

## May 2009 Newsletter

# Fellowship Presbyterian Church

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### “Emerging Church Movement”

by Martin H. Martin



Last week I had the opportunity to get away for a few days to a conference. It is always good to have a break in the routine, a change of scenery, to catch up with some old friends, to be challenged from the Scriptures and encouraged in ministry. Some of the topics are interesting to pastors (and boring to most of the rest of us!) but one topic in particular peaked my interest because of the way it seems to be effecting the whole church in our day. The topic is most often referred to as the *Emerging Church Movement* (ECM) and we probably see elements of it in almost all circles of the Church. It is difficult to put a tight definition on the *Emergent* movement, and folks a lot brighter than I have written whole books trying to do so, but here are some of the basic characteristics.

First, the ECM takes its name from the idea that the true church is “emerging” from the antiquated denominational structures that have existed for centuries. In other words, *Emergents* believe they transcend the institutions of denominations, even believing that the organized church is sometimes more a hindrance than a help in the advance of the gospel.

Second, many in the emerging movement stress the idea of “Apostolic simplicity”, which is a way of saying that we need to have fewer church meetings and spend more time naturally living out our faith in Christ. For example, I have known those over the years who will argue that we should only gather as a church once a week, for worship on Sunday, and that anything beyond that is useless and even detrimental.

Before you think there is nothing good to say about the ECM, we should note there is in the movement a very strong emphasis on the gospel. Related to that, *Emergents* put a strong emphasis on engaging culture rather than retreating from it as evangelical Christians have too often done. In other words they believe in “getting out there” and engaging the lost with the claims of the gospel.

So why does this ECM stuff matter? If it is really having an

effect on the Church then how can we benefit from the things that are right while guarding against the problems or things that are wrong?

Beginning with a point of agreement, I think the ECM is correct that we have often put too much time into meetings that are not really of much value in the work of the kingdom and have even sinned at times with the degree to which we have consumed people’s time by having them “up at the church” five nights a week. There is nothing spiritual or godly in meetings for the sake of meetings.

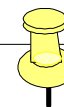
On the other hand, the aversion to “meetings” isn’t exactly biblical either. Look in the book of Acts – the members of the church were getting together *daily!* I’m sure that much of this was informal and casual, but you also see that Christians *loved* getting together. There is something wrong when we start using theology as a way to *not* get together! Why do we not want to? It is one thing if we are exchanging one meeting for another, but I suspect that we often spend that time in front of the TV or computer rather than as an opportunity to reach out and serve.

With regard to cultural engagement and going to the lost with the claims of the gospel, we should sound a hearty “amen”; but we should probably be wary that engagement with culture does not become infatuation with culture. While I agree that it is not Christ-like to be arbitrary weird, I am concerned that we often try to be “hip”. We sometimes do it because we think we will win people over by being cool; but it can also be that we simply enjoy getting to be fun and having people like us. Jesus engaged sinners, so we should to. Paul walked through halls of power and interacted with pagan philosophy. But we also need to look like Christ and engage people with the claims of the gospel, not impress them because we are cool like Elvis Costello or buff like Brad Pitt.

To be honest, and this is where I’ll sound cynical and non-academic, I believe folks gravitate toward the ECM because it gives us a way to pick and choose the things in which we will participate and gives a very spiritual justification to pursue all of the things that are offered by our culture. But we need to relate to Christ and relate Him to sinners, not relate to sinners with how “cool” we are. And we should never forget that Christ died for the Church, not just the universal church but the visible church. He sent Apostles to the church, raised up officers in the church and sent His Word to the church. He loves her, every congregation of her, warts and all; and we should too.

~Pastor Marty

The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper will be celebrated  
(and a special mercy offering received) during evening worship  
on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
The Lord’s Supper will also be observed during morning worship  
on Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>.



## Church Notes:

There is a Session Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM.

### WEDNESDAY SUPPER & ACTIVITIES

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

5/06: Fried chicken, man & cheese, green beans, rolls, tea & strawberry shortcake

5/13: Italian baked chicken, brown & wild rice, broccoli casserole, rolls, tea & assorted pies

5/20: Ham, mac & cheese, green beans, rolls, tea & apple pie

5:27: No supper or activities (will resume September 16<sup>th</sup>)

6:30 PM: Devotional & Prayer Time (adults); Catechism (children grades k-4 thru 6<sup>th</sup>)

### WEDNESDAY EVENING WORKERS SIGNED-UP FOR MAY:

**CATECHISM TEACHERS:**

**KITCHEN CLEAN-UP:**

5/06: Wortmans; 5/13: Martins ; 5/20: Wortmans

5/06: Carolyn Root 5/13: TBA; 5/20: TBA

### ◆ Youth Events ◆

◆ **Saturday, May 16: Airsoft War (or a movie for any non combatants!)**

9:00 AM—2:00 PM, at the Willborns’ home; lunch will be provided.

◆ **July 20—24: Jr. High Conference at Awanita**

Please contact Breno Macedo (brenopm@gmail.com or 631-3896) for event details.



Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

cordially invites you to attend their

Nineteenth Commencement

on Friday, May 22, 2009, at 7:00 P.M.,

200 E. Main St, Taylors

Reception following

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



June-July Newsletter deadline is **Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**.

The office will be closed Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, for Memorial Day.

### SERVING IN MAY:

Elder of the Month: Larry Poole (268-5514); Deacon of the Month: Bill Wilder (848-6434)

Greeters of the Month: the Wayne family; Ushers: Troy High & Bill Wilder.

Mark Your Calendars:

**Sunday May 24<sup>th</sup>:**

**Cookout/ Picnic Supper with**

**Emilio & Anelise  
Garofalo!!**

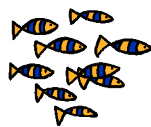


*We are very excited to have the Garlfalos  
visiting with us at Fellowship  
on Sunday May 24<sup>th</sup>:  
that evening following worship,  
we will have a cookout/ picnic  
and time of fellowship  
with Emilio & Anelise!*

**Menu: hamburgers, hotdogs, sides, lemonade & desserts**  
*(hamburgers, hotdogs, buns, condiments  
& lemonade will be supplied by the church)*

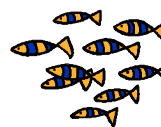
**Please sign-up to bring: a side dish**  
*(baked beans, potato or pasta salad, fruit or veggie tray, etc.)*  
**or your favorite dessert!**

**Sign-up sheet is in the narthex; thank you!**



MISSIONARY MISSIVE  
*Emilio & Anelise Garofalo*

*by Carolyn Root*



This year Emilio and Anelise Garofalo have been serving the Lord in Mississippi. Emilio is completing his first year of the Ph.D. program at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson. As Director of International Ministry at Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Ridgeland, he ministers to the foreign community living in the area. In December Emilio was ordained as a pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil – a joyful occasion. His presbytery has authorized him to remain in the U.S. for 2-3 years to work on his Ph.D.

In a mixture of Spanish and English, Emilio teaches an International Sunday School class with about 15 regular students. He also participates in a weekly English as a Second Language program which has 65 students, 6 teachers, and 15 volunteers. Students hail from many countries, but the majority are from Honduras, Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, and other Hispanic countries. He has also had several opportunities to teach and preach at the church. Anelise has applied for a temporary work permit to work at Christ Covenant School, a ministry of their church.

They would love to have people praying for their ministry, for the students who are not believers, and for growth in maturity in those who are believers already. Please pray also for their financial support, Anelise's work permit, and Emilio's studies.

The Garofalos will be here Memorial Day weekend (May 22-25), attending graduation Friday evening at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Taylors. The session at Fellowship has asked Emilio to preach both morning and evening worship services that Sunday. It will be nice to see them again! In the meantime you may drop them a line or call them at:

**Rev. and Mrs. Emilio Garofalo**  
711 Lake Harbour Drive, Apt. 1141  
Ridgeland, MS 39157  
601-826-6795  
*emiliogneto@yahoo.com.br*



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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