

HALVORSEN MINISTRY UPDATE



The recent events of injustice, and now again with Jacob Blake, has sparked protests throughout our country and across many campuses in our nation. Issues of racism and injustice are overwhelming and grieving to me. It compels me to search myself and to cry out to the Lord for change in our country and in my own heart.

The protests show a general shift in the philosophical mindset of students today... a GOOD shift, in more ways than one. Today's students talk more about truth, sin, and compassion more than before, which could help them overcome the common barriers that students have had in hearing and believing the Gospel. My mentor and boss's husband, Ryan McReynolds, did an excellent job describing this general shift:

Today's students talk about truth.

When I [Ryan] was in college back in the '80s, students often argued about truth claims. Then, not long after for many students the very idea of truth was rejected. People would talk about "your truth" and "my truth." I remember talking with students at CU Boulder and they would tell me that nothing is truly wrong or right. It is only what is "wrong for me" that matters.

Students don't say that much anymore, at least not in protest speeches. Students will now say that it is true that racism exists and try to persuade you with evidence. The phrase "Black Lives Matter" is an assertion of truth. You won't hear anyone say "black lives matter for me but they may not matter for you." The claim is that it is true with a capital T that black lives matter. True for everyone. This return to the idea of truth is very encouraging since it is the foundation of knowing God and dialogue with others. God is the author of truth and Jesus is the truth. Today's students are talking about truth.

Today's students talk about sin.

"You do you" has been a popular phrase used by students as a reply to moral judgments. For example, if someone says, "pornography is wrong," students often respond with "you do you." This means that you can make moral claims on yourself, but not on others. In other words, "sin" is in the eye of the beholder, only. That is changing.

The word sin has been unpopular with college students for much of the past. But today, students declare with passion that some things are evil, some things are wrong, some things are murder. In a word, they are talking about sin. Students have started to passionately embrace the idea that some things are wrong even if there is no law against it, even if there is no immediate consequence, even if no one else sees what has happened. Recognizing that sin is real is a necessary first step toward repentance seeking a savior from sin.

Today's students believe in compassion.

Despite being taught in class that "survival of the fittest" is the only reasonable explanation for behavior, students today speak passionately about protecting others. This is a noble aim and consistent with Jesus' command to love your neighbor as yourself. The protests for justice for George Floyd and others are for many students a result of a passion for protecting others out of empathy and compassion. This focus on compassion makes students more likely to consider following Jesus.

Please pray for Cru leadership and staff as we do the ongoing work to recognize and confront the racial bias that naturally flows from our own sinful hearts, while leading our students to do the same.

Pray for us as campus staff point to Jesus on their campus as the truth, the remedy for sin, and the source for compassion.

Pray as we come along side our African American students and other students of color, that they would feel heard, understood, cared for, equal, and valued.

Pray for me, as I have joined another Cru fundraising coach to conduct statical research to help missionaries report to the field faster. Pray as we particularly study how we can help ethnic minority Cru staff overcome the additional fundraising hurtles they face. We desperately need diverse staff to reach diverse students!

Pray for our campus staff as they creatively connect with students, both virtually and in-person. Pray for their safety. On the colleges and universities opening here, regular re-testing ("interval testing") of students and staff has been helped containment of Covid so far.

Thank you for being behind me and the Cru staff I coach through your prayers and support. We are grateful to be able to minister to others during such a time as this!