

crossculture

Asian Intersarsity Christian Fellowship

October 2008 | Issue 2.2



What do I do? Where should I go?

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.

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Amanda Hurless & Jerry Wang

Front cover by Steven Chen, *Junior*
Back cover art by AIV Bursley Small Group

Staff Corner

a prayer for AIV

by Sara Wolfgram, *staff*

FATHER, I THANK YOU FOR giving us life and the chance to experience this world in Your presence. Thank You, Lord, for Your closeness and for Your Son and Your Spirit that unite us, despite the ways we doubt You, deny You and war against one another. Lord, You are all-powerful, yet oftentimes we offer You empty praise because we don't know you, God. How many of us will come to You one day and say 'Lord, Lord,' yet You will say 'I never knew you?'

God, I am helpless without You. Lord, how can I really know You when I can't see the ways that I've been fooling myself? How is it that we can confess You as Lord, yet inside our hearts are far from You? God, you desire to draw near to all of us, but as You keep knocking, we are turning away. How true it is that there are none who seek God.

Yet, You are not confined by our lack of faith and our hesitance and stubbornness. You sealed the history of the world with a radical act of sacrifice, power and love. You foresaw all things before they came to pass. When will we see, Lord, that it's not about us alone, but that You are working through us, as you worked through Christ, to accomplish something greater, something purer and truer than we can even imagine?

Lord, when will we be able to fix our eyes on You and not be choked out by life’s worries, riches and pleasures? When will we be able to see You in all things that we do, seeing you as the truth behind the “truths?” When will we be able to see AIV as a mission-based part of your body, a group of students that is constantly learning and dying to self, then living and going?

I pray first for myself that You would be giving me humility and faith. Take my pride, my ambitions, my fear and replace it with Your wisdom and grace. Give me freedom to make mistakes and freedom from judgment because You are my righteousness and my judge.

For AIV, I pray that we would shed our falsehood, arrogance, busyness, idols and worries and simply come to encounter You. There can be no real transformation and no real purpose behind anything we do unless we have allowed ourselves to be steeped in the reality of You. Do we even know what we’re missing, Lord? Can we even imagine what it is like to be so filled with life and fullness, lacking nothing?

Give us true life, Lord and open the eyes of our hearts. May this change in us spill over into all parts of our lives. May our chapter grow and max out Palmer Commons, and may we see more people than we can imagine coming to know You and experience true change in their life... our friends, our classmates... complete strangers. Lord, help us to love our classes and study with purpose. Help us to make the hard decisions because we’re following You and not our own insecurity. We invite You into our hearts, our relationships, our fellowship and campus, praying for Your kingdom to come. Amen. †

God, The Ultimate Healer

by Casey Lwo, Senior

AS A YOUNG WOMAN IN HER twenties struggled painfully to put on her shoe, I quickly bent down to help her with tears in my eyes. Dr. Kao had just diagnosed her with Diffuse Scleroderma, and at her advanced state there was nothing we could do to help her. My heart ached for her, because her disease had already progressed to the point where every movement caused extreme pain. After I put on her sock and shoe, she started crying and thanking us. I remember thinking to myself at that moment, “Why are you thanking us? Didn’t we just fail you?”

Seeing the limitations of human medicine has humbled me and taught me to find comfort in the healing power of Christ. For the few thousand patients we saw in China, we could, at the very best, ease their physical sufferings by providing them a few months supply of medicines. But God’s healing is complete and everlasting. Knowing that it is only God who can heal the people of the world, I am reminded of my own salvation. Jesus knows the most important place in need of healing: the soul.

God sees our diseased hearts, and we are restored to Him through faith. For Christ said to the sick woman in Mark 5:34:

“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

From this trip, I have learned that the best medicine given is the love of Jesus Christ. Knowing that Christ’s healing surpasses what we humans can do fills me with peace. Looking back at the woman and others like her that we met in Yunnan, I know that God will never fail them because He has never failed me.

As I struggle to be an obedient daughter to Him every day, I experience God’s healing power when I fall short. Reassured of His love for us, we who receive the healing of Jesus Christ are now vessels for God’s work. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says:

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.”

Jesus can transform the lives of those around us the same way He has changed our lives. Our job is to share Christ’s healing love to others and allow Him to work through us as His ambassadors. †

Un-defining Poverty

by Sophia Chang, *Senior*

BEFORE YOU READ THIS ARTICLE, take a moment and look at the picture. The village shown is Small London. I remember taking photos in that village, looking at them later, and picturing them on the newsletter for a missions agency with some sort of appeal to “Help save African children from their impoverished AIDS-stricken lives.” That thought upset me a little, because walking through Small London, there is no sense of poverty at all. Instead, an amazing sense of richness.

The people in the village live as some tribes did hundreds of years ago. We learnt from one of the villagers that the people in Small London had come from many different areas and had happily chosen to live this mud and thatch lifestyle, leaving modern conveniences behind. We also learnt that when news reporters come to record videos in Ghana concerning poverty, a lot of the times, villages which are actually comparatively wealthy are accidentally chosen based on appearance. Needless to say, my conceptions of wealth and poverty needed some redefining.

In the midst of ‘poverty’, I discovered wealth in the relationships I saw. One local explained to me how it was less dangerous to be a tourist, because of the shame that harming a tourist would bring upon one’s tribe. Although violence is not pretty, this was a good picture of how Ghanaians see themselves and their actions inextricably connected to their

communities. Our lives in the US are also connected to the people around us, but how often is community impact at the forefront of our decision-making rather than



personal pursuits? Community is evident even in the orientation of their buildings, traditional symbols, and methods of food preparation.

Outside of tribal relationships, Ghanaians also have a strong sense of something they call ‘Ghanaian hospitality.’ Before a newcomer even needs to approach a local, a Ghanaian will reach out to offer help, friendship, and welcome. As an outsider, it was possible to stop and talk to almost any local and find them willing to talk and wanting to get to know me better.

Regrettably, most Ghanaians are unaware of what they have. In many of the places we went, the overwhelming train of thought was that, “we are behind; we need to catch up to the US.” While there is much they can learn from the United States, they do not realize all that they have which we do not. By seeing themselves through the eyes of the media, they have forgotten much of the worth in their own traditions and turned to mimicking our high rises, single family homes, and lifestyle in ways which have been harmful to their culture, relationships, and environment.

While the AIDS pandemic and poverty are very real and serious problems on the African continent and we are called to respond, I hope that we can learn to see the African population as more than just people who need our help. God has created a diverse world to glorify Him, and in the global body of Christ, no part of the body is lesser or greater. There is so much to learn and gain from an understanding of the diverse people God has placed with us in this world. †

Check us out at:
www.umich.edu/~aivcf

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Everyone has a story. What's yours?
crossculture@umich.edu

The Least of My Brothers

by Jerry Wang, Grad Student

I HAD JUST HAD A NICE LUNCH with some friends after Sunday church. I left Charlie's feeling pretty good, clutching a small green bag of chocolates in my hand, given to me after Harvest's inaugural service. It was a beautiful day – a rich blue sky spotted with splotches of wispy white, a warm, radiant sun, and gentle, cool breeze. Perfect for running around with friends, playing football, taking a walk, or just sitting outside. I made my way through the Carriage apartments, headed in the direction of the CCRB and my apartment just beyond that, for another regular, pleasant Sunday afternoon. But what should have been a quick five-minute walk ended up becoming half an hour.

I was approaching the intersection of Washtenaw and Geddes when I saw him. Sitting there on the cold sidewalk, wrapped in his drab green coat, hunched back leaning against a street sign. Inwardly, I shook my head. *Oh great, here goes. Another homeless drunk.* My attitude shocked me, but it wasn't enough to keep me from planning my intentional negligence. The sign post was situated near the curb of the street, and like a sick reenactment of the parable of the good Samaritan, I was about to land a role as one of the unloving priests by passing by him on the opposite side of the sidewalk. Then, I heard a faint gentle whisper that might have been drowned out had I been using my mp3 player. "Go to him." I didn't need to look around to see if anyone had been trying to talk to me – I knew who it was. It was the same One I had gone to church that morning to worship. Suddenly, in that microsecond of thought, I was seized with fear and immediately began justifying myself.

But what if he is unfriendly towards me? What if he injures me? Even if I give him some of my money, what good will it do? Won't he just use it to buy more alcohol? I can't indirectly sin by doing something like that...! God was quiet as He listened to me lay out my logic, not arguing or fighting with me. But after I had finished my long train of pathetic thoughts, and was silent, He seemed to smile slightly. The gentle but distinct whisper came again. "Go to him." I sighed and looked down at the chocolates I held in my hand. I suddenly found myself taking long strides toward this man, where he was sitting on the ground. *No, don't!* my mind screamed at me. But I couldn't help it. I was beyond my own control.

He was wearing a baseball cap that covered his face where his curly, unkempt hair did not. I felt myself knelt down beside him, and extended my hand. "Would you like some?" I mumbled feebly. He looked up at me, slowly, and I saw his shriveled, contorted features, resembling a cartoon character's face after being punched in the nose. I saw the faint glimmer of his eyes behind his nearly closed eyes. He looked old and wrinkly, his back hunched over, his skin tanned from years in the sun. His brown hair was graying, and he carried a faint, refreshing scent like clean laundry.

It turns out that this old man did not know Ann Arbor, and had no friends or family here. Because it was hard to understand him, I grew impatient at one point, and contemplated leaving him on a Bursley/Baits bus at the mercies of the bus driver, and just going home. But the bus driver, a black middle-aged woman, understood him, and gently told us which bus to look for to get to Blake Center, which I originally misheard from him as "bike center." As we continued our walk, his hands gently clasping my arm as I guided him over curbs and across streets, I noticed that he was not using his cane.

DAILY PRAYER MEETINGS (DPM)

Monday

9:30 pm @ Bursley Main Lobby
7:30 pm @ East Hall Psych Atrium

Tuesday

10:00 am @ Pierpont Commons (piano)
7:30 pm @ East Hall Psych Atrium

Wednesday

7:30 pm @ East Hall Psych Atrium

Thursday

9:00 am @ League Underground



The white TheRide bus waited patiently for us as we walked across the street. I could feel the eyes around me boring into my back. Finally getting there, the door opened to a smiling, slightly balding white man in his fifties. As the blind man got on the bus and paid his fare, as the doors began to close, he turned back towards me and, shockingly, gave me a thumbs up in appreciation. I suddenly began to cry, heartbroken by my own hypocrisy and selfishness. How long had he been sitting there for?

How many people had passed him by?

He wasn't the pitiful one. I was. He wasn't the blind one. I was. Still, a peace and joy I had not experienced in a long time began to fill my heart. *God, that You would use a wretch like me...* I suddenly realized that I hadn't asked what his name was. But then again, I didn't need to, because deep down, I already knew.

His name was Jesus.

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'" †

How Do You Love?

by Kenny Tang, Junior

I LOVE RUGBY. IT'S A WONDERFUL SPORT THAT GETS knocked for being violent, but the strategy aspect is far more compelling to me than anything else. Two teams of 15 people line up against each other, and the goal is to get the ball into the end zone exclusively through a ball carrier. When the ball carrier gets tackled, his teammates jump on him and defend him from the other team (called a ruck) in order to maintain possession of the ball and pass it out of trouble to other teammates, who are ready to advance the ball.

I'm a sucker for metaphors, especially in sports, where accountability for one's actions and teaching of the fundamentals is stressed. In our own Christian walk, we function as players in the game, looking for opportunities to change the world around us, communicating and mobilizing resources to build God's Kingdom in the grit of the soil and the hearts of all people. When we run into conflicts, our brothers and sisters in Christ are there to ruck for us, support us and communicate encouragement in our lives.

The support we receive from them allows us to put the ball into their hands, perhaps to be returned to us when we pick ourselves up from the ground and continue playing. For me, this is exemplary accountability, in that we share each other's struggles and fight for each other, supporting each other in prayer and advice, encouraging them to refocus and recommit. I've known great fellowship here in AIV, and while I've grown, I've come to know that we

as students are profoundly intimidated by the pressures of school and the responsibilities of growing up. Rather than

Jesus replied, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

focusing on what we can do for God's kingdom, our own interests can take priority. But just as rugby is a team sport where individual players don't serve their own interests, so it is with us following Christ. It's vitally important that we're taking our commitments and our priorities seriously, and that we can grow by supporting and being supported in Love by our brothers and sisters in Christ.



One of my Rugby coaches over this summer was getting very frustrated over the lack of support that I was giving my teammates, letting them run into contact without support. He called me in, and spoke softly and soberly. "Maybe it's my own fault. Maybe I haven't made time to go over support drills. Maybe we haven't done enough conditioning. Maybe those guys are stronger, better and faster than we are. Maybe rugby is something you do on the weekends - you're not willing to get hurt for your teammates. Maybe you're not ready. But maybe you're just making excuses."

**"Maybe you're not ready...
But maybe you're just making excuses."**

How do we Love? (See Matthew 22:32-40.) By holding each other to our commitments. By praying. By jumping on your brother or sister when the times are rough and helping them at your own risk. What remains is the need to recognize what we're willing to give up if we see God's Love as important. †

In Not Of, pt. I

by Cory Chin, Sophomore

*I hide me far away from trouble
The world outside me grows darker by the day
So I promise to stay here close beside Him
Surely God would want His children safe...*

THAT'S AN EXCERPT FROM ONE OF Avalon's songs, "In Not Of". Being a diehard Avalon fan since freshman year of high school, I never actually stopped to meditate on the lyrics of this particular song and the urgency of the message that it carries. How true this is for many of us, even if we don't explicitly think those thoughts. I know personally, I once thought that the perfect Christian life would be isolation - being alone with God, with prayer, reading the Bible, singing praise songs, etc. I'd be completely sheltered from all the godlessness, violence, hatred, corruption, and selfishness of the world. But guess what? That's selfishness on my part.

*Then in reading, how my eyes were opened
I find that He is leading us out into the world
Into the middle of fallen saints and sinners
Where a little grace is needed most...*

"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar and puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light" (Luke 8:16)

How many times do we go to small groups, large groups, church services, retreats, conferences, etc. just to take notes, get a spiritual high for a few

days, and then archive it away deep down in the back of our minds? We need to be fed spiritually, and that spiritual food fuels the lamps that we are to shine in the darkness. Yet too many times, we hoard this knowledge and wisdom, and keep it all to ourselves, becoming consumers who end up merely going to fellowship and training events to be fed more and more. While it's important that we have defense and protection against the evil one, that's not the sole purpose of the teaching and training we receive - there's a whole world of lost people out there, dead in their sin. It's time to break out of our little AIV bubble and really reach out to the rest of the campus.

*Wait a minute
If we say we love them, why are we not in it
Why we run and hide
Entertain a stranger
Maybe entertain an angel
The danger is if our worlds don't collide...*

I'm definitely guilty of this "bubble effect" myself. This is my second year here, and I really can't say I've made much of an effort at all to make friends outside of AIV (or Good News*). I have a couple friends from high school too, but those were pre-existing relationships. Granted, I was in Baits last year, so it may have been a bit harder (okay, a lot!). But even this year, I find that I'm not really trying to develop friendships with non-Christians and reach out to them. So the only difference is that now, I don't

have an excuse. It's comfortable hanging out in the Christian environment, for the most part. But God didn't call us to barricade ourselves with support and just be comfortable - He called us to spread His gospel message to the four corners of the earth. I heard a quote from an atheist before that "if Christians really believed in hell, you would not be able to shut them up about their gospel message". So why are we sitting by and doing nothing as many of our neighbors are lost and headed for destruction? Part of it may be that we like feeling supported and safe. There's nothing wrong with that, but if it keeps us from fully serving the Lord and reaching out to the lost, then it becomes a big problem. Yes, God is sending us out like sheep among wolves (Matt. 10:16) and it's going to be very uncomfortable and unsafe at times. However, we are not alone - if God is for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31)? We also have each other as brothers and sisters in Christ to give support and encouragement. The real danger exists when our bubble keeps us apart from everyone else in the world. In a way, we're conceding them to Satan. By not sharing the gospel with them and by just hanging out with our own Christian friends, we are serving no one but ourselves. If we really love the people in the world, it's about time that we go out into the world and start showing them God's love through our actions.

*He came to save the world so let us be
In it, not of it... †*

*Good News is a Christian a cappella group on campus

A Call to Serve with Purpose

by Anonymous Guest Writer

I PRAYED HARD BEFORE I CAME over to Ann Arbor. I prayed that I would be able to find a good church in order to be challenged, to grow and to be a part of the work God is doing over here. Too many times I have heard people say that college will either make or break your faith, and exactly because of that, I was fearful that I might fall into a self-centered life. I joined the Asian Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship (AIVCF) to quickly get plugged into a community of believers and I was blessed enough to also have found a church to go to the first Sunday I was here.

It is quite obvious that my Christian life in high school was a dichotomous one where I was only a so-called “Christian” when I went for Sunday morning service or when I met up for the youth fellowship, but back in school and at home, I was totally not being a good witness, much less proclaiming the Gospel. That had to change, and I felt God calling me to deepen my relationship with Him instead of being part of the Laodicean* church where I was “neither cold nor hot”. The thought of God casting me away because of this apathy was unbearable.

I started to regularly attend AIVCF small group meetings, and I thought that I was in the best position where I could give and gain to the fullest. However, I started to feel uncomfortable all too soon. I realized that most of the time, I came back from small group meetings always full of questions and doubts because

anytime a difficult question was raised, it was never properly handled in terms of getting all of us clear what the Gospel proclaims/teaches. I always ended up going on Gchat with my pastor from my hometown to settle these questions in my mind. For me, it was not too bad... but what about other newcomers and more importantly, pre-Christians or non-believers? What would they have done?

After some time, I considered fully committing to either the church I was attending or AIVCF in terms of serving in a ministry. Being a student, I could not have contributed as much as I would have wanted to for both organizations; thus, I had to make a decision to choose one. I made up my mind the day I went for Lock-In.

Something meant to be so beautiful turned into a disappointment for me.

For all the hype about going out to a place and staying overnight worshipping, studying the bible, praying and also fellowshiping, I experienced something I was not prepared for. Whenever it was time for bible study, it was always “We all know the answer to that but nobody’s saying anything, so here goes...”, “Lets get this over with”, and “I’m so tired (goes on with a story of why it is so)”. When it was time to pray in groups, my group actually went to sleep. One of the

leaders noticed my discomfort and suggested I joined another group that was actually praying!

Something meant to be so beautiful turned into a disappointment for me. I was a new believer and I consider myself still new to the faith. I could have done something better in these mentioned situations, like actually addressing these problems I had with my leaders instead of leaving the fellowship, but one big factor that played a role in preventing me from doing that was the fact that I did not feel connected to my leaders. I decided to leave before I became bitter and am glad with the decision I made.

Now, I realize how difficult it is to lead the fellowship considering the different church backgrounds everyone comes from, yet I still believe that these problems must come to an end for the sake of our community. I pray that our unified love for Jesus Christ our God, which is the main reason for the existence of this whole fellowship, remains strong and that whenever and wherever we serve, we serve with all our strength and passion, keeping the right perspective always. We should all strive to do our best to be the salt and light on this campus, so let us not let anything hold us back. Let’s go all in instead of holding back.

Let’s give it our all. †

*REVELATION 3:14-22

Returning Home

by Ron Hunsucker, *Guest Writer*

I ACCEPTED JESUS CHRIST AS MY personal Savior at a young age. I was later baptized at a church in Lansing, Michigan. A young boy at that age, like most kids, I did not comprehend the deep growth part of my relationship with Jesus, but I was known to call Christ my friend. I was not afraid to memorize verses from His word and recite them out loud; I was not shy about my friend Jesus. I also told others about HIM. When people ask about the family I was raised in I say that the parents I have are a blessing from God. Why? Because they encouraged me ask questions about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit and other characteristics of the Christian walk I did not understand.

When I became a teenager, I was still strong and active in the local church. The Church I attended is where my family had attended for years. My parents were married at the church, and served in leadership positions (and they still do this today). I was active in Bible studies, youth group, and other ministries. I liked Christian music, and it was not really accepted as such at the church I went to. That was the first time where I had a funny idea that older Christians did not know that much about really growing in Christ. I really wanted to grow in my walk with Jesus. And Christian music with guitars and drums and meaningful lyrics really helped me to do that.

At age 19, I stopped. Stopped going to church, getting involved in ministry activities, discontinued reading my Bible, and even sharing with longtime friends at church how I was doing. I retreated into myself. I thought I had all the answers for all life after graduating from high school. College in the fall of 1991

brought me into an exploration mode of new friends, and new ideas about there not being spiritual beings. I was pursuing my identity outside of Christ. And all the time I felt the tug at the soul that is not explained with any words except 'loss of the childhood friend'. I started college then with an idea of exploring outside the church, and finally my exploration brought me to Tibetan Buddhism.

I was serious about getting involved in Buddhism. I met the Dalai Lama and read the sutras, the scriptures of Buddhism. After all this, I still felt the pang of the loss of the childhood Friend I had made, and the Holy Spirit pulled me back to Him, Jesus Christ, and I found out that after ten years away from Church, attitudes towards Christian rock and praise and worship music had begun to change.

I have been back at the church where I grew up and came to know Him as my Savior and proclaimed that in baptism for 10 years. God did not erase me from His grace and mercy when I did not acknowledge Him during my college years. Instead, He saw me as a man who, when a boy, believed in the salvation of redemption through the death and resurrection of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Today, I am active in church, involved in Bible studies and personal growth through reading the Scriptures of Christ, and most of all, I know that I was saved for all time when, at a young age, I said "My friend is Jesus." I have also been very active in proclaiming the peace of Christ without a political gospel; voting conservative is not automatically a proclamation of true faith. †



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FALL LARGE GROUPS

"... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."
(1 Peter 3:15)

**Fridays @ 7:00pm
in Forum Hall,
Palmer Commons**

Today | ... *Do Missions?*
with Laura Sapp

10/17 | Fall Break
AIV LOCK-IN

10/24 | *Q&A*
with Pastor Bob

10/31 | *Is God Democratic or
Republican?*
with Fred Bailey

11/7 | *CATALYST*
Joint Chapter Event

11/14 | *COMPELLING*
Fall Conference

11/21 | *Relational Evangelism*
with Dan Gregorian

11/28 | Thanksgiving Recess



“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown...



“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

~ Luke 8:5-8

