



Dayspring Discipleship Institute

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“...the ministry of the Word” – Acts 6:4

Teaching – Equipping – Training – Ministering

Brenda Cox, Executive Director

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“...the Dayspring from on high has come to give light to those that sit in darkness...” --Luke 1:78-79

Newsletter

Dearhearts,

It is a peaceful place...this hillside. Quiet. Sheltered in a cape of looming oaks. I remember the gentle breezes that stirred the crepe myrtle blossoms from childhood. Today a harsh wind blows a cold mist in my face as Katie and I place flowers on the graves. It is a place of reflection on the meaning of life and of lives come and gone. The cemetery in Cherry Hill is where my parents and husband are buried. Where uncles and aunts, grandparents and great grandparents all bear witness to the meaning of life.

I drove there this last weekend, after speaking at a women's brunch at First Baptist church of Mena, to decorate the graves with my cousin. She lives in Mena and always sees to it that those graves in our family line all the way back to the early 1800's are remembered with flowers on the first Sunday in May...Decoration Day.

The weekend before, I had gone with my cousins, Barbara and Jon, to bury their mother's ashes in Duckett cemetery to the south, just east of my childhood home in Wickes, Arkansas. The same peace attended this small, secluded cemetery hidden by a panoply of trees where my dad's mother and father are buried. Still legible from 1920, “He died as He lived...a Christian.” So did so many of them here, and at Cherry Hill. All flawed... but many seeking to be the best they could, seeking God as best they knew. And yet there are some who never saw that side of God...or of themselves.

Cemeteries remind us of what is important in life... and what isn't. Of what is worth living for and dying for. There are some buried here who lost sight of that. Some who seared their souls in anger, who numbed their hearts. Others who lost their way in minutia and littleness and never found who they really were. Never saw in themselves what God saw. And then there are those who lived what God saw whether they glimpsed it in themselves or not. Simply by seeking God as best they could they unknowingly lived out their destiny.

That was my mother. Sitting at her kitchen table, looking out the patio door to their sun dappled back yard, we drank a cup of coffee those many years ago, and talked. She was about the age then that I am now as we talked about the gifts of the Spirit. “I just don't know what my gift is,” she lamented. “I've asked the Lord over and over to

show me what my gift is, but He hasn't.” My jaw dropped. I couldn't believe she didn't know that hers was the greatest gift of all...the gift of love. My mother didn't have to know what her gift was in order to live it out in her life. As she sought God her gift was used.

The wind blows cold and damp as I pause at Mom and Dad's graves, their stones bearing witness to lives lived well. Lives that left a legacy of what is important in life. Perhaps the wind is made colder by the sadness of those here who didn't... and by how easy it is for us to lose sight of that. The moment seems shrouded in the mystery of why some people find the river of their soul while others flail in the mire. Why some never think it important to focus on God and His ways while others do. The problem with cemeteries is that it is too late, then, to realize we chased the wrong gods and sought the wrong treasures. What is it that causes some to pursue God, and others to ignore Him as though He is inconsequential? As though life has meaning outside of Him?

What deceives you and me that we pursue trinkets and foibles, enshrining them in our lives as though they matter? In the end, it does not matter what kind of car we drove or accolades we received...what trinkets we wore. What matters is how we loved. Where we cast our gaze. Is it on things that turn to dust when we die? Or on that which will go with us past the grave. What legacy will be left from our lives?

As I visited with Jon and Barbara, I was stunned to realize we have nothing tangible of our dad's mother and sister that evidenced their lives. Nothing but the memory of who they were... and the stories of their lives. But perhaps more important than the relics of a life, is the legacy of a life. What imprint it has left on the earth. What lessons it has imparted whether for good or ill.

There is nothing of Christ's that has been left; no letter or piece of clothing...no relic. Only His spirit. And yet, His Spirit is everything. Perhaps it is so for us as well...the spirit of our lives is our enduring legacy... what we focused on and what we lived for...what we fought and died for. We need to make our choices well. We need to make them now.

I love you,



The Hope Project Pine Ridge Mission Outreach

“But What are These Among so Many?”

Last month you read of the daunting challenges facing the Lakota Sioux in South Dakota. You read of the systemic failures that persist despite the efforts of thousands over the years to make a difference. It is a magnitude of hunger of every sort that we see akin to the gathered masses on the Galilean hillside when Christ noted their hunger and told his disciples to feed them. Perplexed, they asked Christ “with what?” Their meager funds were not enough to buy anything. “*What do you have?*” What they had was a child’s basket of 5 loaves and 2 fish. In an apparent moment of lucidity, a disciple blurted, “*But what are these among so many?*” His logic and reason surpassed his faith. Five loaves and two fish were nothing for the thousands gathered on the hill. *But Christ had told them to feed the multitudes with what they had.* And here it was. He must have felt embarrassed even bringing such a meager portion to the Master. *But in His hands it was everything.* In His hands...blessed and broken...it defied logic and reason.

What efforts we bring to the prairie swells of Pine Ridge are dwarfed by the magnitude of need and will be meaningless in the scheme of things unless we bring what we have to Him. Miracles merge the Divine and the human in sacred partnership. Christ created the miracle, but he entrusted what He had blessed to His disciples. In their hands the blessing was given to the hungry.

The basket of loaves and fish was insignificant in and of itself. The math didn’t add up then, nor does it now. But the basket was filled, not just with bread and fish...but with hope... true hope.

“What is the single most critical need?” This question was posed by one present at the April 16 meeting. The answer is **hope**. **Hope** is the most urgent need of the reservation. Its absence is what underpins the suicide rate, the alcoholism and to a real extent the family violence and abuse. So in every approach, our mission is to provide hope. Not a wish...but **true hope**. It is the hope contained in the basket of bread and fish. It is the hope of Christ incarnate in our flesh... blessing and breaking and feeding what can’t be satisfied any other way. Blessing with His love. Breaking barriers and mindsets with experiences that speak of possibilities, not impossibilities.

Over 20 persons came on the 16th of last month to hear more about the needs of the Pine Ridge reservation. From that evening and from the newsletter survey the nature of our ministry outreach is taking shape as we consider short-term, mid-term and long-term approaches that seek to address some of the broken systems.

Pine Ridge School

Professional Development Assistance. Rebecca Drummond of the Grapevine Colleyville ISD is working with P.R. assistant principal, Lynette Cuny, to create a professional development program for the high school teachers for fall. Another educator from Grapevine Colleyville will be teaming with Rebecca to conduct a **volleyball camp** in July for the girls team.

Songs of Hope, the band initiative, is being driven by your response. Donations for instruments have already come in as have pledges for 2 gently used flutes and possibly 1 new one. If you would like to donate for the purchase of other band items, the options include:

Reeds for Clarinets and Alto Sax’s - 2 and 2 ½

2000 Essential Elements Beginning Method Books

Level 1:

- Flute - \$7.20 each / \$43.20 package of 6
- Clarinet - \$7.20 / \$43.20 package of 6
- Alto Sax - \$7.20 / \$21.50 package of 3
- Baritone TC - \$7.20 / \$14.40 package of 2
- Trumpet - \$7.20 / \$36.00 package of 5
- Percussion - \$13.50 / \$27.00 package of 2

I realize I inadvertently left the impression that the only instruments were 17 trombones and 1 flute. It was meant as an example of the challenges the band faced with military band instrumentation. If you would like to donate other instruments than the alto sax’s or flutes, that have been previously mentioned, they would be welcome since the cost of repairing existing antiquated instruments is prohibitive. Caroline Doyle heads this effort.

Monetary donations will be used to purchase items - for pick up - from a music store near Pine Ridge.

Dental Care

Several have expressed a desire to help financially as the Oglala Lakota College pursues a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to establish a mid-level professional dental program that can dramatically effect the acute dental needs on the reservation. If the Kellogg Foundation approves this grant, it appears we will be able to provide them the good-faith funds needed to receive the grant – an exciting step in effecting a change in a broken system!

CASA Gift Cards

You have provided 5 gas cards to enable volunteers to travel the reservation to advocate for kids who have been most severely abused. **This is an on-going need.**

Fall Marks the Beginning of Something New

This fall we step out into a new arena, offering a series of courses taught by different people, that will introduce new ways of seeing our world and understanding our place in it. They will explore new ways of understanding our faith in its historical and Jewish context and in the context of the religions of the world that are at our doorstep.

Our series begins in September with a focus on understanding the great religions of the world both historically and their current impact on world events and their current influence here at home.

Mark your calendars for Thursday evenings beginning September 5 as the tentative start-up for this class. (Date is subject to change.)

Becky Elliston to Teach Fall Course

Loving Your Neighbor by Understanding His World View

In a 4-6 week course, retired Rockwall High School history teacher, Becky Elliston, will “begin a conversation” on the *Great Religions of the World* and their presence at our doorstep. “We have new neighbors, and we need to understand the world they come from in order to better love them.” *What do we need to know in order to best translate Christ to them and to engage the international mission field we live in here?* Their cultural and social impact on civilization will be considered in order to better know how to relate to them here in the grocery store (or on the mission field) and to communicate their value to God.

Recent Chapel Wedding

Friends Gay Bostick, Teresa Jacks and Caroline Doyle stand beneath the antique rose arbor near the chapel. Teresa Box and Kevin Jacks were married at the chapel in April with Gay as Matron of Honor and Caroline coordinating everything.

This has been one of the most beautiful springs for our roses any of us can remember with most of the bushes laden with vibrant blooms.



Art Class Thriving at Nursing Home

Twelve to fifteen residents of a local nursing home eagerly show up for Elaine Souder’s art classes. Anne Morton has been assisting Elaine for several weeks, loving on the ladies there and helping with the art.



She brings such blessing, not only for Elaine but for the men and women who attend the class.

Prom Kids Discover Prayer Garden

Cars filled the parking lot as Gay Bostick arrived to close the chapel on a recent Friday evening. “Oh no!” she panicked, “did we forget a wedding?” Fortunately for us we had not. Rockwall high school kids, dressed in prom attire had discovered the prayer garden and were having a photo fest among the roses that are blazing in full plumage this year and in the Garden of the Unborn.



What a delight to know the blessing the garden was for these young people as they went all over the grounds finding the best settings for their special pictures.

May it bless you as much as it seemed to bless them.

Photo is of Garden of the Unborn with flowers placed on fountain in memory of an aborted or miscarried baby.

The article below was originally in last month's newsletter but was pulled for space purposes.

Offerings From Spring Semester Leave Questions

Though some of the regular offerings of our ministry continue strong, others are indicating a *trend* that has left me trying to decide what to do.

Roundtable is stronger than ever as is the Sunday morning Chapel study. The response to my presentation of "*A People Who Changed the World*" was also strong as has been the Road to Emmaus Monday evening study led by Gay Bostick. Elaine Souder's Art Therapy workshops still carry a lot of energy and interest.

The remaining offerings, which are mostly mine, are another story. Though I had felt strongly led to teach *Ancient Paths* because it holds some of the most extraordinary, potentially faith-altering principles of God's dealings with us, attendance – though faithful – has been quite small. (This is the case also with the *Saturday Meditations* but it was expected they would be small and there is no trend that is troubling).

This year's Easter Observances were a mix with *the Sunrise Service* experiencing the largest turnout ever at 39 while the *Good Friday Observance* saw by far the lowest attendance ever with six coming through the day until two more people came for the closing focus at 6:00. *Thursday Vesper Service* also had the lowest attendance ever though the number was sufficient not to warrant re-evaluation at this time. But the Good Friday Observance does.

This seems a change point for me and the ministry in terms of what we offer, how we do the newsletter and whether or not I continue teaching - and how that is to look if I do...

See right column for a change that, over the month of reflection, has clarified.

A Note from Brenda

About a year ago I considered ending my Bible teaching as a regular feature of this ministry. For quite some time, perhaps a year, I had been seeing a trend of declining attendance in the studies I offered. In the year since, that trend has been even more pronounced. What it says to me is that the Lord's blessing no longer rests upon my teaching ministry. Though I believe He still blesses the understandings that are taught and those who hear them, it is clear He is not blessing my teaching ministry. So I will no longer be teaching the Bible as a regular feature of this ministry.

What does that mean?

It means that – unless God rolls this stone away – I will no longer teach evening or weekday Bible studies of any kind, either on a weekly or monthly basis. The only Bible study I will continue to lead on a regular basis is the Sunday morning Chapel study. I may -once or twice a year- lead a retreat or one-day teaching on prayer. I may teach limited classes training teachers to lead the Emmaus Bible Study or equipping Bible teachers generally should the Lord open that door.

(This fall the ministry will be offering a different kind of teaching program which I had planned to participate in occasionally. It is unclear what I should do about that.)

What it doesn't mean

It doesn't mean that any of the other ministry offerings I lead will change. As the Lord prompts, we will still offer the Dinner Book Club and Christian Classics Book Club as well as the other offerings I have mentioned in the left column. There will still be an on-going focus on prayer through the Saturday Meditations and other prayer events as we are led to do.

*Beginning in September –
Sunday Morning Chapel Study
On*

The Book of Revelation

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Dayspring Chapel

New Teachings Now Up on Website

For listening on-line or for downloading:

- **A People Who Change the World** – the Great Moravian Prayer Vigil. Includes power point presentation.
- **Ancient Paths**
- **Sunday Chapel Study on Numbers**

**Our Deep Appreciation to Mike Vlk for His
Sacrificial Help**