



IN THE LOOP

G.A. Special Edition 3

July 9, 2010

News of Eastminster Presbytery

Survivor: Minneapolis

It's a good thing the praise band this morning is LOUD (and really good). Mixed with an excess of coffee, I'm awake.

I enjoyed hosting a gathering of our G.A. commissioners, our stated clerk, and fellow Eastminsterite the Rev. Janet Lowery for dinner last evening at "The News-

room." Our commissioners are in good spirits and appear energized by the vital role they are playing.

Today will be another full and potentially long meeting. All decisions will have been made before commissioners recess to their hotel rooms.

I am looking forward to a luncheon today hosted by

Presbyterian Outlook editor Jack Haberer. I first met Jack while on General Assembly Council and am sure that the table conversation will be lively and informative.

By the time you receive this "In the Loop," it will be Monday and I will be home. See you at Presbytery at JBM on Tuesday, July 13!

Dan Schomer

Inside this issue:

Survivor: Minneapolis 1

The Penultimate Day 1

Quote of the Day 2

The Penultimate Day continue 2

The Penultimate Day

G.A. Stated Clerk Grady Parsons called Friday "the penultimate day" and said he liked to say that. It's the next to the last day of the 219th G.A. and it began with a motion to reconsider the action taken Thursday evening to have all issues relating to marriage and civil union answered by adoption of the study document. Had the motion carried, the commissioners would have been considering changing the definition of marriage and granting ministers the discretion to officiate at same sex unions. The Assembly voted by 60% not to reconsider its previous action reinforcing the Assembly's desire for further discernment on this matter.

The Assembly took a number of substantive issues relating to the Middle East:

- Peace and justice concerns for the people of Iraq were expressed.

- The Assembly denounced (not divested of) Caterpillar for profiting from non-peaceful use of its equipment in the Middle East.

- The controversial paper "Breaking Down the Walls" was presented to the Assembly with significant amendments that created a consensus document and received unanimous support from a committee with diverse viewpoints. While continuing to address peace and justice issues relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict, the amended document has sought to provide a more balanced viewpoint.

After an extremely long debate, the commissioners voted by 55% to have the **Board of Pensions** provide benefits to same gender domestic partners. The action also provides for relief of conscience for those churches who do not want

their Board of Pensions dues used in this way.

At 5:00 p.m. the Assembly was interrupted by a relatively small **demonstration** of those who hoped that this Assembly would redefine marriage as between "two persons" rather than "a man and a woman." Following a hymn and prayer by Moderator Bolbach, the Assembly went into recess. Demonstrators and the Assembly acted respectfully. By 5:15 p.m. the Assembly was back in session.

The Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues recommended and the Assembly approved recognizing all congregations and presbyteries that have made the

Commitment to Peacemaking



Fun Facts

Stated Clerk Grady Parsons has maintained his infamous sense of humor despite the seriousness of his office. Grady has a statue of John Calvin sitting on his table on the podium. This morning Grady wore a baby blue bow tie...not his usual look. Grady shared that he was wearing the bow tie in memory of the late Bill Forbes, a much loved executive with the Board of Pensions. Grady also has a big heart!

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together!**

We're on the web:
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Quote of the Day

"Cynicism is an enemy to be defeated because it is the opposite of hope."

Jack Haberer at the Presbyterian Outlook Editor's Luncheon

It was a pleasure to have lunch with the Rev. Dr. Stan Ott during the Outlook Editor's Luncheon. Stan is currently working with 28 presbyteries throughout the country and has developed "Act 16:5 version 2.0." Stan is quick to share with others that Eastminster Presbytery was one of the first presbyteries to adopt the Acts 16:5 Initiative.



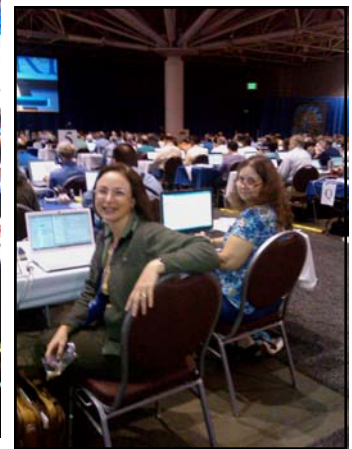
Downtown Minneapolis



YAAD Sarah Bender



Rev. Mark Ruppert



Rev. Elmarie Parker

Elder Jean Garrett

The Penultimate Day *continued*

over its thirty year history. A statement on the war in Afghanistan expressed appreciation for those who have made sacrifices and promotes actions that will result in a just peace. Along with a recommitment to Peacemaking the Believer's Calling, the Assembly passed resolutions encouraging continued exploration of the reconciliation of Korea, an end of violence in Columbia, protection of Christians in the Muslim world, and restoration of democracy in Madagascar and Honduras. A minister commissioner shared how critical were these justice resolutions because they address God's people in pain. The commissioner asked for a time of prayer and was invited by the Moderator to lead the Assembly.

The Assembly voted to make missionary support a high priority, af-

firmed the value of the work of PHEWA and approved developing a funding strategy, reestablished the G.A. Office of Collegiate Ministries, reaffirmed its commitment to ministry in North Korea, and approved financial support for the Young Adults Volunteers program.

The Committee on Health Issues presented and the Assembly approved annually establishing a Day of Healing; committed to assist the Church to become knowledgeable about HIV, AIDS, as well as Hepatitis B & C; approved a statement on violence against pregnant women; and approved congregational resource materials on the subject of reproductive options.

Final Reflections

This was a good General Assembly. There was a positive spirit present that I attribute to the presence of the Spirit. Polarities of past Assemblies were absent. Commissioners spoke with passion, but also with mutual respect. What pleased me most was a sense of unity among the commissioners. They were not of one mind on individual issues, but they were of one mind in wanting to do what was best for the Church of which Jesus Christ is the head.

In many ways this Assembly was like any other. Many actions were taken and the presbyteries will be voting on amendments sent to us by this Assembly over the next year. But this Assembly had a different feel...a feel that makes me hopeful for the future of our church. This Assembly showed us that unity and diversity are compatible!