

## Plans with Baby

“What are you planning on doing after the baby is born?” This question has come up a lot lately! I’m planning on working up until Baby Girl is born, then taking maternity leave before returning to work for InterVarsity part-time in the summer. The changes in my job this year should make that transition quite smooth. I’m grateful for my staff colleague, Latina Williams, who has taken on a central role with the DePaul InterVarsity chapter. Her skills in chapter building and leadership development are remarkable, and I’m honored to work with her. I anticipate mentoring DePaul students next year, as well as continuing work on staff-training and curriculum-development projects. I’m grateful for the opportunity to continue serving students and faculty even as our family grows. Life will certainly be rich and full!

## Creative Service

Because of our commitment to high-quality training events, InterVarsity staff are often called upon to design curriculum and Bible-study materials, along with their responsibilities for chapter leadership development, evangelism, discipleship, fund raising, personal spiritual growth — not to mention staff meetings. Add a few campus crises to the mix, and time simply runs out! I’m delighted that my job these days includes updating curriculum for our summer Cedar Campus training programs. (I’m currently revising a course on spiritual formation, “Encountering God.”) Not only do I love thinking about how to create materials that will help students grow in their relationship with God and Christian living, but I’m glad to be able to serve my staff colleagues by partnering with them in this way.

## Shelf Life

### Book Notes from Ann

*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*,  
by Adele Ahberg Calhoun.

In this new book from InterVarsity Press, Calhoun sheds light both through an easy-to-use chart and by reflection questions and instructions for experimenting with each discipline. She covers a breadth of topics — not only familiar disciplines like Bible study and worship, but also some unusual ones, such as “care of the earth” and “laby-

my belly, trying to hear her heart-beat, and she kicked him right in the face! I am feeling healthy and energetic at the beginning of this third trimester. I have been reading pregnancy and baby books voraciously, as we prepare ourselves to welcome our daughter into the outside world.

December was busy for me with several Apollo Chorus concerts. We figure that Baby Girl will have a special love for Handel’s *Messiah* since she heard it so often — at least the soprano part!



Here’s me, Kirra, Allie, and Eric at the ice-cream parlor during leadership training last summer.

rinth prayer.” I’ve been especially stretched to consider the discipline of “slowing” — deliberately choosing to be delayed in practical actions, such as driving in the slow lane or picking a longer checkout line.

Calhoun does a wonderful job of whetting the reader’s appetite for each discipline, giving a few tips for getting started, and pointing to further resources for deeper study. How helpful for my Cedar Campus curriculum revision!

## Boys’ Eye View

Baby Girl continues to thrive and, with 89 days left till her due date, has already brought us much joy. The other day, Jon was listening to

## Prayer Requests

Please pray:

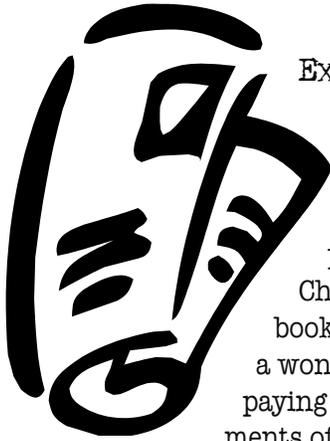
- for God-given inspiration as I revise the Encountering God track
- for student leaders to be raised up for the next school year
- for a healthy pregnancy and full-term birth (around April 16, Easter Sunday)

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Extra! Extra!

## Paying Attention to God Stirring Inside

I've been thinking a lot lately about paying attention. The Christmas devotional book I used this Advent has a wonderful reading about paying attention to the movements of Christ in our world today:

"When I have no eyes for the small signs of God's presence — the smile of a baby, the carefree play of children, the words of encouragement and gestures of love offered by friends — I will always remain tempted to despair. The small child of Bethlehem, the unknown man of Nazareth, the rejected preacher, the naked man on the cross, he asks for my full attention. The work of our salvation takes place in the midst of a world that continues to shout, scream, and overwhelm us with its claims and promises" (Henri Nouwen, *Gracias! A Latin American Journal*, as quoted in *Advent and Christmas: Wisdom from Henri J. M. Nouwen*.)

I long to live this kind of an integrated life — not just relegating my spiritual nurturing to quiet times and church activities alone. How can I pay attention to God in the midst of the whirlwind of life's activities? The other day, I was studying 1 Samuel 16 with some DePaul student leaders, and we considered this verse: "The Lord does not look at the things human beings look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7, TNIV).

*What kind of a heart do you have? What kind of heart do you want God to see in you?*

As we reflected on these questions, I thought about how difficult it is to pay attention to internal, spiritual wholeness while the world

we live in is consistently focusing on external realities: job performance, health and appearance, competence in tasks done. External expectations aren't bad, and in fact they often are related to internal health. Our challenge is to balance external tasks with an ability to attend to the whisper of God in the quietness of our spirits — to be open to seeing God move, for example, while walking down a busy street to the next student appointment.

I have a lot of room to grow in this area of paying attention. Baby Girl is teaching me some about this. I've noticed that when I don't pay attention, I don't feel her move very much. But once I start attending to her, even in the midst of a busy workday, I can feel her movements and remember her even more. In a similar way, I'm much more attuned to the movements of the Spirit throughout the day when I pray for the grace to be able to perceive them. I thank God for the way he has used our yet-unborn Baby Girl already to teach me of his love and grace toward us. And I'm overwhelmingly grateful that he sent Jesus into the world to be yet another way of inviting us to pay attention to him and be with him.

For Christ & the University —

*Ann*

P.S. As always, there's more online at [www.annagram.org](http://www.annagram.org). This issue's Web Extras: "Ann's Tips for Meeting New People" and a recipe for Cashew Chicken Curry (for a slow cooker).