



October 2005

The "Vanderbilt is 4-1 in Football" Issue"

Don Paul Gross

www.gfmse.org

www.emergingscholars.org



Ken Myers Luncheon



Kids on vacation

If you are interested . . .

On a semi-regular basis, I send out prayer updates via email. If you would like to receive these updates, please email me.

Financial Contributions

can be sent to:

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

P.O. Box 7895

Madison, WI 53707-7895

All gifts are tax deductible.

Engrossing News

It has been a busy month of September at Vanderbilt. I have had the opportunity to coordinate two events hosting Ken Myers of Mars Hill Audio. The events exceeded my expectations.

"Is Jesus Just Spiritual Prozac?"

Did Jesus come just to make us feel better about our spiritual life, or does His coming impact all aspects of our life? We combined with six undergraduate ministries resulting in about 150 students gathering for the event. Ken Myers challenge to the student body was for us to recognize that Christ and Christianity changes the way we view all of life. Whether we are studying literature or economics, our faith has something to say. One of the biggest joys of this event was seeing the different ministries come together.

"Faithful Stewards or Terrestrial Gods? Christianity and the Chief End of Science"

I set out planning for 20 people to attend a luncheon at the University Club. In the end, there were 75 at the lunch which included an equal number of faculty, graduate students, and med students. This talk looked at the origins and presuppositions of western science and examined them in light of Christian values. It was a thought provoking talk, challenging us to consider what we have faith in – the "progress of science" or God?

Around the Southeast

One of the reasons I chose to be an Area Director is to help the ministry grow on other campuses. After three years of a lot of seed planting, such as hiring staff, training staff, and helping staff get funded, I am starting to see dramatic growth.

- @ Vanderbilt, the number of relationships with international students has doubled
- @ U of Miami and Florida International U, the number of small groups has doubled from 3 to 6 and the number of students has more than doubled
- @ U of Florida, the size of the Graduate Christian Fellowship has doubled
- @ U of Tennessee, the number of graduate students involved has more than doubled
- @ U of Tennessee and at U of Miami, ministry in the law schools has doubled.

Numerical growth and spiritual growth are not the same thing. However, God is clearly growing the breadth of the work through the staff I serve. Inevitably, as Christian students gather, God does things in individual lives and in the life of these communities.

Food for Thought

This week we begin a six week series called *Food for Thought*. It is a lunch gathering that seeks to be a crossroads for the body of Christ at Vanderbilt and is open to undergrads, graduate students and faculty. We did a similar event this past spring. It is an opportunity to discover and discuss topics having to do with Christianity — specifically issues involving the intersection of living the Christian faith and the life of the mind.

Food for Thought Small Group Blurbs

God, Science and Technology, and the Modern Imagination

Science and technology can encourage us to become so preoccupied with our own knowing and making that we forget that we are *ourselves* creatures in a larger Creation. Thus our reliance on science and technology as a culture can hinder our ability to depend on and to pray to God. The purpose of this discussion group is neither to predict an Huxleyan future nor to support Luddite sensibilities, but to examine how science and technology, as a dominant force in our society, can subtly encourage us to live as if God doesn't exist. *Led by Kenny Benge (IV staff) and Patrick Rist*

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe: Read the Book before you See the Movie (release date December 9th)

We will consider the direct symbolism in the book, but we will also consider the philosophy behind Lewis's imaginary world as a window into Lewis's overall philosophy. We will spend a little time at the beginning and the end of the series talking about Lewis and his work, and about the other Narnia books, but most of the time will be spent on reading and discussing the book itself. You will be encouraged to read the chapters before the discussions, but if you don't have time, you won't be lost. *Led by Dr. Gerald Stubbs, Professor of Biological Sciences*

Silence and Solitude in a Hurried World

Do the constant demands on your time overwhelm you? Do you feel like you have filled your life to its capacity plus a little bit more? Join this group as it reads and discusses the *Christianity Today's* Book of the Year in Spirituality – *Invitation to Silence and Solitude: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence*, by Ruth Haley Barton. The author is not a monastic but a professional who leads a busy life. All participants will receive a free copy of the book. *Led by Don Paul Gross*

Staff Director Spiritual Formation Group

In September I traveled to participate in a three-day retreat designed for InterVarsity staff who are in leadership. We looked at the Biblical views of rest – rest from work and rest in work. We enjoyed times of prayer, solitude, fellowship and encouragement. I felt particularly blessed getting to be with staff whose spiritual lives I have much to learn from.

Family News from Ginger

We had a good summer for which we are very grateful. Clay and Clint, my brothers, were both married to great women this summer! We were able to go to the beach again with my parents, which is always a blessing.

The fall is definitely off and running. This year Olivia is in 6th grade at our local middle school. She and I both can walk there. She is on a swim team as well as tutoring our neighbor. Logan is in 4th grade and has joined a baseball team. Nolan, our 2nd grader, is playing his 8th season on a soccer team. He claims to score a goal for each egg I feed him before his games; though recently he ran a two for one special (two goals for one egg)! Victoria is attending a pre-K class three mornings a week this year. She and I ride our bikes to and from school. Her preschool is right beside Olivia's school and across the street from the community center and park. Victoria is in a free dance class offered at the community center once a week. I am so thankful for all of the conveniences God has put here for us. Nolan's soccer practice is even at the same middle school.

Pray for our kids as they share our house and yard with many other children. Some children are not as easy for them to love, so they are learning to show the love of Jesus to their world.