



From the Pastor

The recent addition of Hungryhearts, Volume XIV, Number 2, published by the Office of Spiritual Formation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) focuses on Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his politics of Spirituality.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as many of you know, was a courageous pastor and theologian who was persecuted for his faith and action in Nazi Germany.

Michael Jenkins, of Austin Seminary, writes the lead article. I want to share with you a portion of his wonderful article and some of Bonhoeffer's reflections on the church. I think it has a great deal to say to us here at Central.....

Bonhoeffer writes from prison in August 1944:

Faith is participation in this being of Jesus (incarnation, cross, and resurrection). Our relationship to God is not a "religious" relationship to the highest, most powerful, and best BEING imaginable....but our relationship to God is a new life in "existence for others," through participation in the being of Jesus.

"At a time when, especially in North America, many people characterize their spirituality as "private" and "individual" in contrast to anything that smacks of "organized religion" or the "church," Bonhoeffer's preoccupation with the character and the calling of the church may be mystifying. Why is Bonhoeffer so interested in the church, which some members of his family saw as a "poor, feeble, boring, petty, and bourgeois institution"? The answer is purely theological. The Church - poor, feeble, boring, petty, and all the rest - is also the Body of Christ,

and it is precisely through this broken body that God continues to penetrate physically and spiritually in to the very heart of the world.

Bonhoeffer writes:

The church is the present Christ himself. With this statement we are recovering an insight about the church which has been almost totally forgotten. While we are used to thinking of the church as an institution, we ought instead to think of it as a person with a body, although of course a person in a unique way.

To become a new human being means to come into the church, to become a member of Christ's body. The new human being is not the single individual who has been justified and sanctified; rather, the new human being is the church community, the body of Christ, or Christ himself.

What a high view of the meaning and purpose of the church. I wonder what you think about "the church." So perhaps we as the Body of Christ might enter into such a conversation. I am asking Gretchen, our newsletter editor to save a space in subsequent newsletters under the name: Members Speak Out About the Meaning of the Church. I am encouraging you to jot down some of your thoughts and pass them along to her: cpcnewsletter@centralpresbyterian.org.

And I would point you to Hungryhearts. You can find it on the web at www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation.

Thanks for being such a vital part of our church.

Body Life

All Church Retreat October 28-30



After several years of not going to Mo-Ranch for a fall all-church retreat, it has been decided that we will offer this wonderful opportunity again to our entire church community this fall. We are very excited to have reserved Nicholas Place, Nicholas Barn and the Milk Barn for our accommodations and retreat. These facilities are not only beautiful and private but we can also provide our own meals, which will save on the cost. We are trying to make this retreat as affordable as possible, (more on the exact cost later). We hope that everyone will seriously consider making plans to attend this special weekend at Mo-Ranch with our church family.

The initial price breakdown is as follows:

1. Nicholas Place (sleeps 24; 6 rooms, 1 king and the rest are single beds) is \$65.40 per person.
2. Nicholas Barn (sleeps up to 18; 5 rooms) is \$52.76 per person.
3. Milk Barn (sleeps up to 30; 5 bedrooms) is \$41.66 per person.

The price is the same whether or not you sleep one or two nights. Also, infants or small children not needing a bed would be free.

Rooms will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis, so now is the time to start signing up. We ask that you fill out an "All Church Retreat Reservation Request" form and return to Susan Fernandez online, at church or by mail. (email is sfernandez1@austin.rr.com) We are also offering a payment plan option of paying 1/3 in August, 1/3 in September and the balance in October. But first, we really need to start getting a preliminary head count, so please begin looking ahead to October and let us know if you can joining us for a wonderful weekend for "Fellowship of Our Church Family."

Central Presbyterian All Church Retreat Reservation October 28-30, 2005

Names of all persons staying together

Please list your preference of accommodations:

1st choice _____

2nd choice _____

3rd choice _____

(Please note that every effort will be made to honor your first choice, but that it may not be possible.)

Do you have any special needs?

Do you wish to participate in the 3 month payment plan or pay in full?

Will you arrive on Friday or Saturday? (estimated time)

Please contact Susan Fernandez by email (sfernandez1@austin.rr.com), or at 292-4289 if you have any questions.

Go to www.moranch.org to see pictures of the ranch and to get excited about this CPC opportunity.

Fellowship Riddle for Summer

What do you get when you add 15 gallons of ice cream, a couple of batches of peach cobbler, dozens of cookies, fresh fruit tarts, brownies, cakes, chocolate sauce, caramel sauce, candy sprinkles and fresh fruit to horse rides, pool games, and about 80 of your Central Family? A big ol' batch of summer F-U-N!

Wow! What a fun afternoon we had at Joyce and John Harmon's house the afternoon of June 19. The CPC annual ice cream social was a delightful time! John and Joyce Harmon served as most hospitable hosts, and opened their home to us for an afternoon of sun, shade, food and fun.



Overheard near the food tables: Did you taste the green tomatillo ice cream? What about the mango tango? I love anything Bluebell makes. Is that CLETUS'S peach cobbler? Let me at it!



Overheard at the pool: After a spectacular cannonball by Cliff Blanchard, son Patrick exclaimed, "That's my Dad!" also overheard "aacck!" "The water is freezing!" "This water isn't cold enough, we need to add ice cubes."



Overheard elsewhere: "Isn't that a pretty horse?" "It's pretty big!" "This place is an oasis in the city." "I'm glad I came; this is really fun."

We thank the Harmons for a fantastic fellowship event.

Step Right Up

Everybody loves a good punch line and even more, a cool cup of punch after worship! Central has a longstanding tradition of offering refreshments to members and visitors every Sunday after worship. It's a nice time to greet our guests, and chat with members and friends.

But just WHERE do all those goodies come from? Well, they come from your kitchen or local supermarket. We rely on members to step up to the plate, and prepare and serve snacks after worship. This is your chance to express your epicurean creativity! Just have on hand a snack and a drink (punch, juice, lemonade, etc.), and plenty of friendly smiles at the punch bowl. We have been fortunate to have such goodies as cookies, fresh fruit, homemade bread and jam, chips, cheese, crackers, popcorn, birthday cake, sweet breads, candy, juice, sherbet punch, fizzy punch, flat punch, hot cider, and a variety of other culinary treats. Your refreshments may be as simple or elaborate as you wish.

Your Fellowship Committee thanks everyone who has volunteered to prepare and serve refreshments. Please consider serving your congregation in this way one or more times this year. There is a sign up sheet on the Hopportunity bulletin board in Smoot Hall. Some Open dates for consideration are: July 31, August 7, Sept 4, Oct 2, Oct 9, Oct 23, Nov 6, Nov 20, Dec 11, Dec 18. There are so many opportunities for you! If you have any questions, please contact Dallas Roper Serumgard 899-2846 dallas.roper@alumni.utexas.net

Session News

May Update

The Session met in May and had the following highlights.

- Thank you note from Caritas for 24 pounds of food for pantry
- Koinonia groups - working with leaders of inactive groups
- ice cream social will be held at John & Joyce Harmon's home - 6/19/05 tentative date
- approve purchase of another microwave for the kitchen. The microwave will be paid with a combination of funds from the book sale, donations from the Congregation, and other resources
- approve purchase of tee-shirts for C-CYM for use during their summer mission project (6/19-23). Funds to cover the cost of tee shirts will be solicited from the congregation.
- the Long Range Planning team is projecting to finish their report by the end of June, 2005. A Saturday work session is tentatively being scheduled for July 9. The LRPT will present their report to Session at that time. A presentation to the congregation is set for Rally Day, Sunday, August 21, 2005.
- Revision to the Officer Nominating Committee (ONC) process has been developed. A formal report will come through the Administration committee for the June Session meeting. the June 26 Brunch program (in lieu of Monthly After Church Pot Luck) will include the play REVOLTING MINISTRY.
- Currently CPC monthly expenses are exceeding revenue/income by an average of \$5,000 per month for 2005. The Finance Committee develop an awareness plan (Minute for Mission, blurb in the newsletter/bulletin, letters to each member) to advise the congregation of our situation.
- Approve the election of a treasurer. Finance committee will develop a job description for the June Session meeting.
- Sheila Aikens has transferred to St. David's Episcopal. Membership is at 245 (as of 5/11/05).
- Approved funding of the appointment of Win Bent as a Notary Public. Mr. Bent's services will be provided at no cost to CPC members.
- Elders Molly Duncan and Sally Estes will be Commissioners at the June 10 - 11 Presbytery meeting to be held at Schreiner University, Kerrville, Texas.

- the Pentecost offering yielded a donation of approximately \$300 to St. Matthews Elementary.
- work is still going forward on a possible informal summer Friday service.
- received a \$2500 grant from the Synod for the Interfaith Arts Festival (Saturday, October 8, 2005).

Finance / Stewardship Committee

Your Finance Committee has focused on several issues since January. We are exploring the concept of stewardship in the broad sense, looking beyond the "alms giving". We would like to offer opportunities for the congregation to grow in stewardship awareness year-round, not just during the stewardship campaign that focuses on the budget.

Rick Carlson, with assistance from several individuals, has reorganized the setup of the budget so that we can obtain a more accurate picture of monthly expenses and projected needs. This will enable us to provide reports that are meaningful to the congregation on a periodic basis.

In the next few months, we will be focusing on the fall stewardship campaign. Again, we will be asking for your input regarding programming needs in order to build our budget for 2006.

During the summer months because of travel/vacations, it is easy to omit paying your pledge. We ask you to remain current with your offering so that the bills and payroll can be paid. Your Finance Committee appreciates what you give in time, talent and money. This is what makes CPC a great place to be.

Rita Livingston,
Chair Finance & Stewardship

Summer Pledge Reminder

It's summer and vacation time is here. Summer is always busy, the kids are out of school, and there are places to go, people to see and things to do. One of the things that your finance committee asks you to do is to keep you pledges current. Traditionally pledge contributions can wane in the summer, so if you will please remember to make your contribution when you are at worship or mail it to the church, we will greatly appreciate it. We thank all of you for your faithfulness to the life of our faith family.

Christian Education

Who Will Teach Them?

Sunday school teachers are needed for the 2005-2006 school year. Teaching Sunday school at Central is a team oriented approach. A minimum of two teachers per class is needed. Teachers may choose to co-teach each Sunday or opt to alternate Sundays on which they teach. Teachers are needed for the Sr. High Class, the Jr. High Class, 3rd-5th grade, and Pre-K. Teacher training will be provided in August. Characteristics of prospective teachers include:

- Love for God
- Love and genuine concern for children and/or youth
- Willingness to learn
- Willingness to trust God as you embark on a teaching adventure this school year
- Desire to teach

If you possess three or more of the above qualities, please prayerfully consider teaching Sunday school this coming school year. Contact Frances Franklin at 472-2445 or frances_centralpresbyterian@hotmail.com.

Potluck Breakfast Continues in July

After the wonderful time that was had by all with "Those Revolting Ministers" in June (I'm assuming - it hasn't actually happened yet, as of this writing!), we are going to try something a little bit different for Summer CE in July. We'll still gather at 9AM for a potluck breakfast, and then from 9:45-10:45 we'll explain, discuss and learn about our "Elements and Rituals of Worship." The discussion will center around some of the sights and sounds we encounter every week - the banners, the passing of the peace, a hymn or two, and the benediction to name just a few - and why we do some of the things that we do in a worship service. There will also be crafts, and maybe even some prizes - so be sure to mark your calendar! That's the last Sunday of the month, July 31st - bring a breakfast dish (quiche, casserole, sweet rolls, fruit), and be at the church at 9AM!!

C-CYM: Mission in Austin

By: Sarah, Joe, Cameron, Robert, Christina, Kevin and Emily

On June 19-21, 6 C-CYMer's and their 2 intrepid leaders went on a mission: to help the downtown and East Austin communities.

Our mission activities included preparing and serving dinner for 96 homeless men at ARCH, clearing out a downstairs CPC room, preparing 7 rooms for painting at El Buen Pastor, preparing more than 2000 lovingly-decorated pamphlets for Manos de Cristo's Back-To-School program, digging a glorious hole and installing a fencepost, and sanding, priming, and painting wood trim for Habitat for Humanity houses.

AND, we still managed to enjoy ourselves, with board games, Bible-study, and baseball. We also kept it cool at the pool, and (maybe a f-verb) many fine Austin dining establishments.

Above all, we learned that doing the Lord's is work superly awesome.

Ask a C-CYMer for more about the trip, they'll be glad to tell you about it. And if you see Joe Escandell, remind him that there's a clean-up on aisle Brazos.

Circle News

United Presbyterian Women's Circles are on a break for the summer. They will resume in September. Questions? Ask Ann Hooks or Pat Soderlind.



VBS

The VBS Express Report ***Children Learn about Mission***



There were fourteen children enrolled in VBS this year. This year's theme was Living as Forgiven Children of God: The Wonderful World of Mission. As they traveled from one country to another you could hear the sounds of "choo-choo!" coming up the stairs in the church. Students experienced arts and crafts, music, snacks and games, and a Bible and mission story from a different country each day.

To make the week's Bible lesson more relevant, students participated in a local mission project. They collected underwear and socks for children receiving aid from Manos de Cristo, a local charity. Tucker Ruderman came and talked to the children about the importance of sharing as part of Central Presbyterian Church's mission.



Highlights also included having students from Brazil as participants in our VBS program. A total of 37 plus volunteers and donors helped make VBS a success by either giving, money, food, time or decorations. A BIG hearty thank you to everyone who helped with VBS this year.



Callie Candee, Mac Candee, Jordan Candee, Rick Carlson, Kathy Cox, Molly Duncan, Katy Dyer, Clairlea Eckert, Eley Escandell, Christina Fernandez, Joshua Franklin, Margaret Harren, Lisa Hinley, Emily Hodges, Kevin Hodges, Pete Johnson, Cletus Johnson, Julie Johnson-Carson, Judy King, Frank Lenoir, Greg McDonnell, Katie Scarlett Mcleroy, Liz Musick, Addie Pierce, Sharon Risher, Lee Roman, Tucker Ruderman, Samuel Schaefer, Virginia Stotts, Kathi Thomas, Marilyn Thomas, Deena Veirus, Willyn Wahl, Gloria Walls, Casidy Wilson, Janine Zabriskie

VBS Snacks for Home

Here are some of the snack recipes VBS'ers enjoyed, while learning about these countries. All recipes and cultural notes are from the VBS material

Nepal: Kheer (Nepali Rice Pudding)

makes 4 half-cup servings

- 1 c. instant rice
- 2 c water
- 1 t butter
- 1 c half and half
- 1 1/2 c sugar
- 1 t cardamom

Bring water to boil in saucepan. Add butter. Stir in rice, cover and remove from heat. Let stand covered for 5 minutes. Add half and half, sugar and cardamom Boil mixture again Cool slightly Serve

Cultural note: Rice is a staple in many countries of the world. Rice is grown in the lower fields of Nepal. It is very plentiful there, but in the higher mountains, it is a luxury and must be brought up to the mountains. A common greeting among Nepalis is "Bhaat khaayo?", which literally translates as "have you eaten rice?"

Northern Ireland

McCann's Oatmeal Cookies

- 1 1/4 c. butter
- 1/2 c sugar
- 1/2 dark brown sugar
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 1/2 c flour
- 1 t baking soda
- 1 t salt
- 1 t cinnamon
- 3 c Quick Cooking Oatmeal
- 3/4 c. raisins (optional)
- 1/2 c. walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Cream butter with sugars in a large mixing bowl, then add vanilla Combine flour, baking sods, salt & cinnamon and add to mixture. Mix well. Stir in oats, and if desired, raisins and/or walnuts. Drop spoonfuls of batter onto an ungreased cookie sheet Bake for 12-15 minutes, then remove them and cool on cooling rack. *Cultural note:* "References to oatmeal appear in writings in the third century. Ireland has a good climate and water to grow some of the best oats. McCann's oatmeal is made from oats grown only in Ireland."

Brazil

Banana Frita com Canela e Acucar (fried bananas with cinnamon sugar)

- bananas (or ripe plantains)
- butter- about 1 T for every 2 to 3 bananas
- cinnamon sugar

Peel and cut bananas in slices, at an angle Fry bananas in butter, first one side and then the other, until golden brown. Sprinkle bananas with cinnamon sugar and serve

Cultural note: Bananas originated in Asia and were brought to North & South America by explorers. The Portuguese started the first banana plantation in Latin American in 1502. Brazil is the world's leading producer of bananas, most of which remain in Brazil as a local food source. Bananas are actually part of the lily family and a cousin of the orchid.

Zimbabwe

Sweet Potato Cookies

Makes about 30 cookies, recipe doubles easily

- 1 1/4 c flour
- 3/4 t baking powder
- 1/4 t baking soda
- 1/8 t. salt
- 1/4 c. butter (1/2 stick butter)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 t nutmeg
- 1/2 t cinnamon
- 1/8 c. honey
- 1 egg

1/2 c grated, raw sweet potato (peeled, then grated- easy to do in food processor!)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix flour, baking powder, baking soda & salt together in mixing bowl and set aside. Cream butter and sugar in large mixing bowl. Add nutmeg, cinnamon, honey & egg. Then add the grated sweet potato. Blend the flour mixture into the sweet potato mixture. Drop batter by spoonfuls onto an ungreased cookie sheet and bake 7-10 minutes. Place cookies on cooling rack. If desired, glaze with lemon glaze

Lemon Glaze:

- 1 t butter
- 1-2 T lemon juice
- 1 1/2 c. powdered sugar
- 1 T water

Mix butter, lemon juice & powdered sugar into a bowl. Stir in water slowly to make a glaze consistency, then drizzle over the cooled cookies.

Mission Update

Manos News

Back to School Again! Volunteers Clothing, Supplies Needed!



Share your talents and your donations for the Manos de Cristo Back to School drive July 18-22 and July 25-29. Each year, CPC members participate in this Presbyterian ministry for some 1300 children in need, ages 4-13. New and gently used school clothing, new backpacks, and school supplies are gathered and are distributed by volunteers to the children and parents at Manos de Cristo, 4911 Harmon Avenue.

Enjoy the excitement and happy faces as you distribute clothing and supplies; or share a Bible story or help with a craft or art project. Our friends from other Presbyterian churches will be helping also.

Here's the way you can help:

- Pick up a labeled grocery bag at Central after worship service on June 26 or July 3. Fill it with needed items as marked on the bag for kids, grades pre-K to 8th.
- Return the bag by 12:30 p.m., July 10 to the wooden box marked Manos de Cristo in the hallway near Smoot Hall under the staircase. Your donations will be delivered to Manos de Cristo.
- *Volunteer! Adults and high schoolers are needed, as follows:
 - o July 11-15 (9 a.m.-Noon, to sort clothes, help set up.
 - o July 18-22 and July 25-29 (8:30 a.m.-Noon) to assist children and families

To volunteer, call or E-mail Sarah Henkel, Program Coordinator, 477-7454; manosprograms@sbcglobal.net.

Elizabeth Musick, 527-0037, is Central's Coordinator for the Back to School Program.

Thanks for helping Manos share God's love with all God's children!

Birthday Program Continues



The Mission Committee's year-around project for the congregation to provide much needed and not budgeted (or stretching the budget to the max) items to Central continues.

The Birthday Program provides help with much needed items and projects throughout the year. The Mission Committee thanks the many members who have participated in 2004!

See the Celebrate Your Birthday With CPC booklet in Smoot Hall (located under the birthday cake banner) for these and other gift opportunities! Contact any of the Missions Committee, Cletus Johnson, Tom Escandell or Scarlett McLeroy for more information.

IHN at CPC

Schedule your volunteer time now! If you missed being a part of IHN in April, plan now to help out in August.

The IHN schedule for CPC for 2005: 8/14 Central Presbyterian 11/13 Central Presbyterian

For more information and to volunteer, contact Arden Henderson.

THANK YOU.....

To one and all who were able to support the Florentino Subi Funeral Fund. Enough money was given to cover his \$3,200 funeral and to place a marker at the grave site. Yosbel is most appreciative for your generosity.

Community News

Caritas ESL

Lu Zeidan, luz@aaimaustin.org, is seeking help from the cluster. For Caritas to do a more adequate job with ESL they could use some folks to care for children while parents are in class. If you are interested you can call Lu at 386-9145.

What a Hoppertunity, so hop to it.

International Adoption Seminar

Are you or someone you know interested in international adoption? If so, mark July 17, 2-4PM in Smoot Hall at Central Presbyterian Church on your calendar. (Please enter through the door by the alley.) Kathi Thomas, who, with her husband, adopted from Guatemala, is now working with Reaching Out Through International Adoption (ROTIA), an agency that is headquartered in New Jersey. Kathi will be working with clients, helping them with the "paper chase" (otherwise known as the dossier) and general contact throughout the adoption. ROTIA has programs in many countries, but Kathi will be focusing on International Adoption in general for this presentation. However, if you're interested in a specific country for which ROTIA has programs, Kathi can get you information.

This is strictly an informational information, so you don't have to be committed to international adoption at this time, just interested in the process!

The seminar is limited in size, so please contact Kathi for reservations or for further information at kathi@hastings.com.

Interfaith Care Alliance

My name is Leanne Kolnick. This summer I am interning with Interfaith Care Alliance (ICA). I would like to invite male members of the Central Presbyterian Church to attend a focus group, specifically aimed at garnering the insight of men in the Austin religious community regarding issues of volunteerism. Interfaith Care Alliance (ICA) is a non-profit organization with a mission to build a community where all people facing a difficult illness will receive loving care and support. In an effort to accomplish this goal, they need to improve volunteer recruitment. ICA has seen a dramatic increase in the requests for care team services over the last few years, and yet have experienced waning of numbers of volunteers. ICA has hopes of engaging more

men in their organization, to effectively do so it is essential to discover what men are looking for in a volunteer experience, and cater to those needs. Material discussed in the focus group will be treated as confidential. Beyond the focus group, there is no further obligation to donate time or money to the organization. The session will last no longer than 90 minutes. Light snacks will be provided. The focus group will be held at 6pm on Thursday, July 14, 2005 at the Interfaith Care Alliance office at 7215 Cameron Road, Austin, Texas, 78752. Email confirmation of attendance to leanne@interfaithcarealliance.org would be greatly appreciated, or call (512) 459-5883.

AAIM Book Club

Book People, at 6th and Lamar, and Austin Area Interreligious Ministries join hands to offer a Spirituality Book Club. The group reads spiritual writings from different faith communities, and the members come from a variety of traditions and backgrounds.

July 5 (Tuesday): *Mystics, Masters, Saints and Sages* by Robert Ullman and Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman

Robert Ullman and Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman comb the world's religions for examples of human beings who have apparently transcended earthly limitations and achieved a state of higher consciousness. These enlightened masters, say the authors, have experienced a sense of interconnectedness with all life. The authors include writings from Krishnamurti, Kabir, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint John of the Cross, Paramahansa Yogananda, Rumi, Eckart Tolle and more.

Upcoming Schedule: July 5th (Tuesday) August 1 September 12 October 3 November 7 December 5

All meetings start at 7pm and end at 8:30. We meet at Book People at 6th and Lamar on the third floor.

CASA of Travis County, Inc.

What We Do

What is a CASA Volunteer? A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteer is a trained citizen who is appointed by a judge to represent the best interest of a child in court. Children helped by CASA are those that have been abused and/or neglected and whose home placement is being determined by the court.

What is the CASA's role? A CASA provides a judge with a carefully researched background of the child to help the court make a sound decision about that child's future. Each child's case is unique. The CASA must determine if it is in a child's best interest to stay with his or her parents, be placed in foster care, or be freed for permanent out of home placement or adoption. The CASA Volunteer provides "guardian ad litem" representation for the child in the court system, as well as advocacy in educational, social welfare and medical areas.

How does CASA make a difference? According to the National CASA Association abused and neglected children are more likely to face homelessness, unemployment, and prison as adults. However, children with CASA volunteers are more likely to receive therapy, health care and education. Judges have observed that CASA children have better chances of finding permanent homes than non-CASA children. In 1998, the University of Texas School of Social Work Research concluded that CASA of Travis County volunteers moved children to a safe, permanent home six months faster than children that did not have a CASA volunteer.

How does CASA of Travis County support volunteers? CASA recruits, screens, trains, and supervises community volunteers to take on the role of advocating on behalf of abused and neglected children. Each volunteer undergoes an FBI fingerprint check, personal interviews, thorough screening and in-depth training prior to being assigned to a case. Each volunteer is supervised by a professional staff member who oversees their work throughout each case.

How does a CASA Volunteer investigate a case? To prepare a recommendation, the CASA volunteer spends time with the child, talks to parents, family members, social workers, school officials, attorneys, therapists, teachers and others who are knowledgeable about the child's history and progress. The CASA Volunteer has a

court order that allows them to review all records pertaining to the child -- school, medical, caseworker reports, and other documents.

How does a CASA differ from social service caseworkers? Social workers often have 30 to 50 cases at a time and are frequently unable to conduct a comprehensive investigation of each. The CASA is a Volunteer assigned to one child or family of children. The CASA Volunteer is an independent appointee of the court. The CASA thoroughly examines a child's case, has knowledge of community resources, and makes a recommendation to the court independent of state agency restrictions.

Is there a "typical" CASA volunteer? CASA volunteers come from all walks of life, with a variety of educational and ethnic backgrounds. There are 400 active CASA Volunteers annually in Travis County. Aside from their CASA volunteer responsibility, 50 percent are employed in regular full-time jobs.

What are the requirements for becoming a CASA Volunteer? Prospective volunteers must be at least 21 years of age, and undergo a criminal and Child Protective Services background checks. Applicants are required to complete an application, attend a pre-training interview, and participate in CASA University. Volunteers should have effective oral and written communication skills.

How many cases on average does a CASA volunteer carry at a time? Typically each CASA carries one case at a time, allowing them to focus on the needs of one child or sibling group.

How much time does it require? The scheduling of most volunteer activities is flexible. While each case is different, a CASA volunteer usually spends 15-20 hours each month doing research and spending time with the children on their case.

What other volunteer opportunities are available at CASA of Travis County? There are plenty of opportunities to lend your talents varying from assisting with events to general office help. Friends of CASA is volunteer group of community members who assist with CASA's fundraising efforts. For more information on Friends of CASA and other volunteer postings, visit our website.

For more information about how to Volunteer, contact Jessica Keisacker at (512) 459-2272 ex. 32 www.casatavis.org

Onward, Moderate Christian Soldiers

By JOHN C. DANFORTH

Published: June 17, 2005

It would be an oversimplification to say that America's culture wars are now between people of faith and nonbelievers. People of faith are not of one mind, whether on specific issues like stem cell research and government intervention in the case of Terri Schiavo, or the more general issue of how religion relates to politics. In recent years, conservative Christians have presented themselves as representing the one authentic Christian perspective on politics. With due respect for our conservative friends, equally devout Christians come to very different conclusions.

It is important for those of us who are sometimes called moderates to make the case that we, too, have strongly held Christian convictions, that we speak from the depths of our beliefs, and that our approach to politics is at least as faithful as that of those who are more conservative. Our difference concerns the extent to which government should, or even can, translate religious beliefs into the laws of the state.

People of faith have the right, and perhaps the obligation, to bring their values to bear in politics. Many conservative Christians approach politics with a certainty that they know God's truth, and that they can advance the kingdom of God through governmental action. So they have developed a political agenda that they believe advances God's kingdom, one that includes efforts to "put God back" into the public square and to pass a constitutional amendment intended to protect marriage from the perceived threat of homosexuality.

Moderate Christians are less certain about when and how our beliefs can be translated into statutory form, not because of a lack of faith in God but because of a healthy acknowledgement of the limitations of human beings. Like conservative Christians, we attend church, read the Bible and say our prayers.

But for us, the only absolute standard of behavior is the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. Repeatedly in the Gospels, we find that the Love Commandment takes precedence

when it conflicts with laws. We struggle to follow that commandment as we face the realities of everyday living, and we do not agree that our responsibility to live as Christians can be codified by legislators.

When, on television, we see a person in a persistent vegetative state, one who will never recover, we believe that allowing the natural and merciful end to her ordeal is more loving than imposing government power to keep her hooked up to a feeding tube.

When we see an opportunity to save our neighbors' lives through stem cell research, we believe that it is our duty to pursue that research, and to oppose legislation that would impede us from doing so.

We think that efforts to haul references of God into the public square, into schools and courthouses, are far more apt to divide Americans than to advance faith.

Following a Lord who reached out in compassion to all human beings, we oppose amending the Constitution in a way that would humiliate homosexuals.

For us, living the Love Commandment may be at odds with efforts to encapsulate Christianity in a political agenda. We strongly support the separation of church and state, both because that principle is essential to holding together a diverse country, and because the policies of the state always fall short of the demands of faith. Aware that even our most passionate ventures into politics are efforts to carry the treasure of religion in the earthen vessel of government, we proceed in a spirit of humility lacking in our conservative colleagues.

In the decade since I left the Senate, American politics has been characterized by two phenomena: the increased activism of the Christian right, especially in the Republican Party, and the collapse of bipartisan collegiality. I do not think it is a stretch to suggest a relationship between the two. To assert that I am on God's side and you are not, that I know God's will and you do not, and that I will use the power of government to advance my understanding of God's kingdom is certain to produce hostility

By contrast, moderate Christians see ourselves, literally, as moderators. Far from claiming to possess God's truth, we claim only to be imperfect seekers of the truth. We reject the notion that religion should present a series of wedge issues useful at election time for energizing a political base. We believe it is God's work to practice humility, to wear tolerance on our sleeves, to reach out to those with whom we disagree, and to overcome the meanness we see in today's politics.

For us, religion should be inclusive, and it should seek to bridge the differences that separate people. We do not exclude from worship those whose opinions differ from ours. Following a Lord who sat at the table with tax collectors and sinners, we welcome to the Lord's table all who would come. Following a Lord who cited love of God and love of neighbor as encompassing all the commandments, we reject a political agenda that displaces that love. Christians who hold these convictions ought to add their clear voice of moderation to the debate on religion in politics.

John C. Danforth is an Episcopal minister and former Republican senator from Missouri.

Letter from the Mission Board Designer/Decorator

Serving God through missions starts in Austin by supporting CPC through supporting and funding the ministry this church provides. Many people don't have the extra time to volunteer or extra food or belongings to donate. But, we can all reach into our pockets and pull out something to support the church where we receive sustenance, acceptance and a willingly active staff to help us. You can feel the Spirit of the Lord through an encouraging smile, hug or hand shake each time you walk in CPC's doors! We (the members and regular visitors) provide the resources that make all this possible. So, give thanks to the Lord for how he has touched your life through the worship and multiple activities CPC provides by tithing on Sunday or anytime on-line at www.centralpresbyterian.org.

So, some of you reading this might be thinking, how can we do this, we are living from small pay check to small pay check!? It is as simple as forgoing that piece of chocolate cake at the bakery, staying home for the night and spending

quality time with your family instead of going out to see an overpriced movie and eating an expensive dinner, reading a book you check out from the library rather than one you bought at a large chain bookstore, or realizing you can live without cable T.V. And then we all need to do is sit still for a while and look around us at all we are blessed with!

For me, it was realizing that I really didn't NEED that cup of special coffee from my favorite yet costly coffee shop! Instead I could give that money to the place I now call my second home; Central Presbyterian Church! If our whole congregation gave a little; combined that would make a huge difference. Plus it would allow for the basic needs of CPC to be met, i.e.; electricity, water, compensation for those who give of themselves on a regular basis, ability to purchase supplies needed to teach our children and support our awesome music ministry the list goes on and on. Our reward for our selflessness and generosity now will most likely not fully be awarded until we meet our Lord. But, how refreshing and humbling it will be when we bow before the Lord and he places his hand on our heads and says, "job well done my true and faithful servant, for I was in need and you sacrificed of yourself to support me, I was discouraged and you gave of yourself to lift me up. Arise for your humble service to my people on Earth did not occur without being seen by me. Look around for you now are eternally with me; where there is no pain and suffering but instead everlasting joy and celebration" (my own summarization of the message voiced in the New Testament)

My prayer for all of you is that our Great God might touch your heart today and always to desire to give rather than receive and be conscientious of the needs of those we depend on instead of focusing inward and remaining in the rut of our own self pity.

May God bless you always through the Love of fellow believers and may you be encouraged to reciprocate.

Thank You,

Katie Scarlett McLeroy, CPC Missions Committee Member

July prayer list

- 1 Harmon, John & Joyce
- 2 Harper Leslie
- 3 Harron, Herman & Margaret
- 4 Harris, Jim & Catherine
- 5 Harris, Mary Dee
- 6 Harrison, Margaret
- 7 Hartigan, Ruth, Scott
- 8 Hastings, Mark & Kathi Thomas, Lettie
- 9 Hauth, Rani
- 10 Haverlah, Leroy & Karen
- 11 Haverlah, Kirsha, Alexa
- 12 Headley, J. Craig
- 13 Hedrick, Mary
- 14 Henderson, Arden
- 15 Hendricks, Carl & Kandis, Madeline Hope
- 16 Hennessey, Terry
- 17 Hernandez, Yosebel
- 18 Hill, Dorothy
- 19 Hinely, Lisa
- 20 Hodges, Kevin & Emily
- 21 Hoffman, Angie
- 22 Hooks, Ann
- 23 Hovenga, Mary Nell, Mike
- 24 Howard, Margaret
- 25 Hudson, Truman
- 26 Johnson, Cletus
- 27 Johnson, Ingrid
- 28 Johnson, Jeane & Zelmar Tovar,
Melany, Kathy, Gedy
- 29 Johnson, Kim & Carol, Pete,
Tommy, Deena Vierus
- 30 Johnson-Carson, Keith & Julie,
Jessie, Micah, Jules, Isaac, Rebekah
- 31 Jones, Janette

Thursday Concerts

Join us for these upcoming free concerts.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| July 7 | Austin Chamber Music Center
Festival Artists |
| July 14 | Austin Chamber Music Center
Festival Artists |
| July 21 | Austin Chamber Music Center
Advanced Students |

A light lunch is served following the concerts. Reservations are required. Please e-mail reservations to concerts@hastings.com with "lunch" in the subject line, or call the church, 472-2445 no later than 10 AM on the day of the concert with your reservations. The cost is \$5 per person.

Pray for comfort and continued healing

Bill Brydson, Willa Brydson, Shawn Estes-Collins (and family), Mary Catherine Byers, Anna Garvey Tanner, Fonee Brumley Hargett, Dwight Harper, Herman Harren, Margaret Harrison, Mary Nell Hovenga, Ila Kilpatrick, Herbert Lehmann, Albert & Nancy McQuown, Mary Peavy, Elizabeth Rountree, Alice Jean Smith, Roy Thomas, G-G Tritschler, Ernest Watson, Jack Yewell.

About The Central Thought

The Central Thought is a monthly publication of Central Presbyterian Church.

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