

CoGeneral Presbyters' Report to Yellowstone Presbytery March 2, 2012 George and Kathy Goodrich

Overview: *These are days of God's opportunities as well as unsettling change in Church, Country, and Culture. They are days to remain rooted in Christ and yet, prayerful, discerning what the dreams, what the mind of Christ might be.*

A Challenge Thought based on our Presbytery Vision Statement from Dallas Willard's popular classic book, The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives: *The spiritual disciplines are those methods by which, enabled by the Holy Spirit, Christians can actually be transformed, those practices through which we "can 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...A widespread transformation of character through...disciplined discipleship to Christ can transform our world...can disarm the structural evils..." pp. ix & xi*

This Lenten season of reflection for re-turning to Christ, we might to ask ourselves, "Am I engaging in the Christian practices which "arrange my life for spiritual transformation?" * Is our church doing so? Are we gradually being transformed into a "love-filled... power-full community" of disciples? Is Yellowstone Presbytery growing to Christian maturity? In these days of change and opportunity, we are committed to helping each of us, each congregation be all it can be in Christ, growing in discipleship, joining in Christ's mission – even as we, ourselves, seek such maturity with your help. Share with us what you are doing. Ask us how this might be!

Our Current Foci as we seek to live into our vision statement:

1. **Assisting The Leadership Council and Committees Move Forward to Fulfill the YP Vision in 2012.** _Helping orient, resource moderators; helping committees set goals that they may better fulfill the vision and guide the ministry of the presbytery in serving its churches.
2. **Per YP Vision Statement: Encouraging Disciple-making Leaders, Congregations with Vision Team**
 - A. **ENGAGE** is a wonderful resource for disciple-making and mission now being used in several congregations. June 2012 the Full curriculum with booklets and DVD's is due out.
 - B. George is offering 4-hour mini-retreats (Saturdays?) for sessions and leaders on the basics of disciple-making for practical, fruit-full Christian growth to sessions, leaders in congregations.
 - a. Ask the folks in Dillon about their Feb 11, 2012 mini-retreat.
 - b. How do you "know" / measure whether your members are growing as Christians? George's 9 steps of Christian Discipleship.
 - c. Would like to offer to five to ten churches in 2012. Interested?
 - C. "Journeying Together," an e-connection of the lectionary passages to our life in YP and in the YP churches. Emphasis on Discipleship. Tell George if you wish to be included.
3. **Yellowstone Churches Reaction to 10-A.**
 - a. George has visited with five sessions of congregations with questions and concerns about the passage of 10-A.
 - i. We have developed several pieces, including a 5-page worksheet to help congregations sort through reasons to stay PCUSA or perhaps leave for another denomination. Several presbyteries or congregations have requested one or all of these materials.
 - ii. CoM has enacted the Discernment Policy with West Yellowstone. George leads team to begin there on March 14.
4. **Adapting for discipleship & mission: Mid Council Commission & Fellowship of Presbyterians Order** since all we, in YP, do is in the context of and connected to the broader church (Kathy primarily following)

Mid Council Commission's charge included: "How are those governing bodies [presbyteries & synods] best

organized to be responsive both to the Spirit of Christ and the changing opportunities for discipleship? Are the structures of history the best platforms for carrying our mission into the future?" from rationale of the charge to the GA Commission on Middle Governing Bodies Mid Council Commission.

"Based on a deep examination of our rapidly changing contexts for mission in the world, our recommendations create the conditions for **adaptive change** with a clear focus: **The stimulation of creative collaboration within and among presbyteries to strengthen the vitality of missional congregations in a post-Christendom world,** ... **"flexibility in the formation of connectional relationships."**

Their 8 recommendations include: 1) " a designated season of reflective experimentation of 9 years" permitting non-geographic, "provisional presbyteries"; *2)* synods would no longer exist as councils with ecclesiastical responsibility and 5 Regional Administrative Commissions would be formed.

"Our proposal does not require change at the congregational or presbytery level, but allows for flexibility, freedom, and authority for those who endeavor to work out our connectional convictions in developing strategies, creating structures, initiating ministries, and sharing projects, all while being protected by the constitutional oversight of a Regional Administrative Commission and a clear expiration date for what—God willing—will be a bold season of experimentation for a changing church in a changing world."

See our separate handout and their full final report at:

http://oga.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mgb_commission/mcc_final_report.pdf

The mission of the Fellowship of Presbyterians is to build flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ. From www.fellowship-pres.org It is an umbrella Order functioning as a movement, based on covenants, which includes 2 groupings - one within, one outside the PCUSA - (see separate handout):

1. Individuals, congregations within the PCUSA who wish to affiliate/join by Covenant, theological affirmation, agreeing with the Core Values, thus distinguishing themselves
2. A new Reformed Order/Body, Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians (ECO) (Many Presbyteries are impacted – Pueblo is seeing six large churches withdraw.)

CORE VALUES - Jesus-shaped Identity; Biblical Integrity; Thoughtful Theology; Accountable Community; Egalitarian Ministry; Missional Centrality; Center-focused Spirituality; Leadership Velocity ; Kingdom Vitality

We will gladly come and share with your session the Fellowship of Presbyterians options within the context of the discernment worksheets.

5. The Glacier-Yellowstone Dream Team – with Vision Team

- a. At the end of 2013 the mission partnership funds of which YP currently receives about \$45,000 annually goes away.
- b. We, George and Kathy, in 2011 raised over \$41,000 from congregations and individuals to support our salary, benefits and ministry expenses above per capita.
- c. These two sources account for nearly half of YP's administrative budget. So at the end of 2013, YP will need to find other means of support. And five of the other presbyteries in the Synod are in the same position. Possible Options:
 - i. Raise more funding to cover the partnership fund shortfall.
 - ii. Plan to cut GP staff to half-time at most.
 - iii. Share GP staff with another presbytery or configuration of churches.
 - iv. Go without executive staff and remain YP. Tent-making for GP?

- d. At Synod's request a dream team of: Debbie Blackburn, Ron Hanson, Dan Krebill, and Neva Rathbun has been chosen by council to interface with Glacier and Wyoming Presbyteries.
 - i. We are working with the Vision Team as it interfaces with this team to make sure any configuration furthers our presbytery's vision statement.
 - ii. We will not be meeting with the Dream Team because a of possible conflict of interest.
6. **CoM** – I find any church without pastoral leadership receives my pastoral concern and assistance as well as Neva's. Great job, Neva.
- a. Churches in search process or without pastor: Miles City, Deer Lodge, West Yellowstone, Jordan.
 - b. Recently filled: Hysham (Paul Cannon), Poplar (Susie Ennis), White Sulphur Springs (Jim Kidd). Thanks to God for our new colleagues in ministry!
 - c. Various policies updated, some with Personnel Committee, too.
 - d. Coming Changes in the Board of Pension Plans. Regional Meeting in April 8-20, 2012.

7. Youth and Camping Ministry continues to be blessed and to develop.

- a. Successful winter ski retreat this past weekend at Rockhaven, 25 kids, 5 churches! Curt Kochner, George and Traci Ruschetti were the speakers.
- b. Curt has the 2012 Camp brochure and 2011 CD's out!
- c. The well project is completed. Thanks, Chuck Beck, Brent, Curt, Ted and team!
- d. Curt and George will lead the Westminster Spires Camping program this summer again with others. (See the Camping and Youth report for Camp dates.)
- e. College kids / past staff and campers are interested in returning.
- f. A college weekend after High School week at camp, July 27-29, 2012.

8. **Mission** – The Mission Committee of the presbytery has the dual responsibility of 1) encouraging and assisting the YP congregations in discerning and deploying into mission and to 2) discern and coordinate mission on behalf of the presbytery. George's focus here has been and will be working with the new moderator and the committee to re-ignite this effort.

9. Serving in the Councils of the Church and in the Wider Church

- a. George - Intermountain's Board / Ownership Linkage com. Presbytery's thoughts?
- b. George - Rocky Mountain College Board of Trustees
- c. George & Kathy - Synod of the Rocky Mountains Staff Forum; George - Synod Coordinating Council.
- d. Kathy - Whitworth University Board of Trustees, Spokane, WA
- e. Kathy – newly forming Evangelism Network to work with PCUSA's Evangelism staff.

10. Personally –

- a. Our daughter, Gillian, returned from University teaching in Argentina, is marrying Peter Cleary (fellow Whitworth graduate) March 24th in Pennsylvania where she grew up.
- b. Chip, 21 and at Whitworth University, is doing well. Internship in CdA this summer.
- c. We celebrate our 35th wedding anniversary in August.
- d. We are grateful for day 182 of George's new life since his texting-driving accident. No, I don't text and drive any more...☺ --- And ***continuing in prayer for you all and YP***

While we are away:

- f. ***Kathy and George will be on vacation*** for Gillian's wedding and time with 4 elderly parents in the east from before the wedding (19th & 21st respectively) until Holy Week.
- g. Please contact Susan Seibert or Ron Hanson with questions, emergencies.

* from *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* by Ruth Haley Barton