

Hace Cargo Interview

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City: Athens

State: GA

Fraternity/Sorority: Sigma Phi Epsilon

Expected Graduation Semester (i.e. Fall '09): Spring '09

University/College: University of Georgia

Major: Speech Communication

Why did you decide to go Greek?

I actually came into school with the decision not to go Greek. After a lot of thought I decided to just get plugged into a campus ministry and make that my primary activity outside of classes because I didn't really know anyone in the Greek system here and knew it was hard to just show up and do well during rush. Half way through my first semester I realized I wasn't really happy and wanted to find a place where I could have influence in people's lives and have a group of people to share my college experience with. I started to entertain the idea of being Greek again. I knew a couple SigEps and was very impressed with them. They brought me around the house and the more I saw, the more I wanted to be a part of it. It certainly looked like a lot of fun, but even more than that God began to burden my heart for the SigEp house even before I was a member of the fraternity. I rushed in the spring of my freshman year and took a bid from SigEp. It has been my mission field ever since.

What is one funny or memorable story from your Greek experience so far?

Right before rush started this fall there was a really bad storm one night here in Athens. None of the freshmen were here yet, but all the upperclassmen Greeks were back in town to prepare for rush. Pretty much everyone had the night off so we were going to have a bunch of people over to the house. Once the storm passed everyone came over even though power was out, assuming it would come back on shortly (before sunset). Well we assumed wrong and downtown (all the bars) was actually closed for the night because of

the power outage. What turned into a relatively small hangout soon grew into the "Blackout Party" and tons of people came over to walk around the house with flashlights and hang out. We don't really know how many people came over (due to the lack of light) but we estimate a couple hundred stopped by. In retrospect it was probably an awful idea to let that many people into the house in the dark, but we had a lot of fun and thankfully everyone was safe. When the power came on at about 3 am a bunch of us headed for Waffle House. Turns out we weren't the only ones with that idea. The wait was over an hour. But everyone there was Greek and hadn't seen each other all summer so we just all hung out together. It was great to be back at school and be a part of the Greek community.

When did you start to follow Christ?

I was fortunate to grow up in a Christian home where I was taught the gospel from as early as I can remember. I actually prayed to receive Christ when I was 5 after hearing my Sunday school teacher give her testimony. I believe that I understood the gospel as well as possible at that age and it was truly my decision. I genuinely wanted Jesus to live in me and to know that if I died I would go to heaven. My love for Christ grew from there, surrounded by Christian parents, a great church and a Christian school until I entered high school. I didn't really take my faith as my own until 8th grade however. In 8th grade my sin was made very apparent to me by some mistakes that I made which embarrassed me. For the first time I realized what a problem my sin was, how evil my hearts desires were and how unable I was to fight my sin nature. Thankfully, I also understood for the first time why Christ came and died and the magnitude of his sacrifice. Grace finally "clicked" for me. Since that point I have really matured in my faith, growing though the process of sanctification daily.

Please describe an event that has been a significant milestone in your spiritual journey.

During the summers when I was 16 and 17 I went on mission trips to Poland with my high school youth group. The first trip really opened my eyes to who God is and how powerfully he could use me when I allowed him to. I had never done a trip like that and seeing a body of believers in another

country who I had nothing in common with except being saved by Christ was amazing. We saw three teenagers accept Christ over the course of the week, one that I spend a significant amount of time talking to. The group of guys on the trip bonded together and spent the next two years together in a discipleship group. I could explain in a lot more detail, but essentially, God used that trip as a turning point for my spiritual maturation in a number of ways, the most significant of which was igniting a desire in me to evangelize. I came home desiring to share the gospel with people and saw multiple friends in high school accept Christ before we went off to college.

Please describe a person that has had a life-changing impact on you.

My father has certainly been the most influential person in my life because of his consistent Godly example that he sets for our family. My mentor in high school probably had the greatest impact for the amount of time we spent together, however. For my junior and senior years of high school I had a mentor that I met with every 2 weeks. Each week we would discuss a different "topic" (usually a spiritual discipline) as well as just spend time encouraging and praying for one another. He really inspired me to grow spiritually in a number of ways. His greatest influence was probably his exhortation to be a learned man. In a generation what has gotten caught up in experiential faith, he pushed me to have a great knowledge of God and the Bible through, reading, prayer and meditation. He also urged me to read Christian authors like C.S. Lewis and even more so to read secular authors so I was keeping up with the view of the world. I gave me novels, poetry, science fiction, and Newsweek magazine articles to read. He exemplified what Paul meant when he urged believers to be in the world but not to conform to the world. He knew the happening of the world, but their personal significance for him paled in comparison to the work of Christ. That is something that truly challenged me and still convicts me often.

When did you start to reach out to your fraternity/sorority? Why did you?

I really intended to reach SigEp from the very beginning. I

felt called into the fraternity so that it could be my mission field for my four years in school here. My first semester was hard though. Being the low man in the pecking order makes it difficult. Its hard enough to simply earn the respect of older guys, much less form relationships where you can really be an influence. In interviews that we were required to do with older brothers I always shared how important my faith was and part of my testimony, but I never felt it really caught anyone's attention. I primarily focused reaching the guys who came in with me, but that was even tough because we were all so busy and thankfully, many of them were already strong believers. My second year has been very different though. Being an "older" guy gives you a lot of influence and respect that is based on nothing but age and experience. I have had tons of opportunities to share my testimony and share the gospel with guys that have to do interviews with me as well as starting a Bible study for the new guys.

Is there a Greek movement (study, meeting, organization, etc.) in your House? On your campus? Please explain it for us.

There is a Greek movement in the house, but it is a movement that needs new blood and new ideas. There has been an in house study here for years, but it has never reached very many guys and has really hit a lot point this year. Attendance is awful and guys are going elsewhere to be fed spiritually. The study I started with the new guys is doing very well and is very encouraging. There have been some great spiritual leaders in our chapter in the past that have modeled discipleship well, but our juniors and seniors are lacking those leaders and I feel a great need to step in and continue that.

Here on our campus as a whole I think Greeks are reached fairly well. Almost all ministries dismiss the Greek community as "sinners" and "disinterested" but thankfully Crusade actively pursues the Greek community, and does so with great success. Crusade meetings are usually at least half Greek kids, which is great for a campus that is 25% Greek. They certainly don't seek to reach Greeks only, but Greeks feel very comfortable. Crusade has started community groups in a majority of the houses and there is a strong group of Christian Greek leaders that meet together weekly to be trained and encourage one another. That time is probably the best time of the week for me, to be

rejuvenated by other Greeks with the same heart that I have. I truly see God redeeming Greeks here.

Please share one or two stories of God using you to reach out to Greeks in your House or on your campus.

My influence this year has been almost entirely with our new guys. Each one has to interview me and as a part of my interview I share my testimony and the gospel with every guy. Most have heard it before, some already believe it, but I always share it, hoping that it will begin a process that leads them to Christ.

Secondly, I started a Bible study specifically for them and they have shown great interest. 26 of our 31 new guys came to the first one (a co-ed one with our "sister" sorority). The attendance decreased but we still average close to 10 guys a week, more than I would have ever expected. Through that I have started meeting weekly with two guys in the group who are not believers as they investigate Christ. One has a church background but is questioning his faith and the other grew up unchurched and is learning a lot. Both opportunities are great blessing and are helping me grow a ton as I disciple them.

What are you expecting God to do in your House or on your campus in the next few years?

My vision for SigEp is that it would be house where guys who come into the fraternity and want to grow spiritually would not have to look outside the fraternity for that to happen. I by no means want a Christian fraternity to form. But when guys come into college wanting to grow, whether they are already believers or they are beginning to investigate, I hope there will be a number of older brothers eagerly awaiting the opportunity to disciple them and help them grow spiritually. I pray that men will accept Christ as their savior and grow in their faith during their years as a SigEp more than any other time in their life.

After graduation, what do you plan to do?

I feel God calling me into vocational ministry. I am still unsure as to what path God will lead me on within that field, but I am confident that he has called me for that purpose. Eventually, I want to pastor a church, and possibly even plant a church, but I don't know what steps God will lead me along to get to that point or if that is even the exact direction I'm headed in. I am excited to see

where I will be a year out of school, five years out and even twenty years out.

What hobby or activity makes you come alive?

I love being outdoors. Being in the mountains or at the beach, either one, really energizes me. I like to fish and hike and to simply sit and watch the waves.

I also love playing sports. Intermural sports are a blast and I love playing pick-up basketball games. I'm the role model for high school "has-been" athletes, but I still love to go out and play.

What book has had the most impact on your spiritually?

Ragamuffin Gospel by Brennan Manning blew me away. It totally expanded my view of God's grace and love for us. It taught me that it was alright for me to be rough around the edges and how healthy it was for me to admit that I don't have it all together. I finally understood that God didn't ask me to act "pretty" for him, but that he would rather me come to him honestly, filthy and sinful, admitting I need the grace he so eagerly gives. The world tells us that to view ourselves in a healthy way we should tell ourselves we look good and are successful, but Ragamuffin Gospel took that pressure away. It's alright to be a mess, that's who Christ came for.

What is one piece of advice to give a Greek student out there who is trying to start a Greek ministry in their House or a Greek movement on their campus?

Build relationships. Lives are not changed by sermons, booklets or small group material; lives are changed when people invest in one another and love one another. Select a small group of guys and show them in word and deed that you care for them. Do not try to do this with your whole chapter, just select a few and envision what it could become down the road if more guys caught your vision for your house. Ministry in every chapter is going to be different, just make sure that you are preaching the gospel to your brothers, not behavior reform or how to act spiritual.