When God Shows Up
On Campus

the miraculous birth
of InterVarsity in the
Rocky Mountains

by Don Everts
Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord. —Psalm 102.18
Dedicated to Gene and Gerri Thomas: for their faithfulness in the beginning, for their steadfastness throughout the years, and for never tiring of telling God’s story.
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Before the Story

The summer of 1944 was a warm one. And Gene Thomas, walking the streets of Philadelphia, stopped to wipe the sweat from his forehead.

Gene was nineteen years old and had just been released from the Army. A torn tear duct was all it took for the native Coloradan to be released from service. “A disabled veteran!” he thought to himself with a smile as he and his friend, who had also been discharged, continued to walk along the streets of downtown Philadelphia. He had time to kill before his train would take him back to Greeley, Colorado where he would get back to his studies for the fall semester.
Seeing a bookstore on his right Gene asked his friend if they could duck in. Gene inhaled deeply as they stepped into the store – he had always been a reader and had always loved books. Growing up he had read every book in the public library in rural Grover, Colorado, and had even taken to borrowing and reading books that local families had in their own private collections.

In the middle of the front room there was a large display of Bibles. Some of them were leather-bound and Gene paused at the table to admire the new Bibles. The pages were made of India paper and the covers were a beautiful black leather. Gene lingered at the table. He had money to spend and had never added a Bible to his own collection of books… so, shrugging his shoulders, Gene picked one of the Bibles up and bought it. He loved the feel of the leather cover, but he had no intentions of ever reading what was written on the India paper inside it.

At this same time back in Denver, Colorado in a tiny apartment on 14th and Pennsylvania an elderly woman was struggling to stand up. Mrs. Frances Dey, a retired missionary, had been on her knees in her bedroom, praying for longer than she had intended. Her knees always gave her a fuss after such prolonged kneeling, which happened often.

Mrs. Dey had spent her life as a missionary in Israel, but now that she was back home in Denver enjoying her
retirement, God kept bringing her heart to the universities in the state. So, Mrs. Dey started working with international students at the University of Denver. And as she went about her days, God would give her a burden to pray for all of the students in the state, on all of the campuses. She prayed fervently for them. She felt God wanted her to intercede for them, and so she did.

She knew that because of the general Christian fear of secular campuses that there was really no Christian witness on campus. It was widely assumed that Christian students would attend Christian universities, and the idea of seeing the secular campus as a mission opportunity for churches or ministries had not begun to occur to many people yet. Knowing this context Mrs. Dey asked God if he, himself, would do something on the campuses. She begged him to show up, to send his spirit onto the campuses, into the dorms, into the classrooms and student unions and… do something!

As it turned out, God did show up on campus. God answered Mrs. Dey’s prayers. This is the story of his answer.
In his dorm room on the Colorado State College of Education campus, Gene sat on his bed looking over his class schedule for his Junior year. “That little stint in the army didn’t slow me down too much,” Gene thought to himself.

It was a Sunday in August 1944 and the fall semester was going to begin the very next day.

A few months had passed since Gene was released from the Army, but he thought back on the experience often. It had been quite an adventure, exposing Gene to people he never would have been around otherwise. An education unto itself, Gene thought, as he reflected on his eye-opening time in the Army.
He also couldn’t stop thinking about his discharge. Right after his torn tear duct was diagnosed his company had been shipped out. Later that year they landed in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge and only three men in his company had made it out alive. And those three were paralyzed. Gene shook his head as he thought of it again.

After enjoying the East Coast with his friend (they had toured through New York and D.C. as well as Philadelphia) he had come back to pick up his college education where he had left off before joining the Army: at the Colorado State College of Education (now called the University of Northern Colorado, UNC.)

Gene looked down at his schedule and nodded. It’d be a busy semester, but that’s how he did things. Going to school during the summers, taking a heavy load of classes… even though he was triple-majored in Music, Education, and Business he was
still going to finish college a bit early.

Gene put his schedule down and lay back on his bed. There was one thing that still bothered Gene about his education: he realized he had never read the Bible. As an avid reader Gene knew how prevalent Biblical imagery was in much of Western literature and history, and it frustrated him that he knew so little about it. He wanted to read the Bible to become more fully able to engage in conversations about literature. But he had always avoided the Bible. He associated it with the church, which was an institution he had never admired and rarely gave any thought to.

He had tried church for a while as a child in Grover. One of Gene’s trusted teachers and mentors, coach Roger Menke, had been asked by a local church to teach a class Sunday mornings. The leaders of the church were interested in getting youth into the church and thought Roger could pull it off. He wasn’t a regular church attendee, but as a coach and teacher who had just come back from a tour around the world, drove a new Lincoln Zephyr around town, and wore cashmere jackets they figured he could bring the youth in. Which he did.

Roger started each meeting by reading the “golden verse” for the day, and then switched the Bible for a copy of Sherlock Holmes and read mystery stories to the youth. Gene quickly fell in love with Sherlock Holmes, and
dismissed the church. “The church knows how to pick good books, but they must not have anything else to say,” he figured.

It didn’t help that the small local church was usually only attended by one elderly man and the rest elderly women. That never sat quite right in young Gene’s mind, nor did the fact that the church tried to get the town’s pool hall closed. Gene knew the local pool hall was a place where people got friendship and counseling. And so he opposed the church’s move to get it closed. The church folks didn’t like Gene much after he came to the defense of the pool hall. And the feeling was mutual.

And it was that feeling that had kept Gene from ever reading the Bible, though he knew much of the imagery and metaphors in literature would open up more if he were to read the thing. He was well read and knew that much of European and English literature was profoundly influenced by the Bible. And yet he had never actually read it.

“I think I’ll do it,” Gene thought to himself as he fell asleep on the eve of the fall semester. “I’m going to read the Bible, find out what it says. And if I gather some other guys who’ve never read it before, it’ll be even that much more interesting…”
Gene looked at himself in the mirror. He was wearing his tuxedo and wanted to make sure everything was in order. He was waiting in the lobby of a large sorority, his date still primping herself up in her room. Gene checked his watch and sat down on a couch. He thumbed through the magazines on the coffee table and one magazine in particular caught his attention.
It was a very modern and attractive magazine called HIS. Thumbing through it Gene was surprised – it was some sort of religious magazine, published by a group called InterVarsity. Every religious magazine he’d ever seen was plain and unattractive. This one had appealing artwork, though, and some of the articles actually looked interesting.

He stopped on one page and looked at an advertisement for a Bible study on the gospel of Mark. Gene leaned closer and read about the study. It was written by Jane Hollingsworth and Gene thought, “Now this might actually help us if we ever do meet to read the Bible.”

Gene took out a piece of paper and copied down the ordering information. He was tucking the piece of paper into his tuxedo pocket when his date started descending the stairs.

Taking his black leather-bound Bible from his bookcase, Gene glanced around his room. “Let’s see… Harry’s bringing the drinks, Tom reserved the room…” Gene grabbed Discovering the Gospel of Mark by Jane Hollingsworth from his desk and headed out his door. (Excerpts from the introduction to this 1943 booklet can be found at the end of
this story.) It was a Tuesday night and he was about to read the Bible with other guys from the dorm who had never read it before.

Gene had gone around his dorm knocking on doors for the last two weeks. He knew many of the folks in the dorm and his conversations had been simple and natural when students opened their doors. Eventually he got around to asking his question: “Have you ever read the Bible?”

It was pretty simple. If they said “no” Gene tried to persuade them to join his group. If they said “yes” he told them they couldn’t be a part of the group.

In the end there were fifteen guys from the all men’s dorm who were interested. The plan was to meet Tuesday nights at seven in one of the dorm conference rooms. And this Tuesday was the first one. And Gene was going to read the Bible.

He didn’t expect to get anything particular from the study, but he was finally going to add the Bible to his list of books read. And doing this around snacks and drinks with a bunch of guys from the dorm who had also never read the Bible was bound to be great fun.
Tom leaned back in his chair and considered the unfamiliar book in his hands, “So, where do we start?” He opened to the first chapter after the table of contents. “Genesis, huh? In the beginning…”

“No.” Gene smiled and waved the little study guide in his hand. “I sent away for this little guide. It’s for a book called Mark. I figured we’d just start there and walk through this study guide. What do you guys think?” There were nods all around so Gene glanced at the first few pages of the study guide as the other fifteen guys in the room tried to find where Mark was in their Bibles. “Here it is…”

The evening passed quickly. Quickly, and with no lack of intriguing conversation. Mark, it turned out, was all about this character Jesus. And Jesus, it turned out, was a fascinating man. As the school chimes went off outside the darkened window Gene realized it was already eleven at night. “Hey guys, let’s call it a night. Same time and

![The 41 page booklet from 1943](image)
Gene pulled on his gloves as he walked out into the cold Denver night. Winter had come with force in Colorado and Gene was down in Denver singing at a convention. He was often able to make money singing at various events, often in downtown Denver. He was done now and it was already cold and dark out, but Gene decided to make one stop before heading back to Greeley.

Gene and his friends had been meeting for a couple months now - and they were having a great time discovering what Mark had to say about Jesus. Every single one of them had gotten personally interested in Jesus as they read through and discussed Mark together. Most of them had had almost no religious upbringing at all and they loved the stories about Jesus. Mark was full of these stories, and they were all surprising and thought provoking.

So the fifteen students discussed Jesus as a person: what he was like and how he treated people. They all loved the fact that he tore into religious people. And they were fascinated by how kind Jesus was to people who were looked down on by everyone else in their culture.
They also noticed how the people around Jesus treated him. In particular they were intrigued by the wide variety of people in the gospels who were attracted to Jesus, and were amazed at how different kinds of people enjoyed Jesus. When they read about all of the sinners flocking to Jesus they puzzled over this and considered it deeply. “What kind of man must Jesus have been if people who were the exact opposite of him wanted to be with him? Do we know anybody that’s like that? And why were the poor so attracted to him?”

Spurred on by his growing interest in understanding Jesus, Gene had decided to stop by the Rescue Mission in downtown Denver before heading back to Greeley. Gene often passed the Rescue Mission and had grown curious. He knew it was a Christian organization and that some of the poor, outcast folks in Denver were hearing messages from the Bible. Gene was fascinated to find out what this was like.

Before the meal was handed out to the group of homeless men, the director of the mission got up and preached. He held a large Bible in his hand and proceeded to tear into the tired, bedraggled looking men who were gathered for the free meal and a place to sleep. He told them, with volume, about how bad off they were.

This confused Gene. The director seemed to be looking down on these men, and yet Jesus hadn’t looked
down on anyone. In fact, Jesus taught that if you so much as hate someone, you are really murdering them. This had become a compelling point for Gene (who had grown up a self-proclaimed elitist.)

After the sermon Gene got up and started mingling with the men. He asked one man what he thought of Jesus. The man shrugged his drooping shoulders and answered in a tired voice, “Oh, I don’t think Jesus is for me. I’m just too bad for him to save.” The man went on to explain how he had murdered a man once, and was clearly beyond saving.

After a few similar conversations Gene walked up to the director of the mission, “Excuse me, sir. Do you realize the kind of men you were talking to just now?”

The older gentleman looked at Gene thoughtfully. “Why do you ask?”

Gene shrugged his shoulders. “It’s just that the sermon you gave seems like the kind of sermon that would be best suited for a church, for religious people who think they’re all right. These people already know something’s wrong with them, and they could use some good news. It seems that’s how Jesus approached people like this.”

Soon enough Gene was on his way back up to Greeley, his mind churning with the images and stories from
the gospel of Mark, his soul haunted by the extraordinary figure of Jesus.

Gene looked up from the Bible he held in his hands at Tom who was sitting at the end of the table. It was Tuesday night and the fifteen men were just getting started on the next section in Mark. Gene looked at Tom with a puzzled look. “You’re going to do what?”

All eyes were on Tom. “Well, I really like Jesus. I like what he teaches and I think I’d like to move in the direction of paying more attention to what he teaches and… following him.” Tom had a serious look on his face. He didn’t seem to be kidding.

Gene just shook his head. “No way. Not me. Don’t you see how Jesus demands so much of his followers? It’s like he wants total control, he wants all of them. I like Jesus too, but there’s no way I’m going to follow him. I have plans for my life.”

Gene looked around at the others at the table. “Listen, I set two goals for myself in the fourth grade: to go
to Harvard, and to make a million dollars by the time I’m thirty.”

All the eyes around the table went wide as each man did some internal calculations: most jobs paid fifteen cents an hour, so a million dollars...

“I want him, you guys.” Tom was nodding and looking down at the table. “Even if it takes all of me, I want to follow him.”

Two more boxes should do it,” Gene thought to himself as he packed up the last few things in his small dorm room.

What an experience college had been! It was June 1946 and with the end of his Senior year only two days away Gene’s head was full of images and memories from the last two years. But few of these memories had to do with being student body president, singing at conventions and other vocal performances, or starting to teach college courses as a senior. He mostly thought of the looming figure of Jesus.

During his Junior year, Gene had started that Tuesday night group to read the Bible, and his life had never been the same. The group itself was full of energy: Tom’s
confession to the group was only the beginning. Every couple weeks another student would announce to the group that he had found he really believed in Jesus. And every time Gene clenched his jaw. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to read about and talk about Jesus – he was so fascinating and perplexing and witty and… brilliant. Gene was just as taken with him as the rest of the guys.

In fact, Gene had even gone one day to the bookstore in downtown Greeley and ordered “every book ever written by C.S. Lewis.” The lady behind the counter looked a bit shocked, but Gene persisted, so she placed the order. Gene had been reading a recent issue of HIS magazine that mentioned C.S. Lewis and he wanted to find out more about him. Several weeks later when the bookstore called and told Gene they had “several boxes” waiting for him, it almost broke Gene financially. But he practically inhaled the books, soaking up what Lewis had to say about Jesus and the Christian faith.

Gene had become so involved in studying about Jesus that towards the end of his Junior year he had even formed a youth group at a local church, studying Mark with the youth and introducing them to various Christian authors from England (including C.S. Lewis.) Gene continued leading this group through his Senior year and was so enthusiastic in his leadership of the group that he had been
elected president of the denomination’s state-wide youth organization!

Gene loved talking with others about Jesus, just as much as he loved reading about Jesus on Tuesday nights with his friends from the dorm.

But on those Tuesday nights Gene had read, along with everyone else, the passages where Jesus makes it plain and clear that his followers were to make him the Lord of their life, were to follow his words and teachings no matter what the consequences. It was like he wanted to be king over his followers. But Gene had plans. As much as he had grown to look up to Jesus, and as consumed as he was by the upside-down teachings of Jesus, and as perplexed and thrilled as he was at how Jesus treated people… Gene just didn’t want to hand over his life.

Gene chuckled a bit to himself as he packed up the last box. Several of the students in their group had become Christians… while the guy who started the group in the first place wouldn’t dare make such a decision.

Gene stood up, surveyed his belongings, and contemplated the coming months: graduation in a couple days, finishing up an independent study during July… Just in time, Gene thought, as he picked up the copy of HIS
magazine he had in his room. He looked again at the advertisement that had caught his eye a few weeks before.

It was for a month-long InterVarsity camp called Campus in the Woods. The camp was to be held in August on Fairview Island in the Lake of Bays area north of Toronto, Canada. And Gene had decided to go up there and hear more about Jesus and the Christian faith.
Gene walked quickly out of the dining hall and scanned the crowd around him. He had been at Campus in the Woods for only a few days and was already full of questions, and searching for answers. All around him were college students from the US and Canada, and he scanned the crowd looking for that one medical student from Ohio that someone had pointed out to him.

Gene had loved the camp so far. Sitting and listening to Martyn Lloyd-Jones (famed preacher from Westminster Chapel in London) and Stacey Woods (InterVarsity’s General Secretary) and Carl Henry (first editor of Christianity Today) and Joe Bayly (editor of HIS magazine) speak from the Bible was satisfying and thought provoking. They all spoke of Jesus. And Gene, leather Bible in his lap, soaked up everything they said.

But Gene still wasn’t sure about following Jesus. What was it really like to become one of his followers? And
how did it feel? And was it worth the cost? Gene had asked around to find someone who had recently become a Christian and was told he should talk with Thad, a medical student from Ohio.

Gene scanned the crowd looking for Thad and finally saw him. Gene rushed over, “Hi, my name’s Gene. I was wondering if we could talk for a minute.” Thad looked at Gene and nodded. “Sure, no problem.” The two sat down at a nearby table and after introducing themselves, Gene summed up his questions: “So, what’s different now that you’re a Christian?”

“What’s different? Oh, lots. I don’t smoke, I don’t drink or go to the movies anymore…”

“What?” Gene looked hurt. “Listen, don’t fool with me. I really am asking serious and important questions. I really want to know what’s different since you became a Christian.”

“But I’m not fooling with you.” Thad looked confused.

So did Gene. “Are you kidding me? There’s got to be more to it than that. I mean, I’ve read what Jesus said and taught and… and it seems to me that following him would cause major changes in a person’s life.”
Thad looked even more confused. “What are you talking about, Gene?”

“Well, like when Jesus says it’s a bad trade to give your soul but gain all the riches of the universe. If each human soul is more valuable than the entire cosmos… well, it seems to me that would change how you relate to people, how you treat all of those around you. To be honest, I’ve been something of an elitist all my life. But it seems that becoming a Christian would change your whole outlook, making it impossible to look down on others.”

Thad looked down at the table for a moment and then met Gene’s gaze again. “You know, I’ve never thought about that.” Gene and Thad talked all that afternoon, and continued to meet and talk for the rest of the month.

In fact, Gene sat down and talked with lots of people during that month up in Canada. He spoke with everyone he could about Jesus and the Christian faith. And while talking with these students he heard stories of groups of students on campuses around the US and Canada – InterVarsity “chapters” that studied the Bible and talked about how following Jesus might impact their lives as students.

Gene liked the idea of InterVarsity chapters so much that he pulled Stacey Woods aside after one of the last
Photos from Campus in the Woods (HIS Magazine)

1. THE CHAMPS. Ping pong contest winners Wilf Bauman, University of Toronto, and Edith Gooding, McGill University

2. THE STUDENT. Jim Martin catches up on some homework after a strenuous morning of lectures on the inadequacies of Kant.

3. THE LODGE. Contents include a dining hall (capacity, 100), lecture hall, fireplace and lounge. Guest rooms are upstairs.

4. THE DOCK. Here mail and groceries arrive, canoes and rowboats check in and out, swimmers swim and loafers loaf.

5. THE MAIDENS. Barely visible behind them is the new dorm housing 34 girls.

6. BUSY BEES. Lu Palm and Emma Shaffer carry a box of leaves on campus day.
meetings. “Hey, Stacey. I am going to start some of these IV chapters up on campuses back in Colorado.”

Stacey looked at Gene with a questioning look and smiled. Stacey said some encouraging words, but Gene could tell Stacey was only humoring him. “I guess it does sound unlikely,” Gene thought to himself as he went back to pack his bags. But he knew what he was going to do.

It was September 1946 in Colorado and the Aspens outside were waving their bright yellow leaves in the chilly wind. The sound of the wind outside was all that Gene heard in the large, empty high school auditorium. He sat alone thinking, fighting with himself.

He had been back from Campus in the Woods for a couple months now, and it had been a thrilling, dizzying couple months. He started teaching at Loveland High School in September and immediately signed up to work with some student clubs. Gene was interested in talking with the high school students about Christianity and knew working with clubs would be a natural way to do this.

Soon the principal had him working with multiple clubs that had Gene talking with lots of students.
And then Gene had started going back to visit the UNC campus at night. He loved the idea of groups of students reading the Bible together and so when he got off work at the high school at three in the afternoon he’d get in his new black Plymouth coupe and drive to Greeley.

Gene knew various UNC students from his years as a student, from debate and music clubs, and even from the youth group he had led at that local church. Many of these contacts lived in the dorms and he went and met with them, describing what it could be like to study Mark together. These folks invited their friends from the dorms and soon a group of students was studying Mark together, following
Jane Hollingsworth’s study guide, and being surprised by the portrait of Jesus they found in Mark.

Gene was often on campus until ten or eleven at night. Soon Gene started driving to Ft. Collins on Wednesday nights as well. Things took off like wildfire there at CSU (Colorado A&M eventually changed its name to Colorado State University) as dozens of students became interested in hearing more about Christianity and talking with other students about Jesus. Gene loved Wednesday and Thursday nights, and couldn’t help from grinning as he drove home late at night. It wasn’t long before he was driving to a different campus each night of the week!

First year high school teacher, helping out with clubs at the high school, spending his evenings on campus with students – yes, it had been a dizzying couple months. And yet what was foremost on Gene’s mind as he sat in the empty auditorium was the question he fought with daily: would he let Jesus be Lord of his life? Gene often went on walks and fought over this question. One night he’d say “I think I really want to do this!” and the next night it was “No way! I want to control my life!”

The struggle wasn’t over loving Jesus or liking Jesus or believing he really had the answer. Gene had a clear view of the Lordship of Jesus: becoming a Christian, Gene knew, was not just about Jesus being his savior, but also being his
Lord. Gene knew he couldn’t split Jesus up and take only part of him.

“When you believe in a person, you believe in the whole thing” Gene thought to himself as he put on his coat and walked back out into the brisk fall wind.

After weeks of fighting with himself Gene made his decision. Right before going home for Thanksgiving weekend, Gene was sitting at his desk in his classroom at Loveland High School.

It was late and everyone else had left the building. He got on his knees on the wood floor and talked simply with Jesus. “Jesus, I want you to take charge of my life. But I have two requests: I don’t want to be a minister and I don’t want to be a missionary to the Bongo Bongos.”

Gene paused a moment. “It will take some time, but if you insist on either of those… I’ll go. Amen.”

Stacey Woods slowly re-read the note on his desk a third time. That young man from Colorado had called
InterVarsity’s national headquarters in Chicago again, but this time he had left a detailed message with his secretary. And Stacey didn’t know what to think.

Stacey vaguely remembered meeting a student from Colorado that summer at Campus in the Woods, but he was still tempted to dismiss the message. This can’t be right, he thought. He was tempted to dismiss the message as the rhetoric of a conman and start for home. This was his last day in the office before Christmas vacation and Stacey had a cold commute ahead of him. But something made him pause. He read the message again… “Five new student chapters meeting at campuses in Colorado and Wyoming…”

InterVarsity has never been within 750 miles of the Rocky Mountains, Stacey thought to himself. He read on… “Eugene Thomas is driving to the University of Denver on Monday nights, the University of Colorado in Boulder on Tuesday nights, Colorado State University on Wednesdays, the University of Northern Colorado on Thursdays and…”

Stacey looked down at the note and shook his head, “Friday nights he’s started driving up to the University of Wyoming! Wyoming?!”

Stacey read again the words he had already read before… “Students on all campuses are meeting to study the Bible, daily prayer meetings are forming, at CSU alone 60 students are
meeting at six in the morning for daily prayer, students are becoming Christians…”

Stacey bowed his head silently. “God, either this is the biggest con ever, or you are up to something very special on the campuses out there.”

Gene stood up and walked to the back of the room. It was a large, rustic meeting room at Sylvandale Ranch up in the Big Thompson Canyon.

From the windows Gene could see the fresh green leaves waving to him from the nearby Aspens. There was still snow on the ground in places, but the early May sun gave the air a warm feel.

But it was what Gene saw inside the large meeting room that most interested him. He had counted 135 people the night before. The room was packed with students sitting on metal folding chairs, singing and praying together.

It was Spring of 1947 and as Gene glanced around the room, looking from person to person, stories from this last school year (almost unbelievable stories) flooded his mind. Over there in the corner Gene saw the cluster of students from the University of Wyoming. Gene smiled as
he saw them praying in a circle. Half a dozen guys had become Christians in a fraternity up there... and the InterVarsity chapter there was never the same after that. It had only been a couple months, but you could sense the energy and depth as the group knelt together in prayer.

“Gene…” Gene turned and saw Charles Troutman, the National Associate Director of InterVarsity, standing next to him. Charles had a serious look on his face, different than the large smile he had been wearing ever since flying into Denver to speak at the weekend conference.

“Charles?” Gene looked him in the eyes. Was something wrong, he wondered.

“Can we pray, Gene?” Charles looked down at the floor for a moment, and then looked back up at the young man standing next to him. “God has done something remarkable and we... we should thank him right now.”

The two men sat down and thanked God for what he was doing on these campuses in the central Rockies.

Gene was sitting in one of the comfortable chairs in the Loveland High School teacher’s lounge. It was May and the school year was coming to a close. John Sherritt sat
in a folding chair across from Gene, and was offering him a job. Well, three jobs to be precise.

It was May of 1947 and Gene’s long-time summer employer was offering Gene his pick of three different jobs. John Sherritt was the owner and president of the Guarantee Life Insurance Company in Ft. Collins and had loved having Gene work for him over the last few years whenever Gene had a break from school. John Sherritt wanted Gene working for him full-time, and was willing to pay to get him. In fact, he had come to the high school to find Gene and offer him his pick of three jobs.

Did Gene want to help sell off some ranches that the company owned in New Mexico? Gene would have his own private plane to fly him and wealthy clients down to New Mexico to visit the properties. The job was simple: show the property and then wine and dine the clients. Stay in the nicest hotels, eat at the finest restaurants… just entertain them first-class while they contemplated their purchase. John smiled as he offered this job: he assumed it would be Gene’s choice.

But maybe Gene would want to be a Home Office Representative. This plum job was usually reserved for relatives of the president of the company! As the Home Office Rep any customers who walked into the building looking for insurance would be his clients. This would mean
an enormous commission on top of an already healthy salary. Perhaps Gene would be attracted to the long-term benefits of this job?

Oh, and there was one more job: Personnel Director. Perhaps Gene would like to handle all the hiring for the company? Plenty of prestige came with the job, but it did mean flying around to campuses throughout the region to recruit potential salesmen in conjunction with the student employment offices of each campus.

John leaned forward in his folding chair, hoping he had won Gene away from Loveland High School.

Gene sat in his chair and thought. His mind was full of memories of this school year: it had been an electric year. He had become a Christian, student chapters had taken root at five different campuses, he was driving his new black coupe every night and seeing students’ lives changed as they discovered Jesus and decided to follow him.

What God was doing was so exciting that other people were starting to help out as well. H.J. Taylor (president of Club Aluminum in Chicago) started giving Gene $50 a month to help pay for the gas to get around to all the campuses. Charles Troutman and Stacey Woods were in constant contact with Gene. Christian students were getting in on the fun of going with Gene to knock on doors and
setting up Bible discussions with their own friends. Students in fraternities and sororities were doing the same thing. And their copies of Jane Hollingsworth’s Bible study guide were getting worn out, just like Gene’s.

Gene looked up at John and said, “I’ll take the third job, John. But on one condition.”

John looked surprised. “Personnel Director? OK, what’s your condition?”

“Well, I do this thing on campuses with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. I help set-up and guide student chapters. I’ll take this job if I can have a flexible schedule, in case I need to visit a campus during the day or want to meet with students at one of the campuses I’ll be flying to.”

John smiled at Gene. “Gene you’ve always worked hard for me in the summers. I have no doubts about you. But I, too, have a condition.”

Gene nodded. “OK.”

“I want to double your salary. And give you some company stock.” Gene just smiled and shook John Sherritt’s hand. This had been the ride of his life, already, Gene thought. And it seemed it was only picking up steam.
The Student Union was full. It was lunch time and Gene had an hour until his next recruiting appointment.

He had been interviewing students all morning and now had an hour off for lunch. Gene looked at the crowds of students with compassion. This trip was going like many of the others over the last two years: he did his recruitment work for Guarantee all day and when he was through he set out across campus, his leather Bible in his briefcase. And God kept showing up as students saw Jesus for themselves, often for the first time.

Ever since opening up the book of Mark Gene just had a natural understanding about evangelism: talking with people about Jesus was just something you did. You just did it. And, of course, there would be fruit.

Simply looking at the person of Jesus was compelling, Gene knew. He had seen this happen to his friends in college, he had experienced it himself… and so he believed that talking about the person of Jesus was the most powerful thing you could do with your time.

The plan was always the same: find students who had never heard about Jesus and introduce them to him. Often he already knew a few students and just started by looking them up and hanging out with them and their friends. Sometimes Gene would walk through the dorms.
Often he would meet with the leadership of a fraternity and make arrangements to speak to them at their evening meal. After the dinner interested students would stay after to talk more, and these conversations would often go until 2:00 am.

Last night Gene had been up until two talking with a group of guys from a fraternity and when the conversations seemed at an end a young man, Colvin, asked Gene if he could meet with him the next day. Gene agreed and so now he was looking around the Student Union to find him. Colvin waved from across the room and the two sat down for a meal, and a conversation.

Colvin told Gene his story of growing up with an agnostic father and having never been to church his whole life. Colvin wanted to know about the Christian faith.

So Gene shared for awhile, toward the end talking about Jesus dying on the cross to save sinners. Colvin had a very serious look on his face as he listened, hearing the gospel for the first time. He nodded thoughtfully and then, interrupting Gene, said with all sincerity, “Gene, do you think we could stop and thank Jesus right now for doing that for us?”
Gene leaned back in his chair as the plane took off. He was coming back from a recruiting trip to Albuquerque and was tired. Tired, and full of joy.

It was now the summer of 1949 and Gene had been traveling around to campuses with Guarantee for two years, seeing InterVarsity chapters spring up on campuses in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Nebraska, Kansas… it had been a thrilling couple of years.

Sometimes Gene would meet with nonChristians, at other times he would meet with Christian students who were interested in starting an InterVarsity chapter on their own campus.

Gene would never agree to start a chapter unless there was already a group of students meeting for daily prayer meetings. If they were meeting to pray for their campus regularly, Gene would meet with them and talk about starting an official InterVarsity chapter.

One year a couple at the University of Utah asked Gene if they could start a chapter. Gary Bergen’s girlfriend, Bobbye, had become a Christian through Nurses Christian Fellowship in Denver. Gary, Bobbye and two other nursing students had then driven down to Colorado for an InterVarsity conference Gene spoke at.
Eventually Gary became a Christian and asked Gene if they could start an InterVarsity chapter at the U of U. Gene agreed and with that another chapter was planted on a campus in the Rocky Mountains.

Gary went on to play basketball for the New York Knickerbockers. And Gene went on to see other new InterVarsity chapters being added every few months, and hundreds of students becoming Christians as the ministry of InterVarsity took root throughout the Rocky Mountains. Watching all this happen was thrilling for Gene. So thrilling, in fact, that Gene felt Jesus was asking him to pursue this InterVarsity work full time.

It would mean telling John Sherritt that he was leaving Guarantee. It would mean raising the budget of the ministry somehow. It would mean buying a large house that could become a haven for students looking to explore the Christian faith.

Gene looked out the dark window of the plane, the snow-capped Rockies were slightly lit up by a full moon. This would be his last trip for Guarantee.

∞
Putting the phone down, Gene said a quiet prayer. He had just been talking with Willard Taussig. Willard was a rancher in Colorado who had become close friends with Gene and had been following the news of God showing up on campuses throughout the region with interest.

Willard had been praying for sometime that Gene would pursue staff full-time. He was a successful rancher, a Christian who often used his resources and properties and ranches to serve all sorts of people – from rural congregations to the urban poor. And he had called Gene this morning to tell him that God wanted him to fully fund Gene’s ministry with InterVarsity, no matter how much it took.

Gene (circled) with other staff from Canada and the U.S. (including Jane Hollingsworth, circled) at an InterVarsity staff training event.
After hanging up the phone, Gene stood at the table next to the phone for a long moment. It was early in the fall of 1949. In the last few months Gene had quit his job at Guarantee, had married Gerri Nelson (who had been leading the chapter at UNC), and had been hired by Stacey Woods as the Regional Secretary for InterVarsity in the Rocky Mountains.

And now this. Gene sat down shaking his head. Gene’s ministry in the region would be fully funded. Gene had confirmation and a large green light to continue following God around on the campuses of the Rocky Mountains.

God was showing up all over the place, on campuses throughout the region. And he was doing something tremendous. The last four years had been so intense, so fruitful, so surprising to everyone that Gene felt like he had stepped into a flowing river and been taken on the ride of his life! God was at work on campus, Gene knew. There was no other way to explain it; there were too many miracles along the way…

Why was I discharged from the Army right before my company shipped out? Was God saving me and setting me apart for this work even back then?
And why did I buy that Bible back in Philly? And why did I finally go around and invite people to study the Bible together? And why did they come?

And why was there a HIS magazine sitting on the table of the sorority’s lobby? If I hadn’t found it, I’m sure we would have just opened the Bible to the first chapter – Genesis. But we didn’t, we opened it to Mark! How did God get that magazine in that sorority that night?

And why did that foundation start sending me money for gas so that I could keep visiting campuses? And why did John offer me such a perfect job at the perfect time?

And how can you explain 60 students meeting at CSU for daily prayer meetings after only a few short weeks? Students joyfully meeting together at six in the morning every day of the week?

Gene paused and looked down at the phone.

God had showed up on campus. And he was at work there. There was no other way to explain it.
The Rest of the Story

For the next nine years Gene helped lead InterVarsity in the Rocky Mountains. He led with wide eyes as he had the privilege of witnessing what God was doing.

Gene saw hundreds of students and faculty encounter Jesus for the first time.

Gene and Gerri’s house in Ft. Collins was near the campus and (as they were hoping when they moved in and literally took the locks off the doors) it was constantly full of students. Their hope was to have their home be a center of hospitality for students and faculty at CSU (and around the
state) who were drawn to look at Jesus and consider the Christian faith. And their hope was fulfilled: the students poured in.

One day a shy female student from DU knocked on their door. She had never met them but felt drawn to come and see what all the stories from her own campus were about. Another time Gene walked into his house to find a man who lived down the block sitting on his couch. This neighbor was curious about why so many people were in and

*CSU students meeting in the Thomas’ home in 1951. The student on the far left, Bill Carlson, was president of the chapter, and eventually went to Africa as a missionary.*

...
out of the house all the time, and wanted to see what was going on!

And for a while the entire CSU football team started coming over to eat Gerri’s cooking and hear about Jesus, including Thum McGraw (for whom the McGraw Athletic Center at CSU is named.) The team felt right at home and came over so often that Gene and Gerri went through nine couches in their first year! (Eventually Gene’s father found a couch that even the football team could not destroy – it took four large men to carry this solid couch!)

Even today many of these students have fond memories of this hospitality. Fred Rilling recently reminisced about coming into the Thomas’ house late at night to retrieve a book he had left there. It was dark when he entered the house and in the dim light he realized there were people sleeping all over the place. He had to thread his way through the sleeping bodies to retrieve his book from the kitchen!

Laughter often rang out through the Thomas’ house – even causing one set of rent-paying tenants to move out! Fun and silliness and joking were par for the course as people entered into the comfortable home. And staff meetings were no exception, whether chasing each other with squirt guns before leaving for a conference or collapsing after serving together all weekend.
But it wasn’t just Gene and Gerri. Wherever a chapter got established, Gene saw dedicated staff and volunteers and faculty in the community open up their homes and apartments for students, creating hospitable places of generosity where people could come and eat and hang out and hear about Jesus.

“Mom” Manford, for example, had a steady stream of students brought to her property up in Estes Park. Student leaders and staff would bring carloads of non-Christian students up for a weekend of skiing and Bible study and enjoyed the remarkable hospitality of Mom – for free.

Gene met Mom when she was 80. And over the years Mom had snow and mud ground into her Navajo rugs, had tables and lamps broken, had silverware stolen… all the while joyfully cooking for the students on her wood stove. She cut and split the wood herself, walked three miles just to get her mail (never accepting a ride!) and spent her winters serving on the Navajo reservation. All this… and she lived to be 104!
Gene also saw hundreds of Christian students become “missionaries” on their own campuses, using their few years on campus to be a part of what God was doing there.

These student leaders would get up early in the morning to pray for God’s spirit and courage, they would invite their friends to look at the gospel of Mark together, they went to conferences to hear more about Jesus and how

Gerri (far left) enjoying a game of Parcheesi with other students in front of the fireplace at Mom’s house up in Estes Park
to be a part of his Kingdom, they set up book tables in student unions to start conversations with fellow students…

These student leaders were used by God during their college years. Many of them in the first few years were returning GI’s who took their call as missionaries on campus as seriously as they took their call to get an education. And this was in a day when it was assumed that Christian students would only go to Christian universities, and that students at secular universities who became Christians should leave their secular campus as soon as possible. Instead, Gene saw these new believers embrace their campuses and be a witness there.

For example, in 1957 the student leaders at Texas A&M felt called to start a Bible Study on every floor of every dorm, fraternity, and large house of students living near campus! Several student leaders took a whole summer off to set up the plans for the fall, and some of them were leading four and even five Bible studies a week to get all of the studies going!

And they did it. They did it! There was a study on every floor of every dorm and fraternity (there were no sororities) and every large student house near campus. It was a costly, risky endeavor, but over a hundred students became Christians that year. Some criticized the student leaders since some of their grades dropped that school year. But as one of the student leaders, Bob Hinckley, put it decades later to
Gene at an InterVarsity reunion, “My grades really suffered that year! I was leading five studies, talking with all kinds of kids. But if you ever talk about this, Gene, tell them that I’ve worked with eleven Nobel prize winners over the years… so it hasn’t fazed me! God took care of us!”

Gene also saw hundreds of businessmen and families and recent alumni give sacrificially to the ministry over the years.

H.J. Taylor and Willard Taussig were followed by a long line of folks whom God moved to give sacrificially to get students to camps, to keep gas in the cars of staff workers, to pay for the vital work of the Regional Offices, and to make possible, physically, what God was doing on campus.

At one point Gene kept three secretaries working full-time as he ran a thirteen state region, worked in InterVarsity’s national office in Chicago, ran Bear Trap Ranch, and “subbed” as the Regional Secretary for the west coast campuses as well! It was only through the generous offering of prayers and finances that this level of work was able to move forward.

When Bear Trap Ranch was purchased by InterVarsity in the early ‘50’s (so that there would be a place for students to come away together during school breaks as
Gene had done up at Campus in the Woods) it was paid for solely through generous donations. Students sold records, jewelry, cars, stereos and clothes to pay for the camp. Students and staff sent money in sacrificially and every year on the day Gene went to make the annual payment (stopping by the post office to pick up any last-minute donations) they were able to make the payment – without an extra dollar to spare!

Heroic volunteers and staff joyfully gave hundreds of hours to the work of God in InterVarsity. When it was decided that Bear Trap Ranch should be known for 1st Class gourmet food in order to appeal to students Wes Kelley, the

Wes Kelley was Bear Trap's first chef. When space was tight, Wes slept in his car so that all available beds could be used for students!
first chef at the ranch, apprenticed at gourmet restaurants up and down the Front Range of Colorado to learn the secrets of the trade. Whether working over a stove, cleaning dishes, running the administration of an office or driving students to a conference the labors of these volunteers and staff were vital to the work in those years.

And over the years Gene saw many gifted men and women be called to be campus staff. They traveled tirelessly from campus to campus shepherding this work that God was doing.

Many of these men and women joyfully walked away from “promising” careers as they felt God was calling them onto full-time staff with InterVarsity in the Rocky Mountains. God had showed up on campus, and they felt it was a privilege to be a part of what he was doing there!

There was more that Gene saw, of course. Gene saw this work of God spread to 13 states in the middle of the US. He became an assistant to Stacey Woods for a time and even spent time traveling with Martyn Lloyd-Jones on behalf of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (InterVarsity in other countries.)

He was a contributing editor to HIS magazine, and led the first ever “House Party” for international students from around the country. 150 international students from 39
countries came together in Estes Park to enjoy the holidays and hear more about this incredible Jesus, thus beginning what has come to be a powerful tradition in InterVarsity across the country.

Gene saw so much during those years. He watched God at work. And, to this day, Gene and Gerri marvel at what God began some sixty years ago.

Gwen Wong teaching at a House Party up in Estes Park.

Gene saw so much during those years. He watched God at work. And, to this day, Gene and Gerri marvel at what God began some sixty years ago.

A couple years after God began showing up on campuses throughout the region (taking young Gene with him!) Gene met an elderly woman in Denver. She was
volunteering with InterVarsity, working with international students in Denver. Her name was Mrs. Frances Dey.

Mrs. Dey had international students in her small apartment nearly constantly and was powerfully used by God in those early years. When Gene and Mrs. Dey first met and heard each other’s stories, they both grew silent, and sobered.

Here Gene was sitting with the woman whom God had moved to pray on her knees for something to happen on the campuses in the state. She had begged God to move. And Gene knew, perhaps more than any other, how strongly God had moved.

Francis Dey and Gene Thomas (both circled) with a group of International students in front of Mom Manford’s house.
And here Mrs. Dey was sitting with the first student God had used to answer her prayers. She had simply begged God to do something, she didn’t know what. And as she listened to the stories of the beginning of InterVarsity in the Rocky Mountains she knew, perhaps more than any other, how extravagantly God answers our simple prayers.

It’s been over sixty years now and God is still answering Mrs. Dey’s prayers. God keeps showing up on the campuses of the Rocky Mountain region.

And as each year passes God is calling new pray-ers to get down on their knees. He is calling new Christian students to become missionaries on their own campuses.

He is calling new volunteers and donors to give sacrificially to support the work. He is calling new missionaries to walk joyfully away from other careers to be a part of InterVarsity’s staff team.

And (most sublime and miraculous and joyful of all) he is still calling students who’ve never really seen Jesus to draw near to him and be amazed.

And God sees all of these people. He sees the sacrifices, the joys, the generosity, and the risks. Since God
is on the campus, he sees everything that happens there. And he cares.

One day when the rowdy CSU football team was over at the Thomas’ breaking yet another couch… a blue teapot got knocked off their kitchen shelf and broke on the floor. It was a small thing and made very little noise when it broke. None of the football players even noticed. But Gene and Gerri did.

This was no ordinary teapot. Years earlier when Gene and Gerri were walking through a small town near Fairview Island after another wonderful experience at Campus in the Woods, they had decided to buy something together as a symbol of how many good things God had given them at camp over the years. They found an unusually beautiful English cobalt blue teapot with silver filigree. It was the perfect symbol, and it stayed on their shelf as a prominent reminder of how good God was, how faithful he had been.

And then it broke. And Gene and Gerri, who had seen nine brand new couches crushed without batting an eyelash, hesitated. There was nothing more precious to them that could have gotten broken.

And as they swept up the shards from their kitchen floor they both thought of their lock-less front door, of the
countless hours spent on campus, of the late-night wake up calls from students in distress. And the shards of their precious teapot, which they poured into their kitchen trash can, made them hesitate.

Was it worth it?

Yes. It was, they decided. It was a painful moment for Gene and Gerri, one which God used to teach them and affirm them. “We’d rather have a house full of people and have things get broken, then have our things safe in an empty house” they decided. So, they walked back out of the kitchen and enjoyed the curious, rambunctious students in their living room. The lock stayed off their front door and the students kept pouring in.

Thirty years later, Gene and Gerri were spending a weekend at a church in Vancouver, B.C. where Gene was speaking at the church’s weekend conference. When the conference was over Gene and Gerri were rushing to catch a small plane (Gene was speaking at the University of Victoria the next day) when an older woman approached Gerri. She handed Gerri a tied-up box and said, “This is for Gene and you. I think you will enjoy it and you can use it more than I will.”

They had only just met this woman at the retreat, but accepted the box and rushed out to catch their plane.
Once settled into their hotel room later that night, Gene said “I wonder what’s in the box?” (He was secretly hoping it contained some sandwiches or a German chocolate cake!) They opened the box and saw an English cobalt blue teapot. It was exactly the same as the one they’d bought decades before!

Gene and Gerri both gasped. They pulled the teapot out and saw that there was also a matching creamer and sugar.

A painting of the teapot set (painted by a friend) still hangs in the Thomas’ house as a reminder of God’s great provision.

The spirit of God spoke cleanly and plainly into their small hotel room: I love you. I am your father and I
know all about you. I see everything. I’ve seen every risky investment you’ve made in these students. And I want you to know it has all been worth it.

None of their sacrifices or risks while following God from campus to campus ever went unseen to God. And they were all worth it. In fact, to this day Gerri refers to the bonus creamer and sugar as “interest” on their earlier investments! The story of the teapot became a parable to Gene and Gerri, a moment of intimacy between them and the God that had called them to labor and serve on campus.

No one had known about the broken teapot except themselves, and God. And Gene and Gerri later found out that the woman had brought the set over on a boat from Australia decades before God prompted her to give it to them. God had arranged this miracle to tell Gene and Gerri, loud and clear, that he had seen all of their invisible sacrifices. This was His story after all.

And for sixty years this story has continued to be written. God is still showing up on campus. And he is still calling students and staff and volunteers and donors to sacrifice and risk as they labor alongside him there.

And he still sees every little thing that happens. And cares. It’s his work after all. A work he miraculously
began over sixty years ago, and which he continues to labor in today.
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. - Hebrews 12.1-2
(More information about InterVarsity’s current work on campuses in the Rocky Mountains can be found at www.ivrockies.org.)
Discovering the Gospel of Mark

The study guide used by Gene and his friends at UNC (and subsequently used by students throughout the region) was written by Jane Hollingsworth in 1943. It was the first ever publication by InterVarsity Press both written and published in the U.S.

Coming from the Atlanta area where her family was in the chocolate business, Jane was a long-time staff worker with InterVarsity and had an influence on campuses across the US and Canada.
While attending school at The Biblical Seminary in New York (now called New York Theological Seminary) Jane learned the inductive method of studying scripture while studying the gospel of Mark under Dr. Caroline L. Palmer.

This seminary had been founded in 1900 by Wilbert Webster White, whom some credit as being the “father” of the inductive method of studying scripture. He started this school to encouraging aspiring young preachers to observe and then interpret and then apply the scriptures.

Jane Hollingsworth’s study guide introduced Gene and other students in InterVarsity to this same method of studying the Bible: the Inductive Method.

In her introduction to Discovering the Gospel of Mark Jane gives a wonderful, winsome overview of the inductive method.

First, she assured her readers that the Inductive Method can help anyone read the Bible and get something from the experience. “We are convinced by personal use and the testimony of others that the method employed will open up the scriptures in a new and living way to those who will faithfully pursue it.”

She was clear, though, that the Inductive Method (carefully reading and observing scripture, taking note of details and facts first before moving on to interpretation) was
not necessarily easy. “Beginners in study by this method admit to finding it slow, sometimes mechanical, often painful, but always richly rewarding. There is an additional beauty and joy in possessing a thing which has caused some trouble.”

For over sixty years university students in the Rocky Mountains have felt this additional joy. Each generation of students has seen small groups hunched over their Bibles looking carefully, meticulously at what is written in the text. Hundreds upon hundreds of students have taken out their pens and highlighters to carefully take apart and analyze a printed “manuscript” from scripture. And it turns out Jane was right: at the end of these interactive studies there is that special beauty and joy in possessing that which caused some trouble!

Jane had three goals in writing her study guide: “1. To help you grasp the facts of the Gospel as written by Mark, just as they stand on the printed page. 2. To help you develop a skill for studying the Bible independently. If you burrow in and make a real business of this study, you will emerge with a better idea of how to get the meat of the Word of God without a human teacher and without ‘devotional helps.’”

Not only have students continued to grasp the facts of the text in front of them, being changed by the
experience, but inevitably InterVarsity alumni point to their learning how to “handle scripture” as one of their most precious and lasting commodities from their days on campus.

Jane’s third goal is the loftiest. And it is a goal that was clearly met from the beginning as Gene and his friends followed Jane’s inductive study of Mark. As Jane put it succinctly in her introduction, “The third aim is always the chief one in Bible study. It is to help you develop a more robust spiritual life by watching the majestic figure of the Son of God as he walks through the pages of Mark in divine authority and redeeming love; that, thus watching, you may obey implicitly the will of God as revealed through him.”

They did, indeed, watch the majestic figure of Jesus walk through the pages of the gospel, as have countless students since that first inductive study. Observation, Interpretation, Application. A simple method of reading scripture that has born much fruit in these Rocky Mountains.

Jane goes on in her introduction to point out how important careful observation is before moving on to interpreting the text. “The first step in each of these studies is to observe accurately what is written on the printed page. This does not mean to go into its meaning, nor to apply it to your own life. It does not mean to search critically – nor to read passively. It does mean to read the passage with the unspoiled attitude of the three-year-old and do what he would do with
a new object: inspect with ardent curiosity, fervent imagination and experimental inquiry.”

It’s so tempting to read a passage once and then move on to lofty speculation. But Jane made it clear that “Only after you have made your observations concerning the facts are you ready to explain the meaning… There is often the tendency to try to think of the answer when you have a question before you. Most of the questions in these studies have their answers on the pages of the Bible. Keep your eyes on the page!”

In the back of the study guide was a long pull-out chart for considering the Gospel of Mark as a whole. Jane used this chart to encourage students to study books of the Bible as a whole – to be able to understand each piece in light of its context.

Jane encouraged students of Mark to name each paragraph of scripture on the chart as well as to write down what they were seeing as they went. As she put it, “The Bible is unfortunately broken up into verses. This is good as a mechanical device, but often renders the meaning obscure. The real meaning of thought is the paragraph… Writing keeps the mind from resting and prevents you from ineffective skimming.”
Gene and his friends had never read the Bible before, and they had no Bible teachers on campus to teach them. But God led Gene to that HIS magazine and thereby led this group of young men to a method of study that took the text seriously and helped them engage with the text for themselves.

Generations of students in the Rocky Mountains have continued to thrive by using the inductive method of studying scripture (the author of this history included!). This method is accessible, text-centered, thoughtful, communal, and anyone can do it – even those who are brand new to the Bible!
(InterVarsity Press has continued to publish materials to help people inductively study scripture. Go to www.ivpress.com to find out more.)