

Worth the Effort

In early November, I met a woman (whom I'll call "Carrie") who had contacted the InterVarsity group at DePaul through our web page. "I have so many questions about faith and philosophy, and I don't even know where to start!" I invited Carrie to study some passages from the Bible with me. We have had such fun studying Scripture together! She asks searching questions about the text and tries to really understand what Jesus is saying (which is not always easy, but of course well worth the effort). When I asked Carrie recently what she is thinking about Christianity, she said that she wants to take things slowly, so that she knows what she is getting into, "but I really like what I see so far."

Neither Slave nor Free

Late last month I had the chance to participate in three days of training in racial reconciliation. Though I was nervous at the outset, it turned out to be a wonderful experience. One of the main things I have learned is that the time is past for "walking on eggshells" in my cross-cultural relationships. I have too often felt hesitant, afraid of saying the wrong thing or doing something to hurt a person of color. Instead, I am learning to take risks and do what it takes to connect across racial barriers. While it is hard to risk hurting someone or looking stupid, I am realizing that the only way I will be able to have any real friendships with people who are different from me is to be able to take such risks. When I do hurt someone, I'll need to have courage to say, "I'm sorry; will you help me to change?" — both to my friend and to God.



I love my new haircut!

Shelf Life

Book Notes from Ann

I have recently been looking for children's books with illustrations of African Americans, and I have found that this is not a simple task! Tim Ladwig's illustrated *Psalms 23* (Eerdman's, 1997), however, is a beautiful exception. Ladwig uses urban images and an African-American family to express the truth of this beloved psalm. Books like this stretch my imagination when it comes to thinking about Scripture and about God's world. While the phrase "he leads me beside quiet waters" typically conjures up an image of a calm pond in the country, Ladwig paints a picture of children playing joyfully in a curbside puddle. I feel encouraged to see the ways that God is renewing his promises in our world today — in urban, suburban, and rural communities alike. It is a challenge to put aside my preconceived ideas of what God's provision looks like, and to look for what he is really doing!

Boyd's Eye View

One of the most dramatic moments lately in the Boyd house occurred on Nov. 1, when I lopped off 12 inches of my hair. It has been such fun to experiment with my new look, using different clips and styles and hats — it's like having a whole new head! ☺ Jon and I have also been actively anticipating Christmas. We made some special candles to celebrate Advent by wrapping votive candles with vellum paper. Each one has quotations from Scripture describing people who waited for the coming Messiah. Jon has been making his "Wonder-Working Chex Mix," another sure sign of Christmas. Also, I have taken up knitting again, a skill I let lapse after high school. I'm currently working on a baby blanket for our nephew. It's such fun to work with my hands!

Prayer Requests

Please pray for:

- ☛ Wisdom and effectiveness in my winter break plans.
- ☛ Students like Carrie to encounter God through Scripture.
- ☛ Safety in our winter travels.
- ☛ Spiritual health and growth in the current student leaders.

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Enclosed this month is a reply envelope. This is for your convenience if you would like to make an end-of-the-year donation towards my work. Thanks for your generosity! Please make your check out to InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.



Extra! Extra!

Take Five

DePaul University has an unusual quarter schedule, which provides for a full five weeks of winter break, running from Thanksgiving all the way through into the new year. This “break” affords me an opportunity to work on plans for the next quarter, to receive further training, and to reflect once again on what God has been doing on campus during the fall. Here are just a few of the tasks I hope to tackle during December and early January:

Regional meetings. Staff from our region will be gathering Dec 10-13 to restructure our Chapter Focus Week training (once known as “chapter camp”). I will be on a team covering exposition, “retreats of silence,” and sabbath rest. We hope to listen to God and make changes to our programs in order to serve students better.

Student training. We have decided to expand our GIGs (“groups investigating God”) at DePaul, and this means training students to join me in leading them. Our hope is that students will invite interested non-Christian friends to learn from the Bible about what Jesus is like. I am also considering offering some intensive discipleship training next quarter. Either way, I will continue to develop leadership training materials for the chapter’s current student leaders. I also need to sketch out our large-group Bible studies for next quarter and train students to lead some of those. As you can imagine, this all takes a lot of preparation! I continue to ask God for help as these plans take shape. We need his help so deeply in all that we do.

Fund development. Due to natural donor attrition and our country’s economic

downturn, I have recently lost some financial support. I trust that God will provide for my needs, but I also know that in order for him to provide I need to ask people. I am eager to see what God will do on this front.

Winterfest preparation. At our annual “Winterfest” student training conference (Feb. 22–24 this year), I will be teaching manuscript Bible study methods, using the book of Ruth as our text. I have been studying this book for some time, and it is fascinating! The story is rich with issues such as God’s provision, justice, relationships between the sexes, and obedience. In December, I will spend more time in study and also begin outlining the shape of that weekend.

National Staff Conference. All InterVarsity staff in the U.S. will be gathering in Orlando, Florida, in early January for our every-three-years conference. Jon and I will both be there. I hope to connect with other staff in the nation to glean wisdom from them, and to attend some of the seminars on various topics.

Vacation! Bill & Betty Boyd, Jon’s parents, have generously invited us to go to London with them to help lead a group theater trip. We will be gone for a week right after Christmas. Jon is especially excited to show me around the city, since I’ve never been to London before. There are so many things I want to see, I need to start studying now! My only complaint is not being able to bring my knitting needles for the long plane ride, what with tightened security these days (sigh) — admittedly a small enough concern in these troubled times.

For Christ & the University —

Ann