



CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST WESTERN PA CATALYTIC JAYSON AND CARRIE WHELPLEY

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Five Years Out

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Time and tide wait for none. This year will mark (already) the 5 year anniversary of the Whelpleys' college graduation! Despite working often in the vicinity of our alma mater, the affairs of life have made it near impossible to keep in touch with college friends, and except for about 4 or so of my closest girlfriends, I (Carrie) have put forth very little effort.

Even so, I received a note yesterday from a college friend. The message did not come via post office with a handwritten signature or stamp, nor did it waste much time on shallow pleasantries. Arriving in my inbox by way of the popular social networking site, Facebook, the note from my friend Kris was primarily a spiritual query, a blatant request for my thoughts on the nature of Jesus, the Bible, confession and forgiveness.

What does my friend Kris have to do with campus ministry in Western PA? Everything. I am no longer a student. I have not been for half a decade. And yet, a casual acquaintance that I gathered in college who currently lives hours away, still, years later, contacts me with spiritual questions, and the internet has given him the platform to do so. I don't believe that I am unique or special in this.

A Year's End

I'm convinced one key to reaching today's college students is networking. While we still do see success with some campus-wide event-with-a-message style outreaches, statistics and experience show that students now are more inclined to explore issues of faith on their own terms, in the privacy of their room surfing the web, watching the history channel, or having coffee with a friend they feel is safe.

One study I read said that 45% of internet users, or about 60 million Americans, say the internet helped them make big decisions or negotiate their way through major episodes in their lives in the past two years. (Where did I get my info? Online of course, at pewinternet.org ☺)

Even in the wake of the tragedy at Virginia.Tech, 10,000 students from Tech alone visited an evangelistic website set up by the staff, and in the first week, over 50 corresponded through email while there, indicating a decision to entrust their lives to Jesus. Countless others are not in that place yet, but have found online discussion groups - like one our director made about Bono from U2's quote on God's grace - to hash out their thoughts and questions.

As we wrap up the semester and prepare to leave the area for a year, many of the movements we coach are small, core groups of 20 or less students. My first prayer this semester has not been that they impress the masses with flashy events, but that they know the gospel; *really* know it, and preach it to themselves daily. Secondly, I pray that they will take seriously the sphere of relationships around them, and boldly, humbly, by every means possible, sink their lives into them, journeying with them even after graduation.

- Continue to pray for our year in DC - there are still many things to be worked out with our move and we don't know many details
- Pray for our summer assignment in Ocean City, MD (May 21st - June 30th) and the ~27 students who will participate (10 guys - an answer to last month's prayers!)
- Pray for students success (and rest!) during finals & fall planning & for growth and healthy relationships this summer.

Pray with me that our students will be safe friends, meet people where they are and seek not to make just converts, but life-long truth-seekers and disciples.

Grace & peace,

(PRAYER NEEDS)