

June & July 2009 Newsletter

Fellowship Presbyterian Church

1105 Old Spartanburg Road ~ Greer, SC 29650

Rev. Martin H. Martin, Pastor

Phone: (864) 877-3267 Fax: (864) 877-0564

Email: office@fellowshippres.org

Website: www.fellowshippres.org

“Church Growth”

by Martin H. Martin



I recently spoke with a pastor friend about the “personalities” of different churches and how the culture of those churches effects the way they view and experience growth. In reflecting on the subject, I have to admit with a chuckle that I am really not a “church growth” type of guy in that I do not keep up with the material constantly being written on methods and strategy. I think my reflections are more sanctified common sense paired with some fifteen years of pastoral observation, both in churches I have served and in those served by my friend. I believe I have noticed the following general patterns.

Some churches (I’m including those that are genuine evangelical and Bible-believing) essentially **function as what one author called “ingrown tribes”**. In the past I have called this the “Cheers Bar” church. People are there because it is their group. But because most of us can only handle so many friends, and might even view “unexpected drop-ins” from others as interruptions, the “my group of friends” church tends to be disinterested in growth and might even resist it.

Then there is the “friendly” church. People are cordial. They smile, speak and shake your hand; **but that is about as far as it goes.** They are happy to move over and give you space on their pew, but they are not so quick to take you into their lives. The problem is not with being friendly, but with being *merely* friendly. The place is cheerful, but there is still little burden for outreach or desire for growth.

A third type of church (you’ll notice a continuum here) is the church that **wants to grow, but not for the right reasons.** Parents want it to grow so there will be friends for their children, worshippers want it to grow enough to not feel empty; but the desire for growth is driven more by a desire to “improve” the group for those already there than it is by a desire to see other sinners served for their good and God’s glory. In other words, growth is desired until there is “enough” of whatever was thought lacking, then the desire for growth fizzles.

A fourth variation, and this is actually a huge stride forward from the last, is **the church that actually wants to grow.** People pray for growth. People go out of their way to meet new folks. Members are excited to see newcomers there and anxiously hope they will stay. And the desire is for the right reason – people want to see the lost saved and the saints grow in grace. The members warmly reach out even to those with clearly evident problems. As I said above, this is a much better place to be than the previous scenario where growth is desired for essentially selfish reasons. The shortfall with the “praying for growth” church is when it stops at praying. There may be an earnest desire for deep and lasting growth, **but there is a deficient pursuit of that growth.** So where does this church need to go next?

In my observation, **the fifth scenario** and the one that is most mature and healthy is the **“praying, laboring and serving to grow” church.** In this church, just like the last, people earnestly pray for growth; but people are going further in the way that they live their lives. Members have genuine relationships with unbelievers around them. They involve their lives in the lives of others. They invite friends and acquaintances to church. They meet those that others bring and then pursue opportunities to get to know them better over lunch, in their home or during an evening out. In other words, in addition to praying for the lost, they pursue and spend time with people. They also cooperate with others in the body, whether consciously or not, to minister as a group to those the Lord brings.

I recently read an observation (I can’t vouch for it but it is interesting) that it typically takes the involvement of twenty church members to see one lost person come to faith. Of course God can work however He will, but if that observation is valid for our culture, then it indicates that the growing churches are those where members are bringing non-Christians to the fellowship and then corporately receiving and ministering to them over a period of time.

All that is to probe us with a few questions. What kind of church is Fellowship Presbyterian? Where would you individually fit in your approach to church growth? Are you happy with things the way they are? Do you want FPC to grow because there are things you will enjoy more if the church is larger. Are you praying for growth but for whatever reason been neglecting to actually pursue it? When did you last bring a newcomer, especially a non-Christian, to church? When did you last write down a visitor’s number so you could get together with them some time outside of church on Sunday?

Think about it (I have been); **and pray about how God might grow you personally and how He might work in and through Fellowship Presbyterian Church.**

~Pastor Marty

Summer Fellowship & Prayer Time:

WEDNESDAYS (June 10—July 1), 6:30 PM

(5:30 PM: “bring your own picnic supper”)

This summer beginning

Wednesday, June 10— Wednesday, July 1,

we will meet at 6:30 PM for a time of informal prayer.

Families are welcome to bring their own “picnic supper”

and eat together (starting at 5:30 PM).

There will be no organized classes or activities for children;

those too young to participate in the prayer time

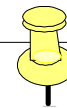
will have a time to play together, supervised

by a rotation of parents.

Come join us for an “informal” change of pace

in our fellowship and prayer together as the body!

The Lord’s Supper will be celebrated on Sunday, June 7th, during morning worship.



Church Notes:

There are Session meetings scheduled for Tuesday, June 9th, and Tuesday, July 14th, at 7:00 PM.

Having completed the process of nomination, training and examination which is contained in our Book of Church Order, the Session of Fellowship Presbyterian Church has called a congregational meeting for June 28 (following morning worship) for the purpose of voting on Mr. Troy High to serve in the office of Deacon. Please continue to lift this matter in prayer as you make your plans to attend.



Congratulations Graduates:

Liz Stubbs will receive a High School Diploma from Riverside High School on Thursday, June 4, 2009.

Jeff Wayne, Jr. received an Associate Degree in Computer Technology/ Network Systems from the Greenville Technical College on Tuesday, May 12, 2009.

Current editions of TABLETALK is available (free of charge) to all members and visitors; pick up your copy (in the narthex) today!

◆ Upcoming Youth Events ◆

◆ **Saturday, June 20: Service Project at the church**
9:00 AM—1:00 PM; 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.

The office will be closed Friday, July 3rd, for Independence Day.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP & PRAYER BREAKFAST:

Saturday, June 6th; 7:00—9:00 AM

August Newsletter deadline is Friday, July 17th.

SERVING IN JUNE:

Elder of the Month: Jeff Wayne
Deacon of the Month: Sam Stubbs
Greeters of the Month: Jan Robbins

SERVING IN JULY:

Elder of the Month: Dave Lesley
Deacon of the Month: Bill Wilder
Greeters of the Month: The Richards

Ushers: Troy High, Ron Reinink & Bill Wilder



Family and Youth Corner:
by Breno Macedo

Fellowship Presbyterian and the Church in Brazil

As I write this today, another graduation is taking place at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and once again, another Brazilian, Rorigo Brotto, is receiving his degree from this institution. This reminds me of the greatness of this country (US) in contributing to spread the Gospel throughout the whole world and, especially, in my country and in particular of the involvement of Fellowship Presbyterian Church with the Church in Brazil.

Claudio Albuquerque, who is today in Brazil ministering to the brothers of the First Presbyterian Church in Recife, is another example of this fact. Claudio was with us for a good amount of time (almost 4 years); he and his family (wife, their son and two daughters) were among us, being shepherded by the Session of our church, having fellowship with the members, while also receiving theological instruction from GPTS. Although his degree is not yet completed, Claudio is both teaching at the seminary in Recife and pastoring a church there (with its 600 members) which gets together twice on Sundays, on Tuesdays for prayer meeting and on Thursdays for theological instruction. Upon returning to Brazil, **Rodrigo Brotto** will be Claudio's assistant pastor!

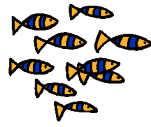
Emilio Garofalo (actually, Reverend Emilio!), our former church intern and graduate of Greenville Seminary, was ordained in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (same denomination as all Brazilians who are currently here; Claudio's denomination as well) and is pursuing further theological instruction at Reformed Theological Seminary in Mississippi. After completing his doctoral studies at RTS, Emilio plans to return to Brazil, to preach and teach in a Presbyterian seminary.

Paulo Brasil, who is currently teaching the Minor Prophets class Sunday mornings at our church, is already an ordained Presbyterian minister and is taking the doctoral program at GPTS. Paulo was already a seminary teacher before coming to the US; he is pursuing further theological training to better serve the kingdom of God in Brazil.

I am yet another example of the Brazilian presence on American soil. I've been here for two years (and almost the same amount of time at FPC) and still have two more years until graduation day comes. After finishing my current program at GPTS, I intend to pursue a masters degree (please, pray for that) and I also have the same intention as my fellow brothers: to return to Brazil, teach in a seminary and pastor a church.

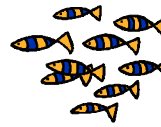
The fact that all these people are related to Fellowship, either deeply involved in ministerial training or present in activities or attending church, is what **catches ones attention**. Our Lord Jesus said that the gates of hell would never prevail against His Church. It may even face times of persecution, of spiritual weakness, of doctrinal decline, but it remains the Bride of Christ. He will never abandon her. This marriage can never be dissolved. And He will use the best means imaginable to restore and perfect her. In this case, **we praise our God for He has appointed Fellowship Presbyterian Church to be involved in the shepherding and training of those who will care for His Church located in the Deep South!**

~Breno



MISSIONARY MISSIVE
Bethany Christian Services

by Carolyn Root



For more than 60 years, Bethany Christian Services has been restoring, preserving, and building families through therapeutic and adoption services. A not-for-profit, pro-life, Christian adoption and family services agency, Bethany touches the lives of more than 30,000 people annually. Its mission is to manifest the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social service.

In May the CBS Evening News with Katie Couric presented a series about the recession's devastating effect on children. One segment featured Chicago-based Safe Families for Children, which provides an alternative to foster care for children temporarily displaced by hard times. Families take in children on a "co-parenting" basis for a few days, weeks, or months. Bethany Christian Services participates in Safe Families programs in Chicago, Atlanta, and Chattanooga.

Now the nation's largest adoption agency, Bethany began in 1944 as the fulfillment of a dream shared by two young women, Marguerite Bonnema and Mary DeBoer, who wanted to establish a Christian residence for homeless children. With the assistance of businessman Andrew VanderVeer, they established the Bethany Home. Their humble ministry has grown into an international team of nearly 900 dedicated professionals ministering in 75 U.S. cities and over a dozen other countries.

In the fall of 2009 Bethany will host mission trips to Romania, Albania, Kosovo, China, and Ethiopia, showcasing Bethany's impact on the lives of children around the world. The 2010 Myrtle Beach Marathon will be held February 13, 2010. Participants and sponsors are needed for this run/walk.

If you would like to help or know of someone in need of these services, you may contact the Greenville office at:

Bethany Christian Services
114 Williams Street, Suite A
Greenville, SC 29601-2995
864-235-2273
bcsgreenville@bethany.org
www.bethany.org



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FELLOWSHIP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
1105 OLD SPARTANBURG ROAD
GREER, SOUTH CAROLINA 29650