

A Vision for College Life **By David Naugle (1986)**

General Statement: the purpose of UTA (University of Texas at Arlington) College Life is to help college students develop a Christian world and life view. This overall objective involves the knowledge and worship of the biblical, Trinitarian God, the belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and a growing understanding of the meaning and significance of the fundamental “pillar points” of biblical revelation which are creation, fall (uncreation), and redemption (new creation).

Worship

At the center of the ministry of College Life is the worship of the triune God of the Bible. College Life should be pre-eminently known as a worshipping community – as a group which acknowledges the existence, nature, and kingship of God and responds in adoration, thanksgiving and praise.

In essence, human beings as *imago Dei* are worshipping creatures: *homo adorans*. Secularism is the negation of the worship of the one, true God and puts the worship of idols in His place. Redemption through Jesus Christ delivers human beings from their secularism, from their worship of false gods, and restores them to a rightful, adoring relationship to the God of Scripture. Worship, therefore, should be the central focus of our group. It should be expressed corporately through preaching and teaching and by the liturgies of singing, thanking, praising, praying and remembering, etc. Worship also should be understood holistically as an expression of commitment to God in every activity of life (Rom. 12: 1-2). Life itself should be an act of worship, grounded in our apprehension of the world as a sacrament of God to whom we respond in awe and gratitude. For He is, indeed, the Creator, Judge, and Redeemer of the world.

Community

College Life should be known as a group of believers who worship and love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. It should also consist of a group of people who love their neighbors as they love themselves. People are not only worshipping creatures but are also social creatures. We need one another desperately; we need to communicate with one another, to touch one another in love and kindness. As we learn to love God, we learn to love one another. We express our vertical love for God in horizontal, human relationships.

College Life should be this kind of community – a truly human community where genuine love — “the mark of the Christian” (Francis Schaeffer) — is expressed profusely. Thus our group should be characterized by acceptance and belongingness, by unity and yet diversity (personal, racial and social), by honesty and transparency, by sharing (even our possessions) and caring, by accountability and support, and by mutual burden-bearing.

Additionally, we fully recognize the God made man as male and female and thus we celebrate our sexuality as a profound mystery and rejoice in our similarities and differences. We enthusiastically promote socially healthy, morally pure male and female relationships as a key to personal growth and development. As well, we endorse the institution of and marriage and family with all its attendant joys and responsibilities. At the same time, we adhere to a high view of singleness recognizing that God does indeed call some of His people to such a solo state in which, for His purposes, He may be served without distraction.

In addition to the benefits which accrue from being rightly related to God, the results of being a part of College Life community should be what the Old Testament called *shalom*: well-being, soundness, security, wholeness and peace, or in short, human flourishing, in so far as this is possible this side of the second coming. Behold, how pleasant it is for brothers and sisters to dwell in love and unity!!!

Holistic Perspective

Denying dualism or religious compartmentalization that divides life up into the false categories of the sacred and the secular, the eternal and the temporal, College Life affirms the value of the totality of life on the basis of the doctrines of creation and redemption and the comprehensive Lordship of Jesus Christ. This affirmation will affect all areas of human existence, especially the following:

The first is that of **university studies**. On the grounds stated above, Christian students should recognize the intrinsic value and strategic importance of their academic training at the university since the human cultural task, including university, is both creationally affirmed (Gen. 1: 26-28) and thoroughly redeemed in Jesus Christ (Col. 3: 17, 23). Additionally Christians must develop an integrative perspective in their studies. *Christians who are students* should become *Christian students*. Christ is Lord not only over students' spiritual life but also over their academic endeavors. Christian students should pursue their studies on the basis of a Christian/Biblical world view by reflecting on the meaning of Jesus Christ in the various disciplines (Col. 2: 2-3). Approaching a college career in this light will result in new meanings and motivations never before experience in the educational task.

The second ramification of the wholistic viewpoint is on the area of **vocation and work**. A Christian worldview makes no distinction between the sacred work of the ministry and all other "secular" work. Like university studies, work is both creationally affirmed by God and renewed in Jesus Christ. An integrative approach is also needed in this area of vocation or calling. The problem is not that the Christian community is lacking in doctors, business people, musicians, etc., but that there are so few truly *Christian* doctors, business people, musicians, etc. We must engage in our daily tasks integrally as Christians by exploring and expressing the implications of a Christian world view

for each occupation. Hence, students involved in College Life will not be encouraged to go into “full-time Christian work” as *the only eternally significant vocational alternative*; rather they will be encouraged to seek the vocation to which God is calling them in order to serve Him in the very work of that vocation with a genuine Christian mind; and this to the renewal and development of human culture and civilization to the glory of God.

The third implication of the holistic perspective is on the area of the **arts and leisure**. Creativity, beauty and recreation are inherent within God Himself and unashamedly manifested in His created order. God has graciously imparted these gifts to men and women whom He created as His image and likeness. Artistic endeavors (visual arts, literature, drama, dance, music, etc.) and leisurely activities (including sports, games and other recreational forms) are things to be freely pursued and appreciated. Consequently, College Life affirms the relationship of Christianity and the arts and leisure; we encourage students to develop their aesthetic and athletic gifts, to educate themselves and make wise choices in their use of leisure time and to investigate the wonder of beauty and human creativity – all as vital aspects of abundant Christian and human living.

Fourthly, the holistic outlook has direct implications on **social and political concerns**. The good news embraces the whole of life and thus speaks significantly and restoratively to issues such as abortion, pornography, church/state relations, sexual lifestyles, home and family, genetics, economics, public education, etc. Christian faith should influence the formation of public policy on these areas and should foster constructive change. College Life will encourage its members to become informed of current concerns, to formulate biblical perspectives, and to take constructive action to bring about positive change in line with the biblical vision of life. Christ is the transformer of culture.

A final area for which the holistic perspective will have meaning is that of **ministry to the poor and needy**. That God is especially concerned for the needs of the unfortunate is an uncontested biblical truth. That God commands His people to give generously and to serve selflessly is also undisputed. Hence, as a vital part of our College Life ministry, we will promote, through teaching and example, an aggressive ministry of giving and serving to those in need.

Evangelism and Discipleship

For Christians, the totality of life is “evangelistic” or redemptive in nature. Perceptive believers realize this and consequently direct their lives to the restoration of *all things* to their rightful spiritual direction in service and glory to their Creator. This is especially true in our relationships with non-Christian people. College Life fully affirms the responsibilities of evangelism and discipleship, of sharing the gospel with those who do not know Christ personally, and of building each other up in our common faith.

Evangelistically, each member of the College Life group should have a clear understanding of the content of the gospel and possess the necessary skills to share the good news truthfully, attractively and persuasively with others. We encourage all types of evangelistic methods, but recognize that most people come to Christ through the influence of a friend or family member in the context of everyday life. Hence the lifestyle and friendship method of evangelism, rooted as it is in the creation decree (Gen. 1: 26-28) is particularly encouraged.

In terms of discipleship, two things are emphasized in College Life. One is the importance of small group participation. The small group setting provides many benefits including (1) the opportunity to focus attention of specific topics of importance to Christian growth and (2) the development intimate friendships with their inherent accountability. The second emphasis in College Life in the realm of discipleship is the importance of each member being equipped “for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4: 12). Christianity is not a “spectator sport,” and College Life repudiates the mentality of “Christian professionalism”. Rather, each believer should be involved redemptively in the lives of other Christians, in teaching and building up one another in numerous ways, especially according to one’s spiritual giftedness. All gifts and ministries are important because all contribute to “the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Eph. 4: 16).

“Where there is no vision, the people perish...”
Proverbs 29: 18 (KJV)