

May 15, 2004

Where there is no Vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18A,KJV)

Rebuilding Christianity in Pakistan

There is a saying that out of tiny acorns grow mighty oaks, and Robert Tebbe and Carl Wheelless have planted a lot of acorns in far-flung fields. What's more, they have lived to see them turn into pretty sizable trees.

Tebbe and Wheelless are former faculty members of Forman Christian College in Lahore, Pakistan, and in March the Lakeland residents returned to the school to celebrate its 140th anniversary. While there, they received three awards from Forman, including one for service to the college. The two also met with some of their former students, a number of whom are now at the top echelons of Pakistani politics and business. Wheelless, in fact, met for more than an hour with Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's president, who spent two years at Forman. The occasion also marked the first anniversary of a new beginning for Forman. In March 2003, the Pakistani government returned administration of the school to the country's Christian churches. By most accounts, the school suffered a decline during the 30 years the government ran it.

Now, with former Eckerd College President Peter Armacost serving as Forman's interim "principal", or president, Tebbe and Wheelless express hopes that the school can regain some of its lost prestige. "It's a real shot in the arm for the Christian community in Pakistan. They were almost euphoric", said Tebbe, 83, who spent 36 years in Pakistan, 12 of them at Forman as professor of chemistry and interim principal. "They said, 'now we can progress.' "

Forman College was founded in 1864 by Presbyterian missionaries and eventually became one of the more prestigious private colleges in South Asia. In 1970, the school was nationalized. The U.S. Presbyterian Church didn't oppose the move, in the hopes that if the school were public there would be wider access to higher education, said David Maxwell, coordinator of Global Education and Leadership Development for the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Louisville, KY. However, Christian churches in Pakistan vigorously opposed the government takeover and immediately began years of judicial and diplomatic efforts to reverse it.

The Pakistani government was unable to maintain Forman and other schools it had nationalized and in March 2003 returned control to the Presbyterian Church. Maxwell said the church immediately began efforts to give administration of Forman to a board of trustees under the direction of the National Council of Churches in Pakistan, an ecumenical body of Protestants.

RESPECT FOR ITS FOUNDERS

It was not entirely a pleasure trip for Wheelless, 85, who was chairman of the political science department at Forman from 1957 to 1970. The Founders' Day celebration drew many of the school's alumni, and Wheelless was pressed into fundraising duty to help the school shore up its facilities and its faculty. "The old students are so proud of their heritage. And these people have money. I told Peter (Armacost), if you can use my name to raise money, do it. Since I came back, I've written more than 100 letters," he said.

Wheelless, who by his own account had a reputation as an astute political scientist, found himself a center of attention. Upon arriving in Lahore, he was the houseguest of Chaudhary Parvez Elahi, chief minister (or governor) of the Punjab province, and a Forman alumnus. Elahi provided him with a car and personal assistant and invited Wheelless to a dinner with 40 of the province's top government ministers. "I cannot believe the honors they gave me morning to night," Wheelless said.

(Story Continued on page 3, bottom half)



Pat Cox is writing the **Prayer Chain** Letter for May. If you have a request or an update, please call Pat at 747-0082.

SYMPATHY

The Southminster Congregation extends deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Mary Alexander Messer who died April 26, 2004. Her funeral was held at Southminster, Thursday, April 29, 2004 with Pastor Peltz officiating.

Rick, Carol, and Erin Messer want to thank everyone for their many expressions of sympathy and love for Mary. She truly loved Southminster, her social connections with the Mariners, and the spiritual support she received from Jerry and the many other members of the church. Her opportunity for spirited discussion in John Calvert's Sunday School class was a highlight of her week's activities during the past year.

Thank you to everyone at Southminster.
Rich, Carol and Erin Messer
May 2, 2004

Southminster also extends sympathy to the family and friends of Wilburn Harris. Services were Wednesday, April 28th.

HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL.

The Kindergarten through Fifth Grade Sunday School Class has made a monetary donation for the gift of a flock of chicks with Heifer Project International. This nonprofit organization provides animals and training to those in need all over the world. The recipients of the chicks will give one of the chick's offspring to a neighbor in need. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.heifer.org>.

Our Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is working hard on our behalf to find a new pastor for Southminster. They are Ken Tracy, Moderator; Bob Melichar, Vice-Moderator; Gaylyn Wattman, Secretary; Doug Dodd, Donna Goodman, Karen Hiller and Kate Stambaugh. They appreciate your prayers for guidance.

ON-GOING REMINDERS....

VISION LINK

Want to look up an old Vision or look up a forgotten detail? Go to www.southminstertulsa.org, click on **News & Calendars** and pick a date! It's that simple!

PLEASE call the Pastor or church office to **notify us of any hospitalizations.**

The Cab Fare Fund provides transportation to and from Southminster church activities. If you would like to make a contribution, please make checks payable to Southminster with a notation for the Cab Fare Fund



Fellowship Committee Bus Trip to OK Mozart- Notice Date/Cost/Concert Change

Join Southminster's friends for the second annual bus trip to the OK Mozart Festival in Bartlesville. The Fellowship Committee's bus trip to the OK Mozart Festival has been changed to Monday, June 14. The bus will leave Southminster's parking lot at 6:30 p. m for the 8:00 concert. The concert that evening features a variety of chamber music performed by The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The cost of the trip has been reduced to \$25.00. Reservations may be made by calling the church office.

Vacation Church School

Southminster Vacation Church School returns on **Sunday, August 1, continuing through Thursday, August 5.** Former Southminster Pastor, Doug Fletcher will be our VCS speaker this year. Plans are for dinner each evening at 5:30 followed by Dr. Fletcher's presentations at 6:30 and additional classes at 7:30. The additional classes are still in development, but will include Francey Wattman's review of her year in India. VCS has always been a highlight of Southminster's educational offerings and we hope you will join us for this year's exceptional programs.



THIS SUNDAY, May 16

6:30pm

Southminster Youth Present:

"Celebrate Life"



FEED-MY-SHEEP: Because there were 5 Thursdays in April, 6 ladies went to E.I.S. to work and took the FMS bags with us. We took 25 bags. When Danny, the director, looked in the bags, he said, "How wonderful! Things from our wish list". Those working were Martha Barr, Marilyn Gates, Alice Joy McBride, Libby Parrish, Marilee Story and Kathy Wright.

Thanks to Jane Trumbo's quick needles we were able to send 2 dozen **hand knitted newborn caps** to St. Johns' nursery. Doris Moser, who volunteers there, is our deliverer.

Southminster provided a salad luncheon for the teachers on Thursday during **Teachers Appreciation Week**.

Those who brought salad were Lou Anderson, Mary Battenfield, Ruth Mason, Libby Parrish, Lennie Stringfield and Kathy Wright. Those who brought desert were Ann Arwood, Jerry Peltz, Pam Slate-Ligget and Marianna Vesely. Marianna also helped serve at the school.

Members of this congregation **adopted all 31 teachers at Marshall**. We even ran out of teachers for those who wanted to adopt. The mission spirit of this church is alive and well and I thank everyone for all you do so willingly. It certainly makes my job a breeze! Libby



Denomination: The Presbytery of San Juan has a church that is acting out caring for one's neighbor. Three of the programs at Caparra Terrace Presbyterian Church are Esperanza para la Vejez (Hope for the Elderly), Almacen de Jesus (Jesus' Warehouse) and Centro de Ayuda a la Familia (Family Assistance Center). The presbytery's 14 churches have 1,934 members. Elder Edwin Gonzalez is member, GAC.

Presbytery: Presbyterian Church, Pryor; Luksokla Church, Wright City; Southminster Church, Tulsa; Tulsa Metropolitan Ministries; Kirk of the Hills, Tulsa; Old Bennington Church, Bennington.

World: Peace

(Cover Story Continued)

Another unexpected honor came on his second day in Lahore. A phone call from Islamabad, the national capital, requested that Wheeless meet with President Pervez Musharraf. Wheeless was surprised, since he never taught Musharraf, who left Forman to enter the military. Wheeless said he was impressed with Musharraf, describing him as a man of charm and intelligence. Their conversation ranged widely, he said, with Musharraf offering opinions about terrorism, education and Pakistani politics. "His balancing act is superb," Wheeless commented. "He has to do certain things to keep the fanatics satisfied. For the Americans to keep pinching and pushing him is unrealistic. He's out best hope."

MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS

Both Tebbe and Wheeless said although Christians are at a disadvantage in Pakistan, relations with Muslims are generally peaceful. Still, there have been a few violent incidents in recent years, notably a grenade attack at a Christian church in Islamabad in 2002. The vice principal of Forman, Christy Munir, was severely wounded in that attack, Tebbe said. Tebbe said such attacks are regarded by Pakistanis as the work of a fanatical fringe element. "It illustrates the depths of hatred that's unreasoning and contrary to acceptable norms," he said.

The fear that the school might be a target caused school administrators in recent years to build walls and fortified gates, a big change from the open spaces and neatly trimmed hedges that once graced the campus. Wheeless said the sight left him depressed.

During the period that government ran Forman, Tebbe and Wheeless said, the college suffered from overcrowding, a decline in academic standards, cronyism and the neglect of the campus' facilities. Both men gave credit to Armacost for starting to rebuild the school academically and physically.

The number of Christian students has risen from 7 to 140, women are present on the staff and in the student body, and elements of Jamaat-e-Islami, a radical Islamic party, have been moved off campus, Tebbe said.

Another encouraging sign for Forman's future is that last week it was granted university status, allowing the school to grant degrees under its own name. Under the Pakistani system, degrees are only granted at universities, so after completing courses at Forman, students have had to go to a university to take their final examinations. Wheeless said that although many things in Pakistan have not changed since he left in 1970 – low literacy rates, low per-capita income, the same families controlling the political process – there has been progress in the country, with better electrical service, cell phones and highways. Wheeless said he thinks Forman has helped Pakistan become a more progressive country in less tangible ways, too. "I think the legacy of Forman has been a standard of honesty and decency, the ability to cross lines, destroy barriers and eliminate prejudice."



THE VISION

SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3500 SOUTH PEORIA
TULSA, OK 74105-2522

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TULSA, OK
PERMIT NO. 296

Sunday, May 16

VISION DEADLINE

9:00am Coffee/Fellowship
9:55am Announcements
10:00am Worship
11:00am Church School
3:45pm Youth
6:00 pm Fellowship Dinner
6:30pm Youth Presentation of
"Celebrate Life"

Monday, May 17

7:00pm SPY Youth Bible Study

Tuesday, May 18

9:30am Sewing Day
4:15pm Confirmation Class
5:15pm Celebrate Life

Wednesday, May 19

6:45am Men's Prayer Group
5:30pm Prepare Shelter Meal
5:30 pm PNC Meeting
7:00pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, May 20

5:30pm Serve Shelter Meal

Friday, May 21

7:00pm Recruits

Sunday, May 23

9:00am Coffee/Fellowship
9:55am Announcements
10:00am Worship
11:00am Church School
3:45pm Youth
6:00pm Tintinnabulators
7:15pm Celebration Ringers

Monday, May 24

7:00pm Session
7:00pm SPY Youth Bible Study

Tuesday, May 25

9:30am Sewing Day

Wednesday, May 26

6:45am Men's Prayer Group
5:30 pm PNC Meeting
7:00pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, May 27

CIRCLES

10:00am Covenant

1:00pm Faith

1:30pm Rainbow

Sunday, May 30

9:00am Coffee/Fellowship
9:55am Announcements
10:00am Worship
11:00am Church School
3:45pm Youth

6:00pm Tintinnabulators

7:15pm Celebration Ringers

Monday, May 31

Memorial Day

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

7:00pm SPY Youth Bible Study

SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3500 SOUTH PEORIA
TULSA, OK 74105-2522

Head of Staff: Pastor Jerry Peltz--jpeltz@southminstertulsa.org

Music Ministry

John Brobston, Adult
Allen Cox, Assistant Director
Betty Kirk, Organist

Mission Outreach Coordinator

Libby Parrish

Children's Ministry

Christie Peacher

Youth Ministry

Christie Peacher-- cpeacher@southminstertulsa.org

Office Staff

Barbara Sezate, Administrative Assistant
bsezate@southminstertulsa.org
Darren O'Guin, Sexton

Vision Karen Hiller / Lou Anderson

Church Office 743-4427

E-mail info@southminstertulsa.org

Church Fax 743-0811

Senior Citizen Center 749-2623

To e-mail information to the Vision
newsletter@southminstertulsa.org

Website: www.southminstertulsa.org

Church office hours: 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.