

CONNECTION

chi alpha

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REACHING THE CAMPUS TRIBES

BY BENSON HINES

(This excerpt from *Reaching the Campus Tribes* has been edited for space. Used by permission.)

A model for understanding college ministry is to approach college ministry as missions.

Like world missionaries, campus missionaries not only introduce Christ to the unsaved but they also help bring Christians to maturity, shape the worldview of Christ-followers, raise up and train lifelong leaders, glorify God throughout local regions, and work to establish lasting, influential outposts of Christ's Kingdom to permanently serve these mission fields.

One clear reality that emerges about different college campuses is that they are, in fact, different. Each campus – from the community college down the street to the large state school – has its own context and culture, and these are fundamental elements that should influence how Christians reach each mission field. In other words, college campuses are a lot like tribes.

As college ministers realize that their work is missionary work, they experience immediate hope, value, and improvement to the practice of college ministry.

Like any tribe, each campus has a particular context that affects the ways it is best reached. For example, large metropolitan areas, mid-sized cities, and true college towns are all separate contexts that require different college ministry approaches.

Each campus has its own tribal culture, too. Traditions, ethnic diversity, academic rigor, and campus policies also affect the culture of a campus tribe. The key principle here is that each campus should be approached and studied in ways that acknowledge its contextual and cultural individuality.

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CHI ALPHA CONNECTION

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DIRECTOR'S DESK



INFLUENCE THROUGH HUMILITY

When we consider the opportunity to communicate the good news, the university campus may well be one of the most fruitful contexts for evangelism and discipleship. In our cover story, Benson Hines defines campus ministry as missions, and as such, it provides a place to introduce students to Christ and see them come to maturity.

Chi Alpha believes this and models this through the commitment to form missional communities on campus. We believe the best means for students to come to faith and maturity in Christ is through exposure to a group of students, fervently committed to the God of the Bible, to one another, and to the work of Christ in the world.

College students are at a life stage where they are more receptive than at any other time in their lives. As they search for meaning and purpose in life, the wide array of beliefs, lifestyles, and ideas in the campus environment shape the students' worldview, including the view of the origins of man. Dr. Michael Tenneson's sidebar on origins (page 5) demonstrates the differing opinions on the origins of life, even among Christians. The campus, as an institution whose function is to create a forum for ideas, allows for free discussion on this topic.

What an opportunity and setting we have to share the good news! In Acts 17:22-34, the apostle Paul relates to the Athenians on Mars Hill in a way that is similar to today's students and campuses. He spoke their language and used their preoccupation with transcendent deity and an unknown god to explain the gospel.

Dan Guenther (page 4) poses a challenge to Christian students to influence the university through prayer and humility rather than defensiveness and debate. We want to communicate the gospel through a fresh apologetic, capitalizing on the premise that the campus is a prime forum for open debate whose context demands reality, solid presentation of facts, and confidence in the message.

Overcoming society's presupposition that everything is manufactured, including Christianity, and finding the most effective place and time to utilize open and nonthreatening dialog and present the gospel as Truth will raise us up as effective ambassadors in the university world.

Dennis Gaylor is the national director of Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, USA.



Since tribes can be so unique and the problems faced in reaching them can be so large, strategy is important for reaching them best. Yet many Christians still view college ministry as basic Christian Education instead of missions, so strategy may be placed on the back burner – if it’s considered at all – while we simply try something and hope students come to us. But that model doesn’t fit very well with the way campus reaching actually works today.

Christians want our world missions efforts to reach people for years and decades to come. When we send a missionary to a foreign land, he may need to spend time upfront planning a mission and laying its foundation. As a result, it is possible he will come back a year later with little in the way of actual numbers to report.

If a college minister reports the same thing to his boss after the first year, he might be looking for a new job the next day. But understanding college ministry as missions means recognizing that a strong mission to a campus will probably take time to develop and bear obvious fruit. Expecting quick growth – including numerical growth – is a big (but common) error.

College ministry generally needs two or three years to form its identity, strategy, core audience, and campus reputation. But this is not simply a wholesale dismissal of numbers as a measurement of success. The key with these parallel ministries – world missions and college ministry – is to examine the numbers in light of a real understanding of how these specialized types of ministry work. A desire

to reach college students must be matched with a willingness to wait – just as we are willing to give worldwide missions efforts a chance to thrive.

Just as newer ministries are often too harshly judged based on their small size, some established ministries seem to assume too quickly that their relatively large size, longevity, or level of support automatically indicates health and quality.

Because they do face a rapidly changing audience (with nearly complete turnover every four to five years), college ministry leaders and supporters should plan on a lifetime of strategic modifications in response to changing students, a changing campus, a growing understanding of the tribe, and God’s work within the ministry and its leaders.

It is notable that Campus Crusade for Christ, probably the most thriving college ministry in America, has traditionally started its campus ministries with entire teams. This powerful tactic of high initial investment to see the best eventual ministry results corresponds with world missions efforts.

Leaders need room to think and explore and plan, especially at the start of a new or replanted college ministry, so it’s frustrating that this is the time Christians are least likely to invest. Instead, we often choose a “wait and see” approach to funding college ministry efforts. This approach simply does not correspond with the reality or needs of most college ministries. A certain level of investment is needed before true success is seen.

College ministers are missionaries and this is a special environment that requires specialized approaches. Just as a foreign missionary would have some practice and training in missions work, anyone undertaking campus mission efforts must likewise become a specialist. This includes seeking out wisdom for the task, approaching it extremely purposefully, and spending much time getting to know college students.

Understanding college ministry as missions also indicates that cooperation is both crucial and fruitful. Foreign missionaries face the same scenario we face in college ministry – multiple Christian groups often working within geographical proximity. So they often decide that some efforts are best performed cooperatively.

Even if outsiders to college ministry struggle to see college ministry as missions, a missiological view of college ministry has resounded with the very people who are best prepared to tell us its worth – college ministers themselves. As college ministers realize that their work is missionary work, they experience immediate hope, value, and improvement to the practice of college ministry.



Benson Hines traveled the U.S. for a year, examining college ministry and continues to dialogue with national campus leaders, professors, pastors, and others who impact the field of college ministry with the

goal of making it stronger. To receive your FREE copy of this e-book, go to reachingthecampstribe.com.

THE OTHER WORD ON CAMPUS

Christians have a role to play in the academic world of our campuses. And I know you may have heard that students need to speak up against the rhetoric of atheist professors in the classroom. Or perhaps that the foundations of the university— philosophically and scientifically—are so secularized that students should avoid certain majors and seek alternatives safer for their faith in Jesus Christ.

These are statements founded in fear. Chi Alpha exists to be an influence in the university. My experiences on three campuses have taught me that public educators are rarely militant toward Christian belief but are often turned off by the tactics of Jesus' followers who don't respect or understand the academic world. Agnosticism, not atheism, prevails in run-of-the-mill academia. Most professors I have met recognize that the modern worldview has its limitations, and Christians need to be prepared to make use of this fact for the sake of the gospel.

THE NEED IS THERE

Thoughtful questions can come from the most unlikely people. Once per month for an entire year, I sat across the coffee table from a geology professor at our university. A self-proclaimed agnostic, he wanted to meet with me because he had difficulty teaching Geology 101 to various religious students every year. These students would occasionally speak up in class, delivering canned statements gleaned from young earth creationism seminars, then clam-up for the rest of the course. Subsequent conversations with these students were unsatisfyingly brief.

My professor friend hoped to engage conservative Christians better. "How do I teach without them feeling trapped or threatened

in their faith?" As a teacher, he sought to answer the scientific questions raised by such Christians, but his interest in investigative science was matched by his concern for his students' well-being.

Our universities are places of ministry before they are battlefields for philosophy or science. No doubt some professors are relieved to discover friendly students who foster helpful, thoughtful engagement with the coursework. If that is so, Christian perceptions of a closed door are self-imposed. God has given us a role.

Our universities are places of ministry before they are battlefields for philosophy or science.

Here are two conversations worth adapting for the academic world on your campus.

1. SCIENCE ISN'T BIG ENOUGH

Contemporary views of life are incomplete. Four centuries of work on the human project have done little to answer the pressing questions of life. Despite loud atheist voices in the media, which claim that science leaves no room for God, their inability to supply real value statements for human life speaks even louder.

First, human progress is ambiguous at best. We grew up with asbestos insulation and discovered it caused cancer; DDT stopped malaria but damaged the ecosystem; and an enlightened Europe endured genocide and two World Wars. Our science offers a never-ending promise of useful knowledge, hampered by the inability to predict what we are doing to ourselves.

Second, modern philosophies empty the meaning from human life. The medieval map of history with the city of God and a cross at the center has been abandoned. In its place we have a minuscule presence in the universe and a missing purpose.

2. OUR WORLD HAS CHRISTIAN ROOTS

This statement goes well with a grain of diplomacy; it is a challenge to a secular culture that has forgotten its origins. In simplest terms, all the modern qualities we love today—whether shopping malls, or individualism, or scientific progress—are indebted to Christian theology.

It is a fact that hinges on worldview. The ancient Greek, Babylonian, Egyptian, Chinese, and Hindu cultures missed out on the fact that nature was both real and good, and a place that human beings were empowered to manage. That is why the modern, rational way of life failed to develop prior to the

FIVE ORIGINS PERSPECTIVES

BY MICHAEL TENNESON, PH.D.

Christian world of the late Middle Ages. Today we take for granted that the world is explainable and consistent (we don't know how else to think), but this was not always the case.

In short, Jesus' followers were uniquely endowed with a sense that the world is a knowable, non-mysterious place. This theology freed the first scientists from superstition and unlocked the universe. Of course, the power this gave to our science also enabled the modern world to forget its need for a God.

LIVE THE ROLE OF A WITNESS

We cannot turn our back on the campus mainstream. Intelligent Design scientists are influential because they work from within the academic world, acknowledging an ancient universe even while they contest the model for human origins. Science can indeed be very effective in deciphering our natural world, but we should not mistake this as the power to answer more meaningful questions. "We falsely equate ethical advance with scientific progress," lamented the anthropologist, Loren Eiseley. His contemporary, C.S. Lewis, was right: the real source for meaning is found in a God who is beyond us.

My geologist friend, it turns out, was a seeker at heart. Our monthly discussions soon morphed into curiosity about meaning in Genesis, and he wanted to know about my personal experience with Jesus. A campus visitor once gave me a list of one-liner gotcha questions for Chi Alpha students to ask their science teachers during lectures. I showed them to my friend, who was not at all surprised. But he appeared to grieve that someone would take the teacher-student relationship and turn it into a public debate.

If the gospel is true, we do not need to evangelize on our enemy's terms. We go in prayer and humility. Help your students know that Jesus' Spirit can speak the gospel through them. Help them know they have a God-given voice in the system.



Dan Guenther is a lover of college students, hot pizza, off-trail hiking, and natural science. He is a campus missionary at Central Washington University where he has served with his wife, Becky, for eleven years. They live at dan.n.becky@elltel.net.

Western beliefs about origins can be summarized in five ways: young earth creationism, old earth creationism, evolutionary creationism, deistic evolution, and atheistic evolution. Proponents of each viewpoint may disagree on some of the details but agree on the points for each position. Evangelical Christians are proponents of the first three views (young earth creation, old earth creation, evolutionary creation). The latter two viewpoints (deistic evolution, atheistic evolution) are clearly untenable positions for the Christian.

YOUNG EARTH CREATION, ALSO KNOWN AS SCIENTIFIC CREATION OR CREATION SCIENCE.

These creationists believe that God created everything in six consecutive 24-hour periods about 6,000-10,000 years ago. They reject macroevolution, including theories of speciation (one kind of life changing into another kind) and common descent (life forms all share a common ancestor), but they embrace microevolutionary theory (evolutionary changes within a kind). They view the Genesis creation account as scientifically accurate historical narrative and posit that any other interpretation leads to a slippery slope of eventual denial of the salvation work of Christ. They reject the presupposition of uniformitarianism (natural processes occur in the same way and rate today as in the past) and scientific findings that do not correspond to a recent creation. Contemporary proponents of this view are Henry Morris (Institute for Creation Research) and Ken Ham (Answers in Genesis).

OLD EARTH CREATION, ALSO KNOWN AS PROGRESSIVE CREATION.

These creationists believe that God created the universe and life billions of years ago. They feel the Genesis creation account is mostly historical narrative but not scientific. They reject speciation and common ancestry, and like young earth creationists, accept microevolutionary theory. They posit frequent creative actions of God through history giving rise to the various life forms present today. Bernard Ramm advocated this view in the 1950s, and Hugh Ross (Reasons to Believe) promotes it today.

EVOLUTIONARY CREATION, ALSO KNOWN AS THEISTIC EVOLUTION.

These creationists believe that God created the universe and life billions of years ago. They embrace both micro- and macroevolution with the proviso that God guided evolution throughout history. They feel that the Genesis creation account is not historical nar-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 >

native. Instead, it is an accommodation to understandings of the people of the day. Most evolutionary creation proponents doubt the existence of two actual persons, Adam and Eve. Rather, they were figurative representations. Francis Collins (Human Genome Project, National Institute of Health, The BioLogos Foundation) and Denis Lamoureux (Professor of Science and Religion) promote this position.

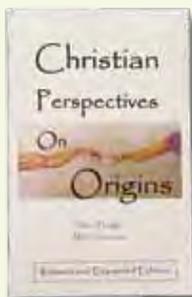
DEISTIC EVOLUTION.

These people believe that God exists but is not involved in His creation. He created the physical realm but has left life to evolve on its own. Evolution is not guided, and the universe and life are billions of years old. They accept micro- and macroevolution, but the Bible is neither inspired nor authoritative. The physical realm is considered to be the best revelation of God. This was the viewpoint of Charles Darwin, who discovered the theory of natural selection with Alfred Russel Wallace.

ATHEISTIC EVOLUTION.

Proponents of this view deny God's existence. They posit that life arose naturally from non-life. They accept micro- and macroevolution, a universe and life that are billions of years old. The Bible is fiction and since there is no God, He has no role in the physical universe. Modern proponents of atheistic evolution are Carl Sagan (narrator of the famous PBS series *Cosmos*) and Richard Dawkins (author of *The God Delusion*).

Intelligent design proponents argue that natural processes cannot explain the origins of the many complexities of life, such as DNA and the bacterial flagellum. However, intelligent design theories are not origins positions, per se, since critics are found in all five origins camps and advocates are found in each of the three theistic camps (young earth creation, old earth creation, evolutionary creation).



FEATURED RESOURCE

Christian Perspectives on Origins, revised and expanded edition by Drs. Steve Badger and Mike Tenneson. Available through the Evangel University bookstore <<http://www.cbamatthews.com/evangel/>>. Price \$5.

OTHER RESOURCES

- The Language of God* by Francis S. Collins. New York, NY: Free Press.
- The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution* by Denis O. Lamoureux.

Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Three Views on Creation and Evolution by J.P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds, eds. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

The Creator and the Cosmos by Hugh Ross. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Refuting Compromise by Jonathan Sarfati. Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books.

The Genesis Flood by John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry Morris. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.



Dr. Micheal Tenneson, professor of biology and an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God, has taught at Evangel University for more than 20 years. He is married to another biologist, Cheryl, and they have three children: Gabriel, Joshua, and Anna.

CAMPUS NEWS:
CHECK OUT THESE ARTICLES TO HEAR THE LATEST ON AMERICAN CAMPUSES.



Supreme Court takes case of student group. USA Today.com. December 7, 2009.

The Supreme Court will decide a case to determine if the

Christian Legal Society chapter at Hastings College of Law in San Francisco has breached the school's anti-discrimination policy. Hastings officials say that student organizations wanting formal recognition and access to school resources and travel funds may not exclude anyone, particularly based on religious or sexual orientation issues.



In Ann Arbor, Michigan Finds Its Life Preserver PBS.org/newshour. December 8, 2009.

Michigan has the nation's highest unemployment rate and has seen a collapse of its manufacturing economy. At the University of Michigan, venture capitalists find their greatest resource to diversify and reinvent the state and its economy among the eager young minds on campus that are focused on great opportunities in their future rather than the current economic defeats.



Colleges consider 3-year degrees. WashingtonPost.com. May 23, 2009.

Some U.S. schools are weighing an option to reduce their undergraduate degree programs to three years to save families time and money. While proponents say shortening the degree programs will not lessen the quality of education, critics fear three-year programs will result in the college experience transitioning toward purely job training, depriving students of the academic and social benefits of a four-year program.

COMING IN 2010:

Atheist student groups are popping up on campuses around the country, hoping to remove the stereotype of the antagonistic atheist and replace it with a friendly, nonjudgmental image. Dennis Gaylor weighs in on this popular trend. Pentecostal Evangel <pe.ag.org>. April 18, 2010.



What is your Coverage plan?

Chi Alpha's service is available from coast to coast and is divided into eight geographical areas, each led by a top-notch Area Director (AD). Together, they offer the best national coverage for campus ministry.

The ADs are appointed for service by the National Director and serve a term of 2-4 years. They work with the Executive Leadership Team to implement Chi Alpha's national direction.

AN AREA DIRECTOR HAS FOUR KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY THAT ADDRESS ALL LEVELS OF CHI ALPHA:

1. ASSIST WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CAMPUS MINISTRIES
2. RESOURCE DISTRICT LEADERS
3. EXECUTE AN AREA OPERATIONAL PLAN
4. ADVANCE THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Chi Alpha's long-term goal is to have each area served by a full-time AD.

In areas where this is not yet possible, the ADs function as an Area/District Dual Director or Interim AD, working from a customized portfolio based on that area's needs.

Mike Amiot
Great Plains Area Director



North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Michigan, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, North & South Missouri

Steve Lehmann
Great Lakes Area Director



Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky

Stefanie Chappell
Northeast Area Director



Northern & Southern New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Potomac, Washington, D.C.

Mario Solari
Southeast Area Director (interim)



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position vacant

Vic Varis
Pacific Northwest Area Director



Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Panhandle of Idaho

Paul Austin
Big Sky Area Director



Montana, Southern Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado

Curt Harlow
West Coast Area Director



Hawaii, Northern Cal-Nevada, S. California, Arizona

Eric Treuil
South Central Area Director (interim)



New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas



Mario Solari stepped down from his AD role after serving 3 years. He started a university church near Florida State University (FSU) and continues to serve there as Chi Alpha internship director. If that is not enough, he is the part-time rep for the West Florida district. Last year he had too much on his plate and gave up the SE Salt Director role to open the position for a new appointment. Thank you, Mario, for your quality leadership as SE AD.

2010

Chi Alpha

**JULY 12 - 16, 2010
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WHO IS INVITED?

Chi Alpha campus missionaries, campus directors, missionary associates, church staff members working with Chi Alpha, college pastors, young adult pastors, pastors of university churches, pastors in college communities, and district leaders.

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