

Red Mesa Raises \$60,000

to meet \$180,000 Pastor Pension Gap

Fall Benefit to Feature Rev. Jim, Family and Friends



Save the date, your gas money or frequent flyer miles and come to the Red Mesa Foundation Benefit on Saturday October 18, 2008 at the Rehoboth Campus Fellowship Hall. This benefit is the "southern benefit" that we postponed from March, so we've got lots of time to "do it up grand." We'll have a delicious meal, great Christian fellowship and outstanding entertainment, provided by the Rev. Stanley W. Jim, Family and Friends Country Gospel Band. We'd like to use this opportunity to make another big leap forward to our goal of \$180,000 for the Red Mesa pastor pension fund. Fall is the loveliest time of the year in New Mexico and we invite friends from near and far to join us for the festivities.

When the leaders of churches in Red Mesa met together in May of 2007 in their Classis meeting, they wrestled with a disturbing reality: two pastors from Red Mesa churches had not been accumulating any retirement benefits. With pastors' salaries being what they are, everyone knew that these pastors wouldn't have been able to save for retirement either. At that meeting, the delegates pledged to work toward raising the money needed --\$180,000 ---to provide retirement pensions commensurate with each pastors years of service. A year later, Classis has set aside \$40,000 and the churches have raised \$20,000 for \$60,000 – one third of the goal!

Why didn't these pastors have pensions? Who is to blame? Will a "bail-out" discourage responsibility in the future? These are the kind of questions everyone asks when they hear about the pension gap. The Church Ministry Finance Committee, who had researched the issue and brought it to Classis, explained that the oversight wasn't a result of will-full neglect, but something that got lost in the process of Red Mesa churches changing from missionary outposts to independent organized churches. As to who was to blame -- Red Mesa leaders realized that there was plenty of fault to go around. And so Classis focused on moving forward. It affirmed that a church that calls a pastor is responsible to make sure it can contribute to a pension. And these days, people are learning a lot more about denominational and other pension mechanisms than they ever expected to.

Sixty-thousand (60,000) dollars is a lot of money for Red Mesa. And \$20,000 came from offerings and fundraising among Red Mesa Churches. And although there is still a long way to go, the spirit in which people have already pitched gives hope that God is blessing faithfulness.

Contributions of any size to the Pension Fund are welcome. Checks can be made to the Red Mesa Foundation and marked "Pension Fund." Since the Red Mesa Foundation is a registered as a 501 c3 charitable organization with the United States Government, donations are eligible for tax deductions for federal income tax purposes. The Red Mesa Foundation is holding the funds in a separate money-market account with Barnabas Foundation. The Classis Church Ministry Finance Committee will begin pension accounts with the existing funds as early as this summer.



Shawna Bailey serves up Navajo Tacos at Bethany Gallup CRC fundraiser.



RMF Benefits to Benefit Pension Fund (2007 Ship Rock Benefit).

