

Columbia International University

Preparing World Christians To Know Him And To Make Him Known



www.IT'S JUST SUPPER.com

July 2005

Dear friends of CIU,

No, don't go on the Web to look for the above organization which, to my knowledge, does not exist. But, in effect, it *did* exist years ago, right here on our CIU campus. Let me explain.

Recently, I was on a domestic flight here in the United States when, within the pages of the in-flight magazine, I spotted a large two-page advertisement for an organization called *It's Just Lunch* (www.itsjustlunch.com), a dating service that sets up lunch dates for busy single professionals who want to meet people of the opposite sex. With 75 office locations worldwide, their ad states that they arrange "lunch dates for well-educated professionals in a civilized and discreet manner." The idea seems to be that a lunch date is a good occasion for an initial encounter because it is fairly public (less intimate) and more limited in time and expense. Fascinated, I said to myself, "*Why that's exactly what we used to do at CIU!*"

"What could be a better place than CIU to meet a committed Christian spouse?"

Back in the 1960s when I attended CIU (then CBC), the school leadership had wisely initiated a practice called "socializing," a way to bring men and women students together without all the overtones of an official "date." Here's how it worked. If a male student was interested in getting to know a female student, he could "socialize" with that young lady. "Socializing" took place each evening over the supper hour in the school cafeteria. It started at 5:30 and had to end by 6:40 (one hour and 10 minutes). The male student would have to ask his female companion in advance, was required to pick her up at the lobby of the central women's dormitory, walk her to the cafeteria, eat supper with her, and then walk her back to the dorm lobby. And, it was a dress-up affair (ties for the guys, dresses for the gals)! It was quite public, and limited in time and expense (since most students were already on the school cafeteria meal plan). ▶

President's Letter

If the Internet had been invented back then, we would have called it www.It'sJustSupper.com! As a student, I thought "socializing" was a great idea and it enabled me to get to know quite a few young ladies without having to officially "date." (Official off-campus "dates" were also allowed back then, but were for much longer and were limited to certain time slots on weekends only.) "Socializing" is no longer a practice at CIU, and I haven't been able to discover exactly when it fell into disuse.

But don't you agree that the former CIU practice of "socializing" and the current philosophy and practice of *It's Just Lunch* sound very similar? Back then, however, we didn't have to pay a consultant to get us together with a compatible partner (which, of course, is the understandable business "engine" of *It's Just Lunch*).

But why am I telling you all this? Because every year on our CIU campus without fail the Lord brings together young men and women who, in many cases, decide to spend the rest of their lives and ministry together. (See the story of Alex and Jenny included with this letter.) And what could be a better place than CIU to meet a committed Christian spouse with a ministry heart? I, for one, am thrilled every time I see this happen, whether it is through "socializing," official "dates," or even through a Christian dating service.

I met my wonderful wife, Annette, here at CIU and we have been serving the Lord for 36 years together. Countless scores of CIU grads have a similar testimony about meeting their life partner at CIU. Will you pray with me that many more "marriages made in heaven" will come together here on our CIU campus?

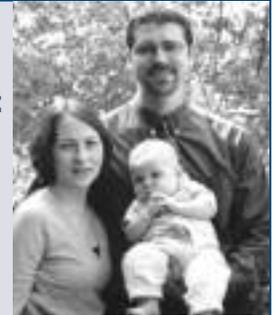
Yours for His glory,



George W. Murray
President

P.S. As we move into a new fiscal year, my thanks to everyone who contributed to our Annual Fund in 2004-2005. In my August letter I will be able to give details about how we ended our fiscal year on June 30.

Alex and Jenny Stewart



When Alex and Jenny Stewart met at Columbia International University a few years ago, they were wary of the whole dating/courtship idea. As a matter of fact, they didn't come to CIU for the purpose of finding a mate. But a mutual love for music brought them together and eventually in love with each other.

Alex, who is from Connecticut, and Jenny, who is from North Carolina, both sang with the Ambassador Singers their first year at CIU. They developed a friendship and became interested in each other. Very interested. The courtship blossomed during their college careers and after graduation from the Bible College, they got married. Their relationship with CIU also continued, as Alex went on to get his M.Div from the seminary this year.

These days Alex is working in construction and Jenny is the Children's Ministry Director at Faith Presbyterian Church in the Columbia area. They just celebrated their third wedding anniversary, and four months ago, became parents to a son, Elijah. As soon as they pay off their student loans, they plan to have a teaching ministry overseas and are currently in dialogue with mission agencies about the possibilities. They are very thankful they met at CIU and can't wait to move on to missionary work.

President's Letter