

By The Multiplication Committee of the
Baptist Collegiate Network

THE CAMPUS ACROSS THE STREET



*Encouraging the Local Church
to Engage the Nearby Campus*



@ 2024, Baptist Collegiate Network

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The ESV text may not be quoted in any publication made available to the public by a Creative Commons license. The ESV may not be translated in whole or in part into any other language.

THE CAMPUS ACROSS THE STREET



Contents

Introduction	4
CHAPTER ONE: GO TO THEM	13
CHAPTER TWO: GO TOGETHER	29
CHAPTER THREE: GO IN PRAYER	44
CHAPTER FOUR: GO WITH LOVE	59
CHAPTER FIVE: GO AND CONNECT	72
CHAPTER SIX: GO AND SHARE	87
CHAPTER SEVEN: GO AND PROCLAIM	101
Acknowledgements	114

Introduction

“So, I hear you are the guy to talk to about getting some college students into my church,” an older African American pastor greets me with his hand outstretched. “I’m Reverend Williams, and my church could really use some help in that department.”

I grasp his hand firmly, “I’m not sure if that is the best way to describe what I do. But it is a decent place to start. When was the last time you were on a college campus?”

Before he could answer, our conversation is interrupted when another pastor comments, “I don’t know how you do it. I could never spend so much time working on a *liberal* campus. That’s just not for me.” The liberal part is stated with emphasis.

I nod and smile. I hope the conversation changes. It sometimes bothers me when folks preemptively label a campus. It usually means that they haven’t spent much time with the students who go there or the people who work there. Being present on a college campus, I have become aware that a college is so much more than just one thing.

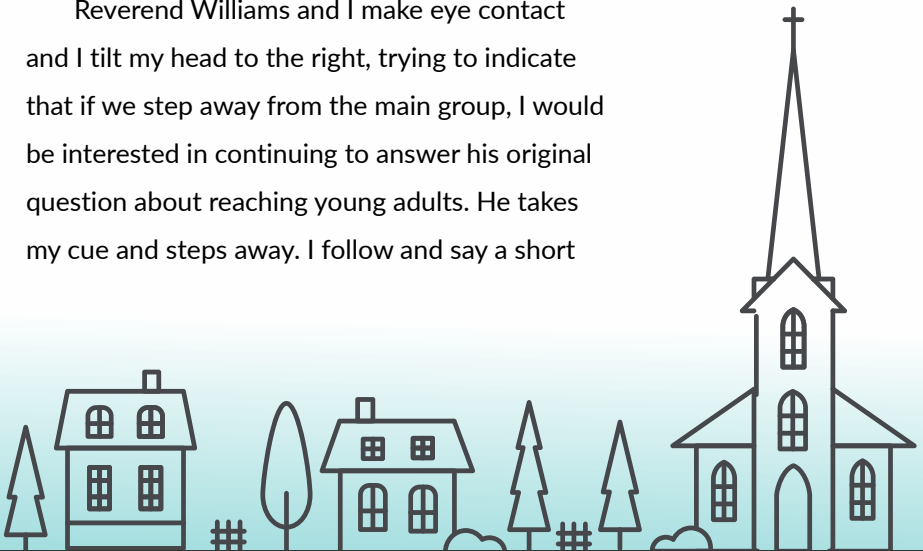


One word will never summarize even the smallest of schools. From international students to commuters, from freshmen to faculty, from athletes to administration, all of them are different, and the vast majority of them need Jesus. I work with the expectation that the non-Christian world will differ significantly from those of us who follow Jesus. I want to encourage this pastor not to write the campus off but to label it as a mission field in his backyard.

How we think about a mission field will greatly affect our ability to engage that mission field effectively with the gospel. We have learned this about international missions and compassion ministries. If we see who we are trying to reach in disparaging stereotypes our willingness to present the gospel to them will be diminished and our presentation of the gospel will be tainted. This is also true of sharing the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection with college students, faculty, staff, and administration.

That is the quiet conversation that takes place in my head, but out loud I say, "It really is a special calling from God to be a missionary to the campus." The conversation with our small circle of pastors soon changes and moves away from colleges and campus ministry.

Reverend Williams and I make eye contact and I tilt my head to the right, trying to indicate that if we step away from the main group, I would be interested in continuing to answer his original question about reaching young adults. He takes my cue and steps away. I follow and say a short



prayer hoping this one conversation proves to be the reason why I came. I consider attending these local pastors' prayer meetings a success when I can have one significant discussion with one new pastor. This could be that conversation.

I take a sip of my sweet tea as Reverend Williams answers my original question, "Honestly, I've never spent much time on a campus. Not since my daughter graduated from Cheney."

"Well, that might be some of the problem. It is hard to reach a place where you are not present. And it is hard to reach a group of people you don't know." I intentionally say with a smile on my face and a light chuckle in my voice. It is always challenging for me to suggest to a pastor they might be doing something wrong. I quickly follow up with, "But we can easily change that. Would you be free sometime next week to meet for coffee at the café across from campus? You can tell me more about your church, and we can spend time thinking about how your church can engage the students on campus."

"I'm not a big fan of storebought coffee. It is always too fancy for me and too expensive." He replies, "Would it be better for us to just meet at the church office? I have coffee there. It will be quieter, and I can show you around the facilities. You can see what Terrace Hill Community Church has to offer students when they come."

"I know what you mean. I never spent money to buy coffee at a shop until I started working with students. Now, try not to take this the wrong way, but I've probably been in a church like yours much more recently



than you have been on a campus like Oak College,” is my measured response. “Thank you so much for the invitation, and I will take you up on it someday soon. But I really want you to see the campus. Can we meet there first? Plus, the coffee will be my treat.”

He accepts my invitation, “Okay, I get that. Let me talk to my wife, who is the *de facto* church secretary and my administrative assistant, to find a good time to meet. We are not a big production at Terrace. It is mainly just her and I. What times would work for you?”

“During a normal day, I can make just about any time work. I can easily shuffle some weekly meetings with students around to be available whenever you are available. Meeting with pastors is a high enough priority that I will adjust to your schedule,” I say, stressing the importance of meeting with him.

Now that the room is mostly full, one of the other pastors in the room starts to gather our attention as we transition into a time of prayer for our community. I always make it a point to add Oak College to the prayer requests. I’m not sure the campus would be remembered as part of the community otherwise.



Over the next several chapters we will go on an imaginary journey with different individuals from Terrace Hill Community Church as they start to intentionally reach Oak College. This journey is imagined but along the way, you will hear other stories from real-life churches that are actively engaging campuses and students. You will be introduced to real ideas, information, and resources that are being successfully used at colleges and universities throughout the country. There will be tangible activities for you and your church to do to help you connect with the young adults in the nearby campus community. At the end of each chapter, there will be a quick summary of the main ideas, a resource list, the suggested activities, and discussion questions.

The goal of this book is not only to **ENCOURAGE** local churches to **ENGAGE** the nearby campuses with the gospel of Jesus Christ for the sake of the Kingdom of God but also to **EQUIP** and **EMPOWER** the local churches to succeed. Comparatively speaking, writing a book that motivates churches to reach young adults would be an easy task. We are trying to be a little more ambitious. We want to create an experience that will guide a congregation through the process. We do not want to just identify the needs but also provide the tools to address them.

This book will highlight seven mindset shifts that the normal church will need to make to reach the ordinary campus across the street. When we tell stories about real-life churches, we will be featuring stories about small to medium-sized congregations. We will also use examples of churches reaching small to medium-sized campuses. Often multiple church-based, para-church, and denominational ministries are dedicated to reaching our large state schools. Many times, the smaller private schools and community colleges get overlooked. Yet most of the time there are ordinary congregations in the same neighborhood as these smaller campuses. This book hopes to encourage, equip, and empower the local congregation to engage the campus across the street.

Matthew 9:35–38, where Jesus is discussing the need for laborers in the harvest, will be our foundational text. It is also our imaginary campus minister’s favorite scripture.

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest

is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (ESV).

We believe there are seven mindset shifts that will help accomplish this task. Each chapter will concentrate on one of these shifts as illustrated by Matthew 9. The seven mindset shifts are:

GO TO THEM – Chapter One

We need to shift from concentrating on getting students to attend events within the church to encouraging the members of the church to be present in the lives of students. This principle is demonstrated by Jesus going *throughout all the cities and villages*. We need to shift from attraction to mission.

GO TOGETHER – Chapter Two

We need to shift from designing student ministry to be the responsibility of an individual minister or ministry, to incorporating the task of reaching the next generation into the mission and vision of the entire congregation. Jesus includes and involves his disciples in the ministry by encouraging them to *pray to the Lord of the harvest*. We need to shift from an individual to a congregational approach.

GO WITH PRAYER – Chapter Three

We need to shift from seeing students as a means of meeting the needs of the congregation. Often churches want students to provide volunteers for other ministries, or to ensure the legacy of the congregation, or to bolster the pride of the church leaders. But we need to see the students and create a ministry that serves them at their specific points of need. Unlike Jesus we are able to *heal every disease and every affliction*, we should see the actual needs of those around us. We need to shift from using to seeing.

GO WITH LOVE – Chapter Four

We need to shift from condemning everything that we think is wrong with campus culture. We need to expect that lost people will act differently than Jesus and God’s Kingdom. On the other hand, we need to communicate our love for university students, faculty,

and administration by serving them in tangible ways that meet their needs. We should have the *same compassion for them* as Jesus shows in Matthew 9. We need to shift from condemning to loving.

GO AND CONNECT – Chapter Five

We need to shift from measuring success by the number of students who attend a particular service or event to measuring success by how many laborers we have sent out and how much of the campus they have engaged. Jesus asked his followers *to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest*. We need to shift from attending to sending.

GO AND SHARE – Chapter Six

We need to shift from focusing on all the reasons we can imagine for why students are not interested, why universities are not welcoming, and the resources we may lack. We need to concentrate on who God has empowered us to be as individuals and as a congregation and how we are perfectly designed to reach students in our own special way with our personal stories. Jesus had his followers pray for the very common everyday idea of *laborers for the harvest*. We need to shift from concentrating on who we aren't to leveraging who we are in Christ. We need to shift from scarcity to authenticity.

GO AND PROCLAIM – Chapter Seven

We need to shift from being shocked at how lost and broken this generation of students is to identifying the many ways in which they are uniquely open to the life-changing good news of the gospel. Jesus saw the crowds around him as harassed and helpless, *like sheep without a shepherd*. We need to shift from bemoaning their lostness to celebrating their openness. We need to shift from pessimism to opportunity.

I am excited that you have decided to come on this journey with us through these seven mindset shifts.

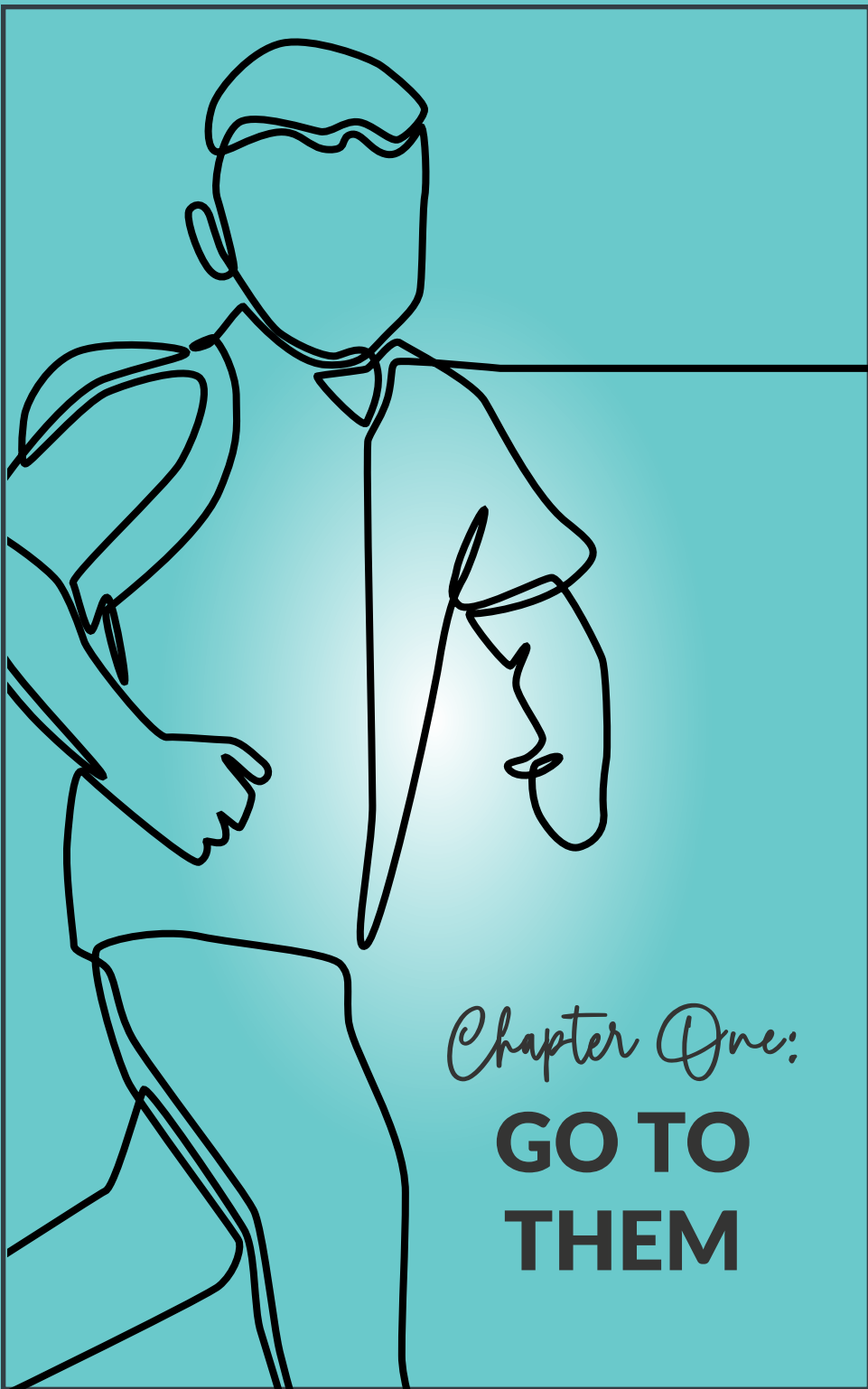
This resource can be used in at least three different ways. It can be read by an individual as a book from cover to cover straight through. It can be used by a small group. At the end of each chapter will be discussion

questions that are designed to promote group discussion. Finally, each chapter can be taken as a stand-alone resource when only one of the mindset shifts is of interest to the individual or group.

This book makes some assumptions. It assumes that you are reading it because you and your church understand that it is important to reach the lost. It also assumes that your church's perspective of reaching the lost includes reaching the lost in the next generation whether that is children, youth, or young adults. We figure that if you and your church have not come to these conclusions then you are probably not going to start reading this book. With that in mind, this book deals with **how** to engage young adults on a campus more than **why**. However, the reasons why we need to engage young adults on campuses with the gospel is not totally ignored.

This book also assumes that an exact guide about how to reach any and every campus is impossible to write. Every campus context is different. Every campus is different, and each campus has a vast array of diversity within it. The only thing that is as diverse as our campuses is the church. Every church context is different. Every church is different, and each church has a significant amount of diversity within it as well. We firmly believe that the only thing diverse enough to impact the diversity on our campuses is the church. Based on that assumption, this is written as a story illustrating principles. While every illustration will not apply to your campus or church context, it is our prayer that these principles will be transferable to a variety of contexts. Hopefully, the narrative in this book will not be read as how you *should* do it but to inspire you and your church to imagine how you *could* do it.

The final assumption is that there is huge untapped potential within the local church to missionally engage the nearby campuses. EveryCampus has compiled a list of 4,188 campuses in the United States. Approximately 1,747 of those campuses do not have a known on-campus gospel presence. But of these campuses with no known gospel presence most will have a local church nearby. This book intends to encourage, empower, and equip the church that desires to go and connect with young adults and navigate how to engage students on a nearby campus. The challenge is big, but our God is bigger.



Chapter One:

**GO TO
THEM**

Chapter One: Go to Them

I walk into the coffee shop across the street from campus. The student, John, working at the register knows my order. John is new. He started working here at the beginning of the semester, but my regular black coffee is unusual enough to stick out. Over the last couple of weeks, I've been getting to know him through our short but frequent interactions. He is an engineering major. I don't remember what type. He is part of the club volleyball team. He knows I am a chaplain on campus and doesn't seem interested in having a spiritual conversation, yet.

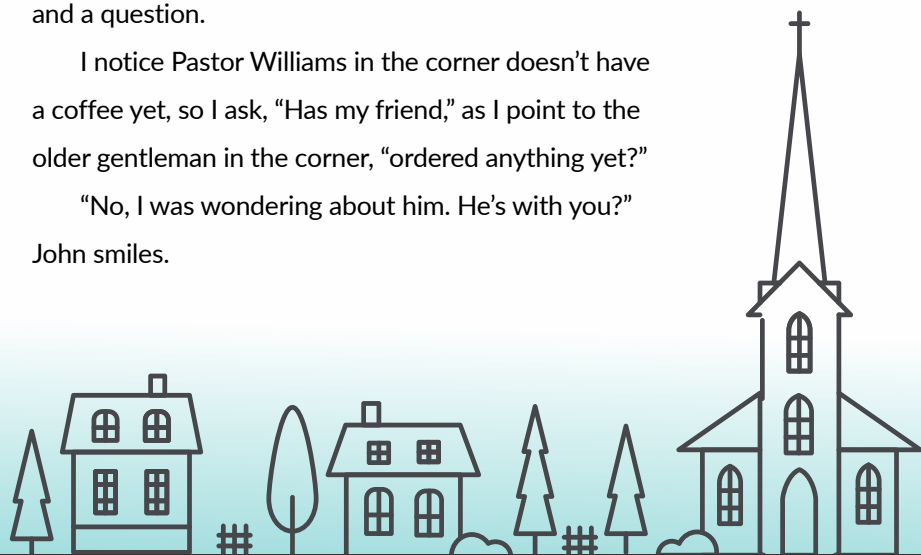
"Hey, John," I nod toward him.

"A large black," he responds as both a statement and a question.

I notice Pastor Williams in the corner doesn't have a coffee yet, so I ask, "Has my friend," as I point to the older gentleman in the corner, "ordered anything yet?"

"No, I was wondering about him. He's with you?"

John smiles.



“Yeah,” I walk over to Pastor Williams’ table. “How do you like your coffee?”

“Just regular black,” He returns.

“Cream or sugar,” I query.

He shakes his head, no.

I reengage John at the counter, “Two large black coffees,” I request as I tap my debit card on the machine at the counter.

John chuckles, “He is with you. We just started a fresh pot, so I’ll bring them over to you when they’re ready.”

I nod as I turn to join Pastor Williams at his table. This is one of the places I like to hold meetings. It keeps me out of my office. Being seen in and around campus is an important piece of being considered part of the campus. Although, it is awesome to have an office nearby, I must remember not to hide in it. Being seen is part of being present. I strategically chose this place to meet Pastor Williams. I not only want to be seen, but I also want the pastor to see the students. I want to *help the pastor* see the students. Also, I want the students to see the pastor with me.

I am five minutes late intentionally. I wanted to see what Pastor Williams would do. How would he act in a coffee shop surrounded by students? What would he see? Would he learn anything about the young adults around him? Would he be looking for ways to engage or would he be concentrating on his phone? We are getting toward the end of the semester, so the place is more crowded but also quieter than usual. Most of the students are here to have an easy source of caffeine to incorporate into



their studying. Socializing and conversations are limited. If we talk quietly, we should be undisturbed.

After the introductory pleasantries and my apologies for being late, I ask, "Have you ever been here before?"

The pastor shakes his head no.

"The coffee shop is pretty close to your home and church. Any particular reason you haven't had a chance to come by?" I ask leading the conversation.

"Yes, but I typically drink my coffee at home. It's cheaper that way," he responds.

"Do you think anybody from your church comes here often?"

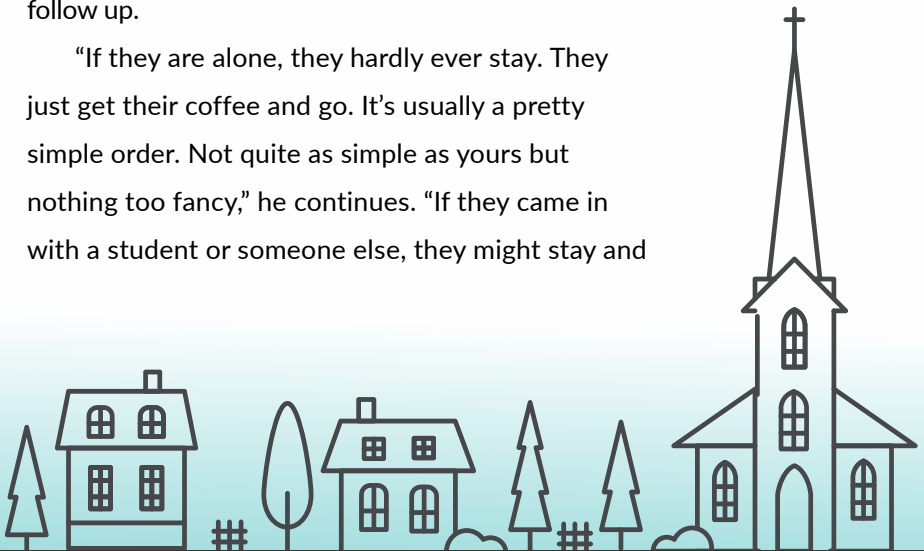
"Probably not."

John interrupts us with our coffees. As we thank him, I stop him with a question, "Hey John, how often do folks our age come in here?"

"Besides you?" he asks, looking at me. I nod. "When I work, we get one or two each shift. They are usually a parent with a student or a faculty member," he replies.

"And what do they do when they are in here?" I follow up.

"If they are alone, they hardly ever stay. They just get their coffee and go. It's usually a pretty simple order. Not quite as simple as yours but nothing too fancy," he continues. "If they came in with a student or someone else, they might stay and



talk with that person.”

“Thanks,” I acknowledged John’s contribution as I turn back to Pastor Williams and John goes back to the counter.

I guide the conversation with another question. “How did it feel hanging out here before I arrived?”

“It was weird. I definitely do not fit in. I think everyone in the entire coffee shop noticed me. It was like they were wondering why I was here.” He shrugs.

“I think it felt weird because people from your age group and congregation don’t usually come here. So students tend to notice when there’s someone new. It’s not uncommon for me to sit here all day without seeing anyone my age or older walk in.” I continued, “This really isn’t about a coffee shop. I was asking those questions to highlight the fact that your congregation is in a separate world from the campus even though they are right next to each other.”

“That’s exactly what I want to talk to you about,” Pastor Williams states. “How do we close that gap? How do we let students know that our church is just a few blocks away? Can you help me get more students to attend Terrace Hill?”

“Before I answer that, can you tell me a little bit more about your church?” I ask.

“As you probably know, we are a predominantly African American church with about 120 attendees on a Sunday morning but with over 400 members on our roll. I’m working hard to get our attendance and our roll



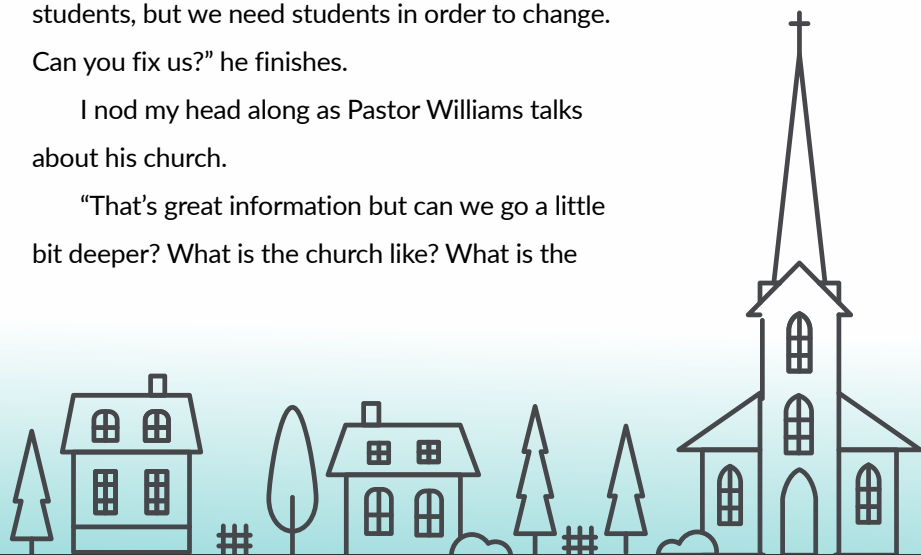
to match up, one way or the other. Our congregation is mostly middle class but with some that would be on government assistance. Quite a few of our folks are retired and on social security. Unlike many of my colleagues, the congregation gives enough that I don't have to be bi-vocational.

"The church is 135 years old. I've been the pastor for about seven years but the pastor before me was at the church for 36 years. I'm reminded of his shadow often. Most of our congregation is older than I am. Many of them have been at the church almost as long as he was. Our congregation is definitely on the older side when it comes to age. With our congregation being older many of our ministries to help in the community are having trouble finding willing volunteers. But we do what we can to help out in the neighborhood. It would be really great if we could get some younger folks to help out with them. I keep hearing about this generation caring more than previous ones.

"Now, we are trying to be more contemporary in our worship. The key word there is trying. I don't know if we have to change our worship to bring in younger adults or if we have to bring in younger adults to change our worship. It seems that we need to change to reach students, but we need students in order to change. Can you fix us?" he finishes.

I nod my head along as Pastor Williams talks about his church.

"That's great information but can we go a little bit deeper? What is the church like? What is the



community like? Do they care about each other? What is your church passionate about? Is there something you all do well together? If you had to name one thing your church does better than most other churches, what would that one thing be? If you were going to brag about your church, what would you say?"

I enjoy these conversation pauses because they make me feel like I'm asking the right questions that challenge people to think more deeply about topics they wouldn't typically consider.

"I know I'm supposed to say something about our fellowship, or our worship, or the preaching and teaching, or our community ministries. I think those are all good things about the church. We do those things well, but maybe not better than everybody else. We are a good church but there are a lot of good churches out there."

He concludes, "But if I had to say one thing about our church that is different from the others, it would be that we are survivors. As an African American church, we survived 135 years in this community. That was not easy. The world was different when this church got started and there have been a lot of changes along the way. Not only the church as a whole, but there are also a bunch of our members who have survived things of their own. We've been through some things, and we are still here!"

"That was not the answer I was expecting but that's awesome," I respond excitedly. "Here's something to think about. Youth and young adult mental health is so much an issue at the moment that the Surgeon General of the United States has included it among his top priorities. I know



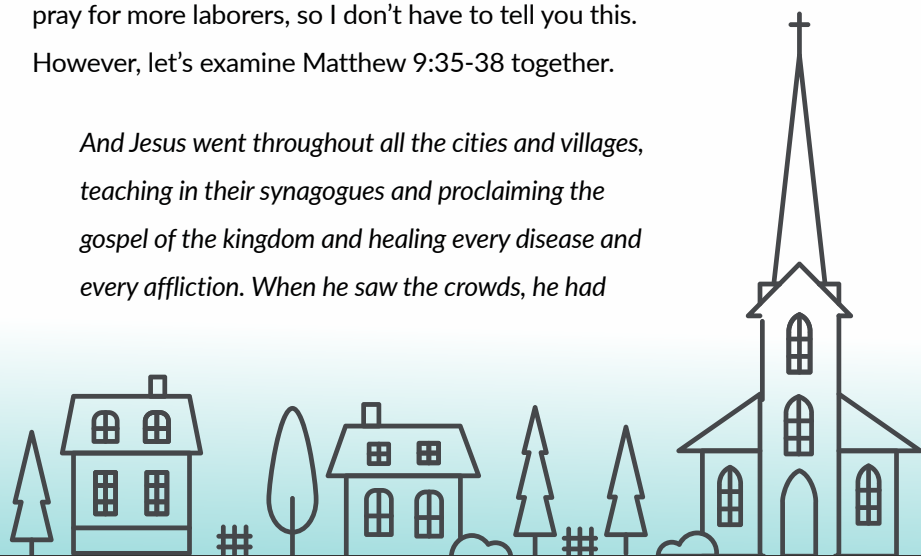
a whole bunch of students here at Oak College that are going through stuff wondering if they are going to make it through. Hearing stories from folks who have made it through might be just what they need. I really believe that your church, just as it is, could reach college students simply through your older members forming gospel-centered relationships with them. But how do we facilitate those connections?"

"It's not always about cool programming. Programs are a tool that help us connect with each other. It is about individual Christians connecting with lost folk on a personal level and sharing the saving grace available through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection," I announce a little too emphatically, drawing looks from the students trying to study around me.

"And that's my question," asks the pastor. "How do we make connections with the students here when there aren't any coming to our church? How do we get them to show up so that we can connect with them?"

"Perhaps some of the issues you are experiencing are related to the questions you are asking," I answer. "As a pastor, you're familiar with the passage in which Jesus encouraged His disciples to pray for more laborers, so I don't have to tell you this. However, let's examine Matthew 9:35-38 together.

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had



compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (ESV).

"There is a lot to unpack here. This is one of my favorite passages and I keep coming back to it when trying to answer this question. But I want to highlight one idea from this text. *Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages*, and then the disciples are told to pray for God to *send out laborers into his harvest*. There are moments in Jesus' ministry when people come to him, Nicodemus and the Rich Young Ruler are two that immediately come to mind, but besides that, Jesus is always going to others. This is what the incarnation is, God coming to humanity. Even the prayer request in this passage is not for a better harvest. It is not even for more laborers, but for more laborers to be sent into the harvest.

"The first step in connecting your church to college students is about getting your church folk to be present in the lives of the students. We need to figure out how to go to them, to be where they are. It is not the model Jesus sets before us to wait for them to come to us."

Pastor Williams is nodding eagerly. It seems a light bulb might be going off in his mind. I continue, "Let me draw an illustration that might help. Imagine a new apartment complex is being built in your neighborhood. This apartment complex is just out of sight from your church. The apartment complex is huge. It will add 10% to your neighborhood's population. And it is just about to open. People are already planning on moving in. What

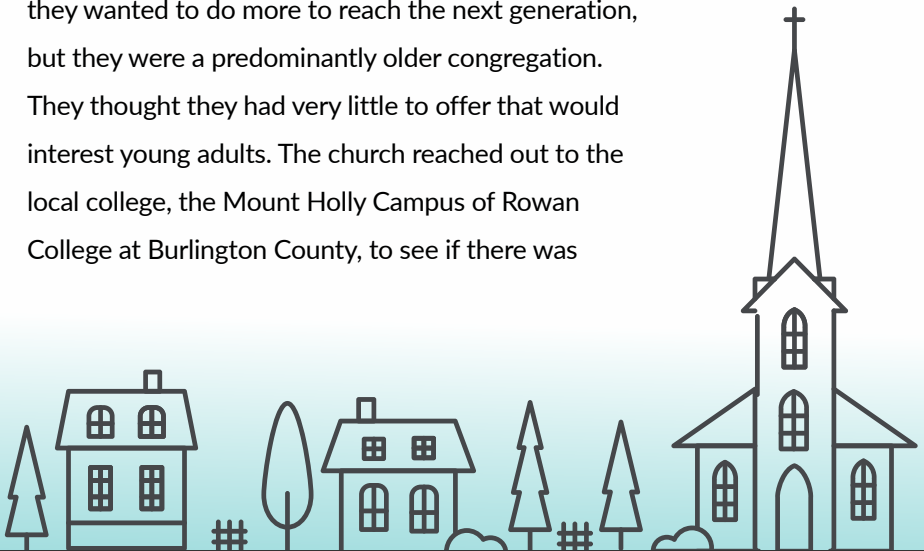


would you encourage your church to do? How would you go about reaching this new place?"

Pastor Williams immediately starts brainstorming. His answers vary, from connecting with leasing office administrators, to leaving brochures in the office, to going door to door when the complex opens up, to hosting children's programming in the public spaces. I'm not concerned about the details; it is the fact that every single idea is always about their church being present and known within the context of the apartment complex. The first question is never about getting those residents into the church. The first question is always about how to get the church present and known where the people are.

I pause for a second, hoping the imaginary scenario does the work for me. Almost immediately the pastor fills the silence with the right question. "How do I go about getting my church to be present on campus and in the lives of the students here?"

I smile, "There are so many options. Let me tell you a story. There's a small church in Lumberton, New Jersey called Southside Baptist Church. In many ways, it is very similar to yours. As a church, they wanted to do more to reach the next generation, but they were a predominantly older congregation. They thought they had very little to offer that would interest young adults. The church reached out to the local college, the Mount Holly Campus of Rowan College at Burlington County, to see if there was



anything they could do. This is a smaller branch campus that is overlooked by many ministries.

“The congregation had several retired secondary school teachers. This prompted them to think about not only the students at the college but also the faculty. The church got permission to start providing donuts in the teacher’s lounge. The donuts led to conversations with the faculty members. Those conversations led them to realize there was a need that the church could meet. Many students at the college could use the basic tutoring that retired high school teachers were perfectly equipped to provide. Working with the college, the church provided volunteers to initiate a mentoring program for students to receive academic tutoring.

“Specific students at the college in need of help, were partnered with the retired teachers from the church. These mentor relationships continued for as long as the students attended the college. Some even continued when the students moved on to another institution. The church as a whole would host celebrations for the students as they met their goals, especially during graduations or as students transferred to larger institutions. All the students involved heard the gospel both in conversation with their mentor and at the church celebrations.”

Pastor Williams interrupts me, saying, “We could do that. Maybe not that idea exactly, but we could do something similar. That seems simple.”

“It brought people who know the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ into relational contact with people who need to hear that gospel by meeting a real need,” I summarize.

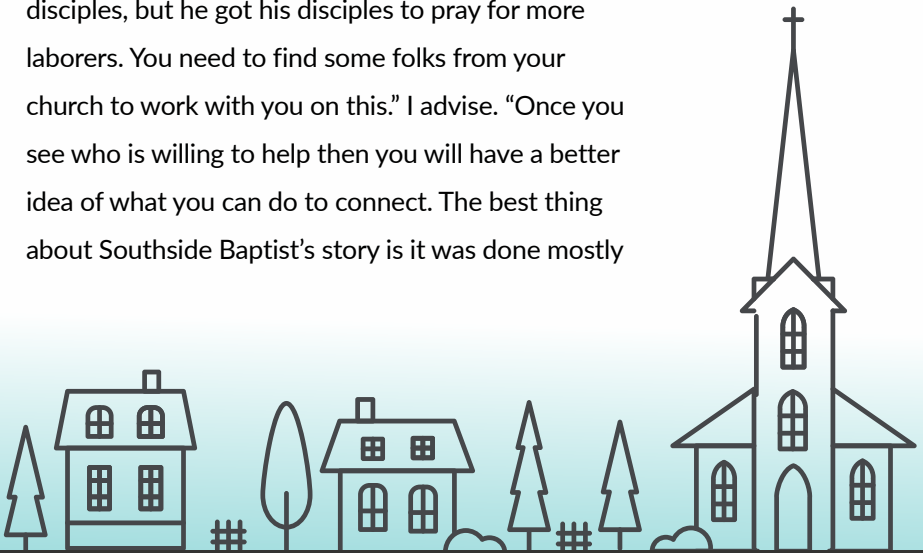


“It definitely didn’t look like a typical college ministry. Many of the relationships between the students and their mentors continued long after college. Several of them are still connected with the church.”

“So how do we do something like that?” Pastor Williams asks. “Oak College wouldn’t allow us to do something like that.”

“I don’t know. Have you ever thought about reaching out to them and asking that exact question? I believe we miss a lot of opportunities to connect with students and colleges because we just assume that they are not interested. We interpret the fact that they are not involved in our programs and services in our world to mean they wouldn’t be interested in being involved in something that is available to them in their world.” I challenge, “Maybe it is as simple as changing the question. Maybe students would be interested in something that meets them where they are. Maybe Oak College would let us help them meet a need if we asked them in the right way.”

“But I’m getting ahead of myself. The first thing we need to do is get some help. You don’t want to do this alone. You can’t do this alone. Even Jesus got his disciples to help him. And not only his disciples, but he got his disciples to pray for more laborers. You need to find some folks from your church to work with you on this.” I advise. “Once you see who is willing to help then you will have a better idea of what you can do to connect. The best thing about Southside Baptist’s story is it was done mostly



with ordinary church members. The pastor supported it, but it was the work of the members. I'm assuming as a pastor you are already too busy. So, if this is going to happen you will need to find some folks from your church to do it."

"I already have a few people in mind who might be interested." He affirms.

"That's great. I would love to meet anyone that would be interested." I quietly celebrate.

"Give me a week or two to ask them and see which ones are interested. When we can pull everybody together would you be available to talk with us?"

"I can do that. Can I suggest some things to read that might help?"

"Sure."

"First, I suggest reading **The 10 Commandments of College Ministry** by Arliss Dickerson. This is a short book and an easy read. You might be able to read the whole thing in under an hour. Arliss has decades of experience in college ministry both campus-based and church-based. There is no one better at communicating the basics of college ministry. I recommend having anybody who is going to work with you on this ministry read this as well. It will be a great place to begin creating a vision of what college ministry should be.

"The second book might be more for you than others. **Generation Z Unfiltered: Facing the Nine Hidden Challenges of the Most Anxious Population** by Tim Elmore is a good book to start to understand the



students you will meet at Oak College. There are several good books describing Gen Z. I'm not sure which one is the best. But this one is a great place to start. I can be overzealous with recommending books, so I'll stop with those two. I look forward to hearing what you think about them."

We thank each other for the time and schedule a follow-up conversation for two weeks from now at the church. I hope he is able to bring a couple of other people to that meeting. Afterwards, Pastor Williams and I say our goodbyes.



Go To Them – Chapter One

ENCOURAGE

Mindset Shift:

We need to shift from concentrating on getting students to attend events within the church to encouraging the members of the church to be present in the lives of students. This principle is demonstrated by Jesus *going throughout all the cities and villages*. We need to shift from attraction to mission.

Key Passage: Matthew 9:35–38

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (ESV).

Jesus’ Example:

Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages. Jesus also asked his disciples to ask God to send our laborers into the harvest.

Real Life Church Example:

Retired school teachers from Southside Baptist Church in Lumberton, N.J., establishing a mentorship program with Rowan College at Burlington County to build meaningful gospel-centered relationships with the students.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

- Arliss Dickerson’s **The 10 Commandments of College Ministry** - Find more from Arliss at <https://collegeministrythoughts.blogspot.com>.
- Tim Elmore’s **Generation Z Unfiltered: Facing the Nine Hidden Challenges of the Most Anxious Population** - Find more from Tim Elmore at <https://growingleaders.com>.

ENGAGE

1. What does your church do well? Is there any way this can be used to connect with students? Don't be afraid to be creative.
2. Who do you know that is connected to a campus? Which campus? (possible connections are students, faculty, alumni, parents, grandparents, employees, administration, support staff, works nearby, works alongside of student interns or recent graduates, etc.)
 - a. Do you have more connections to campuses than you thought?
 - b. Is there a campus or part of campus you are most connected to?
3. Is there a way you could change your routine to spend more time on or near a campus?

Next Chapter: Go Together – In preparation for the next chapter, think about who from your church could join you as you try to reach college students. Create a list of several names and invite them to read this book together with you.

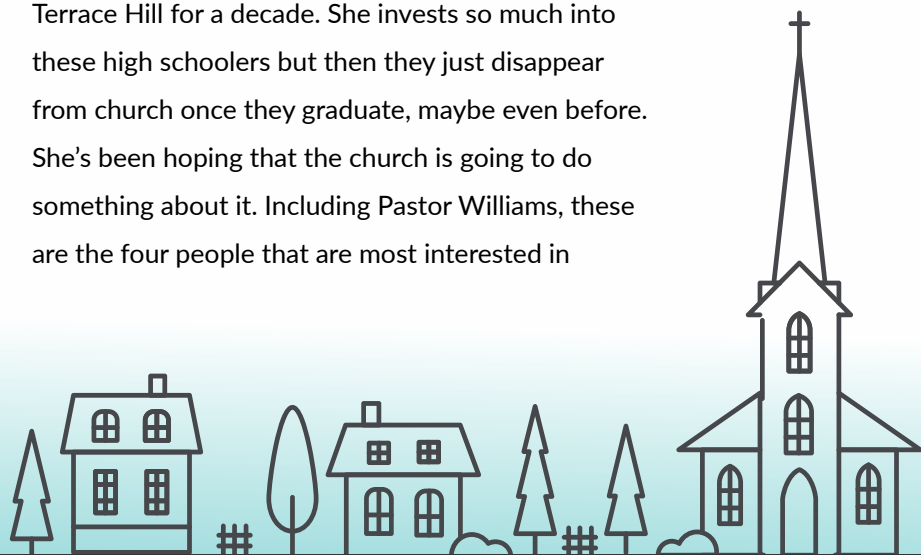


Chapter Two:

GO TOGETHER

Chapter Two: Go Together

As I walk into Pastor Williams' office at Terrace Hill Community Church, he introduces me to the three people already there. First is Bernard Johnson. He is the worship leader and is here to coordinate the details of the special college service they will be having next week. Second is Miss Bea. I'm not sure what her whole name is. She is only ever addressed as Miss Bea. She is in her seventies. She and her husband used to own a diner nearby. She sold it when he passed away but wasn't completely ready for retirement yet, so she works part-time in the cafeteria at Oak College. The third is Mrs. Lydia Russell. She has been the faithful high school age Sunday school teacher at Terrace Hill for a decade. She invests so much into these high schoolers but then they just disappear from church once they graduate, maybe even before. She's been hoping that the church is going to do something about it. Including Pastor Williams, these are the four people that are most interested in



reaching out to the college students. It is a good start.

After a word of prayer, the pastor passionately dives right in. “Let me tell you what we’ve done so far. First, and I’m almost embarrassed to admit this, but we’ve added Oak College to all our prayer lists. I can’t believe it wasn’t there. We should have been praying for it all along. In each of our last two Wednesday night prayer meetings, we’ve taken some dedicated time to pray for the college. It was hard at the beginning. Some of our initial prayers weren’t very loving. Mrs. Russell scolded us on that. She made sure we understood the love that Jesus has for these college kids is the same love He has for everybody else, no more, no less. They are just normal people whom God wants to redeem. It changed some of our perspective to intentionally look at the school through the eyes of Jesus.”

I make direct eye contact with Mrs. Russell. You can see that she is passionate about the next generation. Her years of working with high schoolers have developed a sense of empathy for them. There is a fierceness in her eyes. She will stand up and speak out for them. She loves her church, and she wants her church to grow. But she is here to advocate on behalf of the young adults. Terrace Hill Community Church needs someone like her. I am glad she is here.

Changing topics slightly, the pastor continues, “Your suggestion really helped us. We spent a little bit of time brainstorming all the different types of individuals associated with the College: undergraduate, master’s, and Ph.D. students, internationals, and ESL students, first-generation,



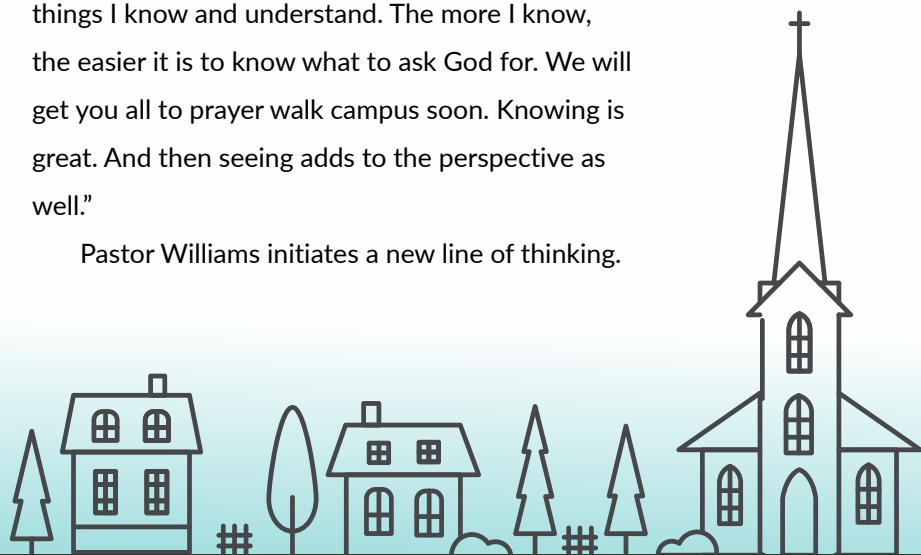
students from different ethnic backgrounds, athletes, fraternities, and sororities, commuters, adult students, different types of majors, scholarship, and financial aid recipients, part-time, and students working their way through college, faculty, staff, administration, and other supporting employees. It was a whole lot easier to specifically pray for the needs of international students or graduate students or faculty than to pray for the whole generic campus in a non-descript way. Specifics about Oak College have given power to our prayer.”

He lets out a sigh of relieved relief, “The second week was better. I spent time doing some internet searches. I was prepared with information on Oak College that helped direct our prayers. Did you know that Oak College has one of our state’s best culinary arts programs?” I nod in response. “We prayed for the cooking students. We prayed that through their education God could use them to provide good food to people.”

Miss Bea interrupts the pastor at this point, “We have some cooks in our church,” clearly including herself in that reference. “This was a prayer request we understood and could put some enthusiasm behind.”

I agree, “I always find it easier to pray about things I know and understand. The more I know, the easier it is to know what to ask God for. We will get you all to prayer walk campus soon. Knowing is great. And then seeing adds to the perspective as well.”

Pastor Williams initiates a new line of thinking.



“Now on Sunday we are going to do something fun. This is a stretch for us. We are encouraging everybody to wear something from a college or university that they are connected to. It can be where they went to school, or their kids, or their grandkids. It could be a school near where they grew up. If they were a part of the military, we encouraged them to wear something from the academy that represents their branch. It can even just be their favorite college football team.”

“Not surprisingly, we got some pushback on this.” He leans forward and centers his eyes on me. He wants me to understand how significant this is for his congregation. Bernard, the worship leader, shifts his weight in the chair, “A lot of our older members think it is important to dress up in their finest for Sunday service. I agree with them. We should put on our best for God. But then that idea turned around in my mind. If how we dress is important to God, if God pays attention to what we wear on a Sunday, then this Sunday God is going to see all these college names on our clothes. Our wearing their names and logos can even become something like a prayer to God.”

“Now Miss Bea had a different objection, one that I felt was a little bit more important.” The Pastor nods at Miss Bea inviting her to speak out.

“Well, not everyone is going to be connected to a college,” she states. “Some of us older folk never went to school. College just wasn’t a thing back in the day. Others went to a year or two and dropped out. Some of them have debt without a degree. Their experience might not be something they want to relive. Then there are others in our church who



might see college as something they could never go to. I'm thinking about some of our young single moms who are just concentrating on surviving."

The pastor interjects, "Now that's a *real* problem," emphasizing real. "We don't want to exclude any of our current people as we are trying to reach out to the students." Excitedly he encourages Miss Bea to continue her thoughts, "So tell them what we've decided to do to solve the problem."

"So, for anyone who doesn't have a connection with a particular school, doesn't want to be connected to a school from their past, or just can't afford college swag," she continues, "we've encouraged them to adopt Oak College as their school. And we've bought them all a nice t-shirt to wear on Sunday."

Pastor Williams can't contain himself again, "That way nobody is left out, and we will have a lot of people wearing Oak College. If God pays attention to what we wear, He's going to get an eyeful of Oak College. Back in the day, I remember when we had loaner jackets and skirts for people who came to church 'underdressed.' We even have a church member who works at the campus bookstore. They were able to get us a discount."

"That's great. I love your enthusiasm! It will be fun to be at church with you all on Sunday and see everybody wearing something representing a school." I respond encouragingly. "It will be great to see the entire church support reaching students. Luke



Anderson from Stonebrook Community Church in Ames, Iowa, says it this way,

‘To reach the campus, it can’t be one person’s passion or two people’s passion. It has to be a major conviction of the majority of the church. If people are not welcoming and excited about college students visiting the church, then it won’t work. There needs to be a unity, passion, and excitement from the church for reaching students.’

“Now Stonebrook Community Church is a lot different than Terrace Hill. Iowa is a lot different than here. The church is bigger than Terrace Hill, with about 400 attending on a Sunday, and it has 60 students connected to the church. But the idea holds true. There will need to be a person, or a couple of people, from the church coordinating the ministry. Eventually, you will want to have students heavily involved in leading the ministry. But none of this will ever reach its full potential unless the congregation, the body of Christ, sees reaching students as one of the church’s priorities. The entire church may not be directly involved but the entire church needs to see and support the vision of impacting Oak College.”

“Stonebrook’s story is interesting because they are a church that intentionally starts other churches. They will send members out to start churches in other towns. Since the 1970’s Stonebrook has started dozens of other churches. To start a church, they would send a trained pastoral leader or leaders to the new location and several others to be part of the congregation. Often the pastoral leader they send has been the college



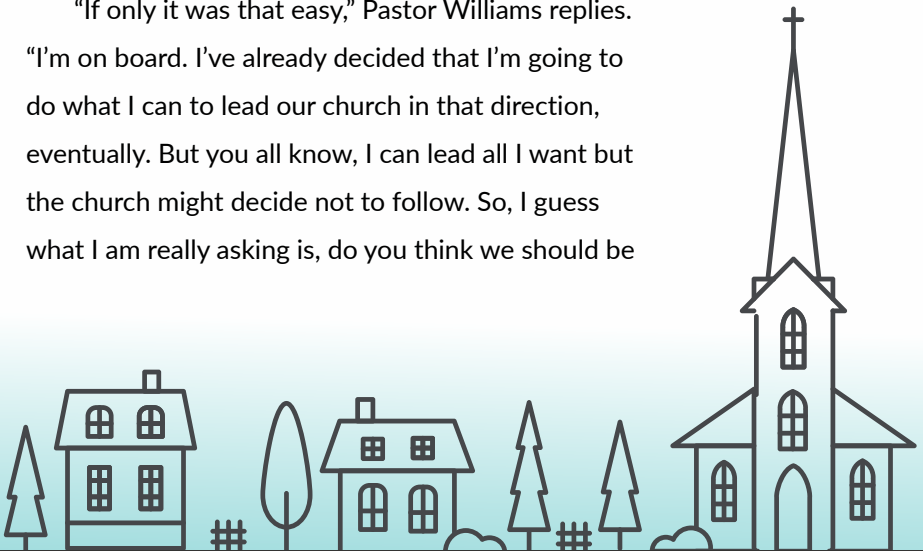
minister who has been training to be a pastor through doing the college ministry. And often the other members they send are recent college graduates. They will encourage those graduates to search for jobs in the area where the church will be starting.

“Every once in a while, sending the college minister and so many college graduates to go start a church somewhere else had the unintended consequence of needing to restart the college ministry at Stonebrook. But since the whole church supported the idea of reaching students, since reaching out to students was a part of the identity of the entire church, they would always restart the college ministry. Technically, Stonebrook isn’t a church that has started a campus ministry, but they are a church that has started their campus ministry several times.”

The four members of Terrace Hill Community Church around the room look at each other, “So do we want to be a church that has college ministry as a part of who we are?” the pastor asks. “First, do we want to? Second, is it possible? Third, what would it take to make that happen?”

Bernard says, “Well, aren’t you the pastor? Aren’t you supposed to make those decisions for us?”

“If only it was that easy,” Pastor Williams replies. “I’m on board. I’ve already decided that I’m going to do what I can to lead our church in that direction, eventually. But you all know, I can lead all I want but the church might decide not to follow. So, I guess what I am really asking is, do you think we should be



a church that college ministry is a part of who we are and are you willing to work with me to lead the church in that direction?" He then proceeds to look at each of them one at a time.

Mrs. Russell meets his look firmly, "I was on board even before you asked."

Next, he turns to Miss Bea. "I don't see why not."

Finally, he looks at Bernard. "I'm just the worship guy, I'll do what I'm told."

I can see a slight concern in Pastor Williams' eyes because of that last answer. He then turns to me and asks, "Can you share with us a little bit about what you are going to preach on, especially the part about the Great Commandment? Your sermon notes on that really helped solidify my commitment to reaching the next generation."

Pastor Williams and I have had a couple of email exchanges since our meeting at the coffee shop. The others haven't had those conversations. This is a new commitment for them. I take a moment to collect my thoughts, "We are all familiar with the Greatest Commandment. In the Old Testament, it is part of the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, '*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*' This is the central text of the Old Testament law. This is the verse Jesus cites when he is asked what is the greatest commandment. Jesus says that the entire Old Testament can be summarized with this verse and Leviticus 19:18, '*Love your neighbor as yourself.*' These two verses combined are a great start to

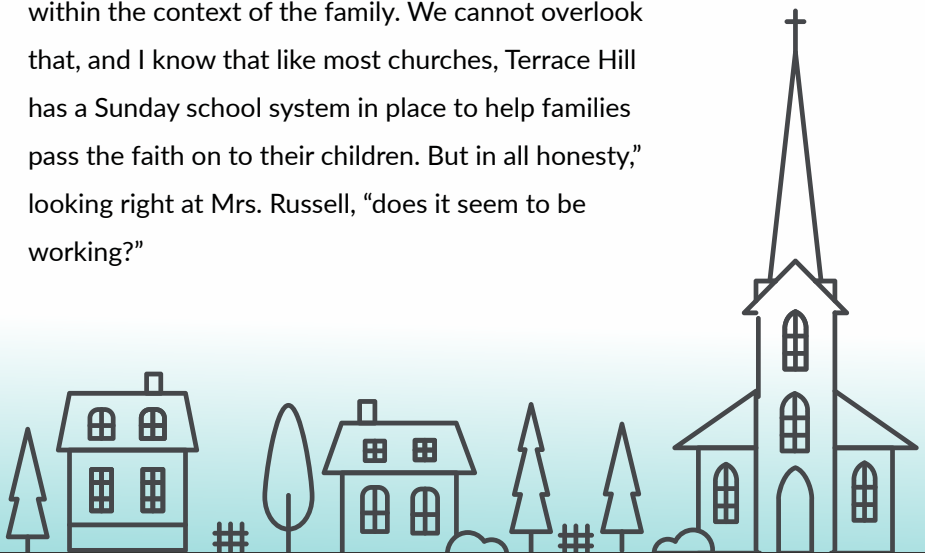


what it means to be faithful to God.”

I look around the room to confirm everybody is following me and then continue, “But if you look closely at the context of this passage in Deuteronomy you see phrases like in verse 2, *‘that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son’s son,’* and in verse 7, *‘You shall teach them diligently to your children,’* and again in verse 20, *‘When your son asks you in time to come,’* and finally in verse 21, *‘then you shall say to your son.’* The central concept of what faithfulness to God looks like in the Old Testament is embedded in a passage that is primarily about passing that faith on to the next generation. A significant portion of what it means to faithfully love God in the Old Testament revolves around diligently communicating that faith to the next generation. In light of Deuteronomy chapter 6, it would be hard to claim to be faithful without intentionally trying to pass that faith on to the younger generation.”

Mrs. Russell interjects, “But all those verses are in the context of a family. They talk about fathers passing the faith onto their sons.”

I nod my head in agreement, “The Shema assumes the faith is most naturally passed from one generation to the next within the context of the family. We cannot overlook that, and I know that like most churches, Terrace Hill has a Sunday school system in place to help families pass the faith on to their children. But in all honesty,” looking right at Mrs. Russell, “does it seem to be working?”



She shakes her head and issues an emphatic, “No.”

“Sharing our faith with the next generation is a multifaceted process. It includes ministering within our own families to our sons and daughters. It can include ministries specifically designed to connect with children and teenagers. But it also includes ministering to college students and young adults. Charles Malik says this:

“All the preaching in the world, and all the care of even the best parents between whom there are no problems whatever, will amount to little, if not to nothing, so long as what the children are exposed to day in and day out for 15 to 20 years in the school and university virtually cancels out, morally and spiritually, what they hear and see and learn at home and in the church. Therefore, the problem of the school and university is the most critical problem afflicting Western civilization.¹

“He highlights that if we are going to pass our faith on to the next generation, we cannot stop the discipleship process when a child grows into a young adult and goes off to college. We must engage individuals with the gospel of Jesus Christ as they are children, teenagers, young adults, and adults. We must disciple followers of Jesus as they are children, teenagers, young adults, and adults. It is foolish and self-defeating of us to end our engagement with someone right as they head off to college. Being a faithful follower of Jesus involves passing our faith on to the next generation and passing our faith onto the next generation in this current culture requires

¹ Malik, Charles Habib, *The Two Tasks*, 1980, p. 32.

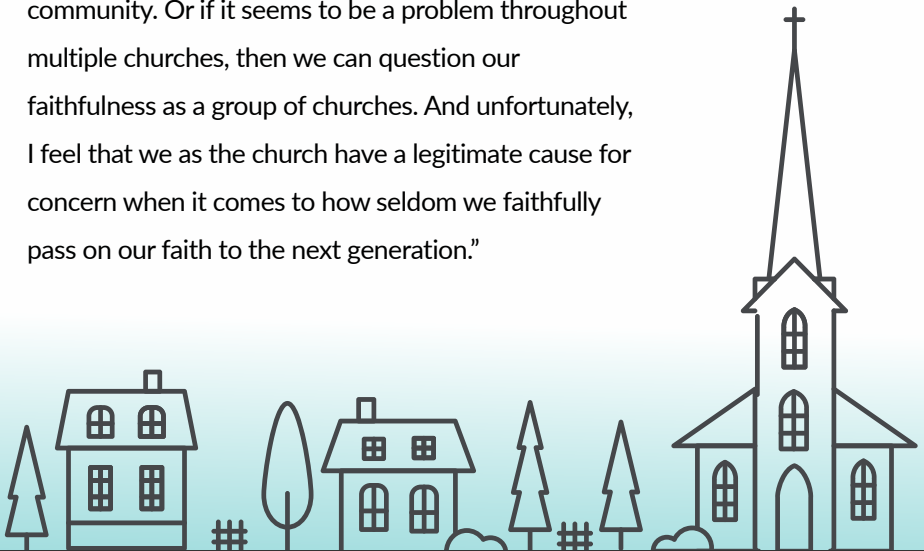


us to minister to them as they are young adults on our college campuses through evangelism and discipleship.”

Bernard is visibly upset, “But what about those of us who tried everything we could to get our kids to follow Jesus but failed? Are you saying it is because we were unfaithful?”

Trying to muster as much compassion in my voice as possible, “I’m glad you brought that up. I want to be sensitive here, and I try to make this clear when I talk to the church as a whole. On an individual level, we are working with young adults who are free to make their own choices of whether to follow Jesus faithfully or not. We cannot always control what our children do. But we have to try our best to encourage them to follow Christ. So, if we are talking about one parent and one child, I believe you can be completely faithful in following Christ and do your due diligence to pass the faith on to the next generation and still have your child decide not to follow Jesus. That is possible.”

“But as a community and a culture, it is a different story. If we find that the children raised in our churches consistently decide to walk away from the faith, we may need to evaluate our faithfulness as a community. Or if it seems to be a problem throughout multiple churches, then we can question our faithfulness as a group of churches. And unfortunately, I feel that we as the church have a legitimate cause for concern when it comes to how seldom we faithfully pass on our faith to the next generation.”



Mrs. Russell adds desperately, “So many of our kids seem to walk away, so many. I’m trying but we just can’t keep them. What can we do? Is this going to work?”

I nod my head in understanding. “This is a step in the right direction. The five of us in this room can be the beginning of the change. But you all cannot do it alone. I believe the church as a whole needs to come to the conclusion that as a church part of what you all need to be about is faithfully passing the faith onto the next generation through reaching college students and young adults.”

“To add a different perspective to this conversation, Jesus is our example. When we think about Jesus’ ministry on earth, He spent most of his time leading a group of his twelve closest followers, which to the best of our estimations were between the ages of 16 and 30 years old. In our foundational passage Matthew 9:35-38, when Jesus asks his disciples to pray for more laborers. Those disciples were probably all young adults. Jesus’ ministry model focused on young adults.”

Pastor Williams even looks surprised by this idea. “So how do we get the whole church to own this task?”

“I think the first step is you all in this room. The service we are planning is a good second step. Then for a third step, I would love it if Sunday motivated a group of your congregation to come and prayer walk Oak College’s campus. We need to see it.” I finish as we transition our conversation into the particulars of planning the Sunday service. Terrace Hill Community Church is moving in the right direction.



Go Together – Chapter Two

ENCOURAGE

Mindset Shift:

We need to shift from designing student ministry to be the responsibility of an individual minister or ministry to incorporating the task of reaching the next generation into the mission and vision of the entire congregation. Jesus includes and involves his disciples in the ministry by encouraging them to *pray to the Lord of the harvest*. We need to shift from an individual to a congregational approach.

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might (ESV).

Jesus' Example:

Much of Jesus' ministry on earth focused on the 12 apostles who we would see as young adults today.

Real Life Church Example:

Stonebrook Community Church in Ames, Iowa, has created a church identity that includes reaching college campuses and young adults as a vital part of how the church defines itself.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

- **The Fuel & the Flame: Ignite Your Life & Your Campus** for *Jesus Christ* by Steve Shadrach and Paul Worcester –Find more from Paul Worcester at <https://campusministry.org> and <https://www.challengecsuc.com/resources/college-ministry-resources>
- Charles Malik (who is quoted in this chapter) was a Lebanese Orthodox Christian, president of the American University in Beirut, and Lebanon's first ambassador to the United Nations (UN). He worked on the *UN's Declaration of Human Rights*. He was

a committed Christian scholar. His works, **A Christian Critique of the University** and **The Two Tasks** add a perspective on the necessity of campus ministry seldom voiced. The book, ***The Two Tasks of the Christian Scholar: Redeeming the Soul Redeeming the Mind***, edited by William Lane Craig and Paul M. Gould involves current scholars reflecting on Malik's influence in their lives.

ENGAGE

Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. Do you believe that passing the faith on to the next generation is an absolute part of being a faithful follower of Jesus? Why or why not?
2. What do you think is the biggest obstacle to passing our faith on to the next generation? Do you have any creative ideas about how to overcome this obstacle?
3. If you are spending more time on campus because of the previous lesson, is there someone you can invite to join you? A young adult? A fellow church member?

Next Chapter: Go With Prayer – In preparation for the next chapter, make a list of what young adults need relationally, professionally, emotionally, spiritually, physically, etc. Are there resources within your church congregation that could help meet these needs?

Chapter Three:
GO IN PRAYER



Chapter Three: Go in Prayer

“I’m glad it’s sunny, even if it is a little bit cold,” I comment to Pastor Williams and the others from his church. There are eight of us. Miss Bea and Mrs. Russell are with us. In addition, there are four new folks from Terrace Hill Community Church that caught the vision from the special Sunday service two weeks ago. “We will be able to spend most of today outside.”

“So, are we just doing a campus tour?” Jonathan, a middle-aged man, asked. He and his wife Rachel have a daughter who just started as a freshman at Howard University in D.C. After the service, they approached me about churches and ministries around Howard. I was able to get them in touch with some friends of mine near that campus. They decided to become part of what Terrace is doing to connect with Oak College to help them understand the world their daughter is now a part of and because they hope someone is taking the time to connect with her.

“It will be like that but a little bit different.” I answer. “We will be touring the campus, and I will be giving you some specific information



about each place we visit. But then at each location, I'm going to ask for a volunteer to pray over some of the details we discussed about that particular place. In some ways, it is easier to demonstrate than to explain."

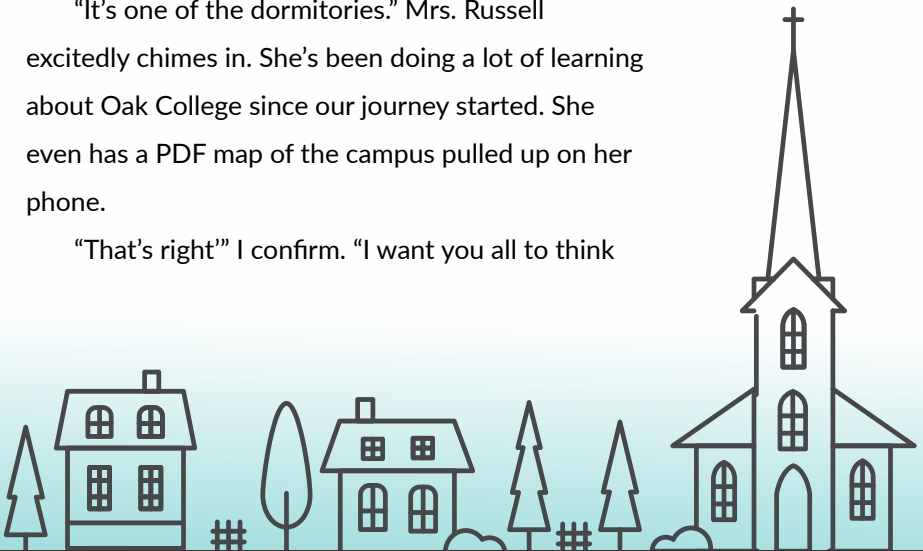
"In our passage from Matthew 9:

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:35-38 ESV).

"Jesus goes about to the different villages, sees their needs, and specifically asks His disciples to pray for more laborers to reach these places. Similarly, we see the Apostle Paul learn about Athens before he speaks at the Areopagus in Acts 17:16-34. That is what we will be doing today. Does anyone know what Cresmont Hall is?" I ask as I point to the name of the building we are standing beside.

"It's one of the dormitories." Mrs. Russell excitedly chimes in. She's been doing a lot of learning about Oak College since our journey started. She even has a PDF map of the campus pulled up on her phone.

"That's right" I confirm. "I want you all to think



about what it might be like to live in this dorm. This is mostly a dorm for freshmen so, these students are typically 18-year-olds living away from home for the first time in their lives. I usually spend time here praying about the students getting along with their roommates, finding good healthy friendships, taking care of, and looking out for each other, and resolving conflicts. Also, I spend time praying for the resident assistants and the resident directors, the people in charge of these dorms. I ask God to give them wisdom, compassion, and perseverance as they support the students living here. Unfortunately, one of the things I always pray about is student safety. I do not want any student in this dorm to die whether that is by accident, illness, anger, or suicide. And finally, I pray that the gospel can be present in the dorms, through Christian students informally being quality witnesses for Jesus in their everyday lives and through organized Bible Studies and the other types of Christian programming that are possible. Can I get a volunteer to voice a prayer for us to God about these particular concerns? Don't be shy. I have it arranged that everyone will get a chance to pray at some point during this walk."

After some silence, Shelby a teacher at the local high school started praying. When she finishes, I start leading our group to the next location which is only a short walk away. "This is what is called fraternity row. Many of the fraternities and sororities connected with Oak College have their houses on this block. On most Friday nights this part of the campus is crowded and lively. This is a social hub of the campus. When you think about fraternity and sorority life what comes to mind?" I ask the group.

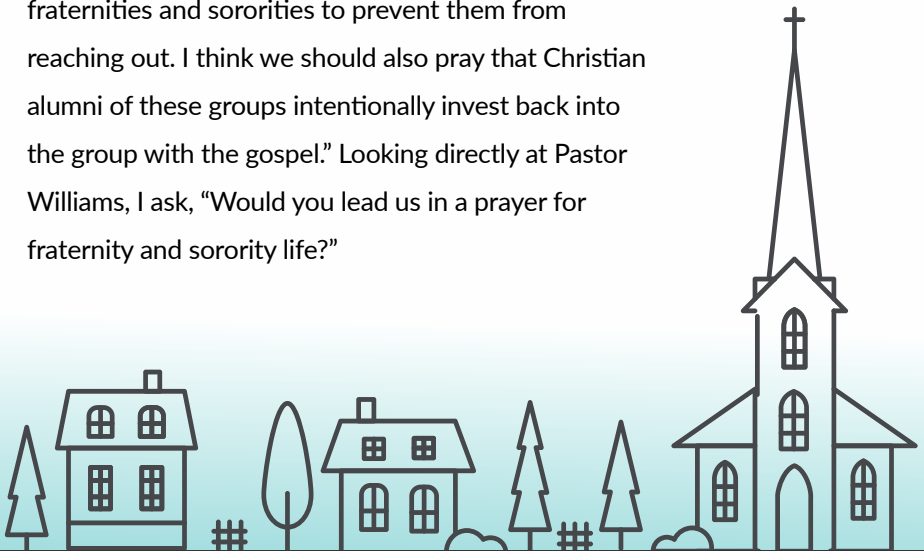


Rachel responds with trepidation, “Drinking and parties.”

I nod my head yes. “But were any of you part of a Greek organization in college?” Pastor Williams meets my eyes and nods yes. “Are there potentially good things about Greek life on a campus?”

“They are a great place to make lifelong friendships and most fraternities, at least where I went to school, are required to do a substantial amount of community service,” Pastor Williams contributes in defense of fraternities and sororities.

“So, as we pray for this part of the college, please pray that God limits the amount of sinfulness and damage that can be a part of fraternity and sorority life. But also pray that God blesses the good things that are part of it. Most importantly pray that the gospel can connect with the students who are so invested in Greek life. Many of these students’ entire lives revolve around their fraternity, and they don’t participate in many other aspects of campus. Therefore, if churches and individual Christians do not intentionally reach out to the Greek organizations, they may never hear about Jesus the entire time they are here at Oak College. Unfortunately, most Christians allow the negative stereotypes about fraternities and sororities to prevent them from reaching out. I think we should also pray that Christian alumni of these groups intentionally invest back into the group with the gospel.” Looking directly at Pastor Williams, I ask, “Would you lead us in a prayer for fraternity and sorority life?”



Then the group turns around and walks across what is known on campus as the quad. I gather our attention again, “This is Oak’s cafeteria. I want to use this location to talk about a couple of things. First, one of Oak’s most prominent degree programs is its culinary arts and hospitality department. Students come from all over the country and even the world to study in this one part of the school. And with Miss Bea being part of the cafeteria staff, this is one place on campus that Terrace Hill already has a connection. We should pray to God that this connection can be used for the sake of the gospel. Second, the cafeteria is a social hub of the college. It is a great place to meet and get to know students. Please pray that this space can be used creatively to engage students. But finally, I don’t want us to forget about the students who are struggling. I don’t know what the statistics are like on Oak College, but national research has demonstrated that about 30% of college students experience some level of food insecurity. Can we pray for those students who don’t have access to food, the right kind of food, or enough food? I think a couple of you should pray. Maybe one should pray for how Terrace Hill can best connect with the culinary arts department and students in the cafeteria and then another should pray about the students who are in need.”

Miss Bea immediately says, “I’ll pray about the students who aren’t getting enough food.”

John follows with, “And I’ll pray for you, Miss Bea, and how we can help you reach out to your part of the campus with the gospel.”

After John’s prayer, Miss Bea walks over to him and Rachel and gives



them both a hug. As we are walking to our next location, while I am next to Pastor Williams, I ask him, “I noticed Bernard hasn’t been around or in the email discussion much recently. Is everything alright?”

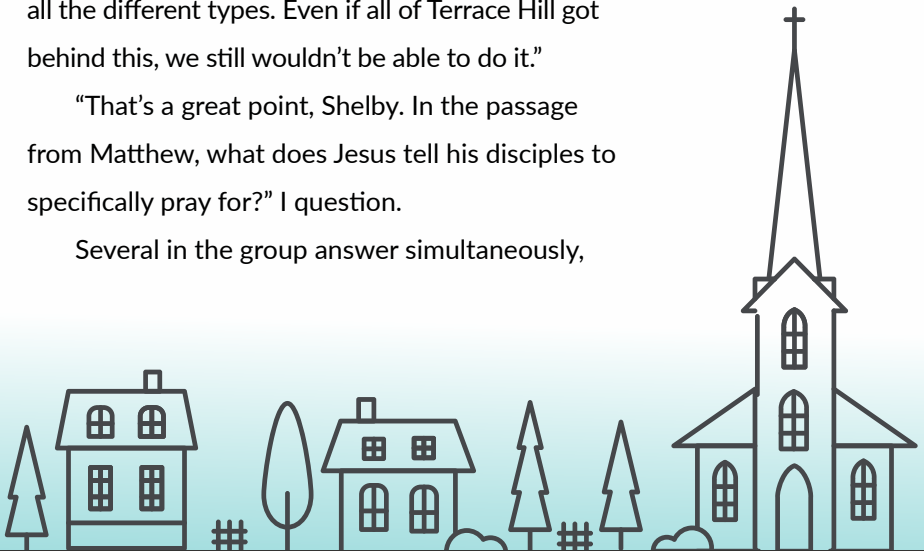
Pastor Williams responds, “Sure, he just realized he was overcommitted and needed to step back from these activities. In all honesty, I just think he was relieved that we weren’t talking about making him play a different style of music. When he learned that we were not going to focus on changing the church service to be more hip, he relaxed. Of course, that also means he didn’t see this as high of a priority anymore.”

I nod, “That’s understandable.” I change subjects and go back to my outside voice addressing the whole group, “On the other side of the cafeteria is the gym. This is where the athletes hang out. The athletes are a lot like the Greeks. They are so engaged in their specific part of the campus that you won’t reach them unless you intentionally design specific ministries for them,” I share.

Shelby, the schoolteacher, raises her hand. “This is all a little overwhelming. We can’t reach all these students and all the different types. Even if all of Terrace Hill got behind this, we still wouldn’t be able to do it.”

“That’s a great point, Shelby. In the passage from Matthew, what does Jesus tell his disciples to specifically pray for?” I question.

Several in the group answer simultaneously,



“More laborers.”

“That’s right, more laborers,” I agree. “Terrace Hill has a part to play in taking the gospel to the next generation. And I believe Terrace Hill has a big part to play in bringing the gospel to some of the students at Oak College. But the only thing big enough and diverse enough to reach this whole campus is many of the churches in our community working together. Our prayers today for the gospel to impact athletes, fraternity and sorority life, and all the other parts of the campus might be answered by God through other churches. If the goal is to reach college students with the gospel for the sake of the Kingdom of God, we have to celebrate when God chooses to answer our prayers through a different congregation.”

“I have a friend, Kelton Hinton, in Raleigh, N.C. He has been successfully working on a strategy like this with Johnston Community College. The community college has a truck driver training school, so they asked a church to bring food and train students to lead a Bible study right before the night classes. They have another church with several Christian nurses, some of them are retired, actively investing in the nursing students through small groups.

“They even have some Christians from a third church who are retired law enforcement, leading a ministry specifically designed to reach that part of the school. In total, he coordinates 8 different churches reaching different parts of the campus. None of these churches could reach the whole campus but together they are making a substantial impact for the

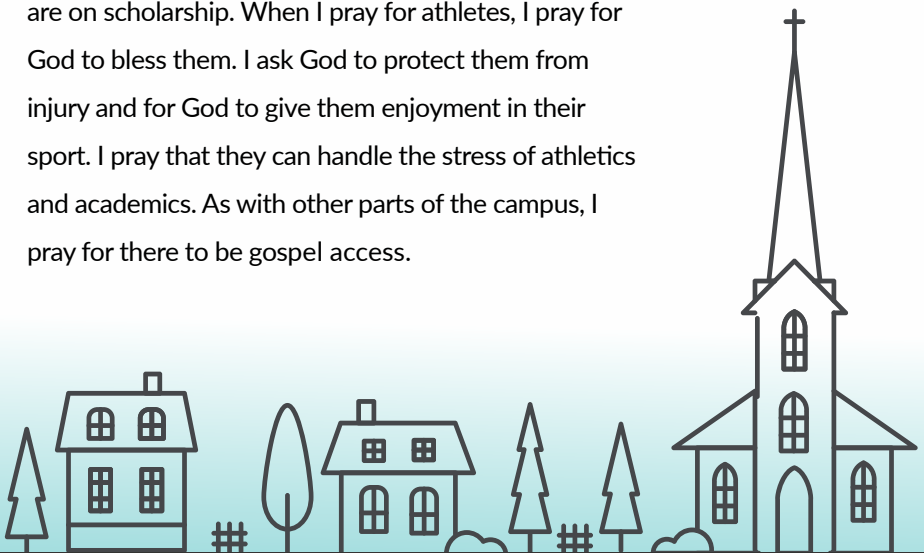


Kingdom. Those 8 churches over the course of the week connect with about 480 different individuals on that campus.”

“Kelton says that when he would ask a church to reach the community college, they would say no because it was too big of a challenge. But when he would ask a church to minister to 20 truck driver trainees or something like that, the church almost always says yes.” I summarize, “This feels like too much because it is too much. But you don’t have to do it all. And you don’t have to do it alone. Pray to the Lord of the harvest for more laborers.”

Pastor Williams interjects, “Getting churches to work together has always been a passion of mine. It is part of the vision we have for Terrace Hill and the community. It would be amazing if reaching out to students is how we help fulfill that part of the vision.”

“With athletes, there are specific ministries that have a lot of experience with how to work around athletic schedules and demands.” Bringing the conversation back, I continue, “College is hard. Just imagine trying to add playing a competitive sport with the games, practices, and training. Oak College is a Division III school so none of these athletes are on scholarship. When I pray for athletes, I pray for God to bless them. I ask God to protect them from injury and for God to give them enjoyment in their sport. I pray that they can handle the stress of athletics and academics. As with other parts of the campus, I pray for there to be gospel access.



“But before we look to God in prayer, I want to point out another group on campus that gets overlooked, especially in smaller schools.” As I say this I turn around and direct the group’s attention to the English Language Center.

“Oak College has about 150 international students from 20 different nations. Most of them are from India and China. Students from those countries have often never heard the gospel before. Some might not even recognize the name of Jesus. There is an opportunity to impact the entire world with the gospel less than a mile from your church. Can we pray for these international students? I typically pray that they make friends with American students who are Christian. I pray that they hear the gospel in a clear and understandable way. And pray that they make a commitment to follow Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Would one of you like to pray for the athletes and another pray for the international students?”

Rachel offers, “Our daughter is thinking about joining the cross-country team. I’ll pray for the athletes.”

“And I’ll pray for the international students,” Bob McAdams says for the first time today. I nod in response. I figured that would get Bob’s attention. He is one of the strongest supporters of international missions at Terrace Hill. He’s always bringing up the missionaries that the church supports.

Crossing the street, I lead the group to the oldest part of the campus. “The building on our left houses quite a few of the faculty offices. And the building on our right is the hub for the college’s administration.

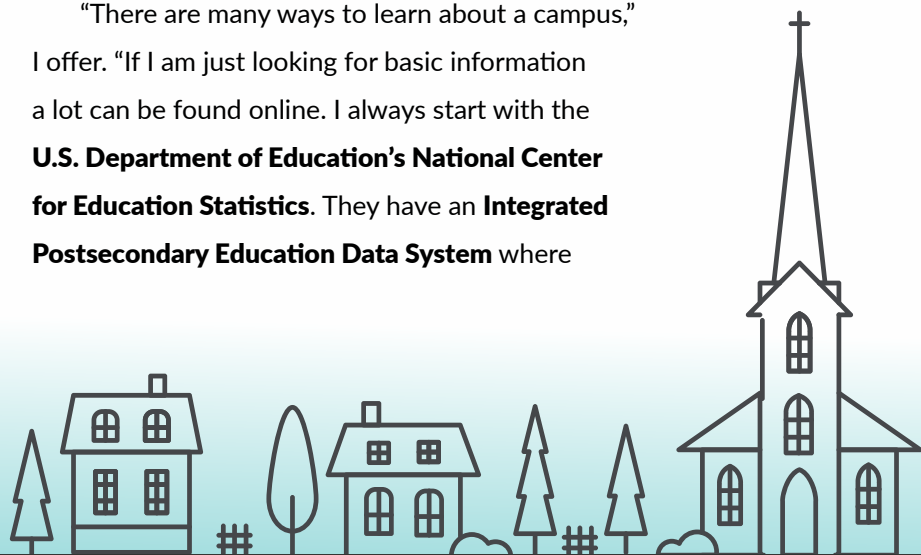


Campus ministry often focuses on the students, which it should, but these are some of the most important people on campus. We cannot ignore them," I emphasize. "We have about 3 or 4 years to minister to students. Many of the administrators and faculty have been here for decades. They are the ones who can make ministry on this campus easy or hard. They are the ones who open or close doors. The gospel's access to this campus flows through these buildings. Often, we think of college faculty and administration in very generic terms. But each one of these offices represents an individual, an individual who needs Jesus. Each of these individuals has a life much like you and me with hopes and fears. We can't just see them as people to be used to help us reach the students. We need to see them as people to love for the sake of the gospel. As we ask them to give us access to reach the students, we need to do it in such a way that Jesus is glorified through our actions.

"This one is a passion of mine," I conclude. "I'm going to be the one who offers our prayer for the faculty and administration."

After my prayer, Shelby asks, "How do you know so much about Oak College? Where have you gotten your information?"

"There are many ways to learn about a campus," I offer. "If I am just looking for basic information a lot can be found online. I always start with the **U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics**. They have an **Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System** where



you can search for any college or university you want. After that, I will browse a school's website specifically searching for specific things like international students, student organizations, or residence halls. If I want anecdotal information, I come to campus and ask questions. Now **EveryCampus** is a good place to find information about the Christian presence on campus.”

I lead the group to our last stop. We walk inside to the student center. “This is the student center. We’ve almost come full circle as you can see the cafeteria is just over there. The bookstore is in here. A lot of the student organizations use this space for their meetings. If there was a Christian group on this campus, they would probably use this building for their Bible studies. The commuter lounge is right over there. That’s a place for students who don’t live on campus to hang out in between classes.”

As I am talking, I notice Dean Simmons walking by. She walks over to greet us. I begin the conversation by saying, “Allow me to introduce you to some of my friends. This is Reverend Williams. He is the pastor at Terrace Hill Community Church just a couple blocks from campus.”

Dean Simmons shakes his hand. “And these are several of the people from his church. We were walking through campus praying and trying to get some creative ideas about how their church could be a benefit to the students here at Oak College.” She nods a greeting toward the others in the group. “This might be a little awkward, but if you could ask a church to pray about anything what would it be?”

Dean Simmons stops for a second. She is clearly thinking. Then she



responds, “Mental health. Pray for students’ mental health. Pray that we can provide for their mental health needs in an adequate and timely manner. Pray that students reach out for help and don’t suffer in silence until it is too late.”

“We’ve already prayed about that a little bit, but we will keep that at the top of our list,” I concur. “Thank you for stopping by. I can’t imagine how busy you are. At some point, I would love to set up an appointment with you and Reverend Williams. He is really trying to lead his church to be more involved in the lives of the next generation, and if there is any way that can intersect with the life here at Oak College, they would be interested in hearing about it.”

Dean Simmons replies, “Set something up on my iCalendar. It probably won’t be soon but that would be a conversation I’d appreciate.” Then she continues in the direction she was originally headed.

“Mrs. Russell,” I turn back to the group and say, “I think you are the only one who hasn’t prayed yet. We’re saving the best for last. Would you like to close our time in prayer? Pray for commuter students. Pray for student mental health like Dean Simmons asked.

Pray for the student activities and student life that happens in this building. And finally, pray that this is just the beginning of Terrace Hill’s presence on this campus.”



Go With Prayer – Chapter Three

ENCOURAGE

Mindset Shift:

We need to shift from seeing students as a means of meeting the needs of the congregation. Often churches want students to provide volunteers for other ministries, or to ensure the legacy of the congregation, or to bolster the pride of the church leaders. But we need to see the students and create a ministry that serves them at their specific points of need. Although we are not called to heal *every disease and every affliction* like Jesus, we should see the actual needs of those around us. We need to shift from using to seeing.

Key Passages:

Acts 17:16-34, *The Apostle Paul learns about the city of Athens before preaching the gospel at the Areopagus.*

Jeremiah 29:7, *But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

Jesus' Example:

Jesus' ministry was in response to the needs of the people that he saw while he went through all the cities and villages.

Real Life Church Example:

Kelton Hinton, an associational missions strategist, uses multiple churches to impact the different communities at Johnston Community College in Raleigh, N.C.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

- **CollegeMinistry.com** has several articles on prayer walking a college campus
- **EveryCampus.com** has a page dedicated to praying for campuses
- The **Collegiate Day of Prayer** has helpful prayer resources
- Paul Worcester and Clayton Bullion wrote an article on **Campus Ministry Today** about **Extraordinary Prayer for Your Campus**
- Paul Worcester has another great article on **Campus Ministry Today** about **Decoding Your Campus**

ENGAGE

1. Add the local colleges and universities to your church and individual prayer lists.
2. If you have a particular college campus that God has laid on your heart start, finding information about that campus. Use Paul Worcester's *Decoding Your Campus* if you need a guide for what information to search.
3. Find a friend and prayer walk a local campus.

Next Chapter: Go and Serve – In preparation for the next chapter, try to creatively think of ways your church could meet the needs of college students. What does your church have to offer? Create a list. Be as creative as possible. Nothing is a bad idea when brainstorming.

Chapter Four:

**GO WITH
LOVE**



Chapter Four: Go with Love

“Thank you for meeting me.” Pastor Williams shakes Dr. Priscilla Hudson’s hand as he enters her office. Dr. Hudson is the Director of Student Support Services at Oak College.

“Dean Simmons suggested we meet,” she answers cordially. “Have you been able to have a conversation with her?”

“Unfortunately, not. We had one scheduled for last week, but Dean Simmons had to cancel at the last minute.” Pastor Williams shrugs, “That’s when she suggested I meet with you.”

“So, how can I help you?” Dr. Hudson asks. Pastor Williams might be imagining this, but her voice seems a little cold and very guarded.

“I’m the pastor at Terrace Hill Community Church which is only a couple blocks from campus. We are investigating ways for our church to invest in the next generation. With Oak College being so near, we’re discussing possible points of intersection,”



Pastor Williams opens. “Someone is working with us who has helped us see the needs of the campus. We’ve talked about international students, commuters, fraternities and sororities, graduate students, faculty and staff, and athletes. We spent time examining each of these communities on campus and are wondering if there were avenues through which we could be a blessing to those individuals. But the idea that our church can’t let go of, the issue that captures our heart more than any other, is food insecurity among students.”

Dr. Hudson changes her posture in her chair. She is trying hard not to look surprised by the direction of the conversation, but it does show. Pastor Williams continues, “I’ve been reading a lot about this recently. It’s the article from the **Chronicle of Higher Education** from 2022 that got my attention. I was first surprised by how many students experience food insecurity. But it is also great news that schools are doing something to meet this need.”

“This is a place where our church can help. Our church has several decades of experience providing food and meals to the local neighborhood through our pantry. We work closely with the city’s food bank. A good portion of our pantry is filled through government programs, but we also have some corporate donors and have a few members that are skilled in writing grant requests.”

Pastor Williams’ eyes start to light up as he gets excited explaining this to Dr. Hudson. He is encouraged to continue by her changing expression. “One of our main volunteers works here at the college in your



cafeteria. Feeding people is something our church is already passionate about. I believe we do it well. And I believe it is a way we could be a blessing to the students at Oak College and even the institution as a whole.” He intentionally pauses to give her a chance to respond.

“I have to admit, this is not what I expected,” Dr. Hudson begins. “There have been a few times when churches have approached us about coming to campus. It is usually with an agenda about preaching on campus or recruiting students to come to their church. I usually have to point out that it is our policy that anyone who publicly speaks on campus has to be connected to a campus organization, either a student organization, an academic class, or an administrative department. They typically get upset and claim that I’m blocking them from campus. I have to be honest; I have never had a church come to me talking about serving the campus in a way that the campus actually needs to be served. Furthermore, you read an article in the Chronicle?” She says with inflection both as a statement and a question, “I’m not sure you understand how significant that is.” Leaning forward in her chair with her elbows now resting on her desk, she asks, “Do you have something particular in mind?”

“There’s this small church in Wallingford, Pa., called The Foundry,” Pastor Williams starts with a story. “They have a food pantry, and they have partnered with Widener University in some very interesting ways. Their food pantry is a place where



students in Widener's leadership development program can volunteer and receive civic engagement credit. There are always students helping the church feed the community in the Chester area through the pantry. But also, through these student leaders, the church partners with an on-campus fraternity using their house to distribute food to students experiencing insecurity. With the commitment of the leadership students and the fraternity, the entire campus knows about the program."

"When I call The Foundry a small church, I mean they have maybe 50 members. They are less than half the size of Terrace Hill. But through the partnership with the Widener, their pantry impacts as many people in need as we do and so many more students. This partnership has been beneficial to both the University and the church. It has given students a tangible way to help the neighborhood around the campus and hands-on civically engaged leadership experience. But it has also helped the church connect with students that they would have never known."

"It all started when the church leaders, Pastors Chuck Keiffer and Hair Kelley, asked the university what they could do to serve the students. My initiation of this conversation with you and Dean Simmons is based on their example. I don't think we will end up doing exactly what they did, but I am starting the conversation like they did. How can we serve the students here at Oak College?"

Pastor Williams looks briefly at his page of notes, "One of the Chronicle articles mentioned that on-campus food pantries make a significant difference in this issue. But it goes on to say that only 25% of campuses



have one. That made me curious, so I tried to find out if Oak College had one. If it does, I couldn't find it. Which might mean it is only available to students, or I'm not looking in the right place."

Looking directly at Dr. Hudson, "Forgive me if this is too direct of a question but does Oak College have a food pantry?"

"We do not," she humbly responds. "But establishing one is part of my assigned tasks for this year and next. Hopefully, in two years we will have a thriving food pantry as part of our comprehensive plan to overcome food insecurity among our students."

"Is there any way we can help?" Pastor Williams offers.

"I'm not sure," there is still a little bit of hesitation in her voice. "What are you offering?"

Glancing back at his notes, Pastor Williams starts, "From our perspective, there could be several ways to connect around this issue. I've written several of them down.

1. I'm not sure how much will be transferable but if you or any of your staff want to see the logistics of how we run our food pantry, you are more than welcome. I can easily set up a time for our food ministry team to walk you through any of the details.
2. After reading the articles, I understand that the best type of food assistance is based on campus, but until you get that established, if you need to send students to our pantry, we



will be more than happy to serve them.

3. Our church would be willing to set up a time when we came to campus and either serve a meal for students who need it or distribute pantry items.
4. Looking at things a little bit differently, we could also provide students with helpful workshops like how to get the best food on a budget.

“These were just brainstorming ideas we had as a church. We don’t know how any of them would actually work or if you would be interested, but these are some of the ideas that we had.” Pastor Williams hands her a copy of the ideas with more details written down.

“I appreciate these,” she says as she looks over them. “I am working with Professor Landon in our culinary arts department. He does have some knowledge in this area. You should probably meet with him as well. I think both of us will be interested in learning from you, as much as possible.”

Pastor Williams excitedly interrupts, “We have almost 50 years of experience running a food ministry out of Terrace Hill. And many of our volunteers have been invested in the program for years. I’m sure it will be different than what you need to do here at Oak College, but there should at least be some information that helps.”

Dr. Hudson continues, “I’m not sure about the second idea. I’m not sure our students will go to your pantry. It might be too big of a barrier. We could provide transportation but traveling to a food pantry on a bus



with a bunch of your fellow students could bring up shame issues.”

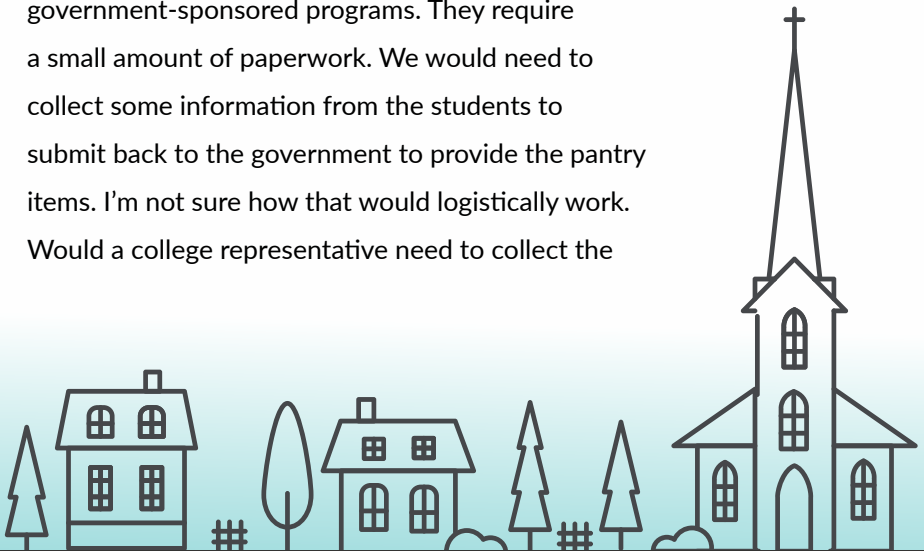
Pastor Williams agrees, “Although our church is just a few blocks away, no students ever come to the pantry. There is obviously a barrier.”

She thoughtfully nods, “I like the third idea. A free meal on campus overcomes the logistics barrier of getting to the pantry. Would you be able to make the meal available to all students, not just those experiencing food insecurity?”

“I don’t know. We could easily find the resources to serve about 50 students a week. And I think with some work we could bump that number up to 100,” he calculates. “What do you think the demand would be?”

“I’m not sure,” she answers. “The only real way to find out is to try. Do you think that you could provide some dry goods and pantry items for students in need to take away with them? A meal once a week available for everybody might not touch our problem, but if the students who need it could go home with a small bag of staples afterward, that would be moving in the right direction.”

“The only issue with that,” Pastor Williams thinks out loud, “is that most of the items for the bags are attached to our government-sponsored programs. They require a small amount of paperwork. We would need to collect some information from the students to submit back to the government to provide the pantry items. I’m not sure how that would logistically work. Would a college representative need to collect the



information and submit it to the government on our behalf? I don't know how academic privacy laws would affect any of this. Would students be comfortable with church folk collecting the information?"

"So, what I heard, is yes if we can figure out the logistics," Dr. Hudson restates and Pastor Williams nods. "With the final idea, I think you should talk to Professor Landon. He would know more about how to engage that." Changing her posture one more time, Dr. Hudson asks another question, "So this a good idea so far but I want to be careful before we get too far ahead of ourselves. I need to ask, what do you all get out of this? Why are you doing this? Are you expecting to be able to proselytize at the dinners? If that's what you have in mind, I don't know if we can work together."

"I understand your concern. First, in the Bible, James writes in a letter, *"If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?"* (James 2:15-16). Terrace Hill has always wanted to be a church that not only talks about the gospel but also helps people at the point of their need."

"Second, we do want students to come to our church but how could we ever expect them to come to us if we are not willing to go to them? We hope that being present on campus will give us the opportunity to form relationships with students and maybe through these relationships a few of the students will decide to check out the Christian faith and our church. There's a story in Scripture where Jesus heals ten people suffering

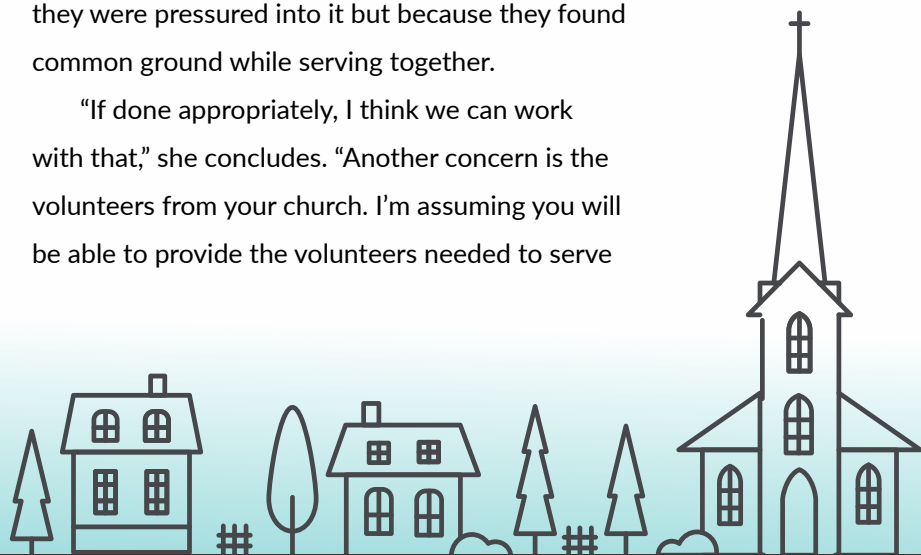


from leprosy and only one comes back to thank Him. He heals all ten. He blesses all of them even though only one ends up connecting with Him. We want to be present in the lives of students. We want to bless them with food to meet a real need in their lives. And we hope by being here, forming relationships with them, and blessing them, some will choose to get to know the Christian faith through us. We are willing to meet students' physical needs for the opportunity to let them know that we are also available to help meet their spiritual and religious needs."

Dr. Hudson seems to react favorably to this response. "Just for clarity's sake, you are not planning on making students attend a religious service to get the meal?"

"No, but I would love to let them know that some sort of religious service is available, whether that is at our church or on campus," Pastor Williams clarifies. "I think The Foundry is a good example of what we are expecting. Working side by side with the student leaders in the pantry has led to many deep and meaningful conversations. Some of these students have not only committed to serving in the pantry but have also started attending church. This did not happen because they were pressured into it but because they found common ground while serving together.

"If done appropriately, I think we can work with that," she concludes. "Another concern is the volunteers from your church. I'm assuming you will be able to provide the volunteers needed to serve



the food on campus. They will have to be vetted in some way to be in contact with the students. We have quite a few 17-year-old freshmen so it would be necessary for them to go through background checks. Would that be a problem?”

“Terrace Hill has a similar policy for all our volunteers in the pantry specifically and at the church in general. We get a lot of families through the pantry, and there are always children around. We do background checks on all our workers. The cool thing is that for non-profits in the state of Pennsylvania background checks on volunteers are free. We use that benefit a lot,” Pastor Williams encourages her.

“This is the best conversation I’ve had today,” Dr. Hudson pronounces. “Before you leave, let’s walk over to the faculty building so that I can introduce you to Professor Landon.”



Go And Serve – Chapter Four

ENCOURAGE

Mindset Shift:

We need to shift from condemning everything that we think is wrong with campus culture. We need to expect that lost people will act differently than Jesus and God's Kingdom. On the other hand, we need to communicate our love for university students, faculty, and administration by serving them in tangible ways that meet their needs. We should have the same *compassion for them* as Jesus shows in Matthew 9. We need to shift from condemning to loving.

Key Passages:

James 2:15-16 *If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?*

Luke 17:11-19 *Jesus cleanses ten lepers even though only one comes back to thank and honor him. Serving others at their point of need is a good thing even if not everyone who is served receives Christ.*

Jesus' Example:

Jesus had compassion for the harassed and helpless crowds that He encountered.

Real Life Church Example:

The Foundry Church in Wallingford, Pa., uses its food pantry to partner with Widener University to provide civic engagement opportunities for students, food for those on campus and the surrounding neighborhoods, and a point of connection to students in need of the gospel.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

- Check out the **Chronicle of Higher Education** for information on current needs among students
- For information on colleges. check out the **Integrated**

Postsecondary Education Data System

- Youth Mental Health is a priority for the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**
- SEND RELIEF, in partnership with the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, is a great way for a church to learn about meeting needs through compassion ministry

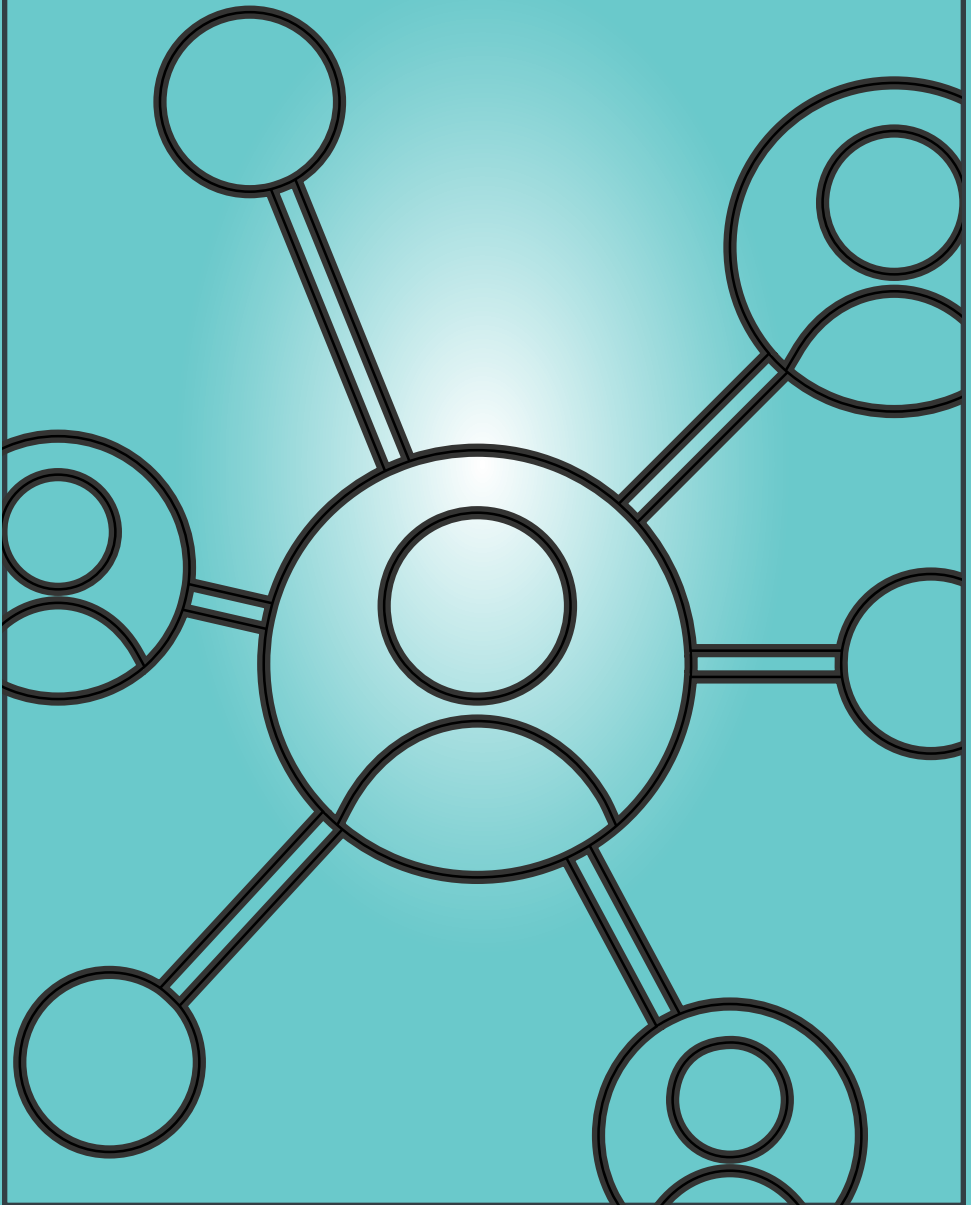
ENGAGE

1. Make a list of what you think students need. Separate that list into physical, emotional, relational, mental, and spiritual needs.
2. Pray that students are able to encounter the God who is able to meet all their needs.
3. List the ways in which your church already serves its community. Are any of these ministries able to meet the needs of students?
4. Meet with a campus administrator and specifically ask them how your church could serve students on campus.

Next Chapter: Go and Connect – In preparation for the next chapter, create a list of things that would indicate that your church's ministry to college students was a success. Try to use something other than the number of attendees at an event as a way to measure.

Chapter Five:

GO AND CONNECT



Chapter Five: Go and Connect

Three months later, Pastor Williams invited me back for an emergency leadership meeting. I step into his office and Miss Bea and Mrs. Russell are there like the first meeting, but now they are joined by Shelby and Rachel from the prayer walk. Rachel's husband, Jonathan, couldn't make the meeting because of his work schedule but he will be updated afterward. And Robert Teague is in the room as well. He has been faithfully helping serve dinners for the last couple of months.

Before I can get settled into my seat, Miss Bea bursts with a statement that is really a question. "We need to know what we are doing wrong."

I sense disappointment in many of the folks' body language. "What makes you think you are doing something wrong?"

"Well, after serving these dinners for several weeks, we tried to start a Bible study. Mrs. Russell agreed to teach it. The first week we only had five students show up. The second week there were three. And then last week nobody came."



I nod my head in understanding, “I can see how that can be disconcerting. Just for clarification, how were you able to start a Bible study on-campus without a student organization?”

Pastor Williams answers, “John, from the coffee shop who you introduced to me during our first meeting, helped us meet at the coffee shop.”

“Cool. John has been on my mind a lot recently. I’m glad you’ve been able to connect with him. Can I ask you some more questions?” Everybody looks prepared to defend what they have been doing. “How has serving dinner been going?”

“We’ve been serving about 50 students each week. Many of the same students come each week,” Miss Bea answers.

“Are you getting to know them? Do you know some of their names?” I ask.

“Definitely,” she continues.

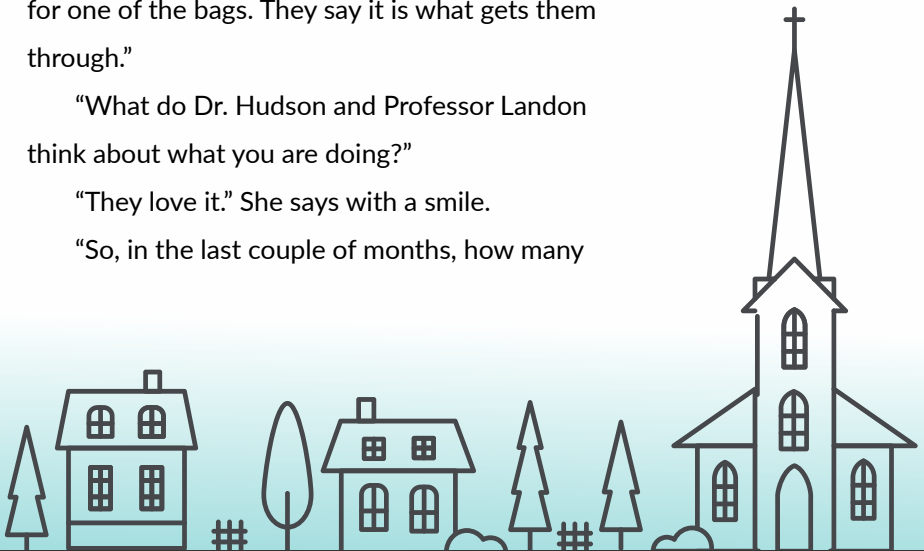
“What about the ‘to go’ kits of food items from the pantry? How many of those do you pass out each week?”

“We have 10 students who come every week for one of the bags. They say it is what gets them through.”

“What do Dr. Hudson and Professor Landon think about what you are doing?”

“They love it.” She says with a smile.

“So, in the last couple of months, how many



people connected with Oak College have you met? Faculty, staff, administration? How many students do you know that you didn't before?" I follow up as the mood of the room begins to change.

"Phew, a lot." Miss Bea looks around at the team in acknowledgment. "I think there are about ten Oak College employees that have helped out with the dinners in one way or another. Five more have been in communication with us about setting up the on-campus pantry. I don't know how many different students we have fed. Jonathan has been keeping those numbers. The accountant in him loves counting."

To drive the point home, I highlight another question, "Now that's just direct contacts. How many students do you think have heard about the dinners and subsequently your church? Just imagine if every student you served mentioned it to four other students. Although the Bible study has not taken off yet, there are some really good things to celebrate. You haven't failed."

"Finally, how many more folks from Oak College is your church praying about? Think about everything that has changed in the last couple of months. You all should be encouraged," I conclude.

There is a collective sigh of relief. The perspective of the room has shifted from concentrating on what was going wrong to what they have been doing right. I don't say this but having six people in this room with me discussing an actual outreach to Oak College was an amazing win in and of itself.

"Now there are probably some things you can do to improve, and I

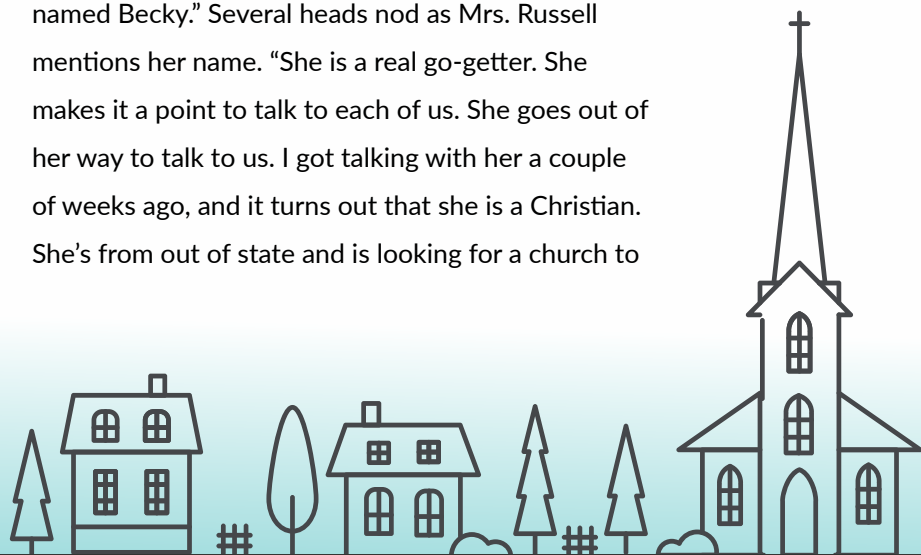


can help with that. But before we critique what you are doing, I think we should spend some time in celebration of what you have done. I think it would be great if we could go around the room and each one of you tell me a story of something awesome that God has done at Oak College over the last couple of months. Let's give God praise for the things He has done."

"I'll start," Pastor Williams says. "I got a chance to talk to Dr. Hudson about Jesus. It was brief. I can't say I entirely shared the gospel with her, but I was able to explain how Terrace Hill as a church is centered around teaching about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection." Looking at me, he states, "When we first started this journey, I only expected to connect with a few students. I never expected to have an ongoing relationship with administrators. They need Jesus just as much as the students do. At the end of our conversation, she volunteered to be our faculty advisor if we ever get enough committed students to form a group."

I indicated my appreciation for his sharing first and patiently wait to see if anyone else has something to say.

"There is this student coming to the dinners named Becky." Several heads nod as Mrs. Russell mentions her name. "She is a real go-getter. She makes it a point to talk to each of us. She goes out of her way to talk to us. I got talking with her a couple of weeks ago, and it turns out that she is a Christian. She's from out of state and is looking for a church to



connect with in town. As a white girl who grew up on a farm, she would have felt totally out of place attending Terrace Hill if she hadn't already met us at the dinners. But I invited her to come to church with me a couple of weeks ago, and she has been there every Sunday since. I really think she could be one of our student leaders when the time comes."

Robert is about to say something but before he gets to, Miss Bea says, "Professor Landon and the others who are working with us on the food pantry have been treating us with so much respect. I never went to college. I barely graduated high school, but I felt like an expert when we were showing them around our pantry here at the church. Working in the cafeteria these years, I've always felt second-class, because college wasn't part of the world I got to experience. But God has shown me that what I have learned through my life can be used for his glory." She ends up holding back some tears, and Shelby reaches over to comfort her.

There is a pause allowing Miss Bea to collect herself. Then I give Robert a slight nod indicating that he can share.

"John, we mentioned him earlier, our coffee shop contact," Robert begins, "We had a good conversation last week. He's studying engineering and really wanted to talk about what I've done so far. He was fascinated by how I started in the Army and then used that to get my degree. I need to follow up with him. I really think we could take our conversation much deeper if it was more one-on-one. He brought his whole volleyball team with him. It seems like he knew everybody at the dinner."

"I want to come back to the idea of one-on-one meetings with the



students a little bit later,” I offer. “But before that, Shelby or Rachel, do either of you have anything to say?”

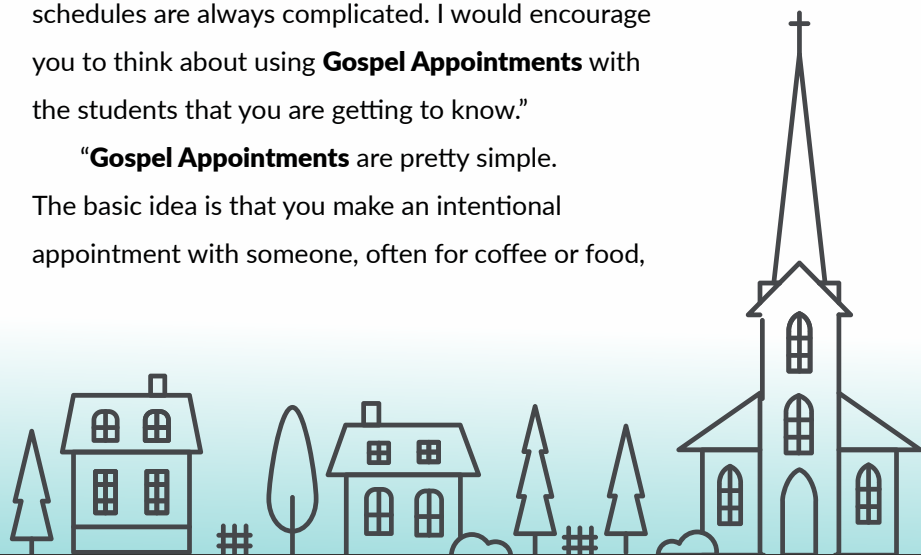
“This might not be that significant for the ministry as a whole, but I’ve really loved serving with my husband,” Rachel adds. “And it has given me something to talk to my daughter about. I see her world differently now that I am on a campus more often. Jonathan’s all business. He enjoys the fact that his administrative skills are being put to good use.”

“It’s my turn I guess,” Shelby starts. “I love Becky, too. She amazes me. But if I had to say something different, I would praise God just for those of us in this room. I really love how God has brought us together to do something none of us could ever do alone.”

“Before we go any further,” Pastor Williams interjects. “I’m going to voice a prayer for us, thanking God for what He has already done. And asking Him to do so much more.”

After the pastor’s prayer, I return to the previous conversation about meeting students one-on-one. “Sometimes it is easier to meet students one-on-one than to try and find a time when several students are free. Students tend to keep their lives very busy. Campus schedules are always complicated. I would encourage you to think about using **Gospel Appointments** with the students that you are getting to know.”

“**Gospel Appointments** are pretty simple. The basic idea is that you make an intentional appointment with someone, often for coffee or food,



and during that appointment, you share the gospel. Paul Worcester, the National Collegiate Director for the North American Mission Board, has developed a good website to explain the what, why, and how of **Gospel Appointments**. You all should check it out at gospelappointments.com. It is the backbone of his campus ministry he started at Chico State in California.” Looking directly at Robert, I say, “I think this would be the perfect way for you to follow up with John.”

“There is a church I know that had a thriving college worship night, with a funded staff pastor totally dedicated to young adults, college students, and youth. I know this is something that is not necessarily possible for Terrace Hill. But even in the context of a large college-age ministry, there was this older retired gentleman. He would show up at every weekly meeting. He never said anything from the stage. All he would do is invite the guys out to grab a cup of coffee with him at some point during the week either one-on-one or in a small group. While drinking coffee he would have a direct conversation with them about the gospel. He would give those students an opportunity to ask him questions about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. At the end of the conversation, he would give them the opportunity to pray to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. Over the course of a decade, he bought hundreds of coffees. Had hundreds of conversations. Saw many students come to Christ either in direct conversation with him or afterward, during one of the weekly events.”

“Marc Hill, who is the state director for Christian Challenge in Arizona,



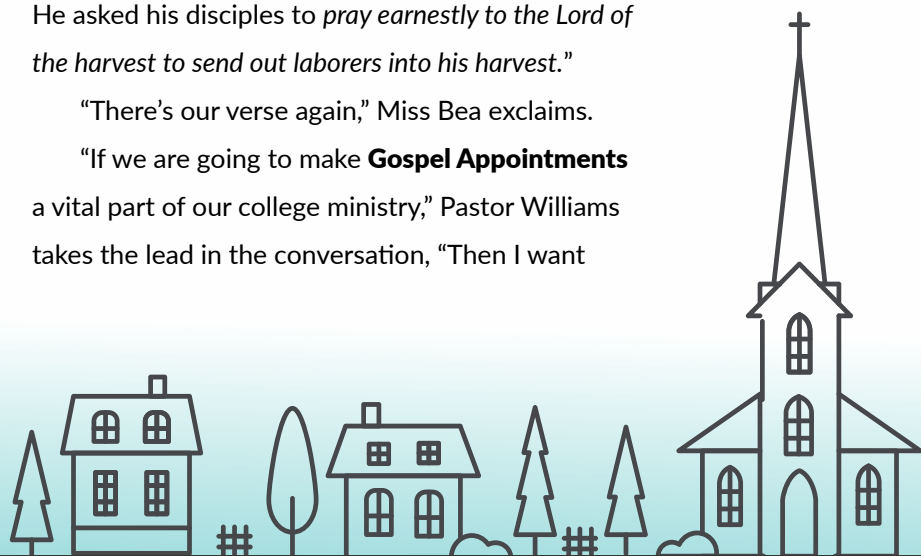
has four priorities that churches have to agree to, to start a Christian Challenge on a nearby campus. Using **Gospel Appointments** is the first of those four priorities. Missional communities, student leadership development, and mission participation are the other three. Marc works for the Arizona Mission Network of Southern Baptist churches, and they are reaching 19 campuses through local church partnerships using these priorities.”

“After looking over the **Gospel Appointments** website, I would encourage each of you to try and make one appointment with someone from the dinners next week. So often after making the initial contact with students we want to start with large group ministries or even small group Bible studies. We forget that talking with someone one-on-one about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most effective ministry tool.”

“In the future, looking at the number of one-on-one conversations with students about the gospel needs to be a vital part of how you measure success. In Matthew 9, Jesus didn’t tell his disciples to ask the Father to send more people to their ministry events. He asked his disciples to *pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*”

“There’s our verse again,” Miss Bea exclaims.

“If we are going to make **Gospel Appointments** a vital part of our college ministry,” Pastor Williams takes the lead in the conversation, “Then I want



us to go through some evangelism training. I think we all need to be able to share our personal testimonies and to be able to share a simple presentation of the gospel.” Shifting into teacher mode, the pastor pulls a worksheet out of his filing cabinet. Handing it to Mrs. Russell and pointing to the copier behind her, “Can you make eight copies of this for us?”

“Acts 1 records a conversation between Jesus and his disciples right before he ascends into heaven. The key verse of this chapter and the theme verse for the entire book of Acts is Acts 1:8, *‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’*

Gospel Appointments are exactly in line with Jesus calling his followers to be witnesses to the world.”

“This is a quick worksheet that I developed about how to prepare your personal testimony. It encourages you to answer three questions.

- 1) What was your life like before you met Jesus?
- 2) How did you meet Jesus?
- 3) What is the difference that knowing Jesus has made in your life since?

“In the answer to the first question, I encourage you to highlight the emotional aspect of your life before meeting Jesus. The person you are talking to might not be able to relate to the details of your life before Jesus, but they will understand the emotions you were experiencing. Second, we often overemphasize the before meeting Christ part of our story. We don’t need to explain in detail what life is like without Jesus to

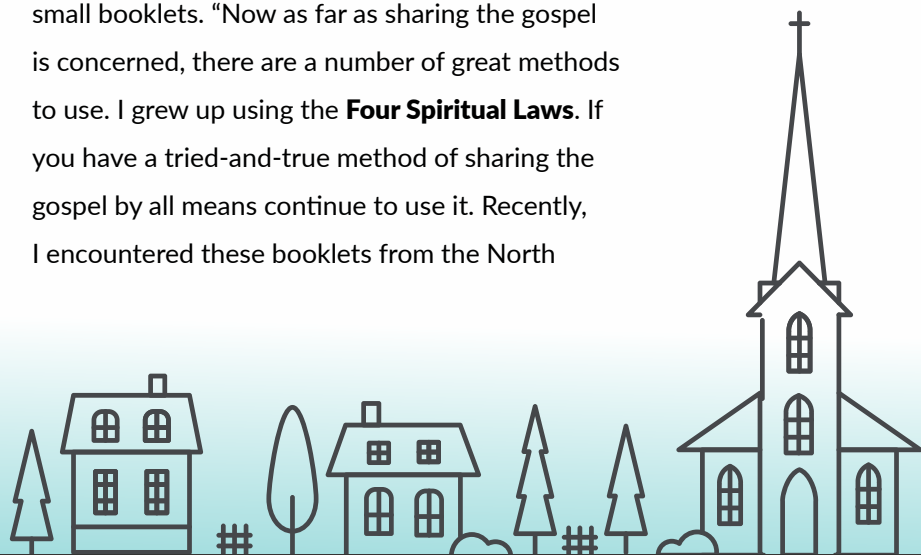


someone who doesn't know Jesus. They already know. We should use this part to set up the two other parts of the story.”

“While answering the second question, be sure to communicate the details of how you came to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ so that the person you are talking with could use your story to reach out to Jesus themselves. You not only want to tell them how you came to Christ, but you want to tell them how they can come to Christ.”

“The third question is the most important part of your story to share. What life is like with Jesus is what non-Christians need to hear. It is what they don't understand and have never experienced. We should be honest. Don't try to create an exaggerated picture of the Christian life like it has no problems and struggles. But highlight in your own words what a blessing it is to live with a restored relationship with the God of the universe through Jesus Christ.”

“If you need any help completing this worksheet let me know. I would be glad to work on it with you. It would be great if we could meet in a week and share our testimonies with one another.” Walking over to his bookshelf, Pastor Williams grabs some small booklets. “Now as far as sharing the gospel is concerned, there are a number of great methods to use. I grew up using the **Four Spiritual Laws**. If you have a tried-and-true method of sharing the gospel by all means continue to use it. Recently, I encountered these booklets from the North



American Mission Board using the **3 Circles** method.” He briefly stops speaking to hand one to each of us in the office. “I’m intrigued by them. I think emphasizing the brokenness of the world might be a good place to start a gospel conversation with the students at Oak College. They seem to intuitively know that all is not well with the world around us. Check it out and tell me what you think.”

Pastor Williams redirects the conversation to me, “Do you have anything else you think we should know?”

“First of all, I love this,” I say as I hold up the personal testimony worksheet. “Is it okay if I steal this and use it with other groups?” Pastor Williams nods. I continue, “If you are up for reading a book, I would suggest **Worlds Apart: Understanding the Mindset and Values of 18-25 Year Olds** by Chuck Bomar. Gus Hernandez From Reality Church in Coconut Grove, Fla., is the one who first recommended this book to me. It says that students are seeking identity, intimacy, meaning, pleasure, and truth. If the search for any of those things was part of your journey to Jesus, I would suggest highlighting that part of your story when you share it.”

“I typically use the categories of relationships, lifestyle, purpose, belonging, and beliefs, when I’m talking to a student. I have a story from my life of how the gospel has changed me in each of those categories. If I’m talking to a student about navigating relationships, I tell a story of how the forgiveness available through the gospel has helped me forgive people in my life. I would encourage you to think through stories in your own life that could be used similarly.”



“Both the **Four Spiritual Laws** and the **3 Circles** are great ways to share the gospel. The only thing I would add is to mention two other tools, **Perspectives** and **Soularium**. These are conversation tools developed by CRU that help start spiritual conversations. They can be really helpful in starting the conversation. You still have to use something like Three Circles to share the gospel but **Perspectives** or **Soularium** can easily take the conversation to that point.” Pulling two boxes out of my backpack I suggest, “If we still have time I would love to show them to you.”



Go And Connect – Chapter Five

ENCOURAGE

Mindset Shift:

We need to shift from measuring success by the number of students who attend a particular service or event to measuring success by how many laborers we have sent out and how much of the campus they have engaged. Jesus asked his followers to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest. We need to shift from attending to sending.

Key Passage:

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Jesus' Example:

Jesus didn't tell his disciples to ask the Father to send more people to their ministry events. He asked his disciples to pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Real Life Church Example:

Marc Hill from the Arizona Mission Network uses **Gospel Appointments** as a priority with churches reaching campuses in that state.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

- **Worlds Apart: Understanding the Mindset and Values of 18-25 Year Olds** by Chuck Bomar
- **Perspectives** and **Soularium** are great tools to engage students in spiritual conversations that could be transitioned into gospel presentations
- **The Four Spiritual Laws** and **3 Circles** are valuable Evangelism tools
- **The Life on Mission App** contains both **3 Circles** and the **Best News** tools for sharing the gospel with others
- **GodTools** is another app that helps you share the gospel with others
- **Gospel Appointments** - gospelappointments.com

ENGAGE

1. Prepare your testimony by answering the three questions: What was your life like before you met Jesus? How did you meet Jesus? What is the difference that knowing Jesus has made in your life since?
2. Was seeking identity, intimacy, meaning, pleasure, or truth part of your salvation story? Can you highlight that as you tell your testimony?
3. Do you have a story about how the gospel has changed your relationships, lifestyle, purpose, sense of belonging, or beliefs? Can you prepare that story in such a way that it is easy for you to tell in an everyday conversation?
4. Find a gospel presentation that you like and become very familiar with it.
5. Practice using **Perspectives** or **Soularium** to engage students in spiritual conversations.

Next Chapter: Go And Share – In preparation for the next chapter, think about one student that you might be able to invite to a **Gospel Appointment**.



Chapter Six:
GO AND SHARE

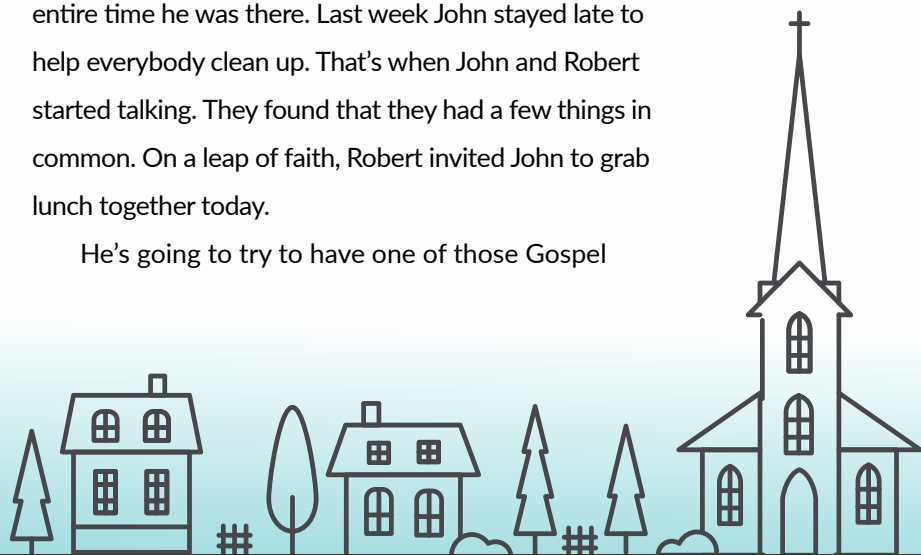


Chapter Six: Go and Share

Robert is sitting in the quad waiting. He is nervous on several different levels. He always feels a little uncomfortable just being on campus. An older retired African American man sticks out. Everybody seems to notice him. There is some relief when a student who has been coming to the dinners regularly gives him a passing smile.

Robert is waiting to meet John. This adds to his nervousness. He doesn't know John very well. John first met Pastor Williams at the coffee shop across from campus. John's been one of the regular attendees at the dinners. Recently he has been bringing his whole volleyball team. John even attended the Bible study once. But he didn't say anything the entire time he was there. Last week John stayed late to help everybody clean up. That's when John and Robert started talking. They found that they had a few things in common. On a leap of faith, Robert invited John to grab lunch together today.

He's going to try to have one of those Gospel



Appointments today like Pastor Williams has trained them to do. This will be his first and that brings the third level of nervousness. He knows Miss Bea and Mrs. Russell are praying for this conversation.

Robert knows that he is still five minutes early. He knows that John should still be in class. But he still watches each person that comes down the sidewalk from the academic buildings. He wonders if that is making him look even more out of place. The nervousness is making him act anxiously. Acting anxiously is making him feel like he sticks out more. And sticking out more is making him feel more nervous. Robert says a quick prayer for peace.

Eventually, he sees John's familiar face. It lights up with recognition, and he waves at Robert. Robert's nervousness about being out of place melts but those feelings connected to the significance of the intended conversation remain. The lunch is happening. Will Robert get to talk about his faith? That remains to be seen. Another quick silent prayer is said.

After some brief negotiations, they decide to go to the nice sit-down restaurant near campus. John had suggested a series of food trucks and fast-food options. He even offered to swipe Robert into the on-campus cafeteria with one of his extra flex meals, but Robert insisted on treating him to someplace nice, someplace John wouldn't go on his own. Robert also wanted to be someplace quieter than the cafeteria. John is popular enough that the conversation would be interrupted multiple times if they were there. Robert did make a mental note, that having lunch with John in the cafeteria might be a great way to meet more students in the future.



They begin the conversation by getting to know more about each other. John is interested in Robert's story, especially how he used his military benefits from serving in the 1980s to go to the local state university and get an engineering degree. They both were fascinated by how much and how little engineering had changed over the years.

Robert intentionally kept the conversation lighter until their food was delivered. When the waitress brought their meals, Robert offered a prayer of thanks over them. John intentionally mimicked Robert's folded hands and bowed head. Without further reason for delay, Robert decided this was the moment to purposefully transition the conversation into the gospel.

"I didn't only decide to become an engineer while in the Army. That's where I also chose to commit my life to following Jesus as my Lord and Savior," Robert begins. "If you are interested, I would love to tell you that story." A huge moment of relief passes over Robert. He has started the conversation. The scariest part is over. Now comes the second scariest part. How will John respond?

A smile comes over John's face. "Okay, this might sound strange because I wanted to talk to you about this, as well. Ever since I started working at the coffee shop and met you all, I've been thinking about Christianity. I thought I knew what it was about but now I'm not sure. I've been watching some videos on YouTube and looking at some TikTok discussions on



it, but they've just confused me more. And then this morning on my way to class, I passed by this group of people on the street corner carrying offensive signs. Yelling about how God hates this group and that group. Saying that we are all going to hell. Have you seen them before? They're just off campus by the coffee shop." John pauses for a second as Robert nods that he knows who John is talking about. "I don't know much but it seems from my time on Wednesday nights that you all from Terrace Hill are so much different than them. So, I came here intending to ask you what it means to be a Christian because I'm really confused."

"I'm sorry that you had to experience that this morning," Robert comforts. "There are a lot of people out there that talk about Christianity in a lot of ways that make me really uncomfortable and even ashamed."

"So, you don't agree with what they were saying?" John asks.

Robert swallows hard, "That's difficult to answer because I have never paid much attention to what they are saying. The way that they have chosen to say it makes me choose not to listen to them. But instead of talking about what others do or don't believe, I can share what I believe about Jesus, and the story of how I came to believe it."

John smiles and nods.

"So, as you know when I was your age, I was in the Army," Robert begins. "The 1980s were a good time to be in the military. We were not actively fighting any major wars. Vietnam was over, and we hadn't started Desert Storm yet. Although I didn't see any combat, there was this constant sense that at any moment the USA and USSR, or the Soviet

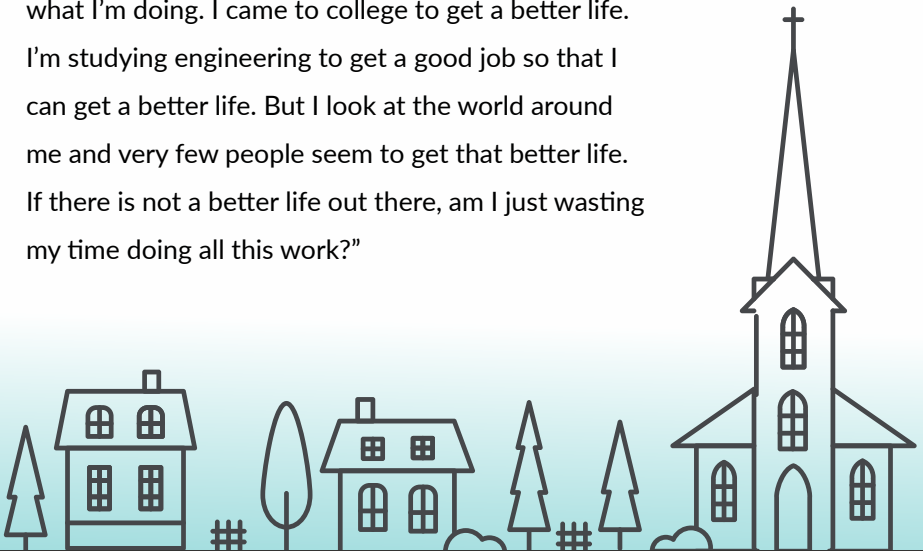


Union, could begin a devastating war. It would be World War III, and it would be nuclear. I was afraid. To me in my mind, it wasn't a matter of "if" we went to war but "when" we went to war. I felt a war with the Soviet Union was inevitable." Robert redirects for a moment, realizing that John wasn't even born when the Soviet Union dissolved. "Do you know what I'm talking about when I say the Soviet Union? Sometimes I forget about the generation gap."

John chuckles, "I've seen it in some of those classic movies, and I think we mentioned it in a history class in high school." John jokingly emphasizes "classic" and "history" to play along with Robert's comment about the generation gap.

Robert enjoys the barb and continues, "I joined the army to get out of the neighborhood because I was afraid of it. But then when I got to the army, my fear didn't go away. It just changed. This created a sense of hopelessness in me. I didn't know what to do. I was beginning to think things were not going to get better."

"I can relate," John interrupts. "Not to the army or the 80s, but to that sense of anxiety and hopelessness. I don't know what I'm doing. I came to college to get a better life. I'm studying engineering to get a good job so that I can get a better life. But I look at the world around me and very few people seem to get that better life. If there is not a better life out there, am I just wasting my time doing all this work?"



“Now, back then I probably would have told you I was a Christian.”

Robert moves on, “Where I grew up you were either a Christian or a Muslim, and I wasn’t a Muslim. But I never went to church or anything like that. I might have been an agnostic or an atheist, but really, I just didn’t care about God.” He pauses. “Until I did care.”

“I can’t exactly tell you why but because of all the fear and anxiety building up inside of me, one Sunday I decided to attend the chapel on base. There were about ten of us in there that day, including the chaplain. Not growing up in the church meant that I understood very little of the service. Sometimes we stood. Sometimes we sat. We sang as a group together. That was weird. I don’t remember a single thing the chaplain said during the sermon. All I remember was feeling even more confused than before.”

John interjects again, “You remember when I came to the Bible study that one night.” Robert nods his head yes. “Well, I hate to say this but that is exactly how I felt. I didn’t understand anything you all were talking about.”

“We talked about that as a group. We are going to be trying a different format with the Bible study moving forward. A format that is much friendlier to folks without a church background. Honestly, I had forgotten what it was like to be new to the Christian experience,” Robert agrees.

“But going back to my story. The chaplain came up to me after the service commenting that he had never seen me there before. And before

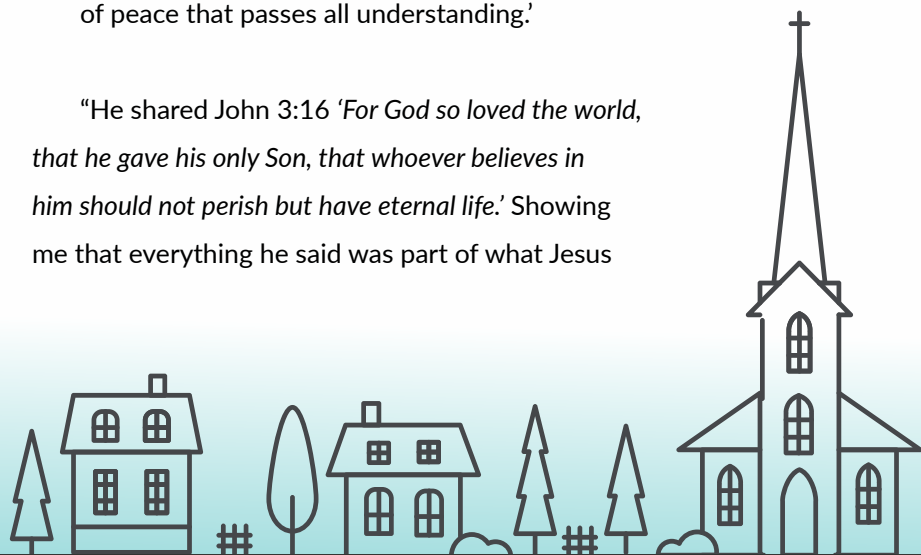


I knew it he was taking me out to lunch.” Robert motions to the table bringing the similarities to the forefront. “I am typically a very private person, but that chaplain got me talking about all that I was going through. He quietly listened to my story. Then when I was done, he calmly asked if I would like to hear about the peace that was available through Jesus Christ.”

“I was skeptical but agreed to listen. He then went on to share with me what he called the basics of the Christian faith. He said:

“God created us to be in a loving relationship with Him. But we disobeyed God’s rules, that’s called sin, and our sin destroyed our relationship with God. But God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for us so that our sins could be forgiven, and we could have a restored relationship with God. This relationship starts when we admit to God that we are sinners, believe in our hearts that Jesus died for our sins, and confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Having this restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ provides a sense of peace that passes all understanding.’

“He shared John 3:16 *‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.’* Showing me that everything he said was part of what Jesus



taught. Hearing it explained like that for the first time was all that I needed. I told the chaplain that I wanted that peace. And I asked what I needed to do to get it.” Robert continues excitedly, realizing that John is following along with every word he is saying. “The chaplain led me through a simple prayer. It was my first real prayer to God. The first of many. We said together:

Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner. I have done things that are wrong. I know that my sins have separated me from you. Please forgive me. I believe that Jesus died so that I can have forgiveness and a restored relationship with You. Lord, I want that. I want Jesus to be my Lord and Savior. Please save me from my sins and give me a new relationship with You. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

“That conversation with the chaplain and that short prayer was the most important moment of my life. It changed everything,” Robert announces. “I committed my life to Christ that day. A decision I have never regretted. But more importantly, Christ accepted my commitment and has kept me throughout the years. I said that prayer nearly 40 years ago, and God has been with me every moment since. God has been there when my life is going well. Even more so, God has been there through the hard times.”

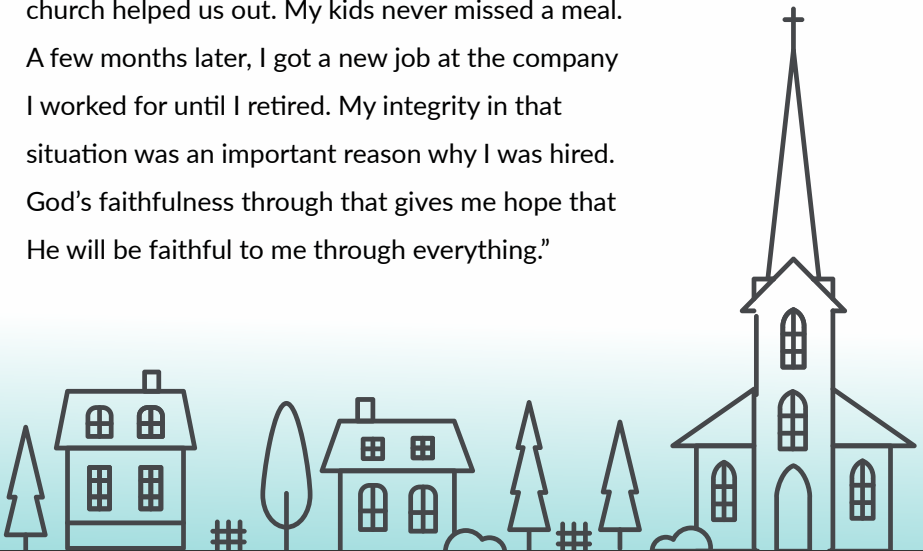
In a quiet voice Robert says, “When I have failed, when I have



struggled, when I have acted like an idiot, God has always been there. No matter how bad the world gets around me, I know that God is in control, and I know that He loves me. That knowledge is what has gotten me through the hard times, the easy times, and all the time in between.”

“What does that mean?” John asks. “Can you tell me a story about how following Jesus has made a real difference in your life? I’m an engineer. I need things to be concrete.”

“Sure,” Robert agrees. “I was married with two kids. I was working at my first engineering job after college. The company I was working for gave me the opportunity to design a new municipal building for a low-income neighborhood. It was my first time leading a project. About halfway through the project, I realized that we were being encouraged to cut corners in a way that drastically lowered costs but also made the building a safety risk. For me, it was an integrity issue. Because of the peace I had through Jesus, I spoke up. Before becoming a Christian, my fear would have never let me say something. Speaking up cost me my job. I got fired for doing what was right. But God was faithful. I wasn’t afraid. My wife stood by me even when I was unemployed. The church helped us out. My kids never missed a meal. A few months later, I got a new job at the company I worked for until I retired. My integrity in that situation was an important reason why I was hired. God’s faithfulness through that gives me hope that He will be faithful to me through everything.”



“So, it all worked out,” John concludes.

“Yeah, it all worked out,” Robert emphasizes. “But I want to highlight, the fact that my faith in Christ gave me the ability to stand up for what I knew was right. And my faith in Christ gave me the ability to be at peace even in that struggle. The fact that it all worked out, the fact that God was faithful has amplified my ability to be able to be at peace as I trust Him.”

“That’s what I want,” John responds. “All I have to do is say that prayer like you did?”

“You have to mean it,” Robert cautions. “The words of the prayer aren’t magic. What really matters is that you mean it in your heart.”

“I’m not sure I’m there yet. This is all so new to me,” John offers. “But I would like to keep talking about it. I have a lot of questions. What were the changes to the Bible study going to be like?”

“We are looking at a couple of study tools to help us teach those who are unfamiliar with the Bible. The first is called a **Discovery Bible Study**,” Robert replies. “In a Discovery Bible Study, you read a passage of the Bible and then work through four questions.

1. What does this story tell me about God?
2. What does this story tell me about people (or myself)?
3. If this is God’s word for my life, how will I obey it?
4. Who am I going to tell about what I’ve learned?

“The other tool is often called an **Inductive Bible Study Method**. I usually summarize it with three questions. What does the passage say? What does the passage mean? How do I apply it to my life? Like I said,



both of these tools can be geared toward those who haven't studied the Bible before.”

Shaking his head, Robert says, “Most of us from Terrace Hill have been part of the church for so long that we forgot what it is like to be new to the Bible. What you experienced in that first Bible study was a mistake on our part. It was designed for us and not for others. If you would be willing to come back, I’m pretty sure things would be better.”

“I’ll check it out. But to tell you the truth, I liked this. Would you be willing to meet with me again, one-on-one?” John asks sheepishly. “You wouldn’t have to buy lunch.”

“It would be my pleasure,” Robert smiles.



Go And Share – Chapter Six

ENCOURAGE

Mindset Shift:

We need to shift from focusing on all the reasons we can imagine why students are not interested, why universities are not welcoming, and the resources we may lack. We need to concentrate on who God has empowered us to be as individuals and as a congregation and how we are perfectly designed to reach students in our own special way with our personal stories. Jesus had his followers pray for the very common, everyday idea of *laborers for the harvest*. We need to shift from concentrating on who we aren't, to leveraging who we are in Christ. We need to shift from scarcity to authenticity.

Key Passages:

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

Although not included in the story, Paul's personal testimonies in **Acts 21-22, 24, and 26** are great models for how to prepare a personal testimony. In each of these passages, you can see Paul outline his life before meeting Jesus, how he met Jesus in a miraculous way, and then what his life is like after meeting Jesus.

Jesus' Example:

Jesus had his followers pray for the very common everyday idea of laborers for the harvest.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

- **Discovery Bible Study**
- **Inductive Bible Study Method**
- Although not mentioned in the story, **Springtide Research Institute** and **Barna** are collecting information on how young adults connect to religion and spirituality

ENGAGE

1. Learn the gospel. As a groups practice sharing the gospel with each other. The better you know the gospel the easier it will be to share it in everyday conversations in a relaxed and meaningful way.
2. Schedule at least one **Gospel Appointment** with a student this week.
3. If **Gospel Appointments** are something that you do regularly, take a student leader with you to encourage them to schedule **Gospel Appointments** of their own.
4. Take time this week to learn about young adults. Intentionally spend at least 30 minutes listening to them. Try to listen to how the gospel can connect to their lives.
5. Spend time listening to other followers of Jesus Christ. Get them to tell you their salvation stories. Listen for how many different ways people you know have come to Christ. Listen for how many different reasons people you know have come to Christ.

Next Chapter: Go And Proclaim – In preparation for the next chapter, think about the most creative way you have ever seen the gospel presented. What was so creative about it? Why do you remember it? How did it affect you?

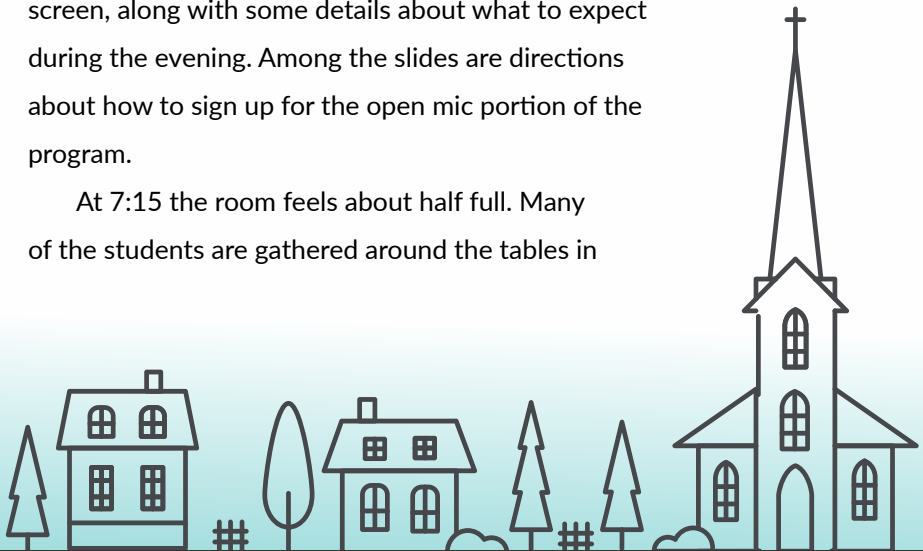
Chapter Seven:
GO AND PROCLAIM



Chapter Seven: Go and Proclaim

The room is a decent-sized multipurpose room almost filled with six round tables and eight chairs per table. Off to the side is a campus-catered buffet of good homestyle food; chicken and dumplings, green beans, and corn. Pre-sliced cake is for dessert. Tea, soda, and water are the beverage options. The front corner of the room has space taken up by instruments. A keyboardist and a guitarist are playing quiet mood music. There is a microphone off to the side. In the center of the front is a projection screen. Announcements about the Wednesday dinners and Bible study, the brand-new on-campus food pantry, and services at Terrace Hill Community Church scroll through on the screen, along with some details about what to expect during the evening. Among the slides are directions about how to sign up for the open mic portion of the program.

At 7:15 the room feels about half full. Many of the students are gathered around the tables in



conversation as the music fills the room with sound and the food fills the room with aromas. Becky, a student leader of the brand-new Christian group on campus, steps up to the microphone to formally begin their first official kick-off event on campus.

“Grace and Peace. Allow me to welcome all of you tonight.” Becky is doing great, but you can still hear a little bit of nervousness in her voice. “Thank you all for coming. We are so glad you are here. We are going to start eating now, but before that let me give you a run-down of what the evening will be like. In about 30 minutes at 7:45, we will start our open-mic portion of the evening. If you have any desire at all to share your talents with us, there are still a few sign-up slots available on the back table. We would appreciate any and every type of performance. Poetry, spoken word, rap, singing, instrumental, dancing (if there is enough room), drama, pantomime, are all welcome. Due to safety concerns archery and horseback riding are not.” Becky adds a little humor and gets a small laugh from the audience. “With that said, we want to promote a certain supportive vibe, and we request that your performances do not include vulgarity or profanity. As always let’s be good members of the Oak College community with what we say. After every performance, we want to be encouraging to the performer, so please applaud our courageous participants.”

After a small pause, Becky continues, “After our open-mic portion, we have invited Swifts to be our featured artist tonight. Swifts is a local rapper who has content that coincides with tonight’s theme of hope. He



will share two of his originals with us. If you like Swifts, take time to check out his content available on Spotify and Band Camp. The information will be on the screen behind me.”

“Then we will get into the discussion portion of our evening. Everybody will be encouraged to participate as we examine the idea of hope through the lens of our culture. We will discuss the depiction of hope in movies, books, songs, tv shows, etc. This will be our time to share. Your opinion is valuable and welcome. But during the discussion let us also respect and appreciate the opinions of others. At the end of our group discussion, two of us will come up and have the final word. John, who is a student here at Oak College, and Robert ,who is a member at Terrace Hill Community Church, will talk about the role hope has played in their individual lives, in their relationship to one another, and in their connection with God.”

“That will be the evening. Before I say a prayer asking God’s blessing on the food and the fellowship, I just want to give a shout out to the Student Support Services Office who provided the food for tonight. Be sure to pick up the flyer about their brand new, on-campus food pantry available to Oak College students who are experiencing food insecurity. Take a couple of flyers and pass them out to your friends. With all that said, let us pray.”

This is Terrace Hill’s big night. After a couple more months of serving the meals, Gospel



Appointments, and an on-campus Bible study that continued to struggle, the church was able to find five student leaders. Some of them, like John, were not even believers when they first met. The church members poured into those students. Those five leaders formed a student organization. And tonight is the launch of that group. Although most of the campus knows about the dinners, this is the official announcement that there is a Christian student organization on campus.

The student leaders and the church folk have been meeting for several weeks, planning. They could do anything. It was a running joke among them to say, “We’ve never done it that way before,” at everything. They had never done any of this before. What would it look like to specifically design an event to communicate the gospel to Oak College in a way that Oak College would hear it? The church leaders had some strong opinions. The students had some strong opinions. At many times those opinions disagreed.

In those meetings, everyone agreed that there must be food. Besides that, it seemed the conversation was at a stalemate until Pastor Williams asked one very important question. “What piece of the gospel do students need to hear the most?”

Without a pause, without thinking, John blurted out the single word, “Hope.”

“What do you mean by that?” Pastor Williams asked.

John collected his thoughts and began, “When Robert was talking to me, when he was telling me his story, when he was sharing the gospel



with me, all I was thinking was that he had hope. He had hope that he could change, that his life could be better. He had hope that the world could be a better place. He had hope, and I couldn't remember the last time I had hope. I couldn't remember the last time I met someone who had hope. It was the hope of the gospel that I needed to hear. I don't know about everybody, but I'm pretty sure there are a lot of Oak College students that need to hear about the hope of the gospel."

Pastor Williams took advantage of an important teaching moment. "Thanks for sharing that, John. There's something profound in what you just said. Let's assume that we are somewhat normal people and assume that the reasons we find the gospel to be meaningful are the same reasons others will." He pauses, "I agree with you that the hope you were looking for and found in the gospel is the same hope others at Oak need to hear about."

"I think we have our theme," Miss Bea concluded.

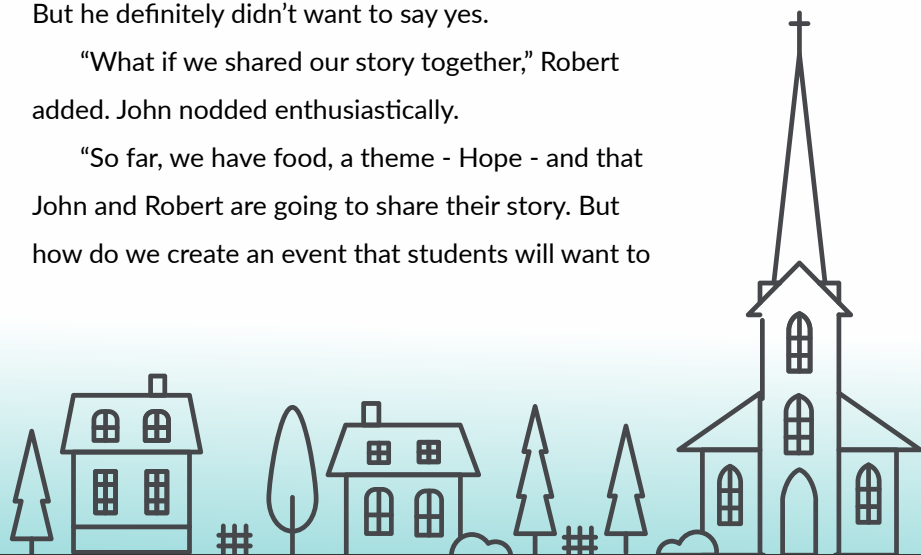
Pastor Williams gently asked, "John, would you be willing to share your story during the event?"

John looked scared. He didn't want to say no.

But he definitely didn't want to say yes.

"What if we shared our story together," Robert added. John nodded enthusiastically.

"So far, we have food, a theme - Hope - and that John and Robert are going to share their story. But how do we create an event that students will want to



come to and come back to?" Mrs. Russell asked.

Becky, one of the new student leaders looked at her notes. "I've been researching what people do to minister to students at other schools. There are tons of ideas. There's a Central Baptist Church right next to the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, Florida. Now they are close to campus so sometimes they will just set up a grill on their property and the smell of free food brings students. The other interesting thing is that the students in their church will do a hymn sing on the beach every other Sunday morning."

Miss Bea jokingly said, "I'm not sure that will work here. We don't have the beach."

"I know, I know. But more importantly, it worked for them because the students wanted it and led it. Something as old school as a hymn sing can work if the students are interested." Becky continued, "One of the most interesting event ideas I came across was from Provision Church in Monroe, N.C. They are in the same town as Wingate University. They have a duck race. The local fire department provides a large pool of water. The students are able to enter their own rubber duckies. Then it is a race to see who can blow their duck across the water the fastest. T-shirts are made. It is a big deal on campus. Again, I'm not saying we do a duck race," Becky preemptively redirected. "But we could be as creative as that."

Pastor Williams chimed in, "Did you know that there was a Baptist Collegiate Outreach Guide? I found it when I asked the BCM State Director for some ideas. It is out of print and the graphics make it seem to



be from the 1990's, but it has some really good ideas if you can find it." He passed around a used copy of the guide.

"These sound like good ideas but I'm not sure any of them are us. I'm not sure any of them do what we want to do." Mrs. Russell said as she flipped through the guide.

Robert offered, "Yeah, we want something that feels authentic to who Terrace Hill Community Church is. The students will know if we are just faking it."

"I think it has to highlight and lean on the involvement, talents, and gifts of our student leaders," Becky added. "It has to be something that feels authentic to Oak College. It has to be a meeting point between those three groups, the church, the student leaders, and the students as a whole, at least the students we are connecting with through the meals."

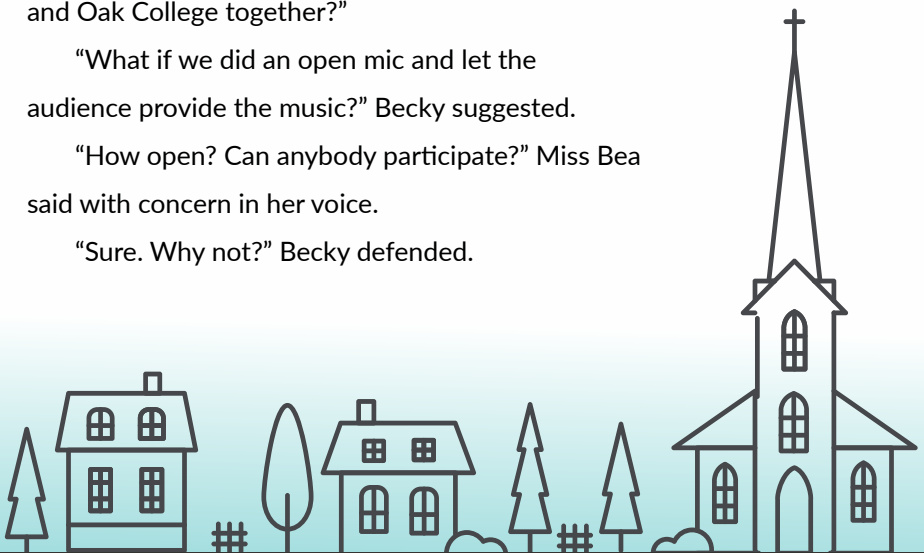
"There seems to be quite a few students with musical interest and talent that come on Wednesdays." Miss Bea commented. "I think we should do something with music."

"What kind of music? Not everybody likes the same thing," Robert retorted. "Is there music that would bring Terrace Hill and Oak College together?"

"What if we did an open mic and let the audience provide the music?" Becky suggested.

"How open? Can anybody participate?" Miss Bea said with concern in her voice.

"Sure. Why not?" Becky defended.



“You mean Christians and non-Christians? What if they share something we don’t agree with? What if they say something ungodly?” Miss Bea responded.

Mrs. Russell laughed, “They will. I mean in my Sunday school class every time I asked a question, I never knew what kind of answers I would get. But it was always so important to hear what they had to say. We would learn what the students really think. The event could be more of a conversation than a presentation.”

“But we have to make sure we share the truth of the gospel,” Miss Bea responded again.

Pastor Williams concluded, “If we end the night with John and Robert’s story, the gospel will definitely be shared. It can be set up as the final word on the topic of hope. This could be a way to balance listening to the students with proclaiming the gospel.”

He continues, “It has always fascinated me with how often Jesus used the question-and-answer method to engage people seeking to know more about Him. Both John 3, Jesus’ encounter with Nicodemus, and John 4, Jesus and the Samaritan woman, are filled with dialogue. Matthew 19:16-22 records a conversation between Jesus and a rich young man. There is a good possibility that this young man was in his twenties but that is just speculation. In that short exchange, Jesus and the young man go back and forth with questions and answers several times. Jesus is easily able to guide the conversation. If we come up with the right questions, we can have an amazing conversation that sets up John and Robert perfectly to



tell their stories and share the gospel.”

John stated, “I always just thought you would preach,” directing his comment toward Pastor Williams. “Do you mean that what I say is going to be the focus? That’s a lot.”

Robert added, “What we say,” in an encouraging voice.

Eventually, the group came to a basic outline of the event – food, open mic, guest artist, discussion, and final word. That outline turned into this event.

Becky shines as an MC. She moves the event along while encouraging everyone to be part of the journey. The open mic alternates between silly and deep. There were a couple of times when a student shares something they wrote themselves that gives the room a glimpse into their soul. Swifts seems to be the perfect artist. He is just a local Christian rapper that the guitarist knew from another church in town. One line of one of his songs hits hard. “The only hope is in the fact that things are not as they ought to be.” Serious questions drive the discussion. Who is the most hopeful person you know? When were you the least hopeful? What is hope? Where do we find hope? Why do we need hope? Clips from movies and quotes from famous individuals are interspersed with Bible verses to promote conversation. It is amazing how Becky coordinates everyone’s participation.

Now it is John and Robert’s turn. Robert starts talking about how his relationship with Jesus gives



him hope in all aspects of his life. He highlights the fact that his hope makes him want to tell others about Jesus. He hopes that many can find hope in Christ. Then he transitions into how he met John at the dinners.

That's when John takes over telling their story. John emphasizes the hope he saw in Robert. Robert's hope made him curious. John was surprised when Robert shared that his hope was rooted in his relationship with Jesus. That wasn't what John thought religion was about. John chokes up remembering his feelings when Robert said that a relationship with Jesus was available to anyone and everyone. Ultimately, it took a couple more conversations with Robert about Jesus, but John announces that he has committed to following Jesus. He smiles from ear to ear as he proclaims to the crowd that he now has the same hope that Robert has because he has the same relationship with Jesus as his Savior that Robert does.

Many in the audience applaud John's testimony. It seems to be a mixture of both the Christians and the non-Christians. Robert takes the microphone back from John and rhetorically asks the crowd if it is okay with them that he says the same prayer he asked John to say when he committed his life to following Jesus. Without waiting Robert begins, "Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, ..."

After the prayer, Robert asks anyone who said the prayer with him to talk to event leaders about it afterward. A student in the second row makes eye contact with John. John knows he needs to talk to them before the night is over.



Becky returns to the front. Final announcements are made, and their first event ends. Pastor Williams looks around the room realizing how much has changed since that handshake so many months ago in a pastors' prayer meeting.



Go And Proclaim – Chapter Seven

ENCOURAGE

Mindset Shift:

We need to shift from being shocked at how lost and broken this generation of students is to identifying the many ways in which they are uniquely open to the life-changing good news of the gospel. Jesus saw the crowds around him as *harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd*. We need to shift from bemoaning their lostness to celebrating their openness. We need to shift from pessimism to opportunity.

Key Passage:

Matthew 19:16-22 is a conversation between Jesus and a rich young man. There is a good possibility that this young man was in his twenties. In that short exchange, Jesus and the young man go back and forth with questions and answers several times.

The event in this chapter is intentionally designed after Pentecost from Acts 2 where multiple voices of the disciples are heard proclaiming the same truth of the gospel in different ways.

Jesus' Example:

Jesus saw the crowds as *harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd*.

Real Life Church Example:

Central Baptist Church, next to the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, set up a grill on their property to cook free food to connect with students, and the students in their church will do a hymn sing on the beach.

EMPOWER AND EQUIP

- As a local church, check with your local church networks to see if there are resources available for connecting to campus. If you are part of the SBC, check with your State Convention and contact your **State Director for Baptist Campus Ministries**.
- If have not found resources through your local networks many of the national campus ministry networks such as **CRU, InterVarsity,** and **CCO** have coaching available to help churches engage nearby campuses.
- A significant portion of this book is based on **The EXIT Manual** developed by the Illinois Baptist Convention in the early 2000s. The EXIT strategy consists of
 - ▶ E – the Essential part where you pray for students
 - ▶ X – the Christ part where you serve students
 - ▶ I – the Intentional part where you share your personal story
 - ▶ T – the Truth part where you publicly proclaim the gospel

ENGAGE

Work with your team to creatively engineer an event that has multiple voices sharing the gospel. Individual testimonies are powerful, and many people come to Christ through personal presentations of the gospel. But there is a unique experience when multiple followers of Jesus Christ unite together to publicly proclaim the message that we believe. What would it look like for your ministry to design an event that incorporates multiple voices testifying to the truth of the gospel in a creatively relevant way designed specifically for the unique context of your campus?

Next Chapter: Go - Only you can decide what comes next.

Acknowledgements

This book is a group effort from the members of the Multiplication Committee of the Baptist Collegiate Network (BCNet) over several years. Matt Middlecamp, Clayton Bullion, Barry Sproles, Garrett Harmon, Kevin Jones, Brian Musser, Kurt Shiver, and Beverly Skinner all contributed as members of the committee. Devon Bartholomew and Paul Worcester contributed as unofficial honorary members of the committee. We also thank Joe Graham for his efforts coordinating the BCNet in general and the Multiplication Committee specifically. Jon Rice, Jennifer Musser, and Shannon Baker all invested time reading, editing, organizing, formatting, and designing the book. Mike Slagle and Kyle Canty gave wise feedback along the way. Brian Musser was the primary writer.

I want to thank Kurt Shiver and the church leaders he interviewed:

- Jenny Caylor and Jack Marslender from Avondale Baptist Church near Phoenix, Ariz., and Estrella Mountain Community College
- Gus Hernandez from Reality Church in Miami, Fla., and the University of Miami
- Luke Anderson from Stonebrook Community Church in Ames, Iowa, near the University of Iowa
- Kelton Hinton with the Triangle East Baptist Association near Raleigh, N.C. reaching Johnston Community College among other schools
- Brad Wingler with Edinboro Community Church in Edinboro, Pa., near Pennsylvania Western University at Edinboro

- Johnathan Chan from Campus Community Church in Tucson, Ariz., on the campus of the University of Arizona
- Julie Deibert from Graystone Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Indiana, Pa., near Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- Lucas Almeida from Central Baptist Church in Melbourne, Fla., near the Florida Institute of Technology
- Marc Hill, State Director for Christian Challenge with the Arizona Mission Network of Southern Baptists
- Perkinsville Church in Boone, N.C., near Appalachian State University
- Cole Bohnsack from Provision Church in Monroe, N.C., near Wingate University
- Rodney Hawkins from First Baptist Church in Pulaski, Tenn., near the University of Tennessee Southern
- Ryan Carver from Gulf Coast Community Church in St. Petersburg, Fla., near University of South Florida, St. Petersburg

I would also like to thank:

- Stanley Williams from Southside Baptist Church in Lumberton, N.J., near the Mount Holly Campus of Rowan College at Burlington County
- Chuck Keiffer and Hair Kelley from the Foundry Church in Wallingford, Pa., near Widener University

Every one of these churches would be an excellent resource for someone interested in learning a unique perspective on how to engage a campus.

CollegeMinistry.com represents a network of Baptist collegiate ministries from across North America. Campus groups, church groups, and campus churches are ministering together to connect college students to God through Jesus Christ.

The Baptist Collegiate Network purpose statement is: To LEAD college students and others in the academic community to faith in Jesus Christ, to DEVELOP them as disciples and leaders, and to CONNECT them to the life and mission of the church.