

crossculture

Asian Intersarsity Christian Fellowship

September 2007 | Issue 1.2

by following the culture of the cross

crossing cultures

INTERVARSITY PURPOSE STATEMENT

In response to God's love, grace, and truth:

The purpose of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA is to establish and advance at colleges and universities witnessing communities of students and faculty who follow Jesus as Savior and Lord: growing in love for God, God's Word, God's people of every ethnicity and culture and God's purposes in the world.

HISTORY

Where we came from, where we're going...

by Laura Li, *AIVCF campus staff member*

AIVCF HAS AN INTERESTING HERITAGE THAT BEGINS IN THE LATE 1980S, PROBABLY THE YEAR SOME OF YOU WERE BORN! Two Korean American undergrad students and a PhD student of Greek ethnicity at the University of Michigan felt God calling them to begin a Bible study aimed to reach Chinese and Chinese American students. Along with a few others, they began what became CCF: Chinese Christian Fellowship. Ten years later, approximately when many of you were in fifth grade, CCF became an officially affiliated InterVarsity chapter.

Having been a student in IVCCF from 2000-2004, and now being a staff member for the past year, I've seen the convergence of the good things about CCF's original objectives, and the strengths of InterVarsity's rich history of campus ministry, result in a strong and flourishing community here at U of M. Due to the vision of a few non-Chinese students, a whole ethnic group, that was up until that point not yet being reached, has been largely impacted and mobilized to love and serve God and this campus. Many of us are direct beneficiaries of their obedience to the Spirit's leading.

Looking back, we celebrate God's faithfulness in bringing many Chinese and Chinese American students to responding to Jesus for the first time, as well as the development of students who have grown up in Chinese churches to follow Jesus with their whole life. And now, it is our turn to cross cultures (get it? Cross Culture!) like those Korean and Greek students, to look out for other people on our campus who need to encounter Jesus and respond to the call to follow Him. Where are our South

Asian, South East Asian, and Pacific Islander friends? What about International students, and Asians in the Greek system? The Lord has placed us in a campus filled with Asian students of diverse backgrounds who still don't know the love of Christ. I believe the Lord has gifted our community as Chinese Americans with incredible hospitality and warmth to the extended Asian American community on our campus. Let's use those gifts for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom!

This past year the staff and leadership team of InterVarsity Chinese Christian Fellowship decided to make a name change. Along with our new name, Asian InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, we are also hoping to adopt a broader vision. But this vision isn't new. Just as the early church, which consisted of mostly Jews, was called to reach out to the Gentiles, and as early Western missionaries sailed across seas to reach our ancestors throughout Asia, I invite you to join in also seeking out the people groups on this very campus that have yet to be reached. I invite you to be about what we've always hoped to be about – reaching the whole campus with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You might be wondering: If we're called to reach all nations, why are we calling ourselves Asian IV? Well, over time we've learned that Asian and Asian Americans have similar experiences in their spiritual journeys. There are blessings as well as barriers that make our Asian and Christian identity unique. So here in AIV, we're hoping to discover and discuss those things as



Vintage photo of CCF campers at Cedar Campus, 2004

we are trained in godliness together.

If you are a non-Chinese student considering joining this community, let me give you an especially hearty welcome. I encourage you to also engage cross-culturally and to participate in our mission of creating a more diverse fellowship, not for the sake of diversity, but for the sake of the gospel, which the Word of God says is for all the nations.

As we begin a new year with a new name, let's make this our hope and prayer: "The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God." Psalm 98:2-3

THEOLOGY

HEAVEN REACHING DOWN TO US:

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

THE FIRST THING WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT GOD IS THAT HE LOVES US DEEPLY, BUT THERE'S A PROBLEM. We're all infected with a spiritual disease called sin, a sickness of the soul that affects every aspect of life. We know we have this disease because we rebel against God. Think about the bad things we do—lust, gossip, cheat lie—these are the symptoms of a sickness that if left unchecked would ruin us, the people around us and even our world.

The sad fact is that we love rebelling against God's ways and we choose to go our own way. Eventually, by continuing to follow the desires of the disease of sin, we find ourselves forever separated from God. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 9:27 that we are all going to die and after we do, we will face God to be judged. Because of our sin and the path we have chosen, we will fall short of God's standard of perfection. God is perfect, he is holy, he is without sin. Even if God wanted to forgive us, he must judge us because he is holy and we are sinners.

If we die without our sin disease cured or our bad things paid for, we will be eternally separated from God in a place called hell. Hell is where we suffer the punishment for our misdeeds without any hope of parole. This sounds like a bad dilemma, but remember that God loves us deeply. He doesn't want people to follow their own way toward destruction. He doesn't look forward to sending anyone to hell. So he did something about our situation.

He sent Jesus to earth. Because Jesus was God's Son, he was sinless. He never broke God's laws and did what none of us could possibly do—live a sinless life. Because Jesus was perfect, his death on the cross accomplished two very im-

portant things. First, the blood he shed is God's antibiotic for our sin disease. Through applying the blood of Jesus to our souls, God can begin to reverse the stronghold of sin. Second, when Jesus suffered on the cross, he took the full punishment of our sin upon himself. The Bible says in Isaiah 53 that Jesus was pierced for our transgressions, or misdeeds.

Finally, Jesus didn't stay dead. On the third day he came back to life, proving that he could pay for all of our sins and beat death and hell. Jesus said that by believing in him, we can also beat death and be raised again. Every believer in Jesus has the hope of heaven—the certainty that when we die won't stay dead but, like our leader, we will come to life again through his power. Because Jesus is alive, we can know him today. It is knowing Jesus and following him on a daily basis that allows us to live life the way it was intended: abundantly, fully, and freely.

The last part of the message has to do with how we respond. The Bible tells us we must repent if we are to receive the gift of Jesus. When we repent, we basically say to God that we want his way and we are willing and ready to turn over our lives to his leadership. We acknowledge our sin, ask God for his forgiveness and power and decide to follow Jesus as our Lord. When we repent, we place our full trust in what Jesus has done for us, not what we can do for God. We trust in his complete and satisfactory death and resurrection and ask him to save us from sin's consequences. Are you ready to give control over to God and admit your sin?

York Moore
*Author of Growing Your Faith
 by Giving it Away (2005)*

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS? DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? FEEL FREE TO ASK AN AIV MEMBER, OR COME CHECK OUT ONE OF OUR LARGE GROUPS, HELD ON FRIDAY EVENINGS!

SEPTEMBER LARGE GROUPS: WORLD ISSUES

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”
 (Colossians 3:15-16)

**Every Friday, 7:00pm,
 at the Forum Hall
 in Palmer Commons**

- 9/7 | **Welcome/What is AIV?**
 Speakers: Laura Li, Sara Wolfgram, and Timothy Li
- 9/14 | **AIDS & Social Justice**
 Speaker: Melodie Marske
- 9/21 | **Multi-Ethnicity**
 Speaker: Fred Bailey
- 9/27 | **International Justice Mission (IJM) Event**
 Speaker: Elizabeth Vitell
 (Thursday)
- 9/28 | **No Large Group**

Nantou Reflections

by Arthur Saye, *Sophomore*

“TEACHER, WHY DO YOU TALK FUNNY?” ASKED DENNIS, ONE OF MY STUDENTS FROM THE FIRST WEEK OF CAMP.

“Chinese is my second language,” I replied.

“Oh...” Dennis nodded understandingly and went back to his seat.

Language is just one of the dozens of obstacles short term missionaries face. As one of two missionaries representing AIVCF this year (the other being Melissa Pan), I felt ready to tackle any obstacle that came my way, knowing that I had God on my side.

The first week of camp, about half of the kids are aboriginal, also known as the “true natives” of Taiwan. Most of them came from broken families, and many of them have alcoholic parents who gamble their way into debt, creating a never-ending cycle of poverty. Aboriginal teen pregnancy rates are also the highest in the country.

To me, God’s presence has always been extremely strong in Nantou, but the kids who attend the camp need God more than ever. It isn’t for their lack of desire to have relationship with God, however. Many of them have never gotten the opportunity to experi-

ence God’s love.

Throughout the camp, we spend every hour with the kids. Although language is an obvious barrier, God always has ways to provide. The vast majority of the evangelism we did during the camp was through our actions, not our words.

I discovered early on that loving the kids with a pure and sincere heart is the best way to reach them. By showing them God’s love through our actions, the kids are able experience God, many for the first time.

In Taiwan, many of the kids are thirsting for attention. Because of the cultural background, many parents are too busy with work, and as a result, unintentionally neglect their children. Some kids who attend camp have never even been hugged before.

By the end of the week, even the most resistant kids open up. Kids are not the only ones to benefit from the overwhelming love exhibited in camp, however. Every year in Nantou, I feel a certain type of euphoric connection with God that leaves me smiling at seemingly nothing at all—all because of God. Rest assured, God is present in every corner of the globe. Just open your eyes.



Campers at Nantou, Taiwan

CULTURE

A Glimpse at Thailand

RELIGIONS: Thailand is nearly 95% Theravada Buddhist, with minorities of Muslims, Christians, Mahayana Buddhists, and other religions. Buddhism in Thailand is strongly influenced by traditional beliefs regarding ancestral and natural spirits, which have been incorporated into Buddhist cosmology. Buddhism casts strong influence on daily life. For example, meditation, one of the most popular aspects of Buddhism, is practiced regularly by numerous Thai as a means of promoting inner peace and happiness.

PEOPLE: Thailand has a population of about 60 million. Ethnic Thais form the majority, although the area also contains Mon, Khmer, Burmese, Lao, Malay, Indian, and Chinese. There is a high degree of integration, resulting in enormous cultural and social unity. The official national language is Thai, and dialects are spoken in rural areas; other languages include Chinese and Malay.

Small Group Leaders

BAITS

Eric Chen: Senior, *Electrical Engineer*

Tammy Yang: Senior, *Economics*

"My small group is going to win every small group competition. I hope you're ready."



COUZENS



Albert Ma: Junior, *Neuroscience*



Tim Li: Super-Senior, *Electrical Engineering*

BURSLEY

Margaret Yi: Sophomore, *Piano Performance*



"My hope is that we will learn together how to live lives that glorify God and show His love to the nations (see 1 Peter 2:12)."

STOCKWELL

Janice Chen: Junior, *Kinesiology*

Melissa Chen, Sophomore, *Chemical Engineering*

"I really hope that we'll be able to form strong friendships, grow together, and help each other see God when it's hard—it's gonna be a good year."



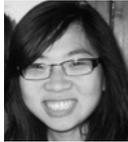
S. QUAD



Steven Lu: Junior, *Microbiology*

"My greatest hope for small group next year is that everyone will be able to find a family in small groups on this large U of M campus."

WEST QUAD



Shannon Qin: Junior, *Art and Architecture*

"I hope we'll have open hearts and minds to serve God both in the community and each other."



Jon Go: Junior, *Kinesiology*

"I hope that every week we'll have a new face and name to learn, and by the end of the year, no one will know who each other is because there will be way too many people."

MARKLEY



Spencer Chang: Junior, *Business*

"My greatest hope for small group next year is for people to grow in their love of God's word."



Michelle Liang: Sophomore, *Undecided*

"I pray for small groups all over campus to be communities in which people feel they can turn to over and over again to meet God in both Scripture and relationships formed within small group."

EAST QUAD



Jeff Bennett: Junior, *Civil Engineer*

Sky Yang: Junior, *English*

"I pray that small groups would be like jello. Solid, quaint yet unpredictable and dynamic. Its fruity flavor provides comfort for distressing days, amusement for frivolous compulsions, and sustenance for hungry stomachs."



DAILY PRAYER MEETING LEADERS

Lily Li: Junior, *Neuroscience*

Ken Tang: Sophomore, *Architecture*

"Jesus sacrificed himself so that all may share a personal, close relationship with the Lord our God in prayer. I feel that DPMs allow everyone involved in it to be more aware of how essential that relationship is in our lives, and to grow spiritually as a result."

Donica Liu: Junior, *Kinesiology*

"DPMs are fun because we get to try new ways to communicate with God."

Dan Chen: Sophomore, *Undecided*

"Prayer is our primary means of seeing God work in others' lives. I hope DPM can provide an opportunity for AIV fellowship members to learn the joy, comfort, and pleasure that can be found in speaking to god daily."

Johnny Lin: Sophomore, *Political Science & History*

"I hope that through DPMs everyone in our chapter learns the importance of prayer not just in their lives, but throughout God's entire kingdom."

Betsy Lau: Junior, *Chemistry & Japanese*

Bonita Goh: Sophomore, *Physics*

"The importance of being prayerful cannot be overstated, for all relationships are conversation, and regular prayer is essential to an intimate relationship with God (quoting Oscar Wilde for her own purposes)."





The Church in China

by Spencer Chang, *Junior*

Traditional ideas of government persecution, Bible smuggling, and secret meetings in the church in China is somewhat a misconception.

THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT DOES, IN FACT, SUPPORT SOME OF THE CHURCHES IN THE COUNTRY. The two government-sanctioned Christian organizations in the People's Republic of China are the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (TPSM) and the China Christian Council (CCC). The TPSM began in the early 1950's, based upon the three "self" principles, "self-governance, self-support (financially), and self-propagation." These principles, originally instituted in the late 19th century by missionaries to China, were reintroduced to break away from the idea of Christianity as a "foreign religion" and to appease the new communist government by establishing a "patriotic" church. The government, however, banned the church and all other religions from

1966 to 1976, during the Cultural Revolution. The church reemerged in 1979, and the CCC was formed in 1980. These two organizations, the TPSM and CCC, work together to serve and build up the church in China, which officially consists of about 10-13 million members.

However, despite their presentable official face, many still believe that the government's true views of Christianity are more similar to those of their communist predecessors. The "two associations," as they are called, are viewed by many, in China and around the world, with great suspicion. It is believed that the TPSM and CCC are, at best, doing what they can in a country whose government and society does not fully support their religion, or at worst, merely a tool of the government used to control the practice and spread of Christianity. Because

of this mistrust, there are a large number of unregistered and house churches in China. Some believe that the majority of Chinese Christians are involved with these unofficial churches, making the previous totals inaccurate. And despite the policy of religious freedom, there are many reports of persecution against members of these unregistered churches.

As students in America, we are familiar with our own Constitutional freedom of religion and separation of church and state, and can recognize the conflict of interest and dangers of a system, such as China's, where the government is so deeply involved with religious expression. By having an official, "post-denominational" church, where there are no denominational divisions, the Chinese government is bordering closely on telling people what to believe, with house churches and greater risk

of persecution as the only other option for those who disagree with the governmental line. Also, the focus on “self” of the TPSM can be counterproductive to the interdependence that the global body of Christ should be striving towards.

It is easy for us to focus on the negatives of the current situation in China, but there are many things that we can take heart in and praise God for. While their religious freedom may not compare to that of America, it has come a long way since the Cultural Revolution. We are all at different points in our spiritual journey, but the important part is that we continue to grow and make progress, like the Chinese church. Bibles are also currently being printed in China. Therefore, even if there is corruption or false teaching in the churches, we can take hope in the knowledge that our brothers and sisters are armed with the truth of the word of God.

In AIV, many of us are from China and other Chinese-speaking countries, which provides us with great missions opportunities. Religious interaction with foreigners is heavily restricted and Bible smuggling is illegal, but there are plenty of prospects with Global Projects and other missionary organizations. We should strive to learn more about the political, cultural, and religious climate in China and research ways in which we can get involved. And above all, we should trust in the power of prayer, praising God for what He has already done in China and what He is continuing to do, praying for the growth of the Chinese church, the commitment of missionaries, strength of those being persecuted, and the opening of doors to join the worldwide fellowship of believers.

MISSIONS

Come, Now is the Time to Worship

by Sophia Chang, *Junior*

My greatest wish for missions this year is that as a fellowship, we care about worship. If we live in awe of God, then others will see; if we delight in God, then we will desire to “declare His glory among the nations” (Ps. 96:3); and if we realize how worthy He is, we will want to see all the nations praising His name. In his book, “Let the Nations Be Glad”, John Piper shows how a diverse group of people from all nations praising God display His glory by showing that He is a God able to be esteemed by people of vastly different cultures. Praise God that there is already so much diversity in the global church! This year, let us grow in reflecting that diversity and begin to understand our interdependence on the diverse global body of Christ. How do we as the church in America need the church in Asia? How do we need IVME and how can we support them?

We have so much need within the body for each other, and there is so much need for us as the body in the world. This year we will be looking into the AIDS crisis and our role in addressing the epidemic. We have a unique message of life, hope, and unmerited love as Christians. Let’s share it! We have a unique stance on issues of morality. Let’s use it! So maybe you decided not to go to Medical school precisely because you have zero interest in learning about sickness. AIDS touches issues of sexism, poverty, economic decline, rejection, homelessness, and culturally accepted ideas and practices. We are a global body; this is not just

Africa’s problem. Join me in “reaching out as the global body of Christ”.

Be on the lookout for:

- Service projects with IVME sister small groups
- Opportunities to learn about other cultures
- Partnership with a team that is on the missions field in Asia working with those affected by HIV/AIDS
- A Summer Missions Fair
- Summer missions trips
- Ministering Across Cultures training (MAC)
- God and what He has to say!

LOCAL CHURCHES

(On campus and off)

Ann Arbor CRC
 Cornerstone CRC
 Grace Bible Church
 Harvest Missions Church
 Huron Hills Baptist Church
 Knox Presbyterian
 New Life
 University Reformed Church
 Vineyard Church

If you’d like to visit any of these churches,
 Enid Chan (enidchan@umich.edu)
 or Timothy Li (timli@umich.edu)
 would be happy to visit with you!

Anna and the King

by Bonita Goh, *Sophomore*

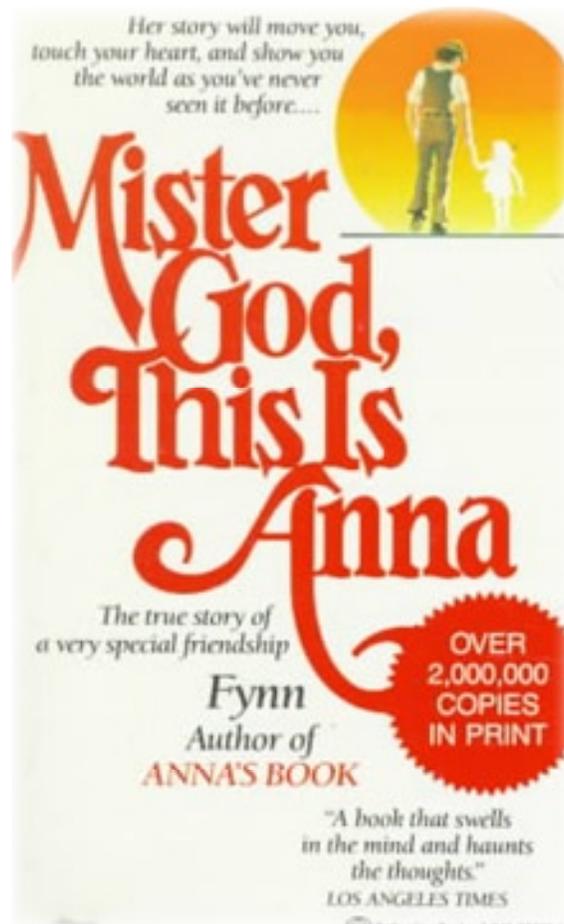
JESUS SAID “SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME TO ME, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE. I tell you the truth, if any one of you does not have faith as a little child, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven”.

What is Christianity through the eyes of a little child? We may be young, but I reckon we have already forgotten. More importantly, who is God, and can we, mere mortals, really know the heart of the Father, whose “ways are higher than our ways, and thoughts higher than our thoughts”? Fynn, with elegantly simple and honest prose in *Mister God, This Is Anna*, deftly recounts his experience being enlightened in theological complexities by the unassuming eloquence of a 6-year-old. Naturally, the title gives away who the 2 stars of the story are.

Anna first introduces herself in her unwittingly eponymous declaration, “the difference from a person and an angel is easy. Most of an angel is on the inside and most of a person is on the outside.” Fynn neglects to describe Anna’s physical appearance, but recounts her verbalized musings with a disciple’s attentiveness, allowing us as readers to get to know her on the inside, so that by the end of the book, we are certain if she is more angel or more mortal. And in that same opening we are also made to examine ourselves: do we define ourselves by who we are on the outside, to our peers, professors, bosses and spectators – more of a person – or by who we are on the inside, to our loved ones and our enemies – that is, more of an angel?

The more acquainted we are with Anna, the more uncomfortable we feel, as we, vicariously through Fynn, exchange in almost scoraticeque discourse with her;

it is through these conversations that Anna becomes our foil, and we become hers, and the qualities of angelic nature become glowingly apparent when set against dull human nature. We are drawn, not completely unpatronizingly, to her guise of naivete, for example, in her comparison of Jesus and Lucifer, when she refers to both of them as “the light”. However, we slowly become enamoured



when her naivete melts away to reveal shrewd wisdom beneath, because she explains that Lucifer, the Devil, is not so much darkness as he is a false light. We feel a mild sense of shameful wretchedness for having been a little patronizing of her; but Anna does not let us off just yet. She continues extending the analogy of light and shadows to illustrate the nature of God and His creation, appre-

ciating the fact that some sorts of shadows are not merely formed by sums and straight lines. (I somehow suspect that she is familiar with the effects of diffraction, which creates grey areas, both literally and metaphorically: physically and morally)

In spite, Anna acknowledges that we cannot know God by observing Him from the outside, that is, by reading books or hearing the testimonies of others, or otherwise observing from a distance in a controlled sanitized – secular – environment. No, she says, in the same way as a voltmeter cannot measure potential difference when it is not connected to – that is when it is outside of – a circuit, we cannot know God when we are outside of Him; but when we enter into (a relationship with) God, we become a part of God in the same way a voltmeter becomes a part of a transmitter radio’s mechanism. The voltmeter serves the radio as a whole, without ever needing to see or know how a radio works, all the while obediently content that it has discerned the part of an electronic radio that concerns itself – the potential difference; so in the same way as we mortals enter into a relationship with God, we become a part of His plans, knowing how He relates to us as individuals, and at the same time being humble enough to know that His plans are too large for us to comprehend.

Fynn makes it only too clear that the Anna will not always be around to cheer and to guide. She died in an accident when she was 8. The circumstances surrounding it are inconsequential, because the tale is of Anna and the King, and once we have gotten to know Him, and are getting to know more about Him, it does not change the fact that in this life or the next, Anna is still an angel.

CAMPUS

A LETTER FROM GREEK INTERVARSITY

OUR MINISTRY IS FOCUSED ON REACHING EVERY FRATERNITY AND SORORITY STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN WITH THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST. We are a spiritual resource for Greeks as they consider Christianity, grow in their faith, and seek to influence their Greek community with the Gospel. We have over 50 Greek IV chapters across the country. At the University of Michigan, we re-started our Greek IV ministry in 2002 with the help of several student leaders who wanted to reach their Greek community and establish a unique ministry for Greeks. In the past we have had a weekly all-Greek Bible study and student leaders who are leading a Bible study in their individual houses. Students take on leadership responsibilities and enjoy fellowship with other Christian Greeks from various houses on campus. Our national ministry hosts an annual Greek Conference in Indianapolis. This year's Greek Conference is February 1-3. You can find more information on our national web site at www.greekiv.org. We have taken as many as 12 students from the U of M to join the over 600 Greeks that attend Greek Conference.

As part of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship's ministry at the U of M, we hope to continue partnering with our sister chapters in reaching the whole campus. Our Greek students are thrilled to build relationships with others, especially through shared ministry experiences like Chapter Focus Week.

You could consider the Greek community at the U of M hard soil, but we are confident in God's desire to reach this niche of campus and continue to work to reach our community. We love meeting new students who are either interested in going Greek or who are already in houses and want to learn how to integrate their Christian faith and their Greek life. We look forward to meeting you!!

In Christ,
 Laura Sapp, *Greek Ministry Coordinator*
lasapp@comcast.net

ART

"For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline."
 (2 Timothy 1:7)



by Irene Wu, *Senior*

ACTS 2: 44 - 47

"All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

FELLOWSHIP

You don't want to bring it up.

ACCOUNTABILITY

by Donica Liu, *Junior*

What is accountability?

Accountability is the responsibility every believer has to help others to stay focused and rooted in Christ. Accountability partnerships begin when fellow believers mutually agree to challenge each other on hard issues. Partners give each other permission to ask about areas in which they struggle.

What are the Biblical bases for accountability? Why is it important that we do it?

James 5:16 instructs us to "confess our sins to each other and pray for each other so that we may be healed." Also, in his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul encourages, comforts, and urges them to live lives worth of God, who calls us into his kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2:12). He sets an example for us to do the same for our brothers. Remember that we are in this race together and should help each other to

"set our minds on things above" and "put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature" (Colossians 3). Finally, we are one body in Christ. When one part suffers or stumbles, we all experience the same (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Does the problem of hypocrisy stop you from being accountable?

We all know what Matthew 7:3-5 has to say about taking the speck of sawdust out of your neighbor's eye: "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Does this mean we can't be accountable to other people unless we become perfect first? That can't be true, since God calls us to accountability despite the fact that we have all fallen short of His glory. We might need accountability even more when we fail to have humility about our sinfulness. Partners should work together with a

sinner-to-sinner attitude instead of a saint-to-sinner attitude, which tends to carry an air of accusation.

Is your friend ready to hear it?

Matthew 7:6 answers this question for us: "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces." Make sure you assess the person, and the situation, before you mention anything. Prayer is also essential in accountability. Ask God to change his/her heart.

Check the issue, and check your motives.

Be sure that you are offering accountability for the right reasons and for the right kind of issue. Would the issue you're bringing up bother God as much as it would bother you? Remember: the person is ultimately accountable to God, not to humans (1 Thessalonians 4:8).

Don't underestimate the power of setting a good example.

Sometimes this may be all the other person needs in order to make a change. 2 Thessalonians 3:9 encourages us to live holy lives "in order to offer ourselves as a model for others to imitate."

What are some good approaches to use for accountability?

Ask questions instead of directly pointing fingers. Asking questions also encourages self-revelation, which could be more meaningful. In addition, watch your body language and general tone. These could create defensiveness and make a hard topic even harder to address.

Are accountability partnerships between males and females helpful?

We are all accountable to each other on some level. However, in terms of having an accountability partner, male-female partners foster a level of intimacy that probably isn't too helpful across genders.

WHAT IS A "QUIET TIME"?

A quiet time is simply time alone with God in the Scriptures, prayer, and meditation. It is the way you get to know Him and the foundation for consistent spiritual growth.

AN 8-MINUTE QUIET TIME STARTER

Quiet times may be any length. This is only a guide. You may find later that it is impossible for you to spend only eight minutes with God.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 1 minute | - | Prayer for guidance (Psalm 143:8) |
| 3 minutes | - | Reading of Scripture and meditation (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:18) |
| 1 minute | - | Application and writing down insights (James 1:22) |
| 2 minutes | - | Prayer: Praise and adoration (1 Chronicles 29:11), Confession (1 John 1:9), Thanks (Philippians 4:6, Psalm 100:4), Personal needs/petition (Matthew 7:7), for others (1 Samuel 12:23, Job 42:10) |

Visit us at:
www.umich.edu/~aivef

Questions? Comments? Submissions?
Email: crossculture@umich.edu