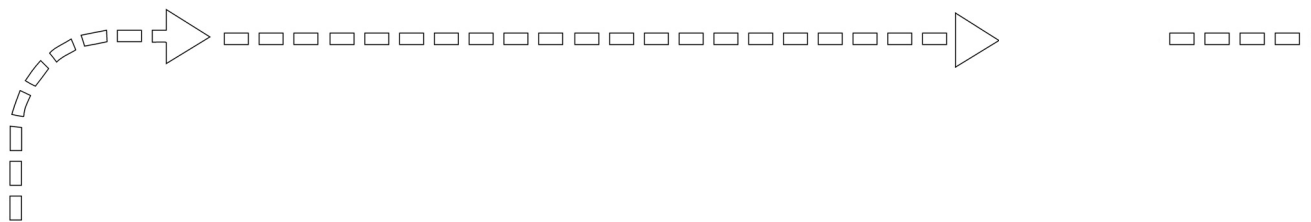
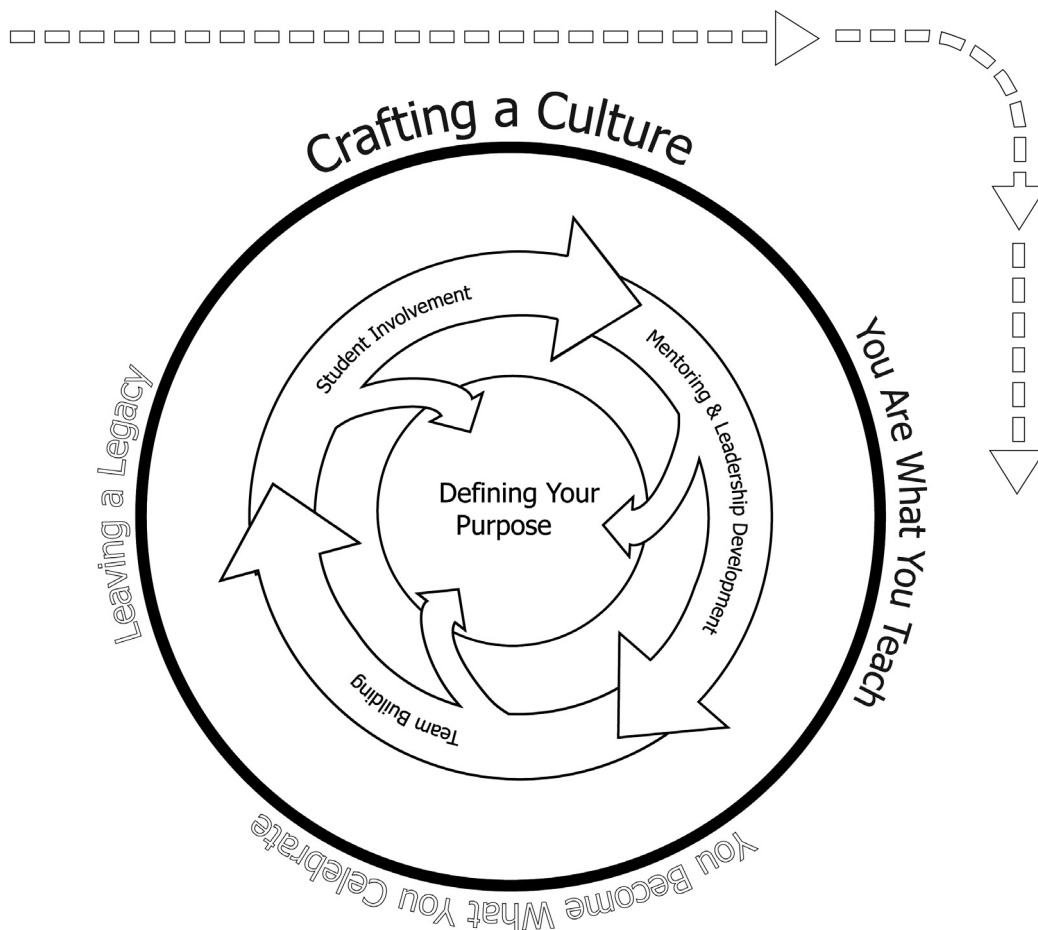




**You Are What
You Teach**

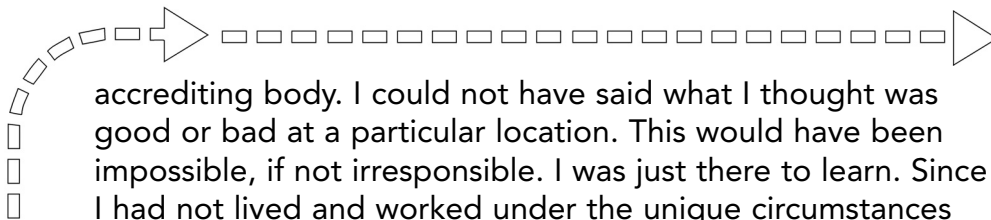




You Are What You Teach

During my jaunts around the country, visiting all of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in North America, I was asked by the majority of chaplains to produce official reports for their individual institutions comparing them to their sister schools. They seemed most curious to know what I thought were their strengths and weaknesses. However, as much as I attempted to sit down and do that, I was not able to comply with their request.

In order to produce a qualitative report after my visits, I would have first needed some expectations, an agenda or a checklist. This was completely contrary to my project. I was not an



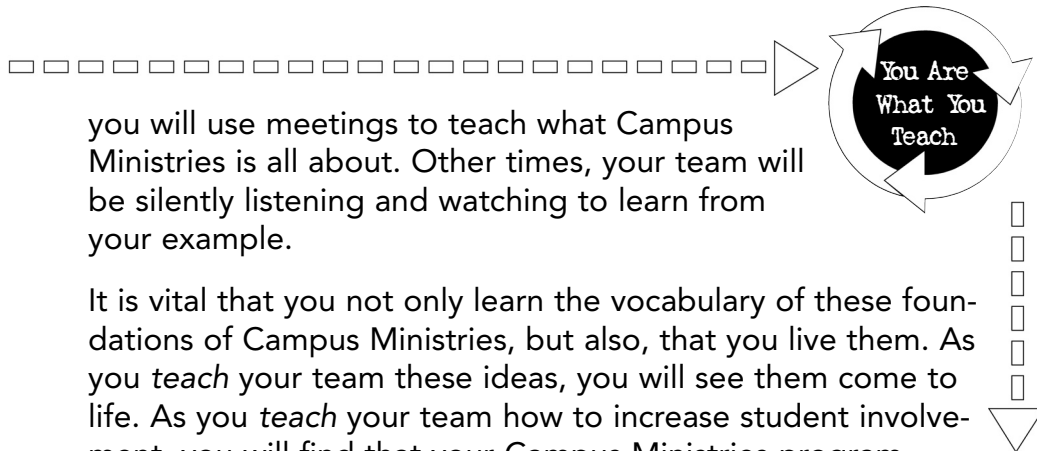
accrediting body. I could not have said what I thought was good or bad at a particular location. This would have been impossible, if not irresponsible. I was just there to learn. Since I had not lived and worked under the unique circumstances facing each school, I was completely unqualified to say whether or not something was right or wrong for the school. I couldn't even safely say that I thought something was missing from the spiritual programming.



Identifying qualities of successful Campus Ministries programs was the first phase of my project. This meant I needed to spend time on each campus looking for minute differences and how they affected each institution's approach to Campus Ministries. Before my project, my experience had been narrow. I spent all of my years in higher education at Union College, and the ways that we approached ministry seemed like the right means to achieve success. However, I learned, through broadening my perspective, that success comes in many different shapes and sizes. When success was defined by whether or not ministry and spiritual growth were occurring at a school, each school achieved success differently.

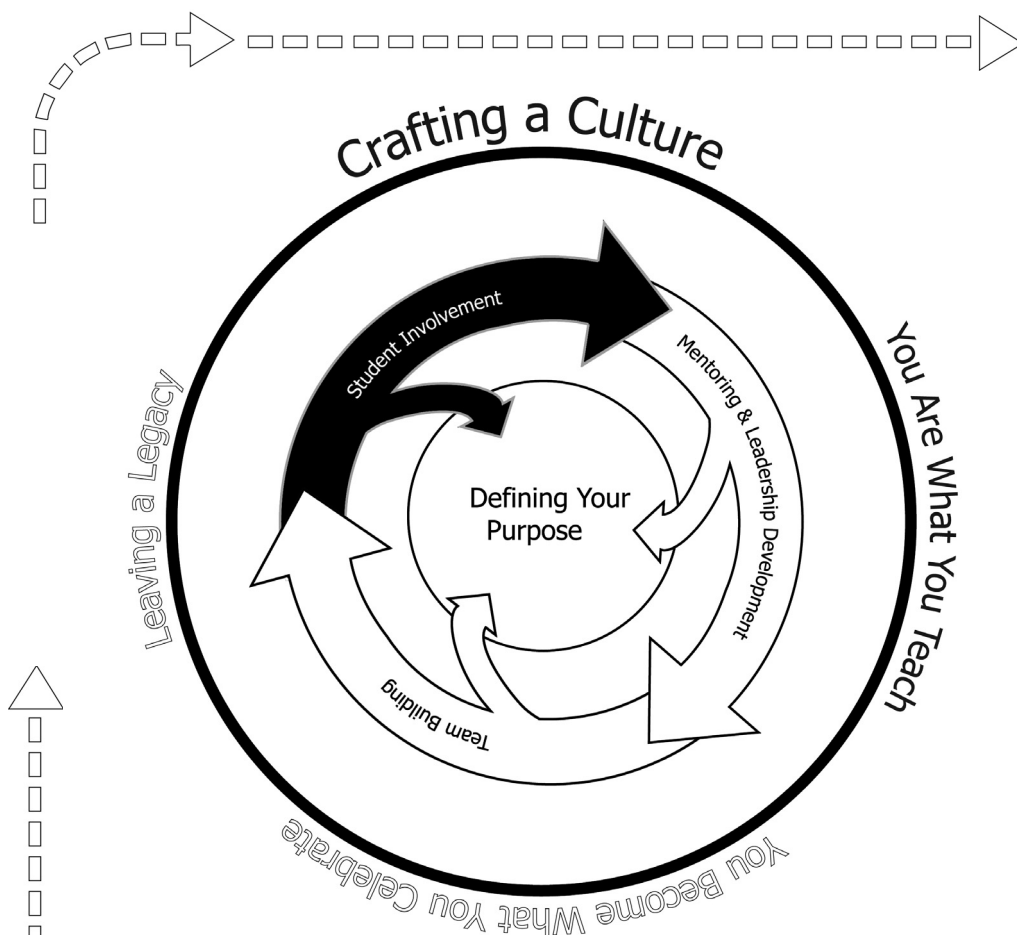
I did find some universal principles for successfully crafting a culture where students grow as leaders: involving students, mentoring and developing leaders, building teams, and identifying a clear purpose.

At this point in the process of crafting a culture where students grow as leaders, it's important to realize that *you are what you teach*. The tone for every school year is set by what you teach. The words that you use in the beginning will echo throughout the school year. If you want your students to be a united team, teach them that vocabulary. If you want them to be visionary leaders, show them what you mean. They need to learn what you expect from them, what to expect from you, and how far their personal boundaries extend. At times,



you will use meetings to teach what Campus Ministries is all about. Other times, your team will be silently listening and watching to learn from your example.

It is vital that you not only learn the vocabulary of these foundations of Campus Ministries, but also, that you live them. As you *teach* your team these ideas, you will see them come to life. As you *teach* your team how to increase student involvement, you will find that your Campus Ministries program involves students. As you *teach* them about mentoring and developing leaders, you will see that you are mentoring and developing them as leaders. As you *teach* them to build teams, you will find that they are your team. And as you *teach* them to define their purpose, you will find that you have defined your purpose.

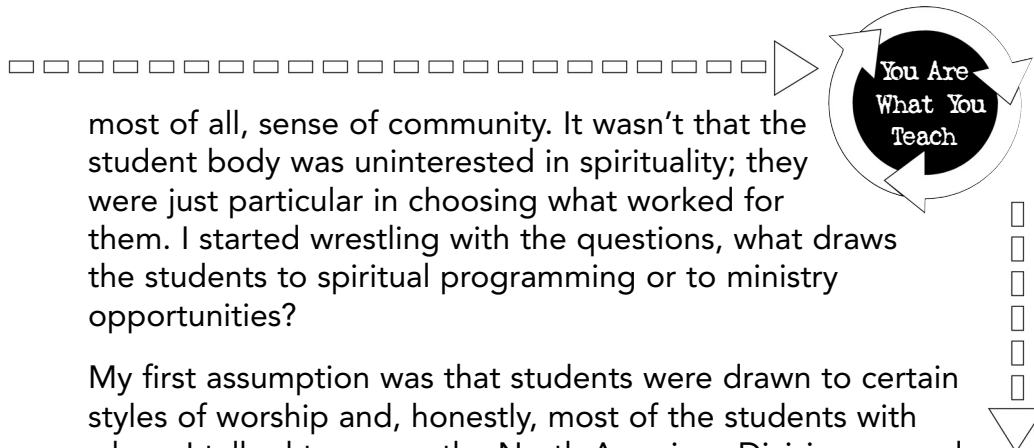


Student Involvement

Glimpses of Success

It was Friday night, and I was sitting in the church ready and waiting for the program to begin. A few students trickled in and found their seats near the rear of the sanctuary. All of a sudden, the opening hymn began. I looked around, surprised that it was time to start. Where was everyone?

The answer came later that evening. I went with some students that I had met earlier in the week to the after vespers program. In a small room I found students packed in so tightly that there wasn't enough room to sit down. I was inspired by the spirit I felt through the students' music, testimonies, and,

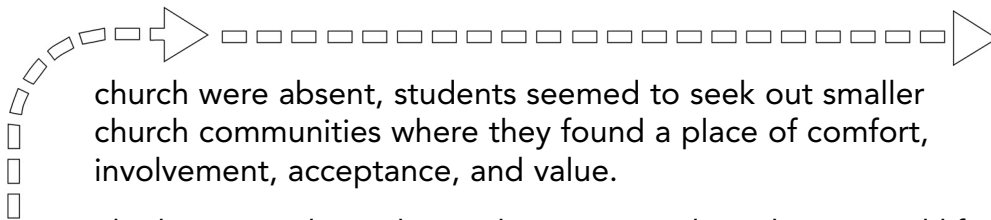


most of all, sense of community. It wasn't that the student body was uninterested in spirituality; they were just particular in choosing what worked for them. I started wrestling with the questions, what draws the students to spiritual programming or to ministry opportunities?

My first assumption was that students were drawn to certain styles of worship and, honestly, most of the students with whom I talked to across the North American Division agreed. They blamed generation gaps, irrelevant music, and uninteresting preachers. As my investigation continued, I began to get an answer regarding their lack of spiritual participation. Students had particular tastes and they craved spiritual experiences that would meet their needs. But something was still missing from the answer.

I observed that even the most judgmental individuals tended to be more accepting when they related to the person planning the programs. Even if they didn't always like what happened, students were more likely to attend programs and ministries that had been initiated and organized by fellow students.

Church was a great example of this. None of our institutions gave credit for attending church services, so it was interesting to watch what the students did on Sabbath morning when they weren't required to be at church. Most of the schools conducted a separate college church service, a program for students by students. These services appeared to be eagerly anticipated and heavily attended by the students. At the few schools that did not provide separate services, the college church found a way to incorporate college students into their activities. I saw churches with students serving on their boards, helping organize the praise music, performing skits, serving on the platform, or completely planning a service. Where both a student-led service and inclusion by the college



church were absent, students seemed to seek out smaller church communities where they found a place of comfort, involvement, acceptance, and value.

The key is involving the students intricately in the spiritual life of campus. This needs to happen at all levels, not just the token student reading scripture. Students need to be a part of the process, starting with the conception of ministry ideas and continuing through to the implementation. Releasing the students' creativity, convictions, and skills is a vital component to successful Campus Ministries. In addition, the student body should feel like they have influence over what happens within Campus Ministries both through making their opinions known and through getting personally involved in programs, ministries, or leadership.



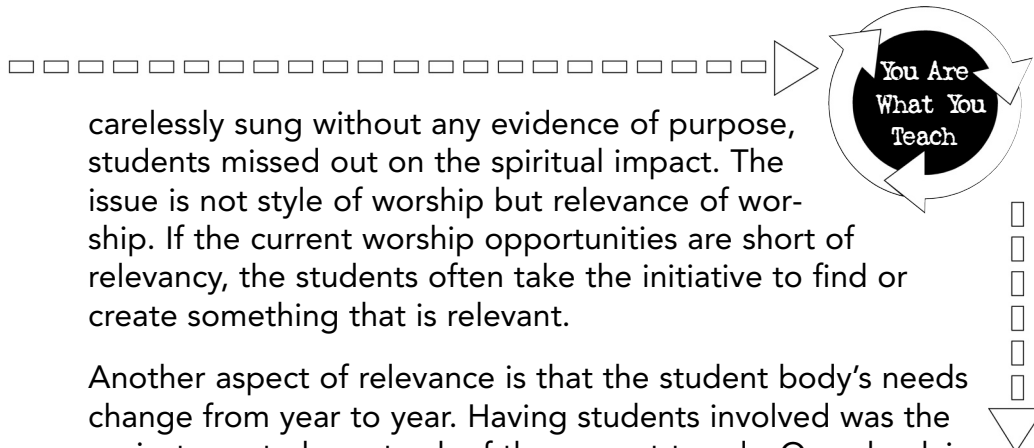
What Happens

We often think that service means to give something to others, to tell them how to speak, act, or behave; but now it appears that above all else, real, humble service is helping our neighbors discover that they possess great but often hidden talent that can enable them to do even more for us than we can do for them.

Henri Nouwen, Donald McNeill and Douglas Morrison,
Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life

Wonderful things start to happen when students become actively involved in any or all levels of Campus Ministries. They add relevance to the ministries that are already up and running, and they take ownership of their spiritual journey. Their lives become deeply changed as they discover the gifts God has given them to share with the world.

Relevance is the key most often missing from struggling ministries. It is not simply a battle of hymns versus praise songs, as some individuals think. I saw many groups that sang exclusively out of the hymnal. Because students selected each song based on their own journeys, the music spoke to the hearts of the students there. Likewise, when praise songs were

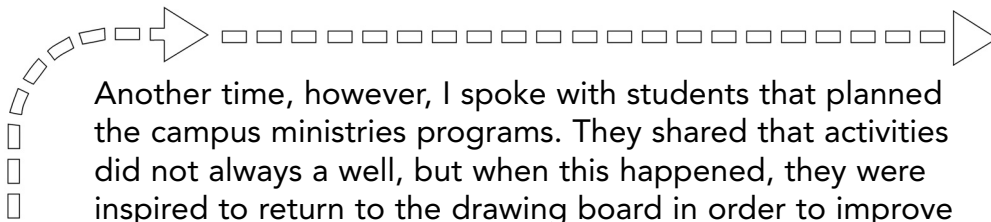


carelessly sung without any evidence of purpose, students missed out on the spiritual impact. The issue is not style of worship but relevance of worship. If the current worship opportunities are short of relevancy, the students often take the initiative to find or create something that is relevant.

Another aspect of relevance is that the student body's needs change from year to year. Having students involved was the easiest way to keep track of the newest trends. One chaplain told me the story behind the school's student-led church service. It began as a small group, meeting mid-week. As it attracted more students, it became a mid-week worship service for the entire school. The next year they decided to try it out as a Sabbath School. After its continued growth, it became a weekly church service during the 11 o'clock hour. The journey was successful because the students were supported and encouraged to explore the current needs of the student body and then given permission to meet those needs in their own creative ways. By being student led, it truly was a program that could respond to the students in a relevant way.

When students are actively involved in the preparation and implementation of Campus Ministries activities, they feel a deeper sense of ownership. They realize that if something is not working or not high quality, complaining about it is pointless. They know they could get involved to make the situation better.

I spoke to a student from one school and asked him if he enjoyed attending its religious programs. He responded, "It's not about whether or not I like it. I have to go. They're usually not very good, but I've just gotten used to that. So I don't expect very much." Instead of seeing the problems and being inspired to make the situation better, he was resigned to let the system worsen. He saw his role as unimportant because no students were involved in the planning.



Another time, however, I spoke with students that planned the campus ministries programs. They shared that activities did not always a well, but when this happened, they were inspired to return to the drawing board in order to improve the programs. This difference in attitude is important to note. Students, when involved, take ownership and desire to make things better. They aren't satisfied with complaining; instead, they become catalysts for change. Even if students are not directly in charge of an activity, when they see that other students are actively involved, they are more willing to forgive small shortcomings.



The most important result of involving a student in Campus Ministries is the change that takes place in each individual life. Through the course of this project, I was blessed by all the student leaders that I met. I was amazed at the stories about how they first became involved in Campus Ministries, and the deep impact it had on their spiritual jounries. While people are passive attendees, they constantly look for others to meet their needs like hungry scavengers waiting for scraps to be thrown their way. However, as soon as they are invited onto a team, whose sole purpose is identifying and meeting the needs of others, a profound paradigm shift takes place. They are lifted to the status of chefs in a restaurant, preparing the best cuisine. Their scavenger days are over. Self-centered individuals grow focused on what they can share rather than what they can receive. Giving students ownership and leadership responsibilities develops a servant-oriented spirit. It is then that they grow the most spiritually. In the process of helping others, they become more selfless than they are in their apathetic, observational state.

Without a feeling of ownership there appears to be psychological, as well as spiritual, walls that develop between the individual and the organization. The students allow themselves to be separate from the operations, to disconnect and become uncaring. The more the students are obviously involved on every level, the thinner and more obsolete these