



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

OCTOBER 2009

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

Recently I read a book titled *Five Questions That Change Everything*. It is the summary of the intensive five day leadership workshop of John Scherer, who is one of the country's top 100 management consultants.

Someone asked him why he didn't write on the five **answers** that change everything. He responded that: *Questions are much more powerful than answers. As long as you are asking questions, you are open to input, discovery, and growth.*

That got me thinking about the five questions that a church, any church, could ask that would change everything. One of those questions might be: **So, tell me, why is this church here?**

Each of us at some point has had what I call the "so... **why** am I here???" moment. When I was in seminary, a couple I had known from my home church invited Linda and me over for dinner, which we thought was thoughtful. After dinner we sat down in their living room, only to find out that the reason we were there was to get their sales pitch to join their Amway team. We looked at each other with that so... *why are we here...* look. Our experience did not match our expectations.

It is a good thing to ask the "so... **why** are we here question," on a periodic basis. It helps bring focus and insures that we are doing what we are supposed to do.

What do you think a visitor would say to a friend or spouse as they are driving home on a Sunday from your church for the first time, and one says to the other: "**so... tell me again - why did we go there today?**"

In the Acts 16:5 Initiative, the 17 congregations that have journeyed together for the past 2 years have had a conversation between the pastor and a vision team related to that question, and questions like it. When we are clear about our vision, and have aligned all the programs of a church around that vision, there will be no doubt in the minds of a visitor why that church is there.

I would invite you to do an experiment. Tell a friend, preferably non-churched, that you are doing an experiment, a study. Ask them to visit your church, and then share with you everything they learned and saw when they were there, especially their answer to the question of: why is this church here?

Just an idea... I would be curious what you may learn if you do this experiment. Let me know.

On another note: one of the reasons we are here is to live out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, which is why I believe so many of you have responded so graciously to the Covenant Partner Special Appeal. To date almost \$90,000 has been received and pledged. Thank you for your generosity. Our goal is to raise \$92,000 to restore the Covenant Partner funding for 2009 and an additional \$58,000 to insure that the board of Beth-El can keep Misi3n Peniel open in 2010.

Thank you!!! Thank you... thank you on behalf of Cedarkirk and the farmworkers at Beth-El in Wimauma, Arcadia, and Immokalee (Misi3n Peniel). 100% of monies collected in this Special Appeal will go to our Covenant Partners. Our goal of \$150,000 will allow Misi3n Peniel to continue. If you want to make an individual contribution, as some have done, please send the checks to PRP Special Appeal, 5600 Peace River Rd, North Port, FL 34287.

With gratitude, thanksgiving, and wondering how one question can change everything for your church,

Grace and Peace,

Graham

Graham Hart, General Presbyter



**Special Appeal for
Covenant Partners
Cedarkirk &
Beth-El/Misi3n Peniel**



**Peace River Presbytery
in the Synod of South Atlantic
of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
invites you to join in the worship of God
as we celebrate a new church**

Peace Presbyterian

**and
as we ordain, install, and commission
elders and pastors.**

**We give thanks to the Spirit of God
for calling the charter membership into being
and for providing the support
this new congregation has needed
to sustain faithful Christian ministry
in the Lakewood Ranch area.**

**Sunday, October 18, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.
State College of Florida
7131 Professional Parkway E.
Lakewood Ranch, FL 34240**

Reception to follow

Please join us in prayer:

- October 4 – First, Punta Gorda
- October 11 – Bee Ridge, Sarasota
- October 18 – Church of the Palms, Sarasota
- October 25 – First, Sarasota



Committee Highlight of the Month

**Peace River Presbytery
Records and Overtures**

By Ray Angle, Chair



The Records and Overtures Committee (R&O) is comprised of six persons, nominated by the Nominating Committee of the Presbytery and elected at a Peace River Presbytery (PRP) meeting to serve a term of three years. The current members are Rev. Phil Bliss, Church of the Palms, Sarasota; Sally Kirby, Northminster, Sarasota; Dick Fernstrum, First, Sarasota; Bobbi Bancroft, Cypress Lake, Fort Myers; Wayne Largent, Community, Englewood, as well as myself from Church of the Palms.

The committee has three primary responsibilities one of which is to receive, review, process and make recommendations to the Presbytery on all overtures received from within the Presbytery and from the General Assembly when it meets every two years.

We are also responsible to obtain host churches for Presbytery Meetings four times each year, in February, May, August, and November, dividing them equally between the north and the south churches of our Presbytery.

Has your church hosted a Presbytery meeting lately?

Another responsibility is in accordance with the Book of Order G-9.0407d(1) which states *every governing body above a Session shall review the records of the proceedings of the next lower governing body. Presbyteries shall review the records of Sessions annually and if a Session shall fail to submit its records for this purpose, the Presbytery shall order them to be produced at a certain time.* In our effort to accomplish this, we are responsible for arranging for host churches in PRP to make their facilities available during October each year for the reading of church records for the churches within the Presbytery. These readings are done by all Clerks or their representatives on a Saturday morning designated by the committee, from approximately 9:00 a.m. to noon.

If any of you would like to become a member of the R&O Committee, please contact the [Nominating Committee](#).

Ray Angle, Chair of Records and Overtures

Rev. Mark Koenig, the director of the Peacemaking Program of PC(USA), will be in our Presbytery on the following dates. Each of these gatherings is open to the entire Presbytery.

- October 1 – Thursday 2:00pm – Pine Shores, Sarasota
- October 2 – Friday morning 10:00am – Vanderbilt, Naples
- October 2 - Friday afternoon – Misión Peniel/ Immokalee – contact Miguel Estrada
- October 3 – Saturday 10:00a.m.- Community, Englewood
- October 3 – Lunch at Boca Royale --- RSVP to Frank Hutchison (941-716-5549) - hutchison57@comcast.net - **Note:** A member of Community is graciously covering lunch (seating limited).
- October 4 – Community, Englewood – worship

<http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/index.htm>



We are pleased to have a PCUSA missionary to **Turkey** visiting our Presbytery from October 2 until October 9. **(Because this individual is serving an area of the world where there are security risks and concerns, no information about her is to be put on web sites or in printed material.)**

Speaking Schedule:

- October 3 – Holy Trinity, North Fort Myers
- October 4 – First, Port Charlotte
- October 5 – DAY OFF
- October 6 – Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota
Northminster, Sarasota
Faith, Cape Coral
- October 7 – Church of the Palms, Sarasota
- October 8 – First, Bonita Springs

Open Invitation to Peace River Presbytery on Thursday, October 8

Mission Dinner and Program at First, Bonita Springs
6:30-7:30 pm – Dinner catered by Olympia Café of Bonita Springs: Mediterranean Cuisine, \$10.00 per person

7:30-8:30 pm - Mission Program with PCUSA Missionary to Turkey

RSVP by Monday, October 5 to Nancy Oedy at First Presbyterian, Bonita Springs, 239-992-3233

For more information about the rest of the schedule for our guest missionary, please call the Presbytery office.



Theme:
Branches of the same vine
When:
October 22-24, 2009
Where:
Cincinnati, Ohio

For more information, go to <http://www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration/>

The Association of Presbyterian Church Educators

Have you signed up for the 2010 event?

For more information:
www.apcenet.org
apcenet@aol.com
966-338-7737

Peace River Presbytery has been participating in the Acts 16:5 Initiative for 2 years, 2008 and 2009.

Under the leadership of Dr. Stan Ott of Vital Churches Institute, teams from participating churches learned many valuable transformational tools to guide their congregations into the future.



17 of our congregations completed the 2 years

- Braden River, Bradenton
- Burnt Store, Punta Gorda
- Covenant, Fort Myers
- Cypress Lake, Fort Myers
- First, Arcadia
- First, Bonita Springs
- First, Port Charlotte
- First, Punta Gorda
- First, Sarasota
- Kirkwood, Bradenton
- New Life Presbyterian Fellowship, Naples
- Northminster, Sarasota
- Peace, Lakewood Ranch
- Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota
- St. Paul's, North Port
- Whitfield Estates, Sarasota
- Wintergarden, Port Charlotte

Mark your calendars!

MAIN EVENT

Saturday, March 13, 2010

Theme: The Spirituality of Aging

More details to follow!

Churches Sharing Ideas

Would you like to give a boost to your mission contributions? **Hope United Church, Fort Myers**, has a program called "5 on the 5th". Every year there are months that have five Sundays. On the fifth Sundays, a second offering envelope is available to give 5 of something: five quarters, five nickels, five dollars, fifty dollars, etc. The contributions are donated to a mission project voted on by session. This is also a good way to involve children and youth in a giving program.



Is there a mission idea that your church would like to share? Please send your article to [Joan Mock](#) by the 15th of the month.

Home improvement
A monthly column for the PC(USA)
by the Rev. Gradye Parsons
General Assembly Stated Clerk

LOUISVILLE - September 11, 2009.

The default television channel at our house is HGTV. It is a channel that focuses primarily on home improvement or home replacement.



The home improvements that are featured range from a new paint job and throw pillows to major renovations. Given that the improvements generally follow a life change of the home owner, the work is usually centered on a hope that new space will mean a new way of living.

This month, the proposed new Form of Government will be available for discussion across the church. To me, this work is like a home improvement project, not home replacement.

The basic structure of our Presbyterian life together - the foundation and load-bearing walls - is all there in the proposal. What is new is the remodeled space to allow the church to move into a new life together.

Why is improvement needed?

The current Form of Government is more than 25 years old. The world in which it was created is so different from today's world in which we minister. Multicultural understandings, personal computers - digital everything - and the all-encompassing Web have created a very different context for ministry.

So, we need to renovate our polity space. We need to knock down some walls of regulation and build room to allow newness to happen. That newness could bring some new ways of living together and some new visions for our future.

The HGTV home improvement shows usually have three parts. First comes the sharing of vision between home owner and designer. Second, the home owner's anxiety surfaces about the changes. Finally, the project is completed.

The Form of Government revision process has had similar stages. Perhaps we are nearing the final phase. I hope you will take the time to look over the proposal carefully.

Henry Ward Beecher said, "Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith."

Let's approach this renovation with the handle of faith.

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09778.htm>

The **proposed** new Form of Government for the Presbyterian Church (USA) is now available.
<http://www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/>

Forgotten, but not gone

One year after Hurricane Ike, Texas still in desperate need

by [Bethany Furkin](#)
Presbyterian News Service
LOUISVILLE - September 11, 2009

When Hurricane Ike blew through Southeast Texas a year ago, thousands of Americans were forever impacted.

And thousands more didn't seem to notice.

Ike was the third most destructive storm to ever make landfall in the United States. According to the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#), Ike came ashore over Galveston Island, in the Gulf of Mexico, on September 13, 2008. Ike was a Category 2 hurricane, meaning that very strong winds caused widespread damage. Winds were at 110 miles an hour and the storm surge was estimated to have reached 20 feet in some areas.

But while the storm was swirling in Texas, the rest of the United States was facing news of other kinds. The 2008 presidential election was in full swing, and the financial system was reaching a breaking point.

"The timing of Ike was horrible for tens of thousands of Americans," said Randy Ackley, coordinator of [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#). "You have whole neighborhoods that aren't there and no one is talking about it. People just don't know the extent of the damage in Texas."

Within one year, PDA received \$24 million in donations for Katrina. For Ike, it's received about 1 percent of that - less than \$300,000, Ackley said.

TO READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE, GO TO:
<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09780.htm>

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

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