



PME CONNECTIONS

Volume 2

Issue 6

November/December 2008

HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY

Our prayer for you is that you have many reasons to give thanks on this special day of thanksgiving – “with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God.”

MERRY CHRISTMAS

We wish you an especially joyous Christmas as we remember that Jesus is the reason for the season.

“This is a day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

HAPPY NEW YEAR

We send prayers for each of you that this new year will be filled with blessings both big and little and “the greatest of these is love.”

2008 PME Weekends

November 14 -16
Spokane, WA

Invite your friends and family to attend a Marriage Encounter Weekend.

If PME dates and locations do not work, go to the Worldwide Marriage Encounter website: www.WWME.org.

Most Weekends for other faith expressions are listed on that website, along with many other useful links.



A Message from Your National Executive Clergy Couple

Dear PME Community,



As Michael and I look back at our four years as National Clergy Executives for PME, we are amazed at how quickly the time has flown by. And now it is almost time to turn over the mantle to Walt and Marlene Estelle.

Looking back, the very best part has been our time with each of you, and watching the way that God has moved in the lives of the couples encountered on the Weekend. When we see the change made in each couple, we are awed and amazed at the way God uses each one of us individually and as part of a team and community.

We are also amazed that more people are not willing to invite their friends and otherwise serve this ministry “to renew the world one couple at a time.”

That is a big concern for all of us at this time. Who will carry the torch when all of us, who have served long and faithfully, want or need or choose to step away?

Or, how can we re-energize this ministry that we all love and serve? How can we re-energize ourselves?

As we think back over our twenty-some years in PME, we know that each encounter served to strengthen our marriage. We know that each circle meeting gave us added incentive in keeping our marriage our #1 priority. And that each relationship blessed us in innumerable ways.

So, what about attending a weekend event again to bless your marriage and the PME community? Bring your married children with you; bring your neighbors; your co-workers. Offer to attend with them. Be a means of blessing in their marriage as you bless your own marriage with the gift of a weekend away.

Blessings and love to each and every one of you.

Kim ♥ Michael

A Message from Your National Executive Clergy Couple — Elect



We are Walt & Marlene Estelle and we are looking forward to serving as the National Executive Clergy Couple for the coming year. This is not a strange experience for us as we have served in this capacity before. We look forward to serving again and

pray that God will be the lighthouse to keep us on course.

This is a particularly challenging time as we (using the inclusive sense here) are not certain as to what that course is to be. Our PME compass may not yet be oriented to our true North and it will be exciting at the least to see where God does lead us. We have tried to follow Him in our journey.

We were encountered on a Catholic Weekend in 1976, went on our Deeper in May 1978 and presented our first Weekend in September of 1978, all as a lay couple. In 1983 God planted a seed and Walter enrolled in seminary and we received a call in 1987 to a parish in Eastern Oregon, then on to Eastern Washington and various ministries. In this we made the transition to clergy talks along with the ordination and have over the years served as National Exec as both Lay and Clergy.

We were privileged in the last eight years to be called to help begin Presbyterian Marriage Encounter in Kenya and Cameroon, making four trips to Africa. We are so thankful for the work God is doing there and see His hand in the couples' fervor and enthusiasm. They have sent us more than 100 talks for workshop and review in

the last couple of years which will give you an indication of their commitment. Thank goodness Herb & Jean Ward have been such leaders in that effort with us.

Presbyterian Marriage Encounter has a rich history; our roots go deep; our heritage is plentiful and abundant. We have run the gamut from waiting lists of a year or more to wondering how we can get five couples on the next Weekend. We have had communities with many Love Circles and communities with hardly any. We have reached out, sometimes aware that we were going into a barren desert; sometimes into fertile fields. We have reached overseas and seen the establishment of thriving communities in Kenya and Cameroon. We wonder how we are going to provide for them in their excitement and energy.

Throughout God has been there. We need to continue to trust in Him and His direction, not our own. How will we allow Him to bless us? How will we discern His course? And that is eternally our quandary.

But for right now, we will rest in the guidance of a wise person that we not fret over the big decision about the future. We simply need to do what we already know in the present. God is clear where clarity is most needed. It is in the choices we make every day – to love one another, to make that daily decision. And it begins with Walt and Marlene deciding. And it begins with you each day. If we commit to that love, the rest will come. And we will write more about that in the coming months.

God bless you all. Thank you for entrusting us with your dreams of Presbyterian Marriage Encounter.

Walt ♥ Marlene

If you or some other encountered couple you know is celebrating a special wedding anniversary, send us an article and a photo. We'd like to honor every encountered couple that has been married 25 years or more (geneandnancy@presby-me.org).

You are invited to tell our readers how Marriage Encounter has been valuable in your marriage. Send an email to "geneandnancy@presby-me.org" including your names, date you were married, when and where you went on a Weekend and where you live. Please attach a photo if you can.

Mission Statement

"Presbyterian Expression of Worldwide Marriage Encounter's mission of renewal in the church and change in the world is to assist couples to live fully intimate and responsible relationships by providing them with a Christian experience and ongoing community support for such a lifestyle."

PRAYER NEEDS

Many of you remember Steve and Lolly Wigall. They were an active presenting team couple several years ago. The Wigalls stay in touch with the PME community mostly via emails.

We received an update just before this newsletter went to our webmaster, Joe Paquette. The text follows:

“Thanks first of all for continued prayers and good wishes. First the really wonderful news! Martin has been accepted into the creative writing department at the University of Maine, Farmington Campus for January 2009. The counselor said that Martin must be an exceptional writer to be accepted as a transfer student into the creative writing department. The department is very selective and small. YEAH! His life goal is to be a published author. Martin will graduate from Landmark College in December with his Associates Degree.

“Steve was to get his last round of chemotherapy on Tuesday, November 11th, but his red blood count was too low. The department in the hospital that does blood transfusions was closed; it was Veteran’s Day. So, we were told to show up at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday in the short-stay department for blood typing and blood transfusion. But, because we didn’t have an appointment, they said they couldn’t squeeze him in. I called the President’s office while we were in the admissions department. Well, I said no way. There is a way, and he will have his transfusion today because it is too much effort for him to come back in on Thursday.

“I did not believe the manager that ‘there was no chair for him to sit in to have the transfusion’. I was pretty emotional and he (the manager) was talking to me logically in a room filled with empty chairs that was across the hall from the treatment room. So, you can see why I did not believe there was not even a chair for him to sit in. I stormed out, and walked directly into the

president’s office, crying. I have no stress . . . and, to be told NO when it seemed to me CLEARLY that HE was not willing to bend or get out of his schedule for good customer care.

“And, lo and behold, the head of Nursing was called. She immediately arranged for Steve to be given the blood transfusion in Pediatrics where there was a nurse who had training in blood transfusions.

“I thanked her profusely and Steve was pampered all day. He was the “geriatric patient in Peds” for the day.

“So, I will write a letter, when I have more time and energy for this sort of thing. But, not now. Steve will have his last round of chemotherapy next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Then, a shot on Thursday. I leave Thursday night to attend a conference where I am a speaker with a friend. So, I have some preparation for that this week.

“I am trying to sleep, but there are not enough hours to get all the sleep I think I need. But, I am hanging in there and am very grateful for a fabulous staff at work who is filling in the blanks for me. I am behind on paperwork, but oh well. . . . No one yells at me. Thank goodness!

“Much love and appreciation for good friends who pray and who will listen to my rantings. . . .”

Lolly Wigall

(lwigall@fastmail.fm)

NOTE

If you have a prayer request you would like us to print in the next newsletter, send it to “geneandnancy@presby-me.org. The deadline for each bi-monthly issue is the last day of the month before it is posted (i.e., the next deadline is December 31).



Dialogue Questions

1. Are we glad we went on our ME Weekend? HDIFAMA?
2. Who are the couples we would like to share the gift of a Weekend? HDIFAMA?
3. What can we do to encourage those couples to go on a Weekend? HDIFAMA?
4. Let’s start now? HDIFAT?

Community Packets

Walt and Marlene Estelle have shared a flier they are using in the PME Northwest Region.

See it on page 5 of this newsletter. You may want to include it in your Weekend packets and/or share it with your community couples.

The flier is available as a Word.doc attachment also. Email geneandnancy@presby-me.org if you would like to receive the attachment.

The Gift

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, girls, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with those important to him.

He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him. Over the phone, his mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday."

Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days.

"Jack, did you hear me?" "Oh, sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said. "You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said.

"He's the one who taught me carpentry," he said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important . . . Mom, I will be at the funeral", Jack said.

As busy as he was, he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away. The night before he had to return home, Jack and his mom stopped by to see the old house next door a final time.

Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture . . . Jack stopped suddenly.

"What's wrong, Jack?" his mom asked. "The box is gone," he said. "What box?" his mom asked. "There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was it's the thing I value most," Jack said.

It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it.

"Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said. "I better get some sleep, I have an early flight home, Mom."

It had been two weeks since Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day, Jack discovered a note in his mailbox. "Signature required on a package. No one at home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days," the note read.

Early the next day, Jack retrieved the package. The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention. "Mr. Harold Belser" it read.

Jack took the package out to his car and ripped it open. There inside was the gold box and an envelope.

"Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, as tears filled his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover. Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, thanks for your time! Harold Belser".

"The thing he valued most was my time," Jack said. Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days. "Why?" Janet, his assistant asked. "I need to spend some time with those who are important to me," he said. "Oh, by the way, Janet . . . thanks for your time."

The story, *The Gift*, is always relevant but it is especially so as we approach this season of giving and thanksgiving. It was sent by Gary & Ann Long who added this postscript, "The best gifts have no monetary value . . . thanks to all of you for your time."

On our ME Weekends we learned that being present to each other is critical to our couple relationship. The gift of time is part of "being present." Dialogue and love letters are ways of "being present".



Ann ♥ Gary Long,
PME National Executives



PME CONNECTIONS



FOR PME CONNECTIONS GO TO WWW.PRESBY-ME.ORG



PME CONNECTIONS is where you will find current and back issues of our official online newsletter of Presbyterian Marriage Encounter.



PME CONNECTIONS, a resource of Presbyterian Marriage Encounter, is a bi-monthly newsletter to keep couples informed of activities within the Presbyterian Marriage Encounter communities along with other information of interest to couples.



PME CONNECTIONS keeps you up to date with what is going on in your community and around the world in PME and it's FREE!

AND DON'T FORGET TO GO ONLINE TO GET

eM ***eMatrimony.org***

eMatrimony is the official online publication of Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

eMatrimony serves as a resource that supports the values of Worldwide Marriage Encounter (including PME) from the U. S. and around the world.

eMatrimony offers articles on improving communication and building intimacy in relationship and provides a means of communication for the whole Encounter movement. And it is FREE! Just send a blank email to signup@eMatrimony.org.