

GREAT COMMISSION STUDENT MINISTRY

A Report

Presented to

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The Cornerstone Bible College and Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for ST703

by

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March 13, 2018

Great Commission Student Ministry

The goal and purpose of life is to worship God. Before the world began, and when the world ends, the never-ending reality remains the worship of God (Gen 1:1, Rev 4:1–5:14). Therefore, the mission of CBC Student Ministries is to assist Christian families in their God-ordained task of raising worshippers of the true and living God. We do this by obeying Christ’s Great Commission to make disciples of Jesus Christ—evangelizing, edifying, equipping young adults by God’s Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Matt 28:16–20, Acts 1:8, Isa 49:6). The Great Commission shapes both our motivation and methods for student ministry.

Our Motivation: The Glory of God

We Glorify God Through Christ-exalting Student Ministry

Our motivation in student ministry is the unrivaled preeminence of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given universal authority and glory. The eternal, almighty Son of God took flesh to accomplish the God’s plan to gather a people for Himself from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation—a plan established before the foundation of the world—that would resound in glory to the Father. (Isa 49:6, Eph 1:4, Rev 5:9; 7:9–10). This redemption began in the Garden, was foreshadowed in the Exodus, prefigured by the law and sacrificial system, predicted by the prophets, and fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Rom 3:25, Heb 2:17; 10:5–14, 1 Pet 1:10–12, 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10). The humiliation and condescension of the Son led the Father to “super exalt” Jesus Christ, giving Him the name above every name (Phil 2:5–11). Christ was publically proven and declared to be the Son of God in power by His miraculous resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:5), which was God’s “stamp of approval” on Jesus who achieved ultimate victory over all of His enemies. God made Christ supreme ruler over all (Ps 110), to fulfill the Father’s purpose to make Christ preeminent in everything (Col 1:18), so that Jesus Christ is placed “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph 1:21), and with all things placed under his feet as head over all

things to the church (Eph 1:22). In short, Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim 6:15, Rev 19:16) and we worship Him. Therefore, all ministry is simply a response to Christ's supreme authority, the natural outflow of people who are under Christ's authority, as we do all things for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31, Col 3:17). Because of the supreme authority of Christ, we are under obligation (Rom 1:14) to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all men, for it is God's sole power for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom 1:16), and the focal point of the Father's ultimate glory (Jn 17:1-3, 1 Cor 15:24-28).

We Glorify God Through Targeted Ministry to Teenagers

Why do we conduct a separate ministry to teenagers? We view teenage ministry as a powerful tool to fulfill the Great Commission. While the godly family is the primary institution given by God to raise children, the local church is given the responsibility to raise believers in the faith. Therefore, we believe that the Bible calls for a godly *synergy* between parents in their primary, God-ordained task of raising their children in the Lord (Deut 6:6-7; Eph 6:4), and the call of the local church to train and equip believers (Eph 4:11-13). As an extension of the local Church, this ministry supports families with the shared goal of evangelizing, and raising up godly men and women who will worship God with their lives. Our student ministry is a targeted way of investing in the young people in our church, to evangelize, equip, and train them for Christian service. As we seek the glory of God through making disciples of Christ, we trust the Lord's presence and support in our endeavors, just as He promised (Matt 28:20).

It is absolutely undeniable that parents are responsible for the discipleship of their children, but the Bible does not prevent, but instead promotes, a godly influence that comes from the body of Christ. For example, when teaching Timothy about how to run the Ephesian church, Apostle Paul reminds Timothy of the centrality of both family and church in Gospel ministry. Paul reminds Timothy about what type of influence both the families and the local church should have in upon all age groups in the family, upholding a godly home as the seedbed for spiritual development of children, and the criterion for leadership in the church (1 Tim 3:4, 3:12, 5:4,

5:10, 4:14). But while Paul confirmed the importance of the home, he also strongly acknowledges influence and ministry from the local church. Paul commanded Timothy not neglect the public reading of Scripture and the preaching of the Word because the faithful proclamation of God's Word ensures salvation for its hearers (1 Tim 4:13-16). He upheld the preaching of the word in the church as one the main vehicles of God's grace in the salvation of people. At the same time, he urged Timothy not to let anyone despise his youth, but to set all believers a public example of speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity (1 Tim 4:12). While acknowledging the godly influences of Timothy's grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (2 Tim 2:4-5), at the same time, Paul encourages Timothy to fan afresh the flame of God which was given to him by the laying on of hands, presumably by elders in the church (2 Tim 1:6). More importantly, Paul also urges Timothy to "follow the pattern of the sound words" that Timothy heard from him (2 Tim 1:13), so that what he "heard from Paul in the presence of many witnesses", he would "entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Tim 2:2) This classic pattern of discipleship and multiplication and training is not given to Timothy as a father, but as a minister in the local church. This pattern is the pattern that Christ Himself modeled, and should serve as the basis for all church ministry, including Student Ministry. The Bible presents a mandate for the local church to pass the torch of discipleship to the younger generations in the church. Since Christ's command to disciple all nations is universal, Jesus does not exclude non-parents from fulfilling this command, nor are teenagers excluded as the subjects of Christ's overarching command. All Christians are universally commanded to make disciples of all people (teenagers included as much as any other age group), and this responsibility belongs to both the family and the church. When it comes to discipleship of children and teenagers, it is not an "either/or," but rather a "both/and" situation.

Our Methods: Going, Baptizing, Teaching

Making disciples is the means in which God is glorified, and includes the entire process which a person is converted to Christ, grows in the faith, and eventually and becomes a

fruitful disciple-maker who serves in a local church (2 Tim 2:2). In short, we seek to produce reproducing worshippers. This process is expressed in three ministerial aspects: going, baptizing, and teaching.

Going: Our Student Ministry Involves Evangelizing the Lost

The first aspect of making disciples is to *go*. We cannot reach people with whom we have no contact. Just like the missionary efforts of God Himself, our ministry is characterized by constant outward momentum. Christ commands us as His followers to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8), ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20), and evangelists (Eph 4:11), who must go home to our friends and tell of the Lord's salvation (Mk 5:19). Just as the local church is called to be his witnesses to the remotest parts of the earth (Acts 1:8), our ministry has a missionary mindset to it. Everything we do is undergirded by our desire to spread God's glory through reaching the teen community. We recognize that many teenagers do not have the benefit of growing up in a Christian home and church to hear the Gospel, so we purposely conduct many activities that are targeted towards making contact with the unbelieving teenagers.

Because the Bible calls all believers to be light and salt to a dark world, Christian teenagers should be exposed to non-believers to share Christ with them. Besides our weekly meetings, we promote different events designed to penetrate our communities with the Gospel. These include High School campus ministries, Volleyball Outreach Tournament, Stinson Beach Hike, and Summer Camp. These events have connected many students to the Gospel, and are perfect opportunities for believing students to invite friends and practice personal evangelism. The overall strategy behind these events is spread the gospel to students who would then invite their own families to get plugged into the local church.

Baptizing: Our Student Ministry Preaches Repentance

The second aspect of making disciples is *baptizing* students in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Just as the ministry of John the Baptist was a call of repentance to Jesus

(Mk 1:4, Lk 3:3, Ac 13:24, 19:4), the Gospel message is a countercultural, all-consuming, call to follow God through the Lordship of Christ. Baptism was an ordinance given by Christ to symbolize three very critical truths of believers: dying to yourself, identifying with Christ, being raised up with Christ into new life: “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (Rom 6:4) Therefore, our ministry strives to teach teenagers the radical call to surrender to Christ and follow Him—first through repentance and faith unto salvation—then obedience to the Lord’s command for water baptism. Following Christ is a radical proposition, involving the whole of someone’s being, where one dies to self and Christ becomes Lord of all. It is a crucifixion of self, to be replaced by Christ: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.” (Lk 9:23–24). In our pluralistic society, it may not be “politically correct” to preach sin to people, but we cannot present to students any teaching that makes students come to Christianity by any means other than repentance from sin. We must remind students that following Christ is for a lifetime, and not only a temporary phase, or a one-time response to an altar call. This comes out in the way we preach, teach, and disciple.

Teaching Them to Observe: Student Ministry Involves Teaching and Training

The phrase “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” implies that students are not only to be taught Christ’s commands, but also trained to practice them. Student Ministry is an excellent platform to train young believers to serve in ministry, and make disciples themselves. This involves several aspects of the Christian life.

We Preach Christ

To promote the worship of God, we place a top priority on preaching and teaching. In general, teaching involves the passing down Christian doctrine, every aspect of the faith and lifestyle to the believer. At the center of this ministry is expository preaching that is God-

centered, Christ-exalting, and Spirit-empowered. We are called to preach the Word, in season and out of season, because the time is already here when people prefer their ears tickled at the expense of their souls (2 Tim 4:1–2). Since Christ is the center of the Scriptures, He must be the unifying theme in all our preaching. (1 Cor 2:2, Col 1:18) Christ must be proclaimed to teenagers for salvation and sanctification because without Christ they are dead in their sins and objects of God’s wrath. Therefore, almost all of our meetings feature an exegetical, Christ-centered, Bible-based sermon where students not only learn the meaning and implications of each text, but how they are called to salvation in Christ. The sermon is followed by a time of small group discussion where students discuss the implications of the Word of God, as well as pray for one another.

We Teach the Scriptures

We must preach Christ to teenagers so they recognize how the Gospel ripples into all areas in their lives, from friendships, to sports, to college plans, to sexuality, to boyfriends/girlfriends, social media, recreation and entertainment. Essentially, we want them to see the supremacy of Christ in all things. Christ alone can save them, deliver them, guide them, and give them true purpose and joy in this life (John 6:35). For these reasons, all of our student ministry gatherings revolve around the Word of God. In addition to our preaching at weekly meetings, we also conduct a weekly hour of Bible teaching in Sunday School. During this time, we teach through the Bible systematically, topically, and exegetically. This teaching is geared towards believers so that they might grow in spiritual maturity (1 Tim 4:13). Teaching the Word can also come in other forms, such as a salvation testimony, small group Bible studies, even Bible-based videos, and memory verses.

We Sing of Our Salvation

One of the ways our commitment to the Word of God is expressed is through Gospel music. Both the Fellowship Club and Crossroads weekly meetings feature congregational singing to worship God. We believe that singing is first a mental apprehension and then an emotional response to being captivated with Christ through His Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph

5:18–21, Col 3:16). Therefore, we select songs that are rich with Christ-exalting truth, and sing with the freedom to express our emotions as those who have been redeemed. We sing songs by Christ-exalting artists like Sovereign Grace Music, the Gettys, and Chris Tomlin—songs that glorify God in the work of Christ for our salvation. We evaluate each song we sing to ensure that it accurately portrays Biblical truth, and points us to our salvation in Christ, which is the greatest fuel for worship (Rev 5-7).

We Pray Fervently

Directly related to Christ-exalting preaching is the necessity of prayer. As in all ministries, we must pray for God to open doors for the Word to go forth: “pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ” (Col 4:3) If salvation is a work of God, then our ministry must be saturated with prayer. We must pray for our students to get saved or we labor in vain. The early apostles dedicated themselves specifically to the word and prayer (Acts 6:4) If we believe that salvation is a work of the spirit, and that the greatest need is transformed hearts amongst our teenagers, then we must pray because ultimately this is a work only God can do, asking Him to do a mighty work on their hearts so they will repent of their sin and embrace Christ. We are commanded to pray in every circumstance (Eph 6:18, 1Th 5:17, Luke 18:1, Rom 12:12, Ps 55:17, Luke 6:12, 2 Tim 1:3), asking for all things in prayer (Mat 21:22, John 16:23-26, Mat 18:19, John 14:13,14, Phil 4:6, 1 Jn 5:15), and teaching our students how to pray as Jesus taught (Matt 6). Therefore our meetings often feature group and individual prayer. We conduct prayer workshops, prayer meetings, and once a year at our Winter Camp, we do a group fasting and prayer.

We Promote Small Group Discipleship

The small group is one of the core structures of our Student Ministry discipleship program. Based directly on the model presented in 2 Tim 2:2 and Matt 28:18–20, we believe that small group mentoring arrangements is the biblical model to make disciples. The life of Jesus himself demonstrated this dynamic as he led his disciples, and Paul modeled it in his ministry to

Timothy. In this model, a more mature believer comes alongside others to shepherd them in their walk with God and teach them how to live lives of worship to God. It is mentoring arrangement where a more mature Christian adopts faithful, available, and teachable students with the goal of shepherding them to someday take on their own group, and to continue that chain for generations. These groups are not just impersonal Bible studies, but they involve life-on-life, regular interactions. They are designed to be spiritual mentoring in the context of real, natural, relationships which often stay together for several years, sometimes from 7–12 grade. These groups are not just volunteers and students, but also include parents discipling their kids, younger staff and even other students. We desire to promote Christ-exalting relationships between students, staff and families, where friendships develop into deep accountability relationships that are based on the Gospel.

Another very effective venue for small group discipleship is Discipleship Camp. Our winter camp is a “spiritual tune-up” reserved for believing students who desire to go deeper in their faith and relationship with God. This retreat is primarily focused on refreshing our relationship with God by hearing God’s Word, prayer, and fellowship. This camp has historically been an excellent opportunity for students to revive their walks with God, commit to more accountability with their fellow students, and for staff to really confront areas of students which tend to hold them back in their Christian lives.

We Promote Large Group Discipleship

As students repent, discipleship occurs in both large and small formats. Our large group discipleship program known as 710. During 710, we separate boys and girls for a short devotional, followed by small groups. This format also allows us to discuss issues in the context of their peers. These times are beneficial because they allow not only the delivery of key and timely messages geared toward to gender-specific issues, but they allow more times of accountability and prayer. The 710 ministry is also an opportunity for us to disciple our younger staff, as they often have opportunities to teach the Word under the guidance of seasoned pastors

and leaders.

We Equip Students for Service

Another important aspect of student ministry is the training of the next generation. One of the main functions of the local church is to equip the saints for the work of service” (Eph 4:12). Therefore, we view our ministry not only as a platform for evangelism, but for training young believers to be the next ministers in the church. For example, at Crossroads, we strive to train High School students to take ownership of many aspects of the gathering, including the instrumentalists, singers, audio/sound team, clean up, and even food. We also make it a point to do periodic “Student-led Nights” where faithful students plan and execute an entire ministry meeting. We also make it a priority to train our students in evangelism. We host an annual student witnessing and training program (SWAT) that trains our students how to explain the verbal message of the Gospel to unbelievers. In addition, we encourage our high schoolers to serve in our local children’s ministry. Many of our High School students give of their time, money and energy to serve in the little ones in the congregation, to train them in the faith as well.

Not only do we use Student Ministries to equip students, but we also use it to train ministry workers. Although the core duty of every staff member is the discipleship of students, older staff members are also encouraged to shepherd younger staff who are new to the ministry. Godly parents also get involved in this endeavor. For example, occasionally one of our staffers is able to disciple not only a student, but also his newly-saved parent. Likewise, sometimes seasoned parents disciple younger staffers. Student Ministries offers an excellent medium to train students and younger ministry workers. We have implemented a special system in our ministry to facilitate training called the Point and Wing system. Through this mentoring system, we have trained dozens and dozens of young men and women in various aspects of ministry. In order for everyone to personally own the ministry and employ their gifts and talents, we appoint every staff member over a certain area of ministry, no matter how small. By breaking the ministry up into different areas of responsibility, we can streamline workloads, increase our ability to run

events, give people more focus, and allow training of specific skill sets in a ministry context.

We Build Christian Community

Part of obeying Christ is following His command to be in community with one another (1 Tim 4:13, Heb 10:25). Since the Garden of Eden, man was always meant to live in God-centered community. We are all created in the image of the triune God who enjoys perfect, eternal fellowship within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We all enjoy friendship and community because the triune God made us in His image. The relational perfection of the Godhead is what Christians are graciously brought into through Christ, and is precisely what makes our joy complete (1 John 1:1–3). Accordingly, one of the greatest needs in a teenager’s life is godly community. This need is expressed in the constant desire for teenagers to “hang out with their friends.” We embrace this tendency as an expression of God’s image in young people. If teens do not find community in the local church, they may find it somewhere else—anywhere from locker rooms, to chess clubs, to street gangs—but we desire that they find their main community in the church with other believers. In tandem with God’s design for the family, the local church provides the community that God intended. Fostering gospel-based, Christ-centered community is key to discipleship.

Some ways we foster Christian community-building is through recreation, food, and fun. We know that teenagers thrive in social activities, so our ministry features diverse games, sports, social activities because we know that community is built during these less formal interactions. For this reason, we often play games at our weekly meetings and host various sports outreach tournaments during the year. These events are excellent platforms for evangelism and service. Another aspect of community building is eating meals together. Just like the early church, all of our weekly meetings feature food and drink, so that after every sermon, we can gather in small groups and discuss the application of God’s Word in our individual lives. During these small groups, students routinely ask questions, share spiritual struggles, and pray for one another. One of most popular event is our annual Movie Night, where families gather to watch

student movie productions. Both the making of these movies and the gospel outreach aspect of the night itself are excellent ways to build gospel relationships with students. These deeper relationships help to create contexts in which gospel ministry can take place as students feel more part of a family.

Overall, Student Ministries is an excellent platform by which we obey the Great Commission to propagate worshippers of God. By partnering with parents in the Gospel, our ministry works alongside the family to raise up the next generation of men and women who will live Spirit-empowered, Christ-exalting lives to the glory of God the Father.