



## A Passion for . . . What?

The name John Walker Lindh was on everybody's lips four years ago. He was the 21-year-old American who was captured in Afghanistan and charged by the U.S. with ten counts of supporting and fighting with the Taliban. Many probed into his background to answer the obvious question, "Why?"

In *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*, Kenda Creasy Dean makes this startling observation: "In some ways, Lindh's story could be told as a triumph for youth ministry." Uh, what was that? Read further:

Significant adult mentors during his late teens ushered him into practicing faith communities that confirmed his intuition that faith calls for a radical way of life. Religion became deeply important to him in ways youth pastors usually hope for. It influenced his lifestyle and his vocational direction (he meticulously devoted himself to studying the Qur'an). He was more than willing to suffer for his faith . . . In short, John Lindh discovered what every teenager is hard-wired to seek: an object he deemed worthy of passion. And he invested his all in it. Misguided? Sure. Tragic? Absolutely. But the point is, he found a cause worth dying for, and gave himself to it without reservation.

Dean's point in the book is that people in their teen years are genetically programmed with above-average amounts of passion—passion in the sense of someone or something to give themselves to, a cause worth suffering for. Teens flocked to see *The Passion of the Christ* not because of the gore but because they were enamored of the realization that "Jesus loves them with such a wild, passionate hope that even death on a cross cannot stop his determination to win them."

So when they come to church next Sunday morning, what will they find? People enthusiastic with the passion of knowing that God loves them and died for them? People wildly happy about the fact that Christ has found a place for them in the body, the church? People sharing stories about how wonderfully the Holy Spirit has guided them the past seven days? What will they pick up from us adults when they show up for worship next Sunday? *G. Crowe*

## The Word

Sitting in the library of the church today, I thought about how much I love books. I love everything about them: the way books look on shelves around the room, the feel of a book in hand, the smell of paper as it is turning. Books are wonderful.

Books unused, unread, collecting dust on the shelf, however, is a different story altogether. That is a tragic sight to see. A book that goes unused is a pointless book.

As I thought this, it occurred to me that there is one book that seems to be collecting a lot of dust, even with some Christian circles—the Bible. Biblical literacy has been on the decline for several years. Stories of God's people have gone unheard; statements of faith professed in the text have gone unread; fulfilled promises of God have gone unnoticed. All of this has occurred because while the Bible is still on the best seller list, it is not being read as fervently or as often as it should be.

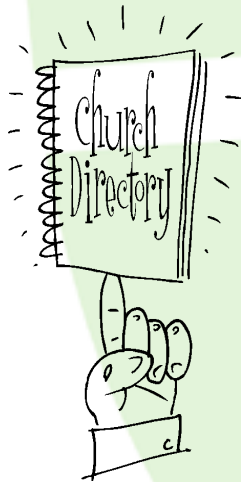
I want to encourage you to open up the Word of God this week. Open it up and read about how God has kept His promises to His people. Read about how He has rescued His people when hurting, alone, scared, oppressed. And when you read, do not read the Bible as you would another history book (i.e. reading about people and places and events that happened in the past). Rather, read it as you would your family's autobiography. Read it as not just stories but as family *memories*. If you are like me and love the feel of a book in your hand, then you must spend time in the Word this week. It doesn't just feel good in your hand, but it feels good in your life. ~Dan

# Prayer Concerns....

**Lynn Robinson**, Oka LeMaster's daughter, is in Home Hospital after surgery for cancer....**Valley Stockton** had an echogram on Monday, and will have an angiogram on June 14 to determine the extent of recently detected heart problems....**Henrietta Frampton** is in St. Elizabeth Hospital, room 4122....**Jim Rustin**, Diann Doty's father, is receiving chemo treatments for cancer of the pancreas and lungs....Continue praying for **Elizabeth Tinkle** (*more surgery on her leg later this month*), **A.L. Otto** (*Carrie Roberts' father who has heart problems*), **Nathan Weir**, **Ken Nicholson**, **Sarah Watts**, **Kaden Koebcke**, **Noah Powlen**, **Natasha Risley**, **Phyllis Gray**, **Mark Eddy**, **Marie DeWoody**, **Anna Dale**, **Carrie High** (*Regency Place Nursing Home*), **Irene Fox** (*George Davis Manor Nursing Home*), **Delpha Allen**, **Ruth Marks**, **Minnie Scott**, and **Burnell Gulden** (*Rosewalk Village*).

Serving in Iraq: **Jon Kiefner**, **Loren Sniffen**, and **Brad King**. Serving in South Korea near the DMZ: **Amanda Martin**.

Also, our **Let's Start Talking Team**—**Josh**, **Gina**, & **Kinley Boyd**, **Lanita Boyd**, **Ryan** & **Stephanie Middleton**, and **Alison Ruhl**, left Tuesday for Suva, Fiji, for 6 weeks. While there they will be using the gospel of Luke with people who have signed up to learn/practice their English skills. Remember to keep them in your daily prayers. (The team web page will be updated periodically by team members. The URL address is: <http://www.ryansmiddleton.com/lst>.)



We are close to sending our information to Olan Mills for printing with our pictures. A draft of the information sheet that will be combined with the picture of each family has been prepared and we'd like someone from each family to proof the information. On June 18 the information sheets for those with last names beginning with A through K will be in the Farris foyer. Information sheets for those with last names beginning with L through W will be in A-2. Please look at the information and make any corrections in ink. If the information is correct, please write "o.k." on the sheet. See Farrell Simmerman or Bill Hodges with questions. Thanks for your help.  
—Bill Hodges

## LifeCare Services Counselor Training

Do you have a heart for hurting young women facing an unplanned pregnancy? Have you ever wished you could provide a word of encouragement and hope in response to a phone call; or perhaps comfort a frightened young lady who has just come to the realization that her whole life is turned upside down? If you would like to explore the possibility of training in a volunteer capacity as a Helpline Counselor, Counselor, or in some other area, join us for our next training session in mid July. Call *LifeCare Services* at 743-4488 for an application.  
—Dana Hobson, director



At the season ending (West Lafayette) baseball banquet, **Peter Bell** was awarded the Sportsmanship award (voted on by coaches) and the Mental Attitude award (voted on by players). He was also invited by the coach to lead the invocation at the beginning of the banquet. Congratulations, Peter, we're proud of you!

## Attention Elmwood Women

Mark your calendars for a carry-in dinner and presentation on the women's ministry on July 22, at 5:30 PM. Watch future bulletins and newsletters for more information. —Sue Wilder

## Our Sympathies

Our sympathies to Mark Bird and his family on the unexpected loss of his cousin, **Justin Davis, 28**, of Memphis, Tennessee.

June 11, 2006

Class: 191 Worship: 270

Contribution: \$6,697

Budget: \$8,100



## Honesty with God

I have a few friends that are always, *always*, smiling. Now I have a pretty positive disposition, but I can't even begin to understand these people! I think that if they were told that their right arm and leg had to be amputated they would smile and say "Praise God." Now I'm all for praising God and all that, but if I were told something like that, my response would be one of anger, confusion, and disappointment. I wouldn't just be angry with the situation, either; I would definitely direct that anger at God. I would be livid! How unfair! Now, I'm certainly not trying to criticize people who may have a better outlook on life, maybe the first thing they think of is their opportunities for ministry which have just opened up for them due to their lack of appendages. If that's the case, that's amazing and they are much more spiritually minded than me.

However, I would like to caution those of us (yes me too) that have a tendency from time to time to think that we need to put on a happy face to be Christians. I suppose the whole idea that if you follow God, you will be blessed (and vice versa) originated early on. We can see evidence of this in the book of Proverbs, as much of it's theology is based upon this worldview. For example, Proverbs 11:5 says *"The righteousness of the blameless keeps their ways straight, but the wicked fall by their own wickedness"* (NRSV).

So it's easy to see where this theory that God blesses those who follow him came from, but there are other things we should consider. The book of Job chronicles a short segment of one man's life who, for some reason unbeknownst to him, is suddenly struck with affliction and disease. Job hasn't committed any sin and he believes that he is being treated unfairly. Job accuses God of acting un-Godly and insists on taking God to court. God appears to Job and tells him in no uncertain terms that God's ways are unknowable and that he is God no matter what he does. In the New Testament Jesus deals with some of his contemporaries who believe that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. In John 9:3 Jesus says *"It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him"* (NASB).

Sometimes life stinks, it's tough, and it's not fair. It's not a sin to express anger or disappointment with the circumstances in your life. The key is that you remember that God is a powerful God who has done many things for each of us in the past, and that he is faithful.

-Phil Travis

## What an Honor!

**Peter Bell's Eagle Court of Honor** has been rescheduled for **Monday, June 19, at 7:30 PM**, at the Covenant Presbyterian Retreat Center in West Lafayette. Family and friends of Peter are invited to attend the ceremony. (The Retreat Center is located behind the Covenant Presbyterian church building and the meeting room is on the second floor. There is not an elevator in this building.)

*Thank You!*

Dear family and friends,  
Stephanie and I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed their funds and prayers to our *Let's Start Talking* project in Suva, Fiji, this summer. Our team is getting ready to leave on Tuesday the 13th. We are both really excited about this new experience!

-Ryan Middleton

## Exodus Freedom Conference

"Live Out Loud," a 6-day conference sponsored by Exodus International, will be held June 27 through July 2 at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana. Exodus International is the Christian support group for people trying to escape the spiritual ravages of homosexuality. Brochures are in the Farris Foyer, or check the web at [www.exodusfreedom.org](http://www.exodusfreedom.org).



**June 14, 7 PM**...Bible classes for all

**June 18, 6 PM**...SHAPE Presentation

**June 21**...Camp C.U.M.O. Fellowship at Greattimes (youth activity)

**June 25-30**...Elevate @ Rochester College

**June 30**...The Ride (Youth trip to Cedar Point)

**July 8-14**...Camp C.U.M.O. Mission Trip

**July 16-22**...Spring Mill Bible Camp Senior week

**July 23-28**...Spring Mill Bible Camp Intermediate week

*Read:*  
2 Kings 9–12; Luke 1–5;  
Ecclesiastes 11–12

# 2006 Spiritual Adventure

Week 26: June 25–July 1

When preparing to participate in Let's Start Talking, we are advised to read the book of Luke, which we will be reading with the people that God brings to us. Many of these people are not familiar with Christianity at all, while some have never even heard the name of Jesus! While reading to prepare, we are instructed to read from different viewpoints, one being of a person who has never heard of Jesus or any of the stories in the Bible. This is very difficult for me to do, because I have grown up with these stories and they are quite familiar to me now. As I read, however, with that perspective in mind, I started to notice some things that I had not noticed or questioned before.

Luke 1:6, states: "Both of them [Zechariah and Elizabeth] were upright in the sight of God, observing *all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly*." As a person who may have never read this before, and even as myself now, that is amazing to me! These two were observing *all* the Lord's commandments blamelessly! From both the Christian and non-Christian perspective I believe that this is impressive.

Further along in the first chapter, I came upon something that might cause me confusion as a first time reader: verse 15 – "he [Jesus] *will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth*." That statement would most likely confuse one who has never heard of Jesus or read the Bible. What is the Holy Spirit? Why is it significant that Jesus was filled with it from the beginning? What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Reading from a different perspective has helped me to be prepared for some of the questions that might surface as I am introducing people to Jesus and his life and has introduced me to a new way of studying familiar stories. **–Alison Ruhl**