



Different, Odd, and God

***“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.”***

One of the “fun” things about being a Christian is standing by to watch how often we see evidences of the truth of those words from Isaiah (59:1). God must have a tremendous sense of humor, because he seems to delight in making lemonade out of life’s lemons.

In the early 1990’s, Dinh Trung, a Vietnamese Christian, was thrown into jail for telling others about Jesus. While his wife and small children waited for him at home, thousands of Christians around the world wrote letters to Dinh Trung, supporting and encouraging him after they learned of his plight from *Voice of the Martyrs*. While others were writing and praying, what was Dinh Trung doing? Preaching to his cellmates in the Quang Ngai prison. Over the years many prisoners were brought to Christ. (“After all,” as the December 2006 VOM newsletter reminds its readers, “he had a captive audience.”)

Recently prison officials –concerned about the number of prisoners who had become Christians–came to Dinh Trung to offer to let him go home months early. He stunned the officials by replying, “I demand my right to complete my prison sentence.” He was alarmed that his teaching opportunity was about to be taken away. Realizing they had no other recourse, prison officials allowed him to stay. In the meantime, VOM continues to support his wife and family, and his wife’s response was, “I am happy that God has given my husband a ministry.”

The preacher said Sunday that a Christian is different. Make that **different**, or maybe even **DIFFERENT**. So different that a teaching opportunity is chosen over freedom and family. Granted, it appears odd to the world. But by faith, a Christian’s viewpoint is so reordered that odd is OK, if it’s of God. G. Crowe

*Our vision:
Knowing Christ, Making Christ Known*

Do You Remember?

Reading through Acts, it is clear that Paul bases much of his apostolic authority on his memory. Riding along the Damascus Road, he was blinded by an encounter with Christ. His reaction was to change his life. In the days, weeks, months, and years to come Paul would remember this experience and would call upon the power of it for his life.

Question: do you remember? Do you remember the first time your eyes were opened to the truth of the gospel? Do you remember when you first saw someone demonstrate servant leadership? Do you remember when you first understood the power of community and accountability?

I was 18 when I first realized what self-sacrificial love really was (although I had seen it before in my parents’ relationship to us, their children). I remember it vividly. I stood there and wondered why it hadn’t clicked before, but knowing that I would never have to learn it again.

I was 23 when I first understood (truly understood) what accountability was and the need for community. Since then, I have never quit preaching on its benefits.

Enough about me...what do you remember? There is power in memory. It moved Paul to preach to the Gentiles. It causes me to move forward in my faith everyday. What does it do for you? I encourage you this week to scrutinize your memories, to rediscover your previous encounters with God, and to hold them up as a powerful tool for your spiritual walk. Remembering these things can be empowering and they always serve as a good reminder for us. Please remember Him because we serve a God who has never forgotten us.... Dan



"A King Is Coming to Town" 2006 Children's Christmas Musical

The 1st through 8th graders will practice **this Wednesday, December 13** from **6:30 until 8:00 PM**. **Dress rehearsal** for 4 & 5 year olds will be Saturday morning at 8:45. Dress rehearsal for 1st-8th graders will begin at 9:00 AM.

The presentation of **"A King is Coming to Town"** will be Sunday evening at 6:00 with finger foods to follow in the fellowship room.

Christmas Community Needs

The Holiday Gift Lift Program of the Mental Health Association distributes new essential items to adults who might not otherwise receive a gift over the holiday season. Eligible recipients include Tippecanoe County residents residing at Logansport State Hospital, patients of Wabash Valley Hospital, clients of the Mental Health Association Homeless Shelter, and residents of all nursing homes located within Tippecanoe County who are deemed appropriate by nursing home personnel. In 2005 our community helped MHA serve 392 people. Please continue to brighten the holiday season for those in need this year and donate a new unwrapped gift. Suggested gifts: sweatshirts, sweaters, warm socks, nightwear, hats, gloves, sweatpants, scarfs (xl-xxl adult sizes, please). Gifts may be placed in the collection box located in the Farris foyer.

Christmas Card Fund



In lieu of sending cards, once again we are offering all who wish to contribute to the Christmas Card Fund, to do so now. **You have one more week to hand your check to one of the elders or ministers, or drop it into the mail and send it to the church.** If you give cash, be sure to attach your name on a piece of paper. **In next week's (December 19) newsletter we will include a list of all who have contributed to this fund and who thus send their greetings to members of the congregation.** This year you have 2 options: your donations can go towards the CSC building fund or the mission work in Fiji for Mike & Timbra Wiist (where the Boyds, Middletons & Alison Ruhl participated in Let's Start Talking last summer).

Have You Seen....?

Acts, volume 1-3 and Matthew, volume 1, of the Visual Bible video tape series are missing from the library. If you have borrowed them, would you please call the church office?



Dale Brown, 49, brother of Tammy Allen, died early Saturday morning in Rensselaer. He was born with brittle bone disease. His funeral was Wednesday in Rensselaer. Our sincere sympathies to Tammy and her parents.

Our sympathies also to Fay & Chuck Wolf and Fay's family, on the death of her brother-in-law, **Steven Rutledge**, in Arkansas, on Wednesday. Steven was a spiritual leader of their family who will be sorely missed.

Thank You!

Thanks for everything you've done during my injuries. The cards, calls, food, and donations have meant so very much to Sheryl and me. I'll be up and walking again in a few weeks. Thanks again,
Jim Willison



The food pantry is in need of **paper grocery sacks**. We are no longer able to get them from one of the area grocery stores. If you have some at home you could share, please bring them to the food pantry. *-John Stafford*

December 10, 2006
Class: 234 Worship: 292
Contribution: \$8,160
Budget: \$8,550



Don't miss Sunday night, December 17!

What is the big deal? Glad you asked! Just in case you haven't heard or have forgotten, "A King is Coming to Town." That's part of this year's Children's Christmas Musical...the other part is "Jesus Is Born." The kids under the leadership of Lynae, Rose and others have been working very hard for several weeks, so you won't want to miss the show. It is always so much fun to see and hear our own tell the ageless story of the birth of the Christ. Mark your calendars now and plan to be here at 6:00 for this special time this Sunday evening! Forgot and made other plans? Cancel them...it can't be better than this. See you here!

Winterfest 2007 - Record Year?

Some of you may remember that earlier this year when Josh Boyd, Outreach Deacon, presented his budget plan for the year, he mentioned he wanted to support the evangelistic efforts of the youth group by providing some incentive for bringing guests to Winterfest in February. Sunday morning, Josh came to the house to talk with the youth group and here is the plan he proposed: 1) for every non-Elmwood guest going with us to Winterfest, the total cost will be \$50 (about half) and 2) for the Elmwood student bringing the guest, their cost will be reduced by \$20. Probably some of you are saying that it seems like Winterfest can be expensive and that is true, but you need to know the money is well spent and many wouldn't flinch at spending the same amount or more to attend a sporting event...with no eternal significance. If you want to know more about the impact of Winterfest on our group, just ask one of the many teens or adults who have made the trek. This year's theme is "The Prize" and lends itself to being very evangelistic. May God truly touch the lives of all of the teens, adults and guests from Elmwood who attend with the urgency of responding to and reaching out with the saving message of the gospel. The dates for this year's event are February 16-18 and we have tentatively made reservations for 40. Please make your commitment soon so I will know just how many to plan to transport and to house. Once again, costs are simple for the event: \$21 for registration, \$10 for the (Jars of Clay) concert, and \$10 for a T-shirt...concert and T-shirt are optional. Exact housing and travel costs will be announced shortly. Let's make 2007 a record year for the Elmwood church at the Winterfest Youth Rally! Thanks for the challenge and opportunity, Josh.

Renovate - January 12-14

Several have already made commitments to go to the youth rally in Bloomington - "Graysville." Don't miss out. Please sign up by Sunday if you plan to go so we will have a chance at the free housing...if we have to get a hotel, the costs will increase - a lot!

- Lee



Joy Batcha, former Elmwood member a number of years ago, has returned from Virginia after the death of her husband, Joe, a couple of years ago. She is retired now and living at an apartment until her house is built on family property in Brookston. Her children are grown and she enjoys visiting her grandchildren here in Indiana and Arkansas. Her address is P.O. Box 65, Brookston 47923. Her phone number: 449-7670. Welcome back, Joy. We look forward to your getting involved with activities here at Elmwood and getting reacquainted!

Prayer Concerns...

Bob Stafford will have total shoulder replacement surgery at Home Hospital on Wednesday...**Irene Sims** is in Home Hospital, room 2333, for treatment of high blood pressure...**Elizabeth Tinkle** had a brief stay over the weekend at St. Elizabeth Hospital...**Pat Turner**, Fay Wolf's mother, is in the hospital in Arkansas...Continue praying for **Barb Newberry** (now at home), **Jim Willison**, **Willard Farmer**, **Lila Fassnacht**, **Kaden Koebecke**, **Sue Durham**, **Annie & Elaine Crowder**, **Beth Holt**, **Ella McBride**, **Linda Smith**, **Marcia Swails**, **Gail Monnet**, **Mark Eddy**, **Amy Weismiller**, **Lynn Robinson**, **Delpha Allen**, **Anna Dale**, **Minnie Scott** (Lane House Nursing Home, 1000 Lane Ave., Crawfordsville 47933; phone: 765-362-0007), **Carrie High** (Regency Place), **Irene Fox** (George Davis Manor Nursing Home), and in Rosewalk Village: **Ruth Marks**, & **Burnell Gulden**.

Serving in our military: **Jon Kiefner** (Iraq); **Amanda Martin** (South Korea); **Jeremy Crable** (Afghanistan); **Brian Guthrie** (going to Iraq in January); **Philip Devine** and **Robbie Mullinax** receiving further training stateside.



Dec. 13, 6:30 PM...1st-8th graders practice

Dec. 13, 7 PM...Bible Classes for all

Dec. 16, 8:45 PM...Dress Rehearsal for 4 & 5 year olds Children's Musical; 1st-8th graders at 9:00 AM.

Dec. 17, 6 PM...**"A King is Coming to Town"** followed by finger foods in fellowship room

Dec. 24, 9:30 AM...Brunch for everyone in place of Bible class

Dec. 24, 4 PM...Afternoon devotional; no 6 PM worship

Dec. 31...Regular worship schedule

Read:
Revelation 15-22;
Psalms 143:7-150

2006 Spiritual Adventure

Week 52: December 24-31

This week's reading has us reflecting on Revelation 15-22. I want to focus on Revelation chapter 16 and the imagery of the bowls.

Revelation 16 begins with bowls of wrath being poured out on humanity (the final judgment). It is an ugly, painful, horrifying event. It is a judgment in which none escape. It is a judgment that finally vindicates the righteous for eternity and punishes the enemies of God once and for all.

But why would the author use the imagery of the bowls? This question has been at the back of my mind for the last 5 years. It is an interesting use of imagery, particularly in light of an earlier chapter. In Revelation 5, the author paints a victorious, Christ-centered moment that results in praise. The moment culminates in song, but just prior to the singing the elders are holding "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 5:8). Did you notice that? More bowl imagery! There may be no connection at all (and that is probably the case academically), but it is interesting to me that the imagery used to describe prayers of the saints is the same imagery used to describe the final judgment.

Could it be that the prayers of the saints might possibly be the catalyst for the final judgment? Revelation 6 certainly supports this idea. The martyrs in Revelation 6:9-11 are calling out to God for the final judgment when they cry "How long, O Lord...until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" The end of Revelation seems to support this idea as well when John declares, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Whether there is a connection between Revelation 5 and Revelation 16 or not, the question before us remains the same. Do we spend enough time in our prayer life crying out to the Lord to come back? Do we beg him to begin the final judgment and call us home? Do we include the request for Jesus to come back and vindicate the righteous on our prayer lists?He will. Praise God!

-Dan Cooke