

*English and Modern Languages*  
*Faculty Publications and Presentations*

---

Liberty University

Year 2006

---

The Real Education of a Hippie

Brenda A. Ayres  
Liberty University, bayres@liberty.edu

ation in life.” Or, put another way,  
 ical. Do not judge, and you will  
 d you will not be condemned.  
 and it will be given to you. A good  
 ther and running over, will be  
 sure you use, it will be measured

that afternoon, and it contained some gentle irony: “I can always count on you to be at work. Thank you.” He believed in me.

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—as free, yet not using your liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 1 Peter 2:13-17 NKJV

IN  
 T THROWN OUT

Why I did it. It was a stupid thing  
 g in the dorm four years at two  
 nies, the second year in a dorm in  
 t Walla Walla College seemed a bit  
 gn-out after-dark policy made me



**Brenda Ayres**  
 Professor of English  
 Liberty University  
 Lynchburg, Virginia

THE REAL EDUCATION  
 OF A HIPPIE

BY THE TIME I began college, I had already earned a degree in nihilism. Although I had attended church nearly every Sunday since age four, by age sixteen I was a diehard atheist.

Once in college, I took every course in philosophy that I could. Existentialism was my thought of choice, but the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Siddhartha*, and *The Prophet* became indelibly etched into my psyche. I tried every drug. I adhered to a macrobiotic diet, eating only peaceable animals like fish and poultry. I practiced yoga, trying to be in tune with the animal world.

Along with hundreds of other students, I protested the war in Vietnam, marched for civil rights, demanded equal rights for women, refused to eat grapes from California, demonstrated in sit-ins against capitalism, helped collect recycled glass (before it became one’s civic duty), wrote articles about ecology and global warming (before they became soundbites), burned a lot of incense, and meditated around candles into the waking hours of morning. A group of us, called the Celebration Troupe, traveled to other campuses throughout Pennsylvania, playing our guitars and singing “You Got to Make Your Own Kind of Music.”

By the time I finished my sophomore year, I had exhausted my life. I simply wanted to die. In fact, I knew that I was going to die on that darkest of dark nights, that twenty-fifth of August.

I was living by myself in a trailer then. Thirty out of the thirty-three people who lived in the commune where I had been living had turned into intolerable Jesus Freaks. It was 1972, and the Holy Spirit was moving on campuses along Interstate 80, from one end of the country to the other.

And here was one of those expatriates, sitting on my sofa, reading from the Bible: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the

Father, but by me" (John 14:6). At another time, I would have attacked him for what I perceived as sheer arrogance and narrow-mindedness in insisting that there can be only one spiritual truth. This time, however, Jesus was standing right there in my tiny living room, and I knew that the words were true, whether I wanted to become a Christian or not. The Jesus Freak read another verse: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). I knew nothing then but that Jesus had His arms wide open. There wasn't much left of me, but what there was—all that there was—ran straight into Jesus' arms. And I know that those arms snatched me out of the very jaws of hell.

Thus began my real education.

**But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. 1 Corinthians 1:27**

.....



## WINNING BY LOSING

**Bill Wohlers**  
 Vice President for Student Services  
 Southern Adventist University  
 Collegedale, Tennessee

LEARNING TO ACCEPT the benefits of unrealized ambition was a lesson God taught me more than once.

My instruction actually began a couple of years before college while I was still attending the neighboring parochial high school. When I lost my first student association election, the event allowed God to show me He always has better ideas for us than we do for ourselves.

Not to be denied, however, I didn't wait long before planning further political adventures. I was convinced that my high school disappointment had to presage collegiate success. In my college sophomore year I again decided to become a campus politician. This effort looked like it would be easy since there appeared to be no opposition. But the student association election commission took care of that by nominating a good friend of mine. He won by four votes.

One year later I was back, seeking votes again from my fellow students. By this time hubris was certainly clouding my judgment, since I, a village student, decided to challenge the exceedingly successful and popular dorm club president. My temerity lasted long enough to withstand the extended ovation for my opponent's speech from the overflow audience in the college chapel. I went ahead and spoke anyway; I also went ahead and lost—by a landslide.