



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

JUNE/JULY 2008

Speaking From the Hart Reflections on our Christian Vocation

"There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone." I Corinthians 12:4-6

Although leadership and organizational skills, a healthy sense of self, and a strong work ethic are all important aspects of a person's effectiveness in church leadership, whether we are elders, educators, or pastors, this work is not about us. Nowhere is that clearer than in our theology of vocation. God calls the church into being, the church gathers as the Body of Christ, and the Spirit equips, empowers, and sends us to join with God in God's mission to the world. Long before the Presbyterian Church USA was organized and long after our current organizational charts and job descriptions are changed, God is, was, and ever shall be on a mission.

To all called into church leadership, the shape and practice of our ministry is grounded in our reformed belief that God, in God's sovereign love, has given us a message, a mission, and a spiritual gift to be used in building up the body of Christ and "God's work of reconciliation in the world."

A calling - The English word vocation comes from the Latin word vocare, which means "to call". In scripture, God calls ordinary folks, the likes of Abraham, David, Peter, James and John, to a work and a life that they otherwise would not have chosen. Contrast that to the word *career*, a 16th century French word that originally meant a circular racetrack. One can run long and hard in a career, as on a circular racetrack, but at the end of the day you may have just gone in circles. A calling, on the other hand, has the sense of purpose inscribed in what one does, how one does the work, and why a person would consider doing such work in the first place. Ministry is a calling, and since the reformation we as Presbyterians have affirmed that ministry is everyone's business. In some way everyone is called by God to do a special work.

Etymologically, the root of vocation is vox or voice, and a calling is another way of affirming that, as we respond to God's call, we find our own voice. A vocation of ministry in the church as an elected leader (whether as elder, pastor, or educator) is first and foremost about God, as in God calling us, but it is also about us finding our voice as we serve and lead in the church.

The work - Being a church leader in this time of significant and adaptive change is still a job. It is work, and most often hard work at that. Yet as Fredrick Buechner has written, "The place God calls you to is the

place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

As church leaders you and I work hard because that is what it takes, and we develop competencies and skills because that is what God's people deserve. We seek always to avail ourselves of the means of grace, for we are human, fallible, and always in need of grace. When we understand that we are not so much on a career path as we are living with the "gift of a vocation", then along the way, as we do our jobs, we may experience what Paul saw as the goal of all our work in the church, namely, that we will ... "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."

The gift, the calling, and the work are all part of the unique ways we live and express our vocation as disciples of Christ, called to serve in Christ's Church and God's mission to, in, with the world.

Grateful for the work and ministry God is doing here in Peace River Presbytery through each of you,

Graham Hart
General Presbyter



Please join us in prayer for:

June 1	Peace Presbyterian NCD
June 8	New Life Presbyterian Fellowship
June 15	Naples Brazilian Fellowship
June 22	First, Arcadia
June 29	First, Bonita Springs
July 6	Braden River, Bradenton
July 13	First, Bradenton
July 20	Kirkwood, Bradenton
July 27	Palma Sola, Bradenton

Please also pray for:

Mission trips

This summer Peace River Presbytery will send youth and adults to:

- the hills of West Virginia (June 14-22),
- the urban metropolitan area of Tampa and at Beth-El Farmworker Ministry in the small town of Wimauma (June 15-20),
- and to a Native American town near Chinle in the upper corner of Arizona (July 12-19).

Youth and adults will be engaging in homeless ministry, rehab of houses, building ramps and making a house safe, warm and dry, leading Vacation Bible School, working on the manse at the Presbyterian Church in Chinle in preparation for welcoming a new full-time pastor, and ministering to other youth. Above all they will be witnessing to the transforming power of the love of God.



In addition, countless other church mission trips will happen in places like, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, and Niagara Falls, New York, to name a few.

Please pray for all the mission trips that will happen this summer as the people of Peace River Presbytery work to share the love of Jesus Christ.

Please continue to pray for the 218th General Assembly

- This meeting is to be held June 21 through June 28, 2008 in San Jose, California. For more information, go to www.pcusa.org/ga218.
- **General Assembly Commissioners** from Peace River Presbytery: Rev. Valerie Bell, Rev. Clint Cottrell, Rev. Russ Hickman, Elder Sally Kirby, Elder Lee Martin, Elder Julia Williams, Youth Advisory Delegate Hannah Neeley
- **Commissioners and advisory delegates will elect a Moderator** the first day of the Assembly. The candidates are:
 - The Rev. Bill Teng
 - The Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow
 - The Rev. Carl Mazza
 - Elder Roger Shoemaker
- **Four Standing for General Assembly Stated Clerk Position**
The Stated Clerk Nominating Committee announced three challengers stepping forward to stand for General Assembly Stated Clerk against the committee's nominee, Gradye Parsons:
 - Rev. Winfield Jones,
 - Rev. Edward Koster,
 - Rev. Dr. William Tarbell.
- For up-to-the-minute General Assembly details, log onto the [General Assembly 218 website](http://www.pcusa.org/ga218).



A New Web Page!

Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, has a new web site! Please go to www.npcsarasota.com and check it out!

Main Event Update

Mark your calendar for Saturday, March 7, 2009 for our MAIN EVENT – a leadership training event in many, many areas. We promise new ideas, great fellowship, and a thought-provoking keynote to help you share the Gospel in 2009 and beyond.

Sharing Resources

By the time you receive this, June will be upon us, school will be out and that can only mean that VBS is right around the corner! For a number of years now, we have worked to connect churches that are using the same VBS curriculum to share resources, decorations, and supplies. If you would like to participate, please e-mail the following information to Candy Reid at candy@peacriverpresbytery.org: Name of curriculum used, date of VBS, and contact person with phone number.



MORE MISSION PERSONNEL PROPOSED

GAC-approved budget increase will go to General Assembly

For the first time in 50 years, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is poised to increase its corps of international mission workers.

The proposed 2009-2010 General Assembly Mission Budget, approved by the General Assembly Council (GAC) in April and going on to the General Assembly this summer, includes funds to increase the number of mission workers from the current 196 to 215 in 2009 and to 220 in 2010.



Last fall's Mission Challenge generated a net of \$500,000 for international mission. Building on that response, some \$2 million in Extra Commitment Opportunity (ECO) gifts for world mission are anticipated each of the next two years.

To contribute, visit www.pcusa.org/mission.

Highlights
May 22, 2008
Stated Meeting of Peace River Presbytery
Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton

Many thanks go to the members and staff of Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton, for all their hard work in preparing for and helping the day of the Stated Meeting.



We were privileged to have as our **guest preacher and keynote speaker Tom Long**. Dr. Long is a Presbyterian minister who has taught preaching at Columbia and Princeton Seminaries, and is currently a professor at Candler School of Theology of Emory University. He has also written a number of books on preaching. The emphasis for this Stated Meeting was

worship, and those attending had the opportunity to participate in the renewal of their baptismal vows.

The breakout groups for this meeting were:

- a brief preview of the 218th General Assembly and how General Assembly works led by John Cairns;
- the work of Coalition of Immokalee Workers led by Noelle Damico;
- Mission, Vision, Priorities and Staff Redesign led by the Personnel Committee;
- Problem Solving for Clerks of Session led by the Records and Overtures Committee;
- and a question and answer time led by Tom Long.

The commissioners from Peace River Presbytery to the 218th General Assembly were commissioned:

Rev. Valerie Bell, Burnt Store, Punta Gorda
Rev. Clint Cottrell, Cypress Lake, Fort Myers
Rev. Russ Hickman, Holy Trinity, North Fort Myers
Elder Sally Kirby, Northminster, Sarasota
Elder Lee Martin, Palma Sola, Bradenton
Elder Julia Williams, Bee Ridge, Sarasota
Youth Delegate Hannah Neeley, First, Arcadia

The Trustees' report included one recommendation which was approved: to permit Braden River Presbyterian Church to increase their line of credit. It was also shared that Peace River Presbytery has received a bequest from the estate of a former member of First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota. The Board decided to use the funds to start a Peace River Presbytery endowment fund with this first portion to be restricted, as instructed, for the support of scholarships.

The **Personnel Committee** is in the process of discerning how to move forward with the Presbytery staff design. Those attending the meeting were asked to give input using two different forms.

Chris Adams, Chair of Leadership and Congregational Development, announced that the next **Main Event** for leadership training will be on Saturday, March 7, 2009.

During the **Nominations Committee's report**, the following were elected to serve on various committees and boards:

Mission & Justice: Paul Fahnstock, First, Bonita Springs, and Frank Ebetino, Venice, Venice

Preparation for Ministry: Debby Wendell, Church of the Palms, Sarasota

Presbyterian Homes & Housing Foundation: Bob Rea, Honorably Retired; Ann McFadyen, First, Sarasota; Dennis Reid, Whitfield Estates, Sarasota; Dick Wyke, Palma Sola, Bradenton; and Ward Powers, Vanderbilt, Naples.

Camps & Conferences: David Landers, Westminster, Bradenton

Motions from the **Committee on Preparation for Ministry** were approved:

- That Jean Sparks and Elizabeth Shannon both be approved for ordination, pending receipt of a call.
- That Howard Biddulph be removed from the covenant relationship with Preparation for Ministry.

A service of Honorable Retirement was conducted for Rev. C. William Hull, with his new status being effective May 31, 2008.

The Presbytery approved the following recommendations from the **Committee on Ministry**:

- **Rev. Dr. Maynard Pittendreigh** as Pastor of Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach, effective June 2, 2008.
- **Rev. Walter Charles Griffith** as Interim Pastor for Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton, effective June 2, 2008.
- **Silvana Franca**, called as Evangelist to the Brazilian Community, to be ordained on Sunday, June 8, 2008 at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples at 7:00 p.m.



The Committee also announced:

- 2008 is year 2 in the new Triennial Visits program. A subcommittee will visit half of the churches and half of the pastors in Peace River Presbytery.
- Growing Healthy Leaders and Congregations Workshop is scheduled for January 8-10, 2009.

The next Stated Meeting will be Saturday, August 23, 2008, at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda.

Great News!



The Rev. Noelle Damico was present at the May 22, 2008 meeting of Presbytery and brought important information on the PCUSA Fair Food Campaign where she serves as the director. She shared the good news of Burger King's willingness to begin talks with the hope that they will join YUM! Brand foods and McDonald's in the quest to receive 1 penny more per pound of tomatoes picked by farm workers. Great news! On Friday, May 23, the CIW and Burger King Corporation signed an agreement to improve farmworkers' wages and enforce human rights standards in the fields! Noelle was able to be present in Washington, DC, where a signing ceremony and press conference took place in the US Capitol. More news will be available soon on www.ciw-online.org and www.pcusa.org/fairfood.

If your Mission Committee would like to receive regular updates from Noelle, please contact Candy Reid to add your name to the list.

Is your congregation a FAIR TRADE congregation?

Fair Trade congregations agree to use coffee from Fair Trade Co-Ops in all of their programs. Fair Trade Coffee helps to ensure that farmers are paid a fair wage for their coffee.



In addition, the coffee is grown and harvested in ways that protect the earth and encourage future growth.

If you would like to consider becoming a Fair Trade congregation, please contact [Candy Reid](#) for more information.

PDA RESPONDS TO MYANMAR AND CHINA DISASTERS

OGHS funds assist survivors

[Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) has committed \$100,000 from One Great Hour of Sharing and designated funds to provide emergency assistance to survivors of the devastating tropical cyclone Nargis that hit Myanmar the first weekend in May. News reports predict the number of deaths could total as many as 80,000. U.N. officials report that close to 1 million people are homeless. The low-lying Irrawaddy Delta region, the country's main agricultural area, suffered the most severe damage. PDA's funds will support humanitarian relief

items for disaster survivors. The response is focused on food first, from \$40,000 to \$50,000 in food aid, then shelter.

PDA is working as a member of ecumenical partnerships Action by Churches Together (ACT) and Church World Service (CWS). In addition to immediate relief operations, a comprehensive assessment is ongoing. Gifts for this disaster relief can be designated to DR000145-Myanmar/Burma.

PDA is also responding to the earthquake that struck China May 12. The PCUSA's mission partner in China, the Amity Foundation, is responding to the disaster; Amity staff members have been assessing the damage in Chengdu and other affected areas.

Funds from One Great Hour of Sharing and designated giving will be used to help Amity purchase rice, quilts, and shelter material for the earthquake survivors. Amity has already provided approximately \$143,000 for the purchase and provision of drinking water and food. PDA has established a special account to receive contributions for China earthquake relief: DR000138.

For more information visit, PDA's web site which is <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/>.

Is a group from your church going on a mission trip this summer? We would love to include a short summary of your experiences in an upcoming issue of *The Interpreter*!

This newsletter is available for viewing anytime at www.peaceriverpresbytery.org.
(Follow link to "Presbytery Publications")

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