

The Spirit of the Disciplines, by Dallas Willard: "The spiritual disciplines are those methods by which, enabled by the Holy Spirit, Christians can actually be transformed. Those practices through which individuals can (ital. his) become like Christ in character and in power and thus realize our highest ideals for well-being and well-doing,... Ordinary individuals... can become, through the grace of Christ a love-filled, effective, and powerful community. This is the heart of the New Testament message."

*Christians who with determination Intentionally pursue Spiritual Formation and Discipleship grow. By the power of the Holy Spirit, they change, and they change the world around them out of love for God and for those whom God loves.*

We prayerfully dream of a presbytery of disciples in which some passionately pursue new ways and forms of creative, God-connecting worship. In which some, God-burdened by the lost and hurting in their communities, reach out as God's hands and heart, sharing and embodying the Gospel; In which some, so aroused by the Holy Spirit for justice that they throw themselves in the Holy Spirit into making change in the systems and culture around them. In which some, deeply contemplative in nature, pursue a knowledge and love of God until they, full of the Holy Spirit, grow and overflow with love for God and God's world. In which some, compelled by the Spirit with a passion for intercessory prayer, see God's reign come and God's will be done more and more on earth as it is in heaven. Which one of these best describes your gift and passion in Christ? Or has the Spirit inspired in you another dream?

And we prayerfully dream of a presbytery in which all of us, rooted and grounded in love for God and one another (Ephesians 3:17) encourage each other, especially those with Spirit-Gifts different from our own, in mutual discipleship to the Glory of God. In this way we grow. In this way we are transformed as the Body of Christ and are God's witness to the world.

Our presbytery vision statement points us in this direction.

The Visioning Process: For the past five years or so, the presbytery has been engaged in visioning and implementing the new vision. We have changed practices. We have broadened and deepened relationships. We have adapted some of our processes. Now we are trying to reframe our structure to better position the presbytery to pursue the vision. This last has proved to be the most challenging of the four elements of change.

- a. We have met and supported the vision teams through their work and continue to.
- b. Please pay careful attention to the vision structure team's report.
  - a. We have determined that the presbytery is not willing to significantly alter the presbytery structure and patterns at this time.
  - b. However, financial considerations will force us to do so, indicating that God has a new direction for us – an adapted way of being presbytery.
  - c. George has been working with Dan Holland to try to pull together an accurate projection of the future.

### Disciple-Making Emphasis – following the Vision:

- a. Three regional groups of pastors are now active in Terry, Billings and Butte for
  - a. Dwelling in the Word, mutual support and discipleship, prayer and
  - b. Hopefully, for ministry and mission together as pastors and churches in the region.
  - c. George has led officer retreats now for Lewistown, Stanford and Geysler, and Dillon.  
Purpose: to help pastors and sessions think about how they will intentionally work for the spiritual formation and motivation of their people in the Christian life and mission.
  - d. George has been asked to be on the planning team for the PCUSA national, annual discipleship conference to be held next in early fall of 2014.
  - e. Kathy serves on the PCUSA National Evangelism Network (Advisory Board-think tank)
  - f. George explored training in spiritual direction to better assist our pastors and leaders in discerning the Spirit's leadings, and for his own spiritual growth. He has been accepted to the Spiritual Direction Certification program offered by Leadership Transformations of Lexington, MA. This program is two years long with five on-site retreats of four days each and off-site study. Lord willing, he will receive his certification in June of 2015.
  - g. Our focus for our sabbatical study is to explore how a small presbytery may foster a culture of spiritual formation and discipleship, fruitful, costly discipleship, (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). See our February 2013 Co-GP report to presbytery.
  - h. George preached on this topic in worship at FPC, Bozeman on April 14.
  - i. We would also like to suggest that the LeaderCab think about forming a Discipleship Team as a "ministry team" of our presbytery to carry this central focus of the presbytery vision forward with intentionality.
  - j. George will be offering a seminar on beginning disciple-making ministry in the local church at the Convocation in November.

### UKirk and Campus Ministry:

- a. UKirk is the PCUSA's new emphasis in collegiate ministry to help present "brand name" recognition of PCUSA campus ministry and to equip local congregations in mission to local college campuses.
  - a. We have been active with the Higher Ed Committee in pursuing this as Yellowstone has again been asked by the Office of Collegiate Ministries in Louisville to be a pilot presbytery in launching this effort along with Glacier.
  - b. Several congregations have been asked to partner with UKirk in this exciting new possibility to reach out to, love, serve and disciple college students!
  - c. Next steps: Grant-writing (Murdoch Foundation) and vision casting with assistance from a seasoned college minister; Adrian McMullan and the prospective trainer will tour interested congregations at some point this summer.
  - d. Bob Culbertson and the Higher Ed committee have met and stepped up to this opportunity.

- b. Christus Collegium sale of our partnership
  - a. George has worked with Dan and Jody to negotiate a settlement. This has been accomplished and is ready for the LeaderCab approval.
  - b. George passed the final legal agreement by Mark Parker, our lawyer the presbytery has been using, loosely connected with FPC, Billings. He has approved the contract and it will likely be signed before the Dillon Presbytery meeting.

Camping and Youth: Camps in July are drawing close!

- a. A great staff is hired for the summer!
- b. Time to promote the camp again through the presbytery churches. Help, please!
- c. Please pray for us, especially Curt Kochner as he coordinates summer camp. George will be the speaker again for the Senior High and Elementary Camps; David Andrew for Junior High.
- d. Ron Hanson has recently suggested a virtual church on the net between the young people of the presbytery. Something well-worth considering.
- e. This year is the Youth Triennium! Talk with Dave Thompson for details. 28 participants as of May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Committee on Ministry: Working closely with Neva with Churches in Transition.

- a. Met with Alene Russell and the St Andrew leadership to evaluate and suggest direction. Good things happening.
- b. Working with Anaconda and the Big Hole on Davis exit interviews and strategizing for the future.
- c. Seeking to support Deer Lodge in its search, and exploring how these vacant churches in one region can support each other and possibly configure together on calling a pastor.
- d. Attended the Regional Board of Pensions meeting in Dallas last week. Contributed to the written report which will go to presbytery.
  - a. The Pension Plan is in good shape and carefully invested. 1% apportionment this year.
  - b. The medical plan is fast expending more than it is collecting in dues. Dues and plans will change.
  - c. Kevin Garvey has launched a very helpful website to help churches gauge their financial, stewardship health, <http://Assessment.PresbyterianFoundation.org>.

Vocations Committee – Jim Tarr is pressing ahead with the team.

- a. Revising the CRE Manual has been accomplished.
- b. New Emphasis on recruiting new CRE's.
- c. Jack Bell and Cathy Mclean are progressing in training. Cathy graduated!

Mission Committee: We need some help stepping up.

- a. The Zimbabwe Partnership shed has been cleaned out and the materials appropriate dispersed to needy missions.

- b. A check for \$1,600 from an inactive account for the benefit of Zimbabwe has been received from St Andrew. I am in touch with Tom Sheffield, EP of Denver Presbytery, to research projects in Zimbabwe which could benefit by receiving them.

#### Personnel Committee and our Sabbatical

- a. Our sabbatical dates: May 9-June 10; August 1-September 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- b. Some of our expenses will be reimbursed by funds from Designated Administrative Funds.
- c. Again, the focus of our sabbatical study: "How a small presbytery creates and nurtures a culture of spiritual formation and discipleship." Kathy also will be working on ideas, opportunities for how churches can help us grow and LIVE as Christ's disciples in the places & through the experiences where we spend MOST of our time - at work and at school, in our marriages, families, communities and relationships.
- d. See our Feb. 2013 Co-GP Report to Presbytery.

#### Synod and GA Service:

- a. George, on behalf of both of us, met by invitation with Grady Parsons, Jill Hudson, and other EP's from western presbyteries in Dallas to being discussion of how we might work with regional ministers and ministries of other mainline churches, particularly the UCC and the Disciples of Christ for the strengthening of Churches and ministries in our regions. Another meeting with reps from other denominations is being scheduled for November of this year, probably in Denver.
- b. Kathy and I expect to be at the Synod Staff Forum meetings in August and October, 2013.
- c. We will miss the Annual Synod Assembly in June as we are away for Sabbatical May 9-June 11, but the presbytery will be ably represented.

#### Convocation with Glacier: November 7-8, 2013 in Great Falls

- a. George serves on the planning team with Susi Ennis from the presbytery. Could use two more reps.
- b. Dr. Steve Hayner, President of Columbia Seminary, will be our plenary speaker.
- c. Vera White, who leads the PCUSA 1001 New worshipping Communities/new church development will be a seminar speaker.

#### Other Service:

- a. Kathy serves as a trustee on the Board of Whitworth University, Spokane. Dr. Carol Simon (PCUSA and her husband a PCUSA pastor) becomes their new Provost/VP for Academic Affairs July 1. The Board, at its recent meeting on April 10-12, voted to continue their partnership with the PCUSA and to explore additional partnerships across several Presbyterian denominations. Fuller press releases are on the University website. Kathy serves on the Academic Affairs Committee.
- b. George serves on the Board of Intermountain Children's Services. Retreat April 19-20, 2013. I would be happy to speak on Intermountain as one of the premier missions with which the PCUSA partners.

- c. George serves Rocky Mountain College as a member of the Board of Trustees which just elected Dr. Robert Wilmouth as the new President. George serves on two committees.
- d. George also meets with the Montana Association of Churches on your behalf. This important Ministry is lobbying the legislature for certain bills, but also needs to rethink and rediscover its mission in the future.

Personal Developments:

- a. Both of Kathy's aging parents have been ill to the point of needing her attention. She is trying to coordinate a care plan for them going forward.
- b. George's aging parents are failing, too. And all of you have been through this.
- c. Our children:
  - a. Gillian and her husband Peter have moved to the DC area for his work. She has found temporary work with International Justice Mission, which, may develop into something fulltime at a later date.
  - b. Chip is finishing his fourth year of five at Whitworth University in Spokane.

"For perfection as well as its reward does not consist in spiritual delights but in greater love [for God and others] and in deeds done with greater justice and truth." Teresa of Avila, 1577, *Interior Castle*.