

September 2008 Newsletter

Fellowship Presbyterian Church

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“Control”

by Martin H. Martin



I sit writing at the end of the first week of a new school year, one in which I now have two children in middle school; and for the first time they are not in a formally Christian institution. When I was growing up in the 70s and 80s, that was the case for almost everybody, including Christian families. Today we have many more options: private non-Christian schools, private Christian schools and even home schooling. Sadly, these options often divide and fragment Christians between various options. But whatever method of schooling you chose – and this has become a pointed reality for my family this year – at some point we have to make a substantial shift in the way we parent our children.

Regardless of whether you drive to school, walk to school or stay at home for school the reality is the same – **at some point our parenting begins to shift from discipline to discipleship, from control to communication and counsel.** If our children are ever to become appropriately independent, spiritually mature young men and women, we must of necessity make this shift. The question is, do you see the necessity of the shift or are you fighting against it?

To be honest, and I see the struggle in my own heart, let me tell you why I think we often don't make the shift as we should – control feels safe! When our children are toddlers we can, and should, exercise a high degree of control. We determine to the minute when they get out of the crib (unless you have a climber!), when their light goes out, what they eat, where they walk, who they talk to, even the exact nature of the conversation. All of that seems very safe. We feel that we can protect them, and to a large degree we can. But as we mature into adulthood it is unrealistic, unwise and even harmful to think that the details of our lives can or should be governed by someone else's control.

Taking it a step farther, my observation is that external controls over the long run produce at best a shallow conformity and at worst an angry, deceptive rebellion. I am not advocating “throwing our kids to the wolves” or leaving them to make decisions that are beyond their years, and I realize that parents have to make judgment calls with their children. But we need to also realize that at some point **we must begin to make hard transitions. So how do we do it?**

First, pray for your child's conversion. Point them to Christ! You cannot ultimately control your child, and if it seems you do realize that you

are only controlling outward actions and not the thoughts of the heart. But if your child is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, if the love of Christ constrains him, then there will never be a place that he can go away from the presence of his Savior and no crevice of the heart where God is not aware and at work. One day your child will move away, or you will pass away; either way, you won't be there. But your Heavenly Father (and prayerfully your child's) will be.

Second, start to focus more on communication and counsel than on the details of control. That's not to say that you should not have a curfew in high school; but instead of trying to keep your child from the possibility of encountering sin (theirs or somebody else's), turn your attention to talking with them about what they are encountering each day. The family dinner table is a great time to do this, riding in the car is another, or perhaps family time at the end of the evening works for you. Whenever it is, sit down and take the time to talk about the events, thoughts, struggles and failures of their day and use that as an opportunity to help them think through those things as a Christian and to submit their hearts to Christ.

Emphasizing a different angle on the previous paragraph – **praise God if your children communicate with you about their observations, opinions, struggles and failures!** It is an opportunity for you to reassure them of your love, of our need of Christ and His love for us. It is a time when you might illustrate in others the subtlety and misery of sin. It is a chance to show where certain ways of thinking and habits of life end in our harm. But praise God when they talk to you!

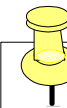
Things might come to your attention that require actions on your part. You might need to pursue a different educational option or make a change in some extracurricular activity; but more often you probably need to use the opportunity to help your kids learn how to walk with Christ in a non-Christian culture.

Lord willing, this will come to be the nature of our relationship as our children become independent young adults. **Right now is the time to lay the groundwork** for the phone calls that will hopefully come down the road: “Dad, I've run into a problem at work and I need your advice. Mom, we've had an issue come up with one of the kids and I was wondering how you handled this type of thing with us.” And prayerfully, one day, in the evening of our years we will watch our children be such a blessing to their children as well. **By God's grace, rather than remaining withdrawn, isolated and controlled, they will function as godly, faithful, mature members of society who are salt and light in the world.**

Can you tell what the anxieties and conversations have been for me lately? Ask me in a few years and I can give you more feedback and observations, but of this much I'm sure – I cannot control my children forever and would not want to; but by God's grace they will learn from me repentance, dependence and faithfulness that will bear fruit beyond high school and college into all of life.

~Pastor Marty

The sacrament of the **Lord's Supper** will be celebrated
(and a **Mercy Offering** received)
on **Sunday, September 7th**, during evening worship.



Church Notes:

Sunday Picnic Supper (& Sundaes!): September 7th!

Plan to join us on **Sunday, September 7th**, following evening worship, for a picnic supper (with sundaes!) and a time of fellowship.

Menu: sandwiches, chips, lemonade & sundaes!

Please bring a tray of sandwiches or your favorite sundae topping.



The **September** edition of **TABLETALK** is available (free of charge) to all members and visitors; pick up your copy (in the narthex) today!

WEDNESDAY SUPPER & ACTIVITIES RESUMES SEPTEMBER 10th:

5:30 PM: Supper (catered meal; cost: \$3.50/adult, \$2.50/child, \$10 max/family)



Sept. 10 Hawaiian chicken, brown & wild rice, broccoli casserole, rolls, tea & chocolate cake

Sept. 17: Beef tips in gravy over rice, green beans, rolls, tea & assorted pies

Sept. 24: Fried chicken, mac & cheese, mixed vegetables, rolls, tea & strawberry shortcake

6:00 PM: Choir Rehearsal (starting Sept. 17)

6:40 PM: Devotional & Prayer Time (adults); Catechism (children)

The Session has called a **Congregational Meeting for September 7th**, to inform the congregation regarding a matter of church discipline.

Ladies' Precepts Bible Study:

(a nine-week inductive study of 2 Peter)

Tuesday, September 16th, 9:30—11:30 AM

For more information (or to sign up), please contact **Wendy Richards** (877-3267 or 399-9276); childcare is provided.



A Session meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 9th**, at 7:00 PM.

INQUIRER'S CLASS BEGINS SEPTEMBER 7th: If you are interested in learning more about Fellowship Presbyterian Church (who we are, what we believe and how we seek to serve), join us for the **Inquirer's Class** (taught by Pastor Marty Martin) beginning **Sunday, September 7th**, during the Sunday school hour (10:00 AM).



OCTOBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th.

Nursery Help Needed: If you are not currently on the nursery rotation, please contact the church office (office@fellowshippres.org or 877-3267) or **Kathy Way** (inmanways@yahoo.com or 864-814-1908).

The office will be closed on **Monday, September 1st**, for Labor Day.

SERVING IN SEPTEMBER:

Elder of the Month: Jeff Wayne (967-8434); **Deacon of the Month:** Bill Wilder (848-6434)

Greeters of the Month: Carolyn Root & Margaret Stannard; **Ushers:** Troy High & Bill Wilder.

Church-Wide / Family Retreat at Look Up Lodge

Friday & Saturday, October 3rd—4th

(supper-time on Friday through Saturday afternoon)



Featured Speaker:
David Sinclair



Retreat includes 3 teaching sessions with David Sinclair
(1-Friday night; 2-Saturday morning);

Q&A/application session (before lunch on Saturday);
Friday night bonfire (yes, of course there will be smores!);
Saturday afternoon camp/ lake activities & fellowship!

Supervised activities for children (4 yrs & up):

toddler/infant nursery available during
all teaching sessions.

Retreat Cost:

Overnight Retreat (including meals):

\$10/person; \$20/family

Friday/ Saturday day only (including meals):

\$5/person; \$10/family

Sign-up is required; sheet is in the narthex.

(Scholarships are available)

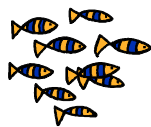
Update on Tommy Brooks: Tommy is at home (able to attend church!) awaiting funds that will enable him to receive **much needed continuous therapy**; Of the \$50,000 needed for the **60 day minimal** length of treatment, \$21,000 has been raised to date. Fellowship has given \$1000 (contributions may still be made to replenish that amount with anything over going to the Brooks Benevolence Fund). Please contact FPC's Officers or Calvary Presbyterian Church for more information.

Dear Fellowship Presbyterian Church,

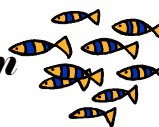
I wish to thank everyone for their prayers and encouragement. It is a blessing to belong to such a caring congregation. You have strengthened me and lifted my spirits. Thank you!

~Florence Tessler

MISSIONARY MISSIVE



Calvary Home for Children



by Carolyn Root

Calvary Home for Children is a group foster home in Anderson, SC, which provides long-term care for foster children from all over the state of South Carolina. It is a haven for children without adequate family structure in need of a long-term, Christ-centered home. Workers seek to keep siblings together, teach reformed evangelical Christian values, mend emotional scars, provide biblical counseling, and give all an opportunity to reach their God-given potential. Over the next 7 years, Calvary Home expects to care for up to 170 abused, neglected, or orphaned children from all over the Southeast.

The vision for Calvary Home for Children began in 1992. Members from up-state PCA churches, feeling burdened by the increase in child abuse and abandonment, participated in mission trips to a children's home in Columbus, MS, and returned with the desire to start a similar work in the Upstate. The first quarter of 1998, a board of directors was formed consisting of leaders from local churches and businesses. They established the Home to be distinctly reformed in doctrine and PCA in identity and to be guided by God's command in Deuteronomy 6:6: "Teach them (God's commands) diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

Those who minister at Calvary Home feel this responsibility profoundly. They are charged with the life-changing task of shaping and fashioning arrows that will shoot straight and true in the hand of the Master Warrior. Oftentimes these little arrows are bent and broken when they arrive, and some have even been discarded as useless. But time and time again, God lovingly and tenderly reshapes these instruments for His own glory.

The home is not operated or funded by a particular church, but is dependent on the collective support of God's people. Unfortunately, the recent economic drought has caused a drop in donations, although caring for 15-20 children is costing more than ever. In addition to donations and prayers, there are some specific ways we can help. First, Calvary Home for Children will be hosting a Golf Challenge on September 29. Each player is asked to raise \$1,500 through fund-raising letters and word of mouth. If interested in playing or assisting, contact Art Klugh (pronounced "clue"), a board member, at 864-940-7541.

The Home also operates a Rags to Riches Thrift Store, in which all proceeds help fund the day-to-day expenses of the Home. The store just moved to a better location at 110 Highway 29, about 4-5 miles past the Anderson Jockey Lot, next to the skating rink (on left coming from Greenville). They would love help sorting and hanging clothes and will gladly receive donations of clothes, furniture, pots and pans, etc. Hours are 9-5, M-F and 9-3 Sat; however, sometimes on hot days they leave early. The thrift store phone number is 864-224-8414.

Let's see what we can do to participate in these opportunities and promote this mercy ministry.

Rick Kirby
Executive Director
Calvary Home for Children
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(864)353-4594
<http://www.calvaryhome.org>

FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED