



## Dare to Shatter the Rules!

I'm in O'Hare airport waiting for my Denver flight. Just finished lunch at the large food court between the K & H concourses. Six choices of fast food, plus a few other tempting kiosks (no, I didn't fall for the lure of Dunkin' Donuts or Cinnabon, though if I finish this in time I may return). Food in hand, where to sit? There are hundreds of two-person tables which probably started out as two-person tables but with more and more people they've pushed the tables closer and closer together until now where I sat was a row of 7 tables together for 14 people.

Instantly I knew there were rules. Rule #1: don't talk with anybody (unless you came with them). Rule #2: don't sit directly across from anybody. Rule #3: don't sit directly beside anybody. Rule #4: look straight ahead or down at my corned beef on rye (this is, after all, Chicago). That means I'm not supposed to look slightly to the right or the left or I'd be invading the person-space of the people across the table but one removed from my eye-space. As long as I sat there I obeyed the rules and so did everybody else I could see from the time I walked in until I left. I'm not sure it's because I've lived in Chicago several times or just because of some intuitive sense, but I knew the rules.

As I walked away I started thinking about other situations I've been in with similar rules. At Marsh, go ahead and pick up the melon for yourself, but don't try that in Italy! In the U.S., walk into a large open area and sit a respectful distance from anybody; in China, in a basically empty room, be prepared for someone to sit down beside you with his belt loops almost touching yours. Every culture has its rules, and we flaunt them at our peril.

That may be one reason the story of Jesus and the woman at the well is so captivating. Jewish people JUST DIDN'T talk with Samaritans. Men ABSOLUTELY DIDN'T talk in public with women. But there he is, breaking both conventions by talking with the Samaritan woman. Didn't he know? Didn't his mother teach him? Or—did he know and just didn't care? Did he know but considered that woman too important to worry about the rules? People over rules? People. People.

*G. Crowe*

## Theological Judgment

Some cringe at the use of the word "theology," thinking it is nothing but the wisdom of humans and not instruction from God. Indeed, some say that there is no need to understand theology or to do theological reflection.

Theology, however, is not simply a study in which one can or cannot engage. Theology is a necessary practice that all of us engage in (whether we know it or not). Theology is simply an attempt to understand God. Theological reflection is another way of simply asking, "Where is God in the events of our current circumstances?" Theology, then, is simply something that all engage in, sometimes in public circles and sometimes in the privacy of our hearts. Having said all of this, I think it is important to keep in mind some principles that will help us as we make theological judgments in our lives. These are only three principles (of course there are other principles that might be helpful) that will help us as we make theological judgments. Theological judgment:

1) *Chases after the concept of truth.* As Christians we do not shrink back in fear from any idea, but instead we listen to all ideas chasing after the truth.

2) *Is formed by Godly virtues.* The very act of living a holy life gives us a greater potential for making better theological judgments in our lives. Living holy lives helps us make holy decisions.

*continued on inside page 2*

# Thanksgiving Dinner Tuesday, Nov. 22



Elmwood's annual Thanksgiving Dinner and devotional will be **Tuesday, November 22, at 6:00 PM.** Don Vice needs volunteers to cook the meal (5 cooks), serve the meal (6 servers), help in the kitchen (4 kitchen help), and 6-8 people to help with clean-up. Call Don at 471-8653 or email at donaldpattyvice@netzero.net if you can help. Sign-up sheets are posted in the Farris foyer.

## Prayer Concerns...

**Alice Follick**, at St. Anthony's Health Care, room F160, is in serious condition ....**David Swank**, son of Vernell & Pete Swank, consults with an oncologist this Wednesday, October 26, to determine how they will treat his lymphoma.....Rose Hunt's brother, **Jim Beghtol's** surgery for cancer was postponed until last Friday in Florida....Continue to pray for **Elizabeth Tinkle, Natasha Risley, Lucie Levy, Marie DeWoody, Merville Zin, Mark Eddy, Geneva Hamilton, Terry Pepper, Anna Dale, Eunice Whitesell, Ramona Farris, Irene Fox, and Delpha Allen.** Those in Rosewalk Village: **Paul & Ruth Marks, Minnie Scott, and Burnell Gulden**

Serving in Iraq: **Dustin Holley** (relative of Paul & Argie Verett and Pauletta & Rob Smith), and **Brad King** (Joe and Sandy Seele's neighbor's son).

*Thank You!*

Dear ones,  
You have blessed our family greatly! You were there for us in **every way.** For your prayers, beautiful flowers, luncheon, hospitality, transportation—for **everything** we are so thankful for you!  
— Joe L. White family

(continued from front page)

3) *Understands that the entire church carries the load.* Not the preacher, the elders, the deacons or anyone one committee in the church ... but the entire community is responsible for making theological judgments. Communal discernment is a key to healthy church life, and cannot be left to one man or one group of men.

These are just a few things that I think will help us as we make judgments in our daily lives. Remember, the question is not whether or not to do theology because everyone does theology! The question is whether we will do healthy theology or unhealthy theology!

~Dan



## Hunger Hike raises more than \$50,000

Lafayette Urban Ministry's Hunger Hike raised over \$50,000 recently. **Lee Porter** represented Elmwood and was given a certificate for participation. Thank you, Lee.



The food pantry is in need of **vegetable soup** and **cereal** this week.

## Our Sympathies...

**Wanita White's** youngest brother, **Marnen Robertson**, who lived in Camarillo, California, died unexpectedly Monday. Wanita plans to go to his funeral later this week.

## New Address!



Now settled in their new home, **Brandon & Veronica Hombs** wish to pass along their new address. It is: 15 Whitewood Lane, Merrimack, NH 03054. Phone: 603.424.0375

**October 16, 2005**

Class: 235 Worship: 339

Contribution: \$5,422

Budget: \$8,100

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### Thanks Mariah!

Last Sunday at noon, Mariah Wise led about 10 through a college application/scholarship/essay workshop. She offered tips, helpful websites and other useful information as students launch into the rat race of selecting and applying for colleges. Mariah has had great success in acquiring scholarships and grants and wanted to pass on the knowledge she has gained to others. If you were unable to attend the workshop, see Mariah or me.

### A Chilly Challenge

As I mentioned last week, the Red Cross has contacted local churches to help with the winter clothing needs of 15 families displaced by hurricane Katrina. The two families Elmwood has been asked to help are two single gentlemen. At LIFE Group, Mariah challenged the teens to bring \$2-\$3 next Sunday and with that, we should be able to purchase at least one of the gentlemen a new jacket or coat. Bring your money to class, or to LIFE Group...we will be at the Devine's this week.

### Thinking Out Loud...

I got the following from a teen friend at camp. She offers a probing question:

#### "A CHRISTIAN'S TRUE CHALLENGE"

Sitting in a pew once a week,  
Singing the songs,  
Praying the prayers,  
Taking the Lord's Supper,  
And listening to the Preacher.  
Walking out the doors when all is said and done,  
Wondering if I heard what was said and sung.  
I know I listened,  
But did I really hear it?  
Sadly knowing the answer  
I walk away,  
Promising to do better another day. – Becky  
Let's all be moved by the Spirit instead of going through the motions!  
– Lee



**Rachel Stafford**, nine-year-old daughter of John and Lynae, was baptized Sunday morning. Having grown up here, Rachel has always been involved in Bible classes and activities of all kinds. She is a fourth grader at Mayflower Mill School (in Gina Boyd's gifted class). She takes piano lessons (Mom's her teacher!), and enjoys singing in Select Choir at Mayflower. The Staffords live at 408 Old Romney Dr., Lafayette 47909. Phone: 474-8478. Congratulations, Rachel!

## Noah's Ark Night November 5, 4-8 PM



**Noah's Ark Night**, is **November 5th, 4:00 until 8:00 PM**. A two by two stew will be served. No charge for the meal, but a request of canned vegetables for the stew and a can of food for the food pantry. Work days to prepare for the activities will be all day Friday, Nov. 4, and Saturday morning, Nov. 5. Lots of fun activities for the children are planned. Questions? Call Lynae Stafford at 474-8478.

## Women's Carry-in Dinner, Nov. 19

**Females of all ages** are invited to a carry-in dinner on **Saturday, November 19, 6:00 PM**, in the A-2 fellowship room. (*This is a date change.*) It will be a special time to gather, share prayer requests with one another, sing praises to God, and enjoy fellowship. Questions? Call Sue Wilder at 497-8955.



**October 26, 7 PM**...Bible classes for all  
**October 30, 6 PM**...LIFE Groups  
**Nov. 5, 4-8 PM**...Noah's Ark Night

Read:  
Ezekiel 1-17;  
Hebrews 3-8  
Psalms 95-103; Prov. 26:24-27:9

# 2005 Spiritual Adventure

## Week 45: November 7-13

Have you ever forgotten something? I generally think of myself as a dependable person, one that others can count on to follow through with my promises. But, ask my wife how often I forget things and she will inform you of the horrible truth.

We have this game we play, called "name this person's birthday." The rules are simple: someone gives a name and the other attempts to remember their birthday. I am sad to report to you that Sarah always wins. It's not just birthdays either. My lack of memory spans to other portions of my life as well, including menial tasks such as oil changes and doctor appointments.

However, there are events in my life that I seem to always remember. For instance, ask me the last time I forgot to watch the Indianapolis Colts play a football game, either on television or in person. Or, ask me about the last time that I forgot to record the Thursday night lineup on CBS. It never happens. I am seemingly unable to forget these moments in my life.

If you are beginning to question this inconsistency, I must inform you that I suffer from a syndrome that I like to call a selective memory. If you aren't familiar with this disease, it affects the human mind, only allowing the most important information to be retained. Unfortunately, all else is lost.

Interestingly, while reading through Hebrews I am astounded to find out that God suffers from this same condition. He is consistently forgetting about certain aspects of our lives, while simultaneously always remembering other aspects.

In Hebrews 6:10, we are reminded that, *"God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them."* But only two chapters later in Hebrews 8:12 we are told that, *"...I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* How amazing it is to serve a God who has a selective memory.

– **Mark Bird**