

HOME

[about alumni](#)
[contact us](#)

STAY CONNECTED

[pray](#)
[serve](#)
[donate](#)
[update your info](#)
[chapters](#)

resources

[events](#)
[archives](#)

You will need an Anchor -by John Teter, FLUX 2009

John Teter graduated from UCLA. God then sent him to serve on InterVarsity staff at USC for six years. He then pioneered a ministry at Cal State Dominguez Hills and Compton City College. The Lord then called John and his ministry team to plant Fountain of Life Covenant Church in North Long Beach. He currently serves as the senior pastor and serves on the ECC national church plant leadership team. John is the author of *Get the Word Out* and coauthor of *Jesus & the Hip-Hop Prophets* with Alex Gee. John also served as a plenary speaker on evangelism at Urbana 2003.

Salvation, and the life it brings, is too great a thing to ignore. You might have caught a glimpse of that reality during your time with InterVarsity at college through a personal experience. You might have seen others experience God. You might have experienced his gift of transformation and healing in your life. If so, you have tasted salvation.

It is this salvation that the author of Hebrews exhorts us to treasure and guard with all of our being. Hebrews 2:1-3 (niv) encourages us to "pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?"

How will you make sure that you do "not drift away" from that salvation? As you enter into a period and season of transition post-college, how do you pay close attention to God's investment in your life? How will you make sure that you do not drift, but mature in Christ in your twenties?

Get involved in a church!

One of the greatest tragedies I see as a pastor and former InterVarsity staff member is former students allowing their passionate college faith to slip away. The drifts are gradual. And more often than not, the drifting occurs because folks with good intentions do not connect to a church right away after college.

You will need an anchor!

I think of one woman who I mentored at the University of Southern California who graduated, got a great job, moved to a nice suburb and even found a church to attend. Everything appeared to be going right for her. Yet, she never became involved in the church, nor pursued anyone in the church to support her and make sure she grew. As hard decisions came her way, she crumbled. She married a man who had great struggles with alcohol, thinking she could change him. She married poorly and made a shipwreck of her faith.

This failure of faith has been one of my primary motives in planting a new church. I wanted to personally be a part of the solution and make sure that twenty-somethings are being won to faith, are deepening as disciples and are fulfilling the destiny that God has set before them.

Contextualization and commitment are key. Sermons and church activities are not usually as specific to your life situations as they might have been during an InterVarsity large group talk. Church competes with other weekend options such as chilling with friends, travel, weddings or sleeping in. Most likely, there will not be an InterVarsity Bible study leader walking you to church like he or she did to large-group meetings. To be honest, your spiritual life after college, and your ability to get around the barriers, will come down to one thing: How badly do you want it? Church will be what you put into it.

The truth is that your post-college church experience will depend almost entirely on how much you choose to put into it. Lucky for you, there is no shortage of ways for you to invest in today's church. And my exhortation and advice is to give all of yourself to small and new churches. Our future as a church depends on it.

The reality of the American church today is that it is not keeping up with current

population and multicultural trends. According to David T. Olson in his new book [The American Church in Crisis](#), "approximately 3,000 churches closed every year [this past decade]; while more churches were started, only 3,800 survived," leaving a net gain of 800 new churches a year. David's findings suggest that "from 2000 to 2004, a net gain of 13,024 churches was necessary to keep up with the U.S. population growth." Less than 3,000 churches were started during that time. As a result, today's church is not meeting the ever-increasing demands of a growing population. Furthermore, according to the same study, only 17.7% of the American population will attend a church service on any given Sunday. Let me reiterate, there is no shortage of church opportunities for you as you move away from college.

Now more than ever the American church needs you to invest in it. As an InterVarsity student you acquired strengths such as love for God's Word, a commitment to being a lifelong learner, leadership skills and a love for community. Churches need you to express those strengths. Develop your gifts and seek to use them within a church context. Help breathe life and fresh gifts into your local church. Get involved in planting churches.

In fact, if there were 50 new InterVarsity alumni sitting in a room wondering what type of church to get involved with, I would highly suggest a church plant. In the deepest parts of my heart, mind and ministry philosophy, the best way to reach the unbelieving and multi-ethnic cities of America is through church-planting. I would recommend that you research the denominations in your area and find out about church planting. There are excellent assessment centers for those who might be feeling called to become church-planting pastors. For others, you can use the valuable talents God has invested in you and make a difference by serving on a church-plant team.

Just remember that whatever church you do choose to get involved with, it will not be InterVarsity. It never will be. Your time at college was for a season and the lessons you learned while participating in InterVarsity hopefully prepared you well for church life. So treasure your time in InterVarsity but do not cling to it. Take the lessons you have learned and find ways to apply them in a church context.

For the sake of today's church, for the sake of those around you, and for your own sake, I encourage you to fight the drift. Find your way into the heart of the local church and make it an anchor for your soul!

Additional Resources:

- [Get the Word Out](#) by John Teter (InterVarsity Press, 2003)
- [The Living Church](#) by John Stott (InterVarsity Press, 2007)
- [The Dangerous Act of Worship](#) by Mark Labberton (InterVarsity Press, 2007)
- [How to Find a New Church Home](#) by Jeffrey P. Dennis, Discipleship Journal 66 (Nov/Dec 2001)

