

gcm connect>>

The Next Generation of Missionaries

A New Kind of College Fraternity by Fred Kirstein

Fred and Erica Kirstein are GCM college missionaries at Illini Life Christian Church in Champaign, Illinois. This past fall, Fred helped launch a ministry exclusive to men in an effort to meet the deep spiritual and emotional needs of young Christian men.

For a long time Illini Life had no established, church-wide men's ministry. We saw the same issues come up with the guys we mentored, but we had no platform to speak specifically to the sensitive issues that men face. Many guys had these struggles, and we knew we weren't giving them the help they needed.

In spring 2009, a handful of influential men in our church and I decided to pull something off for just the guys.

We couldn't commit to recurring events, so we put together one extended evening where we had a great meal, hung out, and had some solid teaching and small group content. About 80% of the guys in our church showed up. It was a memorable night, and the message was clear: the men of



our church were hungry for more direct input in their lives.

That summer I looked at a men's ministry curriculum called *Men's Fraternity* by Robert Lewis. Jon Dillow, a trained Christian counselor on staff with GCM, was excited to lead the group with me, and we launched it in the fall.

The response blew away our expectations. We thought that as busy as our students tell us they are, only a handful

of guys would make the commitment. But over 30 young men committed to a year-long Monday Men's Fraternity Group. There's been incredible commitment to the group, and about 28 guys finished the whole curriculum in April. (continued on page 5)

Dorms: A Venue for Relational Ministry by Brandon Hoops

Brandon Hoops, GCM missionary at The Rock church on the campus of the University of Missouri, shares how dormitory ministry has become a focal point for The Rock.



The dorm I lived in as a freshman is now a parking lot. It's a nice one, too, a perfect spot to tailgate before a University of Missouri football game. But to be honest, I miss Smith Hall. Those tiny rooms, with the dirty walls and lack of air-conditioning, may have been more suited for a penitentiary, but for me it was like the Garden of Eden. God met me there.

It all started when a couple of people from The Rock came to my room, showed interest in my life and invited me to a Bible study. Because of their friendship, I got plugged into the church community, and God used it to draw me to Him and transform my life. (continued on page 3)

The Law of the Seed a devotion by John Drage, pastor at The Rock

“I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” John 12:24-25



“Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”
Luke 9:23

These two familiar scriptures reveal God’s plan for your life: come and die. Just like an acorn will never produce an oak tree unless it (the seed) dies, so you and I will produce nothing unless we die to ourselves. The law of the seed cannot be broken. I am not saying you can avoid dying to self—of course you can. I am saying you cannot truly live and avoid dying to self.

The law of the seed states this: in order to do anything special, real and lasting with my life, I must first die to self! If we want to be truly spiritual, we must learn and obey the law of the seed!

The business of church seems to rest on the backs of a few “behind the scenes” people who make it happen. I often wonder what us mobile



churches would do without the hard work of the tech team that arrives three hours early and piles three tons of sound and light equipment in and out of a Missouri University lecture hall every week? No one lasts doing this task unless they know and obey the law of the seed. They die so that hundreds can live.

There are many of us who can gain spiritual insight from their undying service. Maybe a quick look at what holds us back from dying could assist us as we desire to die to self, but struggle to do it regularly. Sometimes we hold too tightly to our rights or mistakenly think our life is ours. Sometimes we value our comfort way more than the comfort of others. Sometimes we are just lazy. We often refuse to give up control, but we need to let God be in control.

How can we practically follow him in death today? We must be prepared to die! Jesus seemed to want to create a revolution of people who would live differently than anything the world had ever seen. We can not do this on our own; it is not a personal self-improvement deal! It takes Christ in us!

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Naomi Triggs has been a GCM missionary in Amsterdam for seven years. This past year, she has been exploring opportunities of sharing the gospel through raising awareness for social justice in Amsterdam and around the world.

W A L K I N G T H R O U G H A M S T E R D A M

by Naomi Triggs

Showing faith through action is at the heart of the gospel. As the book of James puts it so bluntly, faith without deeds is dead. But God doesn’t want our righteous living if our hearts aren’t in it as well. He wants hearts that respond and act out of love for Christ to the needs of those He loves so deeply.

One year ago, a few of us at the church in Amsterdam fasted during Lent. We desired to identify with the one billion people in the world who go without easy access to clean drinking water. For forty days we went without daily coffee and orange juice for free city tap water. The money we saved went to organizations that dig water wells for those in the world who need it most. Our fast was the kick-off of small social justice group: Linda Kitchen, Claire Buswell (who now works in Mozambique) and me. Together we planned awareness-raising events surrounding the topics of clean drinking water and sanitation and human trafficking. (continued on page 5)



THE ROCK

A CAMPUS CHURCH AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Dorms: A Venue for Relational Ministry

continued

That was 2001. I'm now a GCM missionary with The Rock, and it's my fifth year on campus as a non-student. A lot has changed in those years, but one thing has remained constant: we are still in the dorms.

Dorm outreach has been a part of The Rock from the outset. When pastors John Drage and Ed Courtney planted the church in 2000, they focused on the dorms because there was always an available pool of students who needed to be reached with the gospel. But by 2003, this focus started to slip. That year, in addition to efforts on campus, The Rock made a push to reach 20-somethings in the city. It took a couple of years to realize we weren't good at doing both. So we decided to re-focus our efforts on Mizzou's 25 dorms.



Now you'll find each of our GCM staff members in a dorm an average of two to four times on any given week. Some get together to connect through watching a television show, others organize study groups, and others have game nights. "I have been there enough, so I don't feel awkward about it," Ed said.

We've also been there enough to see students respond. Young people from the dorms account for more than half of our church attendance on Saturday nights. Also, in the past three years we've seen our small groups in the dorms almost double from four to seven. We hope to have eight small groups by next January.

According to Ed, re-focusing on the dorms has been "one of the key things we ever did." Ed said the decision has allowed us to focus on what we do best. We're a relational church, and ministry in the dorms is very relationally focused. In the dorms it is easy to meet students because community is already happening, and we can join it. In fact, the more time we spend in the dorms, the more chances we have to make connections, to share the gospel, and to see lives changed.

Simply put, being in the dorms has become a part of the outreach culture at The Rock. As long as the University doesn't replace all the dorms with parking lots, that will not be changing.

Faces from the Field:

GCM Missionaries
serving at the
University of Missouri



Masvita Lewton

leads recovery ministry, small group and women's ministry.



Brandon Hoops

writes content for small groups and designs creative elements for weekend services.



Garrett Naufel

assists pastors in leading the Rock, and directs small groups on campus.



Bill Lautenschlager

teaches, leads and shares the gospel with students.



Chris Swift

leads a small group, assists the worship team, and ministers to students.



Peggy Myers

leads a small group and creates videos for church services.



Ed Courtney

pastors The Rock, with an emphasis on staff development.



John Drage

pastors and leads The Rock.



Chad & Cassie Clooten

facilitate events, disciple students, and lead a small group.



Andrew & Kirstin Schulz

lead worship, manage finances, and lead a small group.

The Next Generation of Missionaries



TOM MAURIELLO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

-1 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

In commissioning young leaders Paul challenges them in 1 Timothy to be role models in their communities, to let their faith be salt and light to those around them. His goal was that we never lower the standard for young leaders, but raise it. We know that through Christ, the next generation of leaders is capable of accomplishing so much for the Kingdom.

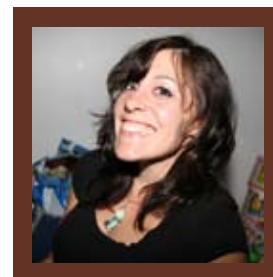
At GCM we are always in the process of identifying, developing and sending out new missionaries. We know that by giving young people opportunities today, they will be better prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. In this Connect we will see just a glimpse of the ministries our young missionaries are leading. Encouraging, empowering and equipping the next generation of leadership is critical to the work of the Gospel around the world.

We are so proud of each of the young men and women here in GCM! They are a shining example of the power of the Gospel! Thank you for encouraging, praying for and supporting their GCM ministries!

Tom

Finishing the Race by Shalom Sanchez

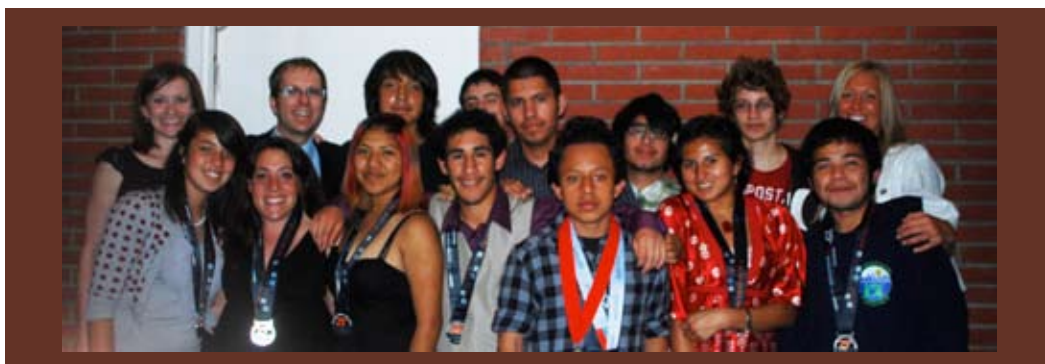
Shalom Sanchez, GCM missionary serving in south Los Angeles, California, shares about her ministry work with disadvantaged teens.



The beginning of Hebrews 11 is a huge encouragement to me, something I continually look to: *“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”* I moved to Los Angeles eight years ago with a hope of reaching youth for Christ. It has been a huge journey of discovery.

The last two years I have been mentoring at-risk youth in a running program with my pastor and his wife, Greg and Julie Christman. We work with high school kids in a rough area of south L.A., helping them with four goals: running, personal, scholastic, and spiritual. Throughout the year we get to know the students, sharing our testimonies as we run and live life with them. At the end of the program we run the L.A. marathon (26.2 miles). This year we had 11 runners finish the marathon with us.

Training for a marathon is a lot like life: there are a lot of different obstacles and challenges. We see growth sometimes when we are the most vulnerable. When we are broken and hurt, we need strength that does not come from our own power. I have really seen that this year through one student, Sara (not actual name). One of her defense mechanisms was to be as tough as possible and not let people in emotionally. She has a very rough family background, and there hasn't been a single girl in her family to finish high school. Most drop out because they are pregnant before the age of 15. Her older sister, who I mentored last year, will be the first girl in her family to finish high school, and prayerfully, Sara will be the second.



Sara has changed this year. She has a joy about her that was not there in the beginning and has started asking a lot of spiritual questions. She injured her knee only a few weeks before the marathon, and the doctors said she might not be able to run. I would have been devastated, but she held onto hope and still had joy in her heart. Then a miracle happened. The week before the marathon, the doctors told her she could run. We had many people praying for her, and she finished the marathon with no pain in her knee. I've continued to meet with her, and we are going to start studying the Bible together. I never would have seen this happening at the start of the year.

I am so thankful for all the Lord has done, but the need is still great. I want to remember my faith has to come from Him and to *“throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”* Hebrews 12:1

Walking Through Amsterdam continued



The water walk event in particular was an opportunity to identify with women and children throughout the world who walk miles to reach the nearest water source.

We put 18-liter buckets (about 5 gallons) on top of our heads and walked from our church building to a park in the city center. Anything goes in Amsterdam, so much of our walk was ignored by the general public. However, some people stopped to watch, mouths gaping, and some even dared to ask what we were doing.

Once we found a water source to fill our buckets, the real work began. Carrying the half-full buckets on our heads back to the church was an eye-opening experience. We sensed that the burdens on our necks and backs were only a small glimpse into the everyday realities of these women and children. However distant those realities are from our own world, we felt that it helped our own hearts to engage more fully with the physical need of millions.

The vision for events like this one sprang from desire to see others

come to Christ. Seeking social justice is both a desire of those who already know Christ and those who are still searching for truth. Some unbelievers are so passionately involved in the cause of justice that it puts us to shame as followers of Christ. But Matthew 5:14, 16 states: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden...Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to the Father who is in heaven" (ESV). We are called as Christ-followers to love and serve the "least of these" (Mt. 25:40). How much greater if our just acts draw people who are outside the church to give glory to God!

In the future we hope to bring our vision into clearer focus.

Ultimately, we want to respond as God desires and asks of us each new day. As I recently read in the *Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, G. Leibolz says: "It [is] not enough to seek justice, truth, honesty and goodness for their own sake and patiently suffer for them. No, according to Bonhoeffer, we have to do so in loyal obedience to Him who is the source and spring of all goodness, justice and truth."



A NEW KIND OF COLLEGE FRATERNITY CONTINUED

The lofty vision of Men's Fraternity is to help men discover what it means to live out authentic biblical manhood. At the practical level, it's about helping us confused guys get our heads on straight. We are seeing young men accept a value system that rejects passivity, accepts responsibility, leads courageously, and looks forward to God's reward. Together we share stories of our successes and failures and encourage guys to just be there for each other.

It's easy to get excited about being men of integrity for a few days at a time. But all men need other guys to consistently encourage them in the small, unrewarding battles of life. So many men settle for shallow relationships that leave them feeling hopelessly isolated. Men's Fraternity tells guys in plain language that we need each other if we want to be the type of men God has called us to be.

I've been with GCM for almost five years, and this fall was my first real shot at any kind of organized men's ministry. I'm continuing to walk humbly through all kinds of insecurities: I'm only 26 years

old, I've only been married 3 years, and I don't have any kids yet. In short, I'm drawing from a pool of life experience that's not much bigger than that of most of the guys in our group. What strikes me most about our Men's Ministry is that I've never felt particularly equipped to lead it. Last summer I saw a need that I didn't want to say "no" to and decided that I was going to try something even if it stunk for a year. God provided a trained Christian counselor as a co-leader, and a few dozen guys who were hungry to grow in Biblical manhood. As we equip them with the tools they need, who knows how God may multiply our efforts.



Fred, third from left, with the men's fraternity group at Illini Life.

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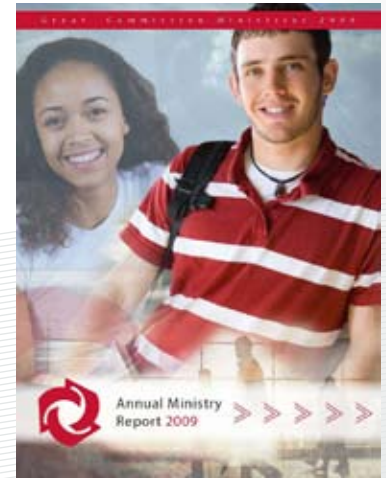
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2009 Annual Ministry Report

GCM has posted its yearly financial statement on www.gcmweb.org under "Who We Are," and we hope you will take time to review it. We take seriously our responsibility to be good stewards of the financial resources God has entrusted to GCM. We want you to be well informed of how those resources were managed. This report also contains highlights from 2009 and statistics on our growing staff program. If you would like a paper copy of the report mailed to you, simply contact GCM.



Prayer Requests

- Pray for the Men's Fraternity ministry at Illini Life. Praise the Lord for changed lives, and pray that more men will be impacted through this ministry.
- Pray for the dorm ministry at The Rock. Pray that the Lord continues to open doors for deep, meaningful relationships with students.
- Praise the Lord for the work He's done in the lives of young people like Sara in L.A. Pray that more students in the running program will experience new life.
- Pray for the social justice group in Amsterdam, that they might have opportunities to share the gospel through promoting social justice.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED!

GCM is committed to mobilizing missionaries to take the good news of Christ's love to the ends of the earth. Would you consider giving to one or more of these life-changing ministries? It is your ongoing partnership that makes the work of GCM possible.

THE ROCK - COLUMBIA

Your gift to The Rock will allow them to continue a fruitful dormitory ministry. The Rock has been ministering to the students of the University of Missouri for 10 years. Your support will help them continue to build relationships and plant seeds for the gospel.

GO PROJECT

The GO Project will provide grants to cover the costs of missionaries being initially trained for the work of deputized fund raising, as well as provide matching funds to begin and seed the fund-raising process.

WHERE MOST NEEDED

Help support GCM's calling to multiply missionaries around the world. This fund is currently directed toward recruiting and training new missionaries.