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# Called to Witness: Ethnography of an Evangelical Christian Camp

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## **Called to Witness: Ethnography of an Evangelical Christian Camp**

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Evangelical Christian organizations have a vibrant presence in many American college campuses today. This paper provides an ethnographic –based study on a week-long training program organized by an evangelical campus ministry in a retreat camp. Building “witnessing communities” in college campuses is stated as the core goal of the program. Through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of printed material, I give an overview of the training program and discuss its meant to witness as a community. Given the diverse ethnic and denominational background of the students, I argue that having a shared vision of witnessing can help to ease some of the challenges brought by the multifaceted diversity. For instance, minor theological disagreements and the controversy of ethnic-specific ministry appear insignificant next to the “Great Commission” to spread the Gospel. Also, I examine the means used to motivate students to become better witnesses. The emphasis on informal, peer-to-peer influence manifests their conception of witnessing, which requires a Christian to build meaningful relationships with nonbelievers with the intention of demonstrating his/her faith, not merely the verbal act of evangelizing. The training camp can be characterized as a venue where consumers of religion are invited to deepen their commitment by becoming suppliers, yet the boundary between a religious consumer and a supplier is more subtle than it seems.