

General Presbyter's Report July 29, 2014

"Being the Body of Christ Together" is the vision of the Committee which is redesigning our committee structure. As followers of Christ, we continue to build relationships and work together when we both agree and disagree on issues. We are going to continue proclaiming Christ, reaching out to the unchurched, and showing the love of Jesus. There is plenty of work to be done!

Attending the General Assembly as a Commissioner this year was much different than previous years. In the past, my role was to support our commissioners and to learn first hand what was being discussed, adopted or rejected so I could be supportive of pastors and churches back home. This year, I was not an observer, I was an active participant! I was a part of the decision-making process. It made me even more conscientious of the impact of each vote on our presbytery. Some people are excited about the decisions made, and some are grieving. However, I pray that we, all of us in PWNC, will continue to work together for the mission of Jesus Christ in this Presbytery. I strongly believe that God calls us to work together, listen and care for one another, pray and worship together, so we can build up the kingdom.

The Holy Spirit was at work at General Assembly, and I believe that the election of Heath Rada as Moderator was one of those times. Heath is a person of strong faith in Christ. He is a gifted leader, but also a person who truly listens, a healer, and a bridge builder. We need to hold him up in prayer as he tries to faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ .

One initiative of GA (which we are already involved with) is "Educate a child, transform a world." This initiative is to show Christ's love to the least of these, by making a positive impact on the root cause of poverty. We were challenged to educate a million children in our communities and around the world in the next four years. This is what Presbyterians have always done. It makes me proud that so many of our churches in this Presbytery are already doing just that!

I cannot count the churches which are involved with schools or provide backpacks to children for weekends. New Vision creates and funds about 90 backpacks each week. Churches in Gastonia through GAP (Gastonia Area Presbyterians) collectively do backpacks through Third Street. Swannanoa and other churches in the Asheville area are also providing backpacks. Many of our churches, such as Robinson Memorial in Gastonia, help teachers get needed supplies for their classrooms. Our summer church in Linville gives over \$100,000 to the local public schools for teachers and principals to use, as needed, to help children where they see the need. They also provide support to Crossnore School, Inc. Imagine what it is like for a child to get glasses, a horn to play in the band, shoes, and more. The Mayland Fellowship provides scholarships to college students. There are so many ways our congregations are making a difference in children's lives.

In Malawi, where a typical school has a hundred or more students in a class room, no desks, no books, and the classroom could even be outside, First Gastonia and this Presbytery started a school. This was requested by the hospital employees who had school-aged children. Many were leaving the hospital for a location with better educational opportunities for their children. Ebenezer School, a Christian school, started with pre-kindergarten and now has classes through the sixth grade. The classes are in English and the students are in bright classrooms, full of desks, books, equipment and supplies for a great learning experience! It is one of the best primary schools in Malawi, and it continues to expand. This is your mission dollars at work. I predict that a Malawian president may one day have attended that school.

In Guatemala, many children are now attending school because of the generosity of the churches and individuals in this Presbytery. Some of those children are now in the upper grades -- we've been doing this for several years. Imagine what a gift it is for parents to see their child learning to read, when they didn't have that opportunity themselves. Recently, a team of educators from this Presbytery and our two partner presbyteries in Guatemala spent time evaluating the education that these children are getting. They returned with ideas for making the educational experience more valuable, as well as ideas about how to keep students in school. Other congregations are working in Haiti and countries in Central and South America. How exciting to know that we are already showing Christ's love to the least of these, women and children, to "educate a child, transform a world".

As we work to show Christ's love, let us also reach out with the good news of the Gospel. That priority was also lifted up at G.A. in many ways. One way was through the initiative called "1001 Worshiping Communities," which started two years ago. There are almost 250 new worshipping communities in our denomination, two in our own presbytery, that are hoping to reach people not involved in church. That is all of our calling. Let us be about reaching others so they will know the amazing love and grace of Christ and the abundant life that is ours with him.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobbi". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Bobbi

I would love to come meet with your Session or congregation to talk about G.A., answer any questions, and listen to your feedback. Also know that there's information on our website (www.presbyterywnc.org) concerning actions that happened at General Assembly.