



Ramah's Voice

a ministry of Ramah International, Inc.

Ministering on College Campuses

By Yvonne Williams

In Matthew 5:14 Jesus is clear to outline our purpose, "*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*" Most of us are very good at shining, but what hills have we selected? The college campus is clearly a city unto itself yet few pregnancy care centers have established a strong presence on this common hill. With a large amount of abortion-vulnerable men and women in attendance, universities need to be included in any pregnancy care center's ministry advancement plans.

The Overwhelming Need

When a student leaves home for the first time, many will experiment with new choices — including sex and substance use. When pregnancy results, the student is often abortion vulnerable. Statistics show that abortions in the US fall into many age groups that largely effect the campus population — especially ages 19-24. Abortion providers understand this statistic and target campuses, knowing the university location will be lucrative for their business.

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The pressure to succeed in college is clearly immense. Many students believe their parents won't want to hear "I'm pregnant" when they have sacrificed/saved all their lives to send their kids to college. Nor do they want to hear "I had an abortion." Even parents who condone sexual activity consider pregnancy a failure because

of the availability of contraceptives. Many students believe that they are incompetent because of the pregnancy. Their hopes and dreams for the future, as well as their parents, will be shattered if they don't abort.

New students enter a whole different world on their first day in college. Removing support systems (i.e. parents, church, or personal mentors etc.) that provided boundaries to protect and comfort the individual can have a major impact on behavior. The prevalence of alcohol and substance abuse to mask emotional discomfort is notoriously high on campuses. Students come to college with a new sense of freedom that can eventually cause them a great deal of problems.

Another interesting aspect of university life is the strong friendships that develop. Those who are close to the one who aborts can also feel the effects of post abortion stress. Dorms, sorority and fraternity, or apartment roommates can have close emotional relationships. When an abortion is experienced, the stress can be shared and the pain expanded.

Student attitudes on abortion are changing and research indicates that only 51% of college freshmen believe abortion should be legal. Most students were born in the time period when their own mothers could have legally chosen abortion or may have even aborted their siblings. Many are working on abortion research papers and their search for information could eventually influence their personal views. Clearly, there is a great need for our ministry services on college campuses.

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A Case Study

The Caring Pregnancy Center in Boulder, CO was anxious to advertise post abortion help and advocacy on the University of Colorado campus. Information about post abortion advocacy was placed in various areas — dormitories, bulletin boards, student centers, athletic offices and women's study programs. A freshman woman whose roommate had recently aborted noticed the information. She had personally witnessed the trauma of the abortion her roommate experienced and brought her into the center for post abortion support.

I was at the center the day they arrived and remember the two women as they glanced around at the brochure rack in the waiting room. On the brochure rack was a copy of the brochure that was seen in the dorm. One woman took the brochure and walked up to the reception desk and stated, "we want to talk about this." This struggling student attended the next group and credited the group with helping her greatly.

How do I reach my local campus?

The college campus can be a world unto itself. This unique characteristic can isolate the student population to a close proximity of the campus. Although students can access support off the campus, they are more likely to research university services first. In considering this area of ministry your first question could be, "How do I attract students to our pregnancy care and post abortion advocacy program?"

Although students can access support off the campus, they are more likely to research university services first.

The best way to begin ministry efforts is to network with existing campus ministries such as local churches, Youth for Christ, Young Life, Navigators, and Campus Crusade for Christ. Meet with each group to share your heart and ministry objectives. Let them know that when they encounter a pregnant student, or one who has aborted, they can refer them to you for help. Also relay that you can help educate their audiences on abstinence, abortion and post-abortion stress. It is important to establish a relationship with these groups so they will use you as a referral. You can also receive more respect from university personnel when you network with existing service organizations.

Students in Post Abortion Groups

When you are placing a student in post-abortion groups consider these characteristics:

- They are often young.
- Many have aborted recently.
- Some are still living in close association with the circumstances that caused them to abort.
- Substance abuse is common and accepted.
- Anniversary dates of the abortion are very powerful to all persons involved.

Students often feel they are protecting someone or something from the problem of pregnancy by aborting. Examples include: parents, boyfriend, girlfriend, school position on a team, cheerleader, ROTC, or educational goals. These people/reasons may still be related and protecting others was more important than the baby. They feel they did the right thing at the time of the abortion, but now they are suffering. Sometimes a steady period of one-on-one ministry might be the place to start.

She relayed that she was, "...angry at the feminist movement because they had led her to believe abortion was easy."

Differing emotions can be experienced strongly in the post-abortive student's heart. I remember a student who shared her story during a workshop on post abortion stress held for International Women's Week at the University of Colorado. She said she, "aborted to be a feminist." She felt that "feminism demanded abortion" yet the emotional pain she felt after her abortion overwhelmed her. She relayed that she was, "...angry at the feminist movement because they led her to believe abortion was easy."

Amazingly, encouraging students to attend a support group can be easier than expected. Students often seem to be more comfortable in a group than someone of an older age. Perhaps this is due in part to their worldview is more accepting of support groups. Always evaluate each student individually to understand how best to support them.

Research Projects and Student Volunteers

Even professors who are strongly pro-abortion can be influenced by new information students present on the topic.

Students make wonderful volunteers and need to be recruited into our ministry movement! They are actively engaged in learning and often have the advantage of accessing the resources of their place of study. Many are interested in working in the pregnancy care field or in social work and need more experience to enhance their resumes before they graduate.

Remember student's range in age from minors upward. Some are getting an Associates/Bachelors degrees while others are working on a Master/PhD degree in counseling, social work or related fields. Never discount the energy and brain trust found on our campuses. Your center can provide the movement with a new generation of staff, volunteers, board members and donors by working on campus.

When students are aware of post abortion stress they will share about this potential pain with others who may be considering an abortion. The number of students who complete research projects on post abortion stress helps more people understand abortion trauma. Even professors who are strongly pro-abortion can be influenced by new information student's present on the topic. Always have a list of resources available to any student who may request information for completing papers.

I encourage you to get acquainted with your local campus. You can bring light and hope for those who feel they are in darkness and have no hope. Not only will you reach students, but you will also have an impact on many others who may never know about your services. Clearly, the college campus is a hill that needs to feel the light of the Lord through you!

Yvonne Williams

Yvonne has served as a pioneer in the field of pregnancy advocacy. She was the director of Caring Pregnancy Center in Boulder for 25 years and currently serves as a national trainer for CareNet. She has been working with women and post abortion stress for 31 years.

Here are some ideas to help you begin your collegeministry:

- Look for opportunities to participate on campus events by visiting with event organizers and ask to present a workshop on abstinence, abortion or post-abortion stress.
- Network with established campus ministries to encourage referrals to your center.
- Establish relationships with professors and university staff who are receptive to your message. These individuals can open new doors of ministry because they are connected to the university.
- Study hall notices, bulletin boards, announcements of community events, personal ads in the student newspapers are all ways to reach students.
- Many campuses have local TV and radio stations that may find abstinence, abortion or post-abortion topics an interesting area of discussion.

As in any area of ministry, work to develop relationships with individuals who can help advance your work in the college setting.





Faith from Praise

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory— I Peter 1:7-8

The above scripture is one of my favorite Bible passages. It's amazing to me that the trials of our faith involve praise. We hear the popular saying "praise God in all things," yet how many of us are able to put that into action when times are hard?

God speaks to me in my own voice and sometimes I'm amazed at what He asks me to do. One day I heard from a young woman I'd been working with that she had just had a late term abortion. For weeks we had e-mailed and I thought the threat of abortion was long past. Her news hit me like a hot poker for she had been more than 24 weeks pregnant. God's instant remark to my heart was to praise him for this child's death.

My first reaction was to be horrified at the thought of praising him for something so horrible. Yet as He spoke to me that day, He made it clear that He had a plan I knew nothing about. When He conceived that child, He knew the death s/he would experience. In praising Him, my faith in His almighty will would be released.

While it took most of the afternoon, I was eventually able to surrender my horror at this child's senseless death and praise Him. It's clear I may never be privy to His plan in this young woman's life, but I know His will to be sovereign even in death.

The hardest time to praise is during our darkest hours. Yet it is in these trials of our faith that God expects our praise! The next time you are in the midst of a trial, reach out to God with praise. It's a clear way to mix Satan up and allow God's power through your faith to flow into the situation.

Sydna A. Massé

Ramah's Resource Corner:

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From the Word of God:

"...who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your soul."

I Peter 1:3-8 (NIV)