

Shepherding Leaders

Our DePaul InterVarsity Leadership Team had an amazing time together at Cedar Campus in June. The week of leadership training and ministry planning started off a bit rocky, with several interpersonal conflicts to work through. But God used those to teach us about conflict management and deepened our good relationships. We developed good plans and a vision statement for the school year.

But the most important thing was seeing the students take ownership of the chapter and understand what it means to be a “shepherding leader.” We studied Ezekiel 34, and I was so glad to hear students say things like, “Being good shepherds means that we will need to put the needs of the new students in our group before our own needs.” I am really looking forward to being a “shepherd of shepherds” this year—and to receive what the Good Shepherd has for us at DePaul.

New Student Outreach

As you are reading this, thousands of new students are flooding into the DePaul campus — navigating their way to classes, seeking new friends, trying to make a place for themselves in this new world. Each year I tell my student leaders the same thing: the most crucial time for new students to make decisions about their faith and get involved with groups like InterVarsity is in the first few weeks of school. We

have been praying for these new students for months! (Will you join us?) We can’t wait to meet them and see what God does in our chapter this fall.

Shelf Life

Book Notes from Ann

The Gift of Being Yourself,
by David G. Benner

I have never read a book that describes so well the connection of the spiritual life and the process of knowing oneself. Our deepest longing is to have an authentic relationship with God, and to do this, we



Allie, Mark, Diana, Maggie, Kirra (back row)
Eric, me, and Nicole (front row) during our great week at Cedar.

need to understand ourselves: who we are, who God has created us to be, and how God is shaping us into the image of Christ. One of my favorite quotations comes in the middle of the volume: “The truly spiritual life is not an escape from reality but a total commitment to it.” As we grow in genuine self-understanding, we face reality about our lives — and we receive also God’s invitation to relationship with him and further personal growth and transformation. I look forward to sharing this book with many.

Boyd’s Eye View

Jon and I have had a lovely summer full of new experiences. Thanks to Jon’s parents for a gift of airfare, we were able to take a two-week vacation in Switzerland. We stayed in two mountain villages and hiked among the Alps nearly every day. I was a bit nervous, since I have never hiked like this before, but Jon was a wonderful *bergführer* (mountain guide). And we saw some beautiful scenery!

We returned in late July to our cozy home — plus with a new bathroom! We have been planning to remodel our bathroom for a while and add some amenities (like a tub that drains, and electricity). Since we only have one bathroom in the house, it worked out great to have the construction done while we were away.

These two things have made the summer of 2004 one to remember!

Prayer Requests

Please pray:

- for new students to find their way to InterVarsity this fall
- for the student leaders: Mark, Maggie, Eric, Allie, Kirra, and Nicole
- for the regional New Staff Training program, which will launch in November
- for Jon and me to find peace amidst a very busy traveling schedule this fall

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Extra! Extra!

Being True for True Leadership

Between my continued work on our regional New Staff Training program and my work with the DePaul InterVarsity student leadership team, I have been thinking a lot about spiritual leadership.

What do good leaders look like?

What are their lives like? How do they make decisions and shape their days?

I am grateful for the wonderful leadership training I have received while on staff with InterVarsity. I remember my first year on staff: newly out of college, 22 years old, ready to soak up anything I heard and do anything I needed to do. I am very glad that the consistent message I heard was this: the most important thing you can do to develop as a leader and a staffworker is to deepen your relationship with God and grow more Christ-like. Hearing this focus on Jesus so early has shaped my life and my work profoundly. I have been sure to “book” my personal spiritual development carefully and to take those times seriously — things like retreat days, meetings with my spiritual director, and daily times of prayer.

The priority of personal spiritual development has been central in my work with students, as well. It is very tempting sometimes to take advantage of these eager student leaders and encourage them to work non-stop to reach new students! But I know that the fruit of driven labor will be meager at best and that it will ultimately hurt the student leaders themselves by training them to be people who depend on their own strength, and not on God’s grace. So we talk about disciplines like daily quiet times, making sure your schedule isn’t too full, and Sabbath rest.

The other day I was meeting with a student leader and talking about her experience thus far in leadership with InterVarsity. She said a wonderful thing: “I sort of feel bad, because the more I try to give back to God by serving him, the more good stuff I get from him!” We had a great conversation about God’s grace, our status as children, and how God delights in pouring gifts out on us, even when we try to “do something for him.” I am looking forward to seeing what good gifts God will bestow on each of these student leaders (and me too!) as we seek to put him first in our lives and shepherd his people.

Parker Palmer, in his book, *The Courage to Teach*, says, “We teach who we are.” I think this is applicable to so many aspects of life: leadership, work, friendships, parenting, and more. In all areas of life, like it or not, we display who we are as human beings in relationship with the living God. In cooking, it is often said that the completed recipe is only as good as its ingredients (which is a great excuse to buy high-quality chocolate!). But this theory also holds true in our life and work and beckons us to consider: What kind of a person am I? Is the vitality of my spiritual life shaping my relationships and roles in life? Through such times of reflection, we can hear a gentle invitation from God to be with him and be shaped by him.

For Christ & the University —

Ann

P.S. This month’s Web Extra presents some treasures I found recently in an old family photo album. Check out the ’70s fashions!