

**Augustana College  
Chapel of Reconciliation**

**Meg Eide**

**30 November 2007**

I'd like to start off big, by saying that it was here at Augustana that I lost *my faith*. It was also here at Augustana, that *faith found me*.

When I began my college career at Augustana 4 years ago, I had it all planned out—and by “it” I simply mean my entire life. I enrolled my freshmen year as an Elementary Education major. I was going to graduate in 4 years, begin my teaching career with the Sioux Falls Public School System, get married, have many beautiful babies, and teach until I died—I figured that was approximately how long it would take me to pay off my student loans (considering how much Augie costs and how little teachers are paid in South Dakota). As long as my future was secure, so too, was my faith.

And here is where I'll let you in on a little secret: life doesn't always go according to plan. Who knew?

I suspect Moses knew.

In his life prior to the burning bush, Moses sounds like a guy who would have had it all planned out, and by “it,” I simply mean his entire life. Having read today's text, we know that Moses is married and works as a sheep-herder for his father-in-law, Jethro. I can imagine Moses, as a young boy, dreaming and scheming about his future. His plans

go a little something like this: Moses would grow up, get married, have many beautiful babies, and herd sheep until he died. Sound familiar?

That's right, I've always felt a deep connection to Moses and *his* story of the burning bush.

So what's so significant about the burning bush, you ask? With the burning bush Moses' life plans are utterly and ultimately changed, nothing will ever be the same. Moses is called to leave behind all the plans he had for his life. He is called to confront Pharaoh, to free the Israelites from their oppressors in Egypt, and to lead these people 'to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey'. With the burning bush God calls Moses out of the comfort and security of his own plans, into a future of challenge and uncertainty.

When Moses is unsure of his future he begins to question his faith. "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" Moses hopes against hope that God is mistaken, that perhaps someone else is more qualified for the job than himself. Who Am I That I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?  
WHO AM I?

I like to think of my Religion 110 class, the fall of my freshmen year, with Dr. Ann Pederson, as my own 'burning bush.' It was a class that challenged my faith and called me to ask questions. Perhaps the biggest thing that Dr. Pederson called us to question

was the notion of the classical theistic god, one that had everything, including our own personal lives, divinely ordained before time. It was through this class Dr. Pederson that I was shown a faith that emerges through improvise as opposed to a faith that is lived out “according to plan.”

As part of this course, my classmates and I were asked to write several papers. Upon receiving my graded papers back, I was a bit shocked by a few of Dr. Pederson’s comments. One of the first papers I got back stated ever-so-kindly said that I should ‘consider’ a religion major. I merely took this as a compliment. Until, that is, I received my final graded paper from Dr. Pederson, which stated a bit more bluntly, and I quote: “Meg, you *need* a religion major!!” I began to take such promptings seriously. I began to consider that maybe God was calling me to “convert.” To a religion major, that is. And if you’ve been paying any attention at all this morning, I’m sure you’ve already realized that majoring in religion was definitely NOT a part of my plans.

As I began to question my future, I also began to question my faith.

Who am I? Who am I that I should leave behind my plans to teach Elementary School?

Who am I that I should major in religion? Who am I that I should go to seminary after graduation? Who am I? Who am I called to be? What am I called to do?

I hadn’t planned on majoring in religion. I hadn’t planned on going to seminary. Is this really what God is calling me to do? How will I be able to afford another 4 years of

school? Am I called to be a pastor, a chaplain, a professor? Do I have enough faith to trust and follow God, wherever this call leads me?

Likewise,

Who are *you* Augustana? Who is Augustana, a college of the church, called to be? What is Augustana College, an institution of higher learning, called to do? Who are you, students, professors, faculty, and members of the Association?

*What is your burning bush? Who is your Pharaoh? Where is your land flowing with milk and honey?*

Even more, do you have enough faith to trust God with your call? Will you have the faith to follow God wherever it may take you? Do you have enough faith, Augustana? Do you?

Today, I am here to answer this question for you and for me? And the answer is this: NO! You do not have enough faith and neither do I. None of us will ever have enough faith to answer the call.

The reason is this: This story is not about Moses' faith. It's not about Moses' faith in himself. It's not even about Moses' faith in God.

Did you notice, that when Moses asks God, "*Who am I?*" God does *NOT* respond by saying, "Well Moses, you are a person of strong faith, a smart man, and a strong leader, surely you're the right person for the job." NO. When Moses asks God, "*Who am I?*" God simply responds: "I **W**ILL **B**E **W**ITH **Y**OU." Which is to say, IT'S NOT ABOUT

MOSES. AND IF IT' S NOT ABOUT MOSES, THAN IT' S NOT ABOUT YOU, AND IT' S NOT ABOUT ME. IT' S NOT EVEN ABOUT AUGUSTANA.

IT' S ABOUT GOD!!! And what God is doing *through* us.

I came to Augustana and lost MY faith. I came to Augustana, and this is what I found: that faith, like God, *finds us*. Faith is not something that *I* have. It is something that *has* me.

So now, when, like Moses I begin to question my future and my faith, whenever I think that the task ahead is too big, that I' m not the right person for the job, God reminds me that: It is and I' m not. And P.S., "I' ll be with you" anyways.

And this is the *good* news: It' s not about me!!! Which is freeing, and therefore ... frustrating, because well, it' s finally not about me..FINALLY! Amen.



## CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING** - Please see the ornaments on the chapel narthex tree to support Christ gift giving this year. Sunday morning offering will buy several gifts for a SF family. Gifts will be blessed in chapel on Mon., Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>.

**JOB OPPORTUNITIES** - Several area churches are looking for part time youth workers. The jobs are posted on the bulletin board to the right of the outside chapel doors.

**FAITH FEST 2008 - WANTED:** Fun-loving Augustana students to be group leaders for a high school retreat that will happen on campus February 16-17!

Faith Fest 2008 with the theme "Ridin' the J-Train" will focus around the verse Mark 8:34 – He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

If you are interested in volunteering for the weekend or want more information, please contact [klender@ole.augie.edu](mailto:klender@ole.augie.edu).

### CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Sunday (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Worship, 11 am - Justin Mootz
Monday (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Worship, 10 am - Rich Bowman, Reli.
Tuesday (4 <sup>th</sup> )	Catholic Mass, 10 am - Fr. Tschakert
Wednesday (5 <sup>th</sup> )	Holy Communion, 10 am - Taize Prayer; Collegiate Chorale
Friday (7 <sup>th</sup> )	Worship, Kelsey Aakre, Sr. Spkr.
Sunday (9 <sup>th</sup> )	Worship, 11 am - Pr. Paul
Monday (10 <sup>th</sup> )	Worship, 10 am - Mike Mullin, Hist.; Christmas gift giving blessing
Tuesday (11 <sup>th</sup> )	Koinonia (pre-seminary group), 10 am
Wednesday (12 <sup>th</sup> )	Holy Communion, 10 am - Taize Prayer; Women's Choir