



# The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY JANUARY 2008

## SPEAKING FROM THE HART

On my Christmas errand list was the purchase of frames for the wedding pictures that our adult children, both of whom were married in the past 2 years, gave us. Without frames, the pictures have been in a drawer. Without frames, the world, at least the people who come to our house, has missed those important family events and some very special people in our lives.

Frames set things up, so those passing through notice and can better see the picture. In the drawer of Peace River are some images and events that, whether we like it or not, need to be taken out of our collective drawer and given a frame. Only then can they be seen in the proper light, and dealt with in an adequate way.

**Frame 1** - The demographics in Southwest Florida are changing, and some recent trends are significantly impacting the church. Over the past 5 years, a time when Florida population was growing, the majority of churches were losing members. **Doing church like we did it last year isn't enough.** We need a new paradigm (frame) to shape our theology of doing and being church. The Acts 16:5 church transformation initiative with Stan Ott, and the other initiatives some sessions have undertaken, are seeking to better frame these new realities. At The Main Event on February 9, I will offer a class to help us frame this new reality. Simply put: *Dorothy, we are not in Kansas anymore.*

**Frame 2** - Over the next year the council will have a discussion about how best to guide the Presbytery into our vision of being a more **Missional, Connectional, and Generous** Presbytery. How can we do better at building relationships, which is at the heart of being connectional? How can we learn a new metaphor for being the church that understands everything we do as living out and implementing the mission of God who has been incarnated in Jesus Christ?

Additionally, as was voted on at the November Presbytery meeting, the Trustees will help us think through how we can support our mission causes like:

- the purchase of land for our new churches,
- building adult-friendly cottages at Cedarkirk,
- purchasing a worship and ministry center for our mission through Beth-El in Immokalee (Misión Peniel),
- and funding a new mission co-worker overseas.

How can we be GENEROUS with the blessings we have been given?

**Frame 3** - I am reminded, as we frame 2008, of the words of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr written almost 50 years ago, but still so true today:

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.

Wishing you a Blessed and Joyous New Year,  
Graham

Please join us in prayer for:



January 6 [First, Naples](#)  
January 13 [Lely, Naples](#)  
January 20 [Moorings, Naples](#)  
January 27 [Vanderbilt, Naples](#)

## THE MAIN EVENT IS COMING TO A CHURCH NEAR YOU

**WHEN:** Saturday, February 9, 2008  
**WHERE:** First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte  
**TIME:** 8:30 Registration  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

THE MAIN EVENT is pleased to bring you Rev. Rich Melheim, founder of "FAITH INKUBATORS", a leadership training group that seeks to teach parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends and mentors how to share our faith with the next generation.



Also being offered is the finest officer training around!

Samples of workshops include:  
Clerk of Session Training 101 – Unpacking the Ordination Vows – Since We Love Jesus, How Can There Be Conflict? – Homebound Communion – When Doing Church Like We Did Last Year Isn't Enough.

Brochures, along with posters, will be available at your church early in January, plus you can check our web site at [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org) (Leader Development page) for information and downloadable registration forms.

Sponsored by the Leadership & Congregational  
Development Committee

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

The Northminster Presbyterian Church congregation began its ministry of serving God in February 1958. The year and month of a Golden Jubilee celebration is finally here! The celebration will be held on Sunday, February 3, 2008. A special combined worship service will be at 10:00 a.m. to commemorate this anniversary. There will be great music by choirs and instrumentalists, audio and video presentations of founding members, and a praise sermon from Pastor Tom Atkins. As part of the celebration there will be a Multimedia Concert with Sarasota Jewish Chorale and Tuttle Elementary Combined Chorus on Wednesday, February 27 at 5:30 p.m. in Northminster's sanctuary (3131 61<sup>st</sup> Street, Sarasota).

## Souper Bowl Sunday

Once again we will have the opportunity to make a difference in the world of hunger by contributing to the Souper Bowl of Caring. Annually, Peace River raises over \$20,000 and collects many canned goods which all go to help those who are hungry. Food pantries are experiencing record numbers of appeals so the opportunity to make a difference is even greater. Go to the Souper Bowl website [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org) for complete information and to order materials. If you have collected \$\$\$ and reported to the Souper Bowl web site in previous years, you should automatically receive an information packet.



## MISSION HIGHLIGHTS

### What is the Eco-Palm Project?



The Eco-Palm Project helps to ensure that palms harvested for use in Palm Sunday celebrations provide a living wage for growers. Also, care is taken for the environment. If your congregation orders palms for your Palm Sunday celebration, consider ordering from the Eco-Palm Project. Complete information and instructions on how to order can be found at [www.pcusa.org/palms](http://www.pcusa.org/palms).

NOTE: Palm Sunday is early this year (March 16) so you will need to place your order no later than February 20, 2008.

## Sister Church Information



Don't forget to sign up for the Pastors' Retreat with our Sister Churches. A group from Peace River Presbytery will be going to Guatemala late March of 2008, and will be led by Graham Hart. For more information or to sign up, please e-mail Graham at [graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

Choir members from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Fort Myers will be in Guatemala January 17-20, 2008 to help their Sister Church, El Divino Salvador, celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Please keep the choir and their leaders in your prayers.

## News In and Around Immokalee

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) march to Burger King headquarters in Miami on November 30 drew a crowd of about 1500. Members from Vanderbilt



Presbyterian in Naples participated and assisted the walkers, and Rev. Miguel Estrada drove the Espíritu motor home to serve as a first aid station. For complete information, including photos and a letter written on behalf of the workers by former President Jimmy Carter, go to the CIW website [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org).

Meanwhile federal prosecutors, under the leadership of Chief Assistant US Attorney Doug Malloy (who spoke at a Peace River Presbytery meeting in 2005) have filed charges in a case in which farm workers picking tomatoes in the Immokalee area say their bosses "beat them and chained their hands to keep them from finding other jobs." The criminal complaint went on to describe the workers' inhumane living conditions saying the workers were locked in box trucks, crates and sheds by the bosses. The new investigation comes just days after a representative from the supply chain monitoring group declared Immokalee free of modern-day slavery.

What can you do? What can your congregation do? Pray....pray...and pray some more. Send a postcard encouraging Burger King to come to the table and negotiate a fair wage for tomatoes picked. For information on how to obtain a large number of postcards to use in your congregation, call Jordan at CIW, 239-657-8311. Also, you can continue to support the work of Misión Peniel in Immokalee through your financial gifts as well as hands on help with the Friday evening supper program.

For more information, contact Candy Reid, Program Coordinator for Mission and Justice.



## Self-Development of People: A look at the Partnership with Coalition of Immokalee Workers

By Margaret Mwale

Self-Development of People (SDOP) in its 37 year history has partnered with over five thousand economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged groups in the U.S. and internationally.

Recently I sat down to talk by phone with Gerardo Reyes Chavez from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a SDOP recently funded partner, and Jordan Buckley with Interfaith Action, a group that works in partnership with CIW to improve sub-poverty wages and end human rights abuses in the fields. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a 3500-member community based workers organization comprised largely of immigrants from Guatemala, Haiti and Mexico that work in low wage jobs throughout Florida.

In mid 2007 SDOP partnered with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers by awarding the organization a grant for \$21,200 to enable group members to engage in a new community center project. As part of this project, the group has been able to use the SDOP grant to continue to run a radio station called "Consciousness Radio" or "Radio Conciencia" on 107.9FM. Mr. Chavez explained there is a constant stream of new people moving into Immokalee, a farm worker community in Southwest Florida. Most of these people are recent immigrants for whom English is a second language so they speak little or no English. According to Mr. Chavez, commercial radio does not provide a voice in the indigenous languages spoken by the farm worker community or address issues that impact on this community such as human rights abuses. Radio Conciencia addresses these issues. He shared how when Hurricane Wilma hit, Radio Consciousness was able to alert everyone in their indigenous languages (Zapoteco and Mixteco spoken in Mexico, Mam and Kanjobal spoken in Guatemala, Haitian Creole and Spanish) of the impending danger and how coalition members went to transport people from their homes to shelters since most people do not have cars. After the hurricane, Radio Conciencia also broadcast where to obtain clean water, ice and other supplies for the farm worker community. It also suggested a plan to county commissioners and disaster relief agencies on how to distribute food and supplies and created maps for the agencies that enabled them to reorganize their distribution plans for more effective distribution of the food and supplies. Because the coalition is comprised

of farm workers, it has a better sense of where these people live.

Mr. Buckley told me, "Through the CIW's partnership with the Presbyterian Church (USA) and other people of faith across the country, we find ourselves on the threshold of a more modern, more humane agricultural industry. By continuing to work together, we can assure fair wages and safe working conditions for farm workers and dignified consumer options for people who not only love tomatoes, but also care that the dignity and human rights of the farm workers who picked those tomatoes are being respected and honored."

In 2003 the Coalition of Immokalee Workers was awarded the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award for its work against modern day slavery. CIW has also been involved in the Campaign for Fair Food that has included efforts led by people of faith, farm workers, students, unions and other grassroots organizations across the country to eliminate labor abuses and sweatshop conditions in Florida and other states. For more stories on other grassroots groups SDOP has partnered with, visit [www.pcusa.org/sdop](http://www.pcusa.org/sdop).

Self-Development of People, a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA) enters into partnerships with community groups of economically poor people who want to change their lives and communities. The National Committee carries out its work by making grants to, and entering into partnerships with, community groups that meet SDOP's criteria for funding. Grants are normally not more than \$20,000. Prospective applicants can apply for grants from both local and national SDOP Committees.

For more information contact:

Self-Development of People  
100 Witherspoon Street  
Louisville, KY 40202-1396  
Toll Free Telephone:  
English – (888) 728-7228 x5782 / 5792  
Spanish – (888) 728-7228 x5790  
Fax: (502) 569-8963

---

### REMINDER



Stan Ott

If your church has committed to the two-year **Acts 16:5** program or is considering this decision, please save the following date for Gathering 1:

**MAY 1, 2008**

Watch for more details!



### Looking for a Different Kind of Mission Experience?

Check out the new youth mission opportunities in the Gulf Coast area during the summer of 2008 and the new Father/Son Weeks sponsored by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. For more information, go to [www.pcusa.org/pda](http://www.pcusa.org/pda).

### 2008 Conferences You Won't Want To Miss!

Association of Presbyterian Church Educators  
February 13-16  
[www.apcenet.org](http://www.apcenet.org)

Montreat Christian Education Conference  
May 27-31  
[www.montreat.org](http://www.montreat.org)

### FROM YOUR RESOURCE CENTER

**REMINDER:**  
**VBS Open House**  
January 13, 2008 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.  
at Peace River Presbytery

### RESOURCES AVAILABLE

**The Thoughtful Christian** online adult study resources have been described as an "easy to open treasure chest" with a multitude of topics, supporting information and simple to use lesson plans accessed with the click of your mouse at [www.TheThoughtfulChristian.com](http://www.TheThoughtfulChristian.com). Two resources you will want to keep in mind as you plan for Lent 2008:

- *PAUSING ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM* by Michael Lindvall and Christy Lang
- *THE TOMB of JESUS: ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH* by Steve Lytch

Also in the Resource Center is **Hosanna: A Spiritual Journey Through Holy Week** by Carol J. Miller. This study explores the main texts in all four gospels and in Paul's writings that deal specifically with the last week of Jesus' life and with the resurrection. Leader's guide is on CD-ROM.

Just what is **OPENING DOORS TO DISCIPLESHIP?** What can it do for my congregation? It is the new online learning resource for the purpose of supporting the educational ministry of the church. It is web-based, interactive and designed for community learning. The

three courses with 12 sessions each may be used in any time frame, setting or sequence. The courses are:

- Basic Teaching Skills
- Basic Bible Background
- Basic Beliefs of the Reformed/Presbyterian Faith

These resources are appropriate for teacher training, adult education, new member classes, and confirmation classes. Best of all, it is FREE to member churches. For more information or to enroll, go to <http://www.openingdoorstodiscipleship.com>.

**FREE DVD from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance:** *Hurricane Katrina Two Years Later: Connecting People and Rebuilding Lives*. Available from PDS (Presbyterian Distribution Service) at [www.pcusa.org/marketplace](http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace).



### Fantastic Opportunities for Mission Trips in the Summer of 2008:

"Challenge to Change" – Middle School Mission Camp  
June 15-20

"Love Works" – Senior High Mission Trip to  
Cabell-Lincoln County, West Virginia  
June 14-22

"Chinlé Mission 2008 – Intergenerational Mission trip to work with Trinity Presbyterian Church in Chinlé, Arizona  
July 12-19

For more information, go to [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org) under YOUTH.

This newsletter is available for viewing anytime at [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org) (Follow link to "Presbytery Publications")

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY  
5600 Peace River Road  
North Port, FL 34287  
  
941-426-8421 or 800-736-4488  
[www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org)  
  
[Graham Hart](#), General Presbyter  
[Bob Rea](#), Designated Associate General Presbyter  
[Candy Reid](#), Program Coordinator  
[Craig Countiss](#), Stated Clerk  
[Jim Barnett](#), Treasurer  
[Alesia Sharpe](#), Office Manager  
[Bill Setchel](#), Financial Secretary  
[Joan Mock](#), Administrative Assistant