

Presbyters, Presbytery and Presbyterianism?

Redeemer is a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The word “presbyterian” refers to our form of church government and comes from the Greek word for elder. When elected “presbyters” (elders) of a local congregation meet to conduct the business of the church it is called the Session. The Session of Redeemer meets the second Monday evening of each month for business and the fourth Monday morning for prayer at the church offices.

Yet presbyterianism also refers to our connectedness to other churches. Within the PCA, churches do not stand alone. Instead, each church is connected and accountable to other churches. We see this principle clearly illustrated in the Council of Jerusalem recorded for us in Acts 15. There the apostles and elders of the church gathered to settle a theological dispute over circumcision.

Today the collective church, or connected church, gathers to oversee ministry, settle disputes and expand the Kingdom of Christ. When this occurs in a region like South Texas we call it a presbytery. Therefore, Redeemer is also a part of South Texas Presbytery. When it occurs at a national level we call it the General Assembly. Most presbyteries meet four times per year while the General Assembly meets only once per year. In June the General Assembly of the PCA met in Dallas, TX.

While it is common in our day to disregard the need for denominations, we cannot disregard Christ’s desire that the unity of his church be exhibited on this earth. When we choose to go it alone, either by ourselves or as church unto ourselves, we blindly commit ourselves to the sins of individualism. Presbyteries and Presbyterianism may not be perfect, but they do help us experience a greater depth and breadth in the communion of Jesus Christ. All of that results in our own greater growth and maturity in the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE WOBBLE OF LIFE BY TOM GIBBS

Recently, it was announced by European astronomers that they had located dozens of giant planets in three distant solar systems. Over the last fifteen years or so, scientists have discovered more than 300 of these distant earth-like bodies. Now astronomers wonder if the universe might be filled with thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of distant planets like the earth. The possibility that life could be found on one of the distant celestial bodies makes the quest all the more intense.

What is interesting about these discoveries, though, is how the “discovery” is actually made. It may be surprising, but none of these planetary bodies have been seen directly. Because of their great distance and relatively small size (of even the biggest planets), no telescope is able to see them—not even the McDonald Observatory in west Texas or the Hubble Telescope in orbit around the earth. Nevertheless, their presence is beyond doubt because they create an undeniable *wobble* in the stars they orbit. Due to the stars being much larger than planets their light is easily seen, and any wobble or oscillation can also be detected with a telescope on the earth. What causes the wobble is the effect of the gravity from a smaller planet on the larger star. Even though the planet cannot be seen, it can nonetheless be detected because it causes the larger star around which it orbits to oscillate ever so slightly.

What makes for fascinating science also illustrates important spiritual principles that should shape our Christian lives. Like those planets that cannot be seen because they are so small, sometimes we may feel as though we are not noticed, as though our Christian lives are unseen. As a church community we can feel this way too. Redeemer might wonder what difference we can really make in such a big city like San Antonio. Nevertheless, no matter how small we may think we are, our presence should never be underestimated. Christians should always bring an observable *wobble* to the lives of those around them. While we may think we are unseen, our

lives can have an undeniable gravitational force on those around us offering testimony of our life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I think this is the idea that Jesus and the apostle Peter are getting at in the familiar passages quoted below:

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16)

“The *wobble* effect our lives create should lead people all the way back to the worship of the Creator.”

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1 Pet. 2:12)

Neither Jesus, nor Peter, teaches here that people “see” the believers. Rather, the Gentiles “see” our good works. The “light” that shines is the light of a transformed person, not a big person-

ality. In other words, what is seen is the *wobble* of good deeds in the world around us. Like the scientists I wrote of above, people are curious about life and when they see it in “good deeds” they will begin to wonder from where this life comes. Eventually, the *wobble* effect our lives create should lead people all the way back to the worship of the Creator, the one from whom all things have come.

The question that emerges is what observable effect are we having in our communities, families, workplaces and schools? We must ask this question as individuals, but also as a church community. We may be small. We may think we are unseen. However, that doesn’t mean we can’t make a big difference. All of us are called to be “outposts of life” because the Gospel has taken up residence in us. Slowly, but surely, we are to change the orbits of the world and its residents around us in ways that are undeniably good. C. S. Lewis wisely remarked about this once, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” May God grant to each of us Gospel life so that the world around us undeniably *wobbles* due to the goodness of our lives!

Is the Ukraine Ready? by Jeremy Whitley

There is a father who has a '62 Corvette sitting in his garage. The car needs a lot of work, delicate care, attention to detail, and 'elbow grease' to restore it to its full, original beauty. At the same time, the father has a nine year old son, little Johnny, who left to his own vices would just as soon go about his business, doing his own thing all day. The father decides to invite little Johnny into the work of restoring the car. At first glance, this doesn't seem to make sense. Little Johnny doesn't know the first thing about working on cars, is clumsy with tools, and will probably slow down the entire process.

Why wouldn't the father just do it himself? He doesn't need the son. It doesn't make sense until we realize that it's not on the basis of little Johnny's merit that the father invites him into the restoration. Nope, it's because he loves his child and wants to build a relationship with him through the work, all the while restoring his treasure to its full beauty. Such is a Holy God with his children.

You know, as of late I get asked all the time... "So, what exactly will you be doing over there in the Ukraine?" Fair question, one that has brought forth many answers, including: "We're camping out in the mountains of the Ukraine; ... sharing the Gospel with some college students; ... whatever Doug and Masha tell us to do." While there may be validity with each one of these responses, let me try to articulate our stated purpose.

Specifically, we are coming alongside Doug and Masha Shepherd, missionaries whom we as a church body support in the Ukraine. They and their team are offering an English language camp for college students this summer. This has been an effective tool the Lord has used to build inroads for the Gospel in many areas of the world. At the camp, we will be assisting its day-to-day administration, as well as building relationships with the students. We will be doing a variety of things, from giving small classes on various subject matters (for example, personal finance or golf) to helping with music, leading hikes, bonding times, etc. A goal is not only to have a successful camp, but also to set the stage for student small/large group engagement, such as, Bible Study, in the fall.

For those of you who don't know, the team consists of Brandon Eggar, James Sedgwick, Mike Davis, Josh Brack, and me. In order to prepare for the trip, we have been meeting, and will meet as a team every Thursday night until we depart on July 12th. We have been watching Rocky IV over and over again to prepare for the trip to this former Soviet country...not really. We have been praying, studying Romans 6, 7, and 8, and having general conversations about the trip. The meetings have been a great time to prepare spiritually and build team dynamics; they have encouraged us to grow together as we prepare for our trip.

We are thankful for the help and support God has provided along the way through the congregation of Redeemer and others in the form of financial contributions and prayers. We would ask that you continually pray:

- That God would continue to raise up students who would attend the camp (our goal is 50), and prepare their hearts for the work of the Gospel.
- For God's provision to the missionaries in the Ukraine (Doug, Masha, and team).
- For continued financial provision toward our goal.
- For our safety and physical well being as we travel.
- For humility and patience as we head over there, and that we would not be distinctly of America, but distinctly of Jesus Christ.
- For safety and patience for our families as we travel abroad.

All that being said, we are still not entirely sure what to expect on this trip, except that God's will be done as He faithfully administers. He did not call us because we are good at it, nor because we are experts in the field of Ukrainian cultural integration. He called us because He is a wonderful, merciful Father who allows us to take part in the work He is doing for the sake of His Kingdom. That is a humbling, awe inspiring thought for each one of us. What better way to get to know a loving, Holy Father than through His Son, His Spirit, prayer, and by joining into His work? Praise be to God!

Missions that we support:

Local Missions:

- * Southwest Church Planting Network, Brad Bradley, Director

Church Planters:

- * Allen and Tracy Taha, Trinity Presbyterian Church in Boerne, TX
- * Aaron and Angie Scott, Church of the Cross in San Marcos, TX
 - * Carlos Cano, Iglesia La Vid in Laredo, TX
- * Mark Spence, Providence Presbyterian Mission in Beeville, TX

Reformed University Fellowship:

- * Justin and Elizabeth Clement at Trinity University
- * Benjie and Natalie Slaton at University of Texas
 - * Meg Chapin at University of Texas
- * Derick and Lisal McDonald at University of Texas, International
 - * Ryan and Bonnie Greene at Texas A&M University
 - * Ronnie Rowe, Southwest Area Coordinator

Christian Medical Dental Association:

- * Roger Matkin, Executive Director
- * Scott Phillips, Area Director

Agape Pregnancy Help Center:

- * Shirley Thompson, Executive Director
- * Kira Wesley, Downtown Director

Young Life

- * Annie Elbert

Local Ministries:

- * Guadalupe Community Center, Elvia Gonzalez, Director
- * Tobin Community Center, Ralph Rivera, Director

World Missions:

- * Bill and Jeanine Allen (MTW) in Cusco, Peru
- * Greg and Amy Sanderson (MTW) in Cusco, Peru
- * Paul and Dawn Fisher (MTW) in Guadalajara, Mexico
 - * Julian Zugg (MTW) in Belize City, Belize
- * Doug and Masha Shepherd (MTW) in Ukraine
- * Andrew and Becky Bronson (MTW) in Thailand
- * Peter Dishman (RUF) in Mexico City, Mexico
- * John and Heather Ferguson (RUF) in Trujillo, Peru
- * Josh and Amy Oettle (RUF) in Mexico City, Mexico
 - * Gene and LuAnn Bowman (BEAMM) on the Texas/Mexico Border
- * Aaron and Leticia Zapata (BEAMM) in Juarez, Mexico

If you would like to know more about the missions Redeemer supports, please contact the Redeemer Office at 930-4480 or John Fitch at jfitch@pol.net.

MISSIONS MINUTE by Laura Kaupp

In March of this year, after two years of prayer and preparation, Reverend Julian Zugg, one of the world missionaries Redeemer supports, embarked on a mission to Belize. His purpose there is to teach, preach and conduct one-on-one training for existing and new pastors, as well as elders and church leaders at Belize Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

For the next 3 to 4 years, Reverend Zugg hopes to bless the church and people of Belize by helping establish and strengthen the seminary. Please pray for him and the students to whom he will be ministering in the following areas:

- For a smooth transition as he assumes lecturing responsibilities at the seminary;
- That the Lord would give him a deeper desire, joy and passion for this new work;
- That the students would be filled with the riches of Christ;
- That the students would strive to love, encourage, and build one another up in love for the work of the Gospel in Belize.

SEVERE OUTBREAK AT VBS... by Tara Gibbs

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-2)

The enthusiasm and love of our volunteers at our FIESTA VBS was totally infectious, and all the children there broke out with a **severe case of excitement over God's redeeming love for us**. We learned that God gave His Son to save us from the bad things we all do. We learned He sent His Holy Spirit to help us live differently, and we learned we are now able to live for Him. We stored God's Word in our hearts and learned that Jesus calls us His Friends (John 15:15). What a precious, precious gift that is! As we listened to this truth, the children were totally silent, but their eyes glowed with appreciation for this amazing privilege. **Jesus calls us His FRIENDS!** And He is the perfect friend who will never leave us or stop being our friend. What does it matter what others think of us?

It is SO exciting to see the love of Christ in action, and sometimes it seems to me that one of the best places to see that clearly is in God's children. As you can see in the accompanying picture, the Guadalupe Center children, our Redeemer kids, their visitors and our fabulous volunteer crew all raised our hands together in praise of our Savior. We had an astounding level of excitement from all the kids as we played games, ate snacks, made crafts, constructed blankets for children at the SAMM shelter and sang A LOT! We heard Victor and Caleb open up our Bible stories to us in new and refreshing ways. We then closed out our week with a giant pizza party for all the families to come see what their children had learned.

The love of the children at the Guadalupe Center is truly infectious. If you have a chance to go expose yourself, get down there as fast as you can.

Thank you to all of our volunteers maravillosos! You were used by God to make this a week that clearly impacted these children. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to impress God's love upon all of these children's hearts.



SUMMER HAPPENINGS

6TH ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL



CONTEST WINNERS:

Best Homemade Ice Cream

"Sarah's Sorbet"-Watermelon
Sarah Hayne

Most Creative Ice Cream Name

*"Berrylicious Berryblend that was
Berried and Raised Again"*
Kelly Bozard

Most Unusual Flavor

"Stinky Rose"
Jennifer & Jason Smith



Join us
at our worship
location,
The McAllister
Fine Art Center
on Sundays
at 9:30 a.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 12-22 Ukraine Mission Trip

July 13 Redeemer in the Country

July 13-19 Silvercliff Youth Camp

August 8-9 Intro to Redeemer Class

August 24 Ministry Fair

August 24 Redeemer in the Park

**Sept. 5 The Lee Trio Concert
@ Ruth Taylor Hall**

MAP

Sunday Morning Worship Services are held
at the McAllister Fine Arts Center