

PRESBYTERY MEETING

MAY 16, 2006

POSTLUDE

What Is Not and Is Discipleship

Keynote presented by Mary Marcotte, Associate General
Presbyter for Education and Leadership Development

By Jim Gill, Postlude Reporter

Lip service. For many, that's what's been given in response to the call to discipleship. They have assumed that church membership equaled discipleship. In their minds and hearts they have reasoned, "I'm a member of the church. I've answered the five questions. I've gone through the New Member Class, and now I go to church. I must be a disciple." But Jesus' call to be his disciple was and is a call to offer more than lip service, to do more than answer five questions. For Jesus, membership is a step toward but does not equal discipleship.

Mary Marcotte set up the morning study with her talk on "A Call to Discipleship," on what is not and what is discipleship.

According to a 2004 survey by George Barna, the dilemma we face is that not only do far too many church members in North America not know the Bible or have a spiritual depth to their lives, they do not even perceive a need for either.

Discipleship, stated Mary, is not a program. It is not something on a list to check off, and it is not something that lives only inside the church. Discipleship is a

lifelong journey, a lifestyle of stretching, a holistic joyous response to Jesus' call to follow him.

Discipleship involves a growing relationship with God that includes absolute surrender and allowing ourselves to be shaped and conformed to the image of Christ. "Discipleship," said Mary, "puts Christ first. This is the keystone."

While it is possible to answer the call to discipleship as an individual, it is best to answer it as a part of a gathered together group of disciples called the church. To answer that call involves not only lip service, but also head and heart and hand and feet service.

Brief reports on five of the workshops that followed Mary's presentation appear on pages 2 and 3.



Mary Marcotte



Commissioners from New Covenant to the June General Assembly meeting in Birmingham were commissioned during afternoon worship. Front row: Alan Trafford, Meg Scott-Johnson, and Hayley Eberly. Back row: Garry Schoonover, Kevin Keaton, and Gaither Bailey.

Missing from photo are Mary Whitaker, Margaret Desmond, and Ruben Armendariz.

New information about Astros game

Mike Cole announced that tickets for the June 10 Astros game, the game selected for Presbyterian Day with the Astros, are nearly sold out. There are several options for those who have not yet bought tickets.

- One, wait to see what seats will be released for sale closer to June 10. Keep checking online.
- Second, two more games have been selected for which tickets can be bought online at the same discounted rate as the June 10 ones: Tuesday, June 20, at 7:05 p.m. or Saturday, July 29, at 6:05 p.m.

Call Kyle Dawson for purchasing twenty or more tickets at one time. One dollar and fifty cents of each ticket sold for all three dates will benefit New Church Development in our presbytery.

Cursillo community serves Presbytery

By Dick Baker, Postlude Reporter

Throughout the day, those attending the presbytery meeting were greeted by the smiling faces of the Houston Presbyterian Cursillo Community, providing assistance with registration, directions around the sprawling MDPC campus, and ushering during the worship service. This was an example of the sharing of the love of Christ through service to others which is such a key element of the Cursillo experience.

The Houston Cursillo Community is comprised of the approximately 1600 lay persons and pastors from throughout New Covenant Presbytery and other parts of the country, who have attended a three-day Cursillo weekend. It is an intentionally designed weekend of faith renewal through study, worship, music, discussion, and lots of good food and fun. For additional information about Cursillo weekends, visit www.houstoncursillo.org.

A fresh look at Matthew: new life in the Kingdom

Some of the most familiar of scripture passages are found in the book of Matthew. What was Matthew (and Jesus) up to in these chapters? With the leadership of Jim Currie, participants in this workshop discussed what Jesus intends as he describes kingdom life in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Matthew gospel. Too often we hear the words but forget to connect them to the person of Jesus.

How are we to live our everyday lives? Often it means living against the stream of most of the world and operating outside our comfort zones. Jesus shakes us out of our everyday apathy by turning aphorisms on their head and setting the bar high for kingdom living. When we realize that we can't possibly do these things by ourselves, we are thrown back on the grace of God and find the meaning of true discipleship.

Arms for Caring: small and smaller

By Jim Gill, Postlude Report

Jesus had a small group. It included his 12 disciples. Within his small group he had a smaller group of Peter, James and John. Within his smaller group he had his closest friend, John. If discipleship is following Jesus and emulating his practices, how can we in the church develop and nurture relationships through small groups? How can we reach out arms of love to those God has brought into our lives?

The Rev. Lynn Hargrove told how as a volunteer in the Pastoral Care department at Memorial Drive, she reaches out with phone calls to the older adults in that congregation. She shared how a phone call can make an incredible connection and demonstrate the church's care and concern.

Elder Phil Cummings talked about how the ministry of Small Groups, which he leads at Clear Lake, can carry out the ministry of bearing and sharing one another's burdens. He recommended two approaches for starting a Small Group ministry, "The Christ Care" Series sponsored by the Stephen Ministry and the "One Anothering" emphasis by Richard Meyers.

Barbara McClintic, Director of Discipleship at Pines, shared how her

Pastor Kim retires

By Dick Baker, Postlude Reporter

The Rev. Dr. Stephen K. Kim was Honorably Retired after 38 years of dedicated service to God and his country. Steve, a native of Seoul, Korea, came to the U.S. in 1959 to continue his education. He received his MDiv from the Theological Seminary, University of Dubuque, and his DMin from San Francisco Theological Seminary. Steve served a pastorate in Roachdale before entering the U.S. Army, where he served honorably in the Chaplain Corps for 23 years until his retirement at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1999, Steve began his journey as an Interim Pastor, serving since that time as Interim Pastor at seven churches in Texas and Louisiana, the latest being New Hope Presbyterian Church in Katy.

In 2003, Steve was selected "Church Man of the Year," an honor bestowed by the PC(USA) Presbyterian Men. Throughout his ministry service, Steve has been accompanied by his wife Patty. They have been married 39 years and have three grown children and one grandson. In recognition of his distinguished service and retirement, the Rev. Mike Cole presented Steve with a certificate and gift from the presbytery.



Patricia and Stephen Kim

congregation has used Stephen Ministry to express one-on-one care and concern for individuals that need a listening ear in particular times of crisis. She pointed out that those who have undertaken the 50 hours of training to become a Stephen Minister see themselves as caregivers but see Jesus as the caregiver.

In a day when many are concerned about church growth and are thinking in terms of big and bigger, this workshop pointed out that when it come to pastoral care, we also need to think of small and smaller.

Bathed in Prayer: it floats!

By Jim Gill, Postlude Reporter

Participants in Elder Jane Henson's workshop came away with something that floats. Jane used the imagery of bathing a baby to demonstrate what it means to bathe particular concerns and particular persons in prayer. To bathe a concern or a person in prayer, we must make it a priority. We do so by setting aside a time to pray and dedicating ourselves to that task. In the same way that we wouldn't leave a baby unattended in a tub to answer the phone, when we begin to bathe someone or some concern in prayer, we

should determine not to let anything interrupt our focus.

In prioritizing our prayer time it should be in a place that is conducive to prayer. We wouldn't give a baby a bath in the living room or on the dining room table surrounded by fine china. You bathe a baby where the water is and where splashing is not a concern.

Jane urged us to make sure the water of our prayers is warm. And even though the object of our prayers may wiggle and protest, we are to tenderly continue to bathe them and love them through the process to the end result that they have been cleansed and covered by our prayers and concern.

Jane concluded her demonstration by leading us in a "hands on" exercise of actually spending time bathing the meeting of our upcoming General Assembly in prayer, praying for the commissioners by name. Then as we exited, thanking Jane for leading us in this exercise, we were each handed a bar of ivory soap with the words on the wrapper in Sharpie script, "bathed in prayer."

The day's Offering will be directed to CEDEPCA - Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (for PW Horizons Bible Study in Spanish).

A Spirit of Servanthood and Stewardship

By Dick Baker, Postlude Reporter

The workshop, A Spirit of Servanthood and Stewardship, challenged participants to examine whether their discipleship is being guided by a proper spirit of servanthood and stewardship. Elder Robert Westheimer led the discussion based on two fundamental questions:

(1) "Do you suffer from "mental models" that keep you from giving space to God?" Mental models are preconceptions that often can be outdated or invalid. They tend to drive our thinking and our actions. If our mental models are wrong, they can steer us away from God and proper Christian servanthood and stewardship.

(2) "Is your prayer life opening you to God's revealing to you who you really are?" Prayer can help us to overcome or move away from the mental models that keep us from God. Spiritual formation must begin with God, not with ourselves, and prayer is the means to do that.

A Mind Transformed by the Word

By Dick Baker, Postlude Reporter

One of the marks of discipleship is to strive to understand the true meaning of discipleship through the study of God's word. In the workshop led by Tim Phillips, the "manuscript process of study" was used to examine what John 15:1-15 teaches about the meaning of discipleship. In this scripture, the familiar "vine and the branches" passage, Christ uses that analogy to teach of the love which He and the Father have for us, and what we must do to be his disciples: "My commandment is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

The manuscript process examines a biblical passage for blocks of ideas, repeated words, and common themes. Ideas are clarified, even in a familiar passage such as this one, when readers ask not only what the words mean, but why they are repeated and how a passage should affect how they live. Tim demonstrated how such study can lead to visually diagramming the flow of ideas through the passage and produce a fresh understanding.

Ministers come to New Covenant from east and west, north and south

Carrie Smith-Coons has been called to serve as co-associate pastor at St. Philip, Houston. Transferring from Lake Huron Presbytery (MI), Carrie is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art and Union-PSCE in Richmond where she received an MA CE and MDiv.

Shawn Coons has been called to serve as co-associate pastor at St. Philip, Houston. Transferring from Detroit Presbytery (MI), Shawn's formal education includes an MC CE and MDiv from Union Theological Seminary-PSCE.



Shawn and Carrie with son Benjamin



David Green

David Green (left) has been called to serve as pastor at First, Galveston. Although he is transferring from Presbytery of Charlotte (VA), he returning "home" as his undergraduate work was done at Austin College. He received his MDiv as well as the MTh from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond.



Shawn Kang

Shawn Kang (left) was received as member-at-large, organizing pastor at Pathways NCD. He is transferring from San Francisco Presbytery (CA). His education included undergraduate study at the U. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and an MDiv from San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Sam Henderson (right) has been called as interim pastor at Clear Lake. Sam is transferring from Peace River Presbytery (FL). He received an MDiv from Gordon-Conwell (cum laude) and a DMin from Columbia Theological Seminary.



Sam Henderson



John Singleton

John Singleton (right) has been called to serve as pastor of First, Conroe. Transferring from Indian Nations Presbytery (OK), John received his MDiv from Fuller Theological seminary.

Gift enables presbytery to implement its vision for the future

Commissioners received and accepted the report of the Gift Task Force, which was appointed by General Council last year to develop recommendations on how a \$3.4 million gift from the estate of Memorial Drive member, Glendora Cris Miller, was to be used by the presbytery. Among the first actions of the Gift Task Force was the recommendation (which the Presbytery approved in October 2005) to tithe ten percent of the gift to the presbyteries of Mississippi and South Louisiana.

Mike Cole reported that the balance of the gift would be used to establish Presbytery's Vision Initiatives Fund, invested equally through the PCUSA Foundation and the Texas Presbyterian

Foundation, under the oversight of General Council.

An annual grant program will provide grants from the Fund to pay for projects fostering Presbytery's vision. Immediate use of a portion of the gift will be used to retire the mortgage on the church property of Grand Lakes PC.

Mike announced that another gift of \$100,000 has been received by the presbytery from the estate of Lynn Johnson, former Stated Clerk of the presbytery. The gift is designated for social justice issues.

The complete report of the Gift Task Force may be found on pages 27-39 of the Presbytery Packet, which is posted at www.pbyofnewcovenant.org.

Motion sustained: Ordination exam completed

Rachel Poysky described Philippians 3:7-11, her text for her ordination sermon, as “the loveliest letter written by Paul.” It is, she said, an encouraging letter written to good friends who were facing persecution and false teachings. Paul wrote how important it is not to miss the main thing, the most important thing - to know Christ and what God has done. It is the only thing that matters. With poise and a strong message, Rachel spoke about the righteousness that comes to us in a new way when we come to know Christ.

Her examination was completed in the afternoon session after answering a question from the floor and those posed by the Chair of COM/E and the Moderator.

Rachel has been called to serve as associate pastor at Memorial Drive where she has been serving in a non-ordained capacity. A graduate of Furman University in Greenville (SC), Rachel received her MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary. She will be ordained and installed at Memorial Drive on July 2 at 4:00 p.m.



Rachel Poysky

Inquirer moved to candidacy

By Dick Baker, Postlude Reporter

Inquirer Alyssa Shultz-Payne, member of Grace Houston, was enrolled as a candidate for the ministry. She spoke of how blessed she has been to grow up in a Christian home, Grace PC, and among many Christian friends. She has felt called to the ministry since high school. After completing her undergraduate college education, she worked on the Grace staff for several years in children’s and youth ministry. She has been studying for the ministry at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, where this summer she will attempt to master the Greek language before beginning her final year next fall.

In his charge to Alyssa, the Rev. Doug Harper reminded her that while she is cultivating her gifts that come from God in both her studies and later ministry, she must always remember to hear God’s word for herself and always to care for her marriage.



Alyssa Shultz-Payne

CODA

Elders and minister commissioners to the presbytery meeting conducted the following additional business at the May 16, 2006 meeting:

- Approved the dissolution of El Buen Pastor PC in Bay City. There is no property involved and the remaining member family worships in another church.
- Renewed the commissions of Lynn David (in absentia) and Bob David to serve as Commissioned Lay Pastors (CLP) at First PC (Kairos and Epiphany Prison Ministries) Pearland from May 13, 2006 to May 13, 2009 and that they be given permission to perform Baptisms, serve the Lord’s Supper, and perform marriages.
- Commissioned Bob David to serve as CLP for the Restoration Fellowship NCD from June 1, 2006 to May 31, 2009 and given permission to perform Baptisms, serve the Lord’s Supper, voice and vote in presbytery, and perform marriages.
- Accepted the request of Paul Quarrels (Houston, First) to withdraw from the process.
- Accepted the request of Caz Minter (Kingwood, First) to be removed from the process and that his files be sent to the Presbytery of the Mid West Evangelism PC.
- Commissioned Bob and Lynn David (in absentia) to serve as CLPs at First Vidor from March 1, 2006 to February 28, 2007 and gave permission to administer the Lord’s Supper.
- Renewed the commission of Carl Slagley to serve as CLP for First PC (Kairos and Epiphany Prison Ministries) Pearland, effective May 13, 2006 to May 12, 2009 with permission perform Baptisms, serve the Lord’s Supper, and perform marriages.
- Renewed the commission of Jane Whitney to serve as CLP at St. Andrew’s Houston from June 1, 2006 to May 31, 2009 with permission to administer the Lord’s Supper to homebound and care facilities.
- Adopted the Alternative Examination Procedure which will be forwarded to the office of the Synod of the Sun for approval.
- Elected 10 individuals to serve on designated presbytery committees as recommended by the Nominating Committee. Their names are listed in the Presbytery Packet posted on our website www.pbymofnewcovenant.org.
- Elected Ted Cooper to serve on the Nominating Committee.

The Postlude is published after each stated meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant by the presbytery’s Communications Committee.

Helen Wolf, Editor

Dick Baker and Jim Gill - Postlude Reporters

Ella Park, Photographer - Graphic Designer at Memorial Drive

Patricia Brantley and Sandra Lopez, Circulation