

"A PIECE OF GRAVEL IN MY SHOE"

Mike Compton



That's how I described **Julia Robinson**, one of our Lightbearers board members, **TO HER FACE**. Yesiree...I've sure got a way with the fairer sex (or, more accurately, I've sure got a ways to go!!).

Now, before you rush to any well-justified judgments about my behavior, let me explain my own impartial and generally accurate side of the story.

From the earliest days of this God-given ministry idea that the Lord has let us name "**Lightbearers**", it has always packed **a one-two punch**.

One is the establishment of a permanent endowment for global missions through real estate, i.e., rental houses in university towns. The revenue source is both renewable (college kids come to such towns every year) and recession-proof (if the economy—nationally or yours personally) takes a hit then giving to churches and ministries and missions might drop off; but you know what does not drop off...giving to landlords. Mommy and daddy are always going to come-off-the-hip to pay rent for little

Billy and Sally. As an aside, let me say that how mommy and daddy spend those rent dollars is entirely up to them. They can flush them down the rent rat hole to line the pockets of some fat-cat heathen slum lord, or they can invest those same dollars in expanding God's Kingdom throughout the earth (I judge no one). But spend those dollars they most assuredly will.

Two is the intentional use of those rent houses both to shape the Christian character of residents and to cast a vision for them of God's heart for His world. Christian kids living together while in college is nothing new. Most such living arrangements are at least moderately moral. What is unusual is for those students to live together intentionally in a residential discipleship and ministry community. Thus, the Lightbearers Houses.

Enter Julia Robinson. She joined our Board of Directors in 2003 and what drew her to us was the discipleship component of our ministry. What I failed to mention to her was that I was only giving lip-service to our own discipleship of the student residents at the time as I was having way too much fun trekking through mountains, jungles, deserts and war zones to find projects for the ministry to fund with donor contributions and student rent monies. Any discipleship was being "out-sourced" to our vari-

ous church and para-church partners.

Well...Julia simply would not let it go. Over the next couple of years she arranged for me to interview a couple in North Carolina, as well as couples from Ohio and Oklahoma. And she kept praying. And asking me how it was going. Finally I felt obliged to tell her (in Christian love, of course) that she was like a piece of gravel in my shoe and I guessed I was going to have to sit down long enough like a kid on a Saturday running around in his laced-up-for-the-day **Chuck Taylor Converse All-Stars**, unlace them, shake the gravel out and lace them back up before he could get back to having fun.

Thanks to Julia's persistence we brought the issue to the Board which affirmed officially that a Director of Residential Discipleship as a full-time staff position was a ministry priority. And she kept praying.

And her prayers brought Andrew and Ashley Brill our way. When Andrew was given just the most skeletal outline of what was desired he wrote a position description and a philosophy of ministry that were both so very good and so very spot-on that I have since claimed their authorship for myself.

Thank you Lord, for Andrew and Ashley, for Julia... and for gravel!!!

LIGHTBEARERS

M I N I S T R I E S

Fayetteville, Arkansas



September 2007, Volume 13, Issue 9

NEW DIRECTOR OF RESIDENTIAL DISCIPLESHIP

Andrew Brill

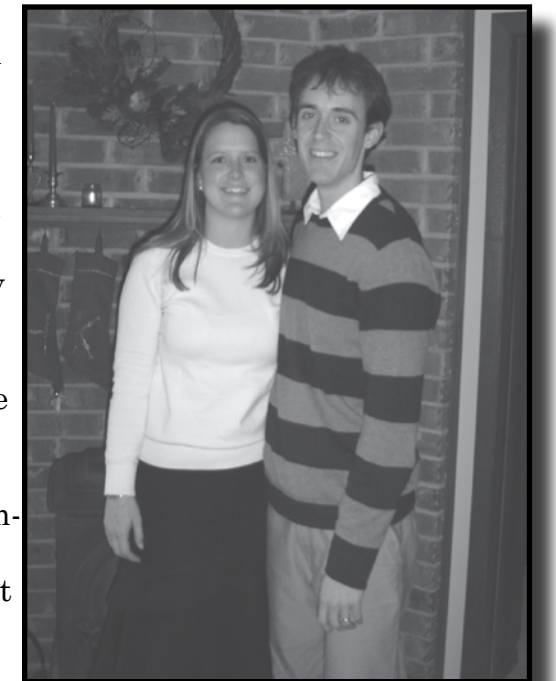
Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings! After two great years in Boston, countless hours of conversation, and a lot of prayer, Ashley and I have decided to return back to Arkansas and take a job with Lightbearers Ministries as Director of Residential Discipleship.

The Past

Working with Lightbearers represents the next step on the path where God has led us. The ministry weds two of our great passions—rela-

tional ministry and global missions. Individually and corporately, we have engaged in student ministry with a particular emphasis on working life-on-life with students. Meanwhile, God has gradually yet forcefully grown in us a passion to see His Kingdom advance around the world. We have taken the Perspectives course, served on the missions committee of our Cambridge, MA, church, and most significantly, we spent six months in 2005 serving in East Africa.



The Present

So what will I do? What does this job look like? At the core, I'll be designing and implementing a residential discipleship program

for the students who live in the Lightbearers houses at the various campuses. To that end, I will recruit students to participate in this discipleship program, raise up individuals to serve as discipleship coordinators in each property, lead overseas missions trips, and identify opportunities for future growth. Finally, I'll serve as both teacher and counselor, helping these students to incorporate their faith in Jesus into all aspects of their lives while also working to



California House (U of A)

**"I want to know more about this Jesus who healed me."
(A testimony from the TU House)**



happened. 'I want to know more about this Jesus who healed me,' she said.

Susi called her parents in China and told them about the prayer and the heal-

ing. Their response? "What is prayer?" After prayer was explained, the mom said, "It was probably the medicine the doctor gave you." Yet Susi remembered that she hadn't even taken the prescription she was given! Her parents had no place in their upbringing for this type of news. They were struck dumb with no Communist answer to refute their daughters' experience.

On Palm Sunday, Susi gave her life to Christ! Many of her new brothers and sisters in Christ poured into her life after her conversion, and her faith increased significantly during her stay at the Lightbearers' house. She has since moved to the Philadelphia area where she is actively involved in an exciting Chinese church.

A Lightbearers' property is an amazing tool, laden with fruit inside (discipleship) and out (missions)!

On March 3rd of this year, Susi, a fun-loving 19 year old from China arrived on campus at the University of Tulsa. By the hand of God, she was placed in our Lightbearers' house under the care of our ministry partner. Here's an excerpt from our ministry partner's newsletter recounting her story.

When she first arrived in the U.S., Susi was having some serious digestive problems. When she went to the doctor she was told surgery would be needed if her condition didn't improve in a few days. Understandably very scared, Susi came to two Christian girls living in the Lightbearers' house wondering what she could do. The Christian girls did the only thing they knew to do: pray for her healing. Miraculously, within a day, Susi was healed and didn't need the surgery! From that moment on, Susi couldn't stop telling everyone about this amazing thing that

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Missouri State House

develop in them an awareness of missions work around the world. This combination of residential discipleship and missions mobilization is unique in college ministry and will challenge me to rely on God in ways I cannot yet imagine.

You've heard the saying "Think globally, act locally." That's what I'll be doing for Lightbearers. With an eye towards the worldwide advancement of God's Kingdom, I'll share life with



OU House

individual college students, as we challenge each other to follow Jesus with growing passion and wisdom.

The Future

Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields,

that they are white for harvest." College campuses and the 10/40 window are both fields which need laborers to reap God's harvest. Students in the Lightbearers houses are voluntarily devoting time, energy, and money to learning what it means to follow Jesus in the 21st century. They want to be equipped and mobilized to care for the spiritual and physical needs of people around the world. They want to know what it means to be a Christian and an accountant, a teacher, a social worker, a doctor, a father, or a mother. I have the incredible opportunity of helping them answer some of these questions.

Leadership guru John Maxwell says that influence is the essence of leadership. What better way to influence students than by engaging them in life-on-life training—going beyond a once a week Bible study to deal with struggles and victories day in and day out? I also recognize, however, that much of the fruit from this work will not appear for years or even decades. When students learn to devote their lives to following Jesus and recognize the importance of overseas missions, they are transformed, and that transformation impacts them twenty, thirty, and forty years down the road. In particular, they reproduce like-minded believers for the rest of their lives.

Take thirty college students and disciple them. If each of those thirty students in turn disciple one student every four years (the length of college attendance), and those students continue the work, in fifty years, you've raised up 122,880 men and women dedicated to the glory of God throughout the world. Just imagine what 122,880 could do to that end!

The Invitation

Please contact me at andrew_brill@yahoo.com if you would like to hear more about Lightbearers discipleship ministry or discuss ways in which you could be involved. Perhaps you know of churches or college ministries I should get to know on campuses (either campuses where Lightbearers already exists or campuses where we can grow). You can also learn more at www.lightbearersministries.org. If you are particularly drawn to this area of Lightbearers ministry and would like to support financially, you can note "Brill Support" on a check made out to Lightbearers. Thank you for taking part in advancing God's Kingdom on college campuses and around the world.



Leverett Complex (U of A)