

ADDENDUM



PRESBYTERY MEETING

EIGHTY-FIRST
STATED MEETING
JULY 28, 2009

LEES-McRAE COLLEGE
Hosted by: Lees-McRae College and
Banner Elk and Arbor Dale
Presbyterian Churches

The Presbytery Packet had to go out by July 10, 2009, so it was necessary to produce the ADDENDUM after the Committee on Ministry Meeting on July 14, 2009.

Addendum D-6

THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Chair: Rev. Dr. James F. Bernhardt

July 28, 2009

FIRST SECTION

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY, AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION, OR A TASK FORCE THAT REQUIRE ACTION BY PRESBYTERY.

- II. RECOMMEND REVISION OF OCTOBER 2006 DECISION: “THE EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES AND TRANSFERRING MINISTERS”** (postponed from the April 2009 meeting) (**Continued . . .**). (See COM Addendum Attachment 8 for new version.)
- III. RECOMMEND FOR COMMISSIONING BY THE PRESBYTERY AS LAY PASTOR WHILE STATED CLERK:**
- A. WILLIAM A. (BERT) SIGMON**
From: Elder, Northminster Presbyterian Church
As: Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Western North Carolina
Effective: August 1, 2009
(See COM Addendum Attachment 9 for Stated Clerk Commission. See Stated Clerk Search Committee Attachment FF 5-6 for Bio Credo.)
- IV. RECOMMEND TO PRESBYTERY THE VALIDATION OF MINISTRY FOR:**
- A. Mike Johnston, as Director of Spiritual Care for Gaston Memorial Hospital, through July 28, 2010.
B. John T. Campbell, as Director for Eastatoe Trail Counseling and Consultation, LLC, through July 28, 2010.
C. Cynthia Strickler, as Director of Dunamis Fellowship, Intl. with Presbyterian Reformed Ministries, Intl., through July 28, 2010.
D. Aimee W. Buchanan, as Director of Creative Crossroads through July 28, 2010.
E. Joseph D. Bennett, as Chaplain for Hospice of Yancey County, Inc., through July 28, 2010.
F. David Bradley, as Pastoral Counselor with Pastoral Counseling and Growth Center of Asheville, through July 28, 2010.
G. Joey T. Byrd, as Chaplain, U.S. Army, through July 28, 2010.
H. David R. Lytle, as Chaplain for Presbyterian Hospital, Charlotte, through July 28, 2010.
I. Robert A. McCully, Jr., as Counselor/Literacy Coordinator for Charlotte Rescue Mission, through July 28, 2010.
J. Dennis Stamper, as Chaplain with Blue Ridge Healthcare, through July 28, 2010.
- V. RECOMMEND TO PRESBYTERY THE ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

Recognizing the value of exploring and developing mission initiatives for reaching young adult

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and multi-ethnic persons not currently a part of the Presbyterian Church USA in our area (similar to the initiative being discussed with The Rev. John McCall), the COM recommends:

1. The formation of a special task force appointed by the General Presbyter and the Chairs of Council and COM to explore potential leadership (individuals to serve as local missionaries), funding sources, and ongoing accountability and support;
2. For the special task force to make preliminary reports concerning their work at the August and September 2009 meetings of the COM; and
3. For the COM, in cooperation with Council, to report to Presbytery at its October 2009 meeting on this matter.

SECOND SECTION

***The Book of Order* provides that the Committee on Ministry may be given authority by the Presbytery to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve and present calls for service of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other Presbyteries required by G-11.0402 and G11.0502g, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur, and to dismiss ministers to other Presbyteries, with the provision that such actions be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery. (G-11.0502h) This permission was granted to our Committee on Ministry; therefore, the following actions are to be simply admitted to the record.**

I. APPROVED THE EXAMINATION AND TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA (Continued . . .):

E. CAROL N. SEAMAN

From: Newton Presbytery
As: Interim Pastor, Hickory First Presbyterian Church
Effective: July 14, 2009
(See COM Addendum Attachment 10 for Bio Credo.)

F. DAVID W. MCKEE

From: Transylvania Presbytery
As: Synod Executive
Effective: July 14, 2009
(See COM Addendum Attachment 11 for Bio Credo.)

IV. APPROVED INTERIM PASTOR RELATIONSHIPS (Continued . . .):

- C. Tyler Martin and Sylva First Presbyterian Church
Effective: July 12, 2009 - December 31, 2009

V. APPROVED STATED SUPPLY RELATIONSHIPS (Continued . . .):

- C. Drayton Cooper and Old Fort Presbyterian Church
Extended: June 1, 2009 - May 31, 2010
- D. David Lytle and Ironton Presbyterian Church
Extended: January 1, 2009 - June 30, 2009

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VIII. APPROVED THE CONTINUATION OF COMMISSIONED LAY PASTOR RELATIONSHIPS (Continued . . .):

- D. Dwayne Durham and Hendersonville First Presbyterian Church
Extended: June 15, 2009 - June 14, 2010

XII. APPROVED ORDINATION/INSTALLATION COMMISSIONS (Continued . . .):

- C. Approve the Administrative Commission for Ordination and Installation of Franklin Strader Jones on Sunday, July 12, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. at Brittain Presbyterian Church, Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Responsibility on Commission</u> | <u>Minister/Elder</u> |
|---------------|--|-----------------------|
| J. D. Waldrop | Moderator/Preside Propound Constitutional Questions | Elder |
| Adam Bowling | Preach the Sermon | Minister |
| Susan Ward | Propound Questions to Congregation | Elder |
| Judie Shapiro | Charge the Minister | Elder |
| Don Scofield | Charge the Congregation | Minister |
| David Bradley | Lead in Worship | Minister |
| Edward Norris | Lead in Worship | Elder |

- D. Approve the Administrative Commission for Ordination and Installation of Daria L. Ragan on Sunday, August 9, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. at Belmont First Presbyterian Church.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Responsibility on Commission</u> | <u>Minister/Elder</u> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Bobbi White | Moderator/Preside Propound Constitutional Questions | Minister |
| Margaret Packard | Propound Questions to Congregation | Elder |
| Sam Warner | Charge the Minister | Minister |
| Richard Boyce | Charge the Congregation | Minister |
| Sherry Lovell | Lead in Worship | Elder |
| Sylvia Sellers | Lead in Worship | Elder |
| Calvin Lewers | Lead in Worship | Minister |

Guests

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|
| Matthew Rich | Preach the Sermon | Minister |
| Joan Martin | Lead in Worship | Minister |
| Wilson Rhoton | Lead in Worship | Minister |

- E. Approve the Administrative Commission for Installation of Alexander Robert McLean on Sunday, August 9, 2009, at 11:00 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Swannanoa.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Responsibility on Commission</u> | <u>Minister/Elder</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jay Rabuck | Moderator/Preside | Minister |
| Robert Garrison | Propound Constitutional Questions | Elder |

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|--------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Dick Hobson | Preach the Sermon | Minister |
| Charlotte Chesnutt | Propound Questions to Congregation | Elder |
| John LaMotte | Charge the Minister | Minister |
| Rodney Lytle | Charge the Congregation | Elder |
| Bill Cox | Lead in Worship | Elder |

XV. APPROVED PERMISSION TO LABOR OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA:

- A. Cynthia Williams
In: Coastal Carolina Presbytery and New Hope Presbytery
As: Supply Pastor

XVI: APPROVED MEMBER-AT-LARGE STATUS FOR ONE YEAR, EFFECTIVE JULY 28, 2009 FOR:

- A. Ashley "Jerry" Beavers
B. Dewey Bowen
C. Jack Davidson
D. Kathryn Dudley
E. Karen Newsome
F. Tamara Puffer

Addendum D

Attachment 8

The Examination of Candidates and Transferring Ministers The Presbytery of Western North Carolina

Preface

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina has granted its Committee on Ministry the “authority to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve and present calls for services of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other Presbyteries required by G-11.0402, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and the pastor concur, to grant permission to labor within or outside the bounds of the presbytery, and to dismiss ministers to other presbyteries, with the provision that all such actions be reported to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.” (*BO: G-11.0502h*)

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina has retained the authority to make all decisions regarding the dissolution of the pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and the pastor do not concur, and also the ordination of candidates as Ministers of Word and Sacrament. If a candidate desires ordination (and usually installation), the Committee on Ministry shall follow the process outlined below in order to make a recommendation to the Presbytery. The Presbytery then must make the decision whether or not the candidate shall be ordained. The same process shall be largely followed for ministers transferring from other Presbyteries, some of whom are candidates for installation.

Statement on the Reformed Faith and Polity

While affirming the unity and integrity of all parts of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, pursuant to G-9.0102.b, regards the following items as particularly important and meaningful at this time:

Book of Confessions: The Nicene Creed, The Apostles’ Creed, and A Brief Statement of Faith.

Book of Order: Form of Government Chapters I - VI, and the Ordination Questions in W-4.4003.

The Presbytery does not anticipate approving exceptions/scruples* in belief and practice to any points in the above items in the Constitution, but will continue its established practice of carefully considering each candidate on an individual basis.

(*“Scruple: an ethical consideration or principle that inhibits action” Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary)

Process for Examination of Candidates and Transferring Ministers

- I. Candidates and transferring ministers (both are hereinafter referred to as candidates) are required to present a written statement of faith and a brief biography (along with some other documents) to the Examinations Sub-Committee. These documents and the verbal examination will serve as the basis of the Examinations Sub-Committee’s determination of the candidate’s “Christian faith and views in theology, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the government of this church” (G-14.0402). The Examinations Sub-Committee will report its determination to the Committee on Ministry as guidance in its consideration of the candidate.
- II. Each candidate will also be invited to respond in advance and in writing to the following questions:

- a. Are you able to answer all the ordination questions affirmatively without exception? If not, which ones and why not?
 - b. Is there any provision in the portions of the Constitution (*Book of Confessions* and *Book of Order*) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) cited in this Presbytery's statement on the Reformed faith and polity which you cannot accept and practice to the extent that your failure to comply would be a serious departure from the Reformed faith and polity? If so, please state any such provision, and attach your biblical and theological reasons for your position.
 - c. Were you ever granted an exception, or had a scruple approved, to any provision in the Constitution by another Presbytery? If so, please state the specifics.
- III. The Examinations Sub-Committee will also use these written answers and subsequent verbal examination to determine if, in its opinion, "a person has departed from the essentials of Reformed faith and polity" (G-6.0108b). This recommendation will also be presented to the Committee on Ministry as guidance in its consideration of the candidate.
- IV. In its determination of whether or not a candidate's exception/scruple is a departure from "the essentials of Reformed faith and polity," the Examinations Sub-Committee shall consider:
- a. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina's Statement on the Reformed Faith and Polity (above),
 - b. Whether the candidate's biblical and theological justification for the departure is a faithful and valid reading of Scripture and the Reformed tradition as determined by the *Book of Confessions*, and
 - c. If the exception/scruple is with a provision in the Book of Order, whether the departure is from a mandatory provision or a lesser standard.
 - i. Scruples concerning mandatory provisions (other than minor administrative requirements) will be considered only if the candidate is willing to comply with the mandatory provision.
 - ii. While carefully considering each candidate on an individual basis, those candidates unable or unwilling to comply with such mandatory provisions will normally be determined to have departed may be determined, on a case by case basis, to have departed from "the essentials of Reformed faith and polity" and be barred from installation and/or ordination.
 - d. All members of the Examinations Sub-Committee shall maintain confidentiality throughout.
- V. The Committee on Ministry (COM) will conduct its examination of candidates in a rigorous manner, focusing on the candidate's manner of life, fitness for ministry and whether the particular call (if there be one) is in order and seems to be a good match of parish and intended pastor. In making its determination, the COM will consider:
- a. The candidate's written documents and answers.
 - b. The Examinations Sub-Committee's recommendation concerning a candidate's "Christian faith and views in theology, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the government of this church" (G-14.0402),

- c. The Examinations Sub-Committee's recommendation concerning any exceptions/scruples the candidate has declared. The COM shall use the same criteria in evaluating requests for exception/scruples as the Examinations Sub-Committee (see IV above),
 - d. The recommendation of the COM liaison to the congregation, who has been meeting with the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), if there is one.
 - e. A verbal examination of the candidate, including a consideration of the suitability of the candidate's intended position in Presbytery
 - f. All members of the COM shall maintain confidentiality throughout.
- VI. The Committee on Ministry shall take all necessary time to agree on a recommendation for ordination and installation, or a decision for a transferring minister. This may include postponing a decision to a subsequent meeting to allow members of the COM time for prayer and study.
- VII. If the Committee on Ministry determines that a candidate is fit for ministry and the particular call is in order, the COM will report that decision, including any acceptable exceptions/scruples the candidate has declared, to the Presbytery at its next stated meeting.
- VIII. If the Committee on Ministry determines that a candidate is unfit for ministry based on the candidate's "Christian faith and views in theology, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the government of this church" (G-14.0402), a scruple on a mandatory standard that is **determined to be** a departure from "the essentials of Reformed faith and polity," or the verbal examination, that decision shall be communicated to the candidate and the Pastor Nominating Committee in writing. This decision will not be communicated to the Presbytery in order to respect confidentiality of both candidate and congregation, except when a review is requested (see Process for Review below).
- IX. **Decisions in the Committee on Ministry and its Examinations Sub-Committee shall be made by a majority of those members, present and voting, if a quorum is present.**

The Process for Review

The Committee on Ministry's decision on the fitness of a candidate for ordination and installation of a transferring minister for the ministry in this Presbytery may be appealed by

1. A majority of a Pastor Nominating Committee, if that request is endorsed by its Session, or
2. Three or more members of the COM who were present at the candidate's or minister's examination.

The request for review shall be communicated to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery within ~~seven~~ fifteen days of the COM's decision. The COM shall reconsider its decision at its next stated meeting – during which time any proposed ordination and/or installation shall be held in abeyance.

At that reconsideration, representatives of the PNC shall be invited to speak and then withdraw after a brief period of clarifying questions and answers.

The decision of the COM after such a review shall be final and shall be reported to Presbytery.

Remembering that “all parties should endeavor to outdo one another in honoring one another's decision, according the presumption of wisdom to ordaining/installing bodies in examining candidates,” further appeals of the COM's decision shall be handled as a remedial case (*BO: D-2.0202*).

July 14, 2009

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ATTACHMENT 9

STATED CLERK COMMISSION

Whereas William A. (Bert) Sigmon, a member of the Northminster Presbyterian Church, has been ordained an Elder, and

has successfully completed the set course of study in the School for the Laity, and

has served faithfully for several years as the Commissioned Lay Pastor for the Duncan's Creek Presbyterian Church, and

has been nominated by the appointed Search Committee to be the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for three years from August 1, 2009;

Therefore, the Committee on Ministry recommends that Presbytery, pursuant to *Book of Order* G-14.0560, commission Elder Bert Sigmon, while he is serving as the Presbytery's Stated Clerk for three years from August 1, 2009, to

- lead worship and preach the Gospel;
- celebrate the Sacraments, when authorized by a governing body;
- moderate a Session when invited by that Session's moderator or when appointed by Presbytery (the Committee on Ministry acting on its behalf); and
- have a voice and vote in the meetings of Presbytery (such vote to be counted as an elder commissioner).

Addendum D

Attachment 10

Carol Noel Seaman

Statement of Faith

I am a person of faith. The central affirmations of that faith are the goodness of God, the love and grace of God, and the mystery of God. The triune God meets us, and calls us to a life of adventurous trust, following even when we cannot see where we are going.

This trust is focused on Jesus Christ. Scripture presents him as the One who reveals God to us in human life. In Jesus we see a God who loves us as a parent loves a child, and who is more concerned with the workings of our hearts than with ritual. God is outrageously unfair in forgiving and restoring sinners; in fact, God goes far out of the way to seek out those who wander. The Kingdom of God is present among us when we turn ourselves to God's love, even when we don't understand or feel worthy of it.

Ultimately, Jesus' life is itself revelation to us. What he taught and how he lived are formative to our understanding of humanity. His death reveals the necessity of suffering; His resurrection declares God's final victory over evil and death. Through Him, we are reconciled to God. We glimpse eternity in Jesus Christ, and that glimpse is enough for us to live as bold, confident people.

Being human, we require the shelter and nurture of the church if we are to grow in God's image and likeness. In the church, we worship, learn, serve, receive, and relate. Though the church is a fallen institution, often failing in its mission, it is still God's. We live in the faith that God is constantly renewing and completing the church throughout the world.

Christian life is a process of growing in love, faith and the knowledge of God. Our lives are not what they were created to be, and there is much that separates us from God, creation and other people. Because God is gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, our sins are not held against us. We know of God's reconciling action through baptism; in the Lord's Supper we hear again and again of grace, forgiveness, and new life. The Holy Spirit is with us and in us to give direction, instruction, and comfort. The Spirit reminds us that we are God's, and that nothing can separate us from God. Life in God is a pilgrimage that eventually leads us home, to the "house with many dwelling places". Therefore, regardless of what life brings to us, we live in hope.

Addendum D

Attachment 10

Carol Noel Seaman

BIOSKETCH

The Rev. Carol Noel Seaman comes to First Presbyterian Church as Interim Pastor from the Community Church of Smoke Rise, Kinnelon, New Jersey, where she served since 2007. Carol was ordained (1995) and began ministry at the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City where she served as Associate Pastor for Mission and Education .

She next moved across the Hudson River to minister at the Clinton Presbyterian Church, Clinton, New Jersey.

Carol, whose Presbyterian heritage can be traced from her birth in Virginia and back to earlier roots in Scotland, has been a life-long Presbyterian and has served the church in numerous capacities before entering the ordained ministry. Carol received a B.A. degree from Mary Baldwin College with a major in Biology, and a M.A. from the University of Florida. While doing research at the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, Solomons, Maryland, she met and married her former husband, moved to Gainesville, Florida, where she taught high school biology and chemistry until...as she says, "It was time for us to start populating the earth." Carol enjoyed the active growing years of their three children and did lots of volunteer work in the church and community.

She later served as a Christian Educator in First Presbyterian Church, Gainesville, worked in youth ministry writing curriculum for the denomination, directing and keynoting Montreat Youth Conferences. She has distinguished herself as an authority and principal speaker at women's conferences, interfaith dialogues, mission interpretation events and spiritual retreats.

Discerning a call to the ministry of word and sacrament, and after her children were in college, Carol attended Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, where she received the M.Div. degree. She has served on the Advisory Board of the Montreat Conference Center, the NYC Interfaith Council and has traveled extensively in Europe and with a group of theologians and business people throughout the Middle East, sponsored by Columbia Seminary. She enjoys creating liturgy for worship and developing the liturgical arts.

Carol is the mother of three: Scott, who is a program director for a radio station in West Palm Beach, Florida, and is married to Brenda and they have three children Colby, Collin and Brittany; Ashley, who is Pastor at North Presbyterian Church, Denver, Colorado, a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and recently featured in the Presbyterians Today as "one of the 40 Young Presbyterians to Watch". Amy attended Mt. Holyoke and Hunter Colleges, and now lives in Denver, too.

For relaxation, Carol enjoys sailing, listening to Bach and Mozart, traveling, quantum physics and being with her children and grandchildren. She looks forward to working with us here at First Presbyterian Church, with energy, imagination and love.

Addendum D

Attachment 11

FAITH JOURNEY

David W. McKee

My personal faith journey has proceeded in a constant, gradual and largely undramatic fashion. I grew up in a Presbyterian Christian home, where our faith style was always relaxed and low-key, yet with a conscious sense of our being a Christian family. Perhaps that consciousness was in some wise acceding to a cultural expectation; yet it always seemed to have a genuine, authentic basis to it. Our faith was more assumed than examined, expressed more in behavior than in words.

That pattern changed considerably when my father entered seminary at age 38. We did not suddenly begin having family devotions, nor start talking a lot about our faith. But we did start attending church quite regularly, and, as a young adolescent, I began thinking more deliberately about my own personal faith. That process was accentuated as I went through the confirmation process.

At that point in early adolescence I began thinking about ministry as a vocational choice. I asked, "Why go into the ministry?" I found no satisfactory answer, so I managed successfully to put the question aside. As I moved through my teen years I became active in the church, primarily through its youth ministry. I began to separate my faith from my parents', and to internalize and claim for myself some growing faith commitments. Being part of the church became a natural and comfortable part of my life – a reality which continued through high school and college, and which remains the same today.

In my junior year of college, during a series of Holy Week services, I concluded that I had not asked the right question earlier. Rather than "Why go into the ministry," I asked, "Why not?" I couldn't answer that one, either! So I entered the candidacy process, and sought other confirmation as well. At many points along the way since, in many relevant though by no means predictable ways, my sense of vocation has been confirmed again and again.

Another level of internalizing my faith and vocation happened in seminary. In large measure I believe I entered seminary because of my father's example. By the time I graduated, I felt I was entering the ministry due to my own sense of who I was (and am), and of what I have to contribute to the church and its life.

As I have lived and worked in ministry through the years, I have continued to experience a steady development and gradual deepening of my faith. It has in many ways become more realistic and less romantic, as I have confronted difficult issues, times and people in the church. It has been a source of exhilaration at moments – such as the birth and growth of our two children (and now our two granddaughters!) – and at various other times an indispensable way of making sense of a world which can seem so utterly senseless. My faith has been a particular joy as my wife and I continue to deepen and broaden the spiritual connection of our marriage. And it has brought me deep satisfaction as I have been with persons through times of celebration and despair, and experienced both their faith and my own growing into a richer and more relevant resource for living. I cannot honestly say that through it all I have maintained a firm grip on my faith; my faith, however, seems to have kept a strong hold on me.

Addendum D Attachment 11

STATEMENT OF FAITH

David W. McKee

I believe in the one God who, in sovereign freedom, has chosen to be revealed in acts of creation, acts of redemption, and acts of sustenance.

- God the Creator, maker of all that is, continues that act of creation within us, around us, at moments in spite of us, and sometimes even through us.
- God the Redeemer constantly seeks to free us from all that obstructs our healthy relationships: with God, with ourselves, with one another. The supreme act of redemption is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which shapes and informs every other aspect of redemption.
- God the Sustainer works in ways we find unlikely and unpredictable, yet which are indispensable to power, integrity and authenticity in our lives of faith.

I believe that God is continually revealed to us through Scripture, which is the uniquely authoritative witness to the reality of God and to the truth of Jesus Christ. God's Word has a profound impact on our lives of faith, as individuals and as a community of God's people.

I believe that the Church is the most likely, though by no means the exclusive, place where we may find the presence of God's kingdom. The Church and the kingdom are not identical: the kingdom is present here and there in the Church; it is also present in other places. We are called to bring the Church and the world into closer congruence with the kingdom.

I believe that each of us is a theologian, whether or not one is consciously aware of it. I stand, both consciously and instinctively, within the Reformed tradition. I hold to the Reformed dictum that every human being has every moment to do with the living God; and I seek to shape my life in that light. Though some might see that fact as intimidating, I perceive it as a source of hope and energy for living.

I believe that the two sacraments observed by our Church are essential expressions of the community's faith, and are indispensable to our corporate worship. They are, as Calvin said, among the marks of the true church and are to be celebrated "in obedience to Christ."

I believe that the representative, connectional nature of our Presbyterian polity embodies a number of vital strengths, and offers invaluable advantages and safeguards. Probably the most frequent example of that is the way in which the collective wisdom of our Church's governing bodies enables them to reach decisions more faithful and balanced than could be reached by any one official alone. I have not always agreed personally with decisions of our governing bodies; but I do continue in good conscience to affirm my ordination vow of subjection to my sisters and brothers in the Lord.