



THE VALUE OF LONGEVITY IN COLLEGE MINISTRY

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I am fortunate to receive and enjoy seeing email and paper newsletters from lots of different college ministers. Today, one was particularly enjoyable. I will not identify specifically the person or campus but will quote some parts of it.

The College Minister shared that they were taking a group to Beach Reach in Panama City for Spring Break and wrote the following:

"We petitioned the _____ University student cabinet for special allocation of additional funds for Beach Reach.....With a short presentation, we were unanimously granted \$2500!! This is monumental!

I wish I could send a message back to me 5 years ago to tell me about this when I stood before this same governing body and heard they would not grant my request for (the name of their ministry) to be recognized as a club (they did a year later). Then again when our first year of requesting a budget they gave us \$250. This year's budgeted money allocation is \$1500, just to give some perspective. This victory falls into the immeasurably more category. Our public university gave us \$2500 to help us fund our mission trip!! Praise God!!"

There is a key phrase there to pick up on and learn from.....did you see it....."5 years ago". In addition to God's work on this campus, they are experiencing the benefit of this College Minister planting their life on this campus for a number of years. Apart from a special movement of God, I believe there is nothing that benefits a college ministry any more than a long term investment by the College Minister.

Through the years I have enjoyed quoting my friend, Johnny Pons, who said he was "going to Penn State to die there". I don't know that Johnny will stay there till his death, but he communicated and meant it that he was going there not till the going got tough or till a better job offer came along. He was going there to be there!

Tim Casteel, the Cru Director at the University of Arkansas, has recently written about "The Alexander Syndrome: Why 60 is the New 30" by Doug Paul Casteel (@timcasteel) tweeted this, "Big idea=you need to be 50+ to lead movements that change the world. And 50-70 are most productive years."

Being in that age category obviously makes me smile. But, I have long believed in two things. Lots of people get out of college ministry because of age just about the time they know enough and have developed enough to do it right and really well.

Second, I believe that being on one campus for many years pays dividends. As the newsletter shared 5 years ago, this College Minister is beginning to reap the investment of five years. Why? The longer we are there, the more we understand our campus. The longer we are there, the more they learn to trust us. The longer



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we are there, the more our faith and maturity have developed. The longer we are there, we have been able to build one year on top of another year.

My personal experience in forty one years on two campuses (9 on one and 32 on another), that some of the best and most productive years were the latter ones.

Keep on. Don't quit. Don't assume you are too old. Some people are too old at twenty five. Others are just right at sixty! It may take several years in one place for them to see you really mean it. The doors may begin to open then.

Sixty is the new thirty!