten Things Every RA Should Know

by Brad Voyles

A prerequisite for my graduation from seminary was to complete 400 hours of supervised ministry experience and present to my class what I had learned from the experience. While my classmates spoke of their youth work and preaching experience, I was able to present lessons learned in ministering to college students in the context of my work as Director of Student Life. From these personal reflections, I developed a list for RA training in order to give my staff some guiding principles for their work. However, these principles are not just for RAs. They apply to my work and to yours and they are lessons that we will continue to learn as we work. This list is not comprehensive by any means, but I hope you find it helpful to use with your own staffs.

1. Your job gives you authority, but your behavior earns you respect.

It is imperative that Resident Assistants be not only rule enforcers, but also rule observers. The behavior of an RA gives credence to the position. The Resident Directors and other administrators hire and train the RAs for the position, but the ball is then placed in their court to earn their residents' respect. The maxim goes, "Rules without relationship breed rebellion," and the quickest way to a

The toughest things to say are usually the right things to say.

long semester is for RAs to see their job only as an opportunity to work on their resume for the police academy. Resident Assistants must view their position as an opportunity to serve their residents and to build relationships with them. It is from a foundation of relationship, service and consistency that an RA can

respectfully enter into tough situations and expect to be heard and respected.

2. Grace needs to be extended in the punishment — not in the declaration of guilt.

A mentality that has crept into our society over the years is that if people are sorry for their behavior then there should be no repercussions for their actions. The temptation is to turn a blind eye to the situation or to let someone get by with a violation "just this time." Our staffs need to recognize that grace can be given in the meting out of sanctions, but they are doing a disservice to the student and to the community when they ignore a violation completely and allow incremental defections from policies to become very large problems. There is a difference between kindness and blindness. It does not best serve the student to turn a blind eye to inappropriate behavior. Godly kindness is a just judgement which leads to repentance (Romans 2:4). If our RAs do not understand this, and if they are not reflecting this in the way they work, then their residents are going to have to learn this truth outside of the controlled environment of college where the cost may be even higher.

3. Tolerance has become the highest virtue in our society.

In his book, *A Study of History*, Sir Arnold Toynbee examines twenty-one historical civilizations and finds in almost every case that the downfall of each was not the rise of another more powerful civilization, but that each one committed cultural suicide. He found that at the heart of this cultural suicide was the idea of promiscuity which could be defined as "the indiscriminate acceptance of anything and everything...an uncritical tolerance."¹ Students are arriving at our colleges with a very uncritical tolerance.

It is the responsibility of the Christian College and University to help them develop a critical tolerance in an effort to at least slow the disintegration of our society. Resident Assistants are in a position to demonstrate to communities of people that there are damaging and offensive behaviors that will not be indiscriminately allowed.

4. The toughest things to say are usually the right things to say.

Nobody likes to do it, but it is a part of every RA's job. It's that dirty thirteen-letter word...CONFRONTATION. Students not only need to hear the very things that are hard for the RA to say, but it is also important part of the RA's own development to be able to say them. Saying the tough things is a part of growing up, a part of loving someone and a part of leadership. These words do not involve only discipline, but also confronting any destructive behavior such as eating disorders, various addictions, and inappropriate relationships. Learning to confront in a loving manner is the most difficult lesson for Resident Assistants, but it is also the lesson which will best serve them in their own lives as they leave our schools.

5. Everybody has a story.

A question I almost always ask when I interview someone for a position is, "What is the difference between the way people perceive you to be and the way you really are?" With the rare exception, people tend to be different in some way from how they are perceived. RAs are working with residence halls full of unknown stories, and the only way to read the story is to take the time to get to know the person. The temptation for RAs is to elevate their own agendas and needs to make beelines from their rooms to their various classes and appointments. Most students are dying to have their sto-

ries read, but need some prompting from those with ears to hear. Our RAs must learn to be discerners of students and be willing to take the time to get past perceptions to the real person.

6. Don't be surprised when non-Christians act like non-Christians.

It never ceases to amaze me how shocked RAs can become when they see a student who is not a Christian acting like someone who could care less about "What Would Jesus Do." What is frustrating is the amount of damage those reactions do to students and also to the potential for ministry. Our RAs need to see non-Christians as opportunities for ministry and not as objects for scorn. One of the unique aspects of Belhaven College is that while we require all of our faculty and staff to sign and agree with our statement of faith, we do not require students to do so. This provides countless opportunities to introduce students to Christ and to His Body. However, this is a process and the process is not always pretty. As one of my seminary professors was fond of saying, "Sheep are messy. Don't become a shepherd if you can't handle the stink."

7. Don't be surprised when Christians act like non-Christians.

The tendency of the Christian is to put too much faith in other Christians and not enough faith in Christ. Our Resident Assistants are not exempt from this. If they examined their own lives, they would find people whom they had elevated and idolized and who had eventually let them down. Christ did not have this problem. John 2:23-25 reads, "Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in man." Jesus knew the limitations of men, and we as Christians would do well to also learn

this. We must recognize that there is a war going on between the old self and the new self in the life of every Christian (Eph 4:22; Colossians 3:9-10). Under pressure we tend to go to the default setting of the old self, so it should not surprise us when others do as well.

8. We are all educators.

All of our Resident Assistants are students, but it is important to remind them that they are also educators and what they help teach is of the utmost importance. While professors take on the task of teaching Calculus, Biology, and English Literature, RAs are teachers of wisdom and self-control in an increasingly impulsive society where students are constantly reminded that they can do what they want, when they want. Wisdom is the skill of godly living and the ability to do the right thing at the right time in often difficult situations. Resident Assistants are in place not only to enforce rules and to hold students accountable, but also to instruct and model wise living and to extend compassion, insight and Christian love to these same students. They should always be looking for teachable moments in the midst of their residents' lives. As students, RAs are in the unique position of peer educator and are more likely to be listened to because they have more recently walked the path of their residents.

9. The beginning only happens once.

They saying goes, "You only get one chance to make a first impression," and that is crucial to remember at the start of each school year. This is important for disciplinary purposes because it is necessary to set a tone from the beginning. It is always better to start off tough and then come down than to begin with a lax attitude toward the rules and then try to tighten up the reins. It is also imperative to start early on the ministry aspect of the position. There is a window of time at the beginning of each year when it is most favorable to go up to a new person and get involved with his/her life.

Unfortunately that window closes steadily so that it suddenly becomes awkward to introduce yourself to someone who you have been smiling and nodding to for the past five weeks. It is vital not to miss those early opportunities to send a message and to avoid looking back on the year with regret.

10. The Lord is my refuge.

In Numbers 35, the Lord commanded Moses concerning the need for cities of refuge. These were cities where someone who had accidentally killed another person could flee for protection until trial. While the Israelites had cities of refuge in which to hide, we now have the God of Refuge in Whom we can rest. However, it is important to note that a refuge is not good until you rest in it. You may have the sturdiest, most secure refuge, but if you are standing outside of it, then it does you no good. Psalm 2:12 reads, "Blessed are all who take refuge in Him." As Christians working in the College and University setting, we have a refuge in Whom we can place our trust and in Whom we can rest securely. The road is long and the going sometimes tough, but do not forget the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time if we do not give up."

Brad Voyles is the Director of Student Life at Belhaven College in Jackson, MS. He has an MS in Educational Administration from Southern Illinois University and an MDiv from Reformed Theological Seminary.

¹Gene Vieth, *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), pp. 44-46.

I Learned Too

by Sara Oyer

I seem to find myself often in conversations about missions. In fact, I find it difficult to distinguish whether I am naturally drawn to people who also share my passion for missions, or if I just direct conversations towards missions every chance I get.

A few months ago, I found myself talking with a colleague about short-term mission experiences. Truthfully, I found his comments baffling. Let me explain. He talked about the value of mission trips in understanding the church universal, broadening our Christian world-view, and experiencing God in a new way. This part of his speech made sense to me. However, the next sentence he uttered was, "But I could never give up a Spring break or any time off to go on a missions trip. I'm too worn out by the time a break rolls around." Certainly, student affairs professionals are drained by their work, but I have found a break spent serving alongside students to be just the refreshment I need to continue serving.

I recently spent three weeks in the Czech Republic serving with 16 Taylor University students. It is impossible to describe the trip adequately through words, but permit me to sum up a few of the many lessons God taught me in the Czech Republic. First, the great commission of the New Testament applies to those of us working in a Christian environment also. Second, relationships with students take on new depth when I allow them to see my weaknesses as well as strengths. And third, pride is a sin overlooked in our American mindset. I pray before every meal, but often neglect to include God in the daily grind of life.

One day early in the trip, my team spent a morning sharing about Christ in a nursing home. We had a simple program of singing and testimony, and then tried to communicate, albeit rather poorly, afterwards. The entire day I couldn't quit thinking about the people we met there. They weren't any different than the peo-

ple that live right down the street from Taylor at the University Nursing Home. I began to feel convicted. Why did I find it easier to fly halfway around the world and share what Jesus means to me with people who only spoke Czech and Russian? They need to learn about Jesus, yes, but so do some of the people living right here in Upland. Have I ever spent a morning just talking with some lonely resident at the University Nursing home? Sadly, I haven't. I get so caught up in the day to day hustle of life at a Christian college, I forget to obey what Jesus directed us to do in Mark 16:15, "...Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." Like most

I get so caught up in the day to day hustle of life at a Christian College, I forget to obey what Jesus directed us to do...

Christians, I tend to think of this verse in terms of overseas work, but this verse also means the University Nursing Home which is within walking distance. Maybe you think you don't have the time or energy to share the gospel with others; your ministry is different. I want to challenge you to begin praying about the ministry of all Christians, to share about our relationship with Christ to whomever God puts in our path.

While my team was in the Czech Republic, we had a team question almost every night. A pair of students would come up with a topic, and then each person would have to comment on it. Some nights the questions were silly and other nights, serious. One evening, crying was chosen as the topic. We were assigned to share about a time in our life that we really cried. Last year, I went through a very lonely period. I was in tears virtually every week. I doubted God's direction in

my life and honestly, was angry that He had brought me to Taylor. Instead of telling God my trials though, I was telling everyone else. It was six months of hard battle for me.

My turn to answer the question was coming closer, and I didn't want to share these struggles. After all, wasn't I one of the leaders of this trip? I didn't want to share about a time I was angry with God, but I couldn't think of anything else to say. I thought the students might see me differently after I shared, and I was right, but the difference was good. I became more approachable. I had several honest conversations with students about their own frustrations with God after I shared. Another student asked why I went so long without telling anyone at Taylor. Isn't that what the body of Christ is for — to encourage those who are weary and come alongside them? Good point. What a blessing it was for me to let students see the less than perfect side of me. They were encouraging and embracing. I am sometimes so busy trying to be the perfect Christian example to my students that I completely miss making a true connection with them. I hope to avoid making that mistake again.

Finally, I learned a valuable lesson about the sin of pride during my month in the Czech Republic. Americans like to do things by themselves, and I am very much an American. I love to plan trips, consider all of the details, and then see the project come together. I call it my hobby. Our team left for Indianapolis on a Sunday evening. We loaded up the vans, prayed together and then drove down to stay at a hotel by the airport. I was feeling pretty good. The team was coming together. The next morning, we had to leave for the airport around 4:30am. The team continued to travel smoothly together, and everything was working out great. I don't know if I would have said this then, but looking back, I must admit that I wanted to take credit for the ease of the operations.

After all, I was a seasoned veteran at plane travel. We loaded the plane, headed towards the runway, and ashamed, I confess I hadn't given God much thought the entire morning. Sure, I had prayed over my breakfast, but I thought I had things under control. Soon, the Lord reminded me who was in charge of my days. About five minutes into the flight, I began to feel light-headed, and before I knew it, I had passed out in the empty seat next to me. Let me say first that I do have a tendency to faint, but God hasn't often taught me such a valuable lesson when I regain consciousness. I was trying to do everything on my own, and I thought I had things so together. Nothing like a spell of unconsciousness to cure my pride. It's not wrong to prepare and plan, but I was trying to do everything without praying God's will be done. God wants to be included in every stage of the planning, from the mundane details to the ministry preparation. I pray I remember this lesson.

When I talk about missions with my Christian friends and coworkers, one hundred percent believe that short-term mission experiences are valuable for students. I don't hear many, though, commenting about the lessons we, as sponsors, learn. Sure, it's a sacrifice to give up break time. It can be tiring and overwhelming. How intimidated I feel taking students to a place I don't know much about. But too often I am comfortable, and in my comfort, I become stale. I believe it's good to face new situations and challenges, and good to be with students outside of our normal responsibilities. God refines me through these trips, and I wouldn't trade the lessons, friendships, and changes in me for all of the vacation time in the world.

Sara Oyer is a Residence Hall Director at Taylor University - Upland in Upland, IN

One Year Later

by Rob Loane

Eleven years and nine months after moving onto campus as a freshman, I checked out of the halls last June. The end of an era that included two campuses (one west coast, one east coast), undergraduate studies, graduate studies, and four years as resident director. Over these years alternative music became not so alternative, the Berlin Wall came down, Michael Jordan struck out a couple times and won a few championships, flannel came in and went out again, McDonalds served another billion people, Microsoft made a few upgrades in software, and I gained fifty pounds. In the shelter of on-campus housing, I observed Ronald Reagan, George Bush and William Clinton all occupy the same house on Pennsylvania Avenue. A lot of 'water under the bridge' as they say. Now after a year of teaching biblical studies on 'the other side of campus,' one central thing has rattled in my heart concerning Christian university education, residential life, and the student. For those who still live and serve in the halls and others who care about the well being of college students, I write this to underscore the unique role of a resident director in addressing the impersonal nature of the student's university experience. Let me begin by sharing a story.

There is a story about a five year old boy who got separated from his family while they were on the boardwalk one summer weekend evening in Ocean City, New Jersey. If you have ever been to the Ocean City Boardwalk in the summer you know the extent of the crowds of people — it can be both exhilarating and overwhelming. For this five year old, with rides and snacks and so many people, a night spent on the boardwalk was his favorite thing to do. But when he looked back for his dad in front of the Johnson Caramel Popcorn shop and realized that he was alone, the excitement was gone and the whole scene turned on him. The lights, the noises, the smells, and the faces all began to press in upon him and to terrify him in his anonymity and lostness. The boy began to quietly cry as he searched the crowd for his family. Face after face, both big and small, young and old, missed him and

his desperate situation. Not one of them focused any sort of sustained attention on him. Everything and everyone raced by the boy in a collective overlooking, until out of the crowd, one face rested on the boy. His uncle had found him! What a wonderful face looking at and moving toward him through the hurried mob. The panic was over.

For many students, their university years are much like this boy's boardwalk experience. The energy and excitement of leaving home and entering into the common life of dorm rooms and classrooms, lectures and cafeteria conversations, libraries and basketball games, with so many new people, can be like this five year old's summer evening. However, some sort of awakening occurs overtime and the impersonal nature of the college experience presses in upon them. The whole scene turns on them. That is, they begin to realize, among other things, how unknown they feel. As they go from class to class, chapel to chapel, meal to meal, and boring Friday night to boring Friday night, there is a gnawing feeling that no one really knows them. Class requirements and tuition bills are given to them as just another part of the crowd. In registration lines, cafeteria lines, book lines and lecture halls they, as students, are addressed *in general*. Rarely are they specified personally in this university experience. It is an unusual student who articulates this clearly, but student after student expresses this in a combination of vague worries, longings, and frustrations. For many, it is the first time they have really become conscious of this anxiety. Undoubtedly, it will not be the last time that such anonymity will be experienced. But the weight of this initial realization is often rather jarring. *Does anyone really see me? Does anyone really know me?*

The bulk of faculty and staff responsibilities unfortunately fail to address this concern. Some of their responsibilities even intensify the anonymity. This after all is one of the outcomes of modern institutions (e.g., universities and colleges) and their depersonalizing tendencies. Sadly, students are often reduced to customers. Universities overlook the student as just another part of the crowd

that must be handled according to some customer service standards and particularized by an ID number. In the classroom, the large majority of the relationships between the student and the professor are impersonal and distant. After all, what is a faculty person to do when her classrooms range from 35 to 250 students? No sort of specifying between students is to be expected. Many faculty recognize this frustration. Many students long for a more personal learning context, yet there is not enough energy or time or even structures in the faculty's week to meet personally with these students.

All this is said not to indict modern university life (although some indictments may be appropriate if we are going to take the title of *Christian* university), but rather to encourage resident directors and those who supervise them to recognize that their roles stand in such stark contrast, or at least should, to these depersonalizing tendencies in the university. To continue the metaphor, the Christian resident director could be the uncle in the boardwalk crowd of today's university. No other role in the university is better set up to address this "lostness." From the role of supervision and mentorship of one's RA staff, to the discipline and counseling role of the students, the resident director stands in a unique place as an educator to address students *in particular* rather than in general. Certainly there are times when resident directors approach students in general with programs and procedures that are necessary and beneficial, but the bulk of their job should not be taken up with such tasks — the well being of so many students depend on it. Residence Life programs need to free up their RD staffs with the opportunity to have the leisure to specify students. To listen, and then listen some more, and then to respond to students uniquely, as whole persons who each have a story and are seeking to make sense of their story. Such a task is not given to rushed meetings or hurried schedules. Programs and projects can be rushed, but people cannot. To address a person in particular requires along with many other things, time and patience.

The modern world is full of hurried, impersonal encounters. From supermar-

kets to coffee shops, from doctor's offices to car dealerships, from sporting events to even many Sunday morning worship services, our lives are full of anonymity. As people who work in the university, we must be aware of the weight of this impersonalness on the students. Sadly less and less students (and educators) are coming from contexts that have specified them uniquely. Many students live with an undercurrent of fear that has been formed by either the dissolution of their family along the way or the domination of a narcissistic parent. During the university years this undercurrent often begins to express itself at the surface. We, as Christian educators, must begin to *cultivate environments that address this sort of lostness*. The role of resident director seems best situated now for this sort of finding or particularizing to occur.

A year out of the halls and this image of the boy as college student is beginning to be clarified and underscored in my own heart. Currently the classroom setting is very hit or miss with this sort of particularizing. The university as a whole may indeed need to better understand this dynamic, but in the meantime, may student affairs programs in general and resident directors in particular recognize and respond to the opportunity that is afforded them as educators.

As this opportunity becomes clear for residence life staffs, two notes must be added. First, resident directors must recognize their limitations. The role of the resident director that I suggest here presumes a relational engagement that can often lead to an overinvestment (e.g., we may risk burnout). Such a dynamic often results in resentment toward students. We must acknowledge this resentment as a misunderstanding of our limitations. We cannot engage in deep individual relationships with all our residents. There will be varied levels of engagement and commitment. (This said however, let us not underestimate what even one timely "long-listen" with a student may do to identify and specify their experience.) Second, some resident directors may begin to realize that while playing the role of the uncle they identify far more with the boy. In the role of noticing others, God at times graciously

awakens us to our own lostness. This can be very disillusioning. Like the boy's experience, it seems as if the college setting suddenly turns on us. We discover that we are alone and lost. We begin to be open to the jarring reality that serving college students has been a way of dealing with our own lostness. We may discover in this process that much of our giving has been compensatory rather than compassionate. That is, we give in order to get. We serve compulsively rather than freely. We offer an attention to others that we deeply yearn to receive. We desperately search the crowd and yearn to be recognized — to be found.

For those who identify with both the boy and his uncle in the story, let me encourage you to consider the relationship between Jesus with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). What a significant day when *out of the crowd Jesus recognizes* and specifies this small and despised tax collector in a tree. Jesus identifies and particularizes the most unlikely of characters. It is critical that we begin to ponder the unique love of God — He particularizes us — *we* are chosen out of the crowd. For God does not love us as just another part of the crowd, nor does God love us because it is in his job description — 'after all, that's what God is supposed to do'. Rather, like Jesus with Zacchaeus, or the shepherd leaving the ninety-nine for the one, or the loving father who uniquely approaches both his prodigal and his elder son, He notices us and addresses us in particular. We, in Christ, are lovingly and truthfully specified. We would do well to linger with some of these images and begin to discover in them a prayer to, and a response from, the one who is the recognizer, the particularizer, the uncle of all us lost children, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

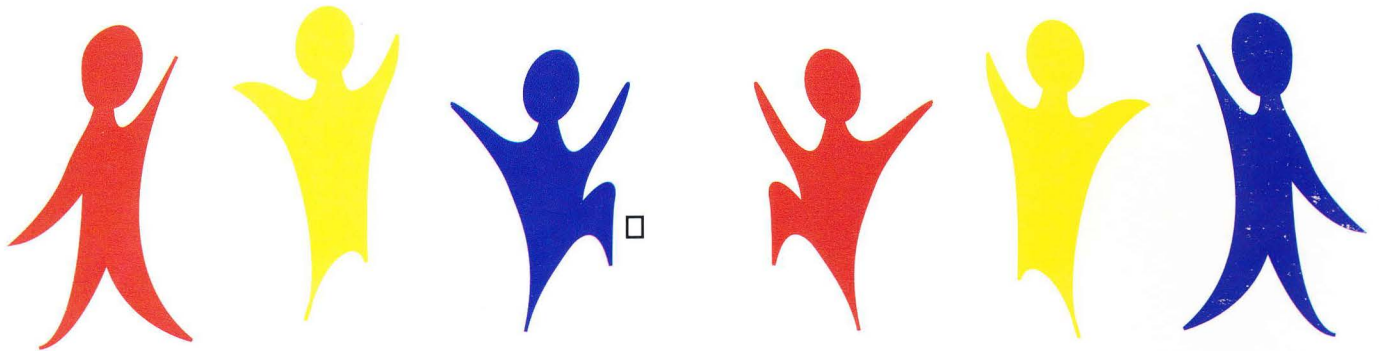
A Blessing

In light of the impersonal nature of so much modern life, in general, and universities, in particular, may we as *Christian* educators respond to this call — to be 'uncles,' noticers, recognizers, and patient listeners on college and university campuses today. In Jesus name, Amen.

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