

Taylor University Pillars at Taylor University

Koinonia

Association of Christians in Student Development

Spring 2009

Koinonia

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Spring 2009



Students of Concern Committee

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Beyond the Mind

The President's Corner



Barry Loy

Is this the beginning of the end of student affairs, as we know it?

The day we announced the cancellation of the 2009 ACSD annual conference, the Chronicle of Higher Education ran a story entitled: *Economic Downturn Limits Conference Travel*. It was a timely message—one that lent support to our decision and also predicted that travel budgets and support for professional development activities will shrink even more next year. While this is troubling given the importance of professional development, I'm even more concerned by the potential impact of the economic downturn on the survival of student development—at least student development as we know it. A colleague recently asked if I thought the weakening economy would lead to the marginalization of student affairs. He cited several examples of how college presidents had “restructured” or “re-created” student development departments in ways not in keeping with current student affairs practice. I just read today in the Boston Globe that Wellesley College, an elite college for women with over a billion dollar endowment, is cutting 80 non-faculty jobs. As funding sources drop, presidents will be tempted to protect faculty jobs over non-faculty jobs. And who can blame them? Students cannot graduate from college without an official transcript, no matter how much they grow and mature through our co-curricular programs. So, I may be stating the obvious, but my encouragement to you is to be ready to give a defense of what you believe about your work and why it is important to the learning enterprise at your institution. Can you show how your work in student development is integral to achieving the mission of your college or university? Resources that have been available to student development professionals during the years of plenty will decrease as we experience several lean years. And, unfortunately, there is no guarantee that we will regain these resources when the economy starts to turn around. Colleges and universities were already feeling the crunch before this recent downturn (Guskin & Marcy, 2003). This should give us all the more reason to prayerfully consider our student development roles in light of institutional priorities and core values. I believe that most of us in student development will be required, if we haven't already, to cut our resources and, to some extent, restructure our departments. If we are proactive in preparing for these lean years, we will be in a better position to remain at the table with other educators to facilitate student learning—the holistic, transformative activity that integrates the curriculum with the co-curriculum.

May the Lord bless you as you continue to honor Him through your good work with your students and colleagues. I look forward to seeing you at Messiah College in June 2010

Barry Loy
President of ACSD
Vice President and Dean of Students
Gordon College

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From the Editor's (very messy) Desk



As I sit at my desk it is hard not to notice just how quiet my office is with students gone for the summer. Like many of you, I love working with students, but I also relish this time. I forget how much I need this time during the frenzied and exciting pace of the year. For most of the year we sprint from meeting to meeting—enjoying a great conversation with students here, praying God will give us a word for this troubled student there, hoping that student who sucks the life out of us stays way over there. It truly is wonderful work and on the best days is simply intoxicating. However, the pace is impossible to maintain. Even the weekends feel less rejuvenating as a busy March gives way to an even more hectic April and May. In the quiet of this time, I heard the air conditioner kick on this morning. That is a sound I can't recall hearing during the school year. I am quite certain that it is running on the hot days in September and again in May, when it stops raining long enough for the sun to shine brightly. My office is cool on those muggy

days so I know it is hard at work, but I guess the sheer busyness drowns out the hum of it. Hearing it this morning, in this time, it makes me wonder what else—sounds, thoughts, and voices—I have missed during the year. My hope and prayer for myself and you is to slow down in this time, these few weeks when we don't sprint and press and push every hour of the day, and to read and remember what we have read, to laugh genuinely and heartily, to play more and work out less, to mend what is in disrepair, to be more fully present wherever we find ourselves, and to listen. May God realign us and restore us in this time.

**The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.**

He makes me lie down in green pastures,

He leads me beside quiet waters,

He restores my soul. (Psalm 23:1-3)

Cheers,
Steve Austin
Editor of *Koinonia*



Submitting for Publication in Koinonia

Each issue of *Koinonia* is open for members of ACSD and others associated with higher education to submit pieces for publication. Some issues are themed while other issues may be quite general in nature. The Editor of *Koinonia* reserves the right to edit each submitted piece and select the best combination of articles received for each issue. The next issue will examine "The Future of Student Affairs", however, articles on other topics are welcome and needed. The deadline for submission is September 1st, 2009.

General Guidelines

- 1) Submit feature articles, original research, reviews, interviews, reflection pieces, and other creative pieces that are timely and thoughtfully engage and inform our ACSD readership.**
- 2) Submit pieces in APA style and documentation, in Microsoft Word format, and on or before submission deadlines for each issue.**
- 3) Limit submissions to suggested lengths: feature articles, original research, interviews, and reflective and creative pieces (800–2,500 words) and resource reviews (700–1,200 words).**
- 4) Articles should be submitted to the Koinonia Editor via e-mail at staustin@taylor.edu.**

Writing for *Koinonia* is a great way to process and share what you are learning, encourage and challenge others, and stay involved in ongoing higher education professional development. We hope you will consider writing and submitting a piece in the future.

Students of Concern Committee: Coordinating Care

By Connie Horton and Mark Davis

Mental health concerns among college students have undoubtedly increased in frequency, severity, and complexity in recent years (Benton, Robertson, Tseng, Newton, & Benton, 2003). Surveys of university student populations (e.g., American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment) confirm that significant numbers of students are struggling with psychological concerns such as stress, depression, and substance abuse and the reality that, for many, these concerns interfere with central goals of the university, including academic functioning (NCHA, 2007). Counseling centers have not only been flooded with many more students seeking services, but have increasingly needed to be staffed with expert, licensed professionals prepared to respond not only to developmental concerns such as homesickness and career angst, but more serious psychological concerns such as eating disorders, substance addictions, major depression (including suicidality), and Bi-Polar disorder. Some student clients are suffering from significant mental illnesses; others may not be diagnosable, but are certainly unprepared to cope with the stressors of university life in a way that is safe and non-disruptive. Clinicians at Christian universities are challenged to help students make connections between personal faith and mental health as even students expressing strong spiritual beliefs are sometimes psychologically fragile, and, too often, do not seem to use their faith as a resource (Horton, 2008).

Counseling centers are not the only departments affected. Professors are increasingly confronted with dilemmas of how to respond and support students with disturbed or disturbing behaviors, or students who disclose significant personal

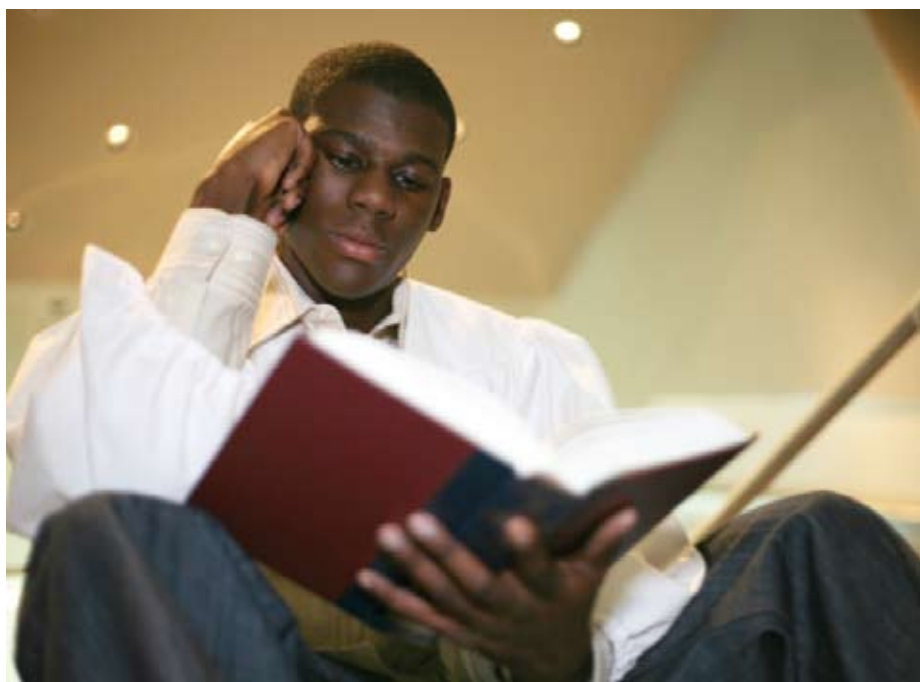
struggles. Disability services are commonly responding to students with psychiatric concerns, the fastest growing category needing accommodations. Health centers are finding that students' medical concerns (e.g., breathing difficulties) frequently have a psychological basis (e.g., panic attacks). Judicial and public safety departments are certainly experiencing more complexities in their work due to these trends. And, of course, residential life departments are greatly impacted as they are asked not only to help students adjust, develop programs, and create community, but also to train resident assistants and hall directors to be on the lookout for students who may be suicidal or self-injurious, have an eating disorder or substance abuse problem, or be struggling with some other significant mental health concern. Chaplains and


campus ministers may be uncertain about their ministries when the relationships of, and lines between, spiritual struggles and psychological disorders become unclear. All aspects of the campus community have a role in ministering to students of concern, and doing so in a way that increases the probability that the student receives the needed care and minimizes risk of campus disruption or danger.

Integrating information and coordinating care can be a challenge. Many universities are creating a Student of Concern Committee (SOCC), a collaborative decision-making group which allows for efficient communication of concerns and response planning. Clearly, there is not a one-size fits all approach. Each university must create its own response which works within its unique system. There are questions, examples, and considerations which may be helpful in assisting university leaders in considering important factors as they create or modify their own unique systems.

Membership

Who should be included on the committee? Common members include the dean of students (who often chairs the committee), directors or deans of residential life,





and the director of the counseling center. Other possible members include the director of the health center, director of disability services, director of public safety, and general counsel. Some universities choose to have some key members there on a regular (e.g., weekly basis), while others are called in as needed.

All aspects of the campus community have a role in ministering to students of concern, and doing so in a way that increases the probability that the student receives the needed care and minimizes risk of campus disruption or danger.

Which professionals should be included at any given university should depend on the university's staffing structure and the particular styles and gifts of the professionals. Those who will be on the SOCC must be good team players and problem solvers who are able to sensitively, respectfully, and confidentially respond to very private information about students in a timely, organized, and effective manner. The size of the committee should be large enough to ensure that key areas are represented but small enough to allow for reasonable scheduling, quality discussion, and the development of close working relationship based on mutual respect and trust.

It should be noted that legally and ethically the director of the counseling center is not in a position to share confidential information regarding counseling center clients (unless there is an imminent threat), including whether a Student of Concern is even being treated at the counseling center. Still, the counseling center director makes a valuable contribution. As a mental health professional, this person may be able to help think through the needs of the student, (e.g., "Those symptoms sound like an eating disorder may be escalating"... "Those remarks do sound

potentially suicidal"), the dynamics of the systems, ("roommates may be unintentionally contributing to the problem") and the appropriate response ("This student needs to be assessed immediately"), without disclosing confidential information. Additionally, there are times where a counseling center client may sign a release that

allows the director to speak more freely (e.g., "Yes, the student does have an eating disorder, but is being treated; physicians have verified medical stability, and the client is cooperating with, and making progress in, treatment").

Referrals to the SOCC

How are students referred? Referrals to the SOCC can come from a variety of sources, most commonly faculty or residential life staff. Parents, coaches, fellow students, and academic advising may also refer. It may be a good idea to have a reminder letter sent out annually to remind members of the campus community that the resource is available. Following is an excerpt from one such letter at Pepperdine:

Are you concerned about a student?

Student Affairs has a "Student of Concern" committee that meets regularly to address student needs. One of the goals of the committee is to provide a safety net for students to ensure their academic and interpersonal success. Anyone in the Pepperdine community may identify students to this committee who may be experiencing problems or encountering obstacles, setbacks or

challenges to their success and retention at Pepperdine. As needed, intervention strategies are determined to best support the student.

Process

How does the SOCC process work? How are decisions made? The process typically involves hearing details of the situation from the referral source, gathering more information as needed, choosing from the range of response options, monitoring the response to intervention through case management, and, finally, closure. The SOCC should meet regularly to consider the needs and needed next steps and to assign members responsible for specific action items. The SOCC also spends time praying for the students' needs. Cases are "closed" when there are no further action items that the SOCC needs to track.

Nature of Referrals and Response

What types of situations are referred, and what is the SOCC response? Because there is a range of referral types, the appropriate response varies. Some are straightforward "FYI" notices that are shared, such as, "This student's grandmother died recently." In such instances, although residential staff may check on the student, express sympathies, etc., there is likely no need to discuss the situation at the SOCC meetings. Other, possibly lower level concerns are worth mentioning, in case additional information gathered raises more serious levels of concern. For example, if a professor notes that a student, who previously attended class regularly, has suddenly stopped attending and has not been seen in a week in a class that meets daily, some additional information should perhaps be gathered. Are other professors reporting the same? Have the residential staff seen the student lately? Additional investigation may result in a conclusion that this is not a significant concern (e.g., a student is planning to drop the class and just has not communicated with the professor) or something more serious (e.g., he is seriously depressed, which has prevented him from feeling able to leave his room recently). Often, the initial referral seems more serious in itself. A student, for

example, may have made a suicidal threat or engaged in self-injurious behavior (such as cutting). There may be a concern that a student appears to have a significant eating disorder or substance abuse issues. Behavior may be bizarre, frightening, or threatening to others. Clearly, these concerns warrant a more serious approach.

The range of options will vary tremendously from having resident assistants checking in and offering encouragement, to referring the student to counseling, to encouraging or, in extreme cases, requiring the student leave campus. One common option is to allow the student to remain in school, but with a requirement to have a mental health or physical health evaluation, within a certain period of time. Based on the evaluation results, the SOCC determines the appropriate next steps, including the possibility of allowing the student to continue to remain on campus if a commitment is made to the recommended treatment plan. At other times (e.g., after a suicide attempt), it may be appropriate for the SOCC to invoke a Medical Interim Suspension and not allow the student to return to school and/or the residence halls until an evaluation has been conducted and safety has been confirmed. The SOCC, on occasion, should encourage a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal or, in the rarest of circumstances, the SOCC may have to invoke an Involuntary Medical Withdrawal.

Medical and Mental Health Leaves

When it is best for a student to prioritize health and mental health over academics? Students with a range of needs can be supported at the university while they pose no significant threat to themselves or others and are able to make progress toward their academic pursuits. There are situations, however, when students need to put academics “on the back burner” while they regain stability by going home and/or seeking intensive outpatient, or inpatient treatment.

In general, Medical Health Leaves should be more commonly considered than Involuntary/Mandatory Leaves. Universities should consider how to encourage students to take advantage of the option of a

Voluntary Leave when this would be in their best interests, and in some cases, in the best interests of the campus community. This may include making the leave process relatively efficient, and coordinated so that students don’t feel they are getting the “run-around,” providing assistance with logistics such as packing and mailing boxes home, and, perhaps most influentially, being generous about tuition credits being issued for future semesters.

Careful thought, under the advisement of legal counsel, should be given to the rare situation in which Involuntary Leaves would be required. Re-entry processes (on Voluntary and Involuntary Leaves) should also be carefully outlined. Resources to assist the university regarding these issues include United Educators (UE) Risk Research Bulletin (April 2006) which highlights the importance of a balanced approach and the need for appeal processes, and the Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA) Law and Policy Report (January 19, 2006) which discusses disability and “direct threat” concerns. Additionally, programs at universities that have been fine-tuning their policies and procedures for many years (e.g., Cornell, see these publicized policies www.gannett.cornell.edu/HLOA.html) provide useful models.

Legal Issues

What legal considerations are most important? In the absence of court cases directly addressing issues such as involuntary medical leaves, many universities are carefully reviewing their policies in light of a 2003 ruling by the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. This decision and its implications are discussed in the UE and ASJA resources referenced above. One of the most important recommendations is to develop a clear set of policies and procedures—and follow them closely. Without clear documentation, it could leave you vulnerable to charges that a student did not receive fair and equitable treatment. Also, before any “adverse actions” are taken against a student, it is critically important that an objective assessment is made by professionally trained medical or mental health professionals. Quick deci-

sions by “nonprofessional” staff members based on impressions may, upon review, be interpreted as bias or lack of objectivity and ultimately discredit the SOCC.

Finally, it is important to note that a student who has a mental illness or specific learning disability may qualify for legally protected status as a disabled person under federal and state disabilities laws. Be sure to work closely with your disability services staff to ensure that any actions taken by the SOCC fall within legal limits.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of increased mental health concerns on college campuses is yet another arena in which Christian professionals must be “wise as serpents” and “gentle as doves” (Matt. 10:16) in their response. Student of Concern Committees can help minister to students in need and facilitate a safe, caring campus community.

Connie Horton serves as the Director of the Counseling Center and Mark Davis serves as the Dean of Student Affairs at Pepperdine University, located in Malibu, California.

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Want to Change Student Culture on Your Campus? Do the CORE!

By Eric Lowdermilk

A few years ago, a popular soft drink company marketed its product with the slogan, "Do the Dew!" If it were up to me, I'd make "DO THE CORE!" a popular slogan at the ACSD conference each year. Why? Because it enabled our institution to zero in on just what the problems were so that we could refine our practices and change campus behavior.

Early in my years at Palm Beach Atlantic University there were several of us at the director level who expressed a gnawing feeling in our stomachs that our students were faced with more pressure to consume alcohol than students at other CCCU campuses. We began discussing this at staff meetings. We found ourselves talking about it repeatedly and it soon became an unspoken agenda item at every meeting. In short, it became a passion of our team.

But the mystery was that we really didn't know the extent of this problem. We thought our students were involved in alcohol, but the only evidence we had was some scant data from our discipline records and the rest was anecdotal stories and hunches that troubled us: that is, until we admin-

istered the CORE survey (CORE Institute: Measuring Change, Delivering Results, 2006). It was developed in the late 1980's as a result of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and has been administered to more than 800,000 students at over 11,000 institutions (CORE Institute: Measuring Change, Delivering Results, 2006). It measures trends such as alcohol consumption in the general population but it can also isolate the drinking habits of underage students as a subgroup.^[KWA1] It asks how many students have engaged in binge drinking (considered five drinks or more in one sitting) in the previous two weeks. It also measures the usage of other drugs and the related harms and risks that students find themselves in as a result of alcohol or drugs. Finally, it delivers a limited amount of data on sexual activity.

In January 2006 we received our data analysis back. The first thing we looked at was, "What percentage of our underage students was consuming alcohol?" The CORE asks this question, giving the students a time frame of "in the past 30 days." At that time, over a quarter of our underage students was consuming alcohol. We were certainly disappointed with this news, but, at

It's made a difference on our campus. If you want to change your student culture... "DO THE CORE!"

the same time, delighted because we finally knew who and how much. So, we decided to "take aim" at this problem.

istered the CORE survey (CORE Institute: Measuring Change, Delivering Results, 2006) in the fall of 2005. That's when we began to have powerful data in our hands that we could use to change our practice.

What is the CORE? The CORE survey is an instrument that anonymously asks approximately 40 questions related primarily to

Taking Aim

alcohol and drug use. It was developed in the late 1980's as a result of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and has been administered to more than 800,000 students at over 11,000 institutions (CORE Institute: Measuring Change, Delivering Results, 2006). It measures trends such as alcohol consumption in the general population but it can also isolate the drinking habits of underage students as a subgroup.^[KWA1] It asks how many students have engaged in binge drinking (considered five drinks or more in one sitting) in the previous two weeks. It also measures the usage of other drugs and the related harms and risks that students find themselves in as a result of alcohol or drugs. Finally, it delivers a limited amount of data on sexual activity.

seminar on assessment that made a valuable point by citing a little humor. Someone had asked an archer, "How did you learn to shoot that well?" To which she replied, "Aw shucks, it ain't nothing. I shoot first and draw a circle around the hole later" (Keeling, 2006). This reminds me of how we so often approach student development. If we don't know what we're aiming at, we never hit our target. Now our team knew who, and it was time to take aim.

We decided that the best way to affect our underage students was to start with the student leaders who had the greatest influence on them. Did our over-21 students need change as well? Yes, but the greater impact on student culture would come from younger students who would be our next student leaders in 1-2 years. So we planned to reveal the statistics and initiate the discussion at our annual Student Leadership Retreat. We put our student leaders in a room and said, "Hey, our youngest students are drinking. Here's how much. What can you tell us?" In so doing, we made them aware of our research data, helped them to own the problem, and also garnered creative ideas from them. It motivated them to lead the change. What followed was an all out attack on alcohol consumption that included active and passive programming, more discussions with students, and fervent prayer for a move of the Holy Spirit on our campus while giving us more creativity to effect change.

Getting Results

Typically, our campus administers the instrument every two years. However, due to an initiative in our state, our campus administered the CORE not only in the fall 2005 and 2007, but also in 2008. What we found was that by Fall 2008, we had reduced our underage drinking percentage by more than 10%. If we take that statistic and apply it only to our underage population, that's 100 less students consuming alcohol. This number doesn't even factor in older students. That's change. Think about what happened when those students became leaders. The next wave of freshmen heard a clearer message from their upperclassmen: "Hey, we don't do that at

this school." It's our hope that this momentum will carry the numbers even lower in the years to come—and we should know, because we plan to keep measuring it with the CORE.

Specifics

If you choose to administer the CORE, your survey data is compared to national trends at other schools. This data can be used not only to change your current culture, but can assist your admissions team in recruitment by comparing the culture at your Christian campus to secular institutions.

The instrument can be administered via hard copy or online. The purchase price includes data collection and analysis that is returned to you in a couple months. On our campus of 2000 undergraduate students, it costs us less than \$1500 each time we administer it and would cost a smaller campus less as the price is dependent on the size of the institution. We pay to use it every other year, therefore we are spending roughly \$750 a year to affect change with approximately 2000 undergrads. That's 37 cents per student per year. Not a bad price to pay to get 100 students to stop drinking.

Sharing the Data = Improved Methodology of Programming

I envision a group of professionals sharing at the ACS National Conference what the CORE has told them about their campus and how that has changed their practice and their student culture. That won't begin until more CCCU schools use the instrument. If you work at an institution that wishes the data be kept private, it could still be shared with others without naming the source institution. We have done that with one such school mentioned below.

An obvious concern here might be, "But you're one of the few CCCU campuses that allow students age 21 and over to drink... we don't have that problem." Our experience is that some of our sister schools who prohibit drinking altogether have similar problems, and some of those have discovered such by their use of the CORE. One institution in the Midwest completed the CORE and found that despite a complete ban on alcohol, 11+ percent of their undergraduate students had consumed within 30 days of the survey.

In the sharing of data we have done so far, we've learned that our binge rate is signif-

icantly lower than two schools we know of and, yet, not nearly as low as a third institution with which we correspond. So from this, we know we can still improve in this area. We have a target supplied by a sister school. Remember the archer mentioned above?

It's made a difference on our campus. If you want to change your student culture... "DO THE CORE!"

More information on the CORE can be found at http://www.siu.edu/departments/coreinst/public_html/ or by calling 618-453-4420 or emailing coreinst@siu.edu

Eric Lowdermilk serves as the Director for Student Accountability at Palm Beach Atlantic University, located in West Palm Beach, Florida.

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You Only Get 1 Up

By Justin Heth and Caleb Farmer

It feels ironic that as I sit down to write this article I just spent 2 hours repairing and resurrecting my old Nintendo Entertainment System from 1986. Luckily, with the help of YouTube, I was able to watch a few videos that showed me how to take apart the NES and clean it so now I am able to fight King Koopa and rescue the princess. It is amazing to think about how far video games have come over the last 20 years.

Today, video games are as normal as eating and breathing for our students. For many of them, video games have always been a part of their lives. They use video games to relieve stress, veg out, connect with friends, or play for the competition. I oversee a residence hall of 292 male students and have seen the rise and fall of

you a place to start the discussion about how gaming is impacting a student's "RL" (real life).

Many of you may be "n00bs" (new gamers) to this whole gaming culture or some of you may have just paused *Halo* or told your guild leader that you are leaving the dungeon raid to read this article. Whatever your personal experience level with gaming, I think the question needs to be asked, "What role do video games play in our student's lives?" Are these games a hobby? An escape? Something to do when one is bored? Or, is it a lifestyle for our students? The average Massive Multi Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG) player is 26 years old and typically spends 22 hours per week gaming (Yee, 2006). In Nick Yee's article, he lists ten

I think the question needs to be asked, "What role do video games play in our students' lives?" Are these games a hobby? An escape? Something to do when one is bored? Or, is it a lifestyle for our students?

games from *Counter-Strike* to all the *World of Warcraft* upgrades and have witnessed what all of this has meant in our community. I must admit that during my time in the hall I have only played a handful of *Halo* matches, *Madden* football games, and some *Rock Band* here or there. I agree that gaming is fun and a nice social event, but, overall, I feel we are watching many men (and some women) give their best to gaming. This is a fact that has many implications for all of our campuses. The goal of this article is to inform you of some current research, flesh out some implications of gaming, and give

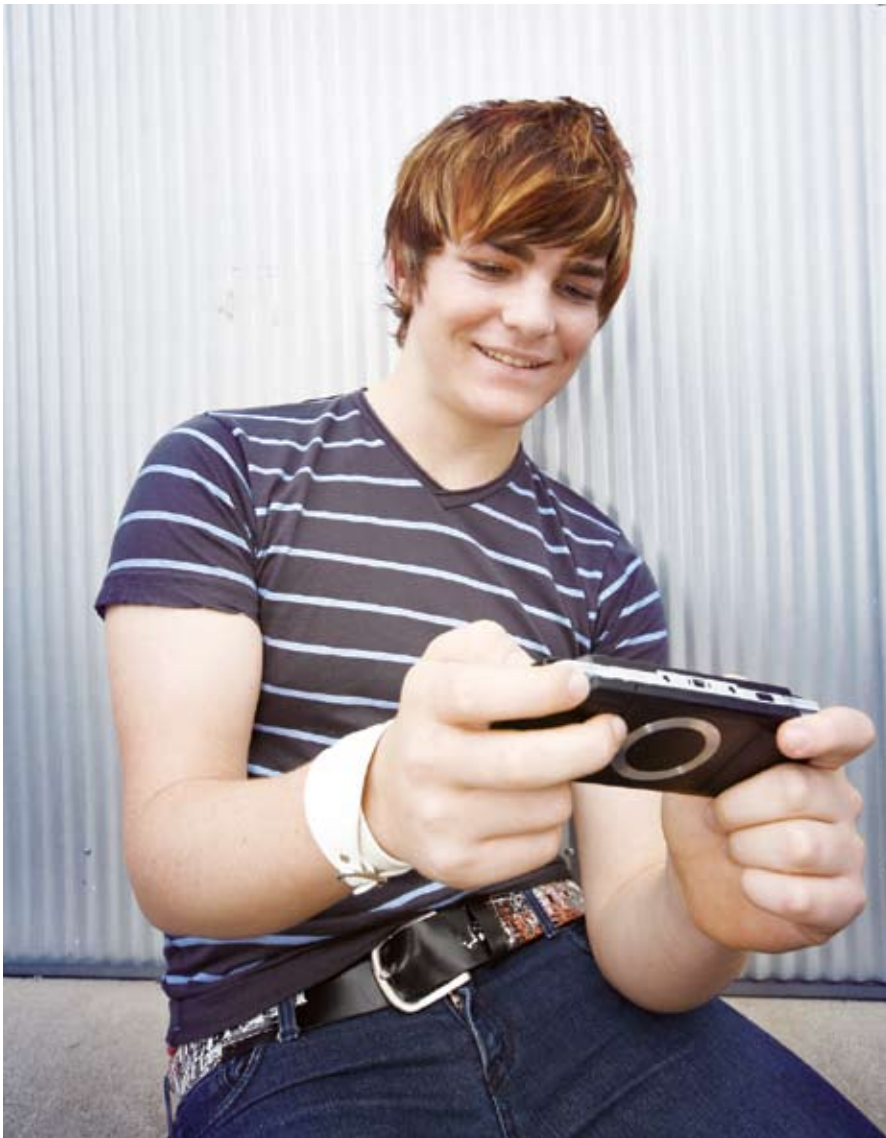
motivational components for gaming:

Advancement (progress, power, status); Mechanics (numbers, optimizing, analysis); competition (challenging others, domination); socializing (making friends, helping people); relationship (personal, self-disclosure); teamwork (collaboration, group achievements); discovery (exploration, finding hidden things); role-playing (story line, character history, fantasy); customization (appearances, style, accessories); escapism (relax, avoid and escape real life problems). (p. 774)

The results of Yee's study revealed that men scored higher than women in the achievement component, while women scored higher in the relationship subcomponent in the social motivation category (Yee, 2006). This may seem common sense for the way God designed us, but I think it also gives some insight into the human psyche. It is very common for men to find their identity in what they do, how well they do it, and to reflect the creator God by putting their hands to work to create something; video games allow for all of these things. I realize we are talking about pixelated worlds of virtual power and possessions, but maybe our God-given commission in the Garden of Eden is in some way being fulfilled in the virtual world. God tells mankind in Genesis 1:28 to "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." That may sound like a stretch, but there seems to be something in the way God designed humans that is awakened through gaming and, at some level, a person's needs and longings can at least be *pacified* by it.

The greatest benefit the gaming culture brings to the residence hall is that it allows guys to connect and form friend groups very quickly. Video games show no prejudice or discrimination. Everyone is included if you know how to hold a controller in your hand. General gaming research reveals a few things that must be noted. Regular gamers have better social awareness and increased reaction time compared to non-gamers. It has also been shown that video games can help people form better problem solving-skills as well as improve hand eye coordination. Gamers may also develop leadership and management skill through accidental or collateral learning, which happens when gamers are in leadership positions in the game over other gamers and have to make decisions about strategy and organization concerning battle plans, collection of resources, and so forth.

Before getting into the larger body of negative research, I would like to offer some anecdotal observations of the gam-



ing culture from the residence hall I live and work in. First, gaming brings out the worst in some people concerning character, self-control, and responsibility—which I have seen and have heard gamers verbalize about themselves. I do not know how many times I have had to address students cursing each other out over *Halo* or have heard swear words being screamed down the hall over a game gone wrong. Next, although friendship groups can form through gaming, I have discovered that those relationships usually lack depth and that these friends rarely discuss any significant issues, including their faith. I have seen

gaming become so addicting for people that their academics suffer; sometimes to the point that the student must leave college because they could not stop gaming. Finally, I have observed how gaming can foster isolation, impacting both men and women.

Current brain research shows that final formation of the brain does not occur until the late 20's (Bechara, 2005). If this is true, then whatever our students are filling their minds with is going to impact the formation of their brains and impact how it is developing. There is preliminary evidence that video game play stimulates the same chemical

systems that narcotics trigger, thus releasing dopamine into the body. The dopamine system is considered the pleasure system of the brain and acts as an accountant keeping track of expected rewards and sending out alerts to inform the body of lowered dopamine levels when those rewards don't arrive as promised (Johnson, 2005, p. 34). The reinforcement of the chemical motivates the person to proactively perform certain activities to meet their needs. If this chemical response is being triggered when people play video games this could start to explain why it is so hard for our students to break old habits and start new habits concerning the amount of time they spend playing video games.

One study concluded that exposure to violent video games caused desensitization to real-life violence and that gamers "get used to" violence and eventually become numb to it (Carnagey, 2007). *Violent Video Game Effects on Children and Adolescents* (Anderson, Gentile, & Buckley, 2008) details the impact of violent video games on an individual by giving them more aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The book *Playstation Nation* (Bruner, 2006), working off of qualitative studies, demonstrated gamers report growing agitation and loss of overall happiness. They also noted that gamers can begin to resent anything that interferes with their playing (Bruner, 2006).

In a qualitative study I conducted with my assistant hall director, we interviewed 20 of the top gamers in the building as chosen by peers. The most intriguing thing we discovered was how unaware students were of the amount of hours they spend gaming. The most frequent comment we heard at the beginning of the interviews were the students stating, "Why are you asking me? My roommate plays way more than I do." When asked how many hours they gamed a day, students minimized their numbers sometimes to levels that were comical. We asked each student if they were a Christian and, if so, to talk about their testimony and how Jesus impacts their life on a daily basis. The majority of these students struggled verbalizing their faith and value system. Some said it was hard to explain, some did not have an answer, and one person said

they felt they were on the right track now, even though they had not been to church in 5 months.

Moving forward from here, the temptation to ban MMORPG's and toss the X-box out the window is not feasible. Most student gamers aren't going to hang up the controller for life. One thing we have recognized when approaching a student about

I am not trying to pick on gamers as one student's video game is another's TV, web surfing, or movie watching. Two hours of time each day spent gaming or watching TV or movies equals out to 30.4 days a year. Reading the Bible for 15 minutes a day for the whole year would equal out to 3.8 days a year. That is a massive difference; it reflects something significant about who we are. By

The most intriguing thing we discovered was how unaware students were of the amount of hours they spend gaming.

gaming is that the student takes playing very seriously. We risk shutting down any meaningful conversation by instantly minimizing the value of gaming when we enter a student's room exclaiming, "It's a waste of time and your life. You should be serving others. Have you read your Bible today? Why are you spending all your time building a pixel character that is worth nothing?" Those tactics are not going to change a student's heart or habits, and could even push them into gaming more. We have to recognize that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate heart-changer and that our job is to put our students in the best position for their hearts and eyes to be open to the Spirit's prompting. True change comes when a student recognizes the need for change themselves.

I firmly believe that gaming can be a healthy hobby just like woodworking, reading, or basketball. But, along with any hobby or interest, we need to be constantly evaluating what priority our hobby has in our life. Our time on this earth is fleeting, our lives are only a breath, and we need to be asking ourselves if we are stewarding our lives in a God honoring way (Psalms 90:12; Ephesians 5:15-17; James 4:14-15). We need to be asking ourselves, "Do our lives draw others to Jesus?" "If someone followed me around and watched me for a week would they know who is Lord of my life?"

the sheer numbers alone, it makes me wonder who the Lord of our life really is.

Some questions to start the discussion:

- How are the video games and the time you invest into them impacting you as a person?
- Should Christians play video games different than non-Christians plays games?
- Would others know we are Christians by the way we game?
- Are we using these platforms to further the kingdom? Or, are we simply build our own kingdoms?
- Gaming can be a hobby just as much as weight lifting or wood working, but how many hours a week are too much? When does one's hobby become an obsession or addiction?
- Are there certain games that Christians should not play? If so, what games and why?
- What's is the balance for you concerning stewardship vs. entertainment?
- What kind of citizens will gamers be?
- How will gaming impact our marriages and relationships?

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The Season

by Sharon Virkler

The screams rang out across the crowded cafeteria, jarring me out of my mundane lunchtime conversation. Was it a crisis? Was someone hurt? The scream didn't sound like someone in pain, though. It sounded rather like the scream of an overzealous fan encountering an American Idol, or, perhaps the sound one makes at the sight of a long lost friend or relative. But, no, it wasn't either of those scenarios. The source? A group of girls encountering an engagement ring on the hand of one of their fellow students. Ah, yes. Spring Ring Season had arrived.

The Season is all about smiles and hugs (and screams), congratulations, and left hand viewing. It's about plans, talk of the future, and choosing bridesmaids and colors between studying and finishing up the semester. But, it's also about the ones who feel as though they've been left behind, whether they'll admit it or not. I think most student development professionals are good at trying to steer these young ladies towards something else to get their mind off The Season. There are exams to pass, papers to write, grad school applications to complete, and activities to be involved in. Why, there's a whole *life* out there for waiting for them! No time to sit around feeling sorry for themselves. There's plenty of time for dating and engagements and husbands down the road.

But don't be so quick to think that we can take those feelings and desires and dreams and lock them away while we help them concentrate on their education.

Several years ago I wrote a book titled *Anticipatience: A New Word of Hope for Single Women*. It is based on what God has shown me about trusting Him to provide me with the greatest desire of my heart—a godly Christian husband. It's about anticipating that He's going to provide, while being patient for His timing. I wrote it from my perspective—that of the “older” single woman. However, though I am older than the screamers, I'm not THAT old! I told my publisher that my target audience was women my age. I never expected to hear from college age women struggling with

the same doubts I had struggled with and I never expected to see Anticipatience on their “favorite books” lists. I have since realized that Christian women of all ages, backgrounds, and education levels have hearts that long to be connected with a godly man. That's the way God wired us.

Anticipatience sounds like one of those words you've heard before. As far as I know, it's original. I've since heard it as the name of a rap song and a champion hound dog, but I still believe I thought of it first. I came up with the word during a time in my life when I was struggling to understand how to wait both patiently and expectantly for God to provide me with the desire of my heart. One day, it hit me that I couldn't be expectant without being patient, and patience without expectation isn't really patience at all. It's lost hope.

Does Spring Ring Season breed lost hope? Do our students struggle with God's goodness and plan for their lives when it comes to love? How can we help them confidently face the future God has for them while still acknowledging their hearts' desires?

I believe the key is just that—acknowledge the desires. It's not anti-educational to admit that you'd like to find a godly life partner. And, it's not anti-educational to start praying along those lines while you're still single and still in school. Asking that God bring a great man or woman (I don't want to leave out our guys here) into your life should be as straightforward as asking God to get you the right job after graduation, or asking God to help you get into the right graduate school. There are some people who seem to put a single person's desire to be married under the category of “selfish things to pray for”. We may begin to believe that asking God for anything personal, like a job, a career opportunity, a car, or even a husband makes Him roll His eyes at our selfishness and wonder why we aren't more concerned with starving children or world evangelism.

Sentiment like this can keep us from asking God for the very thing we want the most. When was the last time you heard a student

share a prayer concern in this way: “Please pray that God would bring a great guy into my life”? That kind of request makes most Christians (and educators) squirm uncomfortably in their seats, or, at the least, raises their eyebrows. We aren't used to hearing things like that. Perhaps we'd be more comfortable if they voiced one of those “unspoken” requests. Ah—we can handle those. Or perhaps a part of us believes they should graduate and experience life before they wholeheartedly begin petitioning the Almighty for a spouse.

I wonder how much more successful our students' romantic relationships would be if we encouraged them to pray about those relationships before they became involved—maybe even before they met each other. They shouldn't feel awkward about sharing these requests and we shouldn't feel awkward praying for them. I've got people here on campus praying for me and for the desires of my heart. It's taken me a while, but I've come to know that if it concerns me, it concerns God, and He is just as willing to hear the request from others who want to pray for me as well. My personal experience with extended singleness has put a special place in my heart for the ones who struggle with believing God wants to give them His best in life and love.

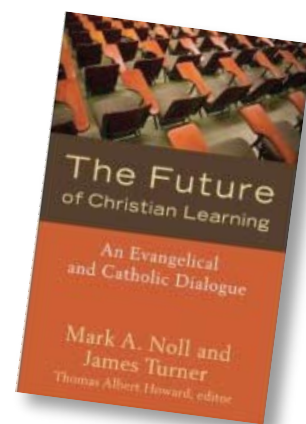
The next time you hear an excited scream in the cafeteria and see a glowing young girl with her left hand extended for all to view, look around for the one who feels left behind. Pray for her. Pray that God will fill the void in her heart with Himself first. Then pray that God would bring a great partner into her life if that's His will – in His timing and in His blessed way. It might not be during Spring Ring Season. It might not be when she thinks it should happen. It might be years down the road, but isn't it an awesome privilege to invest in the lives and futures of our students by praying about the spouse that God may give them? I've had people invest in my life that way. And while I'm still believing and still waiting, I know that those prayers have made a difference. God is directing my path and providing in ways I never could have imagined. And that's what I want for the students He places in my life along the way during this season of their lives.

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The Future of Christian Learning: An Evangelical and Catholic Dialogue

by Mark Noll and James Turner

Reviewed by Philip D. Byers



Tradition is making a comeback. It seems almost counter-intuitive: advancements in technology and revolutionary changes in culture would appear to separate those living in the twenty-first century from any of their predecessors. Within the church, however, there is an increasing fascination with the practices of the past. Chris Anderson (2008) describes the theme of the 2007 Wheaton Theology Conference and the statement of the conference's Call for Papers, which asserted that "one of the most promising developments among evangelical Protestants is the recent 'discovery' of the rich biblical, spiritual, and theological treasures to be found within the early church" (p. 23).

It is within this context and in this spirit that evangelical Christians are now approaching their Catholic brethren with less suspicion. Combined with the spirit of ecumenism which has increasingly characterized the Roman Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council, this evangelical interest in tradition has set the stage for potential collaboration amongst evangelicals and Catholics in higher education. Mark Noll and James Turner (2008) examine this potential in *The Future of Christian Learning: An Evangelical and Catholic Dialogue*, and the discourse is of a predictably high quality from two such respected scholars.

While Noll and Turner differ on many of the particulars, their basic conclusions are similar: both Catholics and evangelicals have strengths which, applied appropriately, can help to ameliorate the weaknesses of their counterparts. Framing the

conversation with the debate between Martin Luther and Johann Eck at the Diet of Worms in 1521, Noll posits that their statements should be "read as exhortations for mutual correction rather than as sentences of mutual excommunication" (p. 68).

Turner classifies their areas of particular strength, noting that Catholics can learn from evangelicals "insofar as they aspire to faith formation" while adding that Catholicism enjoys "rich intellectual and aesthetic traditions" which no American evangelical tradition can offer (pp. 86, 89).

These strengths and flaws did not form arbitrarily, though. In the process of demonstrating how the inherent qualities of both Catholicism and evangelicalism have exacerbated their respective weak-

nesses, Noll shows how a history of revivalism and an adoption of American principles of individualism have laid the groundwork for anti-intellectualism and an unwillingness to learn from church history (see pp. 28-9; 68).

In addressing the lack of focus on faith formation at some Catholic schools, Turner illustrates how the strict historical distinction between the functions of clergy and laity has promoted a "hands-off" approach by many Catholic faculty in the area of faith development. However, he devotes much more attention to describing present characteristics and developments in Christian higher education.

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nesses, Noll and Turner adopt different lenses through which to interpret the issues. With his typical breadth of knowledge, Noll interprets his subject in light of the entirety of American Christianity since

Regarding cooperation between evangelical and Catholic schools, Turner sees the primary arena of interaction in the form of "personal, not institutional, associations" (p. 81). In Turner's view, the disparity

in “prestige” of leading Catholic schools and leading evangelical schools makes it unlikely that serious collaboration between institutions will occur on a large scale. Instead, his model empowers faculty members to bridge the gap by creating relationships they can use to “identify useful differences” between the traditions (p. 82).

Turner also sheds light on the very nature of “Christian” education. Reminding Christian educators of both traditions of the importance of cooperation with the broader educational community, Turner asserts that “Christian colleges and universities do not function in a void, sealed off from non-Christian counterparts, but operate within the larger ecosystem of American and, increasingly, transnational higher education” (pp. 71-2). Turner’s essay is a powerful exhortation for Christian educators to focus outward.

Despite their many points of agreement, Noll and Turner are not wild idealists – they both realize that evangelical-Catholic collaboration is easier accomplished in theory than in practice. Turner bluntly asserts that institutions of Catholic and evangelical higher education “will almost certainly continue to pass in the night,” primarily because “evangelicals and Catholics conceive very differently what it means to be a Christian college or university” (p. 76). Noll concurs, writing in his response to Turner’s essay that because Catholic and evangelical divergences “are rooted...in core beliefs and practices, then those differences are not going to vanish speedily” (p. 136). The way forward, then, is to acknowledge the very real distinctions between the two traditions while celebrating the shared values which allow them to collaborate.

What, then, are these shared values, and how can this discussion assist student development practitioners? Turner is most helpful here, as he describes the manner in which both evangelical and Catholic schools can promote a renewed pursuit of the unity of knowledge. Arguing that Catholic and evangelical schools have “abdicate[d] this project of building a cur-

riculum around...Christian principles of knowledge,” Turner echoes Neil Postman (1986) as he laments the lack of context of contemporary learning, in which “knowledge lies around us in great, unconnected pieces” (p. 92).

Turner posits that the answer to this problem should be particularly evident to Christians, as well as Jews and Muslims, whose shared doctrine of creation affords them “strong motive to work toward such curricular renovation” (p. 95). In his words, “Christian colleges and universities may have a not-so-modest contribution to make to higher education at large” in this regard.

One must question, however, if Turner carries this argument far enough. While the doctrine of creation is surely motivational for the theist to pursue interdisciplinary understanding and whole-person education, the ultimate motivation for the Christian ought to be a properly-functioning Christology. Recognizing that Jesus Christ is the very image of truth (John 14:6) and that only in Jesus can one find “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3), Christians, both evangelical and Catholic, possess a divine mandate to seek Jesus in every discipline and to search for the unity of knowledge which only the fount of all understanding can reveal.

There is much here to cheer the heart of the student development professional. First of all, if Turner is right and the primary collaboration will result from personal relationships, organizations like the ACSD can play a vital role in initiating and sustaining such community. Similarly, anyone who adheres to the basic tenets of the Student Learning Imperative should be encouraged by the ideas expressed by these two fine scholars. The pursuit of the unity of knowledge by college faculty is a philosophical sibling to the principle of whole-person education which impels us in our work.

Ultimately, this contribution by Noll and Turner bespeaks the very unity they seek. In it, the distinctions are not blurred – while writing with civility and grace,

these scholars are clear concerning their doctrinal convictions. But looking past those distinctions, Noll and Turner engage each other’s ideas and combine their individually impressive intellects to pursue a common goal. If Christian education is to be most effective in the coming decades, administrators, faculty, and staff of both evangelical and Catholic traditions will do well to become conversant with the ideas in this dialogue and to model their own interactions on the irenic collaboration of Noll and Turner.

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Restoring Rebecca: A Story of Traumatic Stress, Caregiving and the Unmasking of a Superhero

By Christopher Marchand

Reviewed by David M. Johnstone

In recent decades the dynamics and concerns related to *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (PTSD) have become increasingly recognized, diagnosed and treated. Less recognized is the concern over *Secondary Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (SPTSD). Few outside the worlds of social work, medicine, and emergency response services are aware of these issues. Researching this topic, one discovers that it is spoken about at many levels within the training and practices of these particular vocational fields. Yet, at the same time, it is not often recognized beyond these areas.

In *Restoring Rebecca*, Christopher Marchand, Associate Professor of Youth Leadership at Providence College (Manitoba), introduces this disorder to a wide audience in a very accessible book. SPTSD is commonly known as *vicarious trauma* or *compassion fatigue*. It refers to the overwhelming nature of exhaustion which can result from being personally aware of and responding to the trauma that someone else is experiencing. Examples could include a fire-fighter trying to rescue a dying child from a burning car wreck or a social worker who discovers his foster child has a recent history of abuse. The caregiver or first responder does not experience the immediate or primary trauma of the victim; however, he or she experiences secondary trauma as one who is empathically involved in the crisis or traumatic experience of the victim.

Using a composite character, Marchand outlines the week in the life of a high school student named Rebecca. Using her experiences with friends and family, he illustrates the not uncommon experiences of many individuals who long to extend kindness and compassion to their peers. Rebecca navigates through the stories, experiences, and observa-

tions of substance abuse, bullying, physical injury, family dynamics, and suicidal ideation. These experiences begin to increase her stress and eventually begin to wreak havoc in Rebecca's life. As she attempts to help her friends, she begins to experience her own trauma.

To grasp the significance of this book and its subject requires that I go back to the summer of 2007. I came across a short article by Marchand in which he applied the theories and notions of SPTSD to the role of the youth worker. In his experience, he had observed that most youth workers had intimate knowledge of the pain and angst of the children and young adults who trusted them. Marchand assessed that while many other care-giving professions were trained to identify the symptoms of SPTSD, youth workers were not. They were unable to recognize that their anxiety, fatigue, and sleepless nights were the result of exposure to the hard things experienced by their young people. These symptoms could be the evidence of something quickly recognized by mental health professionals. However, youth workers were in fields not familiar with the signs and background of this disorder. Marchand began synthesizing tools and theories with the intent of using them as an important part of caring for youth workers; particularly, he wanted to provide tools for recognizing compassion fatigue.

In conversation, he discerned that this material might also have relevance for those in the world of student affairs. While he was not aware of it ever having been theoretically applied to college student affairs, he speculated that it might be of use to the field. I was intrigued by his reflections and suggestion. Upon his recommendation, I administered the *Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Test*

(also known as the Professional Quality of Life Scale) to the George Fox University professional staff members who live on campus among our residential student population. I administered the scale two more times through the academic year and then as the year concluded. I am in my second year of administering the scale.

We have used the scale to assist our staff in discussing how to care for one another and how to assess the veracity of our perception of reality. The tools Marchand has highlighted are simple and quick. Training is unnecessary for administering the scale and the results are as valuable as you want to make them. The scale is not a tool for therapy, but the results could be used to direct one to a counselor. They are particularly useful for assessing and evaluating how we maneuver through boundaries, stress, workload, and weariness.

Marchand provides a study guide and tools as appendices to the book. The book and its resources can be easily used by both professional student affairs staff and their student leaders. While it may not be classic literature, its intent is to bring the unexpected and the perplexing world of compassion fatigue into focus and create understanding in an easily accessible manner.

This small book, which can be read in a few hours, is a parable and illustration of how caring can be overwhelming. In story form, Marchand sets out to describe the fatigue, the paralysis and the emptiness that sometimes accompanies the desire to love and care without restraint. He uses the poignant phrase "unexpected cost of caring" to express his concern. While Rebecca's week is concentrated with trauma, one does not have to go very far to observe how Marchand's story is not embellished. Thinking of the crises, illnesses, and tragedies our college students experience, and then the care directed towards them; our colleagues in student affairs are prime candidates for SPTSD or compassion fatigue. This book illustrates the unexpected consequences of caring, yet provides a strategy to minimize that cost and how to restore our ability to care. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

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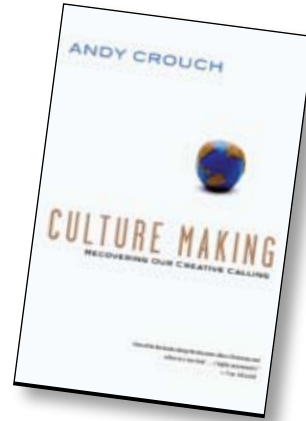
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Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling

By Andy Crouch

Reviewed by Jeff Rioux



With this issue of *Koinonia* dedicated to examining the topic of student culture, it is important that we have a good understanding of what culture is and how we create and influence culture. Andy Crouch's excellent book *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (2008) won the 2009 *Christianity Today* Book Award for Christianity and Culture, and is an important book for us as student affairs professionals to be familiar with as we work with students who are preparing to leave our institutions to go out and make something of the world.

Crouch is particularly helpful in outlining several ways that Christians respond to the culture around them. He defines four responses to culture—Condemning, Critiquing, Copying, and Consuming—and illuminates how Christians have adopted these stances as postures towards culture. He effectively traces recent Christian approaches to culture from the negativism of Fundamentalism's condemnation to the critique of Francis Schaeffer's disciples to the CCM industry which attempted to copy the culture around them. Where we have ended up, Crouch argues, is a place where we have become uncritical consumers of culture, where Christians "are content to be just like their fellow Americans, or perhaps, driven by a lingering sense of shame at their uncool forebears, just slightly more like their fellow Americans than everyone else" (p. 89). Ouch, Crouch, that hurts.

That does not, however, mean that it is never appropriate to condemn or consume culture. Crouch uses the terms "postures" and "gestures" intentionally to help the reader understand when these approaches are appropriate. Our physical posture is our

default stance, and it is largely an unconscious decision. In addition to our posture, we use several gestures at appropriate times: an embrace to show love, a wave of a hand to show greeting, a slump to communicate exhaustion. Likewise, it is appropriate to have many gestures toward certain cultural artifacts, but the danger comes when our gestures turn into a posture toward culture as a whole.

This is very helpful to me, as it names something that I've experienced repeatedly working with students through the years. Because I work in student activities, I hear student responses to popular culture that can sometimes sound like one of these postures. For example, I sometimes hear students talking about "Hollywood" as if it is a monolithic entity that deserves our condemnation all the time. My approach with these students must be to show how adopting condemnation as a posture is dangerous and doesn't do anything to change the culture and:

Having condemnation as our posture makes it impossible for us to reflect the image of a God who called the creation "very good"...If we are known mostly for our ability to poke holes in every human project, we will probably not be known as people who bear the hope and mercy of God. (p. 93)

But we should sometimes condemn cultural goods, and sometimes critique them, and whenever those cultural goods are excellent, we should consume them.

Consumption is the other gesture that we too often see as a posture in Christian college students. This one may be the hardest to avoid as it is built into the fabric of our society. Of course, we should consume

the best that our popular culture has to offer. We should watch the best sitcoms television has to offer (*Seinfeld*, *The Simpsons*, *Arrested Development*, and *The Office*) and we should critique these shows as well. We should listen to Radiohead, M. Ward, Arcade Fire, and the Roots and legally share this music with our friends or even seek to create music in response to what we hear that honors their work. We cannot, however, let consumption become our default stance, as that, in Crouch's words, is "capitulation": letting the culture set the terms, assuming that the culture knows best and that even our deepest longings (for beauty, truth, love) and fears (of loneliness, loss, death) have some solution that fits comfortably within our culture's horizons, if only we can purchase it. (p. 96)

In response to these less appealing alternatives, Crouch offers up Creating and Cultivating culture as the postures we should hold most often. Each of the previous four approaches are attempts to change culture. None of them work. "The only way to change culture is to create more of it," Crouch argues (p. 67). He also rightly notes that Christians are not known as culture creators outside of our churches, but instead, we have a reputation as condemners, critics, copiers, consumers. If this is true, then we are not properly reflecting the image of God, a God who created us in his image (to be artists and creators) and who put us in the garden to take care of it (to be gardeners and cultivators).

So, how do we become better cultivators and creators of culture? If we don't know, we better figure that out, as that is what we are trying to shape in the many students that pass through our residence

halls and student unions. And, if we don't know, we can start by reading *Culture Making*. Another good resource is Crouch's Culture Making website (www.culture-making.com). The site, as a cultural creation, does a lot more critiquing than anything else, but critique is an important gesture, and the site does it well. One of the interesting features on the site is called "Five Questions" which asks the same five important questions about different cultural artifacts: What does the cultural good assume about the world?; What does it assume about the way the world should be?; What does it make possible?; What does it make impossible (or at least more difficult)?; What new culture is created in response to this cultural good? On the site, anyone can suggest answers to these questions for cultural goods such as March Madness, backpacks, text messaging, the financial crisis, The Weather Channel, and jeans. These are the right kinds of questions to be asking as we critique the cultural goods we consume.

Culture Making is an important work that does a lot more than I've described here. Crouch is a good storyteller. He is always illuminating, whether he is describing the effects of the creation of the Interstate Highway system, the Tower of Babel story, or how he makes a pot of chili. I recommend this book to all student affairs professionals. Read it as professional development and consider reading it with students next year as you help prepare them to make something of the world.

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Revisiting *How Minority Students Experience College: Implications for Planning and Policy*

By Lemuel Watson, Melvin Terrell, Doris Wright, Fred Bonner II, Michael Cuyjet, James Gold, Donna Rudy, and Dawn Person

Reviewed by Joshua Canada

Many students attending Christian institutions step into a realm that, although different in kind, is quite similar to the atmosphere in which they were raised. While there is a miscellany of denominational backgrounds, socio-economic statuses, intended disciplines, educational goals, region etc., these variances are discovered through relationships, rather than first impression. Initially, many students find solace in two similarities; Christianity and race. White students can consciously—or subconsciously—make this connection, but for many ethnic minority students, immediate similarity is limited to only a perceived common Christian faith.

How Minority Students Experience College: Implications for Planning and Policy (Watson, Terrell, Wright, Bonner, Cuyjet, Gold, Rudy & Person, 2002) presents a qualitative exploration into the experience of ethnic minority students at predominantly white institutions. The book, essentially a research project formulated into a manuscript, serves as a robust resource within higher education literature concerning ethnic diversity and adds poignant detail to conversations surrounding campus diversity.

To begin, Watson et al., (2002) establish the significance of multiculturalism. The authors define multiculturalism as, "a state of being in which humans feel comfortable in their communication with other people from any culture, in any situation because they desire to learn about others and are empathetic in their quest" (p.10). They argue that the level of multiculturalism a college embraces, in official policy and atmospherically, is an essential variable affecting an ethnic minority student's experience; assert-

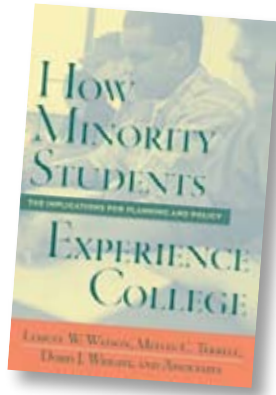
ing that the higher level of multiculturalism held, the better the experience of ethnic minority students.

After establishing this ideological basis, the authors proceed with an explanation of their research. The institutional diversity emphasis (IDE), faculty diversity emphasis (FDE), and student diversity experiences (SDEs) surveys were utilized in the selection of participating universities. All of the selected institutions were well known for their academic reputation, but not for diverse enrollments, faculty or staff. The authors continue by establishing their three guiding questions:

- (1) How do undergraduate students of color experience out-of-classroom learning? How do they characterize such experiences?
- (2) How does racial identity influence students of color and their out-of-classroom experiences?
- (3) How does campus institutional climate influence the out-of-classroom learning for students of color? (p. 4)

Although these questions directed the research, the authors report more directly on the trends found in their interviews. Thus, the research questions are addressed implicitly within the compilation of student remarks.

The book presents several noteworthy findings that reaffirm the current literature as well as reveal additional areas of examination. The authors assert that many ethnic minority students feel deceived by the level of diversity a college promotes when they experience the mono-cultural reality of their campuses. The students' responses suggest



that this incongruence manifests itself in the general culture of the institution, the lack of a diverse student body and administration, the lack of academic and social support services for ethnic minority students, and the cultural ignorance of students and faculty/administration.

Additionally, the authors show that as a response to the lack of diversity on their campus, minority students feel pressured into presenting a monolithic representative of their entire ethnicity. This responsibility in turn alienates students of color.

Lastly, the authors suggest that students who are highly involved in student leadership at small institutions are often more susceptible to being labeled as a minority student and that involvement in race-based groups/organizations can easily further alienate ethnic minority students from their predominately White student body. Though these statements are not antithetical to campus involvement, they challenge the blanket assessment that student leadership involvement is important as a conduit for the social adjustment of ethnic minority students.

A helpful element of the book is an inclusion of a campus guide. These profiles assist in evaluating the collective culture of the colleges involved, which is a valuable task for the practitioner desiring to apply findings to his or her campus. However, it would have been beneficial to have an extensive presentation and breakdown of results. Many assertions are made by evaluating the multi-institutional sample, but there is no breakdown to evaluate the results specific to individual campuses. Although the campuses are generally simi-

lar (small, private, liberal arts colleges), the opportunity to evaluate if trends are more or less prominent at specific colleges is not given. Being able to partake in this detailed evaluation would prove advantageous to the higher education practitioner seeking to find trends in his or her given institution.

As a collection of student quotations and professional analysis, *How Minority Students Experience College* presents a profound and complex assessment of the experience of ethnic minority college students. Though the book's research is based on student experience, the ramifications of these experiences and implications from the authors' conclusions solicit institutional responses and modifications. The authors do not conclude that these changes will come with ease, but do express the need for institutions to comprehend the difficult

have configurations similar to many Christian institutions. It is quite reasonable to assess that many of the experiences of the minority students at Christian institutions are similar to the candid experience of students chronicled in the book.

As Christian higher education professionals interact with a growing diversity in their student body, they must be able to properly meet the needs of a student body which may easily feel as outsiders. Institutions must be careful not to superfluously encourage minority students to be in leadership roles; while it may be a well-intentioned way to contribute to the whole-person education of a student, it may also further alienate students who already realize their otherness. Additionally, multiculturalism needs to be addressed in tangible ways and not manifest itself solely in statements,

...multiculturalism needs to be addressed in tangible ways and not manifest itself solely in statements, task forces, or programs. While these are not intrinsically negative, they are an unsatisfactory substitution for the practice of intentional recruitment and retention of ethnically diverse students, faculty, and staff.

realities of their ethnic minority students in order to better support their current ethnic minority enrollment and pursue further diversity. Much of this hinges on the concept of multiculturalism. The most prevalent comments from students suggest that regardless of the mantra and statements of diversity of an institution, the under-representation of minorities in the faculty and student body creates a sense of otherness and alienation.

How Minority Students Experience College offers a practical, researched-based resource for the higher education professional. Although the research was not conducted at a Christian institution, demographically and structurally the colleges researched

task forces, or programs. While these are not intrinsically negative, they are an unsatisfactory substitution for the practice of intentional recruitment and retention of ethnically diverse students, faculty and staff.

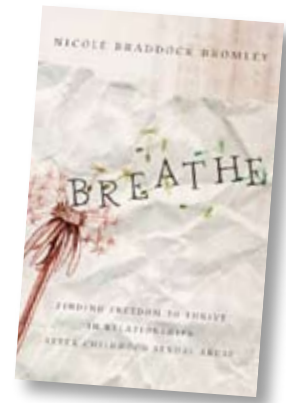
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Excerpts from *Breathe: Finding Freedom to Thrive in Relationships after Childhood Sexual Abuse*

by Nicole Braddock Bromley



Breathe is to Hush as fulfillment is to a promise. Nicole's experience, wisdom, compassion and insight uniquely qualify her to console, encourage and challenge victims of sexual abuse in their ongoing healing. She also masterfully addresses those who help, offering information and advice. Each chapter is cohesively written with an account of a person from the Bible, an explanation of difficulties inherent in that particular element of recovery or support, narrative examples from people Nicole has encountered in her ministry and a "life letter" written by someone other than Nicole, addressing the reader from his or her perspective – friend, mother, husband, fellow victim. Every reader will leave the book with clearer understanding of and commitment to the "circle of inspiration" God intended for those who have been victimized by childhood sexual abuse. Breaking the silence begins the healing. Thriving relationships are the "next step" and the reward of God's promise to dry every tear and bind every wound. Breathe helps us take that step.

–Edee Schulze, Vice President for Student Life, Bethel University

For as long as I can remember, I've been afraid of the dark. It's getting better, but when I'm in the dark, it still doesn't take much to make my heart pound. Even the smallest sound can make me forget to breathe. The worst moments of my childhood occurred in the dark.

In the woods.
In the attic.
In the garage.
In my bed.

I sometimes pretended that my bed was a pink, frilly boat, floating in the middle of a lake and surrounded by alligators. That last part might sound scary to you, but it wasn't to me. The alligators meant that no one could get to me.

But somehow he still did.

My stepfather did things to me that no child should ever experience. While he did them, I would hold my breath. I would force my mind to take me somewhere else and make me something else. It was as if I became part of the light fixture overhead

or the ballerina on the poster by the closet door or the glass angel hanging from my window frame. I watched everything from a distance. When it was over, he would leave, telling me that I was special and that it was our little secret. Gasping for air, I would return to my bed and become me again, an abused little girl who desperately wished that the alligators were real.

Childhood sexual abuse shatters many areas of a victim's life, but perhaps the greatest damage is done in the area of our relationships. Whether the abuse was a one-time exploitation or long-term trauma, its effects impact all our adult relationships. For many of us, the physical aspects of abuse don't even compare to the relational damage we carry into adulthood.

Open, honest communication is the basis of all healthy relationships. Yet survivors of childhood sexual abuse find it very difficult to talk about what they've been through. They often tell me that they remember nights when they held their breath in fear

that an abuser might be near and hear them if they spoke. What they want more than anything is to be free to breathe deeply—to fill their empty places inside with life-giving air—but they never feel safe enough to do that, so they keep silent.

... Since the release of *Hush*, many of you have courageously responded to my call to break the silence surrounding childhood sexual abuse. You have committed yourselves to picking up your feet day after day as you walk toward the light at the end of the long, dark tunnel of healing. You have made huge strides on your journey, and I am so proud of all of you.

Now we move beyond *Hush*, for the simple fact is that healing is a lifelong journey. Even after we've taken these four steps, there's more healing to do. We'll never make it to the light at the end of the tunnel if we're still so afraid of the dark that we forget to breathe. Along the way, we must let stale air out and fresh air in. When we do, we enter a new stage of healing that enables us to thrive in all our relationships.

... *Breathe* is a book for survivors who are ready to work on their relationships. But it is also for those who are committed to walking alongside them on their healing journey. Compassionate people like these make up what I call a survivor's circle of inspiration. Because they care, they inspire us—they literally breathe new life into us by allowing us to exhale the old and inhale the new. Together, they make up our breathing space, a safe place where we can become all that God intended us to be.

As a teenager, I wrestled with why God had allowed me to suffer the pain of childhood sexual abuse. In search of answers, I turned to the Bible to see if God had anything to say about my suffering and how

I could find healing for my pain. As I read stories in Scripture about suffering people, I found myself saying, "Hey! That's me!" I could relate. I've included some of these stories in *Breathe* so that all of you who suffer, for whatever reason, can know that you are not alone and that God cares about your pain and wants to help you through it.

In addition to stories from the Bible, I've told the stories of some of the survivors I've met either in person or through e-mail. At the end of each chapter, I've also included "life letters" written by survivors or by those who have helped them heal by being part of their circle of inspiration. These stories and letters not only help explain why survivors of childhood sexual abuse act as they do, but also show the great impact a circle of inspiration can have on their healing.

My own experience has been that sexual abuse has had the greatest impact on six kinds of relationships: the ones I have had with parents, mentors, fellow followers of Jesus, friends, a spouse, and God. In turn, these relationships have had the greatest influence on me on my healing journey.

Unlike me, some of you may have adult children you can include in your circle. Others of you may not have parents, but you may have people in your life who are like parents to you, so you might put them in the category of parents. Maybe you've never dated and don't plan to marry. If that's God's will for you—great! It just means that your circle will look different than mine. Because all of us are different, our healing journeys will also be different. And because we grow and change over time, so will our circles of inspiration.

As survivors of sexual abuse, we desperately need such a circle. It's our habitat for healing, a place of mutual speaking and listening, of learning and teaching, of supporting and being supported, of giving and receiving unconditional love. It's a place where we can finally be free to breathe. (p. 11-14)

... When I think of the people I've walked with on parts of their healing journeys, I often think of 2 Corinthians 3:1-3, which says: "Your lives are a letter written in our hearts. . . . Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This 'letter' is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on

tablets of stone, but on human hearts." Like the stories of suffering people that we find in Scripture, the life letters of survivors are for all of us. God is writing all of our stories.

When I have the opportunity to hear another survivor's story, I don't just listen to it; I invite God to write it on my heart. Why? Why would I want to allow thousands of stories of pain and suffering to be written in my heart? Because each story is, or has the potential to be, a testimony of how God in His love and grace meets us here on earth in a very personal way. Every story reminds me of the very reason He has me reaching out to broken people—so that I might share in His story, so that I might help bring them closer to knowing Him. When we allow life letters—stories written by the Spirit of the Living God—to be written on our heart, we will be moved to do something to dispel the darkness of sexual abuse.

You may feel that your own life letter has only just begun to be written and that you can't possibly help someone else yet. But you can! Your open ear, your kind word, your time, your prayer, your touch, your act of service could be exactly what someone else needs to get through today. It could even make a difference for eternity. Who better to reach out and help another survivor begin writing her own life letter? The Lord wants to use you every step of the way. When you make yourself available to the people who cross your path, God will do the rest. You are there to help a survivor pick up her pen and put it to the paper; the Lord will do the writing.

Take the time to look around you. Do you see someone sitting fearfully in the dark? Whose path is about to cross yours? What is his story? You may have a split second to reach out to that person; don't miss it. You can be the voice that calls a survivor out of hiding. You can be the hand that helps her find courage to walk toward the light.

Yes, reaching out to the broken and abused can be risky, and it will cost you something. But the reward will be well worth it. As a speaker and author, one of my greatest joys in life is seeing isolated, addicted, and silently hurting people step out of their box and into the healing tunnel. But you, my friend, can have the even greater honor of being used for the long haul. You can be

right there to see her free to breathe and thriving in all her relationships.

Should you make the life-giving decision to take up this challenge and enter into someone else's circle, I pray you'll give God the opportunity to also minister to you and stretch you along the way. Don't let your faith grow stale. Never believe you have all that you need. Don't let your pride or comfort rob you of what could be, both in someone else's life and in your own. There's always more to give and receive, and playing a supportive role in the life of a sexual abuse survivor may be the very thing God wants to use to uncover some things in your own life. Open your heart to what He may want to do in there. Trust me, you won't regret it.

Are you afraid of the dark? I hope you are. Because only those who are afraid of the dark will be inspired to shine the light that dispels it. You and I are called to be a light in this dark world. We're called to make a difference. We need to ignite the flame within us and then unite with others to reach into the darkest places around us. Pretending away the darkness or giving in to it by saying "this is just how it is" will only allow evil to grow. We must find the courage to face the darkness head-on in our own lives, and then we must come together to boldly shine light into the dark world we live in. Once the fog is lifted, we'll all be free to breathe. (p. 177-180)

*Nicole Braddock Bromley is the Founder and Director of OneVOICE enterprises (www.onevoiceenterprises.com) and national spokesperson on sexual abuse. She is a featured speaker of RAINN (Rape, Abuse, Incest National network) and the NCAA Health & Safety Speakers Bureau. She and her husband recently welcomed a new baby boy to their family. Nicole has become a well-known name among ACSD member institutions. Her newly released book, *Breathe: Finding Freedom to Thrive in Relationships after Childhood Sexual Abuse*, follows her first book, *Hush: Moving From Silence to Healing After Childhood Sexual Abuse*, which has been popular within counseling centers and used as the textbook for student support groups on many Christian college campuses.*

Excerpted from *Breathe: Finding Freedom to Thrive in Relationships after Childhood Sexual Abuse*, with permission from the author. Bromley, Nicole Braddock. (2009). *Breathe: Finding freedom to thrive in relationships after childhood sexual abuse*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers

My Journey into Student Affairs

By Kim Stave

My journey into student affairs can be compared to a lesson Parker Palmer (1999), in his book *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, professed to learning regarding the process of discovering his true vocation. A wise elderly woman once told him that the “way closing behind you” can have just as powerful affect in guiding your life as the “way opening before you” may have (Palmer, 1999, p. 28). I resonate with these words as I have found this very lesson to be true in my vocational search thus far. In fact, it’s difficult to summarize my process as a journey, as the term “journey” assumes a specific path I was following with an explicit goal in mind. Looking back 14 years later, I can see clearly that I wouldn’t be where I am now if God had not been closing many ways behind me, speaking into my life when I wasn’t listening, and answering prayers that I had

not yet prayed. My story is of a person who messed up, found redemption, thought she was in the center of God’s will only to discover that she wasn’t, lost faith, regained faith, argued with God, and also laughed at God. And, all the while, God was quietly going about His business of leading my life to the exact place He wanted it, regardless of what I did.

During the spring semester of my sophomore year at Spring Arbor University, I applied to be a resident assistant (RA) for my junior year and wasn’t hired. Then early that summer I received a call asking if I would accept a position to replace an RA that wasn’t able to return. It required moving to a hall with a less-than-desirable layout and reputation, but I decided having the RA experience could be worth it and begrudgingly agreed to move. It turned out to be the best decision of my college experience

to date. Sarah Baldwin (current campus pastor at George Fox University) had just come to Spring Arbor as the resident director (RD) of that same hall where I was assigned to live. Sarah was a phenomenal RD and the longer I worked with her the more I realized I wanted to have the impact on college students that she was having. However, in the spring of that year, I made a series of bad decisions and, despite my justifications for them all, knew I was blatantly violating our university policies. Sarah firmly, but lovingly, held me accountable for my choices and as a result, I lost my RA job for the remainder of that year and for the next, as I had already been hired to be an RA my senior year. Losing my RA job became one of my most difficult life experiences to date, but the way the student development staff dealt with me turned out to be instrumental in shaping my views on the delicate balance of administering justice with grace. I am indebted today not only to Sarah, but to Damon Seacott, Everett Piper, and many others who taught me so many invaluable lessons through that process.

I graduated a year later in 1996 with a degree in Elementary Education and was given the opportunity to finish my student teaching the following January at the Rift Valley Academy (RVA) in Kijabe, Kenya. It was during my semester in Kenya that God confirmed my lack of passion for traditional classroom teaching while sparking a passion for overseas ministry and specifically for TCKs (third culture kids). I was only scheduled to be at RVA for one semester, but was so in love with the culture and the place that I was thrilled when the principal offered me a full-time teaching job for the upcoming semester to cover for a teacher who had returned to the United States on medical leave. I was convinced that this was exactly the place God wanted me and that I was in the center of His will. Imagine my shock when I received the news that the



teacher on medical leave was actually able to return more quickly than anyone imagined and that there wouldn't be a teaching position for me after all. I was devastated. It was God's will that I stay in Africa, wasn't it? Why would he have given me this passion for these people and this place and then not allow me to continue ministering there? I wanted to continue living *as a missionary* in Africa, of all things. Didn't God need more of those?? Why in the world would He send me home?

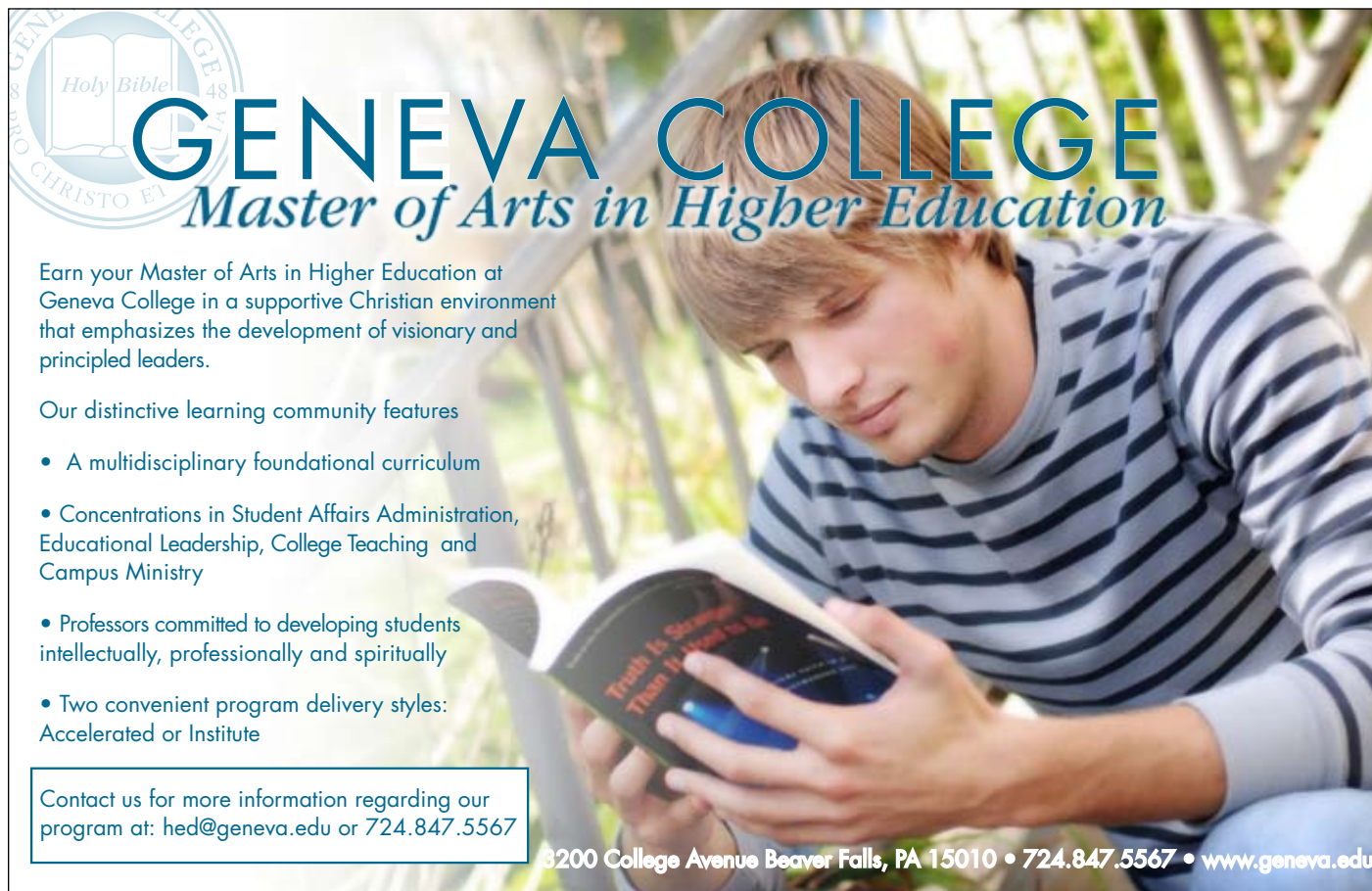
So, with a broken heart and a terrible attitude I returned to the United States and halfheartedly filled out RD job applications at Christian colleges and all I received back were rejection letters, which I assumed I deserved. I was an emotional wreck and felt very hopeless.


My last-ditch effort for a job was to attend the ACSD Annual Conference which Asbury College hosted that June of 1997.

I dragged myself there, but my heart and mind weren't with me. Self-doubt was plaguing me with messages like "you're on the wrong continent! You're supposed to be in Africa! Why are you even wasting your time here?" and "You know you can't get an RD position since no decent school would ever hire someone who couldn't even keep their RA job." Therefore, I put minimal effort into the placement process, had a couple of pathetic interviews, and slept through the bulk of the keynotes and workshops. Then, on Tuesday evening, a friend from Spring Arbor and I walked into Asbury's cafeteria for dinner looking for a place to sit among the long tables brimming with people. We found two empty seats across from each other in an otherwise full table. As the meal progressed, I couldn't help but overhear the woman sitting next to me talking to the man across from her about George Fox University in Oregon. I had sent my

application to George Fox but, outside of that, knew nothing about it. When the two had a break in their conversation, I turned to the woman and said, "I heard you talking about Oregon. My brother & sister-in-law moved to Portland a few years ago and I visited them and thought it was a beautiful place." As if God were placing the words in her mouth, she then looked at me and replied, "Oh. And are you looking for an RD job?" Dumbfounded, I stammered back a meek "yes" and she went on to tell me how they had been interviewing RD applicants all day, but still had one interview slot open that evening if I wanted to take it. How could I say no?

That evening I interviewed with my table-mate Valarie Pierce and then-current RD, Mark Pothoff. We hit it off immediately and the next day I was invited to a second interview with the current director of residence life and dean of students. The level



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of connection we all had—both personally and in our approaches to residence life—were energizing to me. Thursday morning before the conference was over they had me doing a phone interview with Eileen Hulme, then the VP of student life. Within days of the conference's end, they invited to fly me to Oregon for a campus visit and within a month, I was driving a loaded U-Haul from Michigan to Oregon to begin my new job as a resident director.

The entire experience had been a blur to me. I was doing nearly everything I could to avoid getting hired, and yet, God still led me to sit next to Valarie in that crowded cafeteria. The few interviews I had formally been granted at ACSD had flopped, but the one that God placed in my lap, without any of my doing, turned out to be the golden ticket. And true to the connections found in our interviews, George Fox turned out to be a stellar place for me to cut my teeth in the field of student affairs.

Toward the end of my first year as an RD, Eileen Hulme invited me into her office and asked, "So when are you going to start thinking about moving up the student affairs career ladder?" I was so taken aback by her question all I could do was laugh as I told her, "I could never do this for a career. I'm a people-person and I love students, but I'm not administratively gifted and could never do anything beyond being an RD." Her response stopped my laughter dead in its tracks and nearly stopped my heart as she laughed back and said "Funny. That's exactly what I said during my first year as an RD, too." Once again, God was speaking into my life at a time and place I never would have imagined. The encouragement continued from a number of other colleagues within George Fox's Student Life Division and finally, in 2000, I (again, begrudgingly) began Azusa Pacific University's (APU) summer track Master of Education in College Student Affairs Program with a whole lot of self-doubt about my abilities to do anything beyond the relational ministry skills required of an RD.

It was during the two-week class sessions at APU each summer where I found God's wisdom, yet again, in the voice of my instructor Dave McIntire. He challenged



He challenged me not to sell myself short— not to limit what God could potentially do through me as a young professional with my future wide open.

me not to sell myself short—not to limit what God could potentially do through me as a young professional with my future wide open. His words were both piercing and inspiring, as I finally dared to let myself imagine that I could one day be in a role like his or Eileen's.

During the Christmas of my 5th year at George Fox, my husband and I were back east visiting family and had dinner with Sarah Baldwin, who was now working at her alma mater of Asbury College. I was

sharing my journey with her; telling her all God was opening my eyes to but also about a new restlessness that was growing within me to move on to something new. I talked about Kenya and my dream to return and shared my new-found passion for the field of student affairs. And, once again, God spoke through her to tell me about a Christian College in Lithuania where she had a friend working. Lithuania Christian College (now LCC International University) had a young, but growing student life divi-



sion. My husband and I were intrigued and began praying that if this was where God wanted us that He'd provide jobs for both of us there. We looked online and even though the position I was most equipped for, director of community life, wasn't available, they were in need of a sports and recreation coordinator, which my husband applied for, while I applied for an open leadership and service director position. To our joy, we were both accepted. Since the positions are volunteer and required us to raise support as missionaries, we started down that exciting path while I hurriedly began researching leadership development resources. A month before we sold everything and moved to Lithuania, I received a call from Melanie Humphreys, LCC's VP for student life, informing me that the current director of community life had decided to

leave, and asking if I'd be willing to step into her role. I was thrilled, as the community life department oversaw the residence life program which was where my passions and experience were. Once again, God placed the position I desired most in my lap before I had even thought to ask for it.

My husband and I are now completing our 7th year of service at LCC and have loved every year of it. We live off missionary support and God continues to amaze us by providing for our financial needs—often above and beyond what we expect to receive—even despite the recent economic challenges our supporters are facing in the US.

Now, I'm on the cusp of a sharp turn in my vocational journey once again. When our daughter was born in September of 2005, I worked largely from home and with a flexible schedule for the bulk of that academic year until we could find full time child care. Several friends asked if I'd consider quitting my job and staying at home, but I didn't feel that was where God wanted me and was excited about the challenge of combining parenting with my profession. In January of 2008, I was pregnant again and questions regarding the future of my professional life jostled around my mind. As much as I prayed and listened to the advice of experienced moms and colleagues, I still didn't have a peace about the idea of quitting and staying at home. Later that month we experienced a miscarriage, followed by another that May. The blessing of God's timing, even through those tragedies, shown through when I discovered I was pregnant this past fall and my heart had started to change about the idea of staying at home. And at the time of writing this (February 2009) I can truly say I am fully ready and excited to make this transition into a new line of work... the world of being a stay-at-home mom. I have no idea how long I'll be in this vocation but, for now, it's clear that this is what I'm supposed to do. God knew I needed more time and, in His grace, gave me that time to come to the place where I am now.

I've never had the discipline of a committed prayer-warrior who diligently spends hours on her knees each day and then sees the glories of God answering her dutiful

prayers. However, God has still been faithful to answer the prayers that, oftentimes, I haven't even prayed. He's known the ultimate desires of my heart (even when I haven't been able to recognize them) and He's faithfully placed specific people in my life at the exact times to say the exact words He's needed me to hear. For all of this, I rejoice! I celebrate an undeserving life that has been extraordinarily blessed by God's faithful pursuit of me and I wait with eager anticipation to see where He will take me next.

To all of you whom God has used to speak into my life from Spring Arbor to George Fox to APU to LCC, whether mentioned by name here or not, I thank you. Thank you not only for investing your time and energy into me, but for your faithfulness to hear God's words and intentionally speak them into my life.

For those of you who are searching for God's leading regarding the next phase of your vocation, I pray that my story can be an encouragement and a blessing to you. Maybe my words, based on the experiences God has so graciously blessed me with, can be a part of God's message to you this day. Sola Gloria Dei!

Editor's Note – At the time of editing this piece this spring, I received a note from Kim and Andrew indicating that "our plans are not always the same as His." Following a set of very quick circumstances, Kim was offered and accepted the role of LCC's Vice President for Student Life on a half-time basis. Through all of this the Staves continue, as Kim's piece indicates, to be examples of trusting in God and serving passionately where and when He calls.

Kim Stave currently serves as the Vice President for LCC International University, located in Klaipeda, Lithuania.

References

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