

A winter scene with snow-covered trees and a wooden structure in the foreground. The image shows a large, snow-laden tree in the center, with many smaller evergreen trees in the background. The ground is covered in snow, and a road or path is visible in the distance. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet.

# CURRENT

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*Equipping the church to reach the world  
for the glory of God through Christ*

**Justice: God's**

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*"Follow justice and justice alone, so that you  
may live and possess the land the LORD your God  
is giving you." Deuteronomy 16:20*



*Elders on retreat in Lake Arrowhead...working hard to guide us well:  
Mike Wojtanowicz, Rick Hicks, Craig Alexander,  
Bill Runion, Rob Marton, Bob Burris (not pictured)*

## *Editor's Note*

What is justice? God's justice? Is it different from man's justice? Is it retributive, restorative, something else? How do we see God's justice in history? In the Bible? In Jesus? Now?

I am thinking of March in retrospect: 30 Hour Famine, Elder Retreat, homegoings of beloved friends...what does it all mean? Does it matter? How is God's justice reflected in these events? Is it? You are invited to ponder all this as you read through this month's *Current*. Pastor Bob will kick-start our dialogue with his thoughts; along the way, a smattering of Bible verses on justice and a poem welcome your perusal. Find out the latest in youth and women's ministries, and conclude with the lyrics for Sandra McCracken's "Justice Will Roll Down," based on Amos 5:24. In some small way, God's justice is meted out by us, while we await His perfect, final justice. May we meet Him.

*Ingrid Chung*

# The Day the Rain Began

By Duane K. Caylor, in *First Things*, March 2012



Today seemed just an ordinary day.  
The sun rose like an irritated eye;  
wives cooked rice pancakes; children went to play  
at tag in dusty fields or caught frogs by  
the bank of the Euphrates; while the men  
took to the brick kilns, potters' wheels, and plows;  
lovers arose to make love once again;  
and old men at the gate weighed claims and vows.  
But now this afternoon, things have grown tense.  
Anxiety as flour-fine as sand  
from Aram fills our hearts as we watch dense  
cloud ziggurats grow tall above the land,  
and weather warnings in cuneiform  
alert us of a coming thunderstorm.



## Following Jesus in Time

By Pastor Andrew

*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*  
Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV)

This March, as we all adjusted to Daylight Saving Time, many of our high school and junior high students took time to take seriously the call of Jesus to walk as He walked and to love what He loves.

### 30 Hour Famine

During the weekend of March 2-3, 15 students willingly gave up eating food during our yearly 30 Hour Famine. Over the course of the 30 hours, the students worshipped together, learned about the needs of the hungry around the world, served in the community at Casa Teresa in Olde Town Orange, and experienced the reality of life for many in our community and the world who go to bed hungry every night.

During the famine, various students assumed the identity of a child somewhere in the world (from countries such as Zambia, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh). Many of these children have to live with disabilities caused by lack of nutrition and medicine. In the pictures, you can see Jenna and Laina unable to speak and Nate unable to see out of one eye (the sunglasses with one eye taped over). Others could not use their hands or a leg. Still others wore a heavy backpack to simulate the “weight” of being hungry and malnourished. The students played a game called “Tribe,” where they competed in teams through several challenges designed to give them a picture of the conditions many children around the world have to deal with on a daily basis.

*Cont. on p.7*

By Pastor Bob

## Can God Not Not be a God of Justice?

As we listen to the news reports and listen to the sobs of neighbors and relatives in the death of Trayvon Martin,<sup>1</sup> we are moved to think of our Savior’s cries over Jerusalem. We live in a world of sorrow, heartache, and racism, punctuated with cries for justice. Our only hope, praise God, is that God cannot not be a God of justice (Romans 3:26). One day, He will right every wrong, and balance every scale that racism, hatred, pride and arrogance have tipped. One day, everything will be known and judged (Hebrews 4:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10). He is a God of justice—even justice for us. His justice, for us, even began with us.

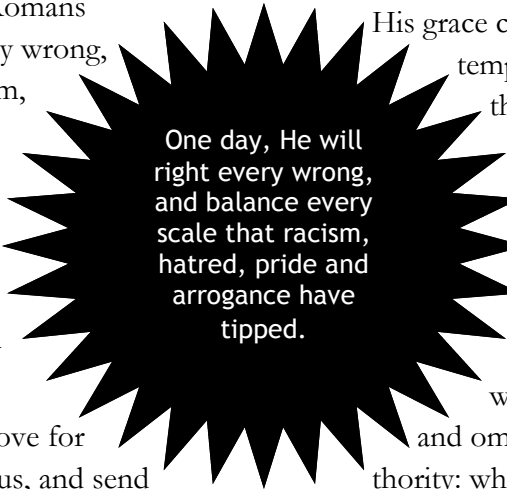
Because of this just God’s great love for His own glory, He chose to love us, and send his only Son to die for the enemy unlovely and unworthy—even us. We are not just partially unworthy but radically, totally unworthy as Romans 9 attempts to convince us; we are saved by free sovereign grace, which should drain us of all self-sufficiency, arrogant pride and calls for justice from

others for ourselves in this life.

Still, when life brings pains and inconveniences, we have an inbred tendency to question God and His justice. We ask.... How come? Why are those innocent...? How can God choose some and not others? We persist, but God is even more persistent—

His grace continues to cover our sinful attempts at being Him. He still forgives those who try to be Him. We try to become God’s judge (Romans 9:19-20); the Apostle Paul wrote to answer this propensity 2,000 years ago. This same presumption continues especially in our 21st-century world that believes wholeheartedly in human autonomy and omniscience, and questions all authority: who does God think He is?

In response, God says to Paul, “But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’” (Romans 9:19-20). In essence, *do you really think you can take on the role of God? That the pot can*



"I will betroth you to me forever;  
I will betroth you in righteous-  
ness and justice,  
in love and compassion."  
Hosea 2:19

*jump on the wheel and put the potter on the slab?*

Let us listen to C.S. Lewis reflect on our attempts at god-hood: "The ancient man approached God...as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defense for being the god who permits war, poverty and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that man is on the Bench and God in the Dock."

You must understand this: the grace showered on us, His enemies, does not permit this kind of God ridicule and presumptuous questioning— His grace, rightly understood, can only humble us. But this is not a one-time pride-crushing event. We live in a sea of pride, like fish in the ocean, hardly feeling the dampness as one who swims in a sea of moisture. Recognizing, appreciating, and glorying in the goodness of God is a process, a fight, the most urgent of psychological and spiritual fights; this is our cure for self-deification. The demon of self-god must be opposed, slaughtered and prayed against. Praise God, we have the Spirit of God, who has pledged His help and given us a book and the gift of repentance to guide our way. And praise God for His perfect justice in His perfect sacrifice that will one day fully wrest all the pride and god-tempting arrogance from our hearts.

Rest assured, our God, the only God, is a God of perfect justice. His Son's death assures us of a secure future and the consummation of perfect justice as His Sacrifice bears its full weight in our eternal inheritance of all things in the heaven and earth to come. Justice will roll down.

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<sup>1</sup>Read Bob Bixby's blog: <http://bobbixby.wordpress.com/2012/03/20/whites-should-be-suspicious-about-trayvon-martins-death/>

"Can he who hates justice govern? Will you condemn the just  
and mighty One?" Job 34:17



mute

**Youth's 30 Hour Famine: raised \$1,000+  
March 2-3**

“He will judge the world in righteousness;  
he will govern the peoples with justice.”  
Psalm 9:8



blind

## Following Jesus in Time *cont. from p.3*

The weekend was not just educational. The students also made an impact as they served at Casa Teresa, a transitional living center for pregnant women and young mothers trying to get back on their feet. Leading up to the famine, several of the students raised money from family and friends to sponsor their 30 hours without food. When all was said and done, the students had raised over \$1,000 to give to World Vision and the ministry of Casa de Pan in Colonet, Mexico.

### The Crave Challenge

Also during March, the students were presented with another challenge, to dedicate the month to “Craving after God” by giving up some things that normally take a lot of their time (think Facebook, texting, TV, movies, video games) and dedicate that same time toward developing their relationship with God. They were challenged to evaluate where their “extra” time was going and how they were using their time in pursuit of following Jesus.

Each week, the students who participated chose one thing to give up for the week and set some goals for

growing in their time spent with the Lord, serving their family, or reaching out to their non-Christian friends. They also memorized 2-3 verses and worked through a devotional on topics such as “Longing for God,” “Finding Rest in God,” “Craving Righteousness,” and “Craving Heaven.”



Personally, I have been blown away by the response of our students and the radical things that they have decided to take on. Many have increased their daily time reading and studying the Bible and taking time to listen and communicate with God in prayer. Several have taken prayer walks in their neighborhood or on their school campuses. Others have been intentional in taking an extra step in serving their family.

Please pray with me that God would continue to work in our students’ lives, that they would grow in their love and passion for Jesus, and that they would continue to embrace a radical commitment to following after Him. Pray also that God would help you to “make the best use of your time” as you follow after Him.

### This month @Taft Avenue...

**Communion & Palm Sunday**  
Sunday, April 1

**Easter Sunday: April 8**  
Pancake Breakfast @9:00am | Easter Service @10:30am

**Orville Bethard’s Memorial Service**  
Saturday, April 14 @2:00pm

**India Yard Sale**  
TBA

**Life Together Kick-Off: Cooking Lesson and Tea**  
Saturday, April 28, 10:30am-4:00pm

*“Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.”  
Deuteronomy 24:17*

# Women's Ministry: Life Together

By Marcia Lichte



The Christian life was designed to be experienced with others and to this end, Taft Avenue Women's Ministries introduces ***"Life Together"***. The goal for *Life Together* is that each woman would cultivate a network or community of spiritual friends and mentors. Being actively involved in these types of relationships provides encouragement, accountability, friendship, and opportunities for growth.

These relationships can best develop when we share our gifts, abilities, interests and time with each other! Our existing bible studies, exercise class, scrapbooking events and book clubs have already given us a great start; now we just need to expand our "life together" and involve more women and more interests and events.

***Life Together Kick-off Event: More than your typical Mother's Day Event!***

Our first official "Life Together" event will be coming up on April 28 in honor of Mother's Day. This will be a unique event starting with a Mother/Daughter cooking lesson opportunity.

Mothers and daughters are invited to come to the TACC Kitchen at 10:30am and learn the fine art of preparing elegant sandwiches and snacks, and other skills necessary in order to host a "Tea". Then, these new skills will be put to the test as these moms and daughters host a Women's Tea at 2:00pm for the pleasure of all of the women of Taft Avenue Community Church and their guests (women, of course!). Watch for details to come, as well as opportunities to sign up for the Mother/Daughter cooking event, as well as for the tea!

## ***Get involved in "Life Together"***

Goal: to cultivate a community of spiritual friends and mentors

If you have an ability or interest that you would love to share with other women, please let us know! It can be a "one-time" thing, like going to a particular play or museum, or it could be something that lends itself better to a series of meetings over a period of time, like baking or cooking classes. Big or small, on-going or one-time thing—it doesn't matter! The important thing is that we share our lives, time and abilities as we change and grow into the women that God has created us to be.

Please contact me at 714-637-3220 ext 228, or email to get involved or provide any ideas or input. Thanks!

## Justice Will Roll Down

By Sandra McCracken. © 2010 DRINK YOUR TEA MUSIC (ASCAP)

Oh my love, you have grown so cold  
To the world outside, to the house next door  
She who has been loved much, has so much to give  
Mercy is the fragrance, of the broken

Chorus:

Justice will roll down, oh justice will roll down  
From high upon those mountains with a mighty river sound  
It will roll down  
It will roll down

Oh my child, I will be your light  
In your secret pain, in the dark of night  
No enemy, no conqueror, will steal your life from me  
I am your salvation, and your victory

Soon oh soon, when the trumpet sounds  
every knee shall bend, every heart will pound  
I have made a new world, where the servant is the King  
oppression will be over, and the slave set free

*To hear the song, go to <http://www.taftavenue.org/#/connect/newsletter>  
and under "Current April 2012", click on "Justice Will Roll Down".*