



# THE INTERPRETER

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

JANUARY 2006

## SPEAKING FROM THE HART

### Cedarkirk, Family Systems and Life Lessons from My Dad

Ten years ago this year my dad died. He was a man of incredible strength, wisdom, calm, and faith. I continue to be thankful for the life lessons he and my mom taught. He was a graduate of The Wharton School, an active layperson in his church, a 47-year employee of Philadelphia Electric, and before his death was the longest serving elected official in Pennsylvania with over 40 years of continuous local civic service.

By word and example my father taught me the importance of character, speaking the truth, living by one's principles, and learning to be a calm faithful non-reactive presence. As a teenager when I heard the words, "Well, son...." I did not always appreciate what he was about to say. As a young pastor, when I was dealing with problematic situations and people, I sought his counsel more than once. Now as a middle-aged man, I miss him and the conversations that began with the words: "Well, son....". However, I am thankful for the wisdom, love, faith, and principles that guided him and that I now carry within my heart and bones.

### Family Systems

It did not begin with "Well, son...", but I heard a similar message using different words at the November meeting of Presbytery. Peter L. Steinke, long-time Lutheran pastor and counselor, who has spent the past 15 years helping churches in crises deal with internal conflict in healthy ways, was our speaker. Dr. Steinke spoke on Healthy Congregations, Leaders and Presbyteries.

"The local church and Presbytery is an emotional system; emotional forces take place each time we gather," Steinke said. "It's critical for those in leadership positions, pastors and elders, to recognize these forces and respond with thoughtful clarity rather than a knee jerk reaction, thus intensifying the anxiety-driven behaviors and problems they are trying to solve."

Using Family System Theory he lifted up some core principles, which are biblical, practical and true. A few of the points Steinke made were that healthy and health promoting Congregations, Presbyteries and Leaders create environments where:

- Differences are accepted
- Leaders and the organization focus on their mission

*(continued on next page)*

**DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN VIEW THE INTERPRETER ON OUR WEB SITE?** Go to [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org) /Presbytery Publications.

## A Different Kind of Officers' Institute is Coming!

**Saturday, February 11, 2006**

Church of the Palms, Sarasota

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Leonard Sweet**

Dr. Leonard Sweet, leading historian and futurist, will be on hand to help us think about the kinds of road maps we need for TODAY in ministry.

Since the Hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, much has changed ..... roads in parts of the country no longer exist, landmarks have been washed away and we see a great deal more suffering and longing for HOPE. Much has changed within the church; the old tried and true ways of doing church are not as effective in some cases. There is a whole world out there that hungers for the HOPE that Jesus Christ offers and yet we are unsure of how to minister. Rest assured, the story of God's love is the same but the way in which we tell and retell it will require 'new road maps'. Dr. Sweet will help us to begin formulating new road maps to ministry in Peace River Presbytery.



Dr. Sweet is a nationally and internationally known speaker at conferences and events, noted author and an ordained Methodist minister. For more information about Dr. Sweet, you can log onto his website at [leonardsweet.com](http://leonardsweet.com).

Watch for brochures with class offerings and registration forms which will be mailed to each church.

## Please Join Us in Prayer for the Following Churches:



Bee Ridge, Sarasota  
 Church of the Palms, Sarasota  
 First, Sarasota  
 Northminster, Sarasota  
 Pine Shores, Sarasota

January 1  
 January 8  
 January 15  
 January 22  
 January 29

## SPEAKING FROM THE HART (continued)

- People respond thoughtfully rather than react to anxiety and change
- Conflicts are managed
- Leaders exhibit presence and calm functioning
- Leaders provide immune capacities for the system
- Caring relationships are developed

### Fox News, Blog sites and Cedarkirk

Peter Steinke's message was similar to what my dad modeled in his lifetime. I share this because 2006 began in a way I never ever could have imagined (see article on Cedarkirk). As we continue to process the concerns generated by gross misinformation on one web site and a Fox News story, I am grateful for the way many, after first hearing of the story, responded, and sought to get the facts before jumping to conclusions. I am thankful for a Camp Board that operated from its principles, and when real threats were received acted appropriately, addressing those safety concerns. In a strange way I am grateful that we have an opportunity, even in this, to learn and practice being a Healthy Presbytery.

As we begin this New Year I invite you to join with me in praying the prayer of St. Francis as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus in what we do, what we say, and how we live our lives.

Graham Hart  
General Presbyter



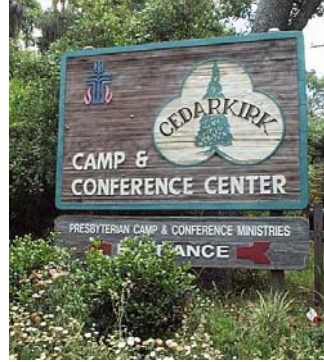
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be  
consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

## STATEMENT FROM CEDARKIRK



In early November 2005, the Muslim American Society of Tampa, asked Cedarkirk Camp, a Presbyterian affiliated conference center to hold a retreat for USF students at the facility. One of Cedarkirk's core values, adopted by the Board of Directors of Cedarkirk, is to provide hospitality to all

people in the name of Christ. In the past, when our facilities are not fully booked by Presbyterian groups, we have provided retreat facilities for Catholic, Jewish and a variety of Protestant groups, as well as secular non-profit groups, private schools and team building retreats for some governmental agencies, and a variety of university groups.

We maintain our Christian identity, acting out the love of Christ by attempting to provide extra-mile hospitality to all guests, whether friend or stranger. We do not, however, welcome all programs. Some examples of programs that would not be welcomed at Cedarkirk would be ones that included drugs, alcohol, violence, hate-mongering or the teaching of any form of prejudice.

The program sponsored by the Muslim American Society was described as a peaceful time apart, to learn peacemaking, experience the beauty of creation and recreation. The Society provided us with copies of their curriculum, inviting our staff to be present at their event, so that we could see first hand the peaceful nature of their program.

During the week of December 25th, terrorism allegations were made against the Muslim American Society and retreat speakers. We immediately exercised all due diligence contacting the relevant governmental authorities at both the local and the federal level. They informed us that there was nothing at all about the scheduled speakers or this group that should cause us not to allow this group to come on retreat.

Due to threats received, Cedarkirk's Board of Directors had to close the entire camp and cancel all activities over the December 31st weekend.

For further information about this matter, please contact Rev. Debra or John Bronkema at 813-685-4224 ext. 4 or [director@cedarkirk.com](mailto:director@cedarkirk.com).

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

Nine ladies of the Mission Sewing Group from **Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota**, journeyed to DeSoto Memorial Hospital in Arcadia to deliver their fourth supply of baby layettes to the Maternity Ward. This brings the total to 100 layettes delivered in an ongoing mission of Covenant and these women. If your church would like to participate either with buying supplies or making items, contact the Covenant church office (941-922-5509) for details.

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, the Presbyterian Women will host Mr. Daniel Dunn of the Sarasota All Faiths Food Bank at their evening Gathering Spaghetti Dinner. All are welcome. Make reservations through the church at (941-922-5509). Food goods will be collected.

**Palma Sola Presbyterian Church** is sponsoring:

### *The Person of Jesus Seminar*

January 21, 2006  
6510 Third Ave. West  
Bradenton, FL 34209

This should be a great seminar and any and all are welcome. Get your registration in as soon as possible so they can plan for you and have a meal there for you. For any other information, call 941-792-3141.

**Church of the Palms** is sponsoring a series of seminars on the **Rhetoric and Theology of Film**. Many people look at movies strictly as entertainment. But movies are a powerful force in our culture. They reflect our attitudes, hopes, and fears. They not only show us what to think about, but sometimes they also take a strong position on how to think about them.

Dr. David Thomas, a **Church of the Palms** member and a specialist in the rhetoric of films (Professor Emeritus, University of Richmond), will dissect how movies work on our minds and hearts. The Reverend Doug Gebhard (Interim Associate for Education, Mission, and Contemporary Worship) will discuss how to look theologically at movies and think critically about their message from a faith perspective. The films will not be shown during class. All classes will be held in the church's Sanctuary. There is no admission fee and there is no prior registration required. A film discussion guide and further information can be found at <http://www.churchofthepalms.org/chrised.html#film>.

*E. T.*— January 10, 2006 at 6:30 PM

*Vertigo*—January 18, 2006 at 6:30 PM

*Shall We Dance*—January 25, 2006 at 6:30 PM

*Tender Mercies*—February 1, 2006 at 6:30 PM

*Thelma and Louise*—February 8, 2006 at 6:30 PM

*Chocolat*—February 15, 2006 at 6:30 PM

*Schindler's List*—February 22, 2006 at 6:30 PM

Contact The Reverend Doug Gebhard for more information at 941.924.1323 ext. 48 or [dgebhard@churchofthepalms.org](mailto:dgebhard@churchofthepalms.org).

## MISSION AND JUSTICE

THE NEEDS CONTINUE. Everywhere you turn it seems there is a need to help the poor, the immigrant population, those squeezed out of the soaring housing prices of Southwest Florida, etc. Nowhere is the need more critical than in the Immokalee area. Immokalee lies at the eastern edge of Collier County, one of the most affluent areas of America. Over 50% of the population is immigrants who work in the farming industry.

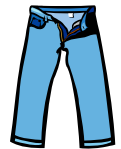
With Hurricane Wilma, the winter crops of vegetables were destroyed. Immediately following the storm there was day work clearing the fields and replanting. Now they wait for the crops to come in and there is no work. The rundown shacks that they were forced to rent for a great deal of money were either destroyed or are now in even worse repair. There is no money for day to day needs.

All of the 'helping agencies' are working together to provide as much help as possible. Our own Peace River Presbytery will be launching a new Presbyterian and reformed ministry there in 2006.

We urge PW groups, Men's Fellowship gatherings, and youth groups to consider helping in Immokalee. Consider going the extra mile with your Souper Bowl efforts with an extra bag of rice or beans.

### CURRENT CRITICAL NEEDS INCLUDE:

- Mattresses
- Baby food, diapers, etc
- Food – especially rice and beans
- Men's jeans – sizes 32 and 34
- New underwear – sizes 32 and 34
- New socks
- Shirts – size 32-34
- Children's clothing



\*\*\* NOTE – other clothing is not needed at this time.

For more information on how to help, e-mail Candy Reid at [candy@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:candy@peacriverpresbytery.org) or call 941-426-8421 after January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you in advance for your help.

### Upcoming Evangelism Event: "From the Crusade to the Coffee Shop"

**Saturday, March 4, 2006**  
**Church of the Palms, Sarasota**  
**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr. Leighton Ford**

**WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION!**

## YOUTH NEWS

### HURRICANE RELIEF WORK DAY IN ARCADIA January 21, 2006

FOR: Youth of all ages, large and small Youth Groups  
– plus at least one adult per 6 kids

COST: \$5.00 per person for lunch and snacks

TO SIGN ON: [candy@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:candy@peacriverpresbytery.org)

Though Hurricane Charley 'blew' through in August of 2004 there is still much work to be done....your help is much appreciated.



9:00 - 9:30	Check in/work assignments
9:30 - 1:00	Work at cleanup/repair sites
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch provided at the church
2:00 - 3:30	Work some more or leave for home if you have traveled a great distance

#### COMING SOON:

#### High School Retreat at Cedarkirk

February 24-25, 2006

Cost: \$80

WATCH FOR MORE DETAILS!

#### SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

#### COMBINATION TRIP: MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE AND WEST VIRGINIA WORK CAMP EXPERIENCE

An incredible 2 week experience in the mountains of North Carolina at [Montreat](#) AND an opportunity to make a difference for Christ in one of the poorest regions of Appalachia.

DATES: June 10-25, 2006

COST: \$600.00 plus \$\$\$ for fast food meals up and back

FOR: All Senior High Youth – Ages 16 and above  
(You must be at least 16 to participate in the West Virginia Work Camp due to insurance regulations)

#### WEST VIRGINIA WORK CAMP EXPERIENCE:

Yes, we will still be making our annual trek to Cabell-Lincoln County in our chartered bus!  
Again, this is for all Senior Highs age 16 and above.

DATES: June 17-25, 2006

COST: \$350.00 (extra cost for chartered bus)

## MIDDLE SCHOOL URBAN MISSION EXPERIENCE

This a great opportunity to enjoy all the benefits of [Cedarkirk](#) (canoeing, climbing wall, swimming, good food, awesome Bible studies and skits, 'hanging with your friends) AND work in heart of downtown Tampa at Metropolitan Ministries, changing lives, sharing the love of Christ, and making a difference.



Space is limited to 20 folks for the Montreat/West Virginia combo trip, 45 for the West Virginia trip alone, and 25 for the Middle School Urban Mission Camp.

#### Hurricane Recovery Contact Information:

Larry Graham-Johnson, 954-732-8128 or  
[larryprpdr@yahoo.com](mailto:larryprpdr@yahoo.com)

Ann Graham-Johnson, 863-494-1000 or  
[ddr1ann@yahoo.com](mailto:ddr1ann@yahoo.com)

200 Oak St., P.O. Box 3345, Arcadia, FL 34265

#### You Can Be A Part of *The Interpreter*!

We would love to receive mission stories from your church for future issues of *The Interpreter*. The article may be 150 words and it would be great if you would include a picture. Please submit by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to [joan@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:joan@peacriverpresbytery.org) If you do not have e-mail, you may mail the article to the Presbytery.

#### DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING ISSUE OF P.R.I.M.E. Times: Wednesday, January 11, 2006

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[Bob Rea](#), Designated Associate Presbyter  
[Candy Reid](#), Program Coordinator  
[Craig Countiss](#), Stated Clerk  
[Jim Barnett](#), Treasurer  
[Alesia Sharpe](#), Office Manager  
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