

First Impressions

***Newsletter of
First Presbyterian Church
Staunton, Virginia
September 2010***



Big Books, Big Questions

As I write this I am one week back from a week of study leave, during which my primary purpose was to read one book. It doesn't sound like much, does it? But, a little background.

Last August I went to Birmingham, AL, where I'd found a small apartment. There I sat down to read Charles Taylor's mammoth philosophical treatise, *A Secular Age*. The book was almost 900 pages of clear but dense writing about the question of how we had arrived at this point in time, and in particular in religious history, this secular age in which faith was only one option of many, and one, so it seems, that fewer and fewer are choosing.

I read diligently, at least six hours a day. I came nowhere near finishing the book. I kept at it, however, after I'd returned to Staunton; and I did finally complete *A Secular Age*. I found it a fascinating account, and it seemed to be a fair and reasonable one. Still, I was aware that I had bitten off more than I could chew; and I found even months (and months) later, that I was still trying to digest the book.

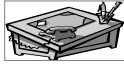
At this point—a little more than a month ago—I ran across a book of essays by several scholars—historians, social scientists, one theologian—about Taylor's book. At the end of this book, *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age* edited by Michael Warner, and others, was an essay by Taylor responding to the criticisms leveled against *A Secular Age*. I thought, "This might help"; and I determined to read the essays this study leave. The book was barely over 300 pages; surely I could manage it.

I did. Now I am digesting it. But, why all the trouble?

It's almost undeniable that we live in an increasingly secular world, at least in the West, though in the West, the United States is—along with Ireland and Poland—the least secular of states. Those countries have the highest percentage of their populations claiming allegiance to one form of religion or another. (The cases are clearly different, however. The great majority of Irishmen and Poles are Roman Catholics. In the United States, people belong to any number of denominations or other kinds of faith groups.) Still, even here, according to polls, there are more and more people claiming to have "no religion." Why is this so? And what role in it does the church play? Also, what role can any one church play?

I'd be a fool to say that I know the answers, or that I can begin listing specific ways to address the problems the questions point to. Still, the questions are worth thinking about. In our own town, what brings people into a church, a community of faith? What keeps them away? What causes them to leave?

(cont. on page 3)



From the Desk of the D.C.E.

Thank you to all who worked on renovating the middle floor of the Potter Building/ Your Effort paid off in such a beautiful way!

Over one hundred hours of time invested!

THANKS -

Denise Lowman - Painting, donating Toys and Linens for Nursery and Crib Nursery

Ron Lowman -Painting, donating Toys and Linens Nursery and Crib Nursery

David Lowman - set up in Nursery and Crib Nursery

Cord Lowman - set up in Nursery and Crib Nursery

Maggie Lowman- set up in Nursery and Crib Nursery

Elizabeth Lowman - set up in Nursery and Crib Nursery

Mona Tate- set up in Nursery and Crib Nursery

Louise Whipple - set up in Nursery and Crib Nursery, work day #3

Catty Clem - Nursery and Crib Nursery

Sharon Wilson - Work Day #1 and Cleaning closets, Garden

Scott Wilson - Work Day #1, Garden

Bob Avery - Murals in Crib Nursery

Lissie Richmond-Painting and reorganizing Children's Library

Betty Richmond - MOTHER IN LAW OF BETTY -Ironing curtain, crib skirts, Work Day#3

Patricia Bennett- THE LIBRARIES!!!!!!!

Anna Bird - Library

Sherry Cox - Library

Molly Morris-Children's Library

Donnie Bosserman - Painting, hauling

Sharon Bosserman - Hauling

Zack Ham-Work Day #2,Hauling

Mark Ham-Work Day #2 Hauling

Bob Mackay -Work Day #1

Rob Richmond- Painting Work Day #1

Robin Dietrich- Painting Work Day #1

Lisa Caywood - Youth Lounge and Work Day#3

Don Bush-Crib reconstruction
 Gary Wilson -Work Day #2, Hauling
 John Dull - Work Day #2-, Hauling
 Mary Jane Crummett- Valances, Curtains and Bench cushions
 Joanna Wyant - (Sister of Mary Jane Crummett) -Valances, Curtains
 Pam Snyder and Louise Detamore-Discovery Toys
 All who bought Toys at the Discovery Toy Party for the Nursery
 Ginny Reid - Carpets
 Page Kullman- Karen Austin's Room
 Randy Jones Upholstery-Valances
 Justin Tate-Work Crew
 D.J. Tate-Work Crew
 Deb Halasz- Beanbags
 Jim Hanger-Cork Strips
 John Sheaves and Theresa Sheaves -
Extra ordinary Custodial, Hanging Valances
 Danny McAllister - Work Day #1
 Megan McAllister - Work Day #1
 John Downey-Work Day #1



Pastor Rick Dietrich and ALL Who have partnered with us IN PRAYER!
 Anyone who has *inadvertently* been left off of the list YOUR GIFT IS MUCH Ap-
 preciated!

The Christian Education Committee for vision, guidance and support
 Dan Layman and the Evangelism Committee for help with publicity for the Open
 House

Anne McIntyre, Sherry Simantel and Megan McAllister and the Fellowship
 Committee for the LOVELY reception!

Next up - the Top Floor of the Potter Building !

Pastor's Message (Cont. from page 1)

Taylor doesn't offer answers to these questions, but he does believe that faithful Christians
 need to look around and be aware of the world they live in, especially how their faith—our
 faith—connects with our daily lives. I'd be interested in your stories.

Rick

YOUTH CORNER:

The summer is now winding down, and as we send our Youth back to their schools we also begin a new year of exciting Youth activities here at First Presbyterian. But before we get to the details on where we are going, a quick recap of the summer's activities will help us see where we currently are.

In July, the Mid High Youth spent 4 very busy days at the Massanetta Springs Middle School Conference and the Senior High Youth spent a full week at the Montreat Youth Conference. They experienced many recreational, worship, Christian education, and service activities during their conferences. They also spent time in close fellowship with one another and their chaperones. These are such invaluable experiences in faith formation for our young people, and they would not be able to have such opportunities without the support of our very generous congregation. The Youth and their leaders thank the congregation here in word, and throughout the year ahead in their actions.

The upcoming year will be one of the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding years for our Youth in recent history. Without divulging details that are still in the planning stages, I can tell you our Youth will be presented with opportunities to live out the Great Commission in word and deed. They will be challenged to rise to meet the call of Christ in their lives to serve others, to build up the church, and to share the Gospel with their world. A calendar of events is being reviewed for publication soon – so keep an eye open for this in the near future. Youth, parents, and the congregation – get ready to BE A BLESSING!

Enthusiastically,

John M. Dull, Associate for Youth Ministries

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR:

As the summer months fade into our memories, we prepare for another exciting year making a joyful noise together! Our ensembles will resume Wednesday evening rehearsals on September 8: Melodious Ringers (English handbell choir) at 6:30 – 7:15 and Chancel Choir at 7:30 – 9:00. If you are interested in joining our ensembles, please contact me directly or just come to a rehearsal to check things out. Music for the Fall is planned through the end of November, and already we have some ambitious and exciting things in sight!

Our upcoming Chancel Choir anthems are as follows for the month of September:

September 5: “My God – Thy Table Now Is Spread” – Hopson
September 12: “Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” – arr. Sanborn
September 19: “A Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester” – White
September 26: “Peace Like a River” – arr. Baker

See you at worship!

John M. Dull, Director of Music Ministries

FROM THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

A check for \$8,690.31 is on its way to Haiti Education Foundation for scholarships and for rebuilding classrooms destroyed in the 2010 earthquake! **It is not too late to contribute** for anyone who meant to do so or would like to send an additional gift. A second check will be mailed for donations received before December 15, 2010. Thank you for your great generosity to the children!

LATEST NEWS FROM BRAZIL

An August 16, 2010 email from Farris and Thelma Goodrum is the first since April.

Dear Friends,
Greetings from the island city of Vitoria

We are working with the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil ... helping out in various ways in the 8 churches of the Presbytery of Vitoria, and teaching at their Center of Theological Formation....

Thelma has preached at a couple of the churches, and has been much appreciated in this role. She graduated from seminary in Londrina in 2007, and has found opportunities to use all that she learned ...At the encouragement of the denomination, she plans to seek ordination with the United Presbyterian Church.

Thelma and I are both teaching at the seminary extension of the "Center" in Colatina, a two hour drive ... We are team teaching a course in "Worship and Liturgy"... I look forward to teaching Christian education and music courses in the near future.

We are also helping in a small church which has an impressive ministry with children from among the poorest of the poor. These children (80 in all) walk to church on Sunday mornings from their slum dwellings on a nearby hilltop.... Here in Brazil the worship service is at night. These children seldom come to the evening services because of the dangers of being out, on foot, at night....

Thelma represented the United Presbyterian Church of Brazil at two conferences in the States in June: the "Brazil Network" conference in Atlanta with the PC(USA) ...and the conference of the newly formed "World Communion of Reformed Churches" in Grand Rapids.

Our son Joel is soon to be 13 years old, and has adapted well to our situation here... Our son Michael is studying at a university ... 1,000 miles away, but visited us for two weeks during his July winter break (seasons are reversed here).

(cont. on page 7)

Nurse's Health Corner

September is National Fruit & Veggie Month! We all know that fruits and vegetables are beneficial to our bodies but what are they *really* doing for you? How can you incorporate them into your diet and how many should you be eating? To celebrate the awareness of Fruit & Veggie month and answer some nutrition questions, we will look at the Centers for Disease Control "Fruit & Veggies: More Matter," campaign, which promotes eating a variety of these foods every day for optimum health.

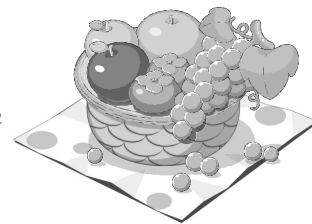
According to the CDC, eating fruits and vegetables provides the body with minerals, vitamins and fiber, all of which are essential in helping to protect you from chronic disease. People who eat a healthier, more colorful diet, have a reduced risk of developing cardiovascular disease, type 2 Diabetes, certain cancers and stroke.

Incorporating fruits and vegetables into your diet doesn't have to be difficult! Simple things like adding fruit to cereal, vegetables to an omelet, eating fruits or vegetables for a snack or making a fresh fruit smoothie are all healthy and fun ways to increase your consumption of these important foods.

A typical adult diet requires two cups of fruits and two and half cups of vegetables per day. However, this varies by age, gender and activity level. A cup of fruit would be a small apple and one cup of vegetables is about 12 baby carrots. To find out more about your specific fruit and vegetable needs visit www.Mypyramid.gov for your food pyramid plan!

Eating healthy is something we can all do to reduce our risk of disease and it can be done in a cost effective way. We know fresh might be best, but we can buy canned fruits (in their own juice) and frozen vegetables. Buying fruits and vegetables in season, cutting coupons and shopping at discount grocery stores can help to reduce the cost of these items. Remember, fruits and vegetables are good for the health of you and your family, so eat up!

*For more information on the CDC **Fruits & Veggies: More Matter** campaign visit: www.FruitsandVeggiesMatter.gov*



Article provided by Bethany Bowen, Intern at James Madison University working with Dana Breeding, RN Health Educator of Community Wellness at Augusta Health. Funding has been provided through the Augusta Health Foundation. To contact Dana Breeding, RN related to the information above, please call (540) 332- 4988 or (540) 932-4988.

We are pleased to be of help to the United Presbyterian Church, a small denomination which was established in 1978 by pastors, churches, and even entire presbyteries who were expelled from the very conservative Presbyterian Church of Brazil for speaking out against the injustices of the military dictatorship of the times ... (Brazil returned to democracy in 1984)...The UPC has a strong ecumenical outlook, and a commitment in the struggle for social change. It was the first Presbyterian denomination to ordain women as elders, deacons and pastors.

We appreciate your support and your interest in our ministry in Brazil!
In Christ's service,
Farris and Thelma Goodrum

Church Women United Human Rights Celebration --- Living the Challenge -- Differently Enabled -- Uniquely Called

Please mark your calendars for Friday, September 10th!

Church Women United will meet September 10, 2010 at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 2001 N. Augusta St. with Registration/Coffee and Refreshments at 9:30 AM. This is an opportunity to meet women from churches thru-out Staunton. This will be followed by the annual Human Rights Celebration from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.. Please call Louise Whipple at 885-6767 if you would like a ride. For handicap accessibility, park at the Northernmost entrance and enter thru the sanctuary side door.

ATTENTION ALL MEN: Free Prostate Cancer Screening

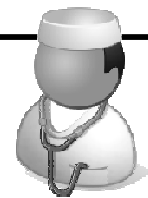
WHEN: Thursday, September 9, 2010 – 5:30 pm

WHERE: Augusta Health Cancer Center

COST: FREE!!

OTHER: Open to men age 40 and above, or African American men age 35 and above, or any man with family history of prostate cancer age 35 and above.

APPOINTMENTS: Call (540)332-5961 (STAUNTON); or (540)932-5961 (WAYNESBORO). Call for more information or to make an appointment



Bulletin Bloopers

- "Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children."
- "Miss Charlene Mason sang, 'I Will Not Pass This Way Again,' giving obvious please to the congregation."
- "The sermon this morning is 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' Tonight's sermon is 'Searching for Jesus.'"
- "You will want to attend the National Prayer and Fasting Conference at First Church. Your registration fee includes three meals."
- "Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things you don't want to keep. Don't forget your husbands."
- "Please welcome Pastor Cowden, a caring man who loves hurting people . "

The Search is On!

Are you good with words? Interested in being "in the know?" The church newsletter needs you! We are currently recruiting a new editor for the church newsletter. Two kids, two jobs (and even two pets) has left me too little time to do justice to the monthly newsletter.

This is a fun, interesting thing to do, and you know everything that happens first in the month! The newsletter is currently designed in Publisher, but could be laid out in Word, if you'd prefer. It only requires a commitment of a few hours near the end of each month. I will happily share what knowledge I've gained this year with my successor.

Please contact me if you might be interested. I'll be happy to give you more details on this great way to serve First Presbyterian Church.

I can be reached at (540) 886-7249, or via email at lavender@ntelos.net.

Thanks for all of your contributions and suggestions this year! Susie

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