

Start or revitalize a ministry in your church

## QUICK START GUIDE



# PUBLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY



Quick Start Guide for Public Campus Ministry

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# Introduction

This book is designed to guide local congregations as they support and assist students in the development and operation of Adventist-based ministries on non-Adventist college and university campuses. The role of the local congregation is supportive; the objective is for students to disciple students. Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) states that campus ministry must be “OF students, BY students, and FOR students.” The majority of content for this Quick Start Guide is adapted and condensed from *The Word on Campus: A Guide to Public College Ministry, 2nd Edition*, by Kirk King and Ron Pickell. This full book and several other helpful resources are available at **AdventSource.org**. Another good resource is ACF North American Division (**ACFLink.org**). It exists to partner with student groups and with local congregations to create an effective witness for the campus.

## Why College Ministry is Important

There are over 22 million college/university students in North America. There are more students than the combined population of the five largest North American cities: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, and Houston.

The majority of Seventh-day Adventist college and university students are attending non-Adventist schools. Most studies indicate that at least 80% (or about 100,000) Adventist students attend non-Adventist colleges or universities. In addition, numerous Seventh-day Adventists from abroad attend colleges and universities in North America.

It is true that in general college students are not very likely to respond to an evangelistic series or a Revelation seminar, even when presented by a peer. But many will respond to food and friendship.

Yes, the university campus may indeed be the most skeptical environment on the planet, but does that mean that students and faculty should be ignored? Do we believe that Christ is interested in college students?

Is not Jesus already present on campus walking with students, forming relationships with them? Are we not called to join Him in His mission for the campus?

22 Million Students = Mission Field  
100k Adventist Students = Missionaries  
Jesus said = “Go and Make Disciples...”

A simple formula exists to follow Christ’s commission to go “on campus” just as the early church was called to go “into all the world.” Still something must be missing, because it is difficult to find evidence of much success in campus ministry efforts today. Could it be that the missionaries do not even realize their role? If the missionaries are ignored or, dare we say, deserted by their own spiritual community, who will help them recognize the presence of God in their own lives or His mission on campus? What will they even have to give if they lack a personal knowledge of Christ? How will they know what to do or to say when the Spirit opens the doors of searching hearts if faith is left behind when they enter college?



The college years are a time of transition. Young men and women are expected to achieve independence and maturity. They make friends, develop skills, and form values that shape the remainder of their lives. Developing a faith in God that is vibrant and personal is an important part of this journey. Faith is largely borrowed from family, friends, teachers, and pastors—at least through high school. Unfortunately, too many college-age young adults set faith aside or reject God altogether when they leave their Christian bubble. Studies have indicated that as many as two-thirds of college students ignore or reject the Christian faith of their childhood during their college years. That of course provokes the question, why? Answers will of course vary with each student but the following list suggests a few of the more common reasons why college-age young adults ignore or reject faith:

- The influence of skeptical friends and professors
- Escape from the reality or perception of an unhealthy legalistic religion
- Unchecked social and emotional immaturity that leads to destructive behaviors
- The natural process of differentiating themselves from their parents to become individuals
- A lack of support from, or often even contact with, their spiritual communities
- Inflexible churches that inhibit personal spiritual exploration, discovery, and expression
- The sense that church is out of touch with their culture and with their needs

The purpose of this Quick Start Guide is to come alongside Seventh-day Adventist church communities to help create environments where young faith can mature and flourish.

## How to Create and Maintain Effective Ministries with College-age Young Adults

The remainder of this Quick Start Guide is divided into three parts. The first part introduces a basic biblical philosophy that provides the framework for developing ministries for college-age young adults (an extensive discussion of this ten-point philosophy can be found in the first section of *The Word on Campus*, noted earlier).

The second part is a slightly adapted version of Chapter 14: “CHURCH” from *The Word on Campus*. It includes thoughts and ideas to guide local congregations in ministry with college-age young adults.

The final part, also adapted from other chapters in the Practices section of *The Word on Campus*, provides a helpful understanding of the secular campus and students today. Student groups and campus ministry leaders should be provided with copies of *The Word on Campus: A Guide to Public College Ministry* and its companion workbook, *Adventist Christian Fellowship: Designing Ministry for Your Campus*. Local congregations should also plan to help provide funding for students to attend a Campus Catalyst training event or the annual Adventist Christian Fellowship Institute. These events are part of the function of Adventist Christian Fellowship North American Division and the details about upcoming events can be found at [ACFLink.org](http://ACFLink.org).



## A Biblical Philosophy of Ministry

This philosophy for ministry is delineated with ten essentials. The first four essentials form the foundation and are therefore given more explanation here. The last six essentials build on the first four to provide a framework for programming and activity. Each essential and its implication for ministry on non-Adventist colleges and universities is examined as a full chapter in *The Word on Campus*.

### Word

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults be built on and centered in Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:1,14). Every relationship, as well as all programming and activities, should be created and evaluated by the person and work of Christ, since He is the very embodiment of the good news we have to share with students. While this is true for all ministries, it is particularly important for this one, because college-age young adults are in the process of forming foundational views on life, and they need first to learn of Jesus, the foundation of biblical faith. While either daily life or detailed doctrines may inform our understanding of the Gospel of Christ, even the second coming and all of its ramifications, all of these become meaningless to someone who has not heard or believed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

### Be

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults be designed to foster friendship. Just as Christ came to BE with us, “the Word became flesh,” so that we could learn about the Father, so we must BE with others so that they too can learn of Him. Jesus said in John 17:10 of all disciples, “My life is on display in them.” The presence of older members in the lives of young Adventists is vital to spiritual development. A network of Christian friendship among peers provides support and accountability. People are best won to Christ through unconditional friendships. This ministry is about investing in meaningful relationships since the life of a transformed student may be the first gospel story anyone will read.

### Come

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults have an active Christian community for support and spiritual accountability. One-on-one friendships expand to become community. Jesus extended a very simple invitation when calling his disciples by simply inviting them to “Come, follow me” (Matthew 4:18). He then spent the next three years creating a community out of a very diverse group of people who ultimately displayed God’s plan of salvation through the living presence of Christ in them to the world. Christian community is a transparent witness of Christ on campus. We are called to worship in community and to serve our world in community. When we include others in our group we are inviting them into the community of Jesus and a tangible witness of His kingdom. “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name,” Jesus said, “there I am among them” (Matthew 18:20).

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” Matthew 9:37



## **Go**

It is essential that college-age young adults are empowered to serve, to lead, and to share. Jesus said, “because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I have been doing” (John 14:12, Message). It is out of community centered in Christ that we are sent. God never sends us out alone, but He is sending us. The presence of Jesus through the indwelling Spirit and the collective prayers of our communities are always with us. These empower us to live like Josephs, Daniels, and Esthers in a non-believing world of secularism. The role of the church is to empower students to “shine like stars in the universe, as we hold out the word of life” (Philippians 2:15, 16). Campus ministry is student ministry, but it is undergirded by the entire mission force of Jesus and His church.

## **ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (ACF)**

ACF is about the mission of God through the Seventh-day Adventist Church on college and university campuses. It is a ministry of students, by students, and for students, supported by local Adventist churches. When we reach the campus we help change the world! To learn more, visit **[ACFLink.org](http://ACFLink.org)**.

## **With**

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults partners with others for Christ’s mission in their lives, on their campus, and in the world. “I thank my God,” Paul said, “... because of your partnership in the gospel” (Philippians 1:4, 5).

## **New**

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults create dynamic ministries for a diverse, constantly changing world. “He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” (Revelation 21:5).

## **Gift**

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults include sharing the gift of new life in Jesus. “Freely you have received,” Jesus said, “freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

## **Know**

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults include components that help young men and women know Christ so fully that they are able to share the Gospel with humble confidence. “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God,” John wrote to his fellow believers, “so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

## **Now**

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults communicate the good news of Jesus Christ in the context of today’s language and culture. “Now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of the urgency of receiving the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ today!



## All

It is essential that ministry with college-age young adults honors the inclusive invitation of Jesus with activities and programs that convey a welcoming attitude and atmosphere for all. “For the Grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people” (Titus 2:11, NLT).

## The Local Church and Campus Ministry

Conversations with students attending a secular campus today are less likely to center around where we should worship—which mountain, which church, which denomination—as they would have been in Jesus’ day or even 50 years ago in North America. Today, the question is more likely to be, “Why should we worship a being we cannot see, touch, hear, or feel at all?” This question catches the organized church off guard. Students are not shopping for better music or more biblical doctrine; most are not shopping at all. Yet most churches base their marketing in some way on comparisons with other churches. This is not surprising, considering the context of capitalism and competition we all find ourselves in today. Church outreach and evangelism have adopted the methods of culture and in the process have distorted the product so that what we appear to promote is ourselves or our organizations instead of the simple message of new life in Christ. Sure, we talk about Jesus, but too often Jesus is used to get people into our church, when what we should be doing is using the resources of the church to introduce Jesus and His kingdom.

All of this creates a spirit of animosity between the church and the world it should be reaching for Christ. Sure, a world controlled by the enemy of God is bound to be at odds with God’s church, but why should we provide fuel for that fire? What if we viewed the church as a transit center for the blessings of God instead of a storehouse for our wealth and building our own kingdoms? What if we used the resources given to the church by its true founder, Jesus, to bless our communities? What if the church were authentically sharing God’s love and lifting up Jesus? What if we took Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman seriously and began to worship the Father in Spirit and truth instead of worshiping our institutions and shutting out both Jesus and the people He has called us to reach?

Some who read this may think we are being too harsh on the church; others will cheer us on and say we are not tough enough. Perhaps the truth is somewhere in the middle, or maybe both are right. What we have discovered in our spiritual journey with the church is that somehow in the midst of the messiness of this very human institution are people filled with God’s love for the world and with a very real passion to share the gospel. Jesus is the message these members share, and somehow they have allowed themselves to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that they overflow with the truth that Jesus has rescued the world from itself and from the devil. Often these people get together, forming small groups of hope and life within the larger church organization, and begin to have a powerful influence for Christ in their community. Churches that encourage and support smaller life groups are the churches that tend to thrive and are more attractive to the world. This should not be surprising, because small groups more closely resemble the small band of disciples that followed Jesus and turned the world upside down. Our prayer is that your campus ministry resembles this model of worshippers and that your local church congregation will encourage and support this life-giving ministry.



## What is “Church”?

Two very different etymologies for the word church help illustrate the point we are making. The actual English word “church” is taken from the Scottish word *kirk*, which is similar to words used in several Germanic and Northern European languages, all of which are likely derived from ancient Greek, *kuriakos*, meaning “belonging to the Lord,” or are given the popular modern usage from *kuriakon doma*, meaning “Lord’s house.” While we do not want to push the illustration too far, the word *kirk* is normally used to describe either a building or an institution. When we say, “I am going to the church,” or, “I belong to the Adventist Church,” we are using a meaning of the word church drawn from this word. It is interesting to note that the writers of the New Testament could have used this word to refer to the church, but it appears only twice, in 1 Corinthians 11:20 (Lord’s Supper) and Revelation 1:10 (Lord’s day). Neither contains any reference to “church.”

The word that is often translated church in the New Testament is *ekklesia*, which literally means “called out.” The word goes back to the Ancient Greek city-states where all citizens with civil rights would be called out to assemble to govern and deal with common issues of the day. *Ekklesia* referenced an assembly of people for political, social, governmental, or religious purposes. The Bible writers put a specific emphasis on the assembly by adding that it is the assembly of God. These early Christian believers assembled not because they chose to come together, but because God had called them to Himself. They gathered in Jesus’ name with the goal of listening to His words and living out His life. *Ekklesia* was designed to be the embodiment of Christ’s life in the world.

These two nuances of the word church are not mutually exclusive. A *kirk* might be a place or an organization used to support the *ekklesia* (assembly) of God’s people called together to promote the kingdom of God, not themselves, the place they meet, or any institution they develop to assist in God’s mission. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Our human tendency to be self-absorbed almost always leads to self-promotion, which in turn clouds and distorts Christ’s message of love for the world. Fortunately, God never gives up on us; He just calls us out (*ekklesia*) of our confused self-made Babylon and invites us to join Him in His work in the world in proclaiming the gospel of His kingdom.

What does all of this have to do with campus ministry? Primarily this: campus ministry is as much church (*ekklesia*) as any Sabbath morning gathering. Students meeting in a home or on campus to listen to God and live out the life of Christ should never feel like they are not the church, like second-class citizens. They have been called out by God just as certainly as students attending an institutionally run college or any group of worshipers in a building designated for worship. We would even be so bold as to suggest that supporting the kind of campus ministries we have described in this book is one of the best ways for the institutional church—denominational or local—to live out the life of Christ in our world, and thus truly show that it is the *ekklesia* of God! The message of these two words (*kirk* and *ekklesia*) cuts both ways then, by reassuring student gatherings on secular campuses that they are the church of God, and by challenging the organized church to encourage, support, and join in what God is doing on campus.





Typical questions that are often asked in a discussion of the church and college-age young adults are: “What are young adults looking for in a church?” or “Why are the young adults leaving the church?” and “What can the church do to keep young adults in the church?” While these are reasonable questions to ask, they are often ineffective because they focus on the wrong outcome. Keeping young adults in the church—especially when we mean church as institution, organization, denomination, or even weekly gathering in a designated church building—is not what God called us to do. He said, “Go and make disciples.” We have all been called out of the world and into His kingdom to make disciples, and disciples are followers of Jesus who recognize that they belong to Him, that He saved them, and gave them life by sacrificing His life. And disciples listen and obey the master by going and making other disciples.

We are not saying that these questions should not be discussed or that local congregations or the denomination as a whole should not seek to understand the younger generation or respond with culturally relevant worship and programming. What we are saying is that the questions about worship and ministry must all be focused on the goal of discipleship, because that is the role and God-given responsibility of the church. Here then is the twist in the plot: discipleship does not take place only inside the walls of a building nor is its purpose the marketing of an institution. Jesus took his disciples to Samaria, and that was just the beginning. Discipleship takes place in the world God has commanded us to reach out to for Him.

## **Therefore . . .**

Our appeal therefore to the church is to use resources God has blessed us with to disciple young adults, to provide leadership and opportunity for young adults to live out their faith, and considering the subject of this book, to invest in the ministry of God on campus. That means money and other resources (this book is just one way the church is investing in public campus ministry), but it also means that students who attend public schools at all levels are recognized, encouraged, and supported by leadership.

Our appeal to the local congregation is to stay engaged in the lives of college-age young adults, even when they are not attending regularly. Be intentional about reaching out to them. Do not stop nurturing or including young adults when they are out of sight, regardless of where or whether they attend college. Reach out to them. Don’t just expect them to come to church. Go out to them—encourage, support, and include them in the life of the church in every possible way. Provide leadership opportunities and freedom to reach their friends and campus in ways and with methods older generations never imagined.

Our appeal to young adults, specifically to students attending non-Adventist colleges and universities, is to recognize that you are the church. If the worship service seems out of touch with your needs, volunteer to help make it relevant for people you would like to invite to church, but seek ways to do so with respect for the needs of others. If someone in the church has hurt you in some way, do not blame God or his church, but forgive and allow the love of Jesus to change lives. Mostly, be the church! You have been called out of the world to live the life given to you by



Jesus and are now being sent back into the world. Right now, the world means your campus as well as your local church. You can become change agents in both.

## The Local Church and Campus Ministry

Church involvement is more of a challenge for students. They are away from home and their home church and are making new friends at church, and getting used to a new worship experience can be a big step for students. This is why campus ministry is so important. ACF groups and campus ministries can become a form of church participation that meets students where they are. This should not be so surprising to us. The gathering of God's people in the Old Testament started out more like a college ministry than the more traditional form of ministry we are accustomed to in the local church. The Children of Israel were on a journey with God similar to the fluid life of a college student. The gathering place to meet God during the Exodus was a tabernacle, not a temple. The tabernacle was simple and able to move as God directed. The temple that resembles more of what we usually identify with as church today was stationary and more elaborate in all its services and furnishings—but the tabernacle accomplished the same thing as the temple. God was present in both. Campus ministry groups help us form some kind of sanctuary for our students to connect with God and to stay connected with the church. Campus ministry fellowships may resemble more of the tabernacle than the temple, but they are just as sacred and meet the needs of students who are on an academic journey with God.

One of the great dilemmas faced by the local church in the 21st century is how to be relevant to the local culture. Walking into most churches today is like stepping into a time machine. Most congregations have a style of worship unchanged for 20 to 50 years or more in some cases. This means that to the uninitiated, they may as well be in a foreign country. Even our own youth, who have attended weekly since they were babies, often find services irrelevant. When style supersedes substance, the Gospel message is diminished. Young adults leave, the community stays away, and the congregation becomes a club, which over time can become more like a museum than a house of worship. If a Christian community is to influence culture, it must learn to understand the culture they are speaking to, communicate with it, and actively engage it. This is one way college students can contribute to the local congregation. Young adults have a much better understanding of contemporary culture, because they have grown up in it. They speak the language and understand the metaphors. They are the culture. Develop an environment in the church where the older generation can learn style from students, while the students learn the substance of their faith from their elders.

Some Adventist college students get their first taste of the world outside the bubble when they go away to college. Many have been isolated from the culture, insulated in the “safety” of church institutions. Many Adventist youth have virtually no friends who are not Seventh-day Adventists, something older church members need to consider, as well. While even this group understands today's world better than their parents, programming in ways that communicate the Gospel to them will still fall far short of connecting with the community. Public campus ministry can be a prophetic ministry for the church in that it challenges us to look beyond ourselves and discover how God is working to transform culture so we can



join Him in that work. The church desperately needs the participation of young people attending public schools at all levels. The rest of this section provides ideas meant to assist the local church committed to investing in students.

“Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore to send out workers into his harvest field.” Matthew 9:38

A supportive local congregation can and should be a major source of support for college students. Students and church leaders need to dialogue. Just having these conversations will encourage students and inform the church members of their needs. The following list comes from just such dialogue sessions over our years of ministry. Still, the list is not exhaustive. Read over the list, and perhaps it will inspire ideas that your church can use. We have divided the issues into six categories to make the overall issues easier to remember.

### **Food**

Food always initiates an easy-going environment for human interaction. We put this first, not because it is the most important, but because it intersects with nearly every other category. Jesse, an undergrad engineering student at CU Boulder who liked to cook, would call the Gates family with a list of supplies for Sabbath lunch nearly every Wednesday. They would purchase the food. Jesse would stop by their house on Friday to cook and then bring several friends over after church for lunch on Sabbath. There were always lots of leftovers that made their way to the dorm. Here are a few other opportunities for church members to provide for this basic need:

- Invite students home for lunch on Sabbath.
- Provide food for Friday fellowship, Sabbath school, or other meetings.
- Schedule regular potluck lunches, and invite students.
- Take students out to eat for lunch between classes or in the evening.
- Have an all-you-can-eat pasta night several times each year.
- Take students to a grocery store and purchase food for their dorm room or apartment.
- Host international student meals and plan events inviting participants to make dishes from their country.
- Host Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for international students to experience American culture and hospitality.

### **Love**

This category is the most important, and rather than intersect with the other areas, it encompasses them. We separate love out to emphasize several specific practices that we believe to be extremely important. The following list is designed to challenge your church to seek ways that they can demonstrate love for students.

- Provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere.
- Intentionally seek out students, and invite them to church and other events.



- Check on students regularly. Join them for a meal or snack on campus.
- Be a safe place to stay connected—a home away from home.
- Provide a haven from studies and a place for interaction with friends.
- Offer uncritical acceptance of students and their friends.
- Have an openness to discuss any issue or question.
- Become friends and hang out with them when possible.
- Listen and learn from them.
- Work to develop community for students.
- Make difficult changes to provide relevance and demonstrate authentic concern.
- Encourage students often.
- Pray for students constantly.
- Pray with students often.
- Preach, teach, and live grace

### **Involve**

There is nothing like participation to encourage ownership. When students have responsibility in the local church, they are more likely to attend and support it. More importantly, participating increases the chance that students will seek out and be involved in a church after they graduate, move away, and begin careers.

- Discover students' gifts and passions.
- Invite students to lead out in worship often.
- Include students on boards and committees.
- Organize service projects, and invite students to participate.
- Include students in mission trip plans.
- Provide leadership training.
- Assist students in the development of a local ACF chapter.

### **Invest**

More often than not, money is the tail that wags the dog. If college ministry is a high priority, then helping finance it will be obvious. When we consider that students will soon have salaries and be giving back to the church, we realize that we cannot afford not to invest in them now. Even if the returns come back in another church, they are still giving to the Lord, so we will have followed the principle of the parable of the talents.

- Include student ministry in your budget, and seek special donations.
- Make sure campus ministry projects have sufficient funding.
- Help students finance short-term mission trips.
- Provide funding for a student chaplain, a task-force position, or even a full- time college pastor.



- Develop an alumni list for future support of college ministries.

### **Challenge**

If we truly love students, we will challenge them to grow spiritually. This process should really begin when students are younger, but it is never too late to start. College students should be given important responsibilities, trained, and held accountable. We have discussed these issues in other chapters, but here is a short list to consider:

- Give students permission to explore spiritual issues and develop their own faith.
- Hold students accountable in their personal spiritual life.
- Be available to mentor students and study together.
- Disciple students, and provide spiritual leadership training.

### **Commit**

This category is different from the others. This is about the church's commitment to serve the student population. Here are a few steps that a church might take to get started with this important ministry. Meet with the elders, church board, and any other interested parties, and ask:

- What campuses are in close proximity to the church?
- What students have already attended, or have you noticed?
- Who has a passion for college students?
- Who connects with young adults in general?
- How can you make this ministry a priority in the church?
- Who could lead and sponsor this ministry?
- What about developing an adopt-a-student program that connects families with students?

“At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church.” Paul penned these words to a church at the strategic crossroads of the ancient world—the church of Ephesus. Ephesus in Paul’s day was a thriving seaport connecting Asia and the Middle East with Western Europe. It had one of the largest libraries in the world which housed between 12,000 and 15,000 scrolls. It boasted the temple of Artemis, seventh wonder of the ancient world, which gathered up to 24,000 people in its large amphitheater. It was a burgeoning economic center and second largest city of the Roman Empire. Yet, considering all this, Paul still hailed the church as the center of God’s purpose for the world. This prominent city was peripheral to the church, God’s strategic mission beachhead.

How do you feel about your church’s influence? How close does it come to matching the religious fervor of game day on many college campuses? Some churches are positioned right across the street from major college campuses and the only real connection with the campus is the additional parking the church offers students throughout the week.

When we stop to consider Ephesus as a major seaport and connecting link between East and



West, we can understand why Paul spent more time here than any other place in his missionary travels. In fact, Scripture says the Christian message had such a strong influence on the people of Ephesus that Paul's preaching was disrupting the very fabric of Ephesian life and culture. People became so convicted about their witchcraft and pagan practices that they began burning their sorcery scrolls; amounting to thousands and thousands of dollars—50,000 drachmas—with each drachma equivalent to a day's wage in ancient Ephesus.

“The Word became a student and moved onto the campus.”  
John 1:14, paraphrased

What will it take for the word of Christ to have such influence on today's college campus? According to recent studies that examine religious trends on campus, students have a growing hunger for God and more and more are turning to Christ and becoming involved in Christian communities that will help them practice their new-found faith. Whatever will help fuel this developing spiritual hunger, it will not come from churches that have no connection with those campuses beyond shared parking privileges. Being positioned next door to a college campus doesn't make us a campus church any more than living next to a church makes us a Christian, but it does offer some natural opportunities for such influence.

Paul again reminds us that this is God's purpose for the church: “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ.” The challenge for today's church—those who are called out by God—is to regain our God-given purpose by actively joining God at the crossroads of culture for the purpose of shaping the spiritual direction and commitments of today's students and tomorrow's leaders.

## The Campus

“True education is always about learning to connect knowing with doing, belief with behavior; and yet that connection is incredibly difficult to make for students in the modern university.” This is why the campus needs the church. This is a high calling. We are not called just to provide healthy alternatives to campus beer parties. We are called to help students understand why choosing the alternative is paramount. We are called to help students develop a system of belief that will serve as a guide throughout their lives. We are called to present Jesus Christ as the center of our worldview. We believe that without a Christ-centered worldview, even the grandest achievements are temporary. The call of campus ministry is to incorporate the otherwise missing component, the living Word of God.

The challenge of this chapter is to understand the campus in a way that helps us effectively communicate Christ's message of love. Beyond influencing the students who are actively involved in our programs, we can help shape the culture of the entire campus by demonstrating the value of belief in God. This is accomplished through the lives of our students and through our interaction with students, faculty, administration, and other groups. When the principles discussed in the ESSENTIALS section are put into practice, our ministries will become a force for good and for God's kingdom on campus. A study of the great revivals



of the past two or three centuries reveals that most of them began on a university campus.

The church also needs the campus. We can ignore the public college campus—most churches do—some whose buildings are just across the street. However, when we avoid the campus, we miss an amazing opportunity to join the mission of God on campus. History reveals what happens when we ignore or deny the world in which faith exists. Faith cannot thrive in isolation. It can, in fact, become dangerous and destructive. The best formula for success is a practical knowledge of how things work in our world combined with a working faith that connects what we know and believe to our Creator and Redeemer. This is what we mean by the integration of faith and learning. Just as the secular university tends to replace faith with learning, so the church tends to replace learning with faith. A well-designed campus ministry will help students integrate what they learn with the faith they know. Over 20 million students are attending colleges and universities across North America at any given time. At least 100,000 of those students have some Adventist background. Will a ministry on campus be there to help them make the connection?

Each campus has its own culture and that culture should be studied and ministry on that campus adapted to fit the unique characteristics. There are, however, several generalized categories of campuses that are helpful to understand. They are listed below and described them in greater detail in the chapter titled “CAMPUS” in *The Word on Campus*.

- Athletic/Party Schools
- Commuter Campuses
- Specialty Schools
- The University System

## Christ and the Campus

The public college campus of the 21st century can seem like a gauntlet that a student must pass through to reach graduation. As a rite of passage, college life today can prove even more dangerous than the Maasai tradition of a young man’s killing a lion before he becomes a man, a warrior to protect the tribe. The plethora of possible fields of study is enough to make anyone’s head spin. The cost even at the “more affordable” state schools has spun out of control, and many students will be paying for college for much of their careers. Competition to achieve can create unhealthy levels of stress. The distractions are so numerous and so easily accessed that it is amazing anyone has time to study. Many are saying that the quality of education and the methods used to teach lag far behind the culture and the needs of society. With the knowledge of the ages literally in the palm of every student’s hand, there is an amazing lack of emphasis on most campuses on how to make use of that knowledge in the real world. Far too many who start college right out of high school are unprepared. Colleges spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with immaturity, and they are ill-equipped to provide the needed guidance. The drop-out rate and worse, the suicide rate, is far too high, and most universities are at a loss to do much about it. Many of the larger institutions are trying to manage the education of 30,000 to 40,000 students. Our campus ministry fellowships can partner with the college administration to help deal with the needs



of students. Ministry means helping assist students as they face the realities of college life, and as they prepare for life after college.

Since the beginning of earth's history, human beings have worked at solving unsolvable problems, and often we end up creating more. No one who has read the Bible should be surprised that a secular college would be filled with unsolvable difficulties and dilemmas. However, just as Jesus is the only solution to the sin problem, He is also the only one who can help students navigate the troubled waters of college life and the life that follows. He offered life, living water, to the Samaritan woman that day at the well and then to the whole village of Sychar. He enlisted the help of the woman and the disciples as He opened the secrets of the kingdom to the people of Samaria, and He seeks our participation today to bring living water—life, the gospel of Jesus and His kingdom—to a thirsty campus. Whether you are a student yourself, a paid or volunteer chaplain, a pastor, a church administrator, a professor, a concerned parent or church member, you have been called out to share the unspeakable joy of life in and through Jesus, the living Word of God on campus. May God's Spirit fill you with all the riches of His wisdom, and may you be empowered to bless others with his amazing gift of abundant and eternal life.

## Students

The National Center for Educational Statistics notes that there are over 20 million students enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States. Add that to the nearly two million students in Canadian colleges, and the number is greater than the combined population of the seven largest cities in North America. Seven million are in two-year programs, and three million are in graduate programs. The rest, just over half, are in four-year undergraduate programs. Since college and university students comprise nearly seven percent of the population, it would be reasonable to assume that a basic understanding of and investment in ministry with this demographic would be important. Combine the numbers with the critical changes that take place during the college years, and we all have a compelling reason to understand and invest personal and organizational resources in ministry with and for college students.

Surveys show that between 70 and 80 percent of all college students with immediate family ties to the Adventist Church, or about 100,000, are attending public institutions in North America. The 14 colleges and universities run by the Adventist Church in North America amount to another 25,000. That is nearly one-tenth of the membership in this Division. Since the average age of the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America is 56, it is clear that many of the 125,000 students we refer to here are not members themselves, but most of them grew up in a home where at least one parent was a member.

Aside from the obvious value of investment in college ministry, if this were a priority for every Seventh-day Adventist congregation close to a public college, what might be possible? Even if the goal was to encourage students with Adventist connections to continue that relationship into their professional lives, the results would be astounding. Perhaps the average age would decrease as the tithe base increased. The goal is, of course, much bigger than keeping students in the church. The goal of campus ministry is to disciple and empower students to reach students for Christ's kingdom! Combining the resources of the church with an army of





students, committed to Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit, who are already on campus interacting with faculty and other students, the results are beyond our ability to imagine. “I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

College itself can actually be valuable to spiritual growth. Statistics tell us that more people who do not attend college leave their churches and God than those who do attend. That may seem surprising, but consider the fact that college is designed to teach a person to think for themselves. If we believe that faith is reasonable and personal, then it is reasonable to believe that thinking people are more likely to follow Jesus. It also is reasonable to assume that thinking people will not be attracted to a religion that asks them to suspend personal exploration and discovery. Churches that make every belief black and white and that stand in judgment of independent thought and conclusion are less likely to attract educated, thinking people, and are, in fact, likely to drive away those who are being educated, even when their childhood and youth are spent in dedicated ministries. God values freedom of choice and from the Garden to the final invitation in the book of Revelation, the choice is left to the individual. Consequences for our choices are made clear, and the appeal to believe is given with great longing and passion. Still, the decision to accept Christ and be part of His community is personal. Campus ministry must honor what God values. We must become communities where college students see Jesus in our members and hear the Holy Spirit’s appeal to their hearts without the distracting human voices of our condemnation. Reasonable people will be attracted to a God whose followers demonstrate love and respect.

One of the tasks of the college years that transcends geography and generations is that college is a time of transition. Many students are living away from home for the first time in their lives. Most students enter college before they complete their teen years, and all are expected to emerge a few years later prepared to enter the adult world of personal and economic responsibility. They are supposed to find and keep a job, manage their own finances, and fully support themselves. One of the roles of campus ministry is to assist students with the task of bridging the gap between independence and responsibility. That includes developing a personal relationship with Christ that fosters spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is a catalyst to meaningful responsibility in the world.

Ask someone who has recently graduated from college to name the top three areas of life that they have changed since high school, and their answers will likely fit into three categories: vocation, relationships, and identity. These are the forces that help shape a student’s understanding of reality, the world, the church, and God. These issues contribute to their understanding of who they are, where they came from, and why they are here.

Identity is in many ways the key developmental issue and is shaped by vocation and relationships, which are both influenced by identity. An individual’s background, personal needs, and values provide a foundation for who they will become. Ultimately a person’s worldview—what they believe about themselves, their world, and their place in the world—is often developed during the late teens and early 20s and is the most influential factor in shaping how vocation is approached, which relationships remain meaningful, and how students approach the rest of life. That is why college ministry is so vital: it places Jesus at the center of the transition to adulthood. Campus ministry helps students to see themselves first



as children of God, citizens of His kingdom, and representatives of His sacrificial life. The local congregation plays a crucial role in walking with college students as they navigate each of these important life transitions.

## **Start and Plan**

The process of developing a campus ministry, planning, and programing is the function of student leaders. For more information, check out *The Word on Campus* book and workbook (see the Resources section for more information). The local church can be especially helpful by funding resources for student groups whose finances are usually stretched.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for your commitment as a local congregation to reach students for Christ. The most effective way to celebrate Jesus on campus is through the friendships of committed students. Help your students develop a relationship with Christ that naturally overflows into their developing relationships on campus. Develop programs that are attractive to those who do not believe, and teach students who do believe to be prepared “to give an answer for their faith” when the door opens.



# Resources

The following resources are available from AdventSource. For a complete list, visit [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org) or call 402.486.8800.

## The Journey Series

By Ron Pickell

Journey is an introduction into the life and mission of Jesus. It was created for larger weekly on or off-campus meetings in a teaching format including small group discussion. Each study opens with a story or illustration that introduces the topic of study. Studies include icebreaker activities, scripture references, questions for discussion, and more.

### Journey Series 1: Invitation

I have heard about Jesus all my life. Who was He? What was His mission? How does His life, ministry, death, and resurrection affect my life today? Even more importantly, why should I follow his life and teachings? He invites us on a journey with others to peer into His life and ministry, and to “Come and see.”

Leader’s Guide           Product #629743  
Participant Guide       Product #629742

### Journey Series 2: Greater Things

There is no greater privilege or accomplishment in discipleship than to become like Jesus. But Jesus actually promises to help us do even greater things in Him through His name. What kinds of greater things can we do through Jesus? What can Jesus teach us about ourselves, life’s meaning, and our relationships with others?

Leader’s Guide           Product #629749  
Participant Guide       Product #629750

### Journey Series 3: Cherishing God

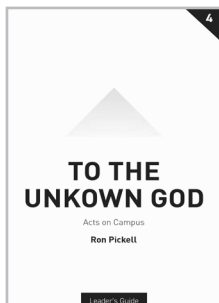
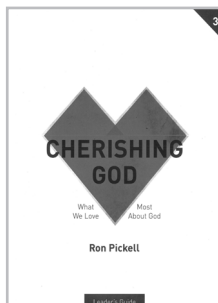
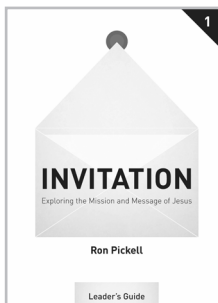
Why does God expect and command us to love Him? Love is what God wants and expects from us first because God is love, but more importantly because love is what we have received from Him. God requests us to cherish Him because He cherishes us.

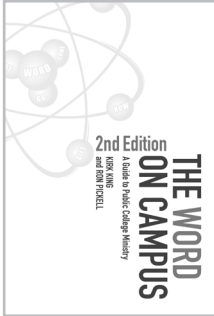
Leader’s Guide           Product #629751  
Participant Guide       Product #629752

### To the Unknown God

This Bible study explores how God is speaking, moving, and directing our lives through a living faith that is gathering others for His kingdom.

Leader’s Guide           Product #629730  
Participant Guide       Product #629748





## **The Word on Campus: A Guide to Public College Ministry, 2nd Edition**

By Kirk King with Ron Pickell

A comprehensive guide to Adventist ministry on non-Adventist college and university campuses in North America. Learn how to start and lead a campus ministry and how to work with students, the campus, and the local church and more.

Product #623956

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## **Adventist Christian Fellowship: Designing Ministry for Your Campus**

By Kirk King with Ron Pickell

This companion workbook to *The Word on Campus* is a procedural guide developed to assist student groups start and plan successful Adventist-based ministries on non-Adventist college and university campuses.

Product #629725

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## **Websites**

- Adventist Christian Fellowship North American  
**ACFLink.org**
- North American Division Youth Department  
**AdventistYouthMinistries.org**
- Traverse: Life Coaching for College-age Young Adults  
**TraverseTheGap.org**
- Center for Youth Evangelism  
**CYE.org**
- Growing Young Adventists  
**GrowingYoungAdventists.com**
- Involve Youth  
**InvolveYouth.org**
- Campus Hope  
**CampusHope.com**

## Public Campus Ministry

This Quick Start Guide for Public Campus Ministry is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more.

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