



Collegiate Impact



Something Viral

The Relaunching of a National Collegiate Day of Prayer

by David Smithers

In the latter part of the 18th century, a transatlantic prayer movement was launched. By 1815, the **Concert of Prayer for Colleges** became a regular feature on the New England campuses of Yale, Williams, Brown, and Middlebury. By 1823, almost every major denomination and university in America had embraced the practice of a concerted day of prayer for colleges.

The universities in America had been established by the church and therefore were expected to supply the next generation of evangelical leaders. "As go the students, so goes the nation." It was this kind of foresight that motivated the American church to establish a national day of prayer for America's colleges.

Henry C. Fish, in his *Handbook of Revivals*, wrote, "In the year 1823, the last Thursday of February in each year was agreed upon as the day for special supplication that God would pour from on high His Spirit upon our Colleges and Seminaries. And what have been some of the results? In the years 1824 and 1825, revivals were experienced in five different Colleges; in 1826 in six Colleges; in 1831 in nineteen. . . . In one of the Colleges, it is stated that a revival started on the very day of the concert of prayer."

The influence of these campus awakenings was so extensive that many pastors were literally urging the parents in their churches to send their children to college if they wanted to see them come to faith in Christ!

Collectively, the movement sought to honor and respect the entire evangelical community, while being careful not to compromise orthodox biblical doctrine or individual ministry

objectives. As a result, thousands of believers from every denomination across America came together and prayed for America's colleges at the very same time.

However, unfortunately, after the turn of the 20th century, the **Day of Prayer for Colleges** began to decline and was eventually abandoned.

The Story Behind February 25, 2010

In September 2009, leadership from *Collegiate Impact*, Student Volunteer Movement II, Campus Renewal Ministries, Student Church Movements, Luke 18 Project, and Campus America came together in New York City to deepen friendships and discuss the feasibility of relaunching the **Collegiate Day of Prayer** the last Thursday of February 2010. Although time was short, these leaders were in one accord to move forward.

Even though there were many obstacles to overcome, in the final weeks before the **Collegiate Day of Prayer**, God moved in surprising ways. As the news began to spread, literally hundreds of prayer groups, churches, and colleges began to sign up to be a part of reestablishing the **Collegiate Day of Prayer**.

The call to pray went out, and God's people responded. Fathers, mothers, pastors, college professors, and hundreds of campus ministry leaders answered the call to pray. Denominational and independent churches from coast to coast signed up to participate. After all was said and done, over 500 different campus prayer groups and churches from 46 states united in prayer on February 25, 2010.

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From **Harvard University** to the **University of California, Berkeley**, and from the **University of North Dakota** to the **University of Tennessee**, our expectations were surpassed. At **The Citadel** in South Carolina, 200 cadets assembled in the middle of campus and interceded for our nation.

A student from **Michigan State University** said, "It was like Psalm 133, a commanded blessing when we come together in unity. . . . Doing this event has already spurred growth in the prayer movement on our campus. All our weekly prayer meetings have grown and had new people in attendance as a direct result of the Collegiate Day of Prayer. We're excited!"

But beyond the reestablishment of the **Collegiate Day of Prayer**, we are curious about what God is up to on a broader scale. As pastor and Bible commentator Matthew Henry observed three centuries ago, "When God intends *great mercy* for His people, the first thing He does is set them a-praying."

Princeton University



From the Director, Dave Warn

In a few days, I leave for Princeton University. Birthed in 1746 on the heels of America's First Great Awakening, Princeton has a rich Christian heritage and still carries the motto *Dei sub numine viget*, which means, "**Under God's power she flourishes.**"

From 1746–1768, of the college's 338 graduates, 158 entered the ministry. For the next 130 years, God visited this school many times, reviving believers and bringing multitudes of lost students to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Yet at the same time, worldly philosophies and other goals became prevalent.

By 1888, the president, Reverend James McCosh, had made Christianity a secondary focus, and over the next 80 years, the school became increasingly agnostic. In 1972, Princeton hired its first avowed atheist president. Currently, professors who claim any religious faith whatsoever are a small minority, and classes taught on religion place Christianity as just another philosophy or idea.

I appreciate your prayers for this trip to Princeton and for all that we are doing in *Collegiate Impact* to see God manifest His presence throughout the world of higher education. May our campuses flourish, not because of endowments or the pursuit of worldly success, but because Princeton's motto of living "**under God's power**" has indeed become a reality.

Please join this coast-to-coast chorus of praise and intercession, and believe God with us for another Great Awakening on our nation's campuses! Like the original Day of Prayer for Colleges, we long to see Christians from all walks of life and churches from all denominations join together in powerful, determined, unified prayer that will move the hand of God and transform the world of higher education. ■

(For more history and information on the **Collegiate Day of Prayer**, visit www.CollegiateDayOfPrayer.org.)

David Smithers serves as the Prayer Track Director for Student Volunteer Movement 2, an international missions mobilization ministry. He has been committed to sharing at churches and campuses about God's desire to awaken and empower His church to finish the Great Commission.



Igniting Hearts • Transforming Campuses

Our vision is to see the body of Christ on college and university campuses experience life in Jesus Christ on such a deep, powerful, contagious level that lives are changed and campuses throughout North America are transformed for the glory of God.

To give a tax-deductible gift or acquire additional information:

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