



Greetings from Grace

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Reflections on Student Ministry

Last year I went to Blacksburg, VA to teach a workshop with Dr. Dan Fountain for a new missions group called the Dawn Treaders. We stayed on a horse farm at the home of a former professor of engineering at Virginia Tech. The workshop was held in a church near the campus of Virginia Tech and some members of the team gave us a tour of the beautiful campus. Needless to say, I was shocked by the mass killings that took place there several weeks ago. When you've been to the place and know people, it seems closer to home.

Soon my e-mail inbox was filled with messages from folk at InterVarsity, the Christian Reformed Campus Ministry Association, and others who were just concerned for the faculty, students and community of Blacksburg. The radio in my office was tuned in to NPR and I listened to the details unfold. Students

were in shock, using the technology with which they are so facile to connect with each other, parents, and friends. Life is so fragile and seems to come to a standstill at times like these.

Ministering to students on campuses is the core of InterVarsity's ministry. The vision statement for our organization is "Students and Faculty Transformed, Campuses Renewed, World Changers Developed". I recalled a conversation with Dr. David Zac Niringiye when I was in Uganda and he headed FOCUS Uganda, the sister movement of IVCF. Zac said, "Grace, if I win the lives of university students in Uganda for Christ, I can impact the entire country." Several years later, I was meeting with a Ugandan graduate student who was at UCLA studying business and marketing. She said, "Grace, you know that business in Uganda is built on

relationships. I can go into any government ministry and there is a FOCUS associate there." Currently she is back in Uganda working with women in economic development. The vision to change society by winning the students to Christ is at the heart of our vision.

So as the Virginia Tech news unfolded, IVCF sprang into action. The incident not only affected the students in Blacksburg, VA but also raised a lot of questions in the minds of students (and adults) around the country. Times of crises always raise questions. "Why do things like this happen? Where was God in all of this? Why did someone skip class and escape the massacre?" Concern was expressed for Asian American students whose culture identified with the young man who had gone on the rampage. Suggestions for how to be sensitive to them and ad-

Summer Schedule

May 31-June 2, 2007 Christian Community Health Fellowship conference, North Park University, Chicago, IL Presenting "Spiritual Care as a Distinctive of Christian Nursing"

June 3-8, 2007 King College, Bristol, TN Teaching "Curriculum Development for Training Health Workers"

June 26-28, 2007 NCF National Staff conference, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN

June 28- July 1, 2007 NCF National Summit, *Nursing as Ministry*, Bethel University. Presenting workshop, "HIV/AIDS: How God is Redeeming the Pandemic"

August 3-4, 2007 Healthcare Missions Conference, *From The Whole Church To The Whole World: Global and Local Health*, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA. Presenting workshop "Things That They Didn't Teach in Nursing School: Preparing for Missionary Nursing"

dress their concerns were posted on websites. We watched as the community in Blacksburg mourned and moved through the grieving process.

Lives are forever changed by such events. The life of a college student is demanding intellectually, spiritually, socially, and emotionally as they navigate the world of ideas, friends and relationships. Having a Christian campus minister to journey along side of them during this stage of their lives is a calling that God has placed on two of the NCF staff that I supervise. Skip McDonald is an African American nurse who serves students on the campus of Emory University in Atlanta, GA and serves as a resource to the Black Campus Ministry and IVCF staff in the region. Renee Lick is a nurse who serves nursing students on the University of Illinois Chicago campus and resources other campuses with nursing students in her region. It is my joy to hear their reports of students who have come to know the Lord Jesus through their ministries, who now see nursing as a means to serving God, and who are learning to provide spiritual care to their patients through the resources of NCF.

I was one of the subjects for Steve Garber's doctoral research that was later published by InterVarsity Press in *The Fabric of Faithfulness*. Steve wondered "How do we help students learn to connect what they believe about the world with how they live in the world?" He found three critical factors in living a life of sustained Christian commitment – convictions that embraced a worldview that answered life's difficult questions, character learned from mentors, and community of likeminded committed people.



Renee Lick (left) and Skip Mc Donald (right) at the National Student Nurses Convention in Anaheim, CA

Recently, during the dinner for my 35 year class reunion from Wheaton, I sat next to one of my retired Wheaton professors and his wife. We reminisced about how the science building that was brand spanking new and state of the art 35 years ago was planning to be replaced as outdated. As I shared with them about my work with NCF, his wife said to me, "You know I was saved through the ministry of InterVarsity." That happens to me repeatedly. A couple of years ago, one of my Wheaton students came up to me after class and said, "My mom was saved through Nurses Christian Fellowship." I recalled how, during college, my life had been influenced by the development of a biblical worldview, how I had been blessed by mentors who lived their Christianity in front of me, and how I had developed lifelong friendships that sustained me.

In March, I participated in a working group of InterVarsity staff who were given the task to look at the "developing world changers" portion of our vision statement. We looked at globalization and what it means to be a global citizen. Urbana 06 had pointed out that Christianity is now based in the Global South. Education is increasingly based on the internet. Travel allows for more study abroad and cross-cultural encounters. Students engaging in Christian service projects are coming to know the Lord through these activities. We want to impact students lives so that they can serve God throughout their lives.

As a strategic ministry within InterVarsity, Nurses Christian Fellowship shares the vision of transforming the lives of nursing students and faculty. We see hospitals and clinics as our campus and believe that Christian nursing can influence the healthcare system. Through nursing we want to bring Jesus and health to our world. Thank you for your part in this important ministry.

Prayer and Praise Report

Praise God for:

- Mary Thompson's many years of faithful service as director of NCF.
- The appointment of NCF's new director, Pat Emery who will take up duties sometime this fall.
- Harriet Coeling who has volunteered to serve as interim director.

Ask God to:

- Be with NCF during the transition to new leadership.
- Bless the graduating nursing students with success on their licensure examinations and a long career of serving Him in nursing.
- Speak through me when presenting at various conferences.