

March, 2008

read about the mission of college ministry at our church and in our community



Revelation 3:20
Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Honest Questions. Real Faith. An Open Door.

Meet Andrew Lavin

I grew up in Chico, so I have a really strong sense of connection with this city. I started attending Bidwell during my Senior year of High School, which was about three years ago, after going on the New Orleans mission with the High School group called "The Refuge". I spent all of last year as the 5th-8th Grade Youth Ministry Intern running Zone 56, our fifth and sixth grade program, and doing contact work with Junior High students. This experience taught me so much about ministry and what kinds of challenges and struggles we face every week in the church.

I signed on as the College Ministry Student Intern in October and the past four months have provided many new and exciting experiences. I've been running a discussion group on controversial issues within the Christian faith, meeting with people regularly, and helping out with the week-to-week logistics and decision making that the Ministry team is responsible for. I am majoring in Religious Studies with a minor in Ethics at Chico State (This is my first semester there after transferring from Butte College). I love learning about and discussing the intricacies of the various religions and everything I learn informs

my faith as a disciple of Christ. In my spare time I like to take pictures, play guitar, read, watch movies, go hiking, work on my bike, and play Frisbee or football with good friends.



My heart for ministry is to meet whatever needs are apparent. If someone needs someone to talk to, I would love to be that person, or to help someone find that person. If someone is struggling with something- either spiritually, personally, interpersonally, or whatever, I want to help in whatever way I can. I also have a heart for getting people plugged into where they want to go. Whether it be small groups, mission work, or simply getting someone to church each week, I want to help. I have many friends inside and out of the church both Christian and not, and I myself am new to the faith, so I feel a strong connection with those who wrestle with faith. Basically I just want to be there for those in need, however small or large the need is.

- Andrew Lavin
College Ministry Intern

Prayer Requests

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Grace and faith for our college students; that they would draw near to God, follow Christ whole-heartedly, and be transformed by the Spirit.
- Wisdom and compassion for small group leaders; spiritual and personal development for students in small groups.
- Continued spiritual and leadership development of the Servantship Team.
- Strength and wisdom for the College Ministry Team.

CHICO URBAN MISSION: LOVE IN ACTION

By Bonnie Johnston, College Ministry Coordinator

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for one another. If any one of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in you? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3:16-18

We are so thankful! Nine students spent their spring break serving others and growing together in Christ through our third annual Chico Urban Mission. This local mission trip (right here in Chico!) is an opportunity to see the ways God is bringing hope and restoration into our city and to reach out in service to our family in Christ.

We partnered with and learned from local organizations and individuals who are already embracing the call of local mission – Orchard Church, the Jesus Center, Citrus Elementary School, the Independent Living Program, Windchime, Church on the Street, and the Well, to name a few. Students were engaged in a variety of service and fellowship activities throughout the week, for example organizing

stock rooms of clothing and food, preparing and serving meals, a neighborhood cleanup, playing with and teaching children, and hearing God's good work through the testimonies of others.

One highlight of the trip was especially remarkable. All nine students chose to grow in compassion by experiencing homelessness and poverty firsthand, spending the night around town and sleeping outside (at designated "safe spots"). Then in the morning, they walked to the Jesus Center, a local homeless shelter and food bank, for breakfast. As leadership, we found it amazing that these students have such a desire for compassion and transformation. True evidence that God is working in their lives!

Equally amazing was the amount of support we received from our community. Seven families or groups hosted the students overnight, eight sponsors provided meals, and at least a dozen people were committed to praying for the team throughout the week. On top of that, each organization received the students with tremendous warmth and hospitality – serving



the students with information, experience, testimony, and love. This mission has truly expanded our understanding of mission as a community endeavor in the way it has brought so many together.

What a blessing it is to serve God together in this way! Not only were the students challenged and transformed personally, but also our brothers and sisters in Chico were touched in the name of Jesus. We thank God for the good fruit of this trip and pray the students will continue to live out this mission in their daily lives. Will you pray with us?

To find out more about our mission work, please contact Bonnie Johnston, Coordinator of College Ministry, at 530-343-1484 x104 or bjohnston@bidwellpres.org.

Say Yes to Friends (And No to a Lonely Life)

By Greg Cootsona, College Pastor



Our college team at The Door (Bonnie, Andrew, Jessica, Jeannie, and me) has committed itself to creating community. We want to be sure that our Butte College and Chico State students have a community of friends who will support, challenge, and encourage them. Indeed Jesus called us to "love one another" (John 13:34-35)—to will and work for each other's best—and that's what we seek in all our ministries. That's one of the reasons why, after our key worship event, the Five Forty Five, we always have dinner or dessert. There, our students can connect. That's also why we offer every student the opportunity to be in a small group. In a small

group, 6 to 12 people can really get to know each other. That's also why we've started a new monthly event, "Fun Fridays," to provide a place for students, especially those not yet connected to The Door, to get to know each other and to create lasting and life-giving friendships.

Sadly, that's often not how it is. The widely acclaimed pollster and commentator on life in the U.S., George Gallup, Jr., has reported that "Americans are perhaps the loneliest people on earth today." He suggests that we suffer from "personal isolationism." Our famous American individualism has taken a serious toll on our well-being, both socially and spiritually, because human beings are not meant to live in isolation. Without relationships, we find despair. To cite the famous Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, "Hell is the suffering of being unable to love."

We also need to love our wider college community. There are three numbers that consistently go through my head: 28,500 (the

number of Chico State and Butte College students); 8,000 (the amount of students who say they are Christians and who want to be in Christian fellowship); 800 (the estimate of those who are in the college ministries, Christians on Campus). Over the past six months since I began as college pastor, I've continued to be concerned that these numbers just don't add up! We are not fully reaching these two campuses and inviting students—and let's add faculty and staff—to hear and to respond to the Gospel. We are not introducing them to a relationship with Jesus Christ and, through him, with one another.

That's pretty strong stuff, but it's crucial to our task of creating the kind of college life that God intends. We want our students to experience God's best, a life in which they have friends to care for them. We want those who don't know Jesus to be able to respond to his message of love. And the best news is this: in the process, we meet the One who is our Lord and also our Friend, Jesus.

Big Issues Discussion Group

By Garvey Peterson, Student

Our College intern, Andrew Lavin has been doing a discussion group that focuses on controversial topics such as: the death penalty, same sex marriage and the Islamic faith. The group meets Wednesday nights at 7pm at Andrew's parent's house.

"I started this group because I felt there was a desire among college students to discuss important issues surrounding their faith," said Andrew. So far, the group has been successful drawing in a mixture of guys and girls. About eight to ten people attend each week.

When asked why they attend, students had similar reasons. Student Jessica Rojas stated she started going because she was, "interested in hearing other Christian's views on topical issues in contrast to my own." Megan Gerrity stated that in addition to supporting Andrew, she liked the idea of "discussing some of the hot topics of our age".

The issues are approached in an intimate setting where everyone can speak their opinions, but are respectful of others. The Bible, scientific, Christian and non-Christian books have been used as reference points.

The group recently held a discussion between Muslim and Christian students where each group got to dissect and ask questions of each other's faith. Three Muslims students came to the meeting. This discussion time was exciting as we got to hear firsthand what the Islam faith is really about.

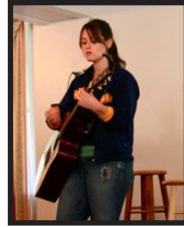
In regards to the future of the group, Andrew hopes, "to bring in more people from other religious traditions and have more interfaith dialogue".

WAYS TO CONNECT & SUPPORT

- Mentor a college student through face-to-face meetings for encouragement and support.
- Lead a small group of college men or women in a weekly Bible study.
- Join our college ministry email list by visiting www.bidwellpres.org/programs/college
- Offer your real-world skills and knowledge for workshops and seminars for college students.
- Host a couple of students for dinner at your home.
- Become an official "Associate"- an adult leader with our ministry.
- Attend our Five Forty Five college worship gathering on Sundays at 5:45pm in Bidwell's sanctuary.
- Give \$50 to sponsor a student for the Fall Retreat (September 2009)

Honoring God Through Worship

By Jessica Reaber, College Worship Intern



Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do His bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted; His splendor is above the earth and the heavens. He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all His saints of Israel, the people close to His heart. Praise the LORD (Psalm 148: 7-14).

We worship because God is worthy of our praise. We were created for this purpose alone. As the College Music Intern here at Bidwell, I have seen a tremendous new uprising of college students and young adults gathering to praise the Lord. It is inspiring and moving to see unity begin to unfold in our community in a way I have never seen myself. And it's not just unity among college students- Our evening service has also been blessed by fellowship with associates of the college ministries (our adult sponsors and small group leaders). Additionally, we have recently seen support from faculty and staff at Chico State and Butte College. God is moving right here in our midst!

College ministry throughout Chico has seen a lot of change this past academic year. Many of the ministries have had a shift in leadership—perhaps all of them. While it has been turbulent at times, and we have felt shaken, it has been a blessing. It has been good. God is bringing us all together as the one body we

are called to be. One of the most exciting things, at least for myself, has been all the college students from different ministries wanting to join in leading music.

It is a blessing and a joy to have the opportunity to work with so many different talented musicians who all desire to honor God through their music. I have also had the pleasure of meeting with other worship leaders in Chico, namely, Matt Lim and Mandy Dobbelmann. Recently God has put it on their hearts to begin monthly worship gatherings outside of our typical church services. I am looking forward to participating in these new gatherings. We did one last semester and it was truly inspired. As the semester progresses, and we become more and more bogged down in work, I hope to see these gatherings bringing life and rest to those who come to worship.

The Lord continues to reveal himself faithfully and give us "hope and a future". I am honored to be taking part in His plans alongside you.

CALENDAR

March

Fun Friday - CSUC Baseball Game & Tailgate

March 27- 4:30 pm (tailgate), 6:00 pm (game)

April

Fun Friday - Drive In Movie

April 17 - 8:30 pm

Jesus Center Breakfast

April 12th

Easter PM

April 12th - 7 pm

May

Five Forty Five BBQ & Worship in the Park

May 3rd @ 5:45 pm

**FOR MORE
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presbyterian church

growing deep growing up growing out

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Do You Know Where Your Children Are?



 **The Door**

www.bidwellpres.org