

PRESBYTERY OF SAN DIEGO CALLED MEETING – July 15, 2008

The Stated meeting of the Presbytery of San Diego at Christ Rancho La Costa Presbyterian Church, was convened by the Moderator, Elder Elizabeth Crews at 2 p.m. She led the presbytery in prayer. The Rev. Jan Cook, host pastor, welcomed the presbytery.

ROLL: It was VOTED that the roll would be taken by card, and that those registering during the meeting, together with corresponding members, and those requesting leaves of absence (when granted) constitute the roll. A quorum was present.

	<u>CONGREGATION</u>	<u>MINISTERS</u>	<u>ECCLESIASTICAL DESIGNATION</u>	<u>ELDERS</u>
1	Brawley, First			
2	Carlsbad, Christ Church of La Costa	J. Y. Cook	103	Laura Mitchell Gerry Tayler
3	Chula Vista, Chula Vista	R. Davis	101	Hugo Carbajal
4	Coronado, Graham Memorial			Frank Wuerfel Langdon Smith
5	El Cajon, First	S. W. Locke	101	Ruth Smith Anne Clark
6	El Cajon, Fletcher Hills	K. Womack	101	Les Campbell
7	Escondido, Westminster			Carole Ostrander Dave Cumming
8	Fallbrook, Fallbrook			
9	La Jolla, La Jolla	P. Cunningham M. Sedgwick	101 193	Bobby Foushee Matt Hurley Marcia Borgman Mary Kinyon
10	La Jolla, Mt. Soledad	J. Moser E. Piper	101 797	Jane Camerer
11	La Mesa, La Mesa			
12	Lakeside, Community			
13	Oceanside, First	E. Wilson	103	Paul Hefner Barry Farrell
14	Rancho Santa Fe, Village Community	S. Mitchell	105	David Buck
15	San Diego, Christ United	E. Girod	105	Al Littlefield
16	San Diego, Faith			David Helkenn
17	San Diego, First	M. E. Walls	103	Maurice Caskey Marilyn Carnes Peggy Baker
18	San Diego, Korean			Kichull Kim
19	San Diego, Linda Vista			Steve Awe
20	San Diego, Mira Mesa			
21	San Diego, Northminster	M. Watson	101	
22	San Diego, Pacific Beach	A. Deuel	191	Jane Kay
23	San Diego, Palisades			
24	San Diego, Point Loma Community	J. Powell	101	Kristine Zortman
25	San Diego, Rancho Bernardo Community	B. B. Humphrey N. Nybo R. Sparling	101 193 103	Lois Sheldon Jeanne Pochel Polly Purcifull

		J. Farell	103	
26	San Diego, Southeast			
27	San Diego, Taiwanese Presbyterian Church	Shang Nan Tsai	101	
28	San Diego, Westminster	T. Wolfe	191	Sue Randerson
29	Solana Beach, Solana Beach	M. McClenahan T. D. Theriault	101 103	Russ Love Dana Jacobs Barry Billingsley Bob Rantzow
30	Spring Valley, Trinity			
31	Vista, Grace	T. Straeter W. C. Bynagte	101 797	Joseph Purser
32	Westmorland, Community	E. Crews	108	Ruth Hoskins

BOLD = Attended Meeting = excused A = Alternate

<u>SPECIAL OFFICES</u>		<u>ECC DESIGNATION</u>
* Executive Presbyter	Clark Cowden	302
* Stated Clerk	Linda Therien	303
* Sudanese-American NCD	P. Lual	301
* Iglesia Church	Efrain Romero	301

INQUIRERS & CANDIDATES

Jim Marian of Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian Church
Taeler Morgan of Westminster Escondido Presbyterian Church

MODERATOR

* Elizabeth Crews

* John Lucas	Chair, Budget, Property, and Finance Committee
* Michael Williams	Chair, Committee on Ministry
* Bill Tayler	Chair of the Presbytery Missions Committee
Steve Elliott	Webmaster
Steve Rybicki	Director of Administration & Mission Services
Machelle May	Presbytery Secretary/Receptionist

* = voting member

VISITORS AND GUESTS:

Elder David Whitmoyer, Westminster Escondido Presbyterian Church
Ann Calvert, Christ Presbyterian Church, La Costa
Sande Rajcic, First Presbyterian Church, Oceanside
Lori and Jim Meals, First Presbyterian Church, San Diego
Marilyn Helkenn, Faith Presbyterian Church, San Diego
Rod Rodriguez, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church
Eloise Housman, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church
Tim Hanna, Youth Advisory Delegate to General Assembly/Point Loma Community
Rob Hanna, Pt Loma Community Presbyterian Church
Bill and Marian Abrell, La Jolla Presbyterian Church
Pat Kellenbarger, Chair, Presbyterian Council for Chaplains & Military Personnel/Solana Beach
Owen Wickstrand, La Jolla Presbyterian Church
Dottie Griswald, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church

OTHER MINISTERS

K. C. Bealo, Sr.	299	T. A. Jasso	299	D. C. Smith	299
M. Cross Sexton	299	H. Jonas	299	W. A. Soldwisch	405
C. Hammond	299	P. Powell	797	P. Weiler	299
		J. H. Robertson	109	W. G. Wollam	299

Attendance:

Ministers	38
Elders	41
Corresponding	0
Inquirers/Candidates	2
Visitors/Others	19
Total	100

Moderator Crews declared the purpose of the meeting as follows:

- To receive and act on reports of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry;
- To receive and act on reports of the Committee on Ministry;
- To receive and act on the report from the Presbytery Nominating Committee;
- To receive and act on the report of the Missions Committee;
- To receive and act on recommendations of the Moderator of Presbytery;
- To receive and act on recommendations of the Budget Property & Finance Committee;
- To receive the report of the Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegate to the 218th meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The purpose of the meeting and the consent agenda were read and approved.

Introduction: Executive Presbyter, Clark Cowden, introduced Elder Steve Rybicki of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Escondido as the new Director of Administration & Mission Services. Mr. Rybicki joined the presbytery staff on July 8, 2008.

Consent Agenda

The following business was voted on consent:

Report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry

1. The Committee recommended the following be confirmed by the Presbytery to serve as Readers for the 2008-2009 Ordination Examinations of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Rev. Dr. Steve Locke
Rev. Jan Cook
Elder Gerry Tayler

2. The Committee recommended that Daniel Ambler, a member of the Fletcher Hills Presbyterian Church be enrolled as an Inquirer retroactive to May 13, 2008.
3. The Committee recommended that Kathryn "Kate" Satterstrom, a member of Christ Rancho La Costa be enrolled as an Inquirer retroactive to June 10, 2008.
4. The Committee reported that Candidate Kim Dawsey-Richardson has passed her Final Assessment and has permission of the committee to seek a call.

5. The Committee reported that Candidate Jake Medcalf has passed his Final Assessment and has permission of the committee to seek a call.

Pastor John Moser, Chair

Report of the Committee on Ministry

1. The Committee recommended that the Presbytery declare that Discovery Valley Church is no longer a new church development project of the Presbytery of San Diego.

Elder Michael Williams, Chair

The following business was voted by voice of the Presbytery

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommendation:

1. That Inquirer Jim Marian of Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian Church be advanced to Candidate retroactive to June 10, 2008.
2. That Inquirer Taeler Morgan of Westminster Escondido Presbyterian Church be advanced to Candidate retroactive May 13, 2008.

Following the vote to approve both parties, the Moderator of Presbytery asked the questions required by the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and delivered a brief charge. The Moderator invited members of the respective churches to come forward and prayer was offered for both Mr. Marian and Ms. Morgan.

Pastor John Moser, Chair

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the Nominating Committee recommendation:

1. That Jeanne Pochel be nominated to the Permanent Judicial Committee, Class of 2009

Elder Doris Pate, Chair

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the Committee on Ministry recommendations:

1. That the Presbytery of San Diego examine Candidate Jake Medcalf for ordination in order that he might receive and accept the call of the La Jolla Presbyterian Church to be their Designated Associate Pastor for Mission & Outreach, contingent on action of the congregation scheduled for July 13, 2008. His *Statement of Faith* can be found at the end of the minutes.
2. To approve the following terms of call for Jake Medcalf as Designated Associate Pastor of La Jolla Presbyterian Church effective September 21st.

Salary/Housing	\$59,050
Board of Pensions	18,601
Study Leave	1,500
Mileage Reimbursement @ 48.5 per mile	
Study Leave – 2 weeks per year	
Vacation – 4 weeks per year	

The principles of the Equal Opportunity Employment Plan as adopted by the Presbytery were followed.

3. Presbytery voted to approve the following Administrative Commission to ordain and install Jake Medcalf at La Jolla Presbyterian Church on September 21, 2008:

Elder Elizabeth Crews, Moderator, First San Diego
Elder Dan Peddie, La Jolla
Elder Em Cummins, Pt. Loma Community
Rev. Michael Sedgwick
Rev. Paul Cunningham
Rev. Dr. Clark Cowden

4. That the Rev. Dr. Alan Deuel be called as Pastor, from Designated Pastor, of the Pacific Beach Presbyterian Church effective July 15, 2008. A congregational meeting was held on June 22, 2008 where this matter was voted (52/2) by the congregation. A copy of Dr. Deuel's *Statement of Faith* can be found at the end of the minutes.

Terms of call are as follows:

Salary	\$35,360
Housing	39,520
Medical Deductible	850
Continuing Education	1,400
Books & Expenses	1,000
Auto Allowance	1,577
Board of Pensions	24,073
Total	\$103,780

4 weeks vacation/2 weeks study leave

5. That the following Administrative Commission be approved to install Dr. Deuel on August 3, 2008, at 3:30 pm at the church:

Elder Elizabeth Crews, Moderator (San Diego First)
Elder Jane Kay (Pacific Beach)
Elder Linda Therien (Palisades)
Rev. Martha Cross Sexton
Rev. John Moser

As corresponding: Rev. Dr. Larry Boles (San Gabriel Presbytery)

Elder Michael Williams, Chair

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the Missions Committee recommendation:

1. That the Presbytery establish an Administrative Commission (AC) for the purpose of creating a vehicle whereby Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana can receive members into their congregation. The steering committee of Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana, after consultation with the presbytery missions committee, presented this motion to the Presbytery of San Diego for their approval:

The Presbytery of San Diego, in determining its strategy for mission with Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana, hereby created an Administrative Commission, in accord with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA):

1. The Administrative Commission is established in accordance with G 9.0503a(2)(a);
2. The Administrative Commission shall provide for the examination and reception of new members; in accordance with G-10.0102b, which says,

“to receive members into the church upon profession of faith, upon reaffirmation of faith in Jesus Christ, or upon satisfactory certification of transfer of church membership, provided that membership shall not be denied any person because of race, economic or social circumstances, or any other reason not related to profession of faith”.

3. The Administrative Commission shall report to the Presbytery through the missions committee of the Presbytery of San Diego Presbytery twice a year.

Elder Bill Tayler, Chair

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the recommendations of the Presbytery Moderator to serve on the Administrative Commission for Iglesia Presbiteriana Hispana:

Elder Christy Zatkan, La Jolla
Elder Gerry Tayler, Christ La Costa
Elder Rod Rodriguez, Solana Beach
Elder Ruth Hoskins, Westmorland
Rev. Brian Reed
Rev. Bill Soldwisch
Rev. Dr. Walter Ray

The Presbytery VOTED to approve the Budget Property & Finance Committee recommendation:

1. That the Presbytery approve a loan of up to \$75,000 for use by the Executive Presbyter, Rev. Dr. Clark Cowden in order that he be able to secure permanent housing within San Diego County - final terms to be presented to the Presbytery for approval.

Background: At the time that Rev. Dr. Clark Cowden was called to the Presbytery of San Diego as their next Executive Presbyter, one of the understandings was that the Presbytery would petition the Synod of Southern California & Hawaii to assist in a mortgage loan. (This was the same process used with Rev. Dr. Andy Smith at the time of his call to San Diego.) The Presbytery did apply to the Synod for the loan but the request was denied. In order to keep with the intent of the original call to Dr. Cowden it is essential that the Presbytery assist him financially in this process.

The Presbytery voted to receive the following financial summary of the Presbytery finances for 2008.

As of May 31, 2008, the Presbytery of San Diego had:

\$246,032 in general, unrestricted reserves, and
\$1,757,912 in restricted reserves.

Year to date, there is a deficit of \$18,970.

Per capita giving is coming in very well. Mission giving is coming in very slowly. All churches are encouraged to send in more of their mission giving soon, to help your presbytery continue to provide the ministry that is being requested of us.

Regarding the four missions of the presbytery year to date,

Iglesia has a deficit of \$17,837

Presbyterian Urban Ministries (PUM) has a deficit of \$11,488

Reality Changers has a surplus of \$2,655, and

The Sudanese ministry has a deficit of \$14,033.

Iglesia, PUM, and Reality Changers all have designated reserve accounts to cover their deficits. The Sudanese ministry does not. Their deficit is paid for out of the general, unrestricted reserves of the presbytery.

Elder John Lucas, Chair

General Assembly Commissioner's Report Youth Advisory Delegate Report

The Presbytery of San Diego was represented by three elder and three minister commissioners and one Youth Advisory Delegate (YAD) at the 218th General Assembly in San Jose, California. The assembly met from June 21 – June 28, 2008. The Presbytery had a time of Q&A with the commissioners and YAD and experiences were shared - both joys and concerns.

Their individual written reports can be found at the end of these minutes.

The Presbytery VOTED to adjourn at 5:30 pm and were dismissed with prayer by the Moderator.

Elder Carole Ostrander, Minute Clerk for
Elder Linda Therien, Stated Clerk

STATEMENT OF FAITH
JAKE MEDCALF

I believe that out of great love God created. He created everything both in the heavens and the earth. This God stands alone and has no equal, and this God is revealed throughout the creation, the Bible, and in the person of Jesus Christ. God exists in three unified yet distinct parts, God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

God deeply desires a relationship with the created. Humanity finds its ultimate purpose in obedient relationship to its Creator, the one triune God. Yet through the disobedience of the first humans that relationship was shattered and a state of separation between humanity and God formed. This separation the Bible calls sin and leaves humanity completely lost. Unable to redeem our own selves, God out of His great love intervened so at last the relationship between God and humanity could be restored.

I believe that God sent His one and only Son Jesus Christ to reconcile humanity and God, to break the power of sin, and to redeem the Creation. Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary. Born both fully human and fully divine the character of God is revealed fully in Jesus Christ. This Christ became the ultimate sacrifice for our disobedience by going willingly to die a cursed death upon a Cross. After three days Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the power of God. The Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection together form the amazing purpose of God found in Jesus Christ, the reconciliation of humanity.

By a process of repentance, or turning from our sin and accepting what Jesus Christ did through his life, death, and resurrection we can enter in a life giving relationship with the one and only triune God. We are saved by the grace of God alone. It is our function to accept this free gift of Jesus Christ.

The grand story of redemption is found within the Bible which is the authoritative word of God. It was inspired by God and written down by humans. This Bible, through the power of the Holy Spirit, illuminates the grand plan of God as well as gives all good instruction for our lives following Christ.

After accepting the amazing grace and free gift of God found through Jesus Christ, we are called to follow God in obedience. This is made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. The church is the gathering of followers both universally and in particular for the purpose of fulfilling the mission that God has called us to, the salvation of humankind and the shelter and nurture of the followers of Christ. We are called to serve God by joining His work in that mission.

There are many gifts God has given to His existing church. The Sacraments are visible signs of the invisible grace. There is a holy mystery experienced within the Sacraments that draws us closer to God. Baptism reminds us that we are born again into new life. The Lord's Supper reminds us that we are completely dependent upon God for salvation, that it was Christ whose body was broken and whose blood was spilt for our salvation. God also gives his Church the Holy Spirit as counselor and guide. It is the Holy Spirit that uplifts, sustains, and encourages individual believers in their life of faith. The Holy Spirit prompts the church universal on to action in the world and to care for the oppressed. These are the gifts given to the church for its continuing mission in the world.

Statement of Faith

Rev. Dr. Alan W. Deuel

I affirm the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus is my Lord and Savior and Lord of the Church and Lord of the world. I affirm that God is triune in God's very being, one God in three persons, whose being has been revealed to the world as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that God, creator of the heavens and earth, became a human being in Jesus of Nazareth and that Christ is the fullness and completeness of God's self-revelation to the world.

I affirm God's sovereignty in that God's purposes are being accomplished in this world, despite signs to the contrary. I affirm that God is active in the world redeeming, reconciling and guiding the world in accord with God's plan toward establishing a new heaven and earth.

I affirm the good news of God's salvation in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, a salvation that calls people to faith and obedience in Christian community. I affirm that because of sin humanity turned away from God and that God sent Jesus Christ as the atoning sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the world. Through repentance and faith, we receive the forgiveness of sins. We become a new creation and enter into a new relationship with God in Christ. Salvation is by God's grace through faith.

I affirm the unique authority and inspiration of Scripture which is a written witness to revelation. I believe that the Holy Spirit speaks in and through the words of Scripture in preaching and teaching and that Scripture is the foundation for what we believe and do.

I affirm the church, the body of Christ, as a covenant community into which we enter into covenant with God and one another. The priesthood of all believers refers to Christ's calling, imparting spiritual gifts and commissioning believers in the body of Christ for service as well as salvation. The Holy Spirit empowers and equips believers to participate in Christ's ministry and mission in the world. I affirm that the Church is commissioned to proclaim the gospel of God's saving love and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

I affirm that the Church is reformed and always reforming by the Spirit in its calling to both respect its tradition and to be open to change, creative possibilities and innovation as the Holy Spirit leads it into the future. I affirm that the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs and seals of the promises of the Gospel. Baptism signifies the washing away of sin, being incorporated into Christ, dying with Christ, rebirth and beginning a new spiritual journey. In the Lord's Supper, we are spiritually nourished by the bread and cup, commune with both believers and the living Christ, remember Christ's death and anticipate His coming in glory. I affirm God's great purpose that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Dear Friends of the Presbytery of San Diego,

Steve Locke, Minister Commissioner: I had the privilege of being a commissioner and a moderator of a committee for the 218th General Assembly. The committee that was entrusted to me was *Christian Education and Church Growth*. The two most exciting items up for discussion were a recommendation from the GAC, “*Growing God’s Church Deep and Wide*” and an overture from Grace Presbytery to “*Develop adolescent human sexuality resources.*”

Growing God’s Church Deep and Wide

The recommendation of the General Assembly Council, encouraged by Tom Taylor, was to develop a strategy of networking with churches and presbyteries that are developing creative ways of doing *missional* work in the church. This was not a recommendation to develop a strategy from the top down, but to find a way that churches and presbyteries can share information together for the work of God’s church. The rationale behind this endeavor was to use what is already being done across the country to benefit our efforts to grow the church deep and wide. Therefore, the development of a website for interactive sharing and receiving information will be needed. The cost is minimal but the benefits could be enormous. The committee recommended this and the assembly approved.

Adolescent Human Sexuality Resources

Two years ago the denominational resource for adolescent sexuality was pulled off the market. This was in large part due to the 217th General Assembly action to eliminate some of the content of the material. Rather than spend the money to rewrite the curriculum they pulled it off the market. The overture to the 218th General Assembly recommended the development of *resources*, not necessarily *curriculum* on adolescent sexual issues. The overture did not advise the GAC in any way regarding the content. However, they were to be guided by the 217th General Assembly recommendations. Our committee recommended this overture and the assembly approved.

My impressions

The GA was neither liberal nor conservative; it was a group of prayerful people who were trying to find their way to do the best for the church. I did not perceive that they were irresponsible, nor were they antagonistic extremists. I am sure there were some who represented extremes but for the most part they were people who cared about the church and loved Jesus and the mission to which they have been called. The people who placed their fingers on the buttons of the voting machine were not driven toward a certain side of the church, but people searching for a way to find the movement of God’s Spirit amidst the confusion of voices. No, I don’t believe there was a conspiracy, nor was there a deliberate strategy to take control. There was only people’s individual conscience, drawn to this moment by the movement of the Spirit. When people put their fingers on the button it was trembling. I know this because mine was. We were all trying to do our best for God and church. The decisions made were done so in hope—a hope that the church would be able to rise above its stalemate and find a new emerging voice.

The one surprising impression that I came away with was the presence of the YAD’S. In my committee they pressed the group, almost to the limit. They were challenging and compelling. They were all of this on the floor of GA as well. What surprised me was their bent toward “openness” on almost every issue, especially on sexual issues. In many ways they may have had an influence within the assembly. If we have a prayer for the church, may it be to keep this emerging generation in the church. If we do the church the church will be challenged to change.

July 5, 2008: A Wrap-Up, of sorts
Bob Davis, Minister Commissioner
San Diego Presbytery

Thank you to San Diego Presbytery for sending me to San Jose as a minister commissioner. It was a blessing to be able to share some of the good things that are happening here and to engage with Presbyterians from around the country. What follows are my impressions of some of the things that occurred:

1. Bruce Reyes-Chow was the best moderator I have seen, bar none. He was not perfect but he was fair. He handled the meeting extraordinarily well. He received challenges to his decisions and rulings with grace. He seemed very comfortable in front of this meeting. I know people were not happy about the process regarding the ordination standards vote -- but I also am convinced that he got the call right and (more importantly) changing the process would not have changed the voting results. The people who were upset about missing the chance to speak should be frustrated with the Assembly, not the Moderator. So, within the confines of the meeting, I thought he served the Assembly well.

After the Assembly? I would not want his job. It will not be an easy road.

2. I am glad that the issue between the GAC and Foundation disappeared from the front pages. You will have to search to find any articles about what happened -- evidence of God's hand at work in the midst to resolve this conflict.

3. The nFoG hangs around despite my best efforts. I still think it is a mistake to try to become missional via polity. We are going to end up arguing about the rules rather than focusing on the mission. That said, it also is fair to conclude I was not persuasive.

4. I am not sure proposed changes to the Heidelberg Catechism or the effort to include the Belhar Confession in our Book of Confessions will ever pass the presbyteries. It will be interesting to see whether Presbyterians can engage the issues involved theologically or if we will simply use these additional opportunities to batter each other politically. Two ironies: 1) many Presbyterians would not know what is in the Book of Confessions if it were not for some of these controversies; and 2) confessions are issued in the midst of controversies for the purpose of addressing the situation theologically. So, whether the changes should be made and whether Belhar ought to be adopted as ours are appropriate topics for the larger church to consider. Instead of lamenting, we can be thankful for the opportunity to engage in a much deeper study of what our confessional documents teach.

5. The Friday night Assembly dealing with the proposed re-definition of marriage was a completely different group than the afternoon group that voted on ordination standards. It was like someone slammed the brakes on the progressive slide. I wonder what would have happened if the "graciousness in separation" commissioners resolution had come up for a vote before ordination standards had been handled.

6. Our social witness continues to be self-perpetuating; though with one important change. The pattern of having the advocacy committees (ACREC, ACWC, ACSWP) do self-evaluations as their only substantive review has come to an end; there now is in place an external review that will take place. Along with the six agencies of the General Assembly, the advocacy committees will be subject to questions of:

- examining the interaction, cooperation between such committees and commissioners, as well as their scope and authority;
- the collective role each contribute complementing and implementing the General Assembly's total mission program or directives.

7. PC-Biz was a moderate success. It was not confidence-inspiring, but improved during the course of the week. On the learning curve of such changes, this was a big step forward. Within the context of this meeting, it was not a trustworthy tool. I relied more on the paper copies that were provided than anything I could find on screen; but as time went on, the electronic versions came up faster and more accurately.

8. It is hard to tell what will be the impact of having Gradye Parsons as stated clerk. He is a fan of the "consensus" process; which was a disaster in one of the experimental committees. (So much of a disaster that it was reported several commissioners left and did not return.) As one who is consistently in the minority at Assembly meetings, I would be repeating myself to say I am not a fan. But -- truth be told -- I am not. However, the Stated Clerk's office is much more than consensus process. It is one of the primary centers of power within the denominational structure. With a new hand at the helm, some changes are inevitable.

9. Ordination standards. Sigh. Undoing thirty years of work in one swipe and making a foundational change without consulting the presbyteries was not good.

The followup was not good, either. I was at the press conference where Stated Clerk Kirkpatrick declared that the Constitution had not changed. That's a bit of Orwellian double-speak. Yes, it is true the words in the Constitution have not changed (yet); that is, the amendment has to go through the presbyteries for votes. However, the reality is that ordination standards have been changed completely: what was never previously allowed is now allowable.

Regardless of the lack of compliance previously, it was understood that self-affirmed, unrepentant, practicing homosexual persons were not eligible for ordination. Not so now.

It seems to me we have reached a pivot point in the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) because there is more to the story than simply eliminating the Authoritative Interpretations and allowing "local option." It is likely that within the next General Assembly or two, the willingness to participate in the ordination of self-avowed, unrepentant practicing homosexual persons will be considered essential – not simply permissible.

One of the more under-reported aspects of what was approved is this answer in response to the question raised in 04-14, "If a moderator refused to ordain an individual whom the session has approved for ordination, has this moderator committed an offense as defined in the Rules of Discipline?" The approve response concludes, "Whether the moderator in question would be considered to have committed an offense would be determined by a permanent judicial commission (PJC) relying on the specific facts in the incident referred to it." In short: we hope it does not come to this; however, if it does, the moderator may be subject to disciplinary action. It is a few short steps from permissive to mandatory to essential.

For now, I am privileged to preach the gospel in my congregation. I cannot guarantee for how much longer that will be the case. It was not the result I hoped to see when I volunteered to be a commissioner to the 218th GA.

Tom Straeter's Report to the Presbytery of San Diego on the 218th General Assembly

I want to thank Grace Presbyterian Church in Vista for submitting my name to the Presbytery of San Diego and the Presbytery for electing me to be a Minister Commissioner to the 218th General Assembly in San Jose CA. This was my first General Assembly and I look forward to attending more Lord willing.

Before ever arriving in San Jose I knew that I had randomly been selected to be on the Social Justice Committee (Social Justice was one of 17 committees; see PC-biz.org for the full list of committees). As many of you know there is quite a bit of reading to do before the Assembly begins. I thought it was interesting that I was assigned to a committee that had as its Vice Chair Betsy Straeter, my sister, who is a minister in the San Gabriel Presbytery. Our committee had a full slate of business to cover in the two days it was scheduled to meet. We addressed issues like "Non Disposable Food Service items"; Living Water for the World (a helpful video presentation on a specific clean water ministry); pay equity and just compensation – God's work in Women's Hands; public education; homelessness; immigration; equal rights; disaster relief and continued assistance; and approved the text for "A Social Creed for the Twenty-First Century" (This creed can also be found on PC-biz.org).

Micah 6:8 "*Do justice, Love kindness, Walk humbly with your God*" was the text that led us each day as we went about the business before the Assembly and our specific committees. The content of most of the resolutions we dealt with in the Social Justice committee was pretty straight forward. However, as you might imagine there were certain resolutions that contained highly charged political agendas. Gun control, Global warming and Immigration detention in the United States are just a few examples of politically charged resolutions.

I actually put forth a "*Commissioners Resolution*" that never made it to a committee but learned a lot in the process. I think it would be helpful for those who are to be Commissioners at a General Assembly go to the preceding Assembly. This will help acquaint them to what will be expected as well as some of the business that will be on the docket for their Assembly.

Respectfully submitted, Pastor Tom Straeter

Carole Ostrander, Elder Commissioner to General Assembly

I was honored to be elected to represent the San Diego Presbytery as a commissioned Elder to the 218th General Assembly, held in San Jose June 21 - 28. There were 7 representatives from San Diego, including Rev. Bob Davis. Others from the Presbytery joined us, including Linda Therien, Stated Clerk, who was the parliamentarian for one of the committees, and Rev. Dr. Clark Cowden, Executive Presbyter.

Presbyterians have been meeting at a General Assembly since 1789. There were 752 Elder and Minister of the Word and Sacrament commissioners this year. In addition to the commissioners, there were 173 Youth Advisory Delegates, 25 Theological Students Advisory Delegates representing 15 schools, 95 corresponding members (who had voice but not vote), 100 Office of General Assembly staff and volunteers, 600 staff, elected members, consultants and guests, 60 staff of theological institutions, 335 staff and stated clerks, 75 ecumenical and Interfaith Representatives, and 950 registered observers. There were also 2,000 volunteers from the host presbyteries. The theme was "Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Each commissioner was assigned to one of 17 committees. My committee was Health Issues, and we considered matters related to health, managed care, disabilities and abortion.

I first met with my Health Concerns Committee Sunday evening. The Health Concerns Committee met again on Monday and Tuesday late into the evenings to discuss and vote on the issues assigned to us. The 77 members on the committee dealt with directing GA Council to develop and fund a comprehensive HIC and AIDS policy for the PC(USA), direct PC(USA) entities to reflect balance in advocating both sides of the abortion issue or neither (see below), receiving a policy statement on serious mental illness, supporting single payor universal healthcare reform (i.e. start over with lessons learned from MediCare, HMO's, etc). The committee generated the following to be presented to the plenary (all 752 commissioners):

The 218th General Assembly (2008) directs the appropriate PC(USA) entities to redevelop congregational resource materials, on the subject of reproductive options, to more adequately reflect the full spectrum of biblical, theological, and pastoral counsel, while remaining consistent with the policy of the 1992 report of the Special Committee on Problem Pregnancies and Abortion and the 2006 policy on Late-Term Pregnancies and Abortion. The General Assembly Council will report back to the 219th General Assembly (2010).

To end on a high note - the commissioners were so impressed with the Youth Advisory Delegates (to be called Young Adult Advisory Delegates in 2010). Their suggestions, questions and actions gave us hope for the future.

Thank you for this once-in-a-lifetime to serve you as Elder Commissioner.

Carole

Doris Pate, Elder Commissioner to GA 218

I was honored to be one of 3 elder commissioners from SD Presbytery. The theme for the 218th General Assembly was Micah 3:8: Do Justice, Love Kindness (or Mercy) and Walk Humbly with Your God. In the overall picture, I particularly enjoyed the Sunday service. I was impressed with our new Moderator and with Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick. When there was a hotly debated issue and lots of emotions on the floor, I appreciate Bruce taking us into prayer before we voted. I did feel the spirit was in the room and people calmed down to think more rationally. Hotel accommodations, venue and city welcome were superb.

There were 17 committees who met, discussed and voted on each overture in their area.

We met in our committees Sunday afternoon through Wednesday. We would reconvene after dinner, working until the agenda for that day was completed. After committees had completed their work, we began the plenary meetings where all the work done in committee is discussed, possibly amended and voted on. These meeting went as late as midnight, trying to get everything taken care of before Sunday.

My committee was **Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations**. We were quite a cohesive group and had many speakers from other Christian denominations who I found to be quite interesting. Some of these were from the Episcopal, Moravia (I wasn't even aware there still was a Moravian church), US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Korean Presbyterian Church, and some missionaries to other countries.

We also had speakers from other faiths; the one that stands out for me was the lady who showed slides of scripture from their Q'uran that requires them to work for peace. She was comfortable speaking to us and when somebody on committee made a statement (this was during our 07-01 debate) that the Muslims believe we worship three gods, she asked to be recognized again and came from the observer section and denied that they believe that. She says that they know we worship one god.

I was impressed with the thoughtful input the YADs had I committee. Many people thought they had been influenced to make certain speeches in Plenary; however I believe they really thought of themselves.

We spent a lot of dialogue on the 07-01 overture which stated we worship a common god. I was pleased with the outcome in Plenary when it developed in that meeting to what is more accurate. There was a lot of work done in our committee that came undone in Plenary. That was sometimes disappointing. I was impressed with the amount of monies contributed to mission through WCC, NCCC, WARC. I have a better opinion of them after this meting. I believe we bother ourselves with a lot of items that would be better left alone and we spend far too much time on nonessential items.

Elder Maurice Caskey

July 15, 2008

I want to thank the Presbytery for electing me as one of your elder commissioners to the 218th General Assembly (GA). It was a privilege to serve the Presbytery in this way. I was assigned to the New Form of Government (nFOG) Committee and this report will focus on that Committee's action and the plenary session votes on its recommendations. First, some overall observations:

San Diego Presbytery does far more than the vast majority of the other presbyteries in the area of outreach to other than individuals of European or African ancestry (*e.g.*, Hispanic, Asian). Very few have new church development in that area; we are much more "missional" in that regard than many of the more "progressive" presbyteries.

There is a huge gulf in the trust necessary for the PC (U.S.A.) to conduct business in a more positive way. The actions of this GA did nothing to improve the level of trust. Trust must be restored if any proposed nFOG is to be accepted by the whole denomination.

The Stated Clerk, Linda Therien, deserves special recognition as an "angel" who looked over us. Each time we arrived at our seats, we found chocolate or other nibbles. After the particularly down experience of Friday morning, we returned to find a small wooden cross with a nice note. THANK YOU for bringing a little sunshine into an otherwise dark day.

The nFOG Committee's only items of business: the radically revised FOG proposed by a Task Force (TF) appointed after the 217th GA and 15 related overtures and concurrences from 23 presbyteries. All of the overtures recommended something other than approving nFOG. Clearly, nFOG was mandated by a series of GAs over a number of years — not one formal initiative came from a presbytery. The primary reasons the TF gave for the nFOG were that the changes are necessary to become a more "missional" denomination and to simplify the *Book of Order (BoO)*. The nFOG really didn't result in that many fewer pages in the *BoO*, nor was there a clear definition of what "missional" is or what it would take to become more missional. After the reports by the TF, Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC), denominational advocacy and advisory committees, GA Permanent Judicial Commission [a rare committee appearance], overture advocates and open hearings, one Committee member observed that all but the ACC and TF spoke negatively about the nFOG and he wanted to hear something positive. The TF was called back to speak more.

After lengthy debate, the Committee recommended the nFOG be referred with comment to the Office of General Assembly and a 15-member expanded TF (that will include all 9 original TF members) for consultation and study with churches and presbyteries. The new TF will report to the 219th GA in 2010. After a series of parliamentary maneuvers, that recommendation was approved by the plenary session as item 06-01. All overtures except Detroit Presbytery's then were answered by referring to the action on 06-01; Detroit's overture was disapproved.

I drew 2 primary conclusions: (i) much of the TF's output reflected one side or the other in a series of power struggles that are ongoing in Louisville; and (ii) the review between now and 2009 needs to be thorough and provide a strong message about what our constitution should look like.

Respectfully submitted, Maurice R. Caskey