



Not Just With Your Own Shadow!

Forget the theologians. Forget the political pundits. The book I received over the recent birthday/Christmas month was written by a dog. Trixie Koontz is her name. Her editor was "Dad," Dean Koontz, whom she appreciates most of the time though occasionally her true feelings come out (*Dad gives editorial suggestions. Stupid, stupid, stupid editorial suggestions. He is not editor. I pretend to listen. Am actually thinking about bacon . . .*).

The book is filled with the best of dog-perspectives:

Dog naps are cool. Cat naps way too short. Can work much better after nice long dog nap.

Summer is for running in grass. Summer is for splashing in surf.

Chase ball! Chase butterfly! Chase cat! Go to vet for treatment of nose scratches. . . . Get belly rub from Aunt Linda . . .

Read Bleak House by Charles Dickens, study brilliant characterizations New tennis ball! Chase! Chase! Chase!

But occasionally Trixie stops long enough to get a little serious:

Life is long path. Is lonely to walk it only with your shadow.

Walk with friends, with family. Walk even with cat if you have to. Share your heart, and lonely path becomes happy parade.

Sounds like cheesy greeting card, but is true. . . Path of life has walls and fences. People build them around you. You build most yourself. Look through fences, see what's on other side. You make your own path.

Turns out Trixie is a theologian after all. "Walk with friends, with family, walk even with cat if you have to" sounds a lot like First Corinthians 12 and the book of First John.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. . . . Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

Life in the body of Christ is good, even if you have to deal with an occasional "cat." God himself is a group (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and he knows we grow best in groups of Christians. God has given us individual spiritual gifts, but those are given "for the common good." God never intended that we each walk only with our own shadow.

—G. Crowe

Undergoing Surgery

Medical operations are very complex. A person goes into surgery and has multiple people tending to him/her at any given time. There are people who check the blood pressure and the vital signs; some provide the proper lighting or equipment needed during surgery; one provides the proper sedative; and one or more will actually be doing the operating itself.

The complexity of surgery is not limited to the operating room. Sedatives can have a lasting effect; pain killers can have an allergic reaction; and recovery time can take longer than expected. But when surgery is needed, surgery is needed. But I know any of you would be the first to run into the operating room if it was necessary to be healthier!

Elmwood is undergoing a necessary surgery of its own right now. Lots of transitions are taking place right now, transitions that will ultimately help us to become a healthier church body. I encourage you to view these changes this way, because recovery time is always better when you have a lot of people helping!

~Dan

Prayer Concerns....

Natasha Risley is now in St. Louis. She will be in traction 6 hours a day until January 26 when she will have an 8-10 hour spinal surgery. She will be at the St. Louis Shriners' Hospital, 2001 S. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63131-3597. Phone: 314-432-3600. Prayer hearts are available to pick up and put in a prominent place to remember to pray for her...**Stan Newberry** is in final stages of cancer. Their Florida address is 5435 Rattlesnake Hammock Rd., Apt. 101E, Naples, FL 34113. Phone: 239-732-0838.... **Marie DeWoody** was hospitalized here and at Riley Children's Hospital for a few days recently. She is home now and doing better....**Bob Stafford** is recovering from shoulder replacement surgery at home.... **Diane Wolf** of Corydon, Indiana, friend of the Guthries, has lung cancer....Continue praying for **Annie Crowder, Sarah Watts, Jim Beghtol, Lucie Levy, Mark Eddy, Anna Dale, Eunice Whitesell, Ramona Farris, Irene Fox, Carrie High, and Delpha Allen.** Those in Rosewalk Village: **Paul & Ruth Marks, Minnie Scott, and Burnell Gulden.** Serving in Iraq: **Dustin Holley and Brad King.**

Your Mission from God

We have written about the fact that we all have a mission from God. Elmwood is starting a series of Sunday School lessons on **January 15** that will prepare us to find out our spiritual gifts and our mission from God. We will use the SHAPE system to do this. Recently we discussed the "S" which stands for Spirit, or our spiritual gift. The "H" in SHAPE stands for Heart. Heart is our passion. What is your unique passion? This process is designed to find out what your passion is so that the ministry in which you become involved is an activity for which you have a passion.

-The Elders

Good \$ense Budget Class

Beginning Wednesday, January 18, and running for 7 weeks, the Good \$ense Budget Class, taught by Janet Boston and Brent Branstetter, will meet at 7:00 PM. The class is limited to 24 people. You may sign up in the Farris foyer. All questions can be directed to Janet at 477-7668, or Brent at 423-5650.

Our Sympathies....

December 20, 2005, **Chuck Lucas**, 77, husband of Jan, and father of Chris Sutherlin, died after a long struggle with congestive heart failure and pneumonia. Chuck and Jan had moved to Lafayette to live with Chris and Greg just a year and a half ago. Chuck's positive outlook and sense of humor will be missed by many. A memorial service was held on December 31, when friends and family from Florida, Canada, and Warsaw, Indiana, as well as Lafayette, remembered Chuck. Our sincere sympathies to Jan, Chris, and sons, Mark & Andy, and their families.

Annabelle Burge, mother of Penny Stafford, died on Wednesday, December 21, at St. Elizabeth Hospital, after being hospitalized for many weeks with pneumonia. Annabelle lived in Delphi all her life. She was 73. Her funeral was in Delphi on December 28. Our sympathies to Penny, her brother, Jerry, and sister, Theresa, and their families.

Geneva Hamilton, sister of Margaret Gustafson, died Friday, December 30. She was 85. Geneva had been in ill health and in a nursing home in Crawfordsville since April. Her funeral was Monday in Lafayette. Our sympathies to Margaret and the rest of her family.



Thank You!

*Our Elmwood family,
Thanks for all the loving cards,
prayers and support during our
time of grief. Thank you also
for the visits and support
during Bob's surgery.*

*In Christian love,
Penny & Bob Stafford*

*Friends at Elmwood,
Thank you for donating gifts
this year to the Holiday Gift
Lift Program. We appreciate
your kindness and thoughtfulness.
We are thrilled that you
decided to participate and we
hope that you will join us
again next year. Thanks again
for your generosity.*

*Beth Holt, Holiday
Gift Lift Coordinator*

**It's a
Boy!**



Cooper James was born to **Beth & Mike Zeltwanger** on Thursday, December 29, 2005. He weighed 8 pounds 4 ounces. Big brother, Drew, and sister, Kaitlin, were excited to welcome him home! Congratulations to Mike and Beth, and grandparents, Cecil and Carol Koons.

December 25, 2005

*Class: no class Worship: 251
Contribution: \$5,225
Budget: \$8,100*

January 1, 2006

*Class: 120 Worship: 201
Contribution: \$6,871
Budget: \$8,100*



Happy New Year!

I know many of you made the "New Year's Resolutions" and probably a couple have already broken them...if you made spiritual resolutions, I pray God will give you the strength to start, continue, and finish strong. The Porter family prays for God's richest blessings on all of our family here at Elmwood.

Crawling or Cruising?

A young pioneer needed to cross the Mississippi River to get to his destination. It was early winter so when he arrived at the banks, the river was frozen. To make the situation worse, it was approaching dusk, so he could not really tell whether the ice was thick enough for him to cross and he didn't have enough daylight to try to find a better place to cross. Very cautiously, he eased on to the ice on his hands and knees (I would probably have been going feet first). It seemed like the trek would take forever. Nearly half way into the journey, he heard a noise behind him. It wasn't ice cracking...it was singing. A farmer was making his way home in a horse drawn sleigh full of coal. He didn't even slow down at the river's edge, he just kept going, singing all the way - not noticing the young man on his hands and knees and the young man wasn't about to reveal himself in that posture.

The difference between the two is fairly obvious. The young man crawling was doing so because he was in unfamiliar territory and the farmer cruising in the sleigh had obviously made the trip before and had seen the ice situation in better light. There is a clear application for you and me. Are we crawling or cruising with God? As funny as it might look, many of us are in a crawling relationship with God. We are not sure He can "keep us up." We haven't experienced or don't remember that God has never and will never let us down. Others of us are cruising along in our relationship with Him because we have "tasted that the Lord is good" and we know He keeps all of His promises. We are aware that God's plans are for blessing in our lives (Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28) and not for our harm. We need to trust God and get off our hands and knees (unless we are in prayer) so we can cruise with Him. If we are cruising, we need to look down river and see if anyone crawling needs a lift in our sleigh. May 2006 be the year we can all look back on and say that was the year we all began to Cruise! - Lee

Pray for, write, and call Natasha Risley!



Brian & Amanda Guthrie, and children, **Jackson & Georgia**, ages 5 and 3, have moved back to Lafayette after traveling to a number of places, compliments of Brian's job in the Air Force. Having come to Purdue in the early 90's to get their degrees, they met and were married and were involved in Elmwood's college group and young couples' activities. They are settling in Lafayette for Amanda's teaching job at Ivy Tech Community College, and Brian will join them full-time in the spring when he hopes to be transferred elsewhere (hopefully closer to Lafayette). Welcome home, Brian and Amanda! Their address: 3935 Regal Valley Drive, Lafayette 47909; phone: 477-6404.

Purchase of *The Purpose Driven Life*

In preparation for the upcoming SHAPE classes we urge all members to buy a copy of ***The Purpose Driven Life***, by Rick Warren. It may be purchased at the following places:

Sam's Club: \$10.77 Wal-Mart: \$12.47
Carpenter's Son: \$15.00 Amazon (Internet): \$11.63
Large print/CD Amazon: \$13.59

Men's Wednesday Night Class

The men's new topic of study on Wednesday nights is, "Jesus, Lord of Your Personality." Do you long for a more positive outlook on life and true spiritual health? Change is possible, you know. This "down to earth" scriptural approach focuses on the four most common inhibitors of a positive personality and illuminates the way to transition from worry to peace and from depression to joy!

-Chuck Brown

Looking Ahead...

Jan. 4, 7 PM...Bible classes for all; new men's class: "Jesus, Lord of Your Personality"

Jan. 15, 9:30 AM..."SHAPE" CLASSES BEGIN

Jan. 18, 7 PM...Good \$ense Budget Class; limited to 24 people; sign up now

Read:
 Genesis 38–50; Exodus 1–10
 Psalms 5–11

2006 Spiritual Adventure

Week 3: January 15–21

IN SEARCH OF MOSES

“He was born circumcised, and when he reached the age of 120, his strength and sight were undiminished. He spoke 70 languages and could draw water from a stone. His forehead glowed with rainbows, and as he recited the secret names of God, precious gems dropped from his mouth.”

If much of that doesn't sound like Biblical history to you, it's because it's not. It's a paragraph from Charles Hirshberg's 1998 article in *Life* summarizing some of the legends told of Moses over the past 3,000 years. Hirshberg continues, “To Jews he is *Moshe Rabbenu* (Moses, Our Master), founder of monotheism in general and Judaism in particular; to Christians he is a model of faith; and to Muslims he is the first prophet to announce the coming of Muhammad.”

Not surprising that Moses is important to so many faith traditions around the world. As introduced in the ten chapters of Exodus in this week's Spiritual Adventure reading, Moses' earliest days were overseen by the hand of God, his call via the burning bush was legendary, his “excuses” made him appealing to every person who has ever faltered in obedience to God, and his repeated walking into the presence of Pharaoh with a demand from God (“Let my people go!”) has brought the word “courage” to a whole new level.

Freud read the Old Testament and concluded Moses was not one but two. There was Moses, an Egyptian prince, who led a revolt among the Israelites which led to the Exodus. Then there was a second, different, Moses, a mystic who was on intimate terms with God, who spoke to God on behalf of his people, and who wrote poetry like Psalm 90. No present-day scholar finds Freud's analysis convincing, but it does show the complexity of the man Moses.

“Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house” (Hebrews 3:5). We look forward to the days and weeks spent in Exodus through Deuteronomy as we stand in awe of Moses, God's man.

–Gayle Crowe

|  Weekly Schedule |  Elders |  World Missions | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Sunday Worship 8:00 a.m. Bible Study 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Life Groups 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m. | Bill Bell 463-1139 Joe Matthews 474-8369 Rick Swensen 463-6822 Don Vice 471-8653 | Kevin Chambers World Christian Broadcasting Anchor Point, Alaska 99556 Loren and Penny Hollingsworth Phuket, Thailand 83000 City of Children Ensenada, Mexico Bren and Cheryl White P.O. Box 245 New Market, MD 21774 | |
| Elmwood Nursery School & Pre-K Preschool: Tues-Thurs 9-11:30 am Pre-K: Mon-Thurs 9-11:30 am Director, Susan McClain 447-2874 | <th> Staff</th> <td></td> |  Staff | |
| | Ministers Gayle Crowe 447-6940 Lee Porter 463-6993 Dan Cooke 543-7469 Office Manager Sherry Marks 447-2874 | | |

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