

Joe & Annie Shea
joe@AGenerationInNeed.com
 508-873-2838

Dec 2019

A GENERATION IN NEED!

www.agenerationinneed.com

joe@agenerationinneed.com

The Experiential Newsletter

This newsletter is intended to be read while holding a cup containing your favorite hot beverage. It could be coffee, tea, hot chocolate, a latte, an espresso... it's your pick. If you can't do that right now, your imagination will do just fine. So as I describe your interactive newsletter experience, I'm assuming you are holding your cup with both hands, you feel the heat comfortably transfer nicely to your cool fingers. There is a small silent whiff of steam curling upwards and disappearing a few inches above the cup. You pause... raise the cup close to your lips as the steam brushes against your face and the aroma awakens your senses. You shape your lips into an almost whistling-like position as you gently blow across the cup. For a moment the steam is instantly cleared from the surface and those tiny smooth ripples appear. Your eyes focus on the following paragraph as you take your first sip. And begin to read...



Here is a striking thought... Who will be the next wave of missionaries to go out into the world to proclaim the good news? And will it be a wave or just a ripple...

As I type these words my mind is taken back to over twenty years ago when I first began to raise the financial support to fund this ministry. At that time I was al-

most forty years old. We had a modest mortgage and four small kids, so the amount of financial support we needed to raise was higher than many other missionaries.

I remember awkwardly making so many phone calls. I worked like crazy to gain opportunities to speak in churches and youth groups. I worked my way into bible studies and the homes of so many individuals. There were emails, letters and cards being sent out every day. And on weekends if I wasn't attending a campus event or retreat, I was on the road seeking support somewhere...

As uncomfortable as it was to ask for donations, my motivation was always rooted in a deep brokenness over the lost-ness and hurt I was seeing on the college campus. I would do anything to bring the gospel to them! I even kept support newsletters in my glovebox, so if I happened to talk with a Christian in a grocery store line or Home Depot I could race out to the car and get a newsletter for them to consider supporting the critical need for Jesus to be on campus. Today, I'm still broken over the lost-ness and hurt, and yes I still keep a copy of our newsletter in the glovebox. Thinking back though, It took me over ten years to raise enough support to receive a full paycheck... Now twenty years later the thought of new missionaries raising their support like I did is so troubling to me... because I believe it is so much harder today, especially for younger missionaries.

Just think about how many solicitations we are bombarded with every day. How often our phone rings with someone seeking a donation? Sometimes there's not even a real person on the other end of the line and I have to tell you, I find it hard to believe the enthusiastic prerecorded robot voice asking for a donation is actually "glad to finally reach me!" I don't know

about you but It's gotten to the point where I just let every unknown caller go straight to voicemail. We can't even trust caller ID anymore because so many solicitors and scammers manipulate what's displayed. And there are more and more variations of fundraising campaigns. There are walks and runs for serious illnesses, disaster reliefs, school projects, and various individual needs. Every day when I walk back from our mailbox I find myself sifting through numerous solicitations and I have to wonder how many of our own newsletters actually get opened... We get so many requests for donations through phone calls, text messages, social media, Facebook birthday challenges, kickstarter programs, GoFundMe campaigns and Hospital caring pages... And while many are real legitimate needs and worthy of consideration, each one in a sense dilutes the others in the swelling sea of requests making it so much more difficult for new missionaries. And again I find myself with this striking thought... Who will be the next wave of missionaries to go out into the world to proclaim the good news? And will it be a wave or just a ripple...

As the number of overall requests for donations have drastically increased, I am also seeing the alarming trend of many church missions budgets decreasing. Fewer churches seem to have the ability to offer their existing missionaries an increase or have the ability to take on new missionaries. There are less missions conferences being held, and when I'm able to be part of one, I continue to see the attendance shrinking. I remember attending weekend long conferences where halls and restaurant function rooms were filled, now more often all the attendees can fit in someone's living room. When I visit church websites and click on missionaries being supported, I mostly see older missionaries like myself who perhaps have raised their support decades ago and the relationships formed over many years is

the glue that keeps their support flowing. For churches who are able to support new missionaries my experience is that it takes an average of two to three years from the first initial contact to actually being voted onto their missions budget. Sadly this is also about the same time new missionaries hit a wall, and feeling overwhelmed and greatly discouraged they move on to seek other employment paths. I have literally seen dozens of great new and young staff give up on being a campus missionary and resign because the funds could not be raised. And to add to this systemic problem, the little support they were able to raise is then lost and rarely transferred over to help jumpstart another young missionary who is beginning the process. And again I find myself troubled with this striking thought... Who will be the next wave of missionaries to go out into the world to proclaim the good news? And will it be a wave or just a ripple...

For over twenty years I have used stories in our newsletters to help connect you the reader to this ministry and the urgency of reaching students. Many of you have been with me as I have shared the Gospel with students and faculty. You have been with me in the planting of new ministries, the recruiting, mentoring and training of new staff. You have been with me as I began to teach on campus and engage more intensely with faculty. You have read about Annie, our kids, and how their stories have even crossed paths with ministry and students. You have been with me as I transitioned to less time on campus after taking up the role of pastoring a local church. And most recently you have been with me as I have left Missions Door and Campus Ambassadors to be part of forming a brand new campus ministry called "Campus One80."

While the campuses and staff I formerly supervised continue to reach students with the gospel, "Campus One80" is off to an incredible start with twenty-seven people on staff and more in the application process. In our first year we have planted four new campus ministries! Two of them have already received club status only a few weeks into the fall semester. Obtaining club status is a critical step to establishing an official ministry and most

often takes years to obtain. So it's truly amazing to see this happen in the first semester. Locally here in MA one of those new plants with club status is Quinsigamond Community College (QCC). Already there are weekly prayer meetings, bible studies, and one on one meetings with students. Connections have been made with a local church to help address hunger issues on campus. And the overall turnout has been great. I continue to minister and teach at Nichols College, however this year I have help, as the same team we have at QCC have been assisting me. So more ministry is happening at more locations than I could do as an individual. My dream, as I have explained in previous newsletters, is to use the support I have raised over so many years to jumpstart and fund more ministry and staff, who would in turn reach more students with the gospel. And it's happening! Let me explain... Jaylyn, Brittany and Noah, three young staff from upstate NY were all struggling to raise enough financial support and were heading toward that all too familiar wall of discouragement that leads to resignations. However, in September, they relocated to MA to join our area team. This was possible because of the funds I am receiving over and above my part-time needs are being redirected to each of them to help underwrite and sponsor their ministry as they continue to raise their own individual support. This is the new vision that I am focusing on and believe is so desperately needed. The model of young individual missionaries raising huge support packages on their own is not working! There needs to be a credible organization close enough to the ministry to respond quickly and in real time to both ministry and missionary needs. And when someone does hit that wall of discouragement and chooses to resign, there needs to be a trusted organization in place to retain the existing support and strategically reinvest those funds back into the mission and other missionaries. And now I find myself encouraged with an answer to that striking question... Who will be the next wave of missionaries to go out into the world to proclaim the good news? And will it be a wave or just a ripple... Can you see it? Can you see what I am seeing?... Jaylyn, Brittany and Noah are part of the next wave of missionaries to go out into the

world to proclaim the good news. And there are more young staff just like them who are and will be caught up in the systemic problem of having to raise support in what could be described as a post-missionary worldview.

So take another sip, and blow over the surface... look at the ripples for a moment... Did you know that when enough wind blows over water those small ripples become waves? And when the wind continues to blow... those waves take on a character of their own called swells. These swells will then march out across the water independent of the wind and even store the wind's energy, making even larger waves that eventually reach the shore crashing onto the beach! Now take another sip... and blow lightly across the small hot pond in your hands and imagine others receiving this newsletter doing the same. Imagine if everyone receiving this newsletter decided to make a ripple, collectively there would be an unleashing of a sizable wind that turns small ripples into waves that become swells that crash onto beaches all across our campus mission fields in the Northeast... Now you're seeing what I see... as I continue to redirect support to critical ministry needs and underfunded struggling staff... Will you continue to help? Will you begin to help? Together let's make WAVES!

=== Joe ===

Like our page on Facebook
"Campus One80"

Please check out our
website to read more about Noah, Brittany,
and Jaylyn as well as CampusOne80.

www.CampusOne80.com

If this newsletter leaves you with any questions or a need for clarification, please don't hesitate to email or call.
joe@agenerationinneed.com
508-873-2838.