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Discipleship Ministry Team, 8207 Traditional Pl., Cordova, TN 38016
901/276-4572; education@cumberland.org; www.cumberland.org/bce

Fall 2009

Discipleship: Touching Others

We met on a cold, rainy day. He held out his arms, dripping wet from under his garbage bag raincoat. Now Tony is my friend. Tony is homeless, but he doesn't think of himself as homeless because he "dwells with the Lord." Tony has thinning red hair and ruddy complexion from being outdoors. He has a cleft palate and missing teeth. He loves the Lord and knows the Bible by heart. Tony speaks in scriptures and songs.

People come into our church daily needing something. Tony, on the other hand, loves to give. Not many homeless people bring me food, but he does. He has brought a breakfast taco, a cup of instant soup, and a container of shelled pecans. He brought a box of tea once so that when he comes in he doesn't have to borrow. I help him buy things he needs. He knows exactly how much his needs cost, and thrift store bargains enable him to meet needs of others. He loves to fish. I've helped buy two fishing poles that he gave away so someone else could eat. He probably shares his favorite fishing secrets, too.

Tony has taught me many things. We had a hard time communicating at first. He would say one thing, and I would repeat what I thought he said until I understood. Sometimes he writes words to shorten our conversations. I've learned to listen more intentionally.

Tony loves to draw. He draws pictures on restaurant napkins. He paints vibrant colored flowers on poster board when he has money to buy art supplies. Most pictures display a Bible verse or his favorite hymn. He even repainted our old nativity scene.

Once when Tony came, he wanted a vacation to the gulf. We went to the Greyhound bus station and purchased a round trip ticket. Think how long most of

us take to make vacation plans—not Tony. With ticket in hand he turned around and got in line—no bags, nothing extra except what he was wearing. He would stay on the beach or at a local shelter at night, and cook fish on an open fire. He has complete trust and isn't anxious about anything.

Tony attends the Wednesday night service sometimes. One devotional theme was "street people." It is different when you ask a homeless person what another street person really needs. Tony answered, "First of all, you don't judge. You don't know the reason for the person's condition." After a pause he finished, "Smoked salmon! I'd give them a can of smoked salmon. No matter what, I will always give them something."

A professor once said that evangelism is "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." Tony shares his bread wherever he goes.

Written by Mark McNeese, pastor of First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Austin, Texas. Originally printed in *The Cumberland Presbyterian*, February 2009. Used by permission.



Photo: Mark McNeese

An update to this story:

Someone from Alabama read the original article and now sends Tony a small donation with a letter once in awhile. Pastor McNeese reports: Tony came in yesterday. I hadn't seen him for awhile and he had two letters waiting for him. As he was opening the letter, he started singing, "Happy Birthday to me." With a tear in his eye he said, "I did get a birthday present!" He was thrilled. By the way, earlier yesterday I prayed to see Tony soon because of the letters waiting in my desk. Around 10 a.m. here he came with a bag and three cookies to give me. We were both blessed. Our God is an awesome God!

Here's What's Working for . . .

Presbytery del Cristo is so spread out geographically, with churches from Texas to California, that the Congregational Care Committee decided to keep in touch with each congregation between meetings of presbytery. Our committee serves as the link between the congregation and presbytery.

This committee is responsible for the care of the congregations. We send notices and notes of encouragement to congregations approximately every other month. Each member of the committee also serves as a prayer partner with one or more congregations. We have asked congregations to add us to their online prayer links and to put us on the mailing lists for their newsletter and emails to help us stay connected and informed.

In the future we hope to offer educational opportunities for people who attend presbytery. The training opportunities would be available on Thursday afternoon before presbytery begins that evening.

First CPC, Austin, TX—The session approved “elder on call.” One elder per month serves as a contact for anyone with concerns. This action will provide everyone with another person to contact in case of emergency or other church news. The elder on call is in addition to the pastor, church office, and shepherd elder.

Jackson CPC, Jackson, TN—Following a fellowship meal, teams comprised of Sunday school classes participated in “Are You Smarter Than a Sunday School 5th Grader” Bible challenge. Prizes were awarded to the team who answered the most questions correctly.

Milan CPC, Milan, TN—Junior and Senior High young people are learning how to manage money based on Christian principles.

New Salem CPC, Lakeland, TN—Needs & Deeds is a type of “Christian Classifieds” where people can advertise for items or services that they need from or are willing to provide to members of the community. Items or services may be for sale or given freely.

St. Matthew CPC, Burleson, TX—Online giving is available to those who are interested in this time-saving method. Utilizing your debit card or electronic funds transfer, you can tithe online or make a tax-deductible donation. It is safe, simple, and convenient!

Greeneville CPC, Greeneville, TN—After reading N. Graham Standish’s book *Becoming a Blessed Church*, the session embraced the idea of having “a Year of Prayer.”

Pastor Jamie Lively has preached several sermons on prayer and the emphasis will continue throughout the year. The session has set aside time for prayer and has divided lists of church members to pray for every week. Each church committee has been asked to make special time for prayer during their meetings. Three prayer groups met during the Lenten season and one continues to meet. Plans are being made for a prayer retreat and a youth prayer group to begin this fall. We have made books and Sunday school material on prayer available for those interested in further study.

Dyersburg CPC, Dyersburg, TN—There is a new wind blowing in relation to congregational care in our church. After months of preparation and prayer, the Session established four new **Congregational Care Ministry Teams**.

Communications Team: will develop ways to stay in touch with members of the congregation who may be going through trying times by utilizing such avenues as cards, phone calls, emails, visits, prayer chain, etc.

Helping Hands Team: will be comprised of those in the church who are skilled in minor home maintenance who wish to use those gifts to assist those in the congregation who have “special needs.” This care team will also be involved in supplying transportation for members who are unable to drive when they need to run errands or visit their doctor.

Special Care Team: with appropriate training will be assigned to provide Christian care for members of our congregation who are experiencing bereavement, terminal illness, divorce, grief, or hospital care.

Shepherding Team: will be sensitive to those in our congregation who are in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and those with limited mobility. This team will also target those who are convalescing from surgery.

Donelson CPC, Nashville, TN—Families in the congregation provide and deliver Meals-to-Go for members who are unable to leave their homes. Those persons who deliver the meals stay and visit with the homebound member.

What's Working for YOUR Church?

Tell us about the positive things happening in your church. Send your ideas to Cindy Martin, 8207 Traditional Place, Cordova, TN 38016 or by e-mail to chm@cumberland.org. We'd love to hear from you!

Responding through Service

Going to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota was probably one of the most amazing trips of my life. I went with a group of people from our church, whom I got to know on a whole new level. Living with people for a week, sleeping in the same teepee-shaped sanctuary, eating meals together, working with them in VBS, and celebrating communion on a butte really establishes a connection!

One of our projects was to hold VBS for the children and youth who live on the reservation. About fifty Lakota Indian children participated, which was double the number from last year. It was such a blessing to have some of the same kids two years in a row and to see how they've grown up.

Just a few facts about the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation today:

- Population: 46,000 Lakota people. One half of the population is under the age of 18;
- Unemployment: 73-85%;
- Per Capita Income: \$6,143;
- Life Expectancy: male 55 (US avg. 75)/female 60 (US avg. 80);
- Infant Mortality Rate: 2.6 times the national average;
- Suicide Rate: 72% higher than the national average;
- Diabetic Rate: 37% of the population is diabetic;
- Alcoholism: 4 million cans of beer a year (average of 10,958 per day) are sold just one mile from the border of the Pine Ridge Reservation in White Clay, Nebraska, where the population is 14 (yes... 14);
- Children in Poverty: 69% of the children live in poverty.

Helping these children find hope, getting to know them on a personal level, showing them that there are people who love them and who want to help them is why the trip means so much to me. These children

need to see that they are not forgotten. They don't think they matter, and I want more than anything to prove to them that they do. The drive there may not always be the most entertaining, some of the stops may be boring, some of the evening speakers may be boring, the sleeping arrangements are not always ideal, it may not make sense...but as soon as you look into the faces, into the eyes of those

children, nothing else matters. You know you're in the right place.

Recently, I had the privilege of serving God in Nueva Laredo, Mexico, on a mission trip there to help build dormitories for future mission trip goers as God is at work in the CP Church there. We accomplished quite a bit during the time we were there. But all that was accomplished was through God because the act of serving is an act of God's grace.



Photo: Courtesy of Vernon Sansom

In order to serve, I had to step out of my comfort zone. I have a very narrow area of comfort. First of all, I don't like to be hot for even a moment and I like the comfort and privacy of my own home. I rarely do manual labor and I prefer staying inside in the coolness of my air conditioning. So why would I want to go to Mexico in 106 degree temperature with no air conditioning to paint walls and haul tiles.

As I was there doing what God had asked me to do, I received a gift. That gift was the realization that Jesus stepped way out of his comfort zone for us so that we could have his grace and forgiveness.

I was there to share what I had and that was my time and money. And I hoped to receive the satisfaction of giving, but I received so much more. While there, I felt I was in continual worship of God and he was blessing me moment by moment. I felt a sense of purpose in my life that wasn't temporary like the world is, but was eternal in its purpose. The comforts of home seemed terribly insignificant in comparison.

God has our work in Mexico covered. God is doing great things there and prospering the efforts of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church for our Hispanic brothers and sisters. It is our individual hands that do the work but it is God's hand that brings about a great harvest for his eternal glory. I am thankful to have been used by God for his eternal purposes—sweat and all.



Photo: Megan Peltier

Training Opportunities

Looking for a way to polish your existing skills or learn some new ones? Check out these events!

Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) will meet in Nashville, TN, January 27-30, 2010. Keynote Speaker is Rev. Michael Lindvall; Preacher and worship leader is Rev. Carla Pratt Keyes. For more information or to register, visit apcenet.org.

Montreat Conference Center offers a variety of training and spiritual renewal opportunities each year. The following events are listed for the remainder of 2009 and the first half of 2010: **The Blaze: A Formative Gathering for Leaders of Youth**—January 5-8 or 6-9, 2010; **Annual Recreation Workshop**—May 3-8, 2010; **Christian Education Conference**—May 31-June 4, 2010. For additional events, visit montreat.org.

Austin Seminary, Planning Christian Education in a Multicultural and Multi-religious context, led by Dr. Fernando Cascante-Gomez (October 19 -21, 2009)

For more information, contact Valerie Knox (800-381-7075 or knox@synodsun.com) or Randall McGee (randallmcgee@sbcglobal.net).

Check out other training opportunities at Austin Seminary by visiting www.austinseminary.edu and clicking on the continuing education link.

LifeTime: Christian Lifelong Learning (a ministry of Memphis Theological Seminary) announces the following classes: **Power Up Your Prayer Life**, led by Rev. Tiffany Hall McClung, September 26, 8:30-12:30, Brenthaven CPC, Brentwood, TN. **Revitalizing Your Church**, led by Dr. Barry Anderson, September 26, 8:30-12:30, Liberty CPC, McMinnville, TN. For information or to register for one of these classes, contact LifeTime at LifETIME@memphisseminary.edu or 901-334-5806. Classes are \$30 per person.

Youth Specialties announces the **2009 National Youth Workers Convention** to be held at the following locations: Los Angeles, CA (September 24-28), Cincinnati, OH (October 29-November 2), and Atlanta, GA (November 19-23). For more information or to register, visit www.nywc.com. The code for Cumberland Presbyterians is NDCBPC8.

Opening Doors to Discipleship offers 3 courses (with a fourth under development) to help teachers and leaders equip themselves to be faithful teachers and leaders. Each course has twelve sessions. The courses are: **Teaching Skills**, **Bible Background**, **Presbyterian/Reformed Faith**, and **Discipleship**. To access these courses, go to openingdoorstodiscipleship.com. Click on login. Enter the Cumberland Presbyterian Church Login Number 14549. Follow the instructions and begin the sessions!

McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago, IL) will offer a Certificate in Executive Leadership program, which is built for the leadership needs of today's ordained and non-ordained leaders (pastors, committee and board leaders, and denominational and judicatory leaders). The program includes four two-and-a-half day class sessions: **Foundations for Leadership** (September 24-26, 2009); **Developing a Vision** (November 12-14, 2009); **Systems and Contexts** (February 25-27, 2010); **Change, Collaboration and Conflict** (April 15-17, 2010).

Ecumenical Stewardship Center Leadership Event Steward Leaders for Changing Times Cost: \$345 (for a first timer; \$370 otherwise) For information or to register, visit: stewardshipresources.org.

LeadNow National Conference, Dallas, TX, (November 5-7, 2009) will focus on three areas to ignite the movement: **Creating a Culture of Service**, **Launching Small Groups to Action**, and **Connecting Your People to Those in Need**. LeadNow will challenge you to transform your church culture so that everyone is on mission and using their God-given skills and passions to serve others.

Learn more by visiting: www.rightnow.org/Events/.

Mid-Central APCE Oasis, a regional educational event, will offer workshops led by people from across the synod and beyond. This event is a great opportunity for anyone involved in Christian education. The meeting will be at the Elms Spa and Resort in Excelsior Springs, MO (October 18-20, 2009).

*Registration August 28-September 30 **\$179**; late registration (after September 30) **\$199**. The Elms is holding a block of rooms at **\$89** per night. Ask for Mid-Central APCE rate.

For more information contact Malinda Spencer at 816-923-5486 or visit churchresourcecenter.org.

Princeton Theological Seminary Forums on Youth Ministry (Hendersonville, NC, November 26-28, 2009 and Princeton, NJ, April 26-28, 2010). Site information, lodging details, and registration available at www.ptsem.edu/iym. Interactive courses include **Adolescent Sexuality**, **The Role of Scripture in Christian Theology**, **The Art of Storytelling for Youth Ministry**, **Understanding the Teenage Brain**, **Developing Young Leaders**, **Intentional Discipleship**, **Worship and Transformation of the Young**, **Spirituality**, and more! Conference preachers are Pam Driesell and Luke Powery. Course leaders are Shane Claiborne, Kenda Creasey Dean, Peter Gomes, and Rodger Nishioka.

Project Family Fun!

"Each day is God's gift. It's all you get in exchange for the hard work of staying alive. Make the most of each one! Whatever turns up, grab it and do it. And heartily!"

Ecclesiastes 9:9-10 (The Message)

Families generally get together to discuss schedules, decide what to eat or determine what needs to be done before school or work the next day. But when do families set aside time simply to play together? This project is for that purpose—to plan and implement a Family fun night. **The goal is to relax and enjoy a night free from drama and stress. It is to enjoy being with your family and celebrate the family members God has given you to love.**

Here are some things to consider when planning your Family Fun night:

- use board games for your evening. They are readily available in your own closet or can easily be borrowed from others—so that means they're free. Choose games that are age-appropriate for all family members;

- plan an outing to a game park for active play. Be sure not to let it turn into a night where everyone is playing at the same time, but not with one another;

- pair up in teams if you have smaller children;

- consider non-competitive games. A good source is *The New Games Book* by Andrew Fluegelman & Shoshana Tembeck. Online resources are available at web sites such as inewgames.com or teachers.net/archives/noncompetitive.html;

- most of all, make it a time to have fun with each other.

For additional ideas, check out *Project Family!* on our website at www.cumberland.org/bce. Click on the link for *Project Family!* on the left side of the home page.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SEASON OFFERING

August 30–September 27, 2009

At the close of the 2009 Cumberland Presbyterian Youth Conference a minister, who was attending the event as an adult participant, remarked, "It's good to know that there's a place where we can send our youth and they come home better than when they left." That's the real hope of all discipleship ministry, especially the teaching/learning/nurturing ministry of every congregation. We want our folks to return home better than when they left!

In order to keep ministries like CPYC, the consultant program, *Encounter*, resource distribution, stewardship emphasis, and more going, your partnership and support is needed. We need your prayers and your help in promoting programs of this partnership. Please put your Discipleship Ministry Team on your ongoing prayer list. We also appreciate your participation in our various programs and events like the

2009 Miniversities on Evangelism that reached over 500 Cumberland Presbyterians in approximately 20 locations in the church.

The General Assembly authorized the Board of Christian Education (now Discipleship Ministry Team)

to receive an offering annually during Christian Education Season. This offering has established the Christian Education Season Endowment. The earnings from this endowment help expand our partnership ministries with your congregation. Please consider taking a special offering on one or more Sundays during Christian Education Season (August 30 through September 27, 2009). Send your congregation's contribution to: CE Season Offering, Discipleship Ministry Team,



Photo: Paula Denbow

8207 Traditional Place, Cordova, TN 38016. May God bless your giving, struggling, living, and serving.

Youth Evangelism Conference

December 27-30, 2009/Nashville, TN

Wake Up to God's story!

"The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." Romans 13:11



Wake Up to Their Story!

Stay Awake!

Wake Up to My Story!

Purpose: to engage youth and adult leaders in active conversation and practice of evangelism.

Join with youth from across the denomination for an incredible three-day event to worship God, waking up to God's story, waking up to our own stories, waking up to the stories of those whom we want to come to know Christ, and how to stay awake that we might not slumber in response to God's call.

Who: youth grades 7 – college freshmen and adult leaders

Early-bird Registration: September 15, 2009/**Cost:** \$95.00 per person

Registration: October 15, 2009/**Cost:** \$105.00 per person

Late Registration: November 15, 2009/**Cost:** \$125.00 per person
(includes conference registration, 3 meals, shirt, entertainment/recreation)

*Registration does not include lodging. Lodging will be in area hotels. For information on lodging or to request a registration packet, please e-mail scg@cumberland.org, gre@cumberland.org, or pam@cumberland.org; call 901-276-4572; or visit the website at www.cumberland.org/bom/churchgrowth/2009YEC.htm



PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM 2010

PYT 2010 - JULY 20-24

Cost: \$409.00 per participant
Registration will begin online this fall!

PYT is for young people who will be ages 15-19 years old by July 20, 2010. Adult advisors must be 21 years of age by this date. A list of presbyterial registrars will be available in September. They will assist people who have questions regarding registration. For further information, contact Susan Groce: scg@cumberland.org or 901-276-4572 or 2010 PYT, 8207 Traditional Place, Cordova, TN 38016. Also visit the PYT website at www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org.

Save
the
Dates:

CPYC July 4-9, 2010!

Youth Worker Summit December 1-4, 2010

Sacred Space for Youth Workers: Gathering in Hope, Rekindling the Light

Coronado Springs Resort, Walt Disney World Florida

www.youthworkerssummit.org. Registration will begin online this fall!



Reflections from 2009 Cumberland Presbyterian Youth Conference



The theme “let ME do the talking” encouraged participants to listen for God in all aspects of life.

I truly enjoyed every minute I spent there. What a great experience. Makes me wish I was (years) younger. God Bless each and every one of you. **Rebecca Wells**, Adult Participant, Beaver Creek CPC

Shew I don't know about everyone else, but I am terribly missing camp and all of the good times there. **Sebastian Phillips**, Youth Participant, Smithville CPC

If I ever need anyone to talk to, anyone to console about a problem, anyone to laugh with, anyone to cry with, there is a sheet we received with a list of names of brothers and sisters that I have grown with. I can get in touch with any of them any time I want. Relationships and memories have been made at CPYC that we will carry with us for the rest of our lives, and I could never say “thank you” enough for the blessings of those experiences and those people. **Miles Bubbett**, Youth Ministry Planning Council, Alabaster CPC

I have to be honest, since I had never attended CPYC I really had no idea what to expect on July 12 -17. What I found, I do believe, was an amazing conference where God was alive and moving! **Patrick Wilkerson**, Adult Participant, Jenkins CP, Candidate serving in Columbia Presbytery

If you were to ask anyone at the camp they would tell you that quiet time was one of the most meaningful experiences. It was amazing to listen to the change in the camp. For fifteen minutes each night the camp was silent, everyone in deep conversation with God. **Erin Swindle, Jake Sanabaria, Andrew Smith and Melinda Swindle**, Youth Participants and Staff from Christ Church, Tampa, FL

When asked, What is one thing you liked about CPC this year?

- The time I have spent with God. **Woodbine CPC participant**
- Morning Worship! **Paige Duggins**, Shiloh CPC (Texas)
- I really liked the singing. It has been incredible. **Kenny Butcher**, Brush Hill CPC
- Worship was sooo powerful! **Jenna Brandon**, Winchester CPC
- The Love! **Michael Anders**, Church Street CPCA, Huntsville, AL



Photos: Jill Carr

Events/Announcements

Christian Education Season

August 30 – September 27

Senior Adult Sunday

September 13

Christian Service

Recognition Sunday

September 20

Youth Evangelism Conference

December 27 – 30

Cumberland Presbyterian

Youth Conference

July 4 – 9, 2010

Presbyterian Youth Triennium

July 20 – 24, 2010

Youth Worker Summit

December 1 – 4, 2010

Visit our website

www.cumberland.org/bce
for updates!



Discipleship Ministry Team
8207 Traditional Place
Cordova, TN 38016

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This publication is made possible by
Our United Outreach.

Have you heard? *The Cumberland Presbyterian Handbook* is now available!

Prepared in the whimsical yet informative style of the Worst-Case Scenario Survival Handbooks™, The Cumberland Presbyterian Handbook is a requisite resource that presents essential facts and noteworthy tidbits about being Cumberland Presbyterian. Written with a reverence for the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, it provides historical and theological information about Cumberland Presbyterian beliefs alongside fun-filled facts and practical tips on being a church-going follower of Jesus Christ. Complete with illustrations and maps, the book includes a wonderful combination of vast truths, complex details, and bits of humor about the Cumberland Presbyterian understanding of the Christian life. This incredibly handy and often-humorous resource is perfect for Cumberland Presbyterian youth, adults, students, families, and all those interested in learning

about much of what encompasses life in the church.

This comprehensive yet concise resource includes information on the following:

- How to explain Cumberland Presbyterianism to your friends.
- How to pray.
- How to get to know your pastor.
- How to listen to a sermon.
- What to bring to a church potluck.
- Plus many other easy-to-follow tips and suggestions!

Following Jesus is hard enough without having to navigate the faith journey all alone. Everyone needs a companion, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Handbook is just such a resource.

Published by the Discipleship Ministry Team, 2009. Trade Paperback, 216 pages, \$22.95. **To order your copy**, call 901-276-4572, ext. 252 or e-mail resources@cumberland.org.

