

New Territory

Here's a great vignette related by my colleague Jon Dahl, who works among grads and faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Madison:

"This morning I had breakfast with 'Walter,' a new grad student, who let me know up front as politely as he could that he could see being part of the Grad Fellowship provided two conditions could be met:

"First, that he be free to express his doubts about the existence of God and about any truth claims Christians make about that God. Secondly, he wanted to know if we believed the billions of people who are not Christians are consigned to hell. If we hold that Jesus is the only way then we wouldn't be seeing him again.

"On the first condition, I told him the fellowship is full of people who have questions, including the staff worker. He would be in good company. On the second condition, I pulled out my Bible and took him to Romans 1.

"That seemed to be new territory for him. We talked a lot about the nature of God's love and what it means when Jesus says he is the way, the truth, and the life. We talked about what Paul gets at in Romans about being judged by the light we have been given.

"The outcome of the conversation is he will be coming to our meeting tonight to hear Prof. Jeff Hardin talk about living a God-honoring life as an academic. I love this job."

This story captures so much of what we're up to: First, Dahl is *there*, right on campus, available to talk with Walter and folks like him. Second, he's honest and humble about the intellectual journey of Christian faith. But (third) he challenges Walter to think hard and clearly about who Jesus really is and what the Bible really teaches. Finally, this kind of work leaves Dahl saying, "I love this job."

I'm so glad God has called 100 of my colleagues to minister among academics as Dahl does — and privileged me to serve on their national leadership team. Stories like this remind me what the efforts we put into leadership, supervision, and infrastructure are really for!

Tidbits

- ◆ The undergrad InterVarsity chapter at DePaul University (staffed by a certain Ann Boyd) invited me to speak in October on faith and academics. My talk hinged on the question, "What is a Christian student?" and offered as many practical tips as I could muster from my own two decades as a schoolboy.
- ◆ Helping InterVarsity stay in touch with people — and at the same time helping people stay in control of how we contact them — is a major emphasis for the Web Team. We've been putting lots of work into a system to help people receive **national newsletters via email**.
- ◆ This month we launched a **network of intercessors** to pray regularly as we develop a program of conferences for Graduate & Faculty Ministries (GFM). At this early stage of dreaming big and laying groundwork, it's especially crucial to listen to God, and these folks will help us do just that. (If you'd like to join the circle, please let me know.)

Next Up

- ◆ Plans have been proceeding rapidly for "Open for Business," a conference for MBA students and business practitioners to be held at the Urbana Mission Convention in December 2006. Next steps include going live with online registration, producing a detailed brochure, and assembling an advisory board.

Site Seeing

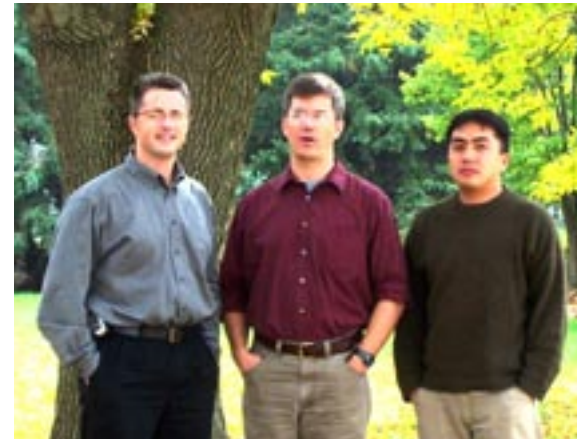
So many sites, so little time. Here are some sweet picks:

- ◆ If you ever need quality photos (for a presentation, church bulletin, or whatever) don't miss **iStockPhoto.com**, which gives easy access to over half a million images, royalty-free for as little as \$1.
- ◆ If you use Apple's free iCal application, you can publish any calendar to share with others — a great way to sync up the family. The free services of iCal Exchange (**icalx.com**) make it easy to publish.
- ◆ New at JonBoyd.org: a review of *Latino USA: A Cartoon History*, thoughts on the verb *to heal*, "A Prayer before Study," and more.

Boyd's Eye View

Ann and I are delighted to report that we're **expecting a baby** on Easter Sunday! That puts us just about half-way through the pregnancy now, and Ann and Baby Boyd have been doing great. After three miscarriages in the last year, we've been especially attentive to this little one. We enjoy listening to Baby Boyd's heartbeat with a nifty fetal monitor whenever we feel nervous. So far so good!

The pregnancy books inform us the baby is the size of a can of pop right now. A couple weeks ago it was a stick of butter, and a lemon before that. Why do they always compare fetal size to various food items? Could it be that mama has food constantly in mind?



Three men with their hands in their pockets: John Terrill, me, and Jimmy Quach, the "Open for Business" leadership team.

Facts

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To make a tax-deductible contribution to support my ministry, make checks payable to InterVarsity and mail to PO Box 7895, Madison WI 53707. Please include a note saying "For Jon Boyd." You can also give securely online; for info, visit JonBoyd.org and click on "Donate."

Prayer Requests

Please pray with me:

- ◆ For students like Walter, thinking hard about their faith
- ◆ As we lay plans for the "Open for Business" conference
- ◆ For continued good health for Ann and Baby Boyd
- ◆ For \$1,300 in donations, to be in the black by December 31