Berkeley in the Sixties

In 1973, after serving with Campus Crusade for some twelve years, the Lord burdened my heart with a vision for a new kind of ministry.

At that time I had the responsibility for the oversight of several hundred campus staff in the southwestern U.S. As you know, these were turbulent times on campus. . .and especially so along the west coast.

I often found myself in some strange and scary places in those days:

- *Like speaking to 3,000 radicals from the free speech platform on the steps of Sproul Hall at Berkeley…*
- *Or dialoguing with Mario Savio and Bettina Apthecker (her father, Herbert, was the head of the Communist Party-U.S.A. at the time) about the claims of Jesus Christ…*
- *Or being present to observe Angela Davis and Stokeley Carmichael whip student audiences into a literal frenzy at U.C.L.A. and San Jose State…*
- *Or debating Madalyn Murray O'Hair at SMU on the existence of God…*
- *Or sharing the gospel with hippies and "druggies" on Telegraph Avenue, in the People's Park, and across the bay in Haight-Ashbury…*
- *Or trying to sleep while Timothy Leary and his entourage had a rousing, all-night LSD "Love-in" in the motel room next door to mine!*

Someone has said, "The best thing about the 'good old days' is that they're gone!" Most of us feel that way about the sixties. We are glad that the Black Panthers, the SDS, the Weathermen, Woodstock, "Hair," the Age of Aquarius, the student riots, the communes, the protest songs, the Vietnam War crisis, the long hair and buttons proclaiming "Make love,

not war," are with us no longer.

But after personally visiting (for ministry of some sort) over 170 campuses during the past 30 years, I am here to tell you that we are still losing the battle on the college campus in these days. There is actually more hostility toward Christianity and traditional values in 2003 than we faced in the late sixties!

Part of the reason is that the "new morality" of the counter-culture which startled so many of us in the sixties has become the "morality of personal preference" for most in the new millenium!

And many of those bright young radicals just got a haircut, slipped back into corporate America and academia to continue their revolution in more quiet, subtle, and dangerous ways.

WE DID NOT RE-ABSORB THEM; THEY ABSORBED US!

The truth is that today on many campuses, under the guise of "academic freedom," there is a doctrinal/political creed demanding such conformity that its opponents—be they faculty, university administrators, visiting lecturers, or students—are publicly ostracized, hooted down, and even attacked!

In reality, an inquisition of sorts is taking place right now across academia, and its high priests are dogmatic, unbending students and their mentors who insist upon having the curriculum and the world only as they desire it.

And they are committed to a policy of silencing, pushing aside, and even crushing any and all who would dare to oppose them.

In 1973 as I sought to minister to college students amidst the

foment described above, I came to a deep conviction that the battle on the campus, rather than being nearly over, had really just begun. And that is the primary reason we first began Probe Ministries. . . to make sure the Christian viewpoint would continue to have an honest hearing in the university arena, and to be sure it was available for serious consideration by searching students.

Many tens of thousands have had that opportunity on their campus, in their classrooms, and at their church since Probe's inception in 1973. And we have been able since to take the research and interaction gained from that crucible of ministry experience and share it with millions of others through conferences, literature, the media, and now, perhaps the most potent tool for world-wide impact, the Internet!

Jimmy Williams, Founder
Probe Ministries

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