



JUNE 2007

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1. LETTER, RESOURCE MATERIAL ADDRESSES INFO FROM NEW WINESKINS:

In an effort to address material from the New Wineskins Association of Churches (NWAC) that "mischaracterizes" the convictions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), top officials with the denomination have sent a letter and resource material out to middle governing body leadership. General Assembly Council Executive Director Linda Valentine and stated clerk, the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, jointly penned a letter to executive presbyters and stated clerks in an effort to deal with information presented by NWAC in its document, "A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven: Report of the Strategy Team of the New Wineskins Association of Churches." The New Wineskins' document, posted on the association's Web site, raises questions about the faith and mission of the PC(USA). NWAC is a conservative movement in the PC(USA) that seeks partnerships with Presbyterian churches that hold similar views of biblical standards. Accompanying the letter from Valentine and Kirkpatrick is the document, "The Church's One Foundation is Jesus Christ Her Lord," developed by the PC(USA)'s Office of Theology and Worship. The complete story and full text of the letter can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07357.htm.

2. MURRY NAMED DIRECTOR OF FIELD ED AT DUBUQUE SEMINARY: The Rev. Harold (Hal) Murry has been named director of field education and instructor of ministry at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. The Rev. Murry

succeeds Henry Fawcett, who had served as interim in the post for the past year. Murry holds a bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University, a master's degree from Ohio State University, and received a master of divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Murry was pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Gilead, Ohio, for nine years, and served for the past thirteen years as executive presbyter of John Knox Presbytery. Details of UDTs field education can be found at http://udts.dbq.edu/current/field_ed.htm.

3. PJC SAYS ORDINATION STANDARDS INCLUDE MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES:

The highest court of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has affirmed that the standards for ordaining non-celibate gays and lesbians extend to those seeking to become candidates for the ministry. The statement came in a May ruling by the PC(USA)'s General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in the case of George R. Stewart vs. Mission Presbytery. The case involved a woman who in October 2005 was accepted as a candidate for ministry by Mission Presbytery, which is based in San Antonio, Texas. The presbytery voted to approve her candidacy even though its moderator informed members that the candidate "is a lesbian and lives in a committed (same-sex) relationship." Presbyterian church law allows for the ordination of only those who are in a faithful, heterosexual marriage or who are single and living in chastity. However, the moderator told the presbytery that under church case law, the requirement did not apply to those seeking to enter the candidacy process. For the full story, go to www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07280.htm.

4. RACIAL-ETHNIC SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: The application and application guidelines for Synod of Lakes and Prairies' Racial-Ethnic Scholarships are available online at www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/r_e_scholarship_app_2007.pdf. The Racial-Ethnic Scholarship Program is an educational assistance program designed to encourage minority students in their preparation for service in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The deadline for scholarship applications is Sept. 28. Questions concerning the scholarship can be directed to Mary Taaffe at mtaaffe@lakesandprairies.org.

5. RESTORING CREATION CONFERENCE PLANNED IN OCTOBER: The sixth National Eco-Justice Conference of Presbyterians for Restoring Creation is scheduled at Mo-Ranch Presbyterian Conference Center in Hunt, Texas, Oct. 25-28. At the conference, participants will explore the themes of food and energy choices. Speakers and workshop leaders will focus on several subjects including biblical and theological foundations for eco-justice, social justice, and scientific and political issues. Presbyterians for Restoring Creation is an affiliate, grassroots organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Details about the conference, "Earth Sabbath, Earth Justice: Protecting God's Gifts of Food and Fuel," can be found at www.prcweb.org.

6. SYNOD SCHOOL REGISTRATIONS REACH 590: Registrations for Synod School 2007 continue to arrive. The registration total, as of June 25, reached 590, which equals the final registration total for 2006 – and that was a record. To register for Synod School, go to www.lakesandprairies.org/events.html. To take a look at the Synod School catalog go to <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/PDFFiles/SScat07.pdf>. (Editor's Note: You are likely aware that Rupert Murdoch, owner of News Corp., is attempting to buy The Wall Street Journal. But did you know that News Corp. also owns, among others, Fox News, International Fight League, DirecTV, News of the World and Zondervan?)

7. REGISTRATION CONTINUES FOR PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S GATHERING:

Registration continues for the annual gathering of Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies July 11-14 at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa. The gathering,

"Celebrating the Patchwork of Life," will include worship and music, a quilt display, a bazaar, and a bookstore and gift shop. Key speakers include Sylvia Washer, a retired executive presbyter of Mission Presbytery and co-author of "Get Ready! Get Set! Worship!"; Mary Tatem, author of "The Quilt of Life"; Charlotte Johnstone, author of "Annie, The Kitchen Queen"; and Danelle Crawford McKinney, the only female member of the Dakota Nation to be ordained a Presbyterian minister. For more information and registration materials, contact Virginia Dietz at 563.263.5499 or gydietz@earthlink.net.

8. ELDER, EVANGELISM, MISSION CONFERENCES STILL ON TAP FOR 2007: A number of excellent events are still on the schedule between now and the end of the year. The events, and the online locations of more information, are Presbyterian Elders Conference, Aug. 29-31, www.pcusa.org/eldersconference; National Presbyterian Evangelism Conference, Aug. 31-Sept. 3, www.pcusa.org/evangelism; and World Mission: A Celebration of Grace, Oct. 2-6, www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration.

9. BLAIR RESIGNS AS STATED CLERK IN NORTH CENTRAL IOWA: Rebecca Blair, stated clerk in both the Presbytery of North Central Iowa and the Presbytery of East Iowa, has submitted her resignation, effective at the end of the summer, to the Presbytery of North Central Iowa. She will continue to serve as stated clerk in the Presbytery of East Iowa. Blair has accepted additional responsibilities at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa.

10. PDA ISSUES GRANT TO MISSOURI RIVER VALLEY FOLLOWING STORMS: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance issued a \$10,000 grant to the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley following heavy rain storms in May. Flooding rains slammed South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa. Four-day rain totals, according to weather.com, "were impressive for the region, with Omaha, Neb., recording 7.46 inches, Falls City, Neb., recording 7.15 inches, Logan, Iowa, recording 7.98 inches, and Shenandoah, Iowa, recording 7.52 inches." Presbyterian Disaster Assistance had also issued a grant to the Presbytery of South Dakota. A summary of major 2007 weather events can be found at www.weather.com/newscenter/stormwatch/?from=wxcenter_news and reports of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance involvement following Midwest storms can be found at www.pcusa.org/pda/response/usa/plainsstates-tornadoesmay07-index.htm.

11. TENNESSEE CHURCH CREATIVELY SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL MISSION: First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, Tenn., believes financial support of international mission personnel can be as easy as 1-2-3. First Presbyterian is challenging each member to give \$2 per month for a year to support Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) international mission personnel. The church named the effort the "1-2-3 Offering" to remind parishioners that the offering is taken on the first Sunday of every month, that a \$2 donation is requested, and that funds collected will support the third century of mission by U.S. Presbyterians. Bruce Whearty, a staff member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) World Mission Program, pointed out that a \$2 contribution from all 2.3 million Presbyterians would more than solve the projected funding shortfall for mission personnel during the next two-year budget cycle that begins Jan. 1, 2009. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07278.htm.

12. CALVIN INSTITUTE MAKES GRANT TO UNDERWOOD HILLS IN OMAHA: The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, based in Grand Rapids, Mich., has issued a \$7,800 grant to Underwood Hills Presbyterian Church in Omaha to nurture the sacraments in congregational life. The Rev. Becky Killion is pastor at Underwood Hills, which has partnered with a cluster of churches to increase understanding and celebration of the sacraments. The other participating congregations are Central Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church of the Master, Faithful Shepherd Presbyterian Church, Ft. Calhoun Presbyterian Church and

Peace Presbyterian Church. The Calvin Institute is awarding more than \$700,000 this year to support a variety of worship renewal projects throughout the nation. A complete list of this year's grant recipients can be found at www.calvin.edu/worship.

13. HIGHLY ACCOMPLISHED SPEAKERS SCHEDULED AT PCN CONFERENCE: The deputy general secretary for research and planning at the National Council of Churches; a doctorate in rhetoric and organizational communication; a professor of Christian education at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga.; the deputy director of the Presbyterian Historical Society; and a past associate producer and assistant film editor for two award-winning documentaries for ABC News – these are just a few of the highly accomplished speakers and presenters at the 2007 Presbyterian Communicators Network national conference in Louisville, August 1-4. Registration numbers are growing and space is limited. Registration closes July 2. Registration can be completed at www.pcusa.org/comnet.

14. VIDEO CLIPS FOR WORSHIP ARE AVAILABLE: Good, reasonably priced video clips for use in worship can now be found at a couple locations on the Web, according to Mark Crowner, editor and videographer on the national staff of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The video clips are at www.sermonvideos.com and www.mediashout.com.

15. PCUSA WEB SITE MANAGER LISTS SITE HOSTING COMPANIES: Are you looking for options on companies offering Web site hosting? Dianna Ott, manager of www.pcusa.org has put together a list of companies that host sites. The list is at www.pcusa.org/pcnet/chweb.htm. For more information, Ott can be contacted at dott@pcusa.org or 888.728.7228, extension 5709.

16. COVENANT NETWORK SPONSORS CONFERENCE AT MONTREAT: The Covenant Network of Presbyterians is sponsoring the conference, "A Church for Our Time," at the Montreat Conference Center in North Carolina Aug. 6-11. The conference is designed to address the issues with the diverse but united Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Morning workshops provide interactive, in-depth examinations of ethics, mission, scripture and worship. Afternoons are set aside primarily for rest, reflection and recreation. Additional conference details can be found at www.covenantnetwork.org/events06.htm#acfot. Information regarding Montreat conferences later this summer or this fall can be found at www.montreat.org.

17. PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING LEADER LEAVES: Davis Perkins, president and publisher Presbyterian Publishing Corp., is leaving his position to become publisher of Church Publishing Inc., the publishing house of Episcopal Church. "It is with decidedly mixed emotions that I wish to inform you I am resigning my position at PPC in order to continue my ecumenical journey in denominational publishing," Perkins said in a letter sent to PPC board members. See the complete story at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07329.htm.

18. TENNESSEE CHURCH DISMISSED TO EPC: East Tennessee Presbytery has voted to dismiss Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church - property and all - from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), clearing the way for the large congregation to affiliate with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). Dismissal of the 1,800-member church in Signal Mountain, Tenn., was approved during a special presbytery meeting May 29. The complete story can be found at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07328.htm.

19. PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY'S LARGEST CHURCH SEEKS DISMISSAL: Memorial Park Presbyterian Church, the largest congregation in Pittsburgh Presbytery, voted overwhelmingly June 3 to seek dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and affiliate

with the smaller, more conservative Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). See the complete story at www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2007/07344.htm.