



REASONS COLLEGE MINISTRIES OFTEN DON'T COOPERATE

Arliss Dickerson

Leadership Development Consultant, Collegiate Ministry, Lifeway Christian Resources

Through the years in different experiences I have been surprised at many college ministries (campus and church based) that do not cooperate with other college ministries. A question I have often gotten when leading a training seminar for church lay people is, "Why are college ministries not more cooperative with each other?".

Eight Common Reasons for Some College Ministries NOT Being Cooperative

- 1. Different Theology** - Obviously, all ministries and churches do not share identical theology. Some feel that if they cooperate with another ministry in any way, they are indicating approval of the other ministry's theology.
- 2. Disagreement Over Methodology** - This is similar to the first in that some ministries feel that others are improper or even unethical in their methods. Therefore, they feel to cooperate would be to indicate approval or agreement with their methods.
- 3. Totally Self-Focused** - I have learned that some ministries genuinely wish all ministries well. But, they are going to do whatever they feel is the most effective thing for their ministry, regardless of the effect on others. This is seen sometimes in churches that do not cooperate with their own denomination's campus based ministry.
- 4. Numbers Pressure** - Some College Ministers feel such a pressure (either from supervisors or self imposed) to produce numbers. They fear that their students will see what is happening elsewhere and choose to go there instead.
- 5. Tunnel Vision** - This is best illustrated by a story I heard recently of a church who began reaching members of the football team. The church College Minister went to the athletics ministry person on that campus who served as Chaplain of the football team. They said, "How can we cooperate?". The athletics chaplain said they did not wish to cooperate with that church because they wanted all the athletes to attend one particular church...the one he attended.



6. Desire to Reach More - Some believe that if ministries cooperate it will simply lead to all those cooperating working with and sharing the same students and that more students will be reached if everyone just does their own thing.

7. Just Crazy Busy - College Ministers are sometimes so crazy busy that it just is another thing that takes time or meetings. So, in order to simplify their life, they just do not do anything with anybody else.

8. Limited Finances - Often college ministries (both church and campus) operate with very limited budgets. Sometimes cooperative endeavors involve some activity with a budget involved and everyone is expected to contribute. They just feel they cannot afford to do anything that does not specifically benefit their ministry.

I am a strong believer in the benefit of different ministries being unique and I do not advocate the idea of let's just all join together and be one ministry. But, I do believe there are places and times we should cooperate for the benefit of God's Kingdom as a whole and for the witness to the campus as a whole. For example, many ministries join together for Easter or Easter Week events. In many places the different college ministry leaders meet together on a regular basis for sharing, prayer, and exchange of information beneficial to all. We must always be attempting to do what is best for God's kingdom...not just what is best for our own ministry.

"Teacher, said John, we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us. Do not stop him, Jesus said, No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us." Mark 9:38-40 (NIV)

FIXING A BROKEN COLLEGE MINISTRY is an Amazon book aimed at helping ministries go to the next level. It is available in print or eBook format.