

# STAND TO REASON

## MOMENTS OF TRUTH

### The Berkeley Mission Report *Simply Put, a Life-Changing Trip*

March 14, 2006

Dear Friend,

I could fill pages telling you all that happened on the Berkeley Mission. God's Spirit was clearly at work in the lives of the 24 students and adults from Rock Hills Church who attended this one-of-a-kind missions experience in February. Indeed, so much happened that I will simply provide you with a few "snapshots" here.

#### **SNAPSHOT #1:**

We invited Larry Hicok of the East Bay Atheists and David Fitzgerald of the San Francisco Atheists to do a joint presentation on their arguments against Christianity and for atheism. These men are well-studied atheists and we wanted them to give us their best shot, so to speak. You might think two atheists of this caliber would shake the faith of our students but I wish you could have seen the Q & A time. Following the presentation our *high school* students asked insightful question after insightful question, exposing some of the bankrupt views of atheism. In fact, David wrote the following to me in an e-mail the day after: "Just wanted to send a quick note to say what a great time we had meeting you and your group yesterday. I was really knocked out by the quality of the questions everybody raised. Very refreshing...I was really impressed with your group."



Afterward, we debriefed the students. They were abuzz with excitement. They were excited because they were beginning to see the bad arguments *for themselves*. In fact, before our debriefing one of the students handed me a sheet of paper where he had listed a number of the fallacious arguments of our atheist presenters. Do you think this student will be shaken his first semester in college when his atheistic professor attempts to rip apart his belief in God? No way.

#### **SNAPSHOT #2:**

During the trip, we discovered a stark contrast between the atheists and the students we encountered on Berkeley's campus. Several of our afternoons were spent conducting "conversational surveys" on campus.



We used a series of questions on religious and moral matters as a springboard into dialogue.

Our group discovered that the vast majority of students surveyed had never given these questions much thought. Not one student surveyed offered our group a serious intellectual challenge.

It was clear most Berkeley students had been infected by the relativism so pervasive in culture. Religious truth is relative to individuals or cultures. Moral truth is relative, as well. Thus many students seemed to be characterized by a "whatever beliefism" – believe whatever you want because it is all relative anyway. Given this, it is easy to see why those students are not motivated to think carefully through

religious and moral questions. At the end of the day it does not really matter what you believe regarding “personal and subjective” things like religion and morality.

This experience was the perfect opportunity to impress upon our students that Christianity is total truth – the truth about all of reality and not just a matter of personal preferences. Christianity makes claims about the way the world really is. Therefore, we ought to give our *best thinking* to religious and moral matters. If we get these things wrong, there are real consequences. In addition, we were able to encourage our students with the fact that they had done more reflection on these matters than 95% of the people they will ever encounter.

### **SNAPSHOT #3:**

The final day of our trip was unforgettable. After five full days of rigorous activity we wanted to spend the last day building into and encouraging our students. What better way to do this than spend an afternoon at the home of Dr. Phillip Johnson.

Phillip Johnson is the man responsible for spear-heading the Intelligent Design movement, a movement in the throes of a fierce cultural battle with an evolutionary worldview entrenched in the major structures and thought forms of our society. Dr. Johnson has given a good fifteen years of his life to this particular battle and God has used his efforts mightily. Sitting before us was a life given to the cause of Christ and whose impact will be felt long after he has passed from this earthly existence.

You could hear a pin drop as Dr. Johnson spoke. Even after suffering two recent strokes, his mind is still sharp. Not only that, but his tender heart for the Lord was just as evident. I have never seen a group of high schoolers so quiet, so reverent. Clearly they understood the great honor it was to be in this man’s home and more importantly, to be in the presence of someone who has faithfully served the Creator with immeasurable impact.

Our students did not leave the encounter with Phillip Johnson unmoved.

We were so touched by our time with Dr. Johnson that I want to give you a glimpse into this man’s contribution to the Kingdom. If you sign up for our Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) program I’ll send you three of Dr. Johnson’s books, as well as a great lecture on CD (EFT is a convenient way to have your monthly donations automatically withdrawn from your checking account or charged to your credit card each month. Simply fill out the enclosed blue card).



“This trip really has changed my life. Never before have I really and truly questioned my faith. After all, who would want to? It’s a big step out of your comfort bubble to question everything you thought to be true. But I did...

Ever heard the phrase curiosity killed the cat? Throw it out the window! Curiosity is helping to build my faith in a way I never thought possible before. I now have reasons and research to back up my case for Christ. Sure, there is still a lot of research that I am going to do but what I have found now has really opened my eyes to the things we have accepted as blind faith. Thank you...for helping me answer all of my questions.”

*Krista, high school junior*

My heart is so deeply grateful for you. Yes, you. Only because of your faithful prayer and financial support was the Berkeley Mission possible. And God’s Spirit used this experience to transform not only the hearts but also the minds of the next generation of Christ-followers. So, on behalf of them, thank you.

If you haven’t yet become a financial partner in this work, please consider it this very moment. Through this partnership God can use you to touch the lives of young people for years and years to come. There is no investment more rewarding than an investment in the Kingdom of God.

Humbled by the Spirit’s work in young lives,

Brett Kunkle  
*STR Student Impact*