



## REACHING THE NEXT GENERATION:

*A Manual for Starting and Maintaining  
a Strong CBF Ministry*



# Campus Bible Fellowship®

The university outreach of



**bmm**  
Baptist Mid-Missions



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page numbers are links to each section.

**5**

**STARTING**

a Campus Bible Fellowship Chapter

---

**12**

**PREPARING**

for the CBF Year

---

**21**

**REACHING THE WORLD**

Working with International Students

---

**24**

**MAINTAINING**

Personal Spiritual Vibrancy

---

**29**

**CHALLENGES**

You May Face on Campus

---

**32**

**FINAL DETAILS**

---

**35**

**APPENDIX 1**

Activity Ideas for Working with Students

---

**36**

**APPENDIX 2**

Ideas for Working with International Students

---

**37**

**APPENDIX 3**

Potential Obstacles for Working with International Students

# WELCOME!

There are approximately 19 million college students in the United States today. Over one-third of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) consider themselves unaffiliated with any religion -- making them the most nonreligious generation in American history! In their society, absolutes have been demolished. Gender and identity are fluid. Anxiety and depression are epidemic. This generation is lost and confused. Campus Bible Fellowship missionaries are on the front lines seeking to provide Biblical answers to the problems facing this generation.



CBF has a unique ministry, not only with American students, but also to the world through evangelization and discipleship of internationals. The predominance of international students in the United States comes from countries completely or partially closed to missionaries (from the so-called 10-40 window). Here in the USA however, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Communists are granted a rare opportunity to investigate for themselves the claims of Jesus.

*A student named Sina came from a Creative Access Nation where the Bible is not easily found because the dominant religion blocks access to it. He was jaded by the hypocrisy of that religion and set out to travel the world to find the true God. After visiting countries and religions all over the world, he was able to come to the USA for his master's degree. Sina said, "I knew that God was out there because He had physically saved my life on two occasions, but none of the places of worship I visited around the world offered me peace or truth." After finishing a one-on-one Bible study for eight weeks with a CBF missionary, Sina put his faith in Jesus Christ.*



On the college campus, emerging adults are challenged with ideas that differ from how they were raised.



*A student we'll call Michael tentatively walked up to the CBF outreach table at UNC-Charlotte where CBF missionary Jeff Abernethy was sitting. Taking a deep breath, he looked skittishly around the room and then said, "I am Mormon, and I think I've been lied to. Do you think you can help me?" In a process that took a couple of months, Jeff was able to answer many questions, directing Michael to passages of Scripture that drew him closer and closer to the truth. Jeff suggested that Michael begin reading the book of Romans. When he reached chapter 10, the truth drove deep into his soul and demanded from him a response. Michael bowed his knees to Jesus Christ, his Savior, and began a new life in Christ!*



CBF teaches Christian college students to find their God-designed place fulfilling the Great Commission and growing into men and women who will be faith-filled followers of the Lord Jesus, living godly, authentic lives and worshipping in Bible believing churches.

It is difficult to imagine a more strategic ministry than reaching future leaders on the university campus. Is God calling you to minister with CBF?



## WHAT IS CAMPUS BIBLE FELLOWSHIP?

CBF's vision and mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ on the university campus in fulfillment of Jesus' final Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

While our methods vary from campus to campus, our goals are the same: evangelism, discipleship, and integrating students into local churches.

CBF provides a haven for Christian students in a secular, sometimes hostile, environment as well as a light to those who do not know Christ. Many international students from countries antagonistic to the gospel have been presented with the claims of Jesus. The lives of thousands of students on college campuses have been transformed by the Gospel through CBF ministries.

The General Council of Baptist Mid-Missions authorized Campus Bible Fellowship in 1965, and Hal and Patty Miller began the first CBF ministry in Iowa the following year. From its inception CBF has stood out from other campus ministries. Besides the emphasis on evangelizing and discipling university students, CBF revolves around the local church. Without a church, Campus Bible Fellowship does not exist. CBF connects students into local churches where they can be further taught the principles of Scripture and provided opportunities to serve Jesus. Students are encouraged to worship with Bible-believing churches after graduation.



No two CBF chapters look the same, but there are a number of practices common to each campus. Bible studies, literature tables, counseling, social events, and hospitality are all part of the outreach methods implemented by each CBF staff worker in an effort to evangelize, disciple, and direct students toward the local church in fulfillment of the Great Commission.



The dominant visual in our logo (at left) is a book which represents the main thing, the Holy Scriptures. A colored outline of the Bible wraps itself around a second Bible embedded in white space to depict believers who are taught the Word of God and consequently share their knowledge with those who are empty. As we lead them to Jesus and disciple them in His Word, we send them out into the world for His service and glory, which is represented by the open corner of the Bible.



# STARTING

*a Campus Bible Fellowship Chapter*

*“O God, do not forsake me,  
until I declare Your strength to this  
generation, Your power to  
everyone who is to come”  
(Psalm 71:18)*

You have surrendered to the challenge of starting a new Campus Bible Fellowship chapter. Your heart is stirred for a generation of young adults – both American and international – who need to know Christ and to follow Him. Where do you begin? The task seems daunting.

## **Prepare the soil through prayer**

Start praying even as God begins to lay the possibilities on your heart. Ask God to guide your thinking and to direct your steps. Pray that the Lord will prepare the hearts of students and administrators and open the way before you. Pray that the Lord will direct you to churches located near the campus and also burden them for university students.



## SURVEY THE FIELD

Visit Baptist churches of like faith and practice within about a 30-minute drive from your target campus. Find out where their youth go to college, scope out whether these churches could be potential Area Liaison churches (more on that soon) and whether they would be good places to send CBF students. Talk to youth pastors. You will most likely need a faculty advisor for your Bible study group that will serve as a liaison between the CBF group and the university, so ask if any members of the church work at your target university. In some situations, faculty advisors are deeply involved with the student organization; others merely serve as a liaison between the university and CBF.

Visit the campus website and learn how to navigate it. A university website is a gold mine of information:

- \* How many students attend your university?
- \* What percentage of the student population lives on or near campus?
  - \* Does your university cater primarily to 18-21 year olds or does it have a large population of older students?
- \* How many international students are part of the student body?
  - \* What countries are they from?

Go to the search feature and type in “Student Organizations” or “Recognized Student Organizations” or simply “Student Life.” Some universities list the requirements for starting a new student organization on this page. Are there Christian groups already active on the campus? On the organization page, try searching “Christian,” “Bible,” “Fellowship,” “Ministry,” “International” or the names of national Christian organizations such as Cru, InterVarsity, Collegians for Christ, Navigators, Athletes in Action, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Find out what you can about the organizations that already exist.

What will make CBF distinct? If one group is targeting commuter students, focus on those who live on campus. If another group is doing a good work among internationals, concentrate your energies elsewhere. Contact coaches to inquire if the sports teams need a chaplain. Allow your personal strengths, interests and abilities to guide you. Above all, ask God to lead you to students whose hearts are prepared and receptive to ministering with you on their campus.

**What will make  
CBF distinct on  
your campus?**

**Take prayer walks** around campus. See what is going on. Does the campus seem conservative or liberal? Read the notices on bulletin boards. Get a feel for the atmosphere on campus. You never know what the Lord may be pleased to do as you walk and pray through campus.

Nathan Patefield (University of Washington-Bothell) experienced God's hand in the following situation:

*Though we don't expect to see immediate answers during every prayer walk on campus, sometimes God is pleased to answer right away. Our daughter Patricia and her husband, Jeff, were visiting us, so one day we took them to the Bothell campus of the University of Washington. We sat at a table overlooking the central square and asked the Lord to direct us to interested students. When we wandered into the square, we discovered that the UW was celebrating its birthday.*

*In the shadow of a giant inflatable husky (the school mascot), students were playing corn hole. Patricia and Jeff are good corn hole players, so they jumped into the competition. A couple of international students stopped by to see what was going on. We were able to engage two young men in conversation that lasted for over half an hour! One of them is from Uruguay and is the only South American in his computer classes. We had served the Lord previously in Brazil, so there was a quick connection.*

*The other student was from China and had only recently arrived in the USA. When we explained our desire to begin a Bible study on campus, he told us that he has read portions of the Bible and would enjoy talking with someone about the questions that he has!*

*Before we parted, we gave both students our contact information and we have been in communication ever since, even delivering cookies to their apartments to help them in studying for finals.*

If you are so inclined, test the waters by handing out tracts or doing some low-key open-air preaching. At a state university, you shouldn't need permission to evangelize in public outdoor spaces. Private schools have different rules. What kind of response do you get? Avoid using megaphones or amplification as that tends to stir up unnecessary confrontation. Your goal is to get a feel for the students' spiritual state, rather than to become a stench to the students and administration. Do not convey a holier-than-thou attitude; students will likely tune you out or shout you down if they feel judged.

When you are on campus, note where students are congregating. Pay attention to what times the most students seem to be on campus. Find the student center and see what amenities the campus provides for students. Look for rooms that might be good for Bible studies and small groups. A clean, well-lit room in a main traffic area with comfortable chairs is ideal. Look for a room that is neither too big nor too small.



## MOVING FORWARD

**Meet with the Department of Student Life** (It might have a different name like Office of Student Engagement). Find the person responsible for student organizations. You can probably find that person on the website, but if not, start with the Department of Student Life.

- \* Ask what benefits there are in being a recognized student organization at your particular campus.
- \* Inquire as to the procedures for starting a student organization. Every university has slightly different requirements. It will probably be a fairly well-defined process.
- \* Ask if there is a template for organizations' constitutions.
- \* Ask whether a student needs to initiate a student organization or whether you can do it yourself.
- \* Be prepared to explain what Campus Bible Fellowship is on a national level.

Begin praying for the student officers that you will need for your CBF group. These leaders will impact greatly how well your group launches. Pray that God would provide a strong Christian who has a good number of connections on campus. One who is an extrovert would be an asset.

You will likely find that you are required to have a specific number of charter members in order for your organization to be recognized on campus. From this group of students, you will select your student officers for that first year. These students will do the bulk of the work in representing CBF around campus and in most administrative offices. Officers for subsequent years are usually elected near the end of spring semester. Read more about Student Officers and Elections on p. 12, under Semester Launch.

**Time the launch.** If possible, plan to launch at the start of the fall semester in August. This is the time when all the student organizations are re-registering and reorganizing. Universities require student organizations to go through a process of re-registration every academic year. Be aware that this process often changes every few years, so you'll want to make sure that your student officers keep up with it. Second best time to launch a group would be the start of spring semester. You can find those dates on the campus website by searching for the academic calendar. Realize that a launch in August will require being onsite and doing preliminary work several months in advance. Be aware that Student Life Offices are probably running on a reduced schedule during the summer.

**Prepare your documents.** Develop your constitution and bylaws well in advance of your proposed launch. You may need to use the template provided by your university. Also, refer to constitutions of other CBF groups. Universities tend to look at these documents closely when an organization is forming. You might want to have Alliance Defending Freedom [<https://adflegal.org>] look over your constitution before presenting it to the university. A solid document in the beginning may save you many headaches later in your ministry. Also include an Articles of Faith statement in your constitution.

(Follow this link for [sample constitutions](#) and the [BMM articles of faith](#).)

**Develop an online presence for your CBF group.** As you meet students, you will want to have digital resources for them. Consider starting a website and other social media even before your group is functional. This generation is accustomed to checking something out online before showing up in person. A robust social media presence gives your CBF chapter credibility. You can also use social media evangelistically for those who have questions about Jesus. Follow this link for [examples of CBF online presence](#).

**Develop your Area Liaison Committee or Church Committee.**

One thing that makes CBF unique is the Area Liaison Committee which serves as a link between local Baptist churches and the campus. Each participating church contributes at least one member. Campus Bible Fellowship missionaries and, where feasible, student leadership, round out the committee. The ALC assists the CBF staff as they plan the year and provides practical help to implement those plans. Committee members also keep the campus ministry before the church, updating their churches on a regular basis.

Begin recruiting churches and individuals to be part of your ALC. They can be praying for and assisting with the launch. Churches may be able to provide a team of individuals to hand out flyers or do other outreaches at the beginning of the semester.

Your ALC can meet as frequently as needed for your situation – some meet at the start of each semester and others meet monthly to evaluate and direct the CBF staff in their ministry on campus.

Staff and perhaps students report to the committee about progress in the ministry as well as any problems or needs that churches can pray for and assist with. ALC members then report back to their respective churches, so that the church is aware of what the Lord has been doing on campus and the situations and needs there.



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*"Commit your work  
to the Lord,  
and your plans will  
be established."*

- Proverbs 16:3

# MAKING CONTACTS

Ask the director of student organizations if there are orientation events for first year and transfer students. If those events have student organization showcases, ask if you can host a table even as a potential student organization.

Most campuses probably have Student Organization Fairs for all students during the first couple weeks of the semester. Take advantage of that opportunity. Invest the time and materials to make your table look visually appealing. If you are not artistic and creative, ask someone who is to help you. Invest in a nice tablecloth with the Campus Bible Fellowship logo, perhaps in the school colors. Not only will you use it for student organization fairs, but also for weekly information tables which most CBF staff use to evangelize and connect with the general campus population. Take time to develop your table items. Have something on your table to draw students' attention – interactive games or a compelling question, spinner wheels, candy, something with the school mascot. Be sure to have good quality tracts and contact information for your CBF group. If you have a chapter website, you can use a QR code to direct people there. Continue to pray that God will direct students to CBF. As students walk past your table pray that God would reveal Himself to them and awaken in them a desire to know Him.



Search out places where you might be able to meet students. If you are fitness-minded, consider getting a membership to the campus recreation center. Several of our CBF missionaries have had excellent conversations with students while playing basketball. If you are musical, check out the music department. Perhaps there are students who need an accompanist. If finances allow, take a class at the university. This will give you a tremendous amount of information about the student experience and access to the amenities that students have. You might also meet students through class. Taking a religion course will reveal much about how professors approach the Bible and matters of faith.

Be Creative: Search out places where you might be able to meet students

Mary Amesbury (Cleveland State University) shares:

*During the pandemic, CSU was limiting who could be on campus so I decided to take an in-person Religion 101 course so that I could acquire student status. The professor identified as a Catholic, but he had a significant bias against people who believe that the Bible is literally true. The students did not dare challenge his mocking statements, but I did when necessary. Each student was required to visit (in person or online) a religious service but he would not allow anyone to go to a Christian service (including students from other faiths). In an attempt to not be biased for Christianity, he ended up being decidedly biased against it. Initially, the students were not very interactive but a few eventually warmed up and I still run into them occasionally on campus.*

If you desire to work with international students, hang up notices on campus offering to be an English conversation partner or start an English conversation class. Contact the International Student Services office and ask how you can be of assistance to them. You can often work with international students without first being a recognized student organization. Some universities have active International Friendship programs that pair international students with people in the community for friendship and cultural exchange.

You may find that it takes a few semesters to really become established on campus. Don't worry about that. The real value of campus ministry is consistency and being in it for the long haul. A student with whom you interact may come to Bible study months or even years after an initial contact. God is at work, even when you may not see it.

“He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it”  
-1 Thessalonians 5:24





# PREPARING

*for the CBF Year*

You've been diligent in laying the foundation. You are ready to dive into the daunting task of organizing and developing your year-long CBF ministry schedule. So let's go!

A key thing to remember is that God is already there. He was on your campus before you came, and He knows fully and completely the plans He has for you there. He knows those Christian students who will be a vital part of your CBF ministry, and He knows those whom He will bring to Himself in saving faith.

He has paved the way for your planning and organizing. It will be evident to you as you plunge into this next step. You'll see. You'll never be alone in this. God is always there with you. Your extended CBF family will cheer you on; so will your supporting churches and those local churches who will become a tangible part of your ministry. This manual will also point you in the right direction and give you ideas from which to glean.



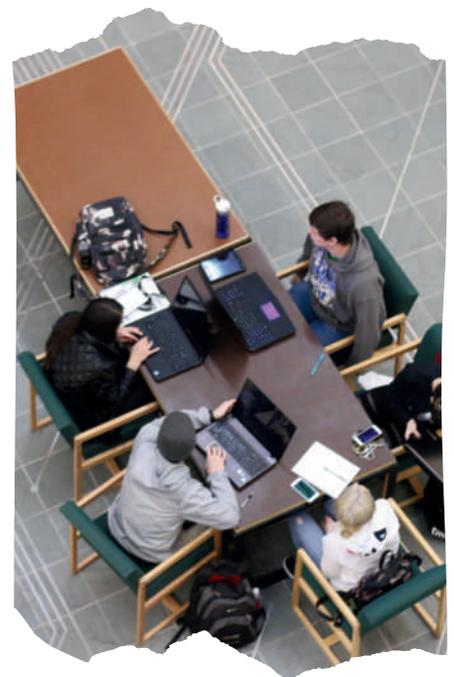
Remember that  
God is already on  
your campus.

# SEMESTER LAUNCH

With the exception of the first year of a newly formed CBF chapter, student officers are usually elected near the end of spring semester. Your university will mandate a minimum number of officers. Abide by your constitution on these matters and make sure your secretary (or someone; even if it's you) keeps good records of business meetings. A Spring election allows for an orderly transition to a new student leadership team, time for the new president to file the proper paperwork for continued recognition on campus, and opportunity to meet with the new team in planning a well thought-out fall semester calendar.

Try to coax your officers into at least one or two meetings ahead of the new semester to plan events for the CBF year. You can meet online or in person - perhaps incorporating a meal with the meeting.

Student officers should be meeting on a consistent schedule whether that is before or after a Bible study or having a meal together or online. As a CBF missionary, you do not necessarily need to be at every officers' meeting, but the missionary should have weekly contact with at least the president and perhaps vice-president of the group. The time you can spend with the officers one-on-one or even as a group is an opportunity to further disciple and mentor students as they learn how to lead and plan. Remembering that they are likely young and inexperienced will help to diminish some of the expectations you may have for them to perform at a professional level. Once in a decade, you may have an officer that has the intuitive gift of organization and leadership. Revel in that year! On the flip side, there will be years where you will need to be much more hands-on with the officer team. Dig in and keep going!

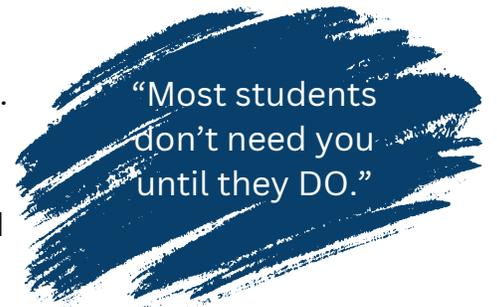


The first week of fall semester is a pivotal time for outreach. Students are open and engaged, without the stresses of projects and tests. Some feel vulnerable, some are looking for a place to belong. They will tend to be more open to you those first few weeks than any other time of the year. Capitalize on that timeframe even extending it throughout the first month. It is during this time that you will meet the majority of students that could become a part of your group.

Utilize signs (A-frame and other styles), flyers, giveaways, T-shirts, and other things for the numerous events that will be available to you particularly during the first month. There is a [resource document](#) on our Campus Bible Fellowship website that can help you with websites and ideas for campus outreach. The first month of both semesters is crucial in establishing a routine, reaching out, being seen on campus, and scheduling meetings with students.



Be available, be consistent, be faithful. This will allow the students to know where you are if and when they ever need you. Jeff Abernethy (University of North Carolina-Charlotte) says, “Most students don’t need you until they DO.” You’ll soon understand the truth in that statement, so don’t be discouraged when you feel like students aren’t connecting with you right away.



Some universities provide lockers or even offices for student organizations. Make sure you ask the appropriate office about these amenities and meeting spaces at the beginning of a school year or earlier if possible. Also, outreach tables may need to be scheduled on a weekly basis by you or your student officers.

Be mindful of the university’s yearly calendar and know when there are school breaks and larger events you might be able to utilize. Be sure not to schedule a big event at the same time as some of the more popular university events, especially those planned during the first month of a new semester.

Some CBF groups prepare welcome kits for first year students that include CBF promotional items, a tract, meeting information and some snacks and beverages. Liaison churches will often help with the cost and the assembling of these kits. These kits can be handed out at tables during those opening weeks of school.



# EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Social and outreach events are a big part of the CBF schedule, but you will want to be intentional about the activities you do. It might be best to ask yourself first: What is the goal for each activity? Are there campus guidelines for off/on campus activities for student organizations?

How many events are enough for one semester? That varies from chapter to chapter and will depend on the energy level of you and your officer team. Often CBF groups plan at least one extracurricular event per month (that is a suggestion, not a rule, mind you). These events build community among attending students and give them an opportunity to extend an invitation to roommates, friends, classmates, and others. It is always good to have specific deadlines to advertise these planned events.

A general list of activities that have been used:

- \*Meeting for lunch at a different spot on campus .
  - \*Weekly table outreaches
  - \*Thanksgiving dinners (on campus or off)
  - \*Christmas parties (on campus or off)
  - \*Retreats (Day or weekend)
  - \*Conferences (with various themes)
- \*Game nights (in your home, at a local church)
  - \*Hiking/picnic
  - \*Bowling
  - \*Escape Rooms
  - \*Paintball/laser tag
  - \*Painting/Pottery
  - \*ESL classes
- \*Attending campus sports events together (tailgating)
  - \*Photo scavenger hunts (on campus or off)
- \*Food for Thought event (focused on a particular subject such as evangelism, missions, apologetics, financial principles. There is a seminar and perhaps dinner)

# LAYERS OF ENGAGEMENT

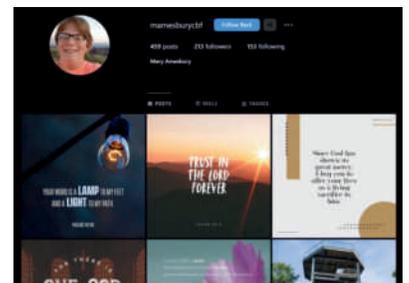
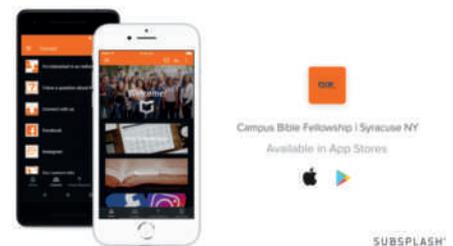
While our world has become more expanded in many ways, it has become smaller in others. Face-to-face encounters are becoming more of an anomaly with this current generation of college students. They thrive on social interaction on their favorite social media sites. It's no secret that social media has largely taken the place of sending emails and using printed paper for advertising and getting information to students. This does not mean that email and physical pieces of literature can't be used or are completely out of date. It depends on you, the missionary, your officers, the unique ambience of your campus, and what your time and financial resources will allow.

Media Ideas:  
Websites, apps,  
Instagram, Snapchat,  
GroupMe, X

Most social media outlets are either free or generally very low cost, and there is an advantage to harnessing the power of social media. But if you're going to have a social media presence, stagnation is your worst enemy. Make sure that your officers and if necessary, you, are posting several times a week. Pictures, videos, Bible verses, and ministry opportunities are all appealing to students.

The social media that your students use will be constantly evolving. Glean from your student officers and other core students what social media they use most often and make sure you have a CBF presence online. The CBF students at University of North Carolina-Charlotte requested that Jeff and Kim Abernethy use Instagram Live to video Bible teachings and upload them to their CBF Charlotte account so that the students can listen to the messages over again. Other CBF missionaries have made the monetary investment with the Subsplash phone app and website. CBF at Cleveland State University videos each Bible study and posts it to their YouTube channel, website, and app.

Even if you aren't extremely gifted or knowledgeable in the social media world, learn from your students or other missionaries. Find out what works and then take the steps to make it happen in your own CBF ministry. Those layers of social engagement will reach students you might never otherwise come face-to-face with.



Another layer of engagement is on-campus advertisement. One method is to purchase several lightweight A-frames and have signs printed on both sides. Position your A-frames around campus in high traffic areas. Some missionaries even add a simple QR code to their signs. A student uses their phone camera to scan the QR code and is automatically directed to your CBF website, Instagram page, Link Tree (a fantastic tool with lots of different features), or a page on the university website that has information about your CBF organization. The possibilities are as vast as your imagination! Have fun with ways to share who you are on campus. Remember that branding your ministry on campus is important to younger generations.



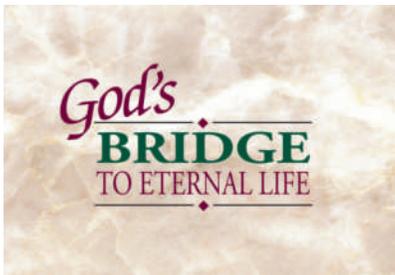
Try it!



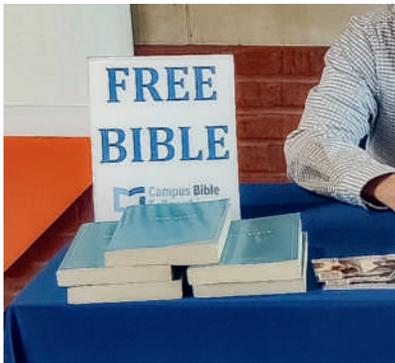
# THE HEART OF YOUR MINISTRY

The two basic elements of doing ministry on a college campus are Evangelism and Discipleship.

**Evangelism:** The outreach ministry of CBF has many faces and varies as much as do the types of campuses where we minister. Evangelism involves reaching out, meeting students, getting to know them and allowing them to know us, hosting events that help define who we are and what we believe biblically, creating places for compassion, community, and caring through everything that is planned. If a student does not feel comfortable with us, they will be less likely to bare their spiritual needs to us. So this is a very important aspect of ministry.



Outreach tables are great places to have varied and vital conversations with students. Offering compelling materials or engaging students through digital means can draw more students to the table. But to be honest, some days are dry. You can sit at a table for hours and not one student will stop by. This can be discouraging. Then there are those days when a student gingerly walks past and then quickly turns around and comes back to stand in front of you. You can see the questions in their eyes, and you know they desperately need what you can offer them. You say a quick prayer in your heart and begin to talk to them. You may have a long or short conversation and you'll give them information about your on-campus Bible studies and events -- feeling sure you'll see them again. In many cases, you will not. That was your one opportunity to share your faith, your hope -- Jesus -- with a student. We should always go to campus with that very thing in mind. If you meet a student and have only five minutes with them, what will you do with that time?



There are other ways to reach out and show students that we truly care about them. You and your CBF students can help new students move into their dorms during move-in days. Most universities have a first week of welcome where they allow organizations to come together in one area and set up tables and give out information and items to interested students.

Poll other Christian student organizations on your campus and see what they do to reach out to students. Initiate giveaways, game nights, scavenger hunts, food/snack tables, hot chocolate and donut stations. Be creative and allow your student officers to help you brainstorm and plan the events that might work for you. You'll learn by trial and error what works well and what doesn't. Your campus will evolve each year. What worked one year may not succeed the next. What works on one campus will not be effective on all of them. Be flexible and keep your finger on the pulse of campus life and the needs around you. God will guide you even in the practical planning of evangelism.

## Discipleship:

Making disciples is a mandate from Christ Himself; it is the spiritual fuel of all we do on campus. It sets us apart from other organizations on campus that focus on cultural, social, or political interests. It is important for us to have a well-rounded presence on campus as much as possible, but that is not the focal point of who we are.

Discipleship is the nurturing of the heart, soul and mind of a student.

Discipleship is the nurturing of the heart, soul and mind of a student when they are ready to learn spiritual truths about God and His Word. It is necessary to give them a place where they can be free to ask questions, to learn, to listen, to voice their concerns, and to grow as a person and eventually as a Christian. CBF is the place where they come face-to-face with their spiritual need for Jesus and His redemptive powers in their lives. This may sound a little dramatic, but discipleship is one of the most important things that we do. Walking with a student down a rocky, oftentimes messy path of life is not an easy thing, but the ultimate outcome is paramount. Every student we meet needs Jesus in the worst way -- just as we did and still do.

Training Student Leaders - When a student is elected as a CBF officer, we have a unique opportunity to come alongside them and guide them as they serve and lead the CBF organization. Numerous students, after being given a copy of the CBF Articles of Faith, have asked to meet with the CBF missionary to ask for clarification or more understanding on one of the articles. Also, officers have accepted Christ while serving in that capacity. Not every college student understands what it means to become a Christian. They may think that they are a Christian simply because they were raised in a Christian home or because they go to church. These times of discipleship and mentoring can yield spiritual victories in the lives of student officers.



- Main Bible Studies - For most CBF chapters, the main group Bible study on campus is the focal point of the ministry week and is the one event that most defines CBF at that particular university. Most missionaries do their own teaching using themes, book studies, video series, or interactive discussion. Some chapters offer a free home cooked meal at the beginning of these main Bible studies and others provide snacks and beverages.

For campuses with an extended time available for the meeting, ice breakers or a game can open the Bible study as well as a time for prayer requests, praises, and prayer. Often students congregate after the Bible study and go out for fellowship. Word of mouth is one of the most effective ways to grow the attendance at these Bible studies. Encourage your students to bring a friend or invite a roommate.

- Small Group Studies (missionary-led) – Small group Bible studies are designed to go deeper with a smaller group of students who might share a common interest or defining characteristic. Girls’ and guys’ studies, Freshmen studies, Graduate students’ studies, athlete studies are possibilities. Often there is more student interaction in these smaller groups.
- Small Group Studies (student-led) - There are times when some of your more biblically grounded and spiritually mature students feel led to host a small Bible study with just a few others. This should be pursued carefully and with much prayer and preparation. It can be an effective way to mature the student teacher in Christ and also to meet the spiritual needs of a section of students that may be interested in a student-led study.
- One-on-One Discipleship - This has to be one of the most rewarding and most draining ministry opportunities on a college campus. In comparison with the number of students you meet and talk with each year, those who commit to sitting with a mentor in person will be a small percentage. But that makes the one-on-one times even more special and important. So much growth can happen when we pour into students one at a time. It’s all in the connection and timing and need of the student. Remember, students do not think they need us until they DO.
- Special Bible Conferences - Because CBF is usually a recognized organization on campus, we have the opportunity to organize and host larger Biblical events and bring in outside speakers. Using the resources of the university, these events can be as large or small as you want them to be. Bringing in a Christian apologist to debate someone who is an evolutionist is an interesting event to sponsor. Other types of Biblical conferences relating to finances, marriage, relationships, counseling or missions can be hosted throughout the school year.



**Conclusion:**

The choices and opportunities before you in conducting a CBF ministry are unlimited! Your ministry will be as unique as you are and that is the beauty of it. God has equipped you for this ministry and will provide you with the most effective team for each specific year of ministry. No two years will be identical. Embrace that truth and prepare for great and mighty things from our Heavenly Father!

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...”  
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17



# REACHING THE WORLD

## *Working with International Students*

Hudson Taylor said that “The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.” In allowing us to serve on college campuses, God has created an effective means of reaching many people from multiple countries at the same time.

Statistics show that over a million international students from over 200 different countries are currently studying in the United States. One individual could never go to all those countries, learn their languages, and reach out to them. But through Campus Bible Fellowship, we can introduce the Gospel into the lives of students from these countries and when they return to their home country, they take the Gospel with them!

Many who have received Jesus as their Savior don’t wait until they return home to share this life changing news. Some internationals that have trusted Christ share the Gospel with their national classmates and Zoom or Skype to share their faith with their families back in their home country.

*"Howard was an international student from China. While studying in the States, he accepted Christ as his Savior and was faithfully disciplined. Before his return home, he commented, "I want my family and co-workers to hear this good news. When my co-workers ask, 'How was America?' I want to tell them how God made a difference in my life"*

*-John Park, University of Iowa*

## Cultural conflicts

Because of the cultural differences, working with international students presents both advantages to be capitalized on and some learning curves to go through. One great advantage is their curiosity. They are curious about all things American and are open to developing friendships with Americans.

*Because learning English is so important to internationals, they seem to “cling” to us when they find out that we are willing to help them with their English. After we help them with English and they have learned that we care about them, then they are often also willing to listen to the Gospel.*

-Nancy Miller, University of Colorado @ Boulder



Culture is a natural springboard. Cultural aspects of life present a convenient opportunity when bridging the gap with internationals. Internationals are often more interested in cultivating new relationships than American students are. Because of this natural curiosity about American culture, international students tend to be more open to discussing spiritual things because they perceive Christianity as a “cultural tradition” associated with the USA.

Many times it is helpful to just ask them what they have heard or read about Christianity. This question creates an easy opportunity to give a brief explanation of the Gospel on your very first contact. It may surprise you to discover that internationals are generally more willing than most Americans to admit when they are not a Christian, and some are more open because of the restrictions that are imposed in their own country.

## Overcoming cultural barriers

It's important that we educate ourselves about the culture and customs of those we are attempting to reach with the Gospel. There are some common barriers that could hinder the sharing of the Gospel. Things like the use of idioms in speech and making assumptions about their beliefs should be avoided. In addition, knowing about their national holidays and greeting customs will be a huge benefit to one who doesn't want to offend. There will be times when a cultural obstacle hinders a relationship, but always remember that humility and love can be understood in any language. With prayer, diligence, and careful attention, we can build bridges instead of barriers.

“Before America there was only one option – there is no God.”

-International student studying at Notre Dame

## Locating internationals

So, how do you find international students on your campus? First, cultivate a good relationship with the International Student and Scholar Services office and let them know that you and your churches are ready to help international students with practical needs such as furniture, transportation to doctor's appointments, and ESL classes. If you host beneficial events, they will hear by word of mouth. It is very true that a happy customer is your best advertisement. Events that provide students with furniture, bikes, or household items are always well received at the beginning of a school year. Some international student offices have even advertised CBF events. This varies by campus, but it is a great place to start.



Next, research other organizations on campus or in your area that have as a goal helping international students. International Students, Inc. (ISI) is a growing Christian group that focuses on connecting international students with Christian families. Many of these workers are solid Christians that are more than willing to share their contacts. Join an on-campus group such as Friends of International Students (FIS) or International Women's Club that seeks to pair Americans with international students. Bridges International (Cru) and Crossroads International, among others, are active on many campuses, and there are foreign churches (Chinese, Korean, etc.) in many areas. Stay humble and be willing to learn from them. Meet their leaders and discover what has worked and what hasn't worked in your specific area. This is not a competition! There are enough lost souls to keep us all busy!

Additionally, get creative with advertising. Attend all of the initial student organization fairs on your campus. Set up a table and be sure to have literature in multiple languages. Post on social media as well as both online and physical bulletin boards. Above all, pray! Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to the right students. Then keep your eyes open for "those students." They may come in the form of someone who is wandering around and looking lost, watching a game of cornhole, or just standing at a bus stop. Be prayerful and intentional while on campus and see how God chooses to work. The greatest ability is availability.

Some universities are particularly strong in international events, so it is possible to just join the university-sponsored events and then arrange to later take individuals hiking, to a museum, to invite them to your house, etc. in order to develop stronger relationships. At other times, you may need to plan and host events.

Relationships provide an open door for sharing the Gospel, and the Gospel is the powerful means by which a life can be changed! Pray about how you can join in the harvest of international souls on your campus. Then prepare to give God the glory for the great things He will do!



# MAINTAINING

## *Personal Spiritual Vibrancy*

### **The Message clothed in Fallible Flesh**

God chose human beings to embody His message of love and redemption to the world. The messenger is therefore essential to the message, especially in our day when young adults are already skeptical towards the Gospel.

Students are looking at you as an example of what it is to love Jesus and love your neighbor. Whether it is fair or not, you will become the model of spirituality that your students will emulate. Because God has called you to this life-giving assignment, it makes sense to thoroughly care for your own soul while caring for the souls of others. Although it is THE most important aspect of your ministry, no one will be pushing you to make it happen. It's up to you.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is to be authentic – that you be a humble, growing follower of Jesus Christ. A cold heart leads to legalism and a powerless form of godliness.

The sin nature will never be eradicated; it will remain corrupt all our days. What does change is how we choose to respond to circumstances – will we respond in the corrupted flesh or in the fullness of the Holy Spirit? As you mature in Christ, you will rely less on the flesh and more on the Spirit. That is what your students need to see in you. They need you to be a visual aid for how to deal with the sin in their own lives.

***"...For when I am weak, then I am strong."***

**- 2 Corinthians 12:10**

## **Temptations that CBF Missionaries Face**

There are temptations that are common among ministers of the gospel, and it will be good for you to have safeguards in place to protect yourself against them. If Satan can get a pastor to fail morally, he damages a church full of people. If Satan can get a CBF missionary to fail morally, he damages a group of college students and multiple other congregations who support that missionary. The target on our backs is bigger; therefore, we need to be extra diligent and have people in our lives who will help keep us accountable.

You must deal with the inner man. Looking spiritual on the outside is not enough. Have you ever gone out after a windstorm and seen large trees that broke apart because the inside was dead? Before the storm, the outside of the tree looked just fine. But the tree had no structural integrity. It was rotting from the inside. God's servants can be the same way. Deal with the inner man and the outer man will be just fine. The reverse is not true.

### Sexual sins

Often, we think of sexual sins when we think of areas of temptation. Certainly, this is serious business, especially with the climate of "anything goes" on campus. However, there are other sins that can also destroy a ministry and a life.

### Insecurity

Do you struggle with deep feelings of inadequacy and insecurity? Is there a condemning voice in your brain telling you that you are worthless, unlovable and just not good enough? Feelings of chronic inferiority will destroy your relationships and your ministry. Because of the monologue in your head, you will have trouble trusting the motives of others. When your sense of identity is dependent on hiding, controlling, and manipulating both yourself and others, it is a sign that something is more important to you than God. Get assistance for this struggle.

Because of your own cognitive distortions, it will be difficult for you to deal with this problem on your own. Not only will you be healthier spiritually, but you will also have the resources to minister to the large number of college students who also struggle with feelings of inferiority.

### Doubting that God loves you unconditionally

Are you convinced that Jesus loves you fiercely despite what you do or do not do? If not, you need to become convinced that Jesus loves you regardless of your performance. The gospel is all about undeserved favor with God based on the perfect work of Jesus.

### Pride

Pride is a universal, malignant disease. "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud...'" (1 Peter 3:5). Your ministry cannot flourish if God is against you.

Do you always need to be right? Are you desperate for attention? Do you think about yourself (either negatively or positively) all the time? Are you selfish? Do you get frustrated and angry with others? Do you refuse to forgive? That's pride. You might think that perfectionism is a pursuit of excellence that glorifies God. But if you are honest, it's probably not God's glory that you care about – it's your own.

### Jealousy and Envy

Beware of jealousy toward other ministries, either CBF or other Christian groups on campus. So much energy is taken away from our own ministries when we allow ourselves to envy what other groups are accomplishing and what it seems that God is doing in a certain group. Envy rots the bones. "But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic" (James 3:14-15).

### Expectations

You'll be frustrated and unhappy if you measure your life by things that you can't control. Often, we can have expectations that we are not even aware of until those expectations are not met. Failed expectations can leave you feeling inadequate and stuck, doubting yourself and your ministry. Remind yourself that God is working out His good, acceptable and perfect will in and through you. That might not mean large numbers of students in your ministry or multitudes of conversions. Your ministry is still vital in the lives of the students you do touch. Learn to be OK with being an imperfect human.

Unrealistic expectations can also strain relationships and be a breeding ground for disappointment and resentment. Learn to lavish God's abundant grace when others fail to meet your expectations just as you would hope that they would pour out grace on you when you come up short.



*"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

- 1 Corinthians 15:57

# HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN SPIRITUAL VIBRANCY IN MINISTRY?

## **Remember whose ministry it is**

Remember the ministry is God's – not yours. He is sovereign and He has placed you on your campus for His purposes, knowing full well your personality, strengths and weaknesses. Trust that He knows what He is doing. Keep worshiping Him and keep reminding yourself of His attributes.

## **Regularly evaluate how you are doing**

Check in with yourself and your spouse on a regular basis and ask yourself some diagnostic questions. Is your heart cold? Are you only in the Word when you have a Bible study to prepare for? Has ministry become an obligation rather than a joy? Are you looking at something other than your relationship to Jesus for comfort or satisfaction?

## **Find spiritual companions to travel the journey with you**

Find someone who is spiritually mature to pour into your life. That person should be someone who loves you enough to ask you the hard questions but not judge you for your answers. Seek out prayer partners that you can be real with.

## **Set up guardrails to keep you safe**

On a high mountain road, guardrails protect you from driving off the edge. In ministry, you will need to have more spiritual guardrails than the average Christian. Know your own weaknesses and set up protections there. The more talented and successful you are, the more you desperately need guardrails.

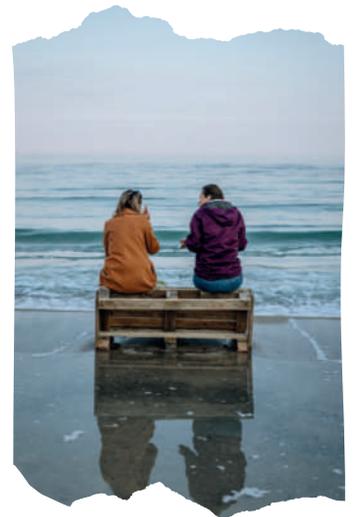
*“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify”*

- 1 Corinthians 10:23

## **Establish ministry rhythms that will keep you sane**

It is important to build rhythms into your life and ministry. Ministry among college students is unpredictable, so you need to make time for yourself, or burnout will result. Learn to recognize the signs of burnout and deal with it as soon as possible. If you have lost your joy, figure it out. Post-event letdown is normal, so schedule an extra day of rest after bigger events and at the end of the semester.

It is okay for you not to be accessible to students 24/7. It is okay to turn off your phone when you are done for the night. Do not neglect your family or your own health for the sake of the ministry.



Take a day off during the week. Sunday doesn't count because you will probably also be ministering at your church. If you have a particular day of the week that is family day, let your students know so that they don't get in the habit of texting you on that day.

Figure out some things that bring you joy and renewal and schedule them into the flow of your semester. Take your vacations. Attend the Baptist Mid-Missions conferences that are designed to refresh you.

Take care of the physical, emotional and spiritual components of your life. Build physical, emotional and spiritual care into your life. If you are running on empty in one area, it will impact the others.

### **When you need more help**

Imagine a race car driver getting out of his car and fueling up his vehicle and changing the tires all on his own. He won't make any progress. Similarly, we need a "pit crew" of spiritually mature Christians as prayer partners and wisdom givers. We all need spiritual tune-ups. When in a struggle, resist the temptation to isolate. [BMM's Missionary Soul Care](#) program is designed to help missionaries who are dealing with larger issues. If that is you, don't hesitate to reach out to them.





# CHALLENGES

## You May Face on Campus

As a Campus Bible Fellowship staff person, you are in a unique position in the campus community. You are not a student, faculty or staff; therefore, you do not have the rights these individuals would possess. Much like any overseas missionary, you are a guest of the place where you minister. You serve only as long as you are welcomed by your host. Therefore, you are called to be prudent in your actions and speech.

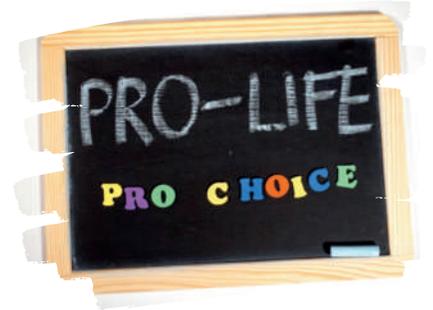
*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is”  
- Ephesians 5:15-17*

### **This generation is easily offended**

We serve among a highly reactive population. They are not afraid to cry foul when they are offended and will demand redress from university administrators. These young adults view free speech as a conditional privilege rather than a fundamental right.

Much wisdom from God is essential as we navigate our involvement in the various issues young adults are facing today. “A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle” (Proverbs 18:19).

Take for example, the important issue of abortion. On the Cleveland State campus, a pro-life group was starting. CBF was approached to collaborate on pro-life issues. The CBF staff person met with the organizer to try to discover what approach this new club would take. The meeting revealed that the pro-life organization was going to take a confrontational approach using larger-than-life, graphic displays. Their goal was to raise a ruckus on campus to get young people to think about the issue. The CBF staff member declined to work with this group (leaving it up to the CBF students to decide if they should be individually involved). The staff member decided that the gospel had to be central to the mission and working with this group would diminish opportunities to share the gospel because hearts would be hardened by the association with this pro-life group.



One of the more reactive groups on campus will be the LGBTQ+ community. Because they tend to be well-organized and vocal, they have a larger influence. As a Christian group, you will most likely be the target of immature behaviors and taunting. Love them anyway. Treat LGBTQ+ individuals as you would desire to be treated. As Bible-believing Christians we shouldn't condone the sin, nor elevate it to a sin greater than all others. Jesus died for all sinners, and He is capable of redeeming people out of every lifestyle. Share the good news of the gospel as you would with any student.



### **Open-air preachers**

Public universities cannot restrict speech based solely on its content, including content that others may view as objectionable. While private institutions have the legal right to regulate who may speak on their campuses, public universities do not and those that have tried to keep these preachers off their campuses have frequently faced a challenge in federal courts – and lost.



Open-air preachers, unaffiliated with any student organization, will routinely come to campus to “proclaim the gospel.” The tactic that is most often used is to gather a crowd using loud, confrontational language condemning students to damnation in hell. They preach against Muslims, gays, pro-choice students and anybody who contradicts their message of God’s judgment and wrath. They often use amplification and wear body cams. LGBTQ+ students will often shout down such speakers. Then, campus police show up to prevent a physical altercation. It’s a grievous place to be for CBF missionaries. Although what the open-air preachers are proclaiming is mostly true, they maintain a holier-than-thou attitude. They preach a works-based salvation that hardens students against the true gospel.

What to do? CBF staff member Mary Amesbury (Cleveland State University) has found that around the fringe of the spectacle there are students who are willing to talk about what they believe. These students are less combative than the LGBTQ students and are open to a conversation. The subject of religion has already been broached so it is easy to get people talking, especially by explaining what is off about the message of the street preacher. Often Mary has had redemptive conversations with students – for even as long as an hour and a half – because she is willing to listen and have a real conversation rather than a shouting match.

### **Maintaining your status as a Recognized Student Organization**

There is a possibility every year that your CBF group may not be granted approval as a recognized student organization. If you are an existing organization, you should make every effort to reorganize when all the other groups are also doing so.

Campus Bible Fellowship at Binghamton University in New York state lost their recognition due to a simple email miscommunication. The staff and officers were not even aware of the problem until halfway through the fall semester when the student government brought it to their attention. The organization then had to start the recognition process from scratch and was not able to reserve rooms for events until their recognition was reinstated several months later.

Often, the issue in question will be a stipulation in your constitution that your student officers must be Christians. Universities see that as discriminatory. What to do? If you are starting a new organization, consider asking [Alliance Defending Freedom](#) to evaluate your constitution. If as a continuing organization you are denied recognition on such grounds, contact ADF for legal advice. The First Amendment's Free Speech Clause prohibits public universities and their officials from disciplining or retaliating against a student for their constitutionally protected speech. It also prohibits discrimination against speech based on its content and viewpoint.

### **Other issues**

If you have a problem on your campus that you don't know how to handle, contact the CBF Coordinator or your fellow staff members for advice. They have probably gone through something similar or can at least be praying alongside you for wisdom and guidance from the Lord and helping you brainstorm for a solution.



## FINAL DETAILS

So you've made it through a year of campus ministry. Before you pack your bags for a well-deserved vacation relaxing at the beach or hiking in the mountains, you should double-check that you've completed all the necessary requirements.

The truism is: “No job is finished until the paperwork is done.” That applies for Campus Bible Fellowship staff workers as well. As menial and mundane as reporting and record-keeping may seem, they are nonetheless a necessary part of being accountable in ministry.

As a Baptist Mid-Missions missionary, you have attempted to stay on top of those monthly expense reports. Hopefully you have also been keeping careful records of the opportunities God has given you in ministry throughout the past school year. CBF requires that we report these blessings twice each year (January and June) on our [Action In Ministry \(AIM\)](#) reports. Reach out to the Coordinator or a member of the Leadership Team if you have questions or need clarification when completing this paperwork.

Although we may not experience the excitement of international travel, CBF missionaries get to take a trip every summer to our annual conference. Here we enjoy spiritual refreshment, intellectual interaction, and fellowship with others in the same ministry along with conducting our business sessions. Conference costs are covered from our monthly field contributions, so travel is our only expense. The location varies from year to year, providing us the opportunity to visit new places.

On alternate years we gather with other BMM missionaries in North America for a PAUSE conference, a time to be physically and spiritually refreshed and further equipped for ministry. This conference is occasionally held in conjunction with the Baptist Mid-Missions' annual Family Conference which enables us to fulfill the requirement that missionaries attend a Family Conference every four years.

The Leadership Team of Campus Bible Fellowship consists of the Team Leader, Assistant Team Leader, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian. They serve the entire Ministry Team (comprised of all CBF missionaries) for a term of two years.

Campus Bible Fellowship is blessed to have a Coordinator with a direct link to BMM. His job description, as explained in our By-Laws, is as follows: "The CBF Coordinator is a special ministry assignment within the CBF Ministry Team. It is missionary in nature. The Coordinator's authority is derived from the Ministry Team. He is to report directly to the Ministry Team or the Leadership Team each time they meet. He is to serve as a liaison between the Ministry Team and the administration of Baptist Mid-Missions."

(For more information on CBF leadership, follow this link to the [CBF By-Laws](#))

**Congratulations!** You've made it to the end of the CBF Staff Manual (but don't forget to check out the appendix for further ministry ideas). Refer to this manual as needed in your endeavors on the campus. All the CBF staff in our various locations, along with the Coordinator, stand ready to advise and assist you going forward. May God bless you abundantly in your efforts to evangelize and disciple university students for His glory!



*"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."*

- 2 Timothy 2:2



# Appendix 1

## Activity Ideas for Working with Students

### Social Activities

- Visit a farm
- Pick apples
- Fall hayride
- Pumpkin carving
- Make home-made pizza
- Cookout
- Church and school programs
- University concerts
- Roller/Ice skating
- Disc golf
- Canoeing, kayaking and paddle boating
- Camping
- Board game night
- Visit a museum
- Sporting events (tailgate together)
- Tea party
- Visit the zoo
- Cooking class
- Make Home-made ice cream
- Birthday parties
- ESL classes
- Hiking
- Bowling
- Escape room
- Paintball
- Laser tag
- Sledding
- Painting/pottery class
- Photo scavenger hunt

### Holiday Activities

- Thanksgiving dinner
- Christmas party
- Decorate cookies
- Go look at Christmas lights
- Decorate/build gingerbread houses

### Outreach Activities

- Meeting for lunch at a different place on campus once a week (or month). Announce where you'll be on social media or through email so that any student can drop by and visit with you and other students.
- Weekly table outreaches
- Retreats (day or weekend)
- Conferences (with various themes)
- "Food for Thought" event (focused on a particular subject such as evangelism, missions, apologetics, financial principles. The event has at least two teaching sessions with a meal in between).

# Appendix 2

## Ideas for Working with International Students

1. Internationals are very interested in coming over to a home since most of them have never visited an American family's home.
2. American holidays lend themselves to natural cultural teaching opportunities as well as a platform for sharing the Gospel. Examples: Labor Day picnic, Thanksgiving meal (most internationals have never attended one), Christmas (even if they have it in their country, customs are different and they are curious), Valentine's Day banquet, Easter services, Memorial Day/Independence Day parades or fireworks, etc.
3. Holidays from their home country allow opportunities to both learn and build relationships due to your interest in their home culture. New Year's celebrations (based on a lunar calendar) are very significant in many Asian cultures.
4. Providing used furniture, bikes, or household items at the beginning of the year is greatly appreciated by internationals and word of this kindness will spread quickly. This takes planning, organization, a place to store the items, and a vehicle to deliver them. Providing this service has always been well received by both students and the international student office at the university.
5. Group activities are very appreciated by those who come from a group-oriented culture. They don't want to be singled out but enjoy trying new things in a group. Throughout the year intersperse group events with individual invitations.
6. Use your God-given skill set to minister and reach others (music, sports, cooking, drawing, painting, car repair, translating, health care, etc.)
7. Bible studies on Zoom with former students (or families of students) are well received and appreciated. This is a great way to continue a relationship as well as reach those in other countries.

# Appendix 3

## Potential Obstacles for Working with International Students

1. When working with Americans, we don't think about the potential problems in communication that idiomatic expressions or slang can cause. However, that is something to be constantly aware of when working with students who are using English as their second language.
2. Try to avoid overly cultural examples and illustrations when teaching so that international students don't feel like they need to ask questions when the American students don't.
3. Purposefully use references to other cultures when teaching. The Bible is set in a Middle Eastern/Asian culture. It is easy to bring up cultural differences without making it sound like you are explaining things for an international student.
4. Be aware of cultural greetings. Some international cultures may hug, kiss, shake hands, etc. Don't extend your hand (as a woman) to a male Muslim or a Jewish rabbi.
5. Avoid assuming that just because a student comes from a Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist country that they personally practice that religion. Some students are offended when you make assumptions, plus some are actually very opposed to those religions because of how they or their family have been treated.
6. Because so many internationals don't know anything about Christianity, start with truths of who God/Jesus is or how one can put their confidence in the Bible as true, etc. It's also powerful to share your testimony with them.
7. Being aware of history is important. For example, the Korean War may not be a great topic with a Chinese student since America and China were on opposing sides of the conflict.
8. Before inviting internationals into your home for a meal, ask them if there is anything they don't eat (Hindus refrain from beef, Muslims refrain from pork, etc.). Some may be vegetarians or have other dietary restrictions. Many internationals don't like overly sweet desserts, but they appreciate fruit.
9. Be aware of cultural or religious holidays (Ramadan, Chinese New Year, etc.). Ask them about their most important holidays. Try to clear your schedule and invite them to come over before or after the holiday (since they usually will be spending that day with other international students or on Zoom with their family). Let them use your kitchen and take them to an international market to buy ingredients they might need to cook a dish connected with that holiday.
10. When going out to eat, offer to let them choose the restaurant because then you'll know there will be something they enjoy eating.

11. Don't refuse an international's cultural food if at all possible. In America, we don't often care if someone tries our food or not. Not so in other cultures. To reject their food is to reject them. Silently pray that God will help you to eat and enjoy their traditional foods.
12. In your conversations with international friends, frequently delve into what they enjoyed back home in comparison to what they have to get used to here.
13. In some cultures, the end chair at a table is a place for the most honored guest (or to its immediate right). Be willing to ask about their culture and then seat your guests appropriately.
14. Bringing a gift is a common international practice. When they give a gift, most cultures don't open it in the giver's presence. They wait until the giver is not present in case the gift is not appreciated. This is a good opportunity to explain the American custom of opening gifts so that the giver can see the joy that the gift brings. Ask what they prefer in each situation. Returning or not accepting a gift is an insult. (Think through how you will deal with a gift of alcohol).
15. Many internationals don't want to be indebted to you and may refuse "gifts" such as a Bible or study material and may attempt to repay you for any act of kindness. Some will consider you their best friend due to your kindness. By inviting an international into your home, you may gain a friend. Due to indebtedness, you may have an open door into their home. Be aware, each situation and culture responds differently.
16. Some cultures will insist on paying. Be prepared to offer to pay more than once. "No" doesn't always mean "no" unless it is repeated multiple times. Then be willing to let them pay.
17. Many international students come from cultures in which the desire to please another will push them to commit to things or agree to positions even if they don't really believe it. They think it will make you help them more or treat them better. Ask the Lord to help you gauge what is real interest and what is politeness.
18. Getting students to commit to Christ can be challenging if their parents don't want them to give up their family/cultural religion.



Campusbiblefellowship.org  
Email: askcbfi@gmail.com



BMM.org  
Email: info@bmm.org