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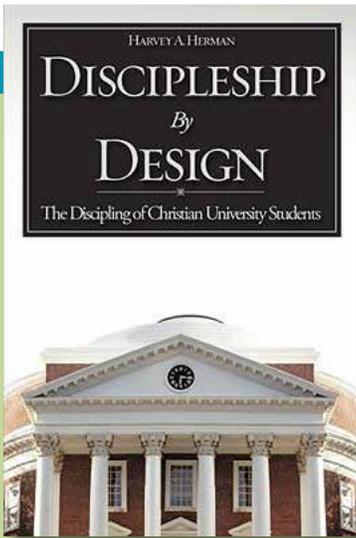
# DISCIPLESHIP AND FACEBOOK

## INTENTIONAL AND RELATIONAL AN INTERVIEW WITH BRADY BOBBINK

**DENNIS:** *Pollsters report that many in our society claim they are born again and attend church, yet they display behavior that is no different than those who have not committed their lives to Christ. Why are there increasing numbers of Christians who seem unchanged by their faith?*

**BRADY:** The disturbing fact is, there are many people that claim to follow Christ that don't just seem unchanged, they are unchanged. The root cause is the failure of leadership in our communities of faith to make clear what it means to be a true disciple and a disciple-making Christian. Large numbers of those who attend church have simply embraced a culturally-laden idea of Jesus that leaves their personal values and actions unchallenged and unchanged. But following and yielding to Jesus as Lord and teacher is the fundamental biblical reality of being a disciple.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 >



## DISCIPLESHIP BY DESIGN

The Discipling of Christian University Students

by Harvey A. Herman

Order your copy from Amazon.com

Jesus' discipleship begins with a personal relationship and an invitation to join a missional community. This book is a proven tool for training small group leaders and fostering a culture of discipleship.



**CHI ALPHA CONNECTION**  
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## DIRECTOR'S DESK



## REACHING STUDENTS REQUIRES BOTH/AND

No one size fits all as we determine ways to impact students with the Good News. It cannot be either/or. It is both/and.

The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Chi Alpha is experimenting with the "simple" church model which calls students to apply missionary methods to a particular group of students on campus (engineering students, art students, business majors, athletes, computer science students, international students,...) and becoming a "simple" church—a witnessing, discipling community to a specific cluster of students.

Athletes with their rigorous practice and game schedules prevents them from being involved in a regular Chi Alpha ministry. Chi Alpha staff become chaplains to the football, baseball, or volleyball teams. Fraternity and sorority clubs are an affinity group that requires you to be one of them. And reaching freshmen students every year is a priority.

Chi Alpha serves the Colleges of the Fenway by offering different types of meetings on a rotating basis to attract a diversity of students and relate to them in different ways. Students from multiple campuses gather on one campus. They desire to help all students grow closer to God, and thus have an approach to do just that.

Western Washington U Chi Alpha has reached thousands of students through years of having a culture of discipleship. They disciple students in a relational context in small groups and one-on-one. The growing believer helps nurture the younger believers. Small groups address the need for more intimate, personal interaction between students, and a consistent relationship in which both the teaching of Jesus Christ (information) and the application of these teachings (formation) takes place in the believer's life.

University students are not all the same. Chi Alpha creates entry points and contexts where students can be introduced to Christians and Christianity. We use every means possible ("simple" church, core groups, life groups, cells, meals, and social activities) for students to experience Jesus Christ and our community. Ultimately our desire is for students to grow in their commitment to Christ, to the body of Christ, and to the work of Christ in the world. We are reaching students.

# DISCIPLESHIP AND FACEBOOK



**DENNIS:** *The term “discipleship” is used in so many ways today. How do you define discipleship in the context of university ministry?*

**BRADY:** Discipleship is the intentional relational process through which a person’s mind, heart and will are reshaped through the living reality of Jesus and His Word. To be a disciple-maker is to actively prepare and intentionally participate in the winning, training, and sending of a person in your sphere of influence.

The challenge we faced in the beginning of our ministry was to take Jesus seriously about teaching them “everything which I have commanded you.” To teach could mean simply to proclaim openly in some large gathering, and we were energetically and very successfully doing that.

Mere public preaching and teaching would be ineffective if left to carry out the transmission of the faith by itself. In studying the Gospels, it became clear to me that Jesus’ approach to disciple-making was intentional, personal, and interactive. We simply began to try and do what we saw the Master doing and this led us to focus on small groups and one-on-one ministry.

**DENNIS:** *What end result do you want to see in a student that is discipled?*

**BRADY:** The apostle Paul says it with great clarity when he speaks of our growing up and becoming mature in our Lord. I aim to help build into each student the vision, disciplines, and skills needed to continue in their growth and service to Jesus, His people, and His world. Our day-to-day ministry is deeply influenced by the questions

and concerns that students are facing at the university. But our vision extends to a concern for what these students will be like when they are forty or fifty, married, and in the broader world.

**DENNIS:** *There is an increase in discussion on how the spiritual journey unfolds. Some have suggested evangelism and discipleship are one in the same. Historically, evangelicals and Pentecostals have emphasized harvest and decision and not so much discipleship. Comment on these ideas and when we know discipleship is occurring.*

**Large numbers of those who attend church have simply embraced a culturally-laden idea of Jesus that leaves their personal values and actions unchallenged and unchanged.**

**BRADY:** Jesus’ own words say that we are called to declare the gospel of Jesus to those who have not heard or understood. It is equally clear that we are to teach all the purposes and commands of our Lord. Jesus calls both of these actions by his followers “making disciples.”

To bring people to the new birth and not intentionally mentor them into stability and maturity is akin to having a baby and then giving it milk once a week but leaving it to fend for itself the rest of the week. On the other hand, to grow people into ever-increasing knowledge of the Scripture that does not result in people who are eagerly doing the mission of making Jesus known is analogous to spending years engineering a car only to find that when it comes off the assembly line, it looks great but it doesn’t run.

Central to our understanding of discipleship is that the person being mentored matures. Discipleship is taking place as young followers take real steps to becoming capable ministers of Christ. The writer

# NOISE



**SUBWAY TROLLEY CARS, HONKING CARS, AND AMBULANCE SIRENS** characterize some of the noise in the Fenway neighborhood of Boston, where college campuses overlap and collide with local businesses and residences and also with each other. Our Chi Alpha ministry here is based at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design, the only public art college in the nation. The thrust and focal point of all our activities on campus is our Tuesday night main group meeting, where we are also joined by students from Berklee College of Music and Northeastern University, creating a group diverse in interests, ethnicity, and backgrounds.

“It is important for us to recognize that students of the emerging generation resist categorization,” explains my co-director, Pat O’Donel. “They—both believers and non-believers—are a complex mixture of believing, doubting, and seeking. Therefore we strive to create an environment in which this complex mixture is explicitly affirmed and addressed: affirmed as a valid way of approaching reality, and addressed through activities that tangibly speak to all the aspects of who these students are. We do not conceive of events as being for ‘those who are Christians’ and ‘those who are not Christians.’”

As we strive to help all students (believers or not) to grow closer to God and to create a supportive spiritual community on campus, we have two main goals: first, to develop relationships with those who do not know Christ (which is how we conduct evangelism), and second, to challenge Christian students to a missional lifestyle. Since we are not the local church, and because our target group (college students) is so narrow, in practice this means that we must carefully choose which ecclesiastical structures to replicate.



## “THEY {STUDENTS} — BOTH BELIEVERS AND NONBELIEVERS — ARE A COMPLEX MIXTURE OF BELIEVING, DOUBTING, AND SEEKING.”

With all of this in mind, we have chosen a four-week rotation for our main group meeting. Two of the meetings each month are devoted to a more typical Christian service, where we have Bible teaching and worship. Beyond the obvious need for such meetings for our Christian students, this kind of event introduces nonbelievers to important aspects of what it means to belong to Christian community: the study of Scripture, the worship of God, and the care for one another in prayer. This semester we are studying the different types of Psalms (hymns, laments, kingship Psalms, etc.).

But what about those students who would—for whatever reason—never even consider attending such a meeting? In order to reach these students, we must preach the gospel in other ways. And so one of our main group meetings each month addresses the intersection of popular culture and religious faith, using the popular television show *The Colbert Report*, a satire of conservative political talk shows. A few days prior to the event I searched recent *Colbert* episodes for interviews conducted on the show that confront themes related to worldview; topics we have already examined include racism, materialism, and the nature of good and evil. At the actual event I typically use three such interviews from the show, providing a brief introduction before watching each clip. I then conduct a guided, open discussion based on prepared questions, interjecting with a brief explanation of the biblical response to each question. The discussion time is invaluable in revealing both the gaps and connections in our students’ worldviews.

Finally, for our fourth meeting of the month, we further meet students’ needs for relationship and engage in one of our most effective forms of evangelism: we simply host a big community meal. We provide the bulk of the meal, with students and volunteers also contributing, and host it in an area of the MassArt student center

that is one of the most public areas on campus. We start the meal with a short prayer and then just eat and talk for about an hour, inviting anyone who walks by to join us. The community meals provide an opportunity to engage in conversation and to begin or deepen relationships, and it is often during this time that students learn to believe that we are safe and without ulterior motives. Because of this regular, public service to the campus community, we have earned trust with both staff and students; this trust is of course the prerequisite for any future reception of the gospel message. The importance of the community meal cannot be stressed enough: last week at our meal I reconnected with two new students who met us at our Christmas party last semester, and also made plans to meet with a Catholic student who wants to know more about the biblical view of women in response to a class she is taking at Emmanuel College. In fact, we believe that this simple practice of hospitality may be the most crucial aspect of what we do on campus.



**Katie Cory** grew up in Rochester, NY, surrounded by lots of excellent Italian-American restaurants and Greek diners. She graduated from Boston University with a degree in bilingual education and taught English as a second language in the Boston Public Schools before entering full-time campus ministry. Today she is in her sixth year with Chi Alpha and working with students in an area of Boston called the Colleges of the Fenway.

Katie has a passion for cultures and languages and desires to see students bring the light of the gospel back to their own communities and nations. She is especially excited about the great concentration of students and elite schools in the Boston area. In her free time she likes to walk around Boston, try new restaurants, and have coffee with friends.

of Hebrews bemoans the fact that some of the people in his audience should be able to teach others but in fact were stunted in their growth. Immaturity is a negative in the Scripture. Maturity is the virtue and outcome that is sought through biblical discipleship.

We are tempted to think that because we do lots of programs that attract crowds and keep folks busy, we are being effective. But as leaders, we must evaluate whether a given program actually reinforces the foundational purposes of Jesus.

**DENNIS:** *Certainly our world and university students have changed in the three to four decades of your university ministry. How have you adapted your leadership in the craziness and hurriedness of our world and among today's students who "want it now and want it all"?*

**BRADY:** I agree that our world has changed over the years that I have served as a campus pastor. One of the challenges of spiritual leadership is to be careful to discern the faddish changes from the fundamental.

Our history as a community is marked by innovation and creativity. But we do not aim to be creative for creativity's sake. We aim to innovate and be creative only to the degree that it enhances the purposes, impact, and values of our Chi Alpha community.

The level of divorce and abuse in our students' pre-college years is a fundamental shift, as is the explosion of the technological gadgets that are now part and parcel of the well-equipped university freshman. Add the twenty-four-hour-a-day entertainment, whether morally harmful (porn, etc.) or not - all of it endlessly accessible without even having to leave your room. These changes challenge us as campus pastors to be insightful, equipped, and courageous if we are to help today's students navigate the numerous distractions and addictions that are marketed in the pop culture.

Of course, the assumption is that we must adapt our leadership or die. The challenge is where, when, and why adapt. I use e-mail and Skype to enhance my ability to communicate more personally and rapidly with past students and friends who are flung around the world. But I am also aware that these and other devices can be huge time consumers and distractions from personal, face-to-face caring.

I know both students and ministers who spend hours each week updating their Facebook or blog sites and surfing the Web but complain of not having enough time to serve in intentional mentoring of others.

Or consider the impact of texting. It is not uncommon to see students texting during worship. At the same time I have seen a real change in the depth of awe that students hold toward the Lord and their ability to enter into a focused and meaningful time of worship. Are the two connected?

Adaptation can move us in a good and helpful direction but it can also move us away from fundamentally proven disciplines and truths.

I seek to prayerfully adapt in response to things that likely will increase our impact on students' spiritual lives.

I am also actively attempting to avoid being a reactionary to all things new, while at the same time seeking to avoid being part of the problem. In a world that is hurried and harried, I continue to carefully

**I know both students and ministers who spend hours each week updating their Facebook or blog sites and surfing the Web but complain of not having enough time to serve in intentional mentoring of others.**

consider and grow in my keeping a place of silence and Sabbath and expect our staff and interns to do the same for their own sake and the sake of the students.

This commitment to living the ancient disciplines and values of Christ's people can and should be applied to many areas of day-to-day life. What I find disconcerting is the serious reflection and conversation about the impact of technology.

**DENNIS:** *If you could speak to every college and university student in America, what is one thing you want to say?*

**BRADY:** I would want to express the hope that their young lives might begin to experience the same healing love, energizing purpose, depth of joy, and lasting hope that is in my life since responding to Jesus' wondrous call to "come and follow me," a call I first heard and embraced as a student at the university.



**Brady Bobbink is campus minister at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA. He was a member of the small group of students that began the campus ministry at Western Washington University in 1972. Thirty-six years later, both the campus ministry and Brady continue to impact the secular university at WWU and around the world.**

**Embracing and implementing discipleship principles nationwide has contributed more than anything to Chi Alpha's fruitfulness and multiplication on campus. We recognize that Brady's personal-life example, his teaching ministry, and the implementation of discipleship principles at WWU have established discipleship as a foundational principle in Chi Alpha's mission and values.**

**Brady is married to Shirley and they have four children: Stefany and Stacy, who are both married to past students of the ministry (Dan and Mark); Micah, who works in the publishing sector; and Seth, a junior in high school. Brady and Shirley are grandparents to eight grandkids. Along with his love for his Lord and his family, Brady loves to read, take long walks with Shirley, and ride his bike.**

# CHI ALPHA EXPERIMENTS WITH "SIMPLE" CHURCHES

BY GREG SILKER,  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA-TWIN CITIES XA DIRECTOR

The University of Minnesota, the largest university in the nation, is a spiritual wasteland where only a fraction of the students know and serve Jesus.\*

Our campus ministry team formed here about four years ago. My wife and I had been on campus prior to that, trying to buy an abandoned fraternity building that we hoped to transform into a street level coffeehouse that would function as the hub of a Jesus community.

In the Gospels, Matthew gathered his "Jesus friends" and his "sinner friends" and let Jesus do His thing. Our goal was to create a place similar to this. We felt God wanted to create an example of a Kingdom endeavor that students could use as an encouragement to their own God-given dreams.

After we completed Bordertown Coffee, we felt lost. We had done what God told us to do, but we had no clue what to do next. As I prayed and waited on God to give me direction, He gave me two things: a more specific job description and a vision of the next step. God called us to plant a Witnessing Discipling Community in every subculture of the university.

Witnessing Discipling Communities (WDC's) support one another in the Word and prayer and reach out to their peers in redemptive friendships. They are simple church communities that multiply.

**There were several things that led us to a WDC approach.**

**1. Subcultures.** Our campus is too big and fragmented to be reached through Word and Worship meetings. We would feel very successful with 500 students in a rocking Word and Worship meeting, but we would not even be scratching the surface of our campus of over 50,000 students. We felt God was calling us to look at the campus as a collection of people groups. The only way to reach our campus is to reach its subcultures.

**2. God's Hand.** We looked at our attempts and saw that subculture-specific communities were thriving. One student had a vision to plant a work in the business school. Another student started six language conversation groups for students who seemed to flourish with coaching. One of the most idiosyncratic WDC's was a reading group on *The Brothers Karamozov*. All of our successes were apostolic, entrepreneurial and led by key non-staff members.

**3. Team.** I long to be part of a team, a close-knit group of brothers and sisters that truly share life together and strategize to

reach their piece of the world. The rest of our team feels the same way. If our staff can't be fruitful without being part of a WDC, neither can our students.

**4. Church after college.** Students often flounder or at least fade into a more passive Christian life after college. We feel the need to disciple students in a Witnessing Discipling Community mode of life that they can reproduce with or without support. And we want them to see this kind of community as the only natural way to follow Jesus.

**5. The faith and gifts of our team.** I believe that God intends to plant a WDC in every subculture of our campus. I also feel that our team is best at mobilizing other missionaries who can plant these Witnessing Discipling Communities.

We seem to plant two different things: WDC's that function as simple churches and those that function as ministries serving a specific purpose. Our team operates as the support base for team members who are led to fulfill either function.

Our team has been highly impacted by Luke 10 and the "Person of Peace" approach Jesus describes. We have also become much more dependent on the Holy Spirit and His work in the supernatural as essential to reaching our campus. We use the Bible itself as our core curriculum and are more concerned with helping students read and obey the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I believe we are seeing the beginnings of a new move of God. People have prayed for and loved this campus for a long time. We are their heirs just as we are heirs to the spoils of Jesus' cross.

Most importantly, we believe that we are doing what God wants us to do—start a multiplying movement of student churches and ministries. We have to believe that Jesus' Church, with His Spirit, can spontaneously multiply. We long to see it.

**Greg is very proud of his four great kids and loves being with them more than anyone—except his wife, Barbara, who helps him have an ever-growing understanding of Jesus' love for His bride. Greg loves helping mobilize people in their callings. He makes the most of his living photographing boats and underwater life.**

\*UMN-Twin Cities has always had a large student enrollment and has remained in the top 5 enrollments in the nation. Today they have 50,883 students, and AZ St U has 68,897 students and Ohio State U who has also been at the top has 52,568 students. Please do not tell Greg ASU is larger.

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