Jesus In Berkeley

Over the last several years, Christian campus groups have come together at the beginning of fall semester at UC Berkeley to celebrate the life of God on campus. Christian faith groups on campus operate pretty much on their own throughout the school year since each campus group has their own mission and student led programs, but we always start the year off together demonstrating the larger and united body of Christ on campus at the beginning of the fall semester. I always look forward to this event. It fills my heart with praise to God for the larger presence of Christ on campus. I love the witness that JIB is to unbelievers when we are all able to partner for the kingdom of God together before the school year gets under way. I am also reminded of how small even our larger witness is on campus when I consider that with all our ministries combined - including the denominational ministries and the non-denominational para-church groups - we are still only connecting with and ministering to less than ten percent of the overall student population. The truth is - we need each other more than we are in competition with one another. This brings up the question - what part of your ministry plans for 2013 - 14 include partnering with others for God's overall mission on campus? We have a lot to learn from one another. Let's remember to pray for God's overall mission on campus and for all the groups that are lifting up the name of Jesus on campus!

Pastor Ron Pickell
ACF Coordinator

News and Events

2013 College Rankings: Forbes magazine ranks the top 650 undergraduate colleges in the U S. To see how your college stacks up go to: Rankings

Campus Catalyst Training: Jump start your campus ministry this year with the North American Division ACF Campus Catalyst Training (CCT). CCT introduces student leaders, participating church members and pastors to the ten essentials of campus ministry helping launch, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm."
grow and sustain Adventist public campus ministry. To learn more about CCT go to: CCT Schedules for upcoming CCT events:

- University Of California, Berkeley: July 26 & 27. See UCB CCT to register.
- Australia CCT, August 7-25. See CCT/AUS for the schedule and more info.
- Lincoln, Nebraska CCT, September 6-8
- Hawaii Young Adult/CCT, September 13-15. For more info view and download the pdf flier at CCT/Hawaii
- Central Florida CCT, October 4-6
- Miami Florida Pastors CCT, October 10
- Miami Florida CCT, October 11-13
- Texas Young Adult/CCT, November 15-17

Young Adult Project: August 1-12, Dominican Republic. This mission trip opportunity is designed for the ages of 18-35 and will focus on construction, community service, new connections, and spiritual opportunities. Join this energetic group August 1-12, 2013 in the Dominican Republic. For more info go to: Maranatha (Sponsored by Maranatha Volunteers International).

InterVarsity’s West Coast Faculty Conference Campus By The Sea: August 4-9, "Doing Justice, Loving Kindness, and Walking Humbly With God In Higher Education. Location for this event is Catalina Island. For more information go to: Campus By The Sea

ACF-GNYC Collegiate Kickoff, September 6 & 7: Church Of The Advent Hope, 111 East 87th St., New York, NY. Professor Zane Yi will present on The Wisdom To Doubt. For more information go to: ACF/NYC

Cruise With A Mission: September 15-22, 2013, AL. For more Info go to: CRUISE.

New York InterVarsity Invitational, The Price Of Life on human trafficking conference: October 4-13. For more information go to: Price

GYC Collegiate/Young Adult Conference: January 1-5, 2014. This years GYC is actually being held the first of 2014 in Orlando Florida. To learn more go to: GYC 2013

CRAVE Campus Outreach at NAD Just Claim It Miami, 2014: February 19-23, 2014. Join us for CRAVE campus outreach event at Florida International University, Miami Florida, on Thursday evening, February 20. More information will be coming at: CRAVE

Why Millennials Are Leaving The Church - Try Atheism: Is a CNN blog illustrating that church ills and hypocrisy are not the only thing

Nothing is too difficult for you” Jeremiah 32:17

In This Issue

- Jesus In Berkeley
- News and Events
- Resources
- Job Transitions
- Good Reads

Campus Ministry Job Transitions/Openings

Farewell to Chaplain Ruben Sanchez
Ruben has been serving as the first chaplain/campus minister for Adventist students on colleges in and around New York City with primary responsibilities at Columbia University in connection with Church Of The Advent Hope. Ruben has done a marvelous job in organizing students and ministry for greater New York city and he will be greatly missed.

Farewell to Chaplain Lucien Nahum Isaac
Lucien has been serving students at the University Of California, Berkeley and the Berkeley SDA church over the last six years. Students will miss Lucien's great care for them as he moves on to pursue non profit work to end human trafficking right here in the SF Bay Area. Please pray for Lucien in his new responsibilities and for the students at UC Berkeley in a year of transition.
driving Millennials away from the faith. They are also being led away
by their doubts and unanswered questions. For many, Christianity is
no longer making sense. Informed believers are going to need to step
up their game and help explain their faith in a way that makes sense
to others if the new life of Jesus is going to be experienced by
millennials today Read more at: Millennials

Resources

How To Choose A College And Keep Your Faith is a great article
for students and campus ministers to check out as a reminder of the
issues students face in heading off to college. Check it out at: College

Student Leadership Journal: As we ramp up for fall semester,
InterVarsity has a great resource for student leaders that you might
want to take a look at. Check out the Student Leadership Journal at:
Leadership

XP3 College: is a great college ministry web site resource. Pastor and
former campus minister, Chuck Bomar, has authored several books on
students and college ministry. His latest is Worlds Apart:
Understanding The Mindsets And Values Of 18 - 25 Year Olds.
Check out these campus ministry resources at XP3.

I Shall Stand Resource On College Sex and Dating: Check out I
Shall Stand for books and resources on sex, abstinence and dating in
the college scene. Go to: Stand for more info.

Templeton Science and Religion Series: Includes a series of nine
short books concerning the sciences, humanities and religion. These
books were commissioned to open intellectual doors and create
discussion for readers of all backgrounds concerning the discussion of
science and faith. Each expert begins with a background of their field
of study with a view to the religious dimension returning to a wide
variety of critical viewpoints. To learn more about these valuable
resources discussing the integration of science and faith go
to: Templeton.

ACFLINK.ORG Web Site: ACFLINK.ORG is the best way for staying
connected with Adventist ministry on non-Adventist college and
university campuses. Another great connecting point is: ACF on
Facebook at ACF North America.

Campus Ministry Quick Start Guide: Check out the new Quick Start
Guide for campus ministry at AdventSource. Quick Start guides are
now downloadable from the ARC Campus Ministry Resources Web
Site by going to: ARC.

Good Reads

Campus Ministry In A Post Modern Culture
At last! A book that interprets the challenges of campus ministry
through a distinctly missional lens. This is an intensely practical
and theologically substantial orientation on what it means to
do college ministry. Alan Hirsch,
Author of The Forgotten Ways,
Untamed, and Right Here, Right
Now. Check it out at: AMAZON

Journey Bible Study
"Come and see", Jesus said,
when asked where he hung out
by some of the earliest of his
disciples. Journey is an invitation
to join these first followers of
jesus as they embark on a
personal discovery of Jesus
mission and message. Journey
is for long time followers and brand
new seekers that are curious
about who Jesus is and what he
means by the coming of the
kingdom. Journey is also a great
resource for Friday night college
large groups, weekly small group
meetings and comes with a
complete leaders guide for
leading and teaching. Journey
will soon be available on
the AdventSource web site. Look
for it in the collegiate section.

Veritas Forum: The Veritas Riff Podcast continues to provide
relevant, insightful commentary on today's most pressing issues.
Check out one of the latest in the series of campus talks on "Why
Health Care Reform Needs Spiritual Reform" by Dr. Ray Barfield of
Duke University. Check it out at Veritas.
Opinion by Hemant Mehta, Special to CNN

Articles and books about why millennials are leaving Christianity often focus on what churches are doing "wrong."

They're anti-gay, anti-women, anti-science, anti-sex-education and anti-doubt, to name a few of the most common criticisms.

I don't disagree with those critiques, but there's another side to the story.

While Christians have played sloppy defense, secular Americans have been showing off some impressive offense, giving young Christians plenty of reasons to lose faith in organized religion.

For instance, atheists dominate the Internet, rallying to thriving websites and online communities in lieu of physical meeting spaces.

Even a writer for the  admitted that “While Christianity enjoys a robust online presence, the edge still seems to belong to its unbelievers.”

Atheists outnumber Christians on popular discussion forums like Reddit, where subscribers to the atheism section number more than 2 million. The Christianity section is not even 5% of that.

The Internet-based Foundation Beyond Belief, which encourages atheists to donate to charitable organizations, just celebrated raising $1 million for worthwhile causes. (Disclosure: I serve on its board of directors.)

Moreover, blogs and websites espousing non-religious viewpoints and criticizing Christianity draw tons of Internet traffic these days. For every Christian apologist's argument, it seems, there's an equal and opposite rebuttal to be found online. I call that "Hitchens' Third Law."

READ MORE: Why millennials are leaving the church

Christians can no longer hide in a bubble, sheltered from opposing perspectives, and church leaders can't protect young people from finding information that contradicts traditional beliefs.

If there's an open comment thread to be found on a Christian's YouTube video or opinion piece online, there's inevitably going to be pushback from atheists.

There has also been a push by atheists to get non-religious individuals to "come out of the closet" and let people know that they don't believe in God.

Among other things, this proves that anti-atheist stereotypes aren't accurate and, just as important, that atheists aren't alone in their communities.

There's the Richard Dawkins Foundation's Out Campaign, with its Scarlet A badges.

There are atheist-encouraging billboards in 33 states financed by groups like the United Coalition of Reason.

There's even going to be an 1-800 hot line for people "recovering" from religion.

READ MORE: Atheists to start 1-800 hot line for doubters

And last year, an estimated 20,000 atheists turned out for the Reason Rally in Washington, a tenfold increase from the previous atheist rally in 2002.

But more than anything else, atheism's best advertisements may be the words of Christian leaders themselves.
When Pastor Mark Driscoll belittles women, Rick Warren argues against same-sex rights or Rob Bell equivocates on the concept of hell, we amplify those messages for them - and it helps us make our point.

(It goes without saying that the pairing of Pat Robertson and YouTube has been great for atheists.)

Pastors are no longer the final authority on the truth, and millennials know it.

Even if they hold Jesus' message in high esteem, the Bible as it has traditionally been preached by many evangelical pastors is becoming less and less attractive to them.

A 2012 study by the Public Religion Research Institute (PDF) showed that many Christians aged 18-24 felt that Christianity was hypocritical (49%), judgmental (54%) and anti-gay (58%).

In addition, Christianity Today reported last year that fewer than half of born-again Christians under 35 opposed same-sex marriage.

When millennials' pastors and hearts are going in different directions, church leaders should be worried.

Can churches win back the youth?

Barring a complete shift in beliefs, that may not be possible. Some of the proposed solutions seem ludicrous to millennial atheists like myself.

For instance, there's been talk of finding a better way to reconcile science and religion. Whenever that battle takes place, religion loses.

There are some questions we may never know the answer to, but for the ones we can eventually answer, the scientific explanation will devour the religious one. Mixing science and religion requires a distortion of one or the other.

READ MORE: Behold, the six tribes of atheism

What about focusing on the message and life of Jesus?

While this sounds good philosophically, the myth surrounding Jesus is part of the problem with Christianity.

To believe in Jesus means believing that he was born of a virgin, rose from the dead and performed a number of miracles.

There's no proof of any of that ever happened, and atheists place those stories in the same box as "young Earth creationism" and Noah's Great Flood.

To be sure, if Christians followed the positive ideas Jesus had, we'd all be better off, but it's very hard to separate the myth from the reality.

In short, there are many reasons the percentage of millennials who say they've never doubted God's existence is at a record low, and nearly a quarter of adults under 30 no longer affiliate with a faith.

The church has pushed young people away, yes, but there are also forces actively pulling them in the other direction.

It appears that atheists and Christians are finally working together on the same task: getting millennials to leave the church.

Hemant Mehta blogs at The Friendly Atheist. The views expressed in this column belong to Mehta.

Photos: Famous atheists and their beliefs