

IMAGINE!

Thank you for teaming with us in reaching students for Jesus.

Fires Don't Always Start Immediately



Does this pic look familiar? That's because it is! Read below how God used J.J. (R) to start a Jesus-glorifying movement! J.J. led Leonard (L) to the Lord on a missions trip in summer 2010, if you recall from our Oct. letter!

Setting ablaze a gospel movement on a New Jersey campus can often feel like sparking a camp fire in a damp forest: soggy branches and moist dirt make it practically impossible for any fiery success.

In our October 2010 prayer letter, we reported to you the difficult beginnings student J.J. McNamara encountered in venturing to start a burning campus movement at William Paterson University.

"I put all our paperwork through six months ago," J.J. said on a phone interview we had with him. Since then, there have been some governmental hurdles he's had to endure, specifically three branches of student bureaucracy.

"We got through the first level, but on October 28, the approval process failed at the executive board [second level]," J.J. explained, "Why? Because I went alone; I got shredded."

Because Willy P already has a few Christian clubs, its student government felt another one would be useless. The executive board canceled any hope for a Campus Crusade for Christ movement, snuffing out J.J.'s determination.

"I was mad. Really mad," J.J. vented, with the sound of entitlement in his voice. "In the fall, I came off a [summer] super-high. People loved me at my county school. I believed I could do it single-handedly [setting up CCC at Willy P] and basically told God, 'Thanks for bringing me here [with summer missions trips and former ministry training]. I got it from here.'"

But as every maturing Christian eventually discovers, J.J. realized that "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

"I got convicted," J.J. admitted, "I let my own pride take over. I regret it." As the means of conviction, God communicated to J.J. through a sermon, in which J.J.'s pastor argued that we must love all sinners, even if they're as worldly as sin itself.

"One thing that hit home," J.J. said, referring to an article he read regarding the starting of campus movements, "was that the student politicians who shot down the movement are souls who we may be able to share the gospel with. We could close the door if we aren't careful."

J.J. repented to God for his ungodly attitudes and pride. He also is grateful that the Lord decided to draw out the approval process for six months, saying the trying journey taught him a whole lot about leadership and serving.

"Sometimes God puts us on the journey, because it brings us closer to him and makes us stronger," he reasoned, "[It] was a humbling experience. If the process was quick, it would have been all about me. I would not have learned."

And although J.J.'s March 11th appeal to the executive board was also shot down, his heart was already in the throes of change.

Two major lessons God taught J.J. were (one) to have more humility toward unbelievers and (two) to push aside his leading and let the Holy Spirit guide his steps.

"I didn't accept the importance of prayer," J.J. said, noting that staff constantly reminded him to talk with Jesus about the movement. "I'm so used to having things work out. In times like this, you have turn to the Word to pick you up."

At the final meeting on April 5th, J.J.'s attitude was, "If this is gonna get done, it's not me. It has to be God." J.J. chose to humbly say nothing as another co-leader once again presented the ministry to a glaringly skeptical student government. God saw favor that day on his children and moved the hearts of unbelievers to approve of a student movement at Willy P! Students involved in the other Christian organizations also voiced their favor.

Through it all, J.J. became convinced of God's faithfulness. He knows the Lord will provide the laborers who'll be willing to harvest at Willy P. Initially, J.J. single-handedly called Christian students at Willy P, soliciting their leadership.

After "randomly" meeting willing student missionaries, he sees that "God crafted the leadership team, and I had nothing to do with it!"

"Just go for the ride!" J.J. advises, "God will come in and provide and the puzzle will begin to become a clearer picture."

Fires are curious things, as are our passions and desires, since they can easily be doused or lose control. When redeemed by the blood of our precious Jesus and transformed by His life-giving power, our emotive flames have an eternal Source with an omnipotent, careful Guide.

Hearing J.J.'s story not only excites us, but it definitely helps us repent and rearrange our attitudes in serving, leading and loving the world and His people.

*Warmly,
Joey and Jenn :)*

APRIL 2011

PrAYer PoiNTs

-Thanks for praying for our baby name. We are going to name our boy "Gianluca!" He'll be arriving on or around August 25. :)

-Thanks for praying for our car need. The Lord came through with a very reliable 2002 Honda Accord!

-We will be moving soon! Pray our transition is smooth, please.

-Our two atheist friends (and students) have yet to read the book we sent them, so our follow-up conversation has not occurred yet. Pray it goes well!

-Pray for the forward progress of the gospel on N.J. campuses, especially at Willy P.