

Taylor University

## Pillars at Taylor University

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Koinonia

Association of Christians in Student  
Development

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Fall 1994

### Koinonia

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Fall 1994

# KOINONIA

ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIANS IN STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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## The University as a Place of Spiritual Formation

by Eugene Peterson and Steve Moore

**A**fter the shock of university life has worn off, it is not unusual for one reality about higher education to become painfully clear for new students . . . it's no "sunday school" experience. Christian students commonly enter college motivated by a commitment to God and a desire to serve their Lord, and then find that they are being either distracted or deflected from that intention at every turn.

They find themselves immersed in rigorous academics, they find themselves staying up late at night reading Foucault or Camus, they wake up in the morning, rubbing their eyes, puzzled over questions they never knew existed.

This is not what they had bargained on. Their professors seem far more interested in their spelling than in their spirituality. They find themselves spending far more time on paradigms than in prayer. What many hope to be a preparation for a meaningful profession becomes a testing by fire.

Many grow up surrounded by warnings regarding the dangers of higher education. Some Christian groups and traditions have little use for "higher learning." "Thinking about God gets you into nothing but trouble," they suggest, "Only believe. And praise!" The brain is more or less bypassed as the Holy Spirit fills the praising heart with blessings.

Such reasoning would go on to suggest that Universities in general and religion departments in specific are to be regarded as

the graveyard of spirituality, the place where men and women are likely to lose their faith. The doomsday warnings that today's youth get regarding drugs and "safe sex" is often similar to the message one might get about

**The university does not provide the materials for spiritual formation, but a particular condition in which the formation takes place for a relatively brief period of time.**

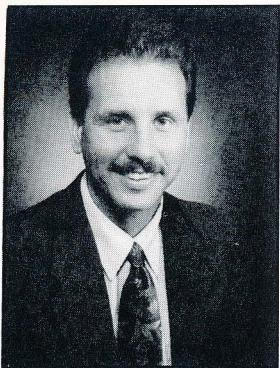
college. Some believe the brain, if used to carry out basic everyday functions (like counting out change and reading the comic strips), is considered fairly harmless. They might continue such reasoning to suggest that if one presumes to think about God and His ways, to ask hard questions and read big books, it is almost certain to develop a malignancy which could spread rapidly to the soul. Intellectual cancer, after all, is the highest known cause of death to the soul.

By and large, the university is not a congenial place in which to nurture spirituality - a life of prayer, a community of love, a risky faith. A college or university is a place of learning, learning about God to be sure, but still learning. Ever since the 18th century Enlightenment-split between the heart, schools have not been easy allies to a life of faith. Talking about God is almost the antithesis of talking to God. Even though the same words are used in the talk, they are not the same thing at all.

But if the university is not a congenial place of spiritual formation, neither is any other place we have inhabited. We haven't found it any better in the congregation, home, retreat center, or ocean beach. We haven't yet

*continued on page 3*

# The President's Corner



**W**ell, the warm Santa Barbara breezes seem like a distant memory now and many of the new ideas and programs that we heard about at the conference are in place and running on our campuses. The 1994 Westmont conference was a marvelous opportunity to share together. Every year I find myself

reflecting on the reasons that our annual conferences are such spiritual highlights for so many of us. Perhaps it is because we worship best when we worship in humility. When we see God's gifts in such abundance in the wonderful people who make up the membership of ACSD, or when our faces are gently turned toward the Father by skillful worship leaders and speakers, or when we are the recipients of such lavish service offered in the name of Jesus it is hard not to be humbled. Thank you Westmont for giving us such a special chance to learn and grow together.

When I returned from the conference I felt a real desire for some extended time alone with God, yet the press of an unusually busy summer loomed ahead. One not so inviting responsibility was a house that needed painting. It seemed like anything but a fulfillment of my felt need for solitude, especially given the fact that (despite more than my share of experiences with ropes courses) I hate heights! Needless to say, God once again demonstrated His uncanny ability to

surprise by using this experience to speak to me. I grumbled for a couple of days about "the last thing I need right now" but God graciously waited for me at the top of my ladder and when I finally joined Him there we had a great week together as He supplied all of my needs according to His riches. My prayer is that we will imitate David and "set the Lord always before us." If peace and purpose and nourishment can be found at the top of my ladder then I am prompted to remember that it can surely be found in my office, in my meetings, and in my work with students.

On another note, I want to communicate that Jerry Davis of Huntington College is leaving us to head up a counseling degree program at Indiana Wesleyan University. Jerry has served the membership as a Regional Director, a New Professionals Institute mentor and most recently, editor. Jerry's new responsibilities will prevent his continued involvement with us. While we will miss him we are grateful for his new opportunity and look forward to continued contact in the future. I am grateful to be able to announce that Tim Arens, Dean of Students at Moody Bible Institute, has agreed to serve as our editor. As you know, Tim is a long term member of ACSD with extensive leadership involvement including service as a national conference coordinator. All of us on the executive committee feel extremely grateful to have someone of Tim's talent and experience in this important position.

God bless and have a wonderful year!

## Please Note:

In the Spring 1994 issue, the article entitled "Equipping Students for Service" referred to Bruce Bugbee and Network Ministries International. Please note the new address and phone number for this organization:

Network Ministries International  
27355 Betanzos  
Mission Viejo, CA 92692  
1-800-588-8833

## ACSD Regional Directors

The regional directors for the upcoming year are: (left to right) Dave Harden, Northeast; Joan Cargnel, Central; Becky Leithold, Northwest; John Derry, Appalachian; Brent Baker, Mountain; Ken Hadley, North Central; Marci Winans, West; Randy Bowyer, Southeast; and Todd Voss, Lakes. Tim Wolf, Northeast and Becci Rothfuss, South Central are not pictured.



continued from page 1

## Place of Spiritual Formation

attempted the monastery ("No wives allowed"), but good friends report similar conditions exist, even within those hallowed walls.

Not only that, but we keep running across holy men and women in colleges and universities, in the guise of professors and students and staff. They are no more frequent, but certainly no less, than in other places we have lived and done our work. If the university itself is not holy ground, it does not prevent bushes from breaking into flame from time to time and evoking holy responses.

Spiritual formation, it seems, is not primarily a function of place or curricula. It took a long time to recognize that rather simple and obvious fact. But once realized, we can quit expecting either persons or institutions to provide for me what was already sitting in my backyard in the form of the daily experiences of life. And from the moment of that recognition, we are freed from a lot of grumbling and complaining in the wilderness.

It is the same for all of us. The university does not provide the materials for spiritual formation, but a particular condition in which the formation takes place for a relatively brief period of time. The condition is characterized by words — words spoken, words written, words read. Books, containers for words, are everywhere. Classrooms, designed for the audition of words, are the primary architecture. Computers, a technology for the recording and retrieval of words, are ubiquitous. The university is a world of words.

Recognizing this is essential in dealing with matters of spiritual formation on the university campus. When we ask the questions, "What can we do to make the university a better place for spiritual formation?" we must also ask, "How can we enter into and embrace the unique condition that constitutes the campus in such a way that we grow up into the maturity of Christ Jesus?" and "How can we bridge the chasm between God's word and our words and lives?"

It is an old problem to which first-rate Christian minds have attended in nearly every century of the church's existence. An approach to dealing with it that we like very much is that of Evagrius Ponticus, sometimes referred to as "Evagrius the Solitary."

It was during the Egyptian "desert" years in the late 4th century that he wrote about matters of the intellect and prayer with the

clarity and wisdom that make him such a good guide for us still. The thought, says Evagrius, that is inattentive or unresponsive or indifferent to God's Word, no matter what its content (and actual contents could be very good indeed), becomes a diversion from God or even an actual defiance of God. The goal, the highest good of the human creature, is that the knowledge of God and prayer to God converge. Knowledge that does not lead to or become prayer to God is, in Evagrius' analysis, demonic — a spirituality divorced from obedience to God. (see *The Philokalia*, Vol. 1; London: Faber and Faber, 1979).

It is a simple distinction, which, with a little practice, we can learn to make for ourselves. The university is as good a place as any to begin making these distinctions. In fact, it is probably the very best place to begin doing it, for there is hardly an hour in a day when there is not an occasion in which to exercise these fundamental discernments.

The French have a wonderful phrase, *deformation professionnelle*, to refer to maladies that we are particularly liable to in the course of pursuing our line of work. Physicians are in constant danger of becoming calloused to suffering, lawyers in danger of cynicism about justice, and those of us who study and work as Christians in higher education are in danger of having the very words we use about God separate us from God, the most damning deformation of all.

Saint Paul wrote about taking "every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). There is not even a hint of anti-intellectualism in that phrase. He is not banning thought. (Have we ever witnessed a more exuberant exercise of the intellect than in Paul?) But he knows that thought, even when it is about God (maybe even specifically when it is about God), soon becomes self-serving, prideful, and (using Evagrius' bold designation), demonic — if it is not brought vigorously, regularly, and devoutly before the living God in prayerful obedience.

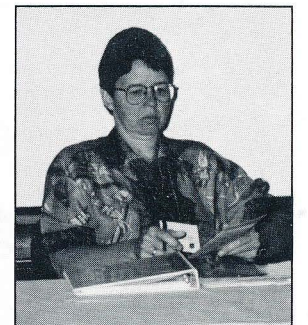
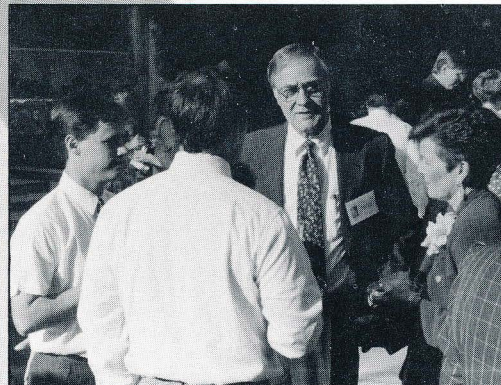
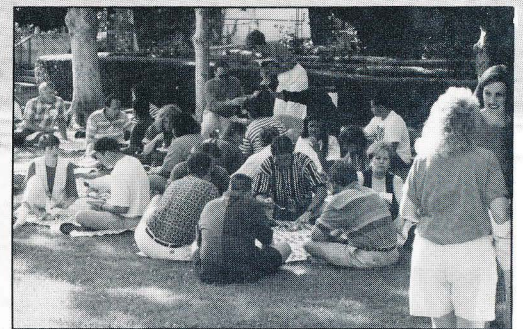
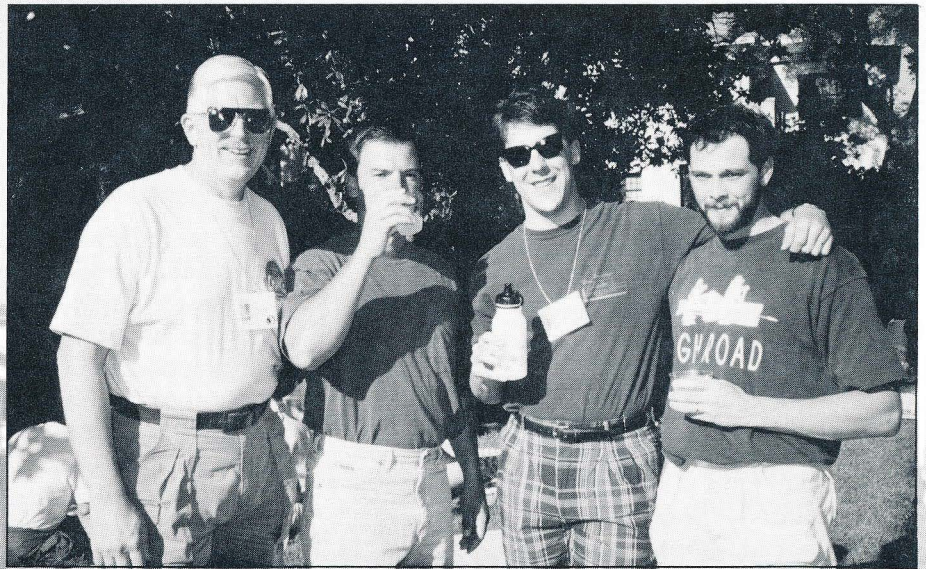
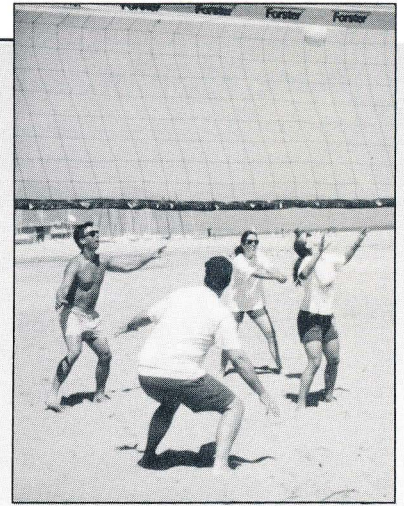
There is a sense in which the university cannot do this for itself. But all of us who count ministry in higher learning an important part of the church's mission can contribute to the spiritual formation that takes place in them by practicing these discernments and posting these warnings at appropriate times and places. It might not seem like much, but an accurate road sign posted at the right place prevents considerable disaster. And an occasional "Capture that thought" scrawled on a classroom wall wouldn't be a bad idea either.

**. . . those of us who study and work as Christians in higher education are in danger of having the very words we use about God separate us from God, the most damning deformation of all.**

*Eugene Peterson is professor of spiritual theology at Regent College and formerly pastor of Christ our King Presbyterian Church in BelAir, Maryland for over 30 years. Steve Moore is Vice President of Student Life at Seattle Pacific University. This article appeared in original form in *Theology, News, and Notes*. In revised form it has appeared in *The Ivy Jungle Report, and Response*.*

# Highlights of the ACSD 1994 National Conference

Journey Inward,  
Journey Outward  
Westmont College





## Into the Unknown

by Mary Carroll Burns

*"I desired to preach the Gospel where Christ is not known" Romans 15:20*

The church that I go to has a sign at the end of the entrance that is visible to every driver leaving the parking lot. It simply says, "You are about to enter the mission field." When I first saw the sign I chuckled, because it is a clever way to remind us that we truly are entering the mission field, whether it be at home, at school, at play, anywhere, not just in a foreign country.

But the mission field doesn't end with Christians evangelizing non-Christians. We need the mission touch of compassion from God too! That's what this year's ACSD conference exemplified. There were so many faces from every type of college and denomination, but we all stood for one belief, encouraging each other in our special profession.

This sight was a relief for me. I wouldn't consider myself the typical member of ACSD. I'm not from a "Christian" college (FSU is considered secular), and I'm not quite a professional yet (still in the Masters stage), but I found a unique haven in attending the ACSD conference this year. Sparing the details, suffice it to say that I really wanted to go to California and the Lord really wanted me to attend the conference, but my bank account wasn't sure. Right before my eyes, He found a way and I am thankful for it. I have since been encouraged by the words that were spoken to me physically and spiritually from the conference, so much so that I am already planning to attend next year at Anderson University.

As student administrators, we face the mission field everyday. For those of us who have been called to public or state institutions, our mission field can become a battleground with all of its pitfalls and setbacks, but through it all, Christ calls us to serve and He gives us the abilities to be good soldiers. Being a member of ACSD has helped me to realize that even though I am not at a Christian college, I am here because I have been called here.

The verse above has been an inspiration to me. As Christians, we are called to serve, wherever that may be, even into the unknown.

# Community Service Finds its Way into the Freshmen Orientation Program

by Carol Sisson

On Monday, August 29, 1994, 420 Freshmen, 65 Student Orientation Leaders, and over 30 Faculty, Staff, and Administrators, took to the streets and parks of Upland to scrape, paint, pull weeds, rip out plaster, clean streets, and do many other odd jobs. All of the volunteers were donned in engineer hats with "I LOVE UPLAND" or "TAYLOR UNIVERSITY" buttons on the front. The three hour service project was part of the newest addition to the Freshmen Orientation program at Taylor University, and it was highly successful.

I had been mulling over this idea for two years, but did not know how to make it happen. This summer, I attended a workshop at ACSO (see, we don't just eat at those conferences) in which Don Simmons from Occidental College described the way that they send their Freshmen into the streets of Los Angeles for a service project during Orientation. He gave some direction for the program and helped me see that it was possible. He is an excellent resource on volunteer programs. Upland is not L.A., but there are needs everywhere, and we found a way to make the project work.

The rationale behind the service project was threefold. First of all, as Christians, we are called to serve. Service is emphasized throughout a student's Taylor experience, and we felt that it was important to involve them in service from the beginning. Second, we wanted to alert students to the community around them, to show them that there are needs in our small town, and to show them ways that the community can contribute to the student's experience. Finally, we wanted an activity in which the students could work on a task together, to help build unity within their small groups as well as within the Freshmen class. We wanted it to be a fun experience that they would remember.

The difficult part of this project was not motivating the students or finding support for the project, rather it was the logistics of finding enough projects and work for 500 people to do, all at the same time. We did not want people standing around feeling like they were not contributing. The answer to this was, to coin a phrase, "fanatical organization!" The first step was plugging in people who could put some time into the project. We were blessed by having a Hall Director's wife serve in the volunteer role of "Project Coordinator." She helped nail down about ten different jobs in the downtown or park area that students could do. The jobs included scraping paint off the

newly acquired one hundred year old Upland train depot (hence the engineer hats!), painting dugouts and trash cans in the park, pulling weeds, and painting the police station. Many Taylor faculty, staff, administrators, and retirees were asked to serve as "site supervisors." They were responsible to get the listed equipment for their project and lead the groups in the afternoon. The equipment and supervisor were waiting at the site when the students arrived.

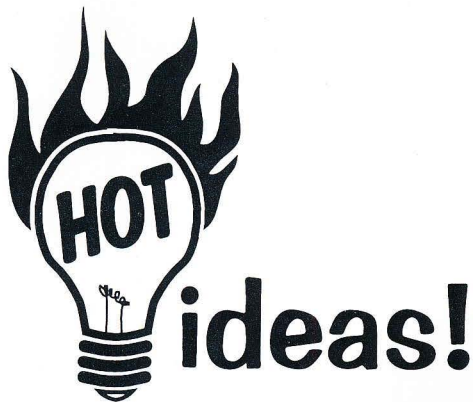
On the day of the Community Plunge, we had a picnic lunch for the Freshmen and Orientation leaders down at the campus lake, followed by a short program with representatives from the town who described the upcoming projects. A local bus ministry organization, Wandering Wheels, transported the students to and from the worksites. Communication between the worksites was made via walkie-talkies. This helped us know to provide additional people or supplies to worksites in need.

The cost of this project was minimal for the Orientation office. The town and local agencies supplied the materials and we supplied the workers and cold drinks for the students. God provided the sunshine, thankfully! The benefits of the project were numerous. Students met and "bonded" with each other while they worked side by side or scrubbed paint off their hands. The students had great attitudes and really made the most of the day. A sense of pride in their class seemed to develop. The supervisors who were involved had the opportunity to meet some students and establish some relationships. In addition, the townspeople are still commenting on the great job that the students did. Some of the comments include, "It would have taken us 5 months to do what they did in 3 hours," "I can't believe that they were so willing to volunteer their time to help our town," and "Not only did they work hard, but they were talking and singing and enjoying themselves!"

Since the workday, several Orientation groups have gone back to their worksites and volunteered more time as a group. The project was a great way to foster community relations and to get the students involved in their community. If you have the time, I would strongly recommend trying this event. It is a great amount of work, but it is extremely rewarding and worthwhile. It is going to be a tradition from here on out at Taylor! For more information, contact Carol Sisson, Taylor University, (317) 998-5515.

*Carol is Director of Orientation at Taylor University, Upland, IN.*

**COCCA**  
Coalition of Christian College Activities



**C**ommunity Service/Outreach seems to be an idea that is making its way onto many of our college campuses. Not only is it an effective way to teach community responsibility, but it also promotes servanthood and enables the colleges involved to get their names into the community in a positive context. Service projects give students as well as administrators, faculty and staff the opportunity to act on I Timothy 6:18, "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."

At Cornerstone College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Student Council is hoping to present such an opportunity to the student body. Grand Rapids, a city of about 175,000, has gang activity and drugs, among other things, that are often a part of larger cities. In response to this, an inner city outreach organization called Servant Center is connecting with local churches and schools to assist them in helping the homeless as well as those involved in gangs and drugs. The Servant Center, which wants helps to rebuild inner-city houses that have at one time or another been either crack houses or hangouts for gangs, is now offering its services and expertise to area organizations like Cornerstone College.

If Cornerstone decides to take on this community outreach project, it will be responsible to raise enough money to pay the back-taxes on an abandoned former crack house. The money raised from area churches and businesses will also be used to pay for the supplies to refurbish the house. Professional plumbers, electricians, and other tradesmen will be asked to donate their time to supervise groups of students who will provide the manpower for the project. The homes will then be used to house homeless families and/or individuals until they can get re-established back into the community with a job and a place to live.

Faculty, staff and administrators are not excluded from contributing to this ministry. Those who have a specialized expertise may even help supervise. This program has the potential to be ongoing and may even open doors for students to do internships at the house by actually living with and ministering to the homeless.

## "Thanks for the Memories and Much More. . ."

**I** can never thank ACSD enough for the impact that it has made on my life. After 16 years of work in student development and 14 of those as a member of ACSD, I have been enriched and blessed from the association. In this short article, I would like to reflect on some of these blessings and offer some challenges to the organization.

It seemed fitting that my last ACSD conference would take place in beautiful Santa Barbara. One of the days at the conference was especially full and as the day was coming to a close, I reflected back on some of my experiences. I had climbed a mountain behind the campus and looked over the beautiful beaches up and down the coast. I had sat with my hands wrapped around hot coffee, listening to the humility of a baker that warmed me more than my beverage. His wisdom was the kind that runs deep and rings true in the hearts of believers. I had taken off my shoes and walked in the cool sand in the darkness of the night while listening to the waves crash on to the beach. And that evening, I had read from Psalm 93:3,4, "The seas have lifted up, O Lord, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves. Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea - the Lord on high is mighty." The Lord is mightier than the sea that I had seen from the mountaintop and had felt on my toes. And that might was not only evidenced in the beauty of Santa Barbara, but also in the lives of those who had gathered there to celebrate the challenge of student development.

During my association with ACSD it is difficult to determine who has grown more, the organization, or myself. The life-long friends that I have made not only helped to educate me in student development, but more importantly, modeled a life of sacrificial service. This modeling, coupled with a depth of fellowship and intimacy has impacted me greatly. A special thank you to some of the many mentors I have looked up to in student development: Russ Rogers, Norris Friesen, Walt Campbell, Tim Herrmann, H.L. Baker, Tim Arens, Barry

Loy, Scott Makin, Miriam Sailors, Deb Lacey, Jane Higa and many, many more. I know that what I have learned from you will help me immeasurably as a faculty member and counselor and even more importantly as a person, who is striving to love God and follow Jesus.

Since I will not be as actively involved with ACSD in the future, I'd like to also leave a few challenges for your organization. First, continue to challenge all stereotypes within the organization. Be careful not to label anyone based on the institution they work at, but take the time to get to know their heart and how God is using them on their campus. Second, don't get sucked into the inferiority complex of our profession. I still say "our" while being a full-time faculty member because I still believe that my major task is student development. Rather than sit around frustrated with not having the prestige of a member of the faculty, take on the offensive. Become the primary student development educator on your campus. Become the expert on student culture, student development and how to best educate them. Then take on the subversive task of trying to educate your faculty. I have sat through enough faculty workshops to know that the majority of them not only don't know what you do, they also don't know students as well as you do and they don't know how to impact them as profoundly as you do. So get busy.

In conclusion, thanks ACSD for the memories and much more. Thank you for helping to shape me into the person I am and for giving me momentum to become the person God wants me to be. I would like to be able to visit with you at a future ACSD conference or on your campus. I would especially enjoy another ACSD golf tournament or an opportunity to soundly thrash Tim Arens on the basketball court. We'll see how the Lord leads in our future. God's best to all of you as you continue to obey and serve Him.

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Annual Conference  
**Association for Christians in Student Development**  
Anderson University  
Anderson, Indiana  
June 5-8, 1995



# LIFESTORIES

MILESTONE TO MILESTONES

*"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage."  
Psalms 84:5*

## **KOINONIA**

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