



“HOW’S THE FUND-RAISING BUSINESS?...”

...a friend asked recently – a question posed to me frequently these days. “Slow,” I replied. And it *is*, in this economic mess. But “slow” is often my answer in better times. While the management of funds given for the work of ministry must always be handled in a businesslike manner – with accountability, honesty, integrity, transparency, etc. – the giving and receiving of funds is first and foremost a **ministry**.

Fund-raising is communicating what we believe by offering others an opportunity to participate in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To communicate that vision is “slow,” because it takes time in this world for most folk to think differently about the resources God has given them – as in life, energy, prayer, and yes, even funds (or more crassly, money).

Fund-raising is an invitation to join in a mission that can bring a vision to reality: the mission of giving children and youth the experience of camp and conference where they come to know God in the beauty of creation, the richness of good friends, the security of loving adults with whom they are safe, and how the way of Jesus can give meaning to their growing and changing lives; the mission of educating, training, and preparing clergy to shepherd God’s people; the mission of caring for the widow and the orphan.

“Fund-raising is a call to conversion, both to those who seek funds and those who have funds.”

(Henri Nouwen) We are all drawn together, whether we are the one asking or giving, because God is about to do a new thing when we are yoked to the same task (Isaiah 43:19-21).

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds (and hearts), so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good, acceptable, and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

The **ministry** of conversion is an ongoing process, because it requires a fundamental “shift in how we see and think and act” (Nouwen). We come to ourselves like the younger son did when he was away from his true home (Luke 15:17-20).

In these troubled financial times when the “system” is lacking confidence, trust, transparency, and basic honesty, we have the opportunity as God’s people to lead and proclaim a **ministry of conversion**, following the admonition of the Apostle Paul: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds (and hearts), so that

you may discern what is the will of God – what is good, acceptable, and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

Kyle Maxwell
Executive Director

This article was published earlier this year in *The Oklahoma Christian*, but the first line was omitted. It is reprinted here for clarification.



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ETERNAL VOICES SPEAKING CLEARLY

How is it we can hear an “eternal voice speak clearly” in the here and now? First, we would need to have heard that voice when it was alive and well, speaking to us, teaching us, inspiring us, in face-to-face encounters. Second, we would prefer the voice to have been one of integrity, one we could trust, one we took to heart — knowing it spoke the truth. Finally, we would like to have known the person behind the voice to be one we loved, perhaps even liked, and to have been loved by them.

All of the above was and is true of Elza and Lois Swick Hawkins, both of whom were professors at the late Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma, and he also a professor at what is today Phillips Theological Seminary, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Both were committed to theological education: Elza, a professor of church history, and Lois, one of the last professors of Christian Education. They were strong church leaders, continually giving of their time, energy, thought, prayer, and other God-given resources.

Elza died March 30, 2003 and Lois died May 16, 2008. In their final last will and testament, they provided for their children, Rogene Hawkins of Enid and Ronald Hawkins of Lima, Ohio, and their grandchildren, as well. We at the Oklahoma Disciples Foundation were notified last year that the Hawkins also provided a bequest to further the ministry of the foundation, in order that their “eternal voices could speak clearly.” All of us who knew them, were taught by them, inspired by them, and were loved by them are grateful now and will be into eternity.

And the Church of Jesus Christ said, “Well done, good and faithful servants!”



Lois & Elza Hawkins

Tulsa Church Celebrates 50 Years

Palm Sunday (April 5) 2009, Harvard Avenue Christian Church in Tulsa celebrated the congregation’s 50th anniversary. The many honored guests participating in the service included Phillips Theological Seminary President, Dr. Bill Tabbernee, Dr. Kay Northcutt and Dr. Rick Lowery.

Much praise and honor was expressed for the late Rev. Robert Peake as the

founding minister of Harvard Avenue, who served the church for 30 years before his retirement. Mrs. Harriet Peake, who was in attendance, was also honored for her teaching, devotion and many activities in support of the church. All the Peake children – Steve, Nancy and David – were present for the anniversary celebration during which Harriet’s “Planting and Growing Our Church” was read by Kate Beatty, recounting stories during Bob’s and her many years of working together to grow Harvard Avenue.

After the service, a luncheon was served in Peake Hall. A video of past years was shown before returning to the sanctuary to hear Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President of the Christian Church, whose message focused on

Christians uniting and working together to show Christ’s love to all.

Continuing the expression of a dominant theme throughout the day – *building the church* – Harvard Avenue has embarked upon a program of establishing an endowment fund. Over the years, the congregation has contributed more than \$4,000,000 in outreach funds. Celebrating the past and looking to the future, the church continues to thrive.



A rock placed in front of the church to commemorate the event bears this inscription:

“ON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH”
Matthew 16:18
Harvard Avenue Christian Church
50th Anniversary
April 5, 2009

All members received a miniature of this rock as a memento of the day.



Back row, left to right: Dr. Rick Lowery, Rev. Thomas R. Jewell, Rev. Don Lanier, Ed Crockett (program co-chair). Front row, left to right: Mark Southard (HACC board chairman), Dr. Sharon Watkins, Dr. Don Farrior, Kate Beatty (program co-chair).