

DONEGAL *Dialogue*

MARCH 2010

VOL. XLVII

NO. 2

Defining the term “missional” *By Charlie Gross*

This brief article highlights some of the thought-provoking concepts from Reggie McNeal’s book, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*. (This article is a compilation of quotes taken from the book, rather than my own work. So, to learn more, buy the book!)

I’ll admit it first. I get confused by the term “missional.” Or, I used to be confused by it. Before I read *Missional Renaissance*. Here it is in simple terms: **To think and to live “missionally” means seeing all life as a way to be engaged with the mission of God in the world.**

Going missional will require that you make three shifts in your thinking and behavior: First, from internal to external in terms of ministry focus. Second, from program development to people development in terms of core activity, and third from church-based to kingdom-based in terms of leadership agenda.

The typical church scorecard (how many, how often, how much) doesn’t mesh with a missional view. We must develop a scorecard that supports the other side of the shifts: ***externally focused ministry, people development efforts, and a kingdom-oriented leadership agenda.***

Missional Shift 1: From an internal to an external ministry focus. The church must shift from an internal to an external focus in its ministry. Externally focused ministry leaders take their cues from the environment around them in terms of needs and opportunities. **They look for ways to bless** and to serve the communities where they are located. Much of their calendar space, financial resources, and organizational energy is spent on ***people who are not a part of their organization.***

Missional Shift 2: From program development to people development. The confluence of these two cultural trends calls for the second shift of the missional church: from a focus on programs to a focus on people and their development as the core activity of the community of faith. We must change our ideas of what it means to develop a disciple, shifting the emphasis from studying Jesus and all things spiritual in an environment protected from the world to following Jesus into the world to join him in his redemptive mission.

The movement founded by Jesus was largely a marketplace phenomenon, an organic connection among people who were experiencing a way of life together. The early days of the movement focused on simple teachings of Jesus, with particular attention to living lives of sacrifice and service to one another and to one’s neighbor. Jesus invaded all areas of life. **Church was not an event or a place; it was a way of life. It must become a way of life again. Enter the missional church.**

Missional Shift 3: From church-based to kingdom-based leadership. Today’s spiritual realities call for the third shift of the missional renaissance—from church-based to kingdom-based leadership. The spirituality the world needs must be robust enough to engage people where they live, work, and play. For these leaders, church has moved from being internally occupied to externally focused, from primarily concentrating on its institutional maintenance to developing an incarnational influence. These leaders find themselves thinking of kingdom impact rather than church growth.

Missional followers of Jesus don’t belong to a church. They are the church. Wherever they are, the church is present. Church is not a place where they go, it is who they are.

I hope this brief article whets your appetite for finding your own path forward in the mission of God in the world. It’s an honor to be on this journey beside you!

Sharing our faith stories

By Nan Best

How do we share our faith with others? Is it by projecting a kind and gracious spirit of hospitality? If that is your style, that’s okay. But we can do better in witnessing to the love and saving grace of Jesus the Christ.

More than not we Presbyterians are “evangelism cautious.” Our way of reaching out is to have a church dinner and publicize it in the newspaper or on a sign. Or we might hold a concert inviting the community to come. Hospitality is our style of evangelism.

What if you were an unchurched person? Would events at the Presbyterian church in town inform you about the present and eternal benefits of knowing Christ?

Can we share with another why it’s important to be a Christian? To have faith in God? Christianity is a minority faith in the United States, yet our method of spreading our beliefs is to hope that the unchurched will come on Sundays or that living a

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The Donegal Digest

Avondale (R. Meute)—The Grove City College Touring Choir will perform at the church on the evening of Sunday, March 28, at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Bellevue (W. Davies)—To beat the winter blahs, Bellevue held a family game night on February 28. All church members were invited to join in a meal, worship led by Alleluia Praise, and a chance to play some games. Each family was asked to bring a covered dish with a salad or dessert, and singles were asked to bring a main dish. Games for teams, families, and individuals were played.

Covenant (Dr. J. Moyer)—The adult mission team planned a trip to Mexico from Feb. 9 to 16. The group spent time with three Faith Ministry churches and volunteered at medical clinics. The team planned to take two sewing machines to the Mexican women who love to sew but lack money to purchase thread, material, and machines.

Donegal (T. McKinnon)—Instead of the usual Palm Sunday services, the church planned a breakfast and combined worship service at 11 a.m. The breakfast will also serve as a “Committee Fair,” offering attendees opportunities to learn about the work and activities of the church. During the service, the choir will present a cantata titled “Amazing Love,” to set the stage for Holy Week.

First Church, York (J. Morgan)—During Lent, the church held a study course focused on the Psalms each Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. Presentations included “Exploring the Psalms,” “Images of God in the Psalms,” and “Seeing the Psalms as a book of theology.”

Highland (Dr. R. Rabey)—The Rev. Anne Osborne, pastor for congregational care, led a study of ways to keep God in the center of one’s life each Wednesday evening from Feb. 3 to March 3. Questions that were explored included, “How do you reach out and care for others and find ways to be a gracious presence in the world around

you?” On March 10, the church held a talent show. Organizers invited members and friends of all ages to share their talent.

Leacock (R. Birch)—A Lenten study and meal will be offered on Tuesday evenings throughout the season of Lent. The study will reflect on the walk of our Lord to the cross with the goal of helping attendees to discover a deeper faith.

Middle Octorara (D. Hileman)—The church has planned a ham and bean dinner on Saturday, March 20, from 4 to 7 p.m. Eat-in or take-out will be available. Funds raised by the event will help support church mission trips. The women of the church are holding a Lenten Tea on Saturday, March 27 at 2 p.m. The program will be provided by Becky Welk and the Solfege Singers.

Oxford (D. K. Slinkard)—Lenten luncheons held at the church each Wednesday offer weekly fellowship, along with soup and sandwiches.

Each week a different speaker shared stories of faith with the gathering. **Trinity (Dr. J. Wilkins)**—The church began Lent with a special Ash Wednesday potluck dinner in the fellowship hall followed by a service including the imposition of ashes and the Lord’s supper. Soup and sandwich meetings were scheduled for 11:45 a.m. on Sundays, from Feb. 21 to March 21. The study focused on a DVD program with Walter Wangerin titled “Meeting Jesus in Life and Death.”

Union (D. Clark)—The church PW will hold its Spring Fling on Saturday, April 17, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Guest speaker Kathy Kambic will expound on the theme of “Let’s Grow—Breaking Forth a New Life.” The event is free, and lunch will be served. A freewill offering will be received.

Wrightsville (C. Blackford)—During Lent, the church is hosting Wednesday evening light suppers followed by a class titled “Christianity 101” taught by Dr. Lee Barrett, theology professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary.



Margy's daughter, Anna (left), reads to an education class taught by Margy's friend, Cheryl.

quality schooling for poor children. Margy recently shared the following story about her experience: Before coming (to Forman), God gave me Mark 12:30-31: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”

I have found this familiar passage to be quite challenging. It is easy and comfortable for me to love those who are like me. I am curious about those who are different than me and really enjoy meeting new people. But to love takes great commitment.

When a well-respected and loved professor died recently, Doug and I

Sharing love in a foreign land

Doug and Margy Trimble serve in South Asia, at Forman Christian College. Doug is Director of Assessment and Institutional Research and Professor of Psychology, and Margy serves on the Presbyterian Education Board, which provides

visited his house, as is customary, and sat with his widow, adult children, and other visitors for about an hour. My American friend Cheryl was at the house, too, but she wasn’t sitting quietly in a chair in the women’s room, like me and most of the other women. She was holding a distraught daughter, getting cushions and drinks for family members, handling phone calls, etc. She stayed with them late into the night and came back the next day to help. For the next several days Cheryl put aside the much-needed rest that she had planned and walked alongside the grieving family by assisting in practical ways in their home.

Cheryl didn’t just come into their house on the day of the professor’s death and decide to be helpful. She had developed a deep friendship with the family over the last five years. She had spent hours with them, sharing in their lives. The love that Cheryl showed has challenged me to invest more personally in my neighbors here.

I have had some wonderful opportunities to lead Bible studies with women, from countries outside South Asia, and a youth group with their kids over the past year and a half. With these families likely leaving soon, I am sensing a transition out of my comfort zone into new opportunities to engage in closer relationships with college students and with local moms from school and church. Please pray that I would be bold and vulnerable in loving my local neighbors.

Officers of the Church *By The Rev. Victor Wilson*

The offices of the PC (U.S.A.) are three: Minister of the Word and Sacrament, Elder, and Deacon.

MINISTERS—Ministers (teaching elders, “pastors”) and elders (ruling elders, “lay”) hold equal parity in governing the Church. For each, the office is for life. Most ministers serve congregations as either Pastor, “Head of Staff” in multi-staff churches, or Associate Pastor. Before ordination, most Pastors must complete an undergraduate bachelor’s degree, and a three-year Master of Divinity degree. They must pass five PC(USA) ordination exams: Bible Content, Biblical Exegesis (original language interpretation), Polity (church governance), Theology, and Practical Theology (practice of ministry). Candidates are also examined by each Presbytery that receives them.

The PC(USA) operates on a “call” system for appointing ministers. This is distinct from an “appointive” system, in which a Bishop or Superintendent assigns pastors to congregations. A call is a relationship discerned between a pastor, a local church, and a Presbytery. The General Assembly helps link pastors to congregations or other ministries. Only Presbyteries confirm or terminate a call. Ministers cannot be members of local churches (their families can), but retain membership in their Presbytery.

A pastor is a member of and MODERATOR of the Session, not a “chairperson” with control over the order of business, or exerting special power, but one who “moderates” the proceedings, calling meetings to order, guiding the flow of decision-making process according to Robert’s Rules of Order, seeking to ensure that Christ is honored and kept central in all the Session’s deliberations. Most pastors vote only exceptionally, such as on one’s moral or pastoral obligation to an issue. Where possible, tied votes are best postponed for prayer and further deliberation. The Pastor also moderates congregational meetings, but has no vote. Neither the Session nor the congregation can meet without the Moderator. If a church is without a pastor, Presbytery assigns a moderator.

A PASTOR’S FUNCTIONS are clearly defined in the Book of Order and are generally laid out in the “terms of call.” Typically, a pastor is called to preach and lead worship, to teach, to oversee the administration of the church, provide pastoral care and counseling, represent the church in the community, and communicate a sense of vision for the congregation’s direction, while embodying a sense of moral and spiritual leadership. The roles of a pastor will vary from church to church depending on its size and ministry, and the distribution of functions among the staff members.

ELDERS—Elders exercise an historic role dating through twenty-five centuries of the Synagogue to Moses (Ex. 18). “Elder” comes from Greek word for elder, presbuteros, which lends our denomination its name. With ministers, elders share in governance of the whole church, and almost identical vows (as do Deacons). The distinction between teaching and ruling elders is one of function not authority.

Elders hold their office for life, but they are installed to govern for precise terms determined by the congregation or governing body. Elders may be elected to fill an unexpired term. Rotation of officers helps prevent burn-out, broadens the base of leadership, and prevents entrenchment.

Along with pastors, elders have the exclusive responsibility for governance and discipline of the church. One elder, elected by the Session, serves as CLERK OF SESSION and is responsible, with the moderator, for compiling the agenda for Session meetings, attending to

the Session’s correspondence, and maintaining the rolls and records of the congregation. Each elder, in consultation with the pastor, is allocated a sessional committee responsibility. Through committees, elders are responsible for all the programs and organizations within the congregation, utilizing whatever other members are helpful to complete their work. Elders report regularly to Session, which alone can change their responsibilities.

Elders often assist in worship leadership and serve communion. They act as liaison to other Boards (Deacons, Trustees), who are responsible to Session, and attend meetings of higher governing bodies.

THE SESSION—The Session of a church is a permanent body whereas Deacons and Trustees are created or dissolved by the congregation. Our Constitution makes the Session the sole ruling body for a congregation. Other boards fulfill their mission on behalf of the Session, much like a Commission. If Deacon or Trustee Boards are not constituted, those responsibilities rest with the Session. All Presbyterian churches are thereby unicameral. Each year the Session submits its minutes to the Presbytery for approval. The Pastor serves as an ex officio (but without vote) member of all committees. Session responsibilities are summarized in the Book of Order.

DEACONS—Deacons are the third ordained office in the church (with ministers and elders). Their historic roots are in the earliest church where they assisted the apostles in the distribution of food and aid (Acts 6).

A BOARD OF DEACONS is created by the congregation. When organized, deacons receive their constitutional mandate through the Session. Deacons are ordained and installed virtually in the same manner as Elders and Ministers, and serve the whole Church. They are to “lead the congregation in the exercise of ministries of sympathy, witness, and service, after the example of Jesus Christ” (G-6.0401). Deacons operate with considerable autonomy, typically discerning their own compassion ministries, within their funding.

TRUSTEES—Elders and Deacons are officers within the whole denomination, but Trustees are “officers of the congregation,” also known as the corporation, as state law requires. Their principal role (in northern congregations) is the care of property and finances. All church property belongs to the denomination, and is held in trust for the whole church by each congregation.

The Constitution of the PC(USA) defines the role of Trustees as follows: To receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for the church; to accept and execute deeds of title for such property; to hold and defend title to such property; to manage any permanent special funds for the furtherance of the purposes of the church, all subject to the authority of the Session and under provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), provided further that, in buying, selling, or mortgaging real property, the Trustees shall act only after the approval of the congregation granted in a duly constituted meeting (Book of Order G-7.0402).

Trustees operate with the respect and oversight of Session, typically with considerable autonomy. Together, Session and Trustees engage the congregation to generate income needed to fund the budget. At the Annual Meeting of the Congregation the budget, approved by the Session, is set before the congregation for their information and discussion.

The Presbytery of Donegal

Donegal Dialogue

Newsletter of Donegal Presbytery

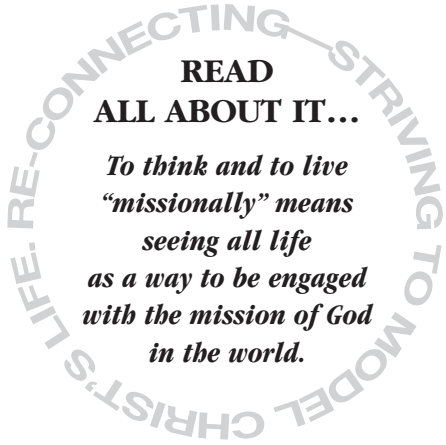
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E-news that's jumped off line!

2020 Vision Session II will be held Saturday, March 27—Session II focuses on “Telling Our Stories—Individually and Corporately: Unbinding the Gospel.” It will be led by the Rev. Susan Wonderland, associate executive of the Synod of the Trinity. Session III is planned for Saturday, April 17. For more information, contact Nan Best at nantrans@comcast.net.

Looking for new ways to fund ministries? The New Ways to Fund Church's Ministries Workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 13, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Palmer Theological Seminary in Wynnewood, PA. More information may be found by visiting www.alban.org/learningdetail.aspx?id=8931.

How offering has changed! Join Dr. Clif Christopher, president of Horizon Stewardship and author of “*It's Not Your Parents' Offering Plate,*” at the First United Methodist Church of Lancaster on Saturday, April 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, call the Parish Resource Center of Lancaster at (717) 299-1113.

HELP WANTED

Full-time, salaried Development Officer sought for the Philadelphia territory of the Presbyterian Foundation. The officer serves congregations, institutions, presbyteries, synods, and Presbyterian-related organizations in the cultivation and solicitation of long-term and endowment gifts. For more information, contact Gloria Van Dyke at 800-858-6127, ext. 5987.

Sharing our faith stories

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good moral life will be the witness to lead others to confess the Savior.

Can we report how many adult baptisms happened in our congregations last year? The healthiest most vibrant congregations in the country are baptizing adults. It's a sign that people are coming to faith.

Can we become passionate about sharing our faith? We can learn to tell our faith stories. We can become good at talking about why following Christ is so important to us. We can learn to pray with another who is struggling. We can do this by practicing in a safe group.

One way to learn faith sharing is to form a study group around the book, “*Unbinding the Gospel.*” I have been leading groups to study, practice, and become the yeast within congregations. The yeast will grow to enable members to talk easily about Christ—the hope of the world.

Let's confess our timidity about evangelism and ask the Holy Spirit to make us faithful to the call of sharing our story of GOOD NEWS.

Nan Best is Associate for Healthy Congregations.