

Why I am Glad I am Baptized and What Are My Dreams?
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Christ the Redeemer Church

For me, there were 2 baptisms. One was just the thing my mother and father said it was time to do. It was in Hobbs, New Mexico and the biggest problem was probably getting me in a suit and TIE! Some of you know, I didn't do well in church when I was young....Sunday School has many bad memories....not the message or church itself....it seemed the adults did not appreciate my continual talking or bouncing off the ceilings....come to think of it, probably a lot of the current adults don't appreciate it now either. BUT I was baptized. It didn't change me much. I didn't understand what all the fuss was about. If I were baptized in the San Marcos River with all the food afterward, it might have had made more of an impression.

The second Baptism was over a long period of time. It was brought on by Marsha and by God...believe me both were required....it was not an easy task. Marsha got me back in church. We were fortunate that God put us in a (United Methodist) church that the pastor could teach in words that created the pictures in my mind that began breaking down the walls I had built up over time. Most people would have given up on me and moved on...but not Marsha. I am forever grateful for her stubborn streak. That church and the closeness it brought to Marsha and my relationship were during some very trying times, saved our marriage, our friendship, and probably my life.

More importantly it brought me to the second Baptism that is the one that took...I don't know exactly when or what pushed it. **Someday, sometime, that last boulder was rolled away.**

I realized that all I had to do was knock and He would let me in. He was there and waiting. I learned that God had me in his arms and safe...not necessarily from harm or pain or even myself....but I was safe and secure....forever.

I believe that the Bible speaks in pictures to me and the pictures of Baptism washing away my sins and cleaning me is not necessarily the physical dipping in water but the washing my sins away and cleansing my soul. No one can get there but God. But I had to let him in...and he is still there. Thank you for listening.

Am I happy I have been baptized? I have been lost. I have been alone in a crowded room. I have been crazy. I like this better.

Second thing Gary asked me to address – What dreams do Marsha and I have in our lives and for our church?....this is hard.

First of all, I dream of a job that when I wake up in the morning, I don't have to look at the address on the phone so I will know what state I am in. I dream of waking up and

having coffee with Marsha, then eating dinner with her on a regular basis. The other stuff...

I am not sure we REALLY could know what is in store for us...I am not sure we should know....We have caught the God Train and am along for the ride...I don't think we could have dreamed this church would exist.. I certainly didn't think I would have the relationship with such a great group of people...I had already begun this before I read Bert's lectionary this week...I am glad that 2 great minds worked so well together this week! We are told that now humankind doubles its knowledge every few years...when I was in college, I played PONG and thought how could it get better than this? About that same time, I got my first hand-held calculator, a Texas Instrument SR10. It could even do square roots and future values. It cost \$115.00. The last one I bought of the same model cost \$8.00 and that one came with a zip up case...we can't dream what we will accomplish next year or even next month because we don't even know what we don't know!

We can "Dream the Impossible Dream", but will probably be just fighting the windmills like Don Quixote. We know there will be triumphs, there will be heart wrenching losses, there will be illness, there will be jobs that come and go....there will be relationships tested beyond breaking points. Some of us are going to get mad or upset with others in this room...But all we have to do is look back at 2009, 2008, and before to see that this Church and its members can endure because we have each other.

We are sad the Westons are leaving, sad that some of the kids actually grow up and move on to their own lives...but then another "Kyle Bunch" we don't even know exists will walk in that door. Some high schooler that is really lost has a friend that doesn't give up on them and gets them here. Someone just looking for a softball team will walk up and ask if he/she can play.

My dream for my family, my church?...I think I will just leave it to God and His sense of humor. I will leave it to the Plan, because in the long run, he knows what is best. **I just hope it includes me sitting in the audience this time next year because that means I am still here, with Marsha and maybe, just maybe, I will wake up and have coffee in MY house a lot more.**

I know I probably ran over my allotted time...but you folks need to be careful what Gary asks for! But I am proud. I did not mention Baseball, football, suspensions, or my general dislike for burnt orange.

May we pray together: We come to you this day, as your humble servants. The Christmas season is behind us. We all hope that after the trees, ornaments, parties, gift exchanges are gone, we can realize the only thing that really counts...your one true gift that lasts forever. That is the one we should cherish. A new year of uncertainty lies ahead. Help us through each Day. Help us to give heartfelt thanks for the wonders you have given us...from your gift of this world, to your undying love, to your Word we try to live by, to

the path of Glory Ever After. We ask these things in your Name....Amen.