



CHANGE THE UNIVERSITY, *Change the World* by Glen Davis



Luke James
M.A. Student

When I started college, following Jesus was not on my list of priorities; but when I discovered who he was four years later, it became of paramount importance. When I started living for Jesus, I had no Christian friends. I felt alone in my circle of hard-partying fraternity brothers. Someone from church invited me to go to a new campus ministry, Chi Alpha. I went, and from that moment forward, I was involved.

Without exaggeration, becoming part of Chi Alpha was the second most important decision I made in college. The events, small group meetings and services provided opportunities to interact with students majoring in something other than the ethics of MTV. Chi Alpha provided a venue for discipleship, which I needed desperately. And I discovered a love for student ministry. I can honestly say I have no clue where I would be right now if God had not used Chi Alpha so mightily in my life.



Rachel,* a Ph.D. candidate at Stanford University, came to hear a guest speaker talk about the compatibility of science and faith. She was intrigued and asked to meet with me. I sat in her office, and she began to pepper me with questions. She started coming to Chi Alpha faithfully. One day she asked if she could share a testimony in our worship meeting. “It’s going to sound weird. You know how it’s spring outside? I feel like it’s spring in my heart. Promise you won’t laugh, but I feel like I’m being born.” I asked her if she knew that Jesus used that exact metaphor in a very famous conversation. “He did? That’s so cool!” She has started working her way through the Bible. Watching her grow in her faith has been amazing.

Shortly after my wife and I came to establish a Chi Alpha ministry at Stanford, Ehud Barak (former Prime Minister of Israel and Stanford graduate) made the following observation in the *Stanford Daily*:

Somehow, the university is the place where the leadership of the future in all areas of life is formed. Since the best and the brightest are coming through these institutions, they have a great influence on the leadership of this nation and nations as a whole.

This is true in politics, in business and with regard to spiritual matters—



college graduates have great influence on nations. Wise missionaries have always known this.

EARLY PENTECOSTAL MISSIONARIES

In 1906 Martin Ryan was baptized in the Holy Spirit at the Azusa Street Revival. He soon left for China, along with more than a dozen members of his church. A profound insight occurred to him in Japan when he noticed all the foreign college students there. Ryan realized he could reach all of Asia by reaching Japan’s college students.

This insight is not new; in fact, Asia was first reached this way. “[Paul] took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:9–10).

Paul spoke in an established educational institution and was thereby able to reach an entire region. His strategy still works.

AS GOES THE CAMPUS, SO GOES THE CULTURE

I am increasingly convinced that university ministry is crucial to the future of the church in the United States and is essential to global missions strategy.

When we reach the campus...

...we reach international students

The world comes to study at America’s universities. According to the U.S. State

*Name has been changed.



Department, 40% of future presidents and prime ministers worldwide will study in the United States, and 25% of international students currently enrolled in the United States will go on to serve as government officials.

Most missionary activity requires learning another language, traveling to another country and working cross-culturally.

But for each nation that missionaries go to, there are hundreds of thousands of students from that nation currently studying in America. These future leaders have already learned English and are eagerly searching for new ideas about God, morality and the meaning of life. Therefore, reaching American universities must be a component of missions.

Over half of my alumni reside overseas, and I'm currently ministering to students from Thailand, India, Finland, Singapore and Rwanda.

...we mobilize missionaries

Chi Alpha has become a primary supplier of long-term missionaries to Assemblies of God World Missions. And this trend is increasing: as a result of our last national gathering, 661 students pledged to "give a year and pray about a lifetime." Currently, more than half have followed through on their commitment.

This is not a one-time occurrence. The history of American foreign missions springs from college revival.

The first missionary society in America was founded in 1806 by five students from



Williams College in Massachusetts who felt challenged to reach the world with the gospel.

In July 1886 D. L. Moody held his first College Students' Summer School. More than 100 students at that event signed a simple pledge: *It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary.* Ultimately, more than 20,000 students would minister on foreign soil as a result of what became known as the Student Volunteer Mission Movement.

...we reach America

Student attitudes on campuses today will become the prevailing wisdom in courtrooms, classrooms and boardrooms tomorrow. Just as the sexual revolution that began with college students in the 1960s has transformed our culture, so any spiritual revolution is most likely to spring from the college campus.

In 1787, at Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, five non-Christian students were so dismayed at their debauched campus that they gathered to pray. A revival began on campus that soon spread to the neighboring community and became a key component in the launch of the Second Great Awakening.

Understanding this principle, Charles Simeon took a pastorate in Cambridge, England, and spent his evenings hosting students for discussion meetings. Over the course of his 54 years of pastoral ministry in a college town, 1100 students became pastors and missionaries.



Daisuke Yabuki
M.Div. Student

I am a product of Chi Alpha. While I was a university student in Japan in 1997, an American Chi Alpha pastor visited my country with several students on a short-term mission trip.

I went to a Chi Alpha meeting and listened to the Bible story through an interpreter who was an AGTS student and the daughter of a Japanese pastor. Although I wasn't ready to accept what I was hearing, the American team didn't give up on me. They prayed for me even after returning to the United States. Three months later, I was saved in a service at the Japanese pastor's church. God called me to full-time ministry, and I married Yoriko (M.A. 1999), the pastor's daughter and interpreter through whom I heard the gospel for the first time. I praise God for his faithful people of Chi Alpha.

For more about the ministry of Daisuke and Yoriko, go to www.agts.edu/more/yabuki



I think about the seniors graduating from my ministry this year: Aaron, a Rhodes Scholar, will go to Oxford next year and hopes to serve in the political arena. Esther is deciding which of America's top law schools to enroll in and is looking toward a federal judgeship. Alan is an engineer who hopes to be an entrepreneur. Leilani is going to work in urban education. Jerry is going to medical school and hopes to work with Doctors Without Borders.

In addition to changing the culture as marketplace ministers, perhaps the most vital role graduates of secular universities play is as lay leaders that are the lifeblood of a congregation. They will become our board members, Sunday-school teachers,



small-group leaders and ushers. Some will even become pastors.

COLLEGE MINISTRY MATTERS

Former president of the United Nations General Assembly Charles Habib Malik saw clearly the potential of university ministry:

The University is a clear-cut fulcrum with which to move the world. The problem here is for the church to realize that no greater service can it render both itself and the cause of the gospel than to try to recapture the universities for Christ, on whom they were all originally founded. More potently than by any other means, change the university and you change the world.

Yes and amen—please join me in praying that the Lord of the Harvest will raise up laborers for this strategic harvest field!

Glen Davis (M.Div. 1999), with his wife, Paula, leads the Chi Alpha campus ministry at Stanford University.

