

News from the Valley

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"We give you thanks O God, we give you thanks, calling upon your Name and declaring all your wonderful deeds" Ps 75:1

Our God is a doer of wonderful deeds. His Name is powerful and good. Want proof? Here are some of the wonderful deeds of the Lord this year in the Ohio Valley:

- Our **West Virginia University** chapter has basically *doubled* in size this year, at least 7 students came to faith this year, and one chapter leader, **Katie McKeever**, is coming on staff
- Several **new** chapters are being planted: **Slippery Rock, Wright State, Pitt**, Black and Asian chapters at **Ohio State**, to name some. It is exciting to see the apostolic passions of staff that more students would hear and respond to the gospel
- There are **seven new staff** joining our team this year—courageous young men and women who could have gotten jobs elsewhere but chose to invest in students and, in this economy, take God at His word and trust His promises for their provision. They humble me!
- To this point, we challenged new Columbus staff **Connie Anderson** to raise \$30,000 in one month, and she raised \$29,500; she also has led 2 people to Christ in that time!
- 31% of our students are regularly in **missional prayer**, up from 28% last year
- Our **diversity** continues to increase: about 42% of our students are nonwhite or nonAmerican, up from 37% last year
- 224 students were trained in **evangelism** this year
- **103 students make decisions to follow Christ this year!** Glory to God!



Connie Anderson

Declaring Your Wonderful Deeds



Me doing St Paul...

One of the most fruitful parts of InterVarsity work is the training we do at **Cedar Campus**, our training center in the upper peninsula of Michigan. Thousands and thousands of students, faculty, and families have met God by the shores of Lake Huron, and this year was no exception. I was the Bible expositor for the first week; the text was Paul's letter to the Philippians. I memorized and recited the text for the students, which is a good discipline as it forced me to think about each word and models something important for the students. What struck me was the theme of the unshackled gospel (Paul was in prison when he wrote) which is *unstoppable*, energizing a community of like minded believers who know Christ in the deepest ways as they hold to the word of life.

Two students responded publicly to the call to follow Christ for the first time; more than a hundred others agreed to write their achievements and failures on toilet paper and cast it into a toilet we had set up at the back of the room, rejecting whatever they had trusted for their identity, and embracing instead the surpassing worth of knowing

Christ. As I watched those students do that, it reminded me why I love college ministry so much – the culture is in trouble, truth is assaulted on many fronts, the self-absorption is real, but here were men and women declaring that they belonged to Christ and not the world, captured by His truth and life and not the culture; pursuing His purposes and not theirs.

We had hundreds of students from my division go to Cedar Campus this spring (45 from OSU are there this week!), and the impact was profound. Seven students from our Black chapter at Youngstown State went for the first time, and came away with a deeper sense of the values of InterVarsity and a passion to double the number of Bible studies on campus and to start two studies for seekers. **Steph Macek**, staff at Case Western, reported on one student who became a Christian about 3 weeks ago: *At the end of the week she said, "Oh man! I can't believe this is over. Can't [Cedar Campus] go on forever? I don't want to go home."* Cedar Campus doesn't go on, but the Lord Jesus does—our home *forever*.

Calling on Your Name – Cedar Campus

Paul says to the Philippians that he has “learned the secret of being content in any and every situation”; as the economy falters, people are laid off, and uncertainty reigns, I want to stand with Paul and learn this secret; and the secret is not hard, in one sense. It is to be so locked in to Christ, inviting Him into all of life, that the circumstances, real as they are, become opportunities to see Him at His creative best. I have had many donors who have had to cut back, and this has left me in some deficit; but I have also had some very generous friends who embrace the importance of ministry among collegians by giving to our work—one told me yesterday he and his wife are giving \$4000 this month. **“I am amply supplied,** now that I have received your gifts” says Paul, and I agree! Thank God with me, and if you have typically given a year end gift in June, please send that in by the end of the month. I’ll be sending out a letter this summer asking for commitments for the coming year.

There are other staff who are in more challenging situations; two here in northeast Ohio. One in particular, **Anna Gruntz**, needs to have a large increase in giving to stay on staff. She is fully gifted spiritually for the position, and has been working diligently on the financial gifts, but not enough has yet come in. This is one of the major faith challenges for us—to see a young single woman working hard to raise her support but not seeing it come in. *Hear O Lord! Give us energy to do the fundraising work, to stay at it and not give up. Move on Your people to give in faith by faith for the faith.*

Chapter Planting

We are laser focused on taking the gospel’s truth and power to every corner of West Virginia, western Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The major way to do this is through chapter planting – starting new fellowships, especially where no existing fellowship of another campus ministry is operating. Two such places we are doing this next year are **Fairmont State University** in West Virginia, and among Asian American students at the **University of Pittsburgh**. It is clear to us that there are open doors and hungry students at these schools. **Jason and Andrea Huang** have already started a seeker Bible study at Pitt, and Marietta College staff **Dan Geogorian** is going to cross the Ohio and join **Jesse Roselius** to help a lot of nonChristians at FSU lose that identity next year...



Jesse and Dan



Andrea and Jason

For all of July, Pam and I are going to Cedar Campus to serve 80 or more of the best student leaders from around the Great Lakes in our **Leadership Institute**. *There is no better or more robust training anywhere for college student leaders*, in my not so humble opinion. We will tackle five loves: Loving the Truth, the World, Others, Grace, and the Lost. I am the “dean of curriculum” so I have been spending much time in putting together the best training we have. The leverage this Institute has is profound; it has become cliché to speak of “life changing experiences,” but I daresay that that is exactly what this is, for many students. Please pray for God’s power and truth, as I and others prepare, and as we gather as God’s people in joyful submission to Him. Also, I have to raise **an extra \$1200** for this program; please use the envelope enclosed if you would like to make a contribution to our support.



Summer Sailing at Cedar Campus

Leadership Institute

Prayer

1. Thank God with me for the **financial provision** for me and many others. Pray for my colleagues Anna, Rachel, Heidi and Bok as they invite others to invest in student work. We need breakthroughs!
2. Please continue to pray as we seek a **home church**.
3. Pray for God’s power at **Leadership Institute** this summer, for me as I teach and shepherd, for Pam as she is away from her garden, and for Melanie who is going through as a student. I’ve attached a calendar for you to pray for us during the month.
4. Pray for your **refreshment** and ours, as staff in my division need summer rest.
5. Pray for **Katie, Joyce, Amy, and Karla** as they staff the missions trip to Xining China this summer, and for **Chloe** as she travels in support of the Cairo Egypt Urban Mission we is doing there in a “garbage village.”

Personal and Family Page

While there is much, really, to be thankful for, I need to be honest and say that I can't remember a year when I have experienced more loss and challenge. My Mom went to be with Jesus on Easter Sunday in April. Pam and I had the opportunity to be with her as she passed away. I must say that it was sad--but truly joyful, too, like escorting someone to the airplane gate for the trip of a lifetime. We sang hymns and choruses, and read some Scripture; not to comfort her so much as to bear witness to a sort of coronation: "*The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body...When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'*" (1 Cor 15) Imperishable, glory, power – Mom knows it from the inside out now. Glory to the One who has swallowed up her death in sweet and unending victory – farther up and further in, forever.

Other challenges include my friend Rick Goetsch who almost died several times as he fought a virulent pneumonia this spring, two other friends battling cancer, having to let go a staff who was underperforming and unable to raise money, other staff whose relationships were strained and needed [my] mediation, filling in for staff on leaves and sabbaticals, and the press of funding challenges in this economy. God has been faithful, and comes into these hard places when I don't forget to ask Him. Sometimes even when I do. All of these sufferings are part of following Jesus, and in this case, following him to the cross.

We are off to the **Outer Banks** for our biannual week at the beach with Pam's family. The whole family will be there to ride waves, eat like royalty, laugh and argue and tell embarrassing stories, and forget about things for a week. Then, in September, we get to take advantage of the cheap airfares and go to Paris, Holland, England and Wales for two weeks with Melanie before she lands up at **Bangor University** in north Wales for a semester of study (Welsh history, Welsh language, etc).

We're visiting many friends "over there" who have stayed with us here; I love seeing them and new places and getting to travel with Melanie. We feel privileged to have the friends, time, and resources to do this.



"Me" catching a ride at the Beach



University of Wales - Bangor

Marc and Pam