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Taking Action

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The Student's Perspective

Christy Bryant

My parents have always been supportive of me, backing anything that I choose to do, however, they have never really understood my desire to be a part of a ministry in college that continues to teach me about my Savior and allows me to serve and interact with nonbelievers. I know I am not the only one who has ever had this experience and yet I do yearn with my whole heart that they would understand.

I recently heard an intriguing story that perhaps expresses it better than I ever could. The story is about a young minister in training, who was sent out for his first clinical counseling experience. He was sent to the hospital to speak with a woman who was classified as "terminally ill". This woman had all but given up on life. She had not spoken to anyone in months and upon arriving at her room, the young minister found the room dark and barren. There were no cards or flowers wishing the woman well, nor were the lights or television on. The woman was lying flat on her back staring at the ceiling. The young minister swallowed hard as he entered the room and introduced himself. The woman did not stir or even acknowledge his presence. The young minister thought to himself, "Why couldn't I have been given an easy case to start with?"

As he sat down next to the woman he tried to think of just the right words to say. He heard himself stumble and stutter as he tried to share with her the love that God had for her. That He loved her so much that He gave His only son to die upon the cross so that she might live. Still the woman didn't move. She didn't even blink. If she had not been hooked up to a monitor, the young minister would have sworn the woman was dead. Sweat began pouring over the young minister's face as he desperately tried to help this woman. He heard himself using all the old clichés that his professor had told him not to use and he wasn't even sure if he was making complete or coherent sentences. Finally, a nurse came in to give the woman her medication and the young minister left feeling very down.

He hadn't helped the woman one bit and he had been horrible. He began to doubt his ability to be a minister at all. It took the young minister several days to return to the woman's hospital room, but when he did he was astonished. As he approached the woman's room, he could see the room was lit up and he could hear voices laughing. Surely the woman must have died he thought to himself, because this is not the same room that I left the other day.

However, upon arriving at the room, he found the same woman sitting up in bed chatting with a nurse. The room was filled with flowers and cards. The woman eagerly greeted the young minister. She thanked him for his previous visit and what he had done for her. The young minister questioned her, expressing how awful he had been at their last visit. The woman laughed and agreed he had been awful. So awful in fact that she began to feel compassion for him. It was the first time she had thought about anyone beside herself in months. And after he had left she had cried for him. She had also reflected upon the words that he had said and realized that even in her darkness God was with her and that if her earthly body should die she would still have eternal life with God; things that she had forgotten when she found out she was ill.

The woman glowed as she spoke these words to him and when the young minister left, he left praising God. "I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power" Corinthians 2:3-5.

At this point you are probably wondering what this story has to do with the importance and need for campus ministry. The point is this, Generation X and its successors, which experts have yet to name, have invaded college campuses and unlike the baby boomer generation they have not grown up in an environment that valued and praised piety, godliness, and righteousness. Yes, our nation was built upon religious principles, our money even professes, "In God We Trust", but today the authority that the Christian church once had on the social structure of society has eroded to the point that we don't even allow God to enter into any public forum. Our nation, our government has placed God into a box and forbidden any public authority to teach about Him or His ways. Many schools do not even allow their students to say the pledge of allegiance anymore, while others have changed the words to exclude the reference to God. What a travesty to a nation that began because its people wanted religious freedom.

The Student's Perspective

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An even greater travesty is that the priorities of this nation have shifted from a desire to serve God to a desire to serve one's self. We are a nation that has become consumed by success, money, and material items and God doesn't seem to fit into our plans! And we wonder why our children carry guns and HIV, abuse, crime, and divorce have abounded. God is just a name of the past, not a person of today. There are millions of people around this country today who don't even know that God wants to have a personal relationship with them; that there is an answer to their pain and disparity. Hundreds of thousands of these individuals are college students.

Like the woman in the story, they too live in darkness day in and day out, unaware that there is someone who feels their pain and wants to end it; someone who wants to love them unconditionally. These nonbelievers need someone to show them God's love and God calls upon those who know Him to spread His good news. In His great commission Jesus makes this clear; "go make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age" Matthew 28:18-20. One can surely see from these verses that God is a living entity desiring to draw his people near to Him.

On college campuses this means that we need campus ministries like, ACT, to share with nonbelievers the love and hope that they have found in God. Unfortunately, as we have stated before, college students grew up in a generation that lacked social trust. As such, A.C.T. meets these nonbelievers where they are at, displaying God's love through service and prayer, while at the same time providing opportunities to those who want to know more about God and to serve their Savior. So, until every student on every college campus has accepted Christ as their personal Savior, we are always going to need campus ministries, like ACT, whose members desire to love and serve the Lord!

(Christy is a graduate student that came to B.G.S.U to pursue her master's degree. She became a part of A.C.T. during the second semester of last year.)

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From The Campus

Bowling Green State University

Summer time for ACT at B.G.S.U. is not the quiet time that many people might imagine. There are many activities still going on. This summer ACT has taken two mission teams to Haiti. One was in May right after school was out and the other was in July right after the July 4th celebration. On both trips, the majority of the short-term missionaries were going in for the first time. As usual, those who made the trip had their lives changed. We always pray that during each trip there will be at least one person who will seriously begin thinking about mission work. Including this year, God has been faithful in answering that prayer.

On Tuesday nights, we have a group of anywhere from 15 to 25 who get together for a cookout followed by a time of worship, prayer, and study. This summer we have been looking at "Spiritual Disciplines." It has been a very challenging study as we are searching for ways to deepen our relationship with our heavenly Father.

Summer also provides valuable time for one on one study with students as well as some "hanging out" time that allows for some valuable "discipling" time.

Summer time is also a time when we prepare for the upcoming school year. An important part of that preparation is evaluating the past year. Knowing how to evaluate is always very difficult. Because you have students for at the most four maybe five years, you are constantly starting over again. We have found that determining the success of campus ministry can only be evaluated after students have been graduated and are living out in the "real world" (as they like to call it) for four or five years. How active are they still in Kingdom business is the important question. A campus ministry is like the farm club system in baseball. We are training and preparing "servants" for ministry in "the real world".

Last year was on of those rebuilding of "leadership" years. By the beginning of the second semester, most of those new leaders were in place. We are excited about this coming school year because of that. We will again have our main meeting (Campus Worship) on Wednesday nights on campus. We will also be having Bible studies on campus as well as at the Campus House. There will be a weekly leadership training Bible study plus monthly leadership meetings and training sessions. We have already been able to make contact with several freshmen students.

We have several outreach events planned such as the food giveaways. This provides us with an opportunity to literally meet several hundred students during an evening. During the last week of school the "BG News", the BGSU student newspaper printed an article titled "101 Great Things About Attending B.G.S.U.". Number 5 on the list was "Free Hotdogs at the Christian House Across from Founders". That helped us to evaluate that aspect of our outreach ministry. Students know that they can come to the campus house just as they are, be accepted for who they are, and learn about God's love that has no strings attached.

As we would evaluate "success" in this light, we have been reminded several times over the last couple of weeks of God's faithfulness in our efforts. We have had several alumnae visit us. Two weeks ago, Karen Gainer stopped by for a visit. She spent a year overseas and is back in the States for additional training to go into Missions full time. Erik Marshall, an alumnus who was graduated from B.G.S.U. a year ago, is in the area raising support to return to Haiti to continue teaching in a Christian school. Last weekend, we met with Seth and Allison Lindemann. Seth was just graduated from Lincoln Christian Seminary. This week, Kate Woods came by for a visit. She leaves in August for her second overseas missionary assignment as a teacher of English as a Second Language. Also this week, we ate breakfast with Mike Deibert. He is home for the summer after teaching in a Christian school in Nicaragua. He will be returning in August. Jenna Campbell, a May, 2003 graduate, is raising support to go to Haiti and be a teacher for the missionary's children and work in the orphanage. Rebecca Coder, who stayed behind in May to experience life on the mission field, returned with the July trip and is preparing to move to Haiti next January. We receive weekly emails from Nicole Lloyd who is serving as a mission team leader for the summer. She is traveling throughout Panama. Over the last month we have received e-mails from Holly and Noel Garrett seeking help on a mission trip to Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Both are A.C.T. alum and have served in Haiti after going on several short-term mission trips. Holly was graduated this spring with a Masters Degree in Missions from Cincinnati Bible Seminary. If our standards of evaluating are legitimate, God is doing wonderful things through the ministry of ACT at BGSU.

We ask for your prayers for our continued preparation for the next school year. We want to be prepared, but we do not want to be so prepared that God has no room to lead us into some new directions, new ministries, new ways of outreach, and new ways to live out our faith. Pray for our student leaders that they will be able to balance their schoolwork and the ministry obligations. Pray that finances for both ACT's General Fund and ACT at BGSU 's student fund will be adequate for the needs of the ministry this year. Pray that the campus ministers will be good examples of what it means to be a servant of Jesus.

What Can You Do?

Pray for us!!!

Become an A.C.T. Prayer Partner

Send us names and addresses of students at BGSU or UT

Partner with us for a food giveaway or tailgate party

Invite us to your church to share A.C.T.'s ministry.

Have an A.C.T. day at your church

From The Campus

The University of Toledo

Highlights from the Spring

All-night Prayer Meeting — Early in the semester, several students and I planned an all-night prayer meeting for A.C.T. Little did we know that 30 people from *other* Christian organizations and churches would also attend. We prayed through the night, worshipping God, asking Him to change our hearts, our campus, and our city to make it more like He wants it.

"Science and Christ" Seminars — UT is a big science school, and with the increasing intellectual rub between science and religion, there is a need for Christians to be well educated on the issues, and there is an opportunity for more scientists to embrace faith in Christ. A series of discussion groups were started that dealt with some key topics: evolution, gene research, and stem-cell use. We invited guest lecturer, Dr. George Murphy, both a theoretical physicist and an ordained Presbyterian minister, to come and speak with us. We also watched a talk given by Dr. Francis Collins, head of the government's Human Genome project and a committed Christian. Many of us were enlightened about a variety of science topics and how they mixed with faith.

Plans for the Fall

My first year here started slow, but after a couple semesters we have begun to see real growth and community here at A.C.T.

We started last fall with two members, my roommate and myself. Anyone who came around for Bible study or fellowship consisted of our personal acquaintances.

After a year of ministry our contact list has grown to over *30 people*. Many are regulars here at the house; many come on a weekly basis to some of our main meetings. Others only occasionally attend, but have nonetheless found a place for themselves here in the ministry.

God has built up a real sense of friendship and community at the Campus House. Several students, passionate about God and serving Him, are key players in God's plans for the fall. We are not sure yet just what all those plans might be.

As the summer has started and new freshmen students are beginning to come for orientation, we are seeing some great potential for growth. 145 new students interested in joining or knowing more about A.C.T have contacted us.

God has blessed the ministry here with a wonderful Campus House that serves as our 'headquarters' and as a place of fellowship and service. The students and staff of A.C.T. have been thinking of new and better ways to use this blessing to its fullest and through the help of supporters like you, we are renovating the House this summer. Here's the bulk of what we are doing to make room for the growth:

Worship Room — We'd like to put in wall-to-wall, cushioned benches around the perimeter of our living room to accommodate more students for our weekly worship nights during the school year.

Prayer Room — We're renovating the spare bedroom and reserving it for our most important ministry: prayer. After a new paint job and a few comfortable seats, it will be ready for use.

Coffeehouse — We're planning on having 'Sacred Grounds' at the Campus House this fall, a bimonthly coffeehouse, complete with live music and free java. This will really give students a chance to invite more of their friends over to the House.

Patio Area — We're making a pebble patio / sitting area out in the front of the House, complete with garden benches and a grilling area. Great for cookouts and tailgates this Fall!

Special thanks to everyone who has already supported us through prayer and finances. Please continue to pray that myself and the student leaders will be filled with God's Spirit and that a spirit of prayer and revival will be born in us this Fall as we continue to provide a Christian family for the students at UT.

Annual Meeting

September 27, 2003

**Come, meet the students and the staff, see what God has been doing
and hear about our plans for the future**

More details to come