

TBPRES TRUMPET



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Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church, PCA

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From the Pastor's Desk

By Rev. Freddy Fritz

Starting a New Ministry Year

By the time you receive this newsletter, the summer will be coming to its unofficial end. As you know, almost all of our ministries took this past summer off. Now it is time to get started again.

On Labor Day, our start to our ministry year, we shall kick off a number of ministries. Sunday school for children and youth, as well as Adult Christian Education and Fellowship, will begin on Sunday, September 4 at 8:45 a.m. Following Labor Day we will see the start of Men's Bible Study, Women's Bible Study, Growth Groups, English as a Second Language, Pioneer Clubs, and so on.

As we begin our new ministry year, let me encourage you to get involved in a ministry. The Bible teaches that every Christian is part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). And one of the reasons God placed each Christian into a local church body is that we may use our spiritual gifts to serve one another. There are many opportunities for members to get involved in serving one another in our church family. Just talk to any ministry leader, and I have no doubt that you will be welcomed to serve with open arms!

Another reason God wants us to use our spiritual gifts is because we demonstrate God's love in service to another, and also to those who are not yet part of the church family. When each person is using his or her spiritual gift, it is a wonderful way of showing the love of God to one another.

Finally, as I close this note, let me ask you to pray for this coming ministry year. Pray that God will glorify himself in the way in which we serve him in our ministry at the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church. Pray that his church will be strengthened as people who don't know Jesus are gathered into a saving knowledge of him, and all of us then grow to maturity in Christ.

Jesus Restores Sight to the Blind Man from Bethsaida

By Earl A. Myers, Jr.

Of the many miracles that Jesus performed during His earthly ministry, the one recorded in Mark 8:22-26 is perhaps the most curious. This particular miracle is found only in Mark and it is the only instance in which the miracle was consummated in stages.

After being brought out of the village by some people, Jesus inquired of the blind man, having spat on his eyes, "Can you see anything now?"

The man looked around and responded, "Yes, I see men! However, I can't see them very clearly. They look like tree trunks walking around!"

Whereupon Jesus placed His hand over the man's eyes again and as the man stared intently, his sight was completely restored. He saw everything around him clearly and distinctly.

Many Bible commentators have attempted to explain this unusual event. None have denied that both phases of the miracle were in fact miracles in and of themselves. Whether the man's sight was hazy initially, or whether it was fully restored, does not lessen the miraculous act.

Some have put forth the idea that Jesus was demonstrating to His disciples that all healing is not instantaneous; it is gradual and may not be realized until sometime in the now or distant future. Others have proposed that spiritual truth is not perceived wholly until some future truth is revealed to give it clarity and definition.

It is the latter proposition that gives this writer pause and reflection. Daniel, writing in the book that bears his name, told of great world leaders, nations and events that would come forth during and following his lifetime. Daniel's apocalyptic visions outlined God's plan for the ages. These visions were so startling and terrifying that Daniel was overwhelmed and literally fainted.

This panoramic worldview, however, was to be sealed up and kept a secret. God speaking to Daniel disclosed that people were not yet ready to fully absorb and comprehend the gravity of the message until the end times. Many things would have to come and go before His plan was understood, at least in part.

First Corinthians 13:12 states, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." Yes, as we study God's infallible word under the direction of the Holy Spirit, we are coming ever closer to understanding and appreciating those world happenings that impact our lives and give us patience while "Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

September Anniversaries

<i>Billy & Trina Jeffries</i>	<i>September 1</i>	<i>9 years</i>
<i>Roy & Stephanie Riley</i>	<i>September 6</i>	<i>47 years</i>
<i>Gary & Pat Smith</i>	<i>September 6</i>	<i>47 years</i>

Who Knew?! Personal Reflections on GA and TBPC

By Eileen M. Fritz

TBPC Ministries

Adult Christian

Education & Fellowship
Ed Jordan

Children

Vacant

Emptynesters

Sandy Neal

Greeters & Welcome Table

Ted Jeffries

Growth Groups Session

Hospitality

Joan Kosanovich

Men's Bible Study

Jeff Beams

Men's Ministry

Brian Carrier

Missions

Bill Jeffries

Music

Debi Hensley

NTCA

Cheryl Barber

Nursery

Marianne Cali

Outreach

Bert Barber

Pacesetters

Randi Mallary

Pastoral Care

Rev. Freddy Fritz

Ushers

Lenny Chew

Women's Bible Study

Melissa Bayley

Women's Ministry

Suzanne Swenson

Youth

Kevin Nobles

Ever admire the beauty and rhythm of toppling domino patterns? Then you know that sensation of delight when things fall together exactly as planned. That was my personal experience at the PCA General Assembly (GA) in Mobile, AL in June as I watched one of God's designs unexpectedly fall into place! To tell you about all the dominoes is not as doable as telling you about a few.



Minutes after entering the hotel lobby to check in, Jane Patete, the recently retired Coordinator for PCA Women's Ministry, was among the first to wave me a "Hello" while she chatted on her cell phone. The next morning, by perfect divine intervention, she appeared again, this time at my table for the Hampton's freebie breakfast. Had to. No other seats! *Who knew?!*

Within a few minutes, Jane turned her sweet face to me with the loaded question, "So, what's been happening in your life?"

I told her about the first thing that popped into my mind - how blessed I was over the last several months to see God's love and grace in the amazing Christian marriage of my new friend Holly, whom I met through our summer and evening Women's Bible Study. I shared how a group of friends and family had just managed to surprise her with a party several weeks prior in May, to celebrate ten years of marriage to her husband, David, a current prison inmate in the Florida DOC.

Jane was riveted, fascinated by the story! Tugging at my arm, she apologized in sweet Southern style for interrupting and spontaneously blurted out her newest networking inspiration. "You have *got* to meet this man who is here in the Exhibit Hall. He is the Director of Metanoia Ministry, the PCA/MNA prison ministry." I told her that I'd be happy to meet him, but I never suspected the impact it would have on me. *Who knew?!*

I was intrigued. After a trip back to the hotel room, I headed for the Convention Center Exhibit Hall, and there was Jane again, two escalator steps ahead of me. This petite, winsome Southern lady turned, looked down into my face, and spoke to me, emphatically emphasizing her urgency with feminine flourish of her index finger.

"Eileen, you must go see him!"

"Yes, Jane! Heading that way now."

Entering the Exhibit Hall, I began the walk up and down the aisles, looking for the PCA prison ministry exhibit. About four aisles later, I stopped to chat with a long-time friend at the Great Commission Publications exhibit, when out of the corner of my eye, I saw Jane again, happily hurrying toward me. "He's right there! I have already told him the story about your friends!" She took me by the arm, ushered me away from my conversation, and I soon found myself shaking the hand of 6'3" Executive Director of Metanoia Ministry, Mark Casson.



Over the next couple of days, we must have talked for three or four hours. From time to time, Mark would interrupt me, the first time to comment on my friends' romance and marriage and how God so clearly led them together. "Their story is our story!" *Who knew?!*

I was fascinated by the story of Mark's radical prison conversion to Christ, his unusual early release from prison, his marriage, and his ministry with Metanoia. I was intrigued by Metanoia's strategy for mentoring inmates through correspondence Bible courses in a one-on-one mentoring relationship with a volunteer. *(Continued next page)*

I learned about Shelly Marshall, who coordinates the correspondence course ministry from her home in Tarpon Springs – only forty-five minutes from my home in Wesley Chapel! *Who knew?!*

Mark thought Holly and I should meet Shelly when I returned home. On the third day of GA, Mark said he had just talked with Shelly by phone. She wanted to know if I might be married to Freddy Fritz.



“Well, yes. I am!”

Shelly shared with Mark that she knew Freddy and that he recruited volunteer mentors for MM. News to me! Maybe he did that at the SW FL Presbytery meeting. I can’t know everything he does!

I asked Freddy about this back in the hotel room.

“Freddy, do you know Shelly Marshall?”

“Yes.”

“She said you recruited mentors for her.”

“Yes, I did.”

“Where? Presbytery?”

“Yes, and at church.”

“You did? How many? Who?”

“Oh, maybe four or five..”

“How? You must have done it as a pulpit announcement when I was still in the Narthex greeting.”

Curiosity put my recent acquisition of Shelly’s cell phone number to good use. Barely greeting her, I texted... “How many, and who do you have listed as volunteers from Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church?”

“Joan Kosanovich, Bill Jeffries, John McNulty, Melissa McNulty, Richard Gainer, Ted Jeffries, Ken Pothoven, Nora Jeffries, and Richard Jackson”

Wow! I love the wonder, beauty, and rhythm of God’s domino pattern falling into place so that I could discover the heart of nine TBPC members who volunteered to mentor inmates through Bible correspondence courses to know Christ and grow in grace. *Who knew?!*

The pastor’s wife had no clue. Did you?

You may meet Mark and Shelly at SW FL Presbytery meeting on September 10, or at TBPC on Sunday, September 11, and/or check out *Metanoia* on the web! <http://pcamna.org/metanoia-ministries/>

Watch 30,000 dominoes fall! <http://cubiclebot.com/videos/30000-domino-spiral-sets-new-world-record-video/>

September Birthdays

3 - Anthony Hunter	9 - Bill Jeffries	21 - Jeff Montoney
3 - Mark McLeod	10 - Abram Nichols	23 - Lauren Dishman
3 - Sophia Nobles	11 - Chris Lear	23 - Michelle Hunter
4 - Chloe Darbyshire	13 - Jonathan Massie	24 - Mary Mollard
6 - Joe Cozzolino	15 - Linda Childers	25 - Trina Jeffries
7 - Ashley Jeffries	17 - Brett Thomas	25 - Randi Mallary
7 - Dale Moore	20 - Sandra Justice	29 - Jessie Hensley
8 - Meredith Gartman	21 - Garry Gawrych	30 - Ryan Coffey

TBPRES WOMEN

By Suzanne Swenson

TBPC women of all ages had a really wonderful day of fun, fellowship, and friendship on July 30. Events began at Rebekah Skopp's home with a baby shower for Amber Dixon. Baby Elliott was a perfect guest as once he saw what was going on, he took a nap! Debi Hensley got the party going with interesting "break the ice" games. She put pieces of paper on our backs with baby related words written on them.



We could ask each person 3 questions until we guessed what the word was.

Well, have you ever walked through Target with "diaper rash" written on your back? I forgot to take the paper off! May not be able to visit that store again! What fun though! Rebekah fixed a wonderful brunch, Amber stayed busy greeting everyone and opening gifts, and there was also a surprise, special guest and lots of conversations between our multi-generational groups. Hannah Montoney and Lilly Knox represented the younger side of Women's Ministry; we had the young moms, the middle moms and, well, hmmm, those

of us that that could be grand moms. Oh, did I forget to mention our surprise guest? It was **Melissa Nichols** who was here for the weekend. It was a great way to begin the day!!

Ah, but the day was not over. We all got into cars and drove to Linda Childers' home in Carrollwood for an afternoon of Sister-to-Sister activities. We began with prayer, a lovely lunch, and more lively conversation. Afterwards, we selected and prayed with prayer partners, and then spent a constructive couple of hours making the Chrismons (Christian tree ornaments for the sanctuary tree). Chrismons are made from gold wire and both pearl and gold beads. Designs included the Latin Cross, butterflies, angels, and several others. We completed 15 ornaments and are working on another dozen. Our thanks go to Nancy Kirkpatrick who planned the event and to Linda for hosting it.

All women in TBPC are welcome to participate in any of our activities and to attend our monthly WM15 meetings. So what is on the agenda for the rest of 2016? Another Sister-to-Sister is being planned for October, and we will host our annual Christmas Brunch on December 4 at the church. Stay tuned to the bulletin board, the worship bulletin, and announcements for details. We still need a server coordinator and table hostesses. Come join us! You will be glad you did!



Truth Matters Today: Of Tyranny and Virtue

By Joe Burns

"[To return America to the Judeo-Christian principles on which our country was founded, we must have a] total focus and concentration of virtue..."

Dr. Timothy Goeglein, Vice President for External Relations at Focus on the Family and former Special Assistant to President George W. Bush

Virtue is tyranny's mortal foe. This is the fundamental principle for those who seek domination. You will never hear of a virtuous tyrant.

Success as a tyrant requires unconditional obedience from the populace. The basic tools are indoctrination and fear. Virtue stands up to the first and overcomes the second. To the tyrant, virtue is a formidable and dangerous threat. If you aspire to be included in the pantheon of successful dictators, you must eliminate those whose virtue compels them to denounce and defy your despicable acts and objectives.

Two of the most notorious tyrants in recent history, Joseph Stalin and Adolph Hitler, followed this axiom very carefully. Both took measures to eliminate all they felt would stand in their way. Not coincidentally, each quickly targeted those devoted to God's commandments vice the ones they themselves laid down.

With Stalin, it started with name-calling such as media campaigns maligning religion as "irrational and toxic."ⁱ Soon he initiated a show of force that proved to be incredibly deadly for those who practiced religion. In his book Why God Won't Go Away: Engaging with the New Atheism, Allister McGrath itemizes the resulting casualties:

"Churches were closed or destroyed, often by dynamiting; priests were imprisoned, exiled or executed. On the eve of the Second World War, there were only 6,376 clergy remaining in the Russian Orthodox Church, compared with the pre-[communist] revolutionary figure of 66,140."ⁱⁱ

Overall, Stalin killed an estimated 20,000,000 people—religious and nonreligious—during the Great Purge in the Marxist Soviet Union in his effort to eliminate his opposition.ⁱⁱⁱ

Then there's Stalin's one-time World War II ally. "Der Führer", Adolph Hitler. As with all true tyrants, Hitler quickly moved to bend Germany to his will in every area of society, especially the church. A year *before* he ascended to the pinnacle of German government in 1933, the Nazis introduced the "German Christians" as a religious movement guided by Nazi 'theology' in pursuit of neutering church opposition to Nazi doctrine and goals. By the middle of 1933, the German Christians seized power in one of Germany's two major churches, effectively bringing the German church under control of the Nazi state. Many pastors and Christians opposing Nazi doctrine and behavior were imprisoned, oppressed, impoverished or killed. Of course, they were by no means alone. By one scholar's estimate, Hitler killed between 15 and 34 million,^{iv} including up to 6 million Jews.^v *(Continued next page)*

Their legacy continues. Just last month, Vladimir Putin, Russian *Prime Minister and President*, unveiled religious restrictions in Russia under the guise of antiterrorism measures. They outlaw missionary work, private worship, and evangelism outside of officially sanctioned areas. For now, the penalties for breaking the state's new rules are restricted to fines.

That's how these things normally start: minor punishments. Comrade Stalin would be proud of Putin's tyrannical baby steps.^{vi}



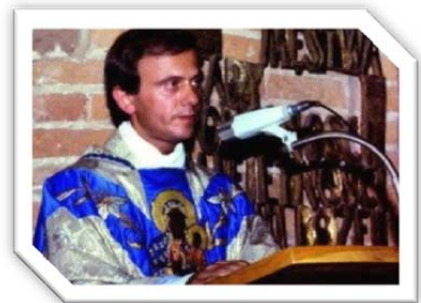
^{vii}We're not facing tyranny of that sort, but keep in mind that tyranny starts with ideology. Ideological shifts in America are accelerating and worsening. The execution of unborn babies here has eclipsed the horrors of Stalin and Hitler combined by amassing nearly 57 million abortions so far.^{viii}

Our Supreme Court recently ruled that homosexuals have a Constitutional Right to marry each other, upending the centuries-old idea that homosexuality is abhorrent. Those who express faith in God as the basis for behavior and societal norms are under attack at all levels via laws, public condemnation, ridicule, name-calling and isolation.

Many who call Christ Lord have knuckled-under to this soft persecution. As such, they are complicit in the tyranny of ideas that foreshadows the tyranny of actions. Conversely, those who stood firm often found themselves in the crosshairs of their ideological opponents and have lost their reputations, businesses, and, in some cases incurred six-digit debts in legal fees. Even so, their loyalty to Christ has emboldened Christians and non-Christians alike to resist endorsing our culture's decline.

Christians like them who are faithful to our Lord can have an enormous positive impact on a culture in the throes of the tyranny of philosophies. History's examples of virtue triumphing over vice are legion. Here's one case from the late Chuck Colson's popular Breakpoint radio commentary:

^{ix}*"The most powerful example of [responding to evil with good] is Father Jerzy Popieluszko, a Catholic priest in Poland in the early 1980s. The pale, gaunt priest had a two-fold message: Defend the truth, and overcome evil with good. People responded and overflowed his church. The secret police followed him everywhere. He began to receive threats and, finally, one night after celebrating Mass and preaching, Father Jerzy disappeared.*



About ten days later, as 50,000 people came to Mass and to listen to a tape of his last sermon, they heard that his body had been found in the Vistula River—badly mutilated by torture. The secret police braced for an uprising. But on the day of Father Jerzy's funeral, the huge crowd that walked past their headquarters bore a banner and shouted what it said, "We forgive." Father Jerzy taught them well.^x
(Continued next page)

We need more Christians with the conviction of Father Jerzy and his congregation. Sadly, as Pastor Bob Burrige said during his July 17, 2016 message at TBPC, "believers often fail to stand up for what God says or commands [because] they imagine all sorts of bad consequences [such as] miss[ing] out on having a good time...losing their job...[being] ridiculed or rejected"

Very true, but, as he said, "these are imagined consequences". They may happen; they may not. What's not in doubt is the impact of silence and outward conformance. We have too many examples from history. If you want tyranny, there's your roadmap.

The better course is to love God above all else, and to stand up to evil in words and deeds. Is that you? Do people in your sphere of influence see you as different than those body-surfing the cultural tidal wave? If they don't, you're likely not living a life of virtue. You're part of the problem. Virtue, you see, is both the foremost vaccine and the most enduring antidote for tyranny...including the tyranny of ideas.

ⁱ Bannister, A. (2015). *The Atheist Who Didn't Exist*. Oxford, England: Lion House plc., p23

ⁱⁱ McGrath, A. (2011). *Why God Won't Go Away: Engaging with the New Atheism*. London: SCPK.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://tinyurl.com/ztwaehj>

^{iv} <http://tinyurl.com/zlbnk28r>

^v <http://tinyurl.com/humsog2>

^{vi} <http://tinyurl.com/jzpj5o>

^{vii} Photo: <http://tinyurl.com/hb9epcj>

^{viii} <http://tinyurl.com/ngfwmy4>

^{ix} Photo: <http://tinyurl.com/zvy9qf7>

^x <http://tinyurl.com/hf7dqwt>

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