Targeting The Neo-Trekkies:

Going Where No One Has Gone Before

Paul Borden

Paul Borden was a keynote speaker at the ACSD National Conference at Houghton College this past June. This speech was given by him at the conference and edited for the Koinonia.

I sometimes am hesitant when they read my resume; it sounds like I cannot hold a job. Also, if some of you are wondering what homiletics is, it is aerobics for clerics. I have not come to you today by the way, as a professional in Student Development. That has not been my background, although I have been a teacher and an academic dean at a Bible college. I have been teaching at Denver Seminary and have been a Dean there as well. I also have, as was mentioned, two children in college. My son is on the eighteen year plan at the University of Northern Colorado, and my daughter I am hoping, will finish on time so we can continue to pay for my son’s education.

I do come to you today somewhat as a student of the culture, and a student of the church. I want to talk about what I see happening and what I think may be happening not only in terms of the church at large in the next ten years or so, but how the culture will be impacting students. Having said that, I think I do need to provide somewhat of a disclaimer about the title. I am not a “Treky”. I want you to know that when I was growing up I watched Star Trek when it was not a rerun. I have seen most of the Star Trek movies, but I have not seen any of the new Star Trek, the next generation and I do not watch reruns of Star Trek. When I came up with this title, they were discussing creating another Star Trek movie. There seemed something humorous to me in having Captain Kirk and Dr. Spock in wheel chairs, in search for the meaning of prunes. Sometimes that’s the way I feel as I look at the future. It seems to me that there are times when I would be much more comfortable in Jurassic Park as a dinosaur than working with students at the seminary level. Our student body is much older on an average than it was ten or fifteen years ago. But as I work with students, and as I work in the church, I recognize that things are changing, and if we are not prepared for the change, and if we don’t think about the change and how we are going to respond to the change, then I’m not sure we are always going to be as relevant as we should be in reaching people and in ministering to them for Jesus Christ.

What I want to talk about this morning are some of the changes I see coming. I also want to talk about the impact these changes will have on students. Then I want to offer some suggestions about what we can do to minister to students who are being affected by the changes in our culture. I want to leave time at the end for questions. I guarantee you I will stop on time because I know some of you are planning to leave. When I ran the internship trip program at Bear Valley I always made our interns work in the nursery so that when they would preach they would learn to stop on time. So I am very conscious of time.

First, I would like to talk about some changes in our culture. I think we are living in a hinge of history. The change from the agrarian culture to an industrial society was called a revolution. It not only produced economic changes, but sociological and psychological changes. We are now moving out of the industrial era into an informational era. The informational era is again producing a revolution. It’s affecting the way we think. It’s affecting the way we act. It’s affecting the

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as I talked with many of you this past summer it has been obvious that we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Houghton College. I know you join me in saying thanks for the excellent work that the Houghton staff did to make our conference a success. The accommodations were wonderful, the program challenging, and the opportunities for fellowship numerous. Our hosts provided a magnificent model of service and hospitality.

The idea of labor has been on my mind ever since the final session of our conference. We were reminded that our "labor in the Lord is not in vain." Frankly, there are many times when my labor feels vain. The times that I don't give my attention to a quietly hurting student because my mind is being pulled by some administrative detail that screams for attention. Or the times that I just can't get around to the things that are truly important. It seem like just a few weeks ago that I was thinking, "summer, if I can just make it to summer." I will catch up on my work, I will plan the creative new programs that I haven't had time for, I will read the stack of books growing ever higher on my desk. I will, I will, I will... As the eager "I wills" of Spring turn in to the resigned "Oh wells" of August it is easy to become discouraged. The temptation to lose hope becomes strong. One must wonder if things will ever be different, if our virtuous goals will ever become reality.

It seems that this temptation is not unique to our busy age. I was recently reading Ecclesiastes and it struck me that there are two ways to read this book. One can either read it from a perspective of futility or from a perspective of grace. The distance between these perspectives is great. The first is a perspective of disappointment and despair. The second leads to the freeing conclusion that life is a gift ordered and given by God for us to enjoy. Within this context our work possesses tremendous meaning. Frustration with the interruptions to our plans is replaced by an optimistic curiosity of what God has in store. Anxiousness with a task that is not progressing as expected is displaced by a good natured, willingness to keep "divine appointments." One of the strong messages of Ecclesiastes is to put first things first.

As we work and minister this fall let's hold on to hope that we have. "... Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Speaking for the executive committee I want to solicit your prayers and your suggestion. As the size of the association has grown, so has the diversity. With 825 members representing 260 institutions, there are many different ideas as to the what this organization would look like. Please let us know how we can better serve you.

Have a great fall and be grateful for the opportunity to be involved in such meaningful labor.

Tim Herrmann
President, ACSD

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way we feel. A lot of you have heard about pre-boomers, baby boomers, and baby busters, but I'd like to slice that pie a little bit differently this morning. First there are the pre-boomers, and there are some of us in this room, not many, but some of us who are pre-boomers, born before 1946, as well as the mid-boomer era which is 1960. And again, there are some of us in this room who were born before 1960. People who have lived in that period of time have experienced a number of national crises. For older people it was the Depression. If you're really old it was World War I. They have also experienced World War II and the Cold War. And if you're born before 1960, you're probably old enough to remember Vietnam coming into your living room every evening as you ate dinner. These events had an impact on people born in the era, from 1900 to 1960. It produced within people the basic value of survival. For example my father, who was born in 1901 and died in his own home in 1983 was a survivalist. The day he died, you could have gone down into the cellar, and you would have found four or five sacks of flour, three or four sacks of sugar and all kinds of canned goods. We could have eaten a month or two in case the Depression hit again. He was ready. The concept was to survive. He would tell me when I was growing up, "Son, you should always invest in certain insurance companies, because during the Depression they never went under." He invested in those insurance companies and received about a 2-3% return on his investment. But at least it was secure, it was safe. He and my mother lived in the same town for fifty years. He worked at the same job for forty years. Because you see, when your basic value is survival, you live with the concept of deferred gratification. In other words, you're willing to put things off that you want to do in the future, because survival is your most important value. That's why students who came to college after World War II, into the 50's and even in the 60's, although it was often a rebellious time, they put up with a lot. They would put up with the curriculum, with boring teachers, and with all kinds of other frustrations. You see they understood the concept of deferred gratification. College is supposed to be that way. You must pay your dues, you must do your stuff, and then you go out and get a job. And if you get a decent enough job, you can retire. People lived with the basic value of survival. I recognize that in my own life as someone born before 1946. Many of the decisions I make are determined by the basic value of survival.

Since 1960 there has been no major national crisis. In fact, you take students born from 1960 on; the only war they remember was a Nintendo war that occurred a couple of years ago in the Middle East. And for the most part, from our perspective no one got hurt. Many Iraqis were killed, but from the United States perspective no one died. They have not experienced a major economic failure. They are used to a consumer lifestyle. They are involved in a therapeutic culture where the high priests and the high priestesses of our culture are the counselors, the psychiatrists, the psychologists. Therefore, their basic value is quite different. It is one of the identification of oneself. The major principle for living is related to self-fulfillment. That's why people will quit a job when they do not have another job. That's foreign to me. You never quit a job unless you have another job. People today quit a job because they do not like it. It's not fulfilling. It's not meeting their needs. It's not something they want. People change careers like they change clothes. People change spouses. They change children.

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And students today will not put up with rules, discipline, or authority. Only unlike the students of the 60's they don't rebel, they just simply ignore them, unless those rules enable them to gain certain advantages. So I think we need to realize that one of the changes that is occurring in our culture, is that there is a basic value shift in terms of what drives people, or what motivates them. By the way, those of you who were born after 1960, may sometimes wonder why you struggle with older administrators and why the people over you act in a way that seems so foreign. You must understand that it is the basic values that are driving them which are different from the values giving you. I am not here commenting on whether one is better or one value is worse. I am simply trying to describe this major change.

A second change we must understand is that we have moved from being a Christian culture to a Barbaric one. Several years ago one of the major Chicago newspapers did a series on fundamentalists. The first article in the series was about Muslim fundamentalists. These are people who put bombs in their cars and drive into embassy's. The second series of articles was about Mormon fundamentalists. These are men with twelve wives who live in Idaho and shoot at the police. The third article in the series was about Christians, what we would call Evangelicals. The message was clear. Just as you are to fear Muslim fundamentalists and Mormon fundamentalists, the Christian evangelical world is something that is also to be feared. This fear is coming to fruition. In Colorado in our last election we passed amendment two. Amendment two had to do with the whole issue of homosexuality. It is still being held up in the courts as to how it will be worked out. What has been interesting to me, is that in the last six or seven years we in Colorado have gone through a recession, from which we are now recovering. During this time there was a movement of many of the Christian organizations to Colorado Springs. We have become the Wheaton of the Rockies. Many of these organizations, now close to seventy, with more coming, are moving into Colorado Springs, including ones like Focus on the Family, which brought in about 1,200-1,500 people. This move has enabled the economy of that city to recover from the recession. And yet there are groups now being formed in Colorado to watch this Evangelical group because it is having such a pervasive influence on the culture. And the reason this is occurring is that the values of the culture are no longer the same values that we hold in the church. To put it another way, the values of the church are no longer the values of the culture.

When I was growing up in a little town in New Jersey, I went to school with the undertaker’s son. He was a nice kid and did not smell like formaldehyde. I remember when he was about ten, his father in this little community of about 1,200 people got a divorce and married another woman. As I look back on it, it was interesting that everybody in the community was upset and thought it was terrible, even though most of the people in the community did not go to church. You see the values of the church were the values of the culture. But that’s no longer true. We do not live in that kind of a culture anymore. People live life as though the church and Christianity do not exist. All you have to do is watch television and the movies. You hardly ever see a rabbi, a priest, or a minister on television or in the movies. If they are there, they’re either portrayed as a good-natured dolt, like Father Downing, or some kind of a charlatan. Alcohol, drugs, teen pregnancies are no longer solved by the church, they are solved by calling a local clinic, a local hospital, or a local counseling group. We need to recognize, that we do not live in a Christian culture, instead we live in a culture that is very much like the culture of the first century, where the values of the church are not the values of the culture.

There is another change that we have to wrestle with in this culture, besides a change in values, and the fact that Christianity is no longer influencing the culture. This change is that our basic method of communication has changed. If you look at an overview of the Western world up until about 1500, for the most part we lived in an oral culture. In an oral culture communication comes through the ear. That means that knowledge is limited to memory, because you can not go to a library and check out books. Traditions are kept alive by stories. The main social unit is the community, because it is in the community that you gain knowledge, gain wisdom, and you learn from people. But as we began to move past the renaissance and the reformation, we began to move from an oral communication culture to a literate one. Now those of us in education live in a literate world. To us, communication comes through the eye. How many of you have said of a very boring teacher, “you go and listen, and get the notes, I’ll read them and get ready for the test”. Knowledge is not limited to what you hear, but knowledge comes through what you see. Words began to become spatial, they took up space. Ideas were structured, we call them outlines. I teach Homiletics to students at Denver seminary. I tell them that they are in the process of becoming literate people. They are learning to read Greek. They are learning to take apart the text. They are learning to create outlines. One of the problems we have is that we are training our preachers and our students to be irrelevant to the culture in which we live. The problem is that the world in which you and I live is no longer a literate culture. Ninety per cent of the books that are produced in this country, except for technical works are only purchased by 10% of the people. Those 10%, by the way, for the most part are women. That’s why when you walk into a B. Dalton, or a Waldens bookstore, even books written for men have covers designed to be purchased by women, because men in this culture for the most part do not read. In fact, we have learned that in the church with which I am involved, if you want to disciple men you give them tapes. If you want to disciple women you give them a book. But we for the most part do not live in a literate culture any longer. The best read newspaper today, which is USA Today, is really nothing but TV in print, with all its colors and charts. This is so people will read it. Today, we have moved from a literate culture to an electronic culture. Communication comes both through the eye and the ear, but the emphasis is on the visual. I recognize that when I get up to preach on a Sunday morning, I am competing with Reebok and Nike commercials, MTV, and everything else on television. I have chosen the worst means in which to communicate on Sunday morning. We need to recognize that television and radio have replaced print. In fact one sociologist says, that the only shared culture of baby-busters is television, which means that if a sermon illustration about the Civil War is used and it was not the Sunday night movie two weeks ago, nobody knows what I am talking about. Ninety-eight per cent of American homes have color TV sets. In fact, there are more people in America who have TV sets in their homes than indoor plumbing. And in five years, many people will have as many as 500 options on interactive TV. The result of this kind of a culture is what Faith Popcorn calls “cocooning”. You drive into your home, your garage door opens up automatically, you go in without seeing your neighbors, you have your privacy fence, you have your entertainment center at home, and there is this whole facade that somehow you can deal with the problem...
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of loneliness by watching that which comes to you electronically.

There are other changes in our culture, and I’m just going to touch on some of them. The society is changing in many ways. Ethnic minorities are becoming majorities. If you have talked about pluralization at all, and how you’re going to deal with it on your campus, you are aware of this phenomenon. I think one of the most interesting things happened to me two years ago. I was in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which if you know anything about Lancaster, it is all German, Amish and Mennonite in the countryside, and in downtown Lancaster and it’s mostly Afro-American. I am driving right through the middle of downtown Lancaster in the Afro-American section, and there I saw a sign for the Vietnamese Bible Church. The culture is changing in terms of what is going to happen with those who are becoming majorities within our country. Twenty percent of the population in Denver today is Hispanic, and every week now, we are experiencing a major migration of Koreans who are coming to Denver from L.A. because of the riots. So things are changing ethnically.

The roles of women are constantly changing. By the year 2000, ninety per cent of the women between the ages of 16 and 55 will work outside the home. Most of them will do so because they must. They say the greatest percentage of people on welfare roles by the year 2,000 will be single moms who used to be middle class, but who are now on welfare because of divorce. There are over a million single fathers now living in our country. That is a change. The word “family” is taking on a variety of definitions. By the year 2000, only 20-25% of the families will be nuclear families with no step relationships. The idea of Ward and June, with Wally and the Beaver is a thing of the past. When you think of the word family in this day and age, you have to redefine the term to include different kinds of families.

The nation is aging. People are retiring earlier. We are getting older. If you don’t believe we are getting older, notice what Madison avenue has recognized. All you have to do is look at McDonald’s commercials, and it is now hard to tell them from the Depend commercials because of who is being portrayed. The church I’m involved with ministers to 300-400 unchurched senior adults every month. We could reach 1,000 if we had the facilities to do it. It is a different world.

The middle class is shrinking, and some of you who are younger realize that it’s going to be harder to have the same standard of living on two incomes than your parents were able to have on one income. The nation is not only in debt, but so are individuals. Here are some figures from Merrill Lynch. They claim that the average boomer spends 30% of his/her income on taxes, 30% on housing, 21% on debt, and 19% on everything else. I know many of your institutions are experiencing financial crunches just like our institution. One of the things that is happening is that mission organizations, colleges and institutions realize that the people with the wealth in this country will be dying off in the next twenty years. There will be the greatest transfer of wealth in the next twenty years in the history of the world. The wealth is going to go to one of three recipients. It is either going to go to the government, to charitable organizations, or to heirs. But the next generation that’s coming along is not going to give to institutions like the previous generation has done, not only because they’re not committed to them, but because they will not have the wealth to do it. It’s going to change the way our institutions function.

The last major change I want to mention from a societal point of view, is that we’re living in a litigious society. It was interesting as I looked at one of your newsletters, there were articles about legal issues. Our seminary just settled three lawsuits within the last two years, one of which if it had gone to court had the potential of bringing down the seminary. You know now as you deal with students, it is a different world in which we live because of lawsuits.

The church has changed. Not only is society changing, but so is the church. We live in the day and age of the large church. Fifty per cent of all Americans who go to church go to about 7-14% of the churches, depending on which statistics you read. Yet 80-85% of all churches are plateaued or declining. The average size church in the United States has 75 members. What that means is, we are living in the day and age of the large church, which says that students who come out of large churches are students who are used to consumer services. When I say services I mean they are used to having services provided for them. Not just morning worship services, but other services. They are used to a niche oriented kind of thinking in the church which makes for a different way of viewing Christianity. Let me say, by the way, this is also happening in rural America. In rural America we are finding the growth of what is called the “Walmart church”. Walmart is the one industry that came out of rural America and made it in urban America. We are finding communities of 200, 300, and 400, where there are churches of 300-800. What they are doing, is they are taking the expertise from the large church, marrying it with the uniqueness of a rural culture and putting it together. Many small churches are probably going to go out of existence, at least if they want a full-time pastor. By the year 2,000, they say that a town of 1,000 will not be able to have a filling station because of the environmental regulations just to keep a tank in the ground. A town of 1,000 will not even be able to pay the pastor’s health insurance, let alone his/her salary if they want to have a full-time pastor. This has implications for counseling potential pastors in terms of career guidance. We also need to recognize that growing churches have become a seven day week church. From 1900 to World War II, unbelievers entered the church through the Sunday School. From World War II to 1960, unbelievers entered through Sunday evening services. From the 1960’s to the 1990’s unbelievers entered the church through morning services. But from the 1990’s on, unbelievers are entering the church through seven day a week services, whether it’s support groups, use of Alcoholics Anonymous, MOPS, aerobics groups, etc. The church who understands that we are going to touch the unbeliever by getting them into church seven days a week is the church that’s going to be effective in reaching them for Jesus Christ. A very large church in Phoenix which has the name Community Church called in some secular consultants and said “what does a community church do in a white American suburb?” Not out in the rural area, but in a suburb. They have changed their whole way of doing ministry to get people going through their doors seven days a week. Many churches across the country that are effective for Christ are understanding that.

What is the impact of all of these changes on students? When I’m talking about students I’m assuming 18-24 year olds, although I recognize student bodies are getting older. Here are what I would suggest are some of the impacts coming from the changes in our culture. Number one. Obviously the basic value that students have today is self identification. Who am I? What are my gifts? What are my talents? What can
We must realize things have changed.

I do for several careers? Number two. Loyalty is developed in relation to individuals not institutions, communities, or groups. That loyalty is related to individuals, not to a class, not to a sorority, not to a fraternity, but to an individual. Both of my children when they were in high school were in band. One of the advantages of having your kids in band is you only have to go to the first half of the football game. The biggest disadvantage of having your kids in band, is you've got to go to all the parades. I have been to all the parades in Colorado, and I have watched and they are all the same. They start out with three guys from the VFW that can't march anymore carrying a flag. Then the important people come along in convertibles and old Lincolns and wave. But you look at the groups, particularly the traditional groups, the VFW, the Shriner, the Elks, the Lions, it is hard to find a younger person in those groups. Why? Because people are no longer giving their allegiance to those kind of groups. We do not do that in this culture anymore. We have moved to a voluntary chapel at the Seminary, because we have become such a non-resident kind of campus. It is interesting listening to the faculty talk about chapel. It is like listening to church boards talk about whether they should keep Wednesday night prayer meeting or not. Students will not come along in convertibles and old Lincolns and wave. But you look at the groups, particularly the traditional groups, the VFW, the Shriner, the Elks, the Lions, it is hard to find a younger person in those groups. Why? Because people are no longer giving their allegiance to those kind of groups. We do not do that in this culture anymore. We have moved to a voluntary chapel at the Seminary, because we have become such a non-resident kind of campus. It is interesting listening to the faculty talk about chapel. It is like listening to church boards talk about whether they should keep Wednesday night prayer meeting or not. Students will not come and yet we say they ought to come. We need to realize students are not committed to groups or to institutions like they were at one time. Basic Biblical knowledge or rudimentary Biblical values can no longer be assumed, even for students from solid evangelical homes and churches. It is interesting to me as I was being shown through the nice library here, that you have a detection system to find out whether students are taking books or not. We are installing one of those at the seminary. Why? Because every year we lose thousands of dollars worth of stolen books.

We must realize things have changed.

There is another change that impacts students. Many students do not think sequentially and find it difficult to learn in literary and linear modes. In fact one sociologist has said of students born after 1968, only 30% think sequentially. The army and navy that recruits from the 70% has had to change the way it does its training. The marines and air force which recruit from the 30% have not had to change. It will probably not have as big an impact on Christian colleges because the church for the most part only ministers to the 30% of the young people that learn somehow to think sequentially. But if you want to know how most young people think today, you watch MTV. The way MTV is put together is not the same as the way we meet one group of students needs, which is an entirely different set of desires and needs from the next group of students. I think if we see that change is exciting, and provides the opportunity to really do things differently, then I think we can become optimists and we can somehow touch students in a significant way for Jesus Christ.

The second question I would ask is "do you enjoy change, and see obstacles as a way to create new ways to reach students?" "Are you open to niche-oriented programs?" One of the things I sense as we struggle with these issues at the seminary, is that the tendency in academic circles is to want to have our programs, whether it is orientation, small groups, or whatever, to fit all students. This does not work. In the world in which we live, students are used to living in niches. We need to recognize if we're going to develop small groups or whatever we must do it in such a way that we meet one group of students needs, which is an entirely different set of desires and needs from the next group of students. I think if we see that change is exciting, and provides the opportunity to really do things differently, then I think we can become optimists and we can somehow touch students in a significant way for Jesus Christ.

The third question I would ask: "Do you believe students are basically good, want to serve God, and expect them to perform well in the right environment?" Two or three years ago, I counted up the number of sermons I had listened to all my life. Now you have to understand, I went to a Bible college which meant I always went to chapel. I went to seminary where I always went to chapel. I've preached a lot of sermons, but being a Homiletics professor, I've also listened to a lot of sermons. I was at a Bible college, at seminary, and I figured up conservatively speaking, not evangelistically, but conservatively speaking, that I had listened to a minimum of 5,000 sermons. Now, the fact that I have any sanity at all is the evidence of the grace of God. But the thing that struck me as I thought about those 5,000 sermons, is that 99.44% of the sermons were basically negative. The speaker assumed that whatever he/she was talking about, the people listening were not doing. They would challenge them to do it, but the underlying assumption was that they probably were not going to obey anyway. As I began to think about the sermons I had preached, I realized that most of the sermons I had preached were

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negative. I think we try to motivate ultimately by guilt, and I think often that comes because there's an underlying basic belief that the work of sanctification isn't really all that significant. I think we have to change our thinking to believe that if God has changed the lives of people, that down deep inside, Christians, students, want to serve Jesus Christ. They may not know how. We may have convinced them they can not. But they want to serve Jesus Christ.

The fourth question I would ask is: "Do you believe students can develop and blossom without being under one's control?" As I look at evangelical Christianity, control is a big issue for us. We try to control people. It's interesting to me that the churches that are booming and growing and touching our culture for Jesus Christ are the churches that have learned that you have got to take hands off, and you can not control people. It is time that we let the Holy Spirit do that.

The fifth question I want to ask is: "Do you think it is a benefit, not a loss that Christianity has lost its cultural leverage?" I am inclined to believe that we are better off today living in a Barbaric culture than we were twenty years ago living in a Christian culture where everyone got inoculated with just enough Christianity to keep them away from the disease. If you think about it, the church was most successful in the first century when it had the least power in the culture. I think this is an exciting, challenging, fun time to do ministry because the church has to present the Gospel basically for the sake of the Gospel, not with all of it's cultural baggage.

The last question I want to ask is: "Do you think that you, along with the work of Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit can win?" As I look at many Christians I am convinced many of them don not think they are going to win. I think that's often why we tend to be negative, that's often why we tend to control what we have, rather than really believing that when it comes to having students go through our institution and go out, we have won the battle, we have not lost the battle.

I think another area I would like to talk about in reaching students today is that we must keep the mindset that we are ministering cross-culturally. I recognize that if I were going to go to a mission field overseas, I would not only have to learn the language, I would have to learn the culture. I think to minister today in the United States, even with Anglo students, let alone Afro-American students, or Hispanic students or whatever, I must remember I am in an cross-cultural situation. My values, my relationship to Jesus Christ, my understanding of what is right and wrong is so different than theirs that I have to think about doing it cross-culturally. That means I am willing to give up any method and change any method unless that method compromises the Gospel. I will give you an illustration real quickly: A pastor moved into Utah. Evangelical churches in a basically Mormon country, are usually 150-200 in size. This pastor came from the mission field where he had worked cross-culturally. He went into Utah and said I'm going to work cross-culturally. The little Baptist church where he pastors wanted to put up an addition to their building. He said to the church board, "We are not going to put an addition to our building," They said, "What are we going to do?" He said, "We're going to sell our building." They said, "Well then what are we going to do?" He said, "We're going to buy this big piece of property out on the main highway and we're going to put up a great big building." They said, "We don't have any people to put up a great big building." He said, "That's right, but we are going to do it anyway and we're going to make it a family center. And while we are building it, we're going to be advertising that when the building is done we are going to give all the neighbors a free tour for three months and then the building will be closed." Now if you know anything about a Mormon temple this ought to begin to ring a bell. And he began to in essence think the way Mormons think only about the church. That church today, because he has thought in a cross-cultural mode is running 800 people, most of whom are converted Mormons. You see he began to think differently about the method and the structures to use to reach people for Jesus Christ. That means that our job is missional. That means that we must have a vision. I would challenge you this morning, that when a student goes through your institution and that student graduates, what is your vision for that student? What do you want to see happen to that student? What do you want them to be? What do you want them to think? What do you want them to feel? What is the vision? If you have a vision, then you must think strategically. The problem in evangelical Christianity is that we tend to perpetuate events. We do not think strategically. I'm going to close with one illustration. A sixty-two year old man in our church who retired from John Mansville, where he used to run construction crews, got asbestosis, had a heart operation with five by-passes and took early retirement. Here was a man with no theological education who had never gone to Bible college. We said to him, "we want you to minister to unchurched senior adults." This group by the way, is the fastest growing part of our population. That man started with a Sunday School class of about ten older women. Today the church is ministering to between 300-400 unchurched senior adults with over 2,000 phone calls made to these people during the month, run by many of the older people in our church. I said, "Bob, how do you reach unchurched senior adults?" He said, "Well, you have to think strategically. You just can't put up a sign and say we're going to minister to unchurched senior adults." I said, "What do you do?" He replied, "Well it's easy. I know I can go into any nursing home, any retirement village, or any community where senior adults are and get 10% of them to come to our services. It is quite easy. You go in and find the gatekeepers, the people that run the place and know everybody, and say, 'tell me who does not get phone calls, who does not get visited, and who never gets any mail'. They are the people we target. We go in and serve them. We take them to our luncheon and do all kinds of things to help them. We're finding people in their eighties and nineties coming to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. In fact, a women two years ago, 99 years of age, met Jesus Christ and said I'm going to work there and the more our culture breaks down, the greater the opportunity for Jesus Christ. I think you could get saved after seventeen! But you must think strategically. I think to minister to students in the 21st century we have to say, "what is our vision? How do we strategize to reach it?" It's a different world. It's a cross-cultural world. We must minister in a cross-cultural way. If we do that, I think this is the greatest day in the world to touch people for Jesus Christ. You know that you are touching students whose lives are filled with pain. I was amazed when I was at the Bible college, the number of men and women who came to that Bible college who had been sexually abused, or abused in other ways. The more pain that is out there and the more our culture breaks down, the greater the opportunity to serve Jesus Christ. After all, the darker the night, the brighter the light. If we think strategically, minister cross-culturally, and have a vision, we can experience a significant day for touching lives for Jesus Christ.

The author would like to credit the various sources and quotes in this speech. No intentions were made to use other persons work without appropriate credits. The information for the above speech was gathered from a variety of books, newspapers, magazines, speeches, and other sources during the past few years.
It was not long ago that we were all horrified by the rioting, looting, killing, and destruction which came as a response to the acquittal of the police officers who beat Rodney King. The events confirm once again that racial harmony is not a reality in our country. In fact, it may be the one most divisive factor our country faces today.

Newspapers and higher education publications frequently chronicle the simmering pot of racial unrest being lived out on America’s campuses. As student development professionals, such information has to be unsettling because, whether we admit it or not, these reports reflect our campuses to some degree, and the problem is worsening, with no apparent resolution or solution on the horizon.

What are we going to do?

Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein offer “a model for reconciliation in an age of racial strife” in their book *Breaking Down Walls*. Their remedy for racial strife is racial reconciliation through the power of the cross of Jesus Christ. This is timeless biblical truth for a modern, difficult problem.

Raleigh Washington is an African-American who is pastor of the Rock of Our Salvation church in Chicago, Illinois. Glen Kehrein is a white American and the director or Circle Urban Ministries (CUM), also located in Chicago. Rock Church and CUM are sister ministries adjacent to the Chicago’s Austin community, bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ through a solid evangelical church and social services to the people of the community. But more importantly, they are a model of racial reconciliation.

Part I of the book, entitled “Apart,” chronicles both men’s lives and sheds light on how their individual thinking was formulated regarding the issue of race relations. The reader is also provided insights into how each man made his pilgrimage to the Austin community of Chicago.

Upon arriving in Chicago and being teamed together, Washington and Kehrein did not have instant harmony. The book describes many personal conflicts and struggles they faced as their relationship grew and sometimes faltered. This transparency was found to be a major strength of the book because it informs the reader of ingredients necessary for lasting reconciliation.

Part II of *Breaking Down Walls* is entitled “Together,” and begins with the authors reminding us that Christ’s ministry on the cross was one of reconciliation: “The reconciliation of all people with God and with each other.” Using 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, they explain that “the ministry of reconciliation is a mandatory part of a Christian’s daily living.”

Washington and Kehrein identify three biblical reasons for urging racial reconciliation for believers: Christ made it a priority (Eph. 2:14-15); the apostle Paul made it a priority (Col. 3:11); and the theological foundation of our faith is reconciliation. The authors submit that “to be ambassadors for Christ, then, is to be reconcilers wherever relationships are broken.”

The remainder of this part provides the remedies for racial reconciliation as described by the author. Their model is outlined in the following eight biblical principles: Commitment to Relationship, Intentionally, Sincerity, Sensitivity, Interdependence, Sacrifice, Empowerment, and Call. Each principle is self-contained in its own chapter and is thoroughly explained using scripture and personal anecdotes from the lives of the authors and others.

In the explanation of their model, Washington and Kehrein provide many practical insights for living a life or racial reconciliation. They are frank in their discussion of the obstacles and difficulties one will face in traveling this road, and provide valuable, tangible ways to be successful in the pilgrimage.

The discussion of the principles raises issues which must be addressed by all races, but particularly take aim at the black/white issue due to the ethnic persuasion of the authors. The reader will be confronted with areas of racial insensitivity existing in his/her life and made to consider some very difficult questions regarding one’s personal involvement in being a racial reconciler.

The theme of the book is that racial reconciliation is a two-way street an as Christians, we are all responsible to be reconcilers, regardless of skin color.

“At the Breach” is the title of the final part of this book and consists of two chapters, one written by each author to their respective ethnic group. “For Black Christians Only” and “For White Christians Only” each contain six imperatives that must be specifically addressed by that group as reconciliation is sought. For instance, Raleigh Washington encourages black Christians to confront racism constructively and not to get caught up in bitterness, while Glen Kehrein admonishes white Christians not to deny the reality of fascination and not to look for simple answers to complex problems.

Throughout the book, Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein emphasize that racial reconciliation which is biblical, effective, and lasting is a two-way street. As they conclude, they challenge the reader to be one who is willing to take risks to open the doors of racial reconciliation.

The evidences of racial strife in our country are very clear. The question is, “How will the Christian community be agents of change regarding this issue?” *Breaking Down Walls* may not offer all the answers, but it certainly provides a launching pad for the journey of racial reconciliation.
Servant's Song
Richard Gillard

Brother, let me be your servant,
Let me be as Christ to you,
Pray that I might have the grace to
Let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
We are brothers on the road,
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.
I will hold the Christ-light for you,
In the night-time of your fear,
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,
When you laugh I'll laugh with you,
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God and heaven,
We shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.

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As the son of a Baptist preacher, I grew up in an environment where the aesthetics of film were quite simple (actually simplistic). Good art was any film where Disney's name was at the beginning or Billy Graham gave an altar call at the end. Bad art was everything else. While I hope we have become a little more sophisticated in our understanding of film since my childhood days in the 60's, there is still a sense in which the average student at a Christian college appears to be aesthetically retarded.

In part, this is because we tend to buy into a handful of false dichotomies in approaching film, and in so doing, encourage a simplistic understanding of the role of cinema in contemporary society. First among these is the art-entertainment dichotomy (as in Shakespeare is art, movies are entertainment). I have seen several articles in Christian periodicals that attack films because they are not the best form of entertainment. Film, at its best, is a complex and sophisticated art form. I'm afraid we often get so little from the medium because we ask so little of it. Our daughter was seven when we took her to see Driving Miss Daisy, eight when we took her to see Malcolm X. In both cases, following the films, she asked questions that allowed us to discuss redemptive relationships in the midst of a fallen world. We need to stop treating film as an electronic baby-sitter. If all we ask of a film is that it be entertaining and unobjectionable (as in no nudity, none of those bad words, etc.), we contribute to the continuing aesthetic retardation of our students.

Another dichotomy that creates problems for us is the often false distinction between sacred and secular films. What is it that makes a film sacred? Billy Graham's altar call? A Christian distributor? Christian personnel? If it's a Christian screenwriter teamed with a non-Christian director, what then? It reminds one of the church debate on the fly in the ointment. If the fly falls in the sacred ointment, is the fly made holy or is the ointment contaminated? About twenty years ago, Christians were picketing the film Jesus Christ Superstar. Personally, the film challenged and furthered my own faith development so much that I saw it seven times, A close friend made a commitment to Christ as a direct result of his experience with the film. Even if we decide that a film is definitely secular, does that mean we should not watch it? In the liberal arts, we read Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, and others who are often openly antagonistic to religious world views.

—Paul Nemecek, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Spring Arbor College

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BOOK REVIEW

Hollywood vs. America

Rob Sisson

Have you ever wondered when contemplating film programming on your campus, "Where have all the good films gone?" Why does it seem to be increasingly difficult to bring movies to campus that are challenging and present a positive thought-provoking message to our students?

In his book, Hollywood vs. America, film critic Michael Medved answers these questions and provides timely insight into the way that today's Hollywood thinks. Medved, a Yale graduate and co-host of Sneak Previews asserts that Hollywood has become more than value-neutral in its leadership. The industry has become aggressive in its attack on traditional values, religion, and the family, while assisting in the glorification of brutality and sexual perversion. Medved also asserts that Hollywood has broken the faith with its public by creating movies, television, and popular music that fuel the fire of every serious social problem that we face from teenage pregnancy to violence in the streets.

Medved's candid insights are powerful and his accusations pointed as he discusses Hollywood's penchant for ignoring and assaulting the values of middle class America while pursuing a self-destructive and alienated ideological agenda that is harmful to the nation at large and to the industry's own self-interest.

Thankfully, Michael Medved does not leave the reader in the midst of despair. He explains from his perspective how Hollywood got into the mess it is in by abandoning a healthy self-censorship in the mid 60's and moving to a humanistic value-free method of choosing movie content and theme. Medved points out the fact that The Sound of Music won the Academy Award in 1965 for best picture, and only four years later the X-rated Midnight Cowboy won the movie industry's highest prize. During the same time period audience numbers dwindled significantly. The author's conclusion is that the abandoning of the Valenti code in 1965 seriously altered the quality of the films produced in Hollywood.

The situation is not hopeless according to Medved. He calls for grass roots efforts for change in the media industry and talks about many producers who are making films with a positive message.

I would highly recommend Michael Medved's book as an important resource for those of us who do film programming on our campus. It is mandatory for those of us who work closely with students to be on the cutting edge of what is being communicated through the popular culture so that we can be agents of change.

HOT Ideas

1. Show a film which deals with a CONTROVERSIAL OR SOCIALLY PERTINENT ISSUE. Have a panel discussion with experts on the subject giving professional opinions and allow students to interact and grow from dialogue. (i.e. Mississippi Burning and panel discussion on racism)

2. PIGGY BACK — Have a week long program within the residence halls dealing with issues brought up in the film.

3. SPECIFIC TOPICS — like family values. Show movies all week long that deal with family values. Break students into groups to give input on how to encourage family values.

4. LEADERSHIP CLASS FILMS — Within leadership development class, show a movie that relates to some aspect of student leadership. Have specific comments and questions formed to lead the group in meaningful discussion. (i.e. Lord of the Flies)

5. DRIVE-IN — Show a quality entertaining movie in a big parking lot, football or baseball field and have it be a drive-in. Sell refreshments and make it a family affair.

6. WATER THEME — Have a scary water movie (i.e. Jaws) and show it in the swimming pool.

7. CONTESTS/INTERACTIVE FILMS — Have contests and giveaways at the beginning and end of the movie. (i.e. when showing Singing in the Rain, have someone do their best Gene Kelly impersonation)

8. MUSIC VIDEO FESTIVALS — Tie this in with a program on the possible dangers of rock music. Possibly a speaker like Al Menconi could be brought in to discuss these issues.

9. BREAKING THE STEREOTYPE FILMS — Have different films showing across campus that would appeal to different groups (i.e. jocks, women, bookworms, etc.). Have students rate the movies, then have a discussion on how we can break down stereotypes.

10. COMMUNITY FILMS — Have certain movies in your series be designated community movies. Drop the price and publicize hard in the community. This can be a great P.R. tool in the community.

11. JOINT EFFORTS IN FILMS — Attempt to join forces with faculty from academic affairs to bring in films that will benefit students, student development staff and the academic affairs faculty.
Convicted Civility
Can We Be Faithful and Polite Too?

From Chapter One of Uncommon Decency by Richard J. Mouw

Richard J. Mouw will be a keynote speaker at the '94 ACSD National Conference at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA.

The two cars faces each other, bumpers almost touching and horns blaring. Neither driver was willing to yield.

It was a narrow city street, crowded tighter by several double-parked delivery trucks. The two drivers who had encountered each other in this obstacle course were both in an uncompromising mood. Finally one car edged forward, pushing the other backward. The driver of the nudged car angrily backed out of the way. But he quickly jumped out of the car and, as the other driver passed by, let loose a series of curses and obscene gestures.

Several of us who were passing along the street had stopped to watch this little drama. One woman offered a poignant assessment before she moved on: “Lordy, sometimes it makes you think that everything is falling apart!”

I don't know whether the woman on the sidewalk had ever read “The Second Coming,” a poem written in 1921 by W. B. Yeats. But her image—“everything is falling apart”—is one that Yeats also used to express a sense of social crisis:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere Anarchy is loosed upon the world;
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack of all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Yeats and the woman on the sidewalk are not alone in their worries about trends in human relations. Laments about the loss of civility—simple politeness and courtesy — are common these days in editorials, articles, books and sermons.

I share that concern. Things really are falling apart. Common decency is on the wane. When challenged, people refuse to back off. They resent having to give others a little space. We talk past each other in many of our most important national and international discussions. Professions like law, medicine, education and finance have begun to lose the public trust. Violence is on the rise in our cities and villages. “Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.”

The angry encounter between the two drivers on the city street can be seen as a metaphor for the whole. There they all stand, bumper-to-bumper, horns blaring: pro-lifers and pro-choicers; gay liberationists and defenders of the traditional family; husbands and wives facing each other in courts of law; artists and legislators; “politically correct” intellectuals and crusading fundamentalists; warring ethnic groups in Eastern Europe; Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants; Arabs and Jews in the Middle East.

As a Christian I also worry that many believers seem to be contributing more to the problem than to the solution. Well known clergy tell their followers that the time has come for a “battle” against the forces of unbelief. The TV cameras show Christians on the picket lines, angrily shaking their fists at their opponents. We are often good examples of the kind of difficult people whom Yeats described as being “full of passionate intensity.”

When George Bush made a speech a few years ago calling Americans to be “a kinder, gentler people,” I responded with a spirited “Amen!” I thought kindness and gentleness should be especially characteristic of those of us who are Christians.

We were created for kind and gentle living. Indeed, kindness and gentleness are two of the “fruit-of-the-Spirit” characteristics that the apostle Paul mentions in Galatians 5. When Christian fail to measure up to the standards of kindness and gentleness, we are not the people God meant us to be.

Not Civility Alone

Not that all civility is the be-all and end-all of life. We will not solve all our problems simply by becoming more civil people. There are times when it is appropriate to manifest some very uncivil feelings. “Passionate intensity” is not always out of place. If I am going to be a more civil person, it cannot be because I have learned to ignore my convictions.

A journalist hit the mark in a review essay dealing with urban problems. He said that Americans are facing a crisis in our cities because we “have let our standards of civility and truth waste dangerously away.”1 I am glad he included something about a lack of concern for the truth. It is not enough merely to reclaim civility. We need to cultivate a civility that does not play fast and loose with the truth.

As Martin Marty has observed, one of the real problems in modern life is that the people who are good at being civil often lack strong convictions and people who have strong convictions often lack civility.2 I like that way of stating the issue. We need to find a way of combining a civil outlook with a “passionate intensity” about our convictions. The real challenge is to come up with a convicted civility.

“Inner” Civility

Civility is public politeness. It means that we display tact, moderation, refinement and good manners toward people who are different from us. It isn’t enough, though, to make an outward show of politeness. Being civil has an “inner”-side as well.

To be sure, for some people civility is only a form of playacting. A friend was telling me about the difficult time he and his wife were experiencing in their relationship. “We go through whole weeks where we’re lucky if

1. From Chapter One of Uncommon Decency by Richard J. Mouw.
we can simply manage to be civil to each other," he said. For him civility was not a very pleasant arrangement. It felt like a form of hypocrisy. Being civil meant that he and his wife would mask their hostile feelings with polite words and grudging accommodation.

In fact, my friend isn't alone. Many people today thing of civility as something more than an outward, often hypocritical shell. But this cynical understanding of civility is yet another sign of decline of real civility. In the past civility was understood in much richer terms. To be civil was to genuinely care about the larger society. It required a heartfelt commitment to your fellow-citizens. It was a willingness to promote the well-being of people who were very different, including people who seriously disagreed with you on important matters. Civility wasn't merely an external show of politeness. It included an inner politeness as well.

In The Hiding Place Corrie ten Boom tells of the time she and her father needed to find a safer place for the Jewish mother and child they had been concealing from the Nazis. A local clergyman came into their watch shop, and they asked him if he would take the Jews into his home. The pastor refused. On an impulse, Corrie ran to fetch the Jewish baby and brought it to him. But the pastor was not moved. "No. Definitely not," he said. "We could lose our lives for that Jewish child."

At that point, Father ten Boom stepped forward and took the baby into his arms. He peered into the child's face for a moment, his white beard grazing against the tiny cheek. Then he looked up and spoke to the pastor: "You say we could lose our lives for this child. I would consider that the greatest honor that could come to my family."

That was a wonderful display of civility. No mere outward show of politeness could have sustained the ten Booms through their fearful months of service to oppressed Jewish people. They had a deep and costly inner commitment to those God had identified as their neighbors, even though these neighbors represented a different cultural and religious ethos. Their civility was hardly an "empty shell."

Flourishing in Humanness

I already said that I believe being civil is a way of becoming more like what God intends us to be. Though he would not have put it in those terms, the ancient philosopher Aristotle would have agreed. He was firmly convinced that civility is necessary for people to realize their human potential. Along those lines, he insisted that we human beings are essentially "political animals." "Political" comes from the Greek word politeis, which pertains to the city—like the Latin civitas, the root for our word "civil." Aristotle was convinced that we cannot become truly human until we can capably function as citizens of the city.

To be good citizens, we must learn to move beyond relationships that are based exclusively on familiarity and intimacy. We must learn how to behave among strangers, to treat people with courtesy not because we know them, but simply because we see them as human beings like ourselves. When we learn the skills of citizenship, Aristotle taught, we have begun to flourish in our humanness.

Acorns do not realize their innate possibilities until they grow branches and sprout leaves. And people do not attain their full potential until they learn how to behave in the public square. In their kind and brave treatment of their Jewish neighbors, Aristotle would have said, the ten Booms had learned some important lessons about what it means to be human.

The great Greek thinker's views on civility and citizenship have been echoed in the teachings of many Christians. St. Thomas Aquinas, for one, was convinced that the Bible confirmed Aristotle's philosophy on this subject. And John Calvin pursued a similar line of thought when he said that public life provides us with the opportunity "to shape our manners in accordance with civil justice."

What Aristotle, Aquinas and Calvin are suggesting has profound implications for the way we make our way through the world. The woman on the sidewalk was expressing similar thoughts when she wondered aloud whether "everything is falling apart." She knew that the incivility she had witnessed on that cramped street was a deep violation of something important. If too much of that kind of thing happens, then we are on our way to losing our humanness. Things will fall apart.

The Struggle for Civility

But how can we hold onto strongly felt convictions while still nurturing a spirit that is authentically kind and gentle? Is it possible to keep these things together?

The answer is that it is not impossible—but it isn't easy. Convicted civility is something we have to work at. We have to work at it because both sides of the equation are very important. Civility is important. And so is conviction.

The Bible itself recognizes the difficulty of maintaining convicted civility. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews lays the struggle out very clearly: we must "pursue peace with everyone," he tells us, while we work at the same time to cultivate that "holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

For some of us, "pursuit" is a very appropriate image. Civility is an elusive goal. We have to chase after it, and the chasing seems to never end.

The Christian experience in North America has been one long pursuit of civility. When the earliest generations of North American Christians were tempted by incivility, they were dealing primarily with their relationships with other Christians. Congregationalists had a hard time tolerating Baptists, and Roman Catholics fought with Presbyterians and Episcopalians. After a while, though, the skirmishes subsided; Protestants began to learn how to live in relative peace with each other, and with Catholics and Jews—as well as with the "fringe" types such as Mennonites and Quakers.

And then another set of problems emerged with newer religious movements. Mormons practiced polygamy. Shakers and other groups introduced novel patterns of communal living. Jehovah's Witnesses refused to allow their sick children to receive blood transfusions, and Christian Scientists rejected medical treatment altogether.

Traditional Christians gradually found ways of dealing with these challenges too. In some cases, as with Mormon polygamy, they set limits on what they would tolerate. With some groups they simply decided to live and let live. In other cases they worked out practical strategies for coping with specific excesses—adult Jehovah's Witnesses may refuse medical treatment for themselves, for instance, but when their children face life-threatening situations, they are temporarily made wards of the state so that the necessary transfusions can be given. After years of trial and error, a roughly acceptable arrangement was in place, and people with different religious beliefs and practices were able to live together with a fair degree of national harmony.

But the challenges of recent decades have sent us back to the drawing board. Now we have mosques in our neighborhoods and New Age devotees in our schools and businesses. Some professors openly call for a return to witchcraft and other ancient pagan practices. Homosexual couples want our churches to bless their "marriages." Cable television delivers pornography into our living rooms.

It is tempting to conclude that these developments have brought us to a point where civility is no longer possible. Isn't the social bond being stretched to the breaking point? Hasn't America's diversity reached proportions where we have lost any reasonable basis for living together in an atmosphere of tolerance and goodwill? Continued on page 14

Richard Mouw has his BA from Houghton College and an MA from the University of Alberta and a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Chicago. His teaching experience includes 17 years at Calvin College. He has been a professor of Christian Philosophy and Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary since 1985 where he also served as Provost. This summer he was inaugurated as President of Fuller. His other books include Holy Worldliness, and most recently, Distorted Truth.
The ACSD '93 National Conference Host Committee

ACSD Regional Directors
The Regional Directors met for lunch at the June '93 National Conference. Those present were (left to right): Randy Bowyer-Southeast, Ken Hadley-North Central, Phil McIntire-Central, Dave Harden-Northeast, Brent Baker-Mountain.
ACSD New Professionals’ Retreat • June 4-6, 1993

Flying Together—Flying Further

Miriam Sailer

Twenty-three participants and seven staff members joined together for a weekend of instruction, discussion and interaction, small groups, worship fun and building relationships at the first ACSD New Professionals’ Retreat which was held on June 4-6, 1993, just prior to the ACSD National Conference on Houghton College, Houghton NY. “Flying Together—Flying Further” was the theme of the retreat. The theme is taken from the idea that as Canada goose fly in a “V” formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if the bird flew alone. The format of the retreat, which was built around sharing together, discussion, reflection and interaction, carried out this theme.

Three main topic areas provided the framework for the discussion and interaction: Task Effectiveness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, and Personal Effectiveness. Russ Rogers provided the initial thoughts on topics from each area. This was followed by response from a panel of “seasoned professionals”: Janet Bates, Jerry Davis, Deb Lacey, Barry Loy, and Miriam Sailer. Discussion and interaction from the entire group ensued. Participants were also assigned to small groups according to their areas of work in student affairs. These groups, led by the experienced professionals, were designed to discuss how the content related specifically to each person.

Some comments from the participants may give a flavor of the experience of the retreat:

“...the opportunity to gain the insights of each other’s experiences and to learn new concepts and strategies from experienced professionals...the chance to share the pains and joys of each other’s struggles and be enriched by our sharing...the reinforcement of our need to sit silently at the feet of the Lord and listen for His voice as part of our process of pursuing our relationship with Him...the opportunity to bond with others who share a love for the Lord and who are called to serve college students.”

“One of the best parts of the weekend’s activities was the small groups which provided for us the avenue to ‘chew on’ the many difficult (perhaps a better word is wondrous) concepts that were presented to us...they provided an opportunity to discuss things with like-minded people.”

“We were a safe group together...the willingness to share from personal experience...the time to be together to think about ‘stuff’, to talk about ‘stuff’ without feeling like I was competing...the lack of status seeking was incredible. I don’t remember having felt as ‘safe’ with a group of people.”

“Will there ever be a not-so-new-professionals’ retreat?”

Lessons From The Geese

1. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird following. Flying in a ‘V’ formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if the bird flew alone.

LESSON: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they’re going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

2. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed where we want to go and will be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to others.

3. When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into formation and another goose flies at the point.

LESSON: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing the leadership. With people, as with geese, we are interdependent on each other.

4. The geese in formation honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

LESSON: We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging.

5. When a goose gets sick or wounded or is shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it is able to fly again or dies. Then they launch out on their own with another formation, or they catch up with the flock.

LESSON: If we have as much sense as a goose, we too will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong. From Milton Olsen, a naturalist, as told by Angeles Arien
Koinonia

c/o Jim Krall
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Koinonia is the official publication of ACSD (Association of Christians in Student Development). The purpose of the publication is to provide interchange, discussion, and communication among Christian professionals in the field of Student Development. It is published three times per year, in early fall, winter, and spring. Both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts and letters may be submitted to the editor for possible publication.

The Koinonia is mailed to all members of the Association. Annual ACSD membership dues are $25.00 per year. Information on membership may be obtained by contacting Jack Braun, ACSD Membership Chairperson, Tabor College, 400 South Jefferson, Hillsboro, KS 67063, telephone (316) 947-3121, ext. 259. Address changes may also be sent to the Membership Chairperson.

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