

As CBFNC's Campus Minister at Western Carolina University (WCU) and alumnus from the class of '95, I know the risk-taking mindset of those who thrive at this school. For most, home is way over the mountains to the east. If you're going to succeed, you're going to study and you're going to build a new community.

Around four o'clock on Thursday afternoons, I'm usually heading from UNC-Asheville to WCU with a car full of food for our meal before worship. As I drive along, I can picture what some of my students are doing. I can see Bryson Shannon and Darren Beebe, the two students who lead our cook team and men's discipleship group, playing Foosball next to the kitchen. They are hoping I'll be a little late so they have time for just one more game.

Bryson, an Engineering major, also serves as President of the National Society of Black Engineers. Darren, a History major, has served as President of our Baptist Student Fellowship (BSF) and recently affirmed a call to ministry after serving as a student.church intern this past summer. Bryson will soon begin his master's program at UNC-Charlotte, while Darren starts at Gardner-Webb's School of Divinity. They are graduating in December, so who can fault them for this small diversion?

## the heart of the Gospel

by David Stone, CBFNC Campus Minister for UNC-Asheville and Western Carolina University



I could name several other friendships among students of diverse ethnic backgrounds—students who met during one of our meetings, at a local church, or in their residence halls. WCU's BSF is one of the more diverse campus ministry groups in Baptist life. Native-American, African-American, Hispanic-American, Hmong-American, and Indian-American students are building community alongside those whose ancestry can be traced back to the British Isles. In the past few years, I have seen diversity grow within the BSF community as well as in the leadership at UNC-Asheville and WCU.

What I read in the news about race relations in our country and the world does not encourage me. What does encourage me, however, is the community among college students in our CBFNC-affiliated college ministries and their willingness to take the Bible to heart, believing Peter's testimony in Acts where he declares,

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right" (Acts 10:34-35). Our students are getting the heart of the Gospel when it comes to acceptance and looking outside their own culture. The Christian community I see displayed through them, I believe, is what the New Testament was trying to convey concerning the growth of the early church.

How freeing it must have been during the formation of the early church to hear the words like those written in the letter to the Galatians, "In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27). How freeing it can be to choose to live those words today, adhering to the promise that in Christ all racial barriers, all class barriers, and gender barriers are broken.

Baptists have a great history of ministry on college campuses in North Carolina, not only as a mission field to reach students but also as a mission field to promote the spiritual growth. For decades, Baptist efforts have been guiding college students as they build a new faith community on their campus, encouraging them to risk and see that God's Kingdom is bigger than they imagined, addressing their hot topics and issues, and preparing young adults to better lead the future of the church.

Your support of CBFNC Collegiate Ministry helps carry out this great work. Thank you!