

When Is the Next Following Christ Conference?

That's a question I get asked all the time, ever since I wrapped up my stint as the program director of Following Christ 2002, InterVarsity's last national event for grad students, faculty, and professionals. But given other pressing endeavors, we were never in a position to say when — or even *if* — we could host another. Now, as of July 1, a big part of my job is to lay the groundwork for a renewal of our program of national conferences.

As InterVarsity's Graduate & Faculty Ministries (GFM) has developed, national events have always been a crucial part of our ministry. Everything from the big Following Christ conferences and colloquia for MBAs to a series of two-week-long Graduate Summer Seminars has proven to us how God meets and strengthens scholars and professionals at gatherings like these. It makes sense: conferencing is an essential feature of the academic and professional life across the board.



Harold Dean Trulear addressing the nearly 1,000 delegates of Following Christ 2002. photo: J. Stone/2100 Productions

We want students and faculty to have a chance to meet one another, to hear world-class speakers, and to dig into the big issues of faith. We want to build a program of national events on a solid foundation, biblically, intellectually, and financially. We want to

give each cohort of grad students a chance to attend a GFM conference that will encourage and challenge them to be faithful leaders of the major institutions of our culture. So that's what we're after.

When is the next Following Christ conference? I still can't give you a date — but we're rolling, and I believe it won't be long.

Tidbits

- ◆ Speaking of conferences, Al Erisman, who co-led the Business track at Following Christ 2002, passes along this story: “[Recently in Hong Kong] I went to a dinner for Christian scholars and met with ten or so professors from different universities and departments around Hong Kong. I asked them how they got started meeting this way (trying to explore together the connection between **their faith and their work**). They said it came out of the Following Christ conference.” What an encouraging word about continuing results of that event from half-way around the world!
- ◆ Speaking of conferences (again), InterVarsity's triennial Urbana Mission Convention is just over a year away. We're proposing plans right now for a special program for businesspeople, “**Business as Mission**.” More news later.

Next Up

- ◆ This fall we'll be publicizing our launch of the website we call the Ministry Exchange. It lets anyone share resources for Christian ministry, from Bible studies and handouts to readings, song lyrics, photos — you name it, and all for free. Please pray for our publicity plans, and try it out for yourself at ministryexchange.org.
- ◆ September and October are unusually busy months for meetings and travel: I'll be out of town over 25% of the time. Of particular importance are **two annual meetings**, one of the GFM Leadership Team and the other of GFM's Staff Directors. Much planning goes on there, so much wisdom is needed. Some of my early strategizing related to national conferences will be on the agenda.

Site Seeing

So many sites, so little time. Here are some you don't want to miss:

- ◆ A golden age for street maps! Newcomers maps.a9.com, with street-level photos, and the elegant maps.google.com are especially good. And a *real-time* taxi tracker: labs.google.com/ridefinder.
- ◆ My friend Kelly muses on arts, gardening, kids, photography, and life at weavingmajor.blogspot.com. I've been learning a lot from her lately. She also makes fonts to share, like “Markley” (at right).
- ◆ Only at JonBoyd.org: a review of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* (which I've been recommending lately) and more.

Boyd's Eye View



Ann and I tried a crazy idea for a vacation last month: we stayed home. We realized there were plenty of things we wanted to do right here in Chicago that we don't normally have (or take) the time to do. The advantages were obvious: save money on airfare and hotels, skip the exhausting hassles of travel, and take advantage of a city we

know and love. One of the highlights was a visit to the Garfield Park Conservatory, a series of lush greenhouses built in 1907, where we took this self-portrait.

All it took was turning off the phone, refusing to check email, and telling everyone we were on vacation. It was an experiment, but it proved very restful.

Another recent delight was meeting our new niece, Violet. At a family barbecue, she proved that (even at ten months) she can keep up with anyone when it comes to eating corn on the cob! We'll see her again in September, and we can't wait.

Prayer Requests

Please pray with me:

- ◆ For our renewal of the GFM conferencing program
- ◆ For effective publicity for the Ministry Exchange website
- ◆ For collective wisdom among GFM leaders at meetings Sept. 14–17 and Oct. 24–27

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