

The University Next Door



InterVarsity Christian Fellowship
March 05
Volume 5, Issue 1

WHY I DO THIS

A hearty hello to you who support this ministry in prayer and through your generous financial gifts! I'm someone who sees things in great detail all at once and that makes writing this newsletter a challenge. It's hard to choose what things to include because many times the things that are the most important don't "tell" well. But it's those very same things by which I know God has called me into this ministry, and in this newsletter I'm going to try and tell you about a few of them.

YOU MEAN YOU REALLY CAN BE A PROFESSOR FOR JESUS?

Those of us in ministry to graduate students and faculty have a phrase we use with those in our charge at least weekly: "the integration of faith and learning." The idea is that if you are a Christian scholar you should be worshipping the same Person in your work as you are in church; Christ is Lord of both parts of life. The difficulty is moving from the fancy phrase to actual habit in a secular university.

This semester the Lord has been doing a quiet but important work in this area. A discussion group I lead at our faculty/student luncheon has been studying the work of the contemporary Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga (pronounced like "planting" corn with an "uh" added on). If anyone has integrated his faith and his learning, Dr. Plantinga has, and the question I brought this group back to over & over was, "can you see yourself doing in your own field what Plantinga has done in his?" There is no room here for the details of our discussions, (which included not intellectual questions only but how you treat and witness to colleagues) but by the end of our five-week series on Plantinga most everyone "got it," and there was one extra treat for me. A business professor named Jeff Overby, who has only come back to his faith in the last year, told our group, "this has been really helpful. I could see some new research coming out of this for me."

I can't tell you all what that kind of thing means in the doing of this ministry. It's the same thing roughly as that quiet fifteen year old boy in the youth group telling

When eighty handouts are too few!

As several of you reading this newsletter know, the reason for that discussion group about Alvin Plantinga is that he came to speak to our fellowship last month. Dr. Plantinga spoke at the invitation of one of his former students, a Christian and good friend of mine, Dr. Tom Crisp. We put on the event at the Episcopal University Center with the help of our good friends there who provided not only a church sanctuary, but coffee and desserts as well. Now we were expecting only sixty people to show, but had eighty handouts printed out. Ninety-three people came, and we didn't have enough! Praise God!

JAY WOODHAM:

1329 Burgess Street
Tallahassee, Florida
32304

PHONE:

850.575.9395

On the Web

www.intervarsity.org
www.ivcf.org/gfm
www.gfmse.org

Contributions:

InterVarsity Christian
Fellowship
P.O. Box 7895
Madison, WI 53707
All gifts are tax deductible



Dr. Alvin Plantinga

New faces all around

There has been a steady influx of people into the ministry this semester, and two of them have especially encouraging stories. One is a middle-aged professor (not Dr. Overby mentioned above) who has returned to his faith in the wake of personal tragedy; a story all the more remarkable for the facts of his age and position in the academy. The other is a first year graduate student who is a brand new Christian. I found this out when she asked for advice on “next steps” in her new faith. Please share my gratitude to God for this returning brother and new sister, and please pray for them in their walk with Christ and for me as I come alongside them. I’m also happy to announce two of our grad students are expecting their first child. Matt and Lindsey Harrington, both graduate students in the History Department and both officers of the chapter are expecting their first child in September of this year. Matt came into this ministry about when I was beginning my work here. He met and married Lindsey during that time, and she became part of the fellowship too. My how time does fly.

Important fundraising update: please read

Governments are not the only things that run deficits. Projected expenses for my ministry are exceeding income. I’m currently required to reduce my hours on campus and devote twenty-three hours a week to fundraising. As you can tell, this is a difficult time to step back from campus, but I can’t stay on campus without adequate funding. At present, I need to raise \$25,500 by June 30th. If I have not yet contacted you about this and you would like to make a contribution toward this goal beyond what you currently give, or know someone who has a heart for the campus and might be interested in giving to my ministry please contact me (even if it’s just to let me know you are praying for me in this regard).

Praise report & prayer requests

Praise: As you have read you can see there is much to thank God for this semester. Most of you will remember that we put on a small conference in Gainesville about this time every year. There is no space to go into details here, but we have already held it, and it was in every aspect the best one yet.

Prayer: First, every fellowship I am responsible for, the Christian Legal Society, Christian Medical Association, and Grad Fellowship, will all need new leaders for next fall. The selection process will begin in April. Please pray earnestly that God would lead us in selecting good officers for each of these fellowships.

This concludes this issue of *the University Next Door*. Expect another one the first week of May.