

## Jesus, Our Passover

One of our DePaul IV chapter leaders is a Messianic Jew — that is, like the apostles themselves, he's ethnically Jewish and believes in Jesus as the awaited Messiah. So, when Mark suggested that we do something to observe Passover, I was very enthusiastic. We decided to host a Seder dinner for our chapter. Mark secured copies of the Haggadah (the reading book for a Seder), and helped to clue me in on all the different foods we needed. A fellow-student volunteered to make "charoset," a sweet apple & nut mixture. I even baked a special unleavened chocolate cake! Students loved it — most had never participated in a Seder ceremony before. For more information (including the yummy chocolate cake recipe), see this issue's Web Extra feature at <http://www.annagram.org>.



Mark leads us in our Passover Seder. Don't worry: it's just grape juice in those wine glasses! (Full color version at [Annagram.org](http://www.annagram.org).)

## Drama Freaks

My staff colleague and arts-ministry specialist, Dick Ryan, and I met with three excited theater students recently. Our purpose: to discuss ideas for doing something for God in The Theatre School (TTS) at DePaul. TTS is an extremely prestigious conservatory. Acting majors are subject to being cut from the program up until their junior year. And, as many of you will recall, the

InterVarsity chapter was founded by a TTS student. Our tentative current plans are {1} to pray!; {2} to host an informal social event for first-year TTS students in the fall; and {3} to host a seminar for first-year students on "how to thrive in TTS," helping students think through the complicated interpersonal and professional dynamics in this field. We are eager to see what God does!

## Shelf Life

### Book Notes from Ann

Great with Child, by Debra Rienstra

No, there's no hidden message: Jon and I are not expecting, nor are we planning on pregnancy in the immediate future! Nevertheless, I devoured this amazing book about a woman's experience of pregnancy, birth, and the first year of her child's life. One of my favorite moments is a description of her

exhaustion while nursing her infant in the wee hours of the morning and singing old hymns: "I'm convinced that what we sing in church isn't for the thrill of the moment. It's a matter of doing

the drills in order to be prepared for the real battles, the ones that happen outside the sanctuary. So there's a reason to sing the same songs all your life: then they'll be there when you need them." Sometimes, I confess, I am tempted to dismiss certain songs when they show up in the program ("not this one again!"). But Rienstra has taught me another way to listen to — and learn by heart — the songs of our faith.

## Boyd's Eye View

Jon has been especially busy with web-development lately. We hope you'll see some of his work at [Annagram.org](http://Annagram.org)! He has also been creating stereographs: paired photos that appear to be three-dimensional with a special viewer. They are amazing! We laugh at ourselves when we sit in our living room looking at 3D images of our living room. :)

I have continued to enjoy knitting, and have just discovered how fun and easy it is to knit pot-holders — definitely more useful than adding to my over-flowing collection of knitted hats.

Inspired by the theatrical release of The Two Towers, I am reading, for the first time, The Lord of the Rings — just about to begin the final volume! We decided to invest in the unabridged book-on-CD set, so now Jon and I keep quoting Tolkien-isms to each other: "Ho! Tom Bombadil, Tom Bombadillo!" :)

## Prayer Requests

Please pray:

- ☛ For me as I lead worship for about 200 people at Cedar Campus, May 17-24.
- ☛ For the seeds of ministry in the DePaul Theatre School to grow.
- ☛ For community to be built up in our chapter more and more.
- ☛ For Caryn and Allie, who will be attending IV's Chicago Urban Program this summer.

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## Extra! Extra! Hey, Good Lookin'

I've been thinking a lot about observation lately. This is a basic skill that we use in Bible study in InterVarsity: the first step to understanding a passage is to make detailed, specific observations. This is also a skill I use in journaling about my personal life — I write down everything that happens in a day, and then I observe my emotional reactions (did that encounter make me angry? sad? anxious? joyful?) and write about them. It is amazing how much useful information you can learn about yourself by simply spending some time observing a day.

These days I've been musing on other dimensions of observation. I just read a magazine article about nature journaling. The article was not written from a Christian perspective, but I was struck by the potential holiness of this kind of journaling. I've been trying it at home — sitting in our backyard, looking at something that is growing, sketching it, and writing out some of my observations. It is amazing how closely I have to look at something to draw it! I try to suspend judgment on my drawings (I'm no artist — at least not yet) and just look at the subject very carefully. A wasp landed on a railing near me, and (though I am terrified of insects, especially stinging ones) I decided to sketch it to help me become less afraid of it. I am really enjoying this discipline of observing God's creation.

And here's another angle on observation: A friend and fellow IV staffworker, Ruth Goring, recently spent a few months in Colombia, serving communities there simply by being an international presence (an amazing story in itself). Ruth drew portraits of dozens of the people in the community and has spoken about how healing it was for those people to be carefully observed for thirty minutes or more.

I've noticed this too in my own staffwork — I believe that listening attentively to students is often dramatically healing for them. The more carefully I listen, the more I am filled with wonder at the work God is doing in their lives. And having a grace-filled listener helps everyone to be a little kinder to themselves. Who doesn't want someone to give you their undivided attention for a little while?

The best place to find this kind of loving gaze is in the eyes of God. I noticed this anew while preparing to teach about body image from Psalm 139:

My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
(Psalm 139:15-16)

How wonderful it is that God sees us and loves us! As we sit and receive his gaze, he transforms us into the beautiful men and women he created us to be. May our eyes and hearts grow to be like his!

For Christ & the University —

*Ann*