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A GENERATION IN NEED!

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Recalling the Call

At the close of this semester Annie and I have completed ten full years of full-time ministry reaching out to college students. It's hard to imagine that so much time has past and so much ministry has happened, so many lives impacted... but perhaps the most impacted lives are not the students we reach out to, but rather Annie and myself...

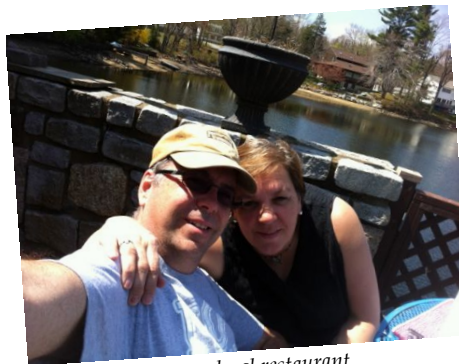
Fifteen years ago, Annie was expecting our fourth child when Val Nordbye (now the national director) came to our church raising support and sharing her vision and the importance of campus ministry. I had been sensing a need to become involved in a ministry focused on evangelism and as Val and the students she brought with her shared... something inside of me was stirred.

After the service I talked with Val and told her I was interested in working with Campus Ambassadors (CA). Val was excited about my inquiry and asked if she could come out to our house and talk together with Annie and me. I still remember Val sitting in our living room and unveiling what full-time ministry would look like. Somehow my idea of being involved in a limited capacity around my work and family schedule was understood by Val to be a desire to enter full-time ministry! While I listened carefully, I did not have the heart to tell her I was not at all interested in leaving my career as an engineering program manager, however Val ended the conversation with these words, "Why not just hangout with us and see where God takes it." I thought to myself, I could do that.. hangout... and see... So in April of 1997 I began to hang out to see where God would take it.

I recently spent some time reading through my old journals and tracked comments about the idea of moving from engineering to campus ministry. Here are a few entries:

4/26/1997 - It's Saturday at the Abby. A beautiful day. The main issue on my mind lately is about CA. I feel God is calling me to this ministry, but financially I am afraid.

5/17/1997 - This morning I am struggling emotionally and physically. It seems to be an impossibility to be given this salary and to raise this amount of support. I go from high to low not knowing what direction God is leading. I struggle with the amount of time, money, and faith needed to make this transition. I understand there are no impossibilities with God but it is so difficult to know his will.



Lunch date at a local restaurant

I know I am called to a ministry, but what ministry? Is this the one? Should I have more faith to live on less? Should I sell everything? There is no clear answer. I have the Word and prayer and even that is difficult. God's will is so simple and yet so complex. I have a desire to do this but I question my motives. Am I doing this for me or am I doing this for the college students who do not know Christ? My motive should be one thing and one thing only, to glorify Christ.

7/12/1997 - I am still at a loss for what to do concerning CA. I feel the call and therefore must move in that direction. But I cannot see financially how I can. What is

stepping out in faith? What is being responsible for your family? Where does the line cross? I know I must (and ultimately will) be obedient to His call but I also must feel at peace with the decision and its cost. Perhaps that is what I need time for most.

10/4/1997 - Today Annie and I are staying at a bed and breakfast on Cape Cod. On Monday it will be our 13th wedding anniversary. We walked the beach this morning and prayed together and talked more about making the move to full time ministry. It's good to talk. I don't know how we will raise the support needed. My own desire is to have all things in order first. But perhaps that is not God's plan. He wants to see faith first. It's not easy to walk by faith, it's not natural it's supernatural!

11/7/1997 - I went on the CA fall retreat it was great. On Saturday the worship service was held in front of a fireplace and we played choruses unplugged. Then student after student shared their testimony. Each had their own set of hurts and pains, and many revealed how they had found Christ through CA. On Sunday, four students were baptized in the lake. I stood in the cold water with Remy, a student who has been coming to our house for a while now on Tuesday nights to play guitar and talk. While it was cold, it was beautiful! More and more I think about this call.

1/1/1998 - I had breakfast with Val yesterday, it went well. She is very encouraging. I still feel the call to campus ministry and that I should act on this soon. I have an appointment to meet Grey from the Mission in early March. This will be good to do as well.

3/20/1998 - I met with Grey for breakfast, we had a great talk. Whenever I talk about full-time ministry with him or Val I leave all fired up and determined to make this transition, whatever the cost. Then the world seems to take that passion and turn

it to skepticism and concern. I also had lunch with Carol -a person I met through work. She has been a blessing and has volunteered to be a prayer warrior for me. At one time she wanted to go into the mission field, but did not. We both feel there is a window of opportunity that the Lord provides and we must not delay too long in responding to the call. She told me she would not let me miss the window, our discussion was a true blessing. Father, help me to be discerning and to respond with courage to your call. Help me to see the big picture and be confident in the direction I choose that it is indeed the direction you have planned and ordained for me to go, that I might bring you glory. Help me to be brave as I face trials, struggles and evil. Open my eyes to your pleasing and perfect will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

4/4/1998 - I am scheduled for a stress test on Wednesday. I pray for my health to return. I am frustrated and tired. In spite of all of this, Annie and I have decided to move to full-time ministry with CA. I have been praying and thinking on this issue for one year now, and during this time the one thing that has really held me back has been the financial issue. I have been thinking of ways to be creative that would allow me to support myself. I have been trying to be the "provider" for my family. Seventeen years ago when my heart problem began, I had a similar attitude. It was my heart problem that caused me to realize my need to depend on Christ. Now seventeen years later my heart problem is on the surface again and I realize I depend on the Lord for every breath. So, whether I am dependent on the Lord for my health to earn income, or depending on the Lord for income directly through support raising, there is no difference. I am still dependent on the Creator. The only difference is who the faith is actually in, God or myself. I choose God!

I remember completing the application to be appointed as a full-time missionary. The package was about an inch thick and had to be mailed through the postal system, but I had not mailed it. After attending an evening event on campus I drove to the monastery, where I often pray. It was dark but not too cold. At this point we had sold our Volvo and I was driving a 1979 Caprice Classic. There at the monastery on top of the hill with the stars out so bright and clear, I got out of the car and climbed onto the faded hood. I leaned my back against the windshield holding the 11x17

inch stamped application envelope between my arms and chest. I began to pray, not so much with words but mostly in peaceful quiet. Its funny, for me, staring at the stars brings a strange comfort that God must be real and that I am also to be a shining star (Phil 2:15). So I sat there for a long time and sometime after midnight, with a smile of confidence, I jumped off the hood, got in the car and drove to the post office in town. I walked up to the mailbox, took a deep breath as I opened the flip door. I slid the envelope into the opening. Knowing our lives were about to change in a huge way, and that we were committing to something connected with a lot of uncertainty and adventure, I took a deep breath and let go!

It took almost five years between Val visiting our church and when we had enough support raised to end the consulting business I had started.

Now 15 years later and 10 years of full-time ministry, so much has changed. I am now an area director and through a real team effort our ministry and staff has grown. Jackie and Elizabeth have successfully planted a ministry at Fitchburg State University. Chris and Kelly have a vibrant ministry to international students in Bridgeport CT. Matt and Kendyl are now running the ministry at Worcester State. The Mission now owns a house (directed by Kendyl) within walking distance to Worcester State and able to provide housing to as many as eight students. Sam, a student intern for the past two years, just graduated and was appointed to full-time. Omo, a former student at Worcester State currently living in Indiana, has been appointed to a full-time position and is seeking to move back to MA. Zach has been appointed to a full-time position and once his support has been raised he will be planting a ministry in the Springfield area. In addition to my role as area director, I continue to direct a ministry at Nichols college and have even become an adjunct professor teaching a humanities/religion class once a year.

We have seen the lives of so many students transformed by the gospel, a number of them who will openly admit they would not be alive today if not for our ministry on campus. So many students now are plugged in and serving in local churches and communities. Students who now in their professions represent Christ as doctors, nurses, scientists, teachers, the military, government, engineering, and even a

soon-to-be lawyer! The list goes on and on... We have seen students fall in love and I have had the privilege of performing many of their weddings. One student recently asked me to walk her down the aisle at her upcoming wedding! And we have seen our kids grow up in an environment that promoted Christ-like love and community, and now our two oldest sons are currently college students involved in the ministry and reaching out to their peers.

So, no matter how many stories I could tell about transformed lives, it's Annie and I who have changed the most as we have seen God work and provide. Thank you for your role in our transformation! As you share your income, love and prayers with us, we continue to see God's call confirmed and are enabled to continue to reach out to students, recruit and train staff, maintain current ministries and plant new ones all for his Kingdom!

=== JOE ===

Annie's Corner:

As Joe made the change to full-time ministry we realized our time together was getting less and less. We decided to take Fridays as our day off and call it our "date day." We go for walks on different town commons, a movie, or out for lunch, sometimes we visit state parks, or even just walk through Walmart. This past Friday our date day crossed over into ministry. We enjoyed an authentic chinese dinner cooked by the parents and grandparents of one of our students. They were visiting from China and he wanted us to meet them. We had such a great time sharing each others culture and history. We were even invited to come and visit them in China. We had such a great time and did not get home until almost midnight. I am so glad that we save Fridays for special moments together and to sometimes share our day with special people.

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Shea's current support status 82%
Additional support needed \$1,850/