

the *Kerygma*



NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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*“All things
are made
for us,
in order
that we may
know and
acknowledge
their author,
and
celebrate
his
goodness
towards us
by
giving him
thanks.”*

- John Calvin

GIVING THANKS BY BRANDON EGGAR

In 2004, Citigroup ran an ad campaign promoting their new rewards program. The program was simply called, “Thank you.” Many of you will recall their memorable commercials. In one such commercial two women are inspecting cantaloupes at the local grocery store when one of the women (while grasping the other’s belly!) confidently asserts to the other, “You must be having a boy!” Shocked, the other woman, retorts, “I’m not pregnant!” “You’re not?” comes the sheepish reply. “No!” yells the mistakenly identified woman. Awkward silence follows the exchange only to be interrupted by the misspoken woman who strangely blurts out, “Thank you.” Amazingly, with those two simple words, the *faux-paux* is forgiven and the two women embrace. The announcer then interjects, “It’s amazing what a simple ‘Thank you’ can do.” - If only a simple thank you would erase the discomfort of those painful “foot-in-mouth” moments we’ve all found ourselves in at some point or another!

And yet, maybe Citigroup was on to something when they ran their ads, even if they themselves did not know what it was. In reality we all know deep down that there is a strange power to the phrase, “Thank you.” We all love to hear those two simple words (especially when, unlike the above commercial, they are spoken out of sincerity) after we’ve done something for someone, like given an gift or performed some task they themselves could not perform. As a matter of fact, we love to hear “Thank you” so much that we often feel gypped if we don’t hear it, or for that matter see it in a thank you note. In these types of circumstances it would be safe to say that we feel entitled to a simple display of gratitude. The problem, however, is that this attitude flies right in the face of the gospel which does not focus on our “right” to a thank you, but on our joyful duty “to give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thes. 4:18). In reality, God’s reality that is, the power of “Thank you” is not in the receiving but in the giving.

According to Scripture, human beings were created for thanksgiving. We were created to give thanks to the one who made us and gave us every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). But as the sad story which has affected us all goes, we did not live up to our calling. In summarizing humanity’s disobedience, the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans writes, “For although

they knew God, they did not honor him or *give thanks* to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Rom. 1:21). Put simply, ingratitude to God is the characterizing mark of the darkened mind, of the mind that is set only on self-satisfaction and self-glorification. Humanity, rather than being known for its humble gratitude for the life given it, settled on prideful ingratitude that led only to death.

In this light, it is not surprising that the Scriptures, in unpacking the new life received in Christ, put a major emphasis on thanksgiving. Again and again, Paul tells his young Christian converts that he does not cease to pray for them and in so doing to give thanks for them continually (Rom. 1:8; 1 Cr. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3; 1 Thes. 1:2; 2 Thes. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Philemon 4). He also puts major stress on the fact that their new life in Christ should be characterized by overflowing thankfulness (Col. 2:7). In their prayers, thanksgiving should abound in and for every circumstance (Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thes. 4:17-18). In their conversations with others, thanksgiving should replace filthiness, foolish talk, and coarse jesting (Eph. 5:4). Thanksgiving to God plays such a key role in the story of redemption that



Paul can go as far as to say that the goal of his apostolic ministry was “to increase thanksgiving to the glory of God” (2 Cor. 4:15). If ingratitude to God was the characterizing mark of the darkened mind, then gratitude to God for all things and in every circumstance is the characterizing of the mind that is being renewed in and through Jesus.

As we come to this Thanksgiving (and Advent) season may we once again realize that “the Church (is to) live in thanksgiving; it is (to be) the air she breathes. Let us listen, and to the measure of our acceptance of this thanksgiving, we shall grasp, and not only by reason alone but with our entire being, that here and only here, only in this thanksgiving, occurs our entrance into the...true- for it is of God- freedom” (Schmemmann, Alexander, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*. Crestwood: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1987).

We were made for thanksgiving, therefore let us give thanks to him from whom and through whom are all things. Thanks be to God!

MISSIONS MINUTE

Missions that we support:

World Missions:

- * Bill and Jeanine Allen (MTW) in Cusco, Peru
- * Peter Dishman (RUF) in Mexico City, Mexico
- * John and Heather Ferguson (RUF) in Trujillo, Peru
- * Sara Joy Proppe (Peru Missions) in Trujillo, Peru
- * Paul and Dawn Fisher (MTW) in Guadalajara, Mexico
- * Cornerstone School and Seminary in Belize
- * Gene and LuAnn Bowman (BEAMM) on the Texas/Mexico Border
- * Doug and Masha Shepherd (MTW) in Ukraine
- * Family (cannot be named) (Wycliffe) in SE Asia
- * Andrew and Becky Bronson (MTW) in Thailand

Local Missions:

Church Planters:

- * Allen and Tracy Taha Church Planters: Trinity Presbyterian Church in Boerne, TX
- Reformed University Fellowship:
- * Justin and Elizabeth Clement at Trinity University
- * Benjie and Natalie Slaton at University of Texas
- * Derick and Lisal McDonald at University of Texas, International
- * Ryan and Bonnie Greene at Texas A&M University
- * Pat and Ashley Roach at Rice University

Christian Medical Dental Association:

- * Roger Matkin
- Agape Pregnancy Help Center:
- * Kira Wesley, Downtown Director

Local Ministries:

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

Monterrey, Mexico

After an absence of three years, David and Hannah Miller returned to Monterrey in August to work in Casa Hogar, an orphanage located there. First hearing of the orphanage from PCA missionaries who work in Monterrey, the Millers planned an ESL curriculum which enabled the children to learn some English while enjoying themselves during crafts, songs, and games.

Casa Hogar receives no governmental subsidy and is totally faith based in its support. The orphanage was the vision of a number of nurses from Monterrey, who over a lengthy period obtained the land and funding to build the facility. It has been in operation for ten years with Mrs. Martha Rojas, a retired nurse, as the director. Mrs. Rojas is a member of a Presbyterian church in Monterrey and has established a loving, Christian environment for children from very dysfunctional family situations. Currently there are 36 children who live at the orphanage; fifteen of these are school age (7-13) and comprised the Miller's ESL class.

Each day they taught an English lesson which was correlated with the craft or games for that day. The children learned to make basic introductions as well as to tell time in English. The children read Psalm 100 in Spanish and during the week, learned to read it in English as well.

On the last day after class, the children insisted the Millers take a seat, then those children who had been taking violin or piano lessons, played for them. It was such a touching experience with the children wanting to give something in return. After getting to know the children, it was difficult to leave them, but the Millers hope to return this winter.

Visit to El Paso/ Juarez by David Miller

In 1990, the Mission to the World of the PCA established the Border Evangelism and Mercy Ministries (BEAMM) to work with presbyteries of the PCA and the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico to promote and establish church planting movements on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border, an area 2000 miles long and stretching from the Pacific coast in Southern California to the Gulf Coast in Texas. BEAMM has concentrated its work in population centers along the border and is currently headquartered in the El Paso/Juarez area. BEAMM promotes church planting in these strategic urban centers utilizing MTW church planters and partnerships, emphasizing training and theological education. Its goal is to establish a network of churches in each of the major metropolitan areas along the border which in turn can establish daughter churches, local seminaries, and community centers for educational and training needs.

On September 15, three families from Redeemer visited the El Paso/Juarez area to learn more about the operation of BEAMM and the ongoing ministries found in that area: John and Chrissy Fitch and family, Clay, Amy, Elise, David and Hannah Miller. Gene Bowman, Director of BEAMM and financially supported by Redeemer, served as host and guide for the weekend and gave the Redeemer team an excellent overview of the BEAMM vision.

As part of the weekend, four churches/church plants in Juarez were visited: Tierra Prometida, Vida Nueva, Gracia y Paz, and Frontera de Gracia. The Redeemer team met all the local pastors and their families and on Sunday morning worshipped at Tierra Prometida. In addition, the group met with Aaron Zapata and Wilbert Frias, the Subdirector and Administrative Assistant, respectively, of the San Pablo Seminary in Juarez, and with Manuel Padilla, the organizing pastor for a new PCA church plant on the east side of El Paso. A PCA church currently exists on the west side of El Paso.

The trip offered an excellent opportunity to see first hand the ongoing BEAMM ministries in the El Paso/Juarez area and to meet those individuals involved in the work there.

HOW'S YOUR FALL HARVEST COMING? BY TARA GIBBS

John 4:31-36

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." 33 So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together.

For many years the illustration has been passed around of the discovery of a miraculous tree growing in your own backyard. It begins: "If you discovered a tree growing in your backyard and found that eating one bite of its fruit could heal any disease—even the most deadly—*what would you do?*" The answer, of course, is so obvious I need not continue the illustration, but although it's quite old, it holds as true as ever. Do we really believe that we have been healed of the deadly condition of sin? Then why do we hesitate to tell others of the bread of life of which we have tasted?

The Samaritan women at the well whose story proceeds this Bible passage couldn't wait to run into her city to tell of the extraordinary interaction she had just had with the Messiah. "Can this be the Christ?" she proclaimed to all whom she met, "Come and meet him!" This is a woman who had zero credibility in her town, but this news is too wonderful for her to worry about what reception her proclamation will bring her. She *must* proclaim it!

The Lord has clearly promised in the Bible that he will gather in all whom are His. The question is, will I lift up my eyes and see the harvest then go out and reap it SO THAT the "sower and reaper may rejoice together"? Redeemer offers a steady stream of opportunities to help us gather in the white fields of souls all around us.

- * Whom do you know who would benefit from hearing the incredibly wise and winsome Jerram Barrs talk about the future of **CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE** November 10-12? This event is a great opportunity to open up a deeper dialogue with a non-Christian or Christian friend.
- * Our annual **CHRISTMAS PARTY** outreach Sunday December 10th will be a beautiful night to enjoy good food and build a deeper friendship with a neighbor or co-worker who may need the Gospel of Grace more than we ever dreamed.

* In addition to these events, there are numerous **MEN'S and WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP** nights which are low-pressure, relationship-building opportunities with people who deeply need real friends who possess real truth. You may even know someone who would be blessed by our **South Texas Women's Conference** on perfectionism this February.

Jesus didn't pull out a "plan of salvation tract" to hand the woman at the well. He cared about her, he developed a relationship with her, he talked to her about what really mattered to her, and He *then* told her what she had been looking for all this time was found in Him. You and I most certainly have someone around us who needs this "fruit of life" we have to offer. It's not a question of "if". Let's begin praying now that God would open our eyes to the "fields that are white for harvest". As we all learn to do this better, those to whom we reach out will not be the only ones finding themselves abundantly blessed. And, a south-Texas drought can't hurt this harvest a bit!

For more information, go to <http://www.redeemersa.org/calendar.php>

ANNOUNCEMENT

MISSION'S REMINDER FROM JOHN FITCH

Just a reminder, in addition to highlighting our missionaries/ ministries and mission trips in this Mission's Minute corner of the newsletters, all of our missionaries and ministries are displayed each week on the mission's table. This includes the latest support letters from our missionaries, RUF pastors and church planter that we support. Let me encourage you to pick a missionary, RUF pastor, church planter or ministry that we support and pray for them on a regular basis. Though we support these people as a church please feel free to support anyone individually. I would be happy to discuss which of our missionaries, RUF pastors or church planters have specific or urgent financial needs. Our world missionaries have support cards on the mission's table that you are welcome to pick up and place on your refrigerator. If you are interested in supporting one of our RUF pastors or church planters, I can direct you how to do so. If you let that missionary, RUF pastor or church planter know your interest in supporting them in prayer or financially, they will add you to their mailing list (postal or email—which is probably easier than trying to read the letters on the mission's table each week). Finally if you are interested in serving on the Local or World mission teams, please let me know: John Fitch 824-5973 / jfitch@pol.net

REDEEMER NEWS

NEW MEMBERS



*Neechia Eggar
(Brandon will be a teaching elder)
Addisyn and Will**



*Jason and Jill Higey
Elijah* and Salem Grace**



*Bernard and Georgianna
Hildebrand*



*Jordan and Kitty
Inman*



Marta Jakob



Olin Johnson



*Tyler and Valerie
Jorgensen*



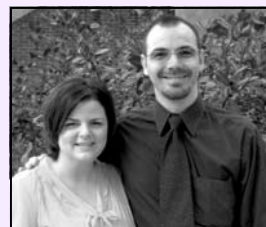
*Carter and Elizabeth
King*



Andrew Lerner



Cara McVicar



*Cristian and Meredith
Moza*



*Andrew and Kelly Muck
Anna Beth* and Will**



Jacqueline Roberts



*Ross and Stacy
Van Klaveren*



*Kevin and Jane
Wallace*

** non-communing member*

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Nov. 3 &4 | Women's Retreat |
| Nov. 7 | Newcomer's Dessert |
| Nov. 10-12 | Christianity and Contemporary Culture Conference |
| Nov 17 & 18 | Intro to Redeemer |
| Nov. 16 | Men's Fellowship Night |
| Dec. 9 | Christmas Basket |
| Dec. 10 | Christmas Party |
| Dec. 21 | Men's Fellowship Night |

MAP



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