



Reports from

Becoming Neighbors:

the Witherspoon conference on global mission and justice

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For more reports and texts from the conference,
please go to
[http://www.witherspoonsociety.org/2007/
witherspoon_conference_07_intro.htm](http://www.witherspoonsociety.org/2007/witherspoon_conference_07_intro.htm)

BECOMING NEIGHBORS: An Invitation to Global Discipleship

From the Witherspoon conference – Called to mission in an age of Empire

by Doug King, editor of Network News

The Witherspoon Society conference was held from September 16 to 19 at the Hampton Inn in downtown Louisville, near the offices of the Presbyterian General Assembly. While the registered participants were not as many as we had hoped, the group was augmented by a number of people from the Louisville area who dropped in for at least part of the event, and enriched it by their own contributions.

But the most impressive part of the event was the presentation of so many perspectives on mission, especially through the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches meeting which was held in Accra, Ghana, in 2004. That gathering adopted the Accra Confession, which WARC describes as “based on the theological conviction that the economic and environmental injustices of today’s global economy require the Reformed family to respond as a matter of faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Accra Confession calls upon Reformed Christians around the world to engage injustices in the world as an integral part of their churches’ witness and mission.”

The central aim of our conference was to hear what the Accra statement, which was shaped very intentionally by the faith and experience of the “Global South,” has to say to us in North America today.

We heard first from the Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) and current President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and then from the Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, who is originally from Ghana, and is currently serving as the General Secretary of the World Alliance.

Later the Rev. Roberto Jordan, a pastor from Argentina who served on the drafting committee for the Accra Confession, spoke specifically from the perspective of Latin America on the Confession and the

“Covenanting for Justice” project that was initiated by the Accra gathering.

But we also considered our own experience in the U.S., by spending one session discussing the “New Social Creed” which is being drafted by an ecumenical gathering of Protestant and Orthodox churches to commemorate the original “Social Creed” that was written by a number of Protestant church leaders in 1908.

And in addition to these views of the church’s calling in the changing and diverse world of the 21st century, we heard from people who are involved in carrying out that kind of mission for peace and justice around the world today. Libby Hunter and Kori Phillips spoke as Young Adult Volunteers, Libby recently returned from Northern Ireland and Kori from Peru. Along with them, Shannon O’Donnell spoke out of her experience in Jerusalem during the past year as a Volunteer in Mission, where the Witherspoon Society has been a partial sponsor of her work on the staff of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.

Later Christi Boyd and Valéry Nodem, of the Joining Hands Network in Cameroon, described how the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon is taking the lead in the struggle for justice – social, economic and environmental – as one expression of the commitments made by those who shared in Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth.

Another set of examples of mission for justice was provided by three people who have been involved in four different movements: the New Sanctuary Movement (Trina Zelle), the Campaign for Fair Food (Noelle Damico), and the National Sweat-Free Consortium (Andrew Kang Bartlett). Hunter Farrell, the new director of the PC(USA)’s World Mission program area, offered a more general – and very personal – look at “World Mission in an Age of Empire.”

Roberto Jordan, preaching for our service of communion on Monday evening, drew together the conference theme, “Becoming Neighbors,” with the various insights we had been hearing about mission from Accra and the “New Social Creed,” and the people who are living out the mission in so many different ways.

To be neighbors, he said, is to be shaped by our sisters and brothers in the community of faith – with no person being above another person, no nation being superior to another nation. Each of us has a different function, different gifts, and it’s that variety of gifts (and our respect for each other’s gifts) that makes the church a dynamic movement rather than simply an institution. Only when we begin to practice this kind of “closeness” with those who are different from us will we be truly practicing neighborliness.

NETWORK NEWS (ISSN 0745-418X) is published quarterly at Decatur, GA, and additional entry offices, by **The Witherspoon Society** of the Presbyterian Church (USA), 2800 White Oak Drive, Decatur, GA 30032-4346
Subscription: Free to members, \$40 per year for non-members.
Periodicals postage paid at Decatur, GA.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Network News, Douglas King, 2800 White Oak Drive, Decatur, GA 30032-4346.

A Challenge from Accra ... for North American Churches

Three leaders of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches challenge progressive (and other) Presbyterians to be listeners as well as doers in the company of the wider church

Clifton Kirkpatrick: God calls us to “take on the principalities and powers – and that requires us to be communities of faith, love and prayer.”

The Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) and current President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, began with a word of gratitude to the Witherspoon Society for presenting to the Presbyterian Church “a consistent concern with justice.” He then mentioned that the workings of Providence had provided us on this one day a unique gathering of resources for a discussion of Accra: Setri Nyomi, General Secretary of WARC, was in Louisville for a meeting of the General Assembly Council of the PC(USA). Christi Boyd and Valéry Nodem were also in town, and would be able to speak about one project in Cameroon, the Joining Hands Network, which exemplifies the vision set forth in the Accra statement. And then Roberto Jordan, who had been invited by Witherspoon at Kirkpatrick’s suggestion, would be able to add his own observations on the Accra Confession.

Kirkpatrick began with his own personal confession: “This is my passion. ... I left Accra with the conviction that to be a faithful church we have to be a part of the larger church ... for to be Presbyterian is to be ecumenical.”

By way of background, he explained that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches includes some 75 million members, in 214 churches in 107 countries. Founded about 150 years ago by churches in North America and Scotland, the body soon decided to reach out to churches in Eastern Europe, and now it is a truly global body, determined to act as an agent for justice on behalf of God’s people. Currently it is seeking very intentionally to “give priority to God’s call to us to do justice.”

“So,” he said, “we gathered about 2000 people in Accra, in 2004, centering around Jesus’ words in John 10:10: ‘... that all may have life ...’” One of the critical moments in the assembly came as the delegates were taken on visits to some of the slave dungeons from which African slaves were shipped to Britain and the Western Hemisphere. This gave a very specific awareness to the whole assembly of the oppression which has been visited on the Global South, and in particular Africa, by the “Christian West” over the centuries.

Adding to his changing perspectives, Kirkpatrick was placed in a Bible study group on the book of Ruth, with fifteen participants, “with only myself from the ‘developed world.’ Well, there was one person from Wales, but she made it clear that she was also from an occupied country. But for these people, the story of Ruth and Naomi was their story.”



Clifton Kirkpatrick

“We became convinced,” he said, “that we must be a church together.”

Out of all the Assembly’s deliberations, three major challenges emerged:

1. Spiritual renewal among Reformed churches. That’s the real source of power, but in many Western churches, and even elsewhere, we are not dynamic, not growing. “We’ve got to be grounded in

the Spirit, in prayer, in healing,” he explained, “getting outside our individualism.” He quoted former PC(USA) moderator Syngman Rhee as talking about “roots and fruits,” with the warning that “we are too focused on the fruits, and not enough on the roots of our faith and life.”

The Accra gathering became convinced, he said, that God is calling us to “take on the principalities and powers – and that required us to be communities of faith, love and prayer.”

2. A call to mission renewal. He said that “this is a growing sense in churches around the world, so our gathering affirmed spiritual renewal along with renewal in mission.” This led to an affirmation that to be a New Testament church is to be involved in the transformation of the world, along with an equally important awareness that “this mission is the mission of the church as a whole.”

3. The most difficult challenge: To covenant together for justice in the economy and the earth. Kirkpatrick explained: “We had a sense that we have to move from acts of compassion to challenging the institutions that are enslaving people – enriching those who have capital by exploiting those at the bottom.” This led the group into “shaping a Biblical understanding of Empire” which began to develop in earlier WARC assemblies, and took clearer shape at the Debrecen [Hungary] Assembly in 1997. That gathering initiated a process to study God’s call to the church in a time of globalization and a growing gap between the rich and the poor. This led to the Accra Confession, which challenges the

church not just to act, but to rethink its very nature and calling.

Kirkpatrick then spoke personally about some of the suffering he has seen around the world in his travels: the plight of the refugees in Sudan; the people of Argentina as their country moves from middle class status into poverty; a Pacific island which is being swallowed up by the rising level of the ocean due to global climate change.

In this age of a global order of capitalism, he said, we must build economies where “there’s enough for all – but it will take both work and theological conviction” to do this.

So the Accra Assembly affirmed that God’s intention is for a world where all have enough. Yet the forces of this nation (the U.S.) seem to be behind the dying of people in Africa. So, he asked, “why did this group vote for me as the new President of their body?” They were saying, he explained, that the PC(USA) has stood for justice; but more than that, “there’s a huge expectation that we in the U.S.A. can make a difference. Our new statement on justice in globalization reflects that kind of commitment.” And we have had some experience in this kind of struggle, as we have shared in the struggle of the Immokalee farmworkers for some kind of justice. He noted that when the PC(USA) joined in supporting the Taco Bell boycott, YUM! Brands corporate officers in Louisville, who happened to be members of Presbyterian churches, were told to press their congregations to attack the General Assembly action. And the commitment of our church was strong enough that not one such effort succeeded.

“This call for justice is urgent,” he added, “and I hope you [Witherspoon members] will continue to hold a special passion for this.”

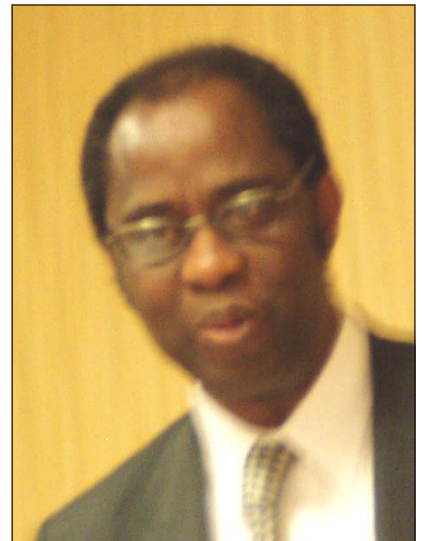
He closed by returning to the Accra delegates’ visit to the “slave castle” on the coast of Ghana. The slave trade (“that whole industry”) had gone on for 300 or 400 years, as a global network involving American slave owners, British and Dutch traders, and the traders in Africa itself. In the place he visited, the Dutch Reformed people had built a chapel on top of the dungeon where women were held – “and they never saw a problem.” And so today, he concluded, there are still injustices in which we are involved. And we are called to stand against them, alongside our sisters and brothers in faith.

Setri Nyomi: Choose life and work for justice.

Setri Nyomi followed Kirkpatrick’s talk, and began by saying “It’s been a joy working with Clif, and we value the vision and passion he brings to this effort.”

He then, “in faithfulness to our Presbyterian and Reformed heritage,” began by reading Jesus’ words from John 10:10, which were taken as the theme for the Accra General Council: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” He then cited the words of Deuteronomy 30:19-20 in which God offers the people of Israel the choice between life and death, and calls on them to “choose life.”

Yet, he said, people today are so often choosing death over life, arranging the world in such a way that people are suffering and dying because of the way we have organized our world. Millions subsist on less than one dollar a day; good education is available only to those who can afford it; millions are dying of HIV/AIDS, cancer, and other diseases. And we are even choosing death for the natural world as well.



Setri Nyomi

So, he said, “we came to Accra with a conviction that we must work for justice.” And then he indicated some of the WARC resources which can give a much more complete picture of what has gone into the document known as the Accra Confession. Please go to http://warc.jalb.de/warc.jsp/side.jsp?news_id=1154&navi=45

Dr. Nyomi noted, as had Clif Kirkpatrick, the impact on him and on the whole gathering of their visit to the slave dungeons, in part to commemorate the passage of 200 years since the end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. “I’ve been there at least ten times,” he said. “I’m not a very emotional person, but I’ve never come away from there without weeping.”

He went on to ask, “How can we stay silent when the way the household is managed leads to death for some members of the household?”

He then talked about what has happened since the Accra gathering. “Some responses have been, ‘How dare you?!’ That has been mostly from Europe. Not much reaction from North America, perhaps because people don’t know about this, or they just think ‘This too will pass.’”

A consultation has been held in Manila to deal in more depth with the context of Empire. And Dr. Nyomi reported that he had just returned from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. Most discussions have focused on the Accra Confession; some churches have adopted it, while most have referred it for further study. He noted that discussions have moved much faster in Latin America than in other areas.

Dr. Nyomi then listed three important features of the Accra Confession:

First, it is clearly stated as “confession.” While there may be doctrinal differences among the churches, this is set forth as a

statement of an active faith in response to the major challenge of our time: economic systems which are killing people.

Second, each section of the Confession consists of two steps: What we believe, followed by what we reject. The first step is clearly positive, but without an accompanying “No,” it would be meaningless.

And third, it concludes with a commitment, a call for action on our part. He then read sections 30 through 36 of the Confession.

Setri Nyomi closed with some challenges for the churches of North America – not as prescriptions, he said, but as questions to ponder:

1. The Accra Confession is a move in which we covenant in obedience to God’s will as an act of faithfulness in mutual solidarity and in accountable relationships. Can Christians in North America be party to this? Can this be done as an act of faith in solidarity with victims of economic injustice in this country as well as with other countries of the world?

2. What are the personal, cultural and institutional fears that prevent us from moving forward in a covenanting for life movement?


3. What contributions can Christians in North America make to ensure that the goals of the Accra Confession are fulfilled?

4. As churches which live and witness in North America, how can we ensure that our ministries are addressing the needs of the “least of these” (Matthew 25: 40 & 45)?

5. We cannot stay silent or refuse to act. What structures are this church and its courts ready to put in place in order to show clearly that we are not going to be inactive?

6. What lifestyle changes are we prepared to make to slow down global warming and foster better responsibility for the earth we have been created to take care of?

7. The General Council called upon all WARC member churches, on the basis of our covenanting relationship, to undertake the difficult and prophetic task of interpreting this confession to their local congregations and urged all to implement this confession by following up the Public Issues Committee’s recommendations on economic justice and ecological issues. I hope churches in North America are not afraid to take a prophetic stance by moving in this direction.

His closing call was both an affirmation and a challenge: “What is the message of Accra to North American churches? We are called to be renewed in our faith and to let our renewed worship life lead to a new sense of mission. This calling moves us beyond staying silent in the midst of a broken world. We are God’s agents of transformation. Let’s respond to that calling and be faithful instruments of God for the transformation of our societies.” 

For more reports on the Accra Confession and the complete texts of the presentations by Setri Nyomi and Roberto Jordan, please go to
http://www.witherspoonsociety.org/2007/witherspoon_conference_07_intro.htm

There you will find links to much more material than we can present here.

“Let Justice Roll Down”

The Witherspoon Society Mission

We are a network of concerned Presbyterians responding to God’s call to let justice roll down, and to work for healing in a wounded world.

Our mission is:

- To listen and learn from those who have been silenced as we seek solidarity with them;
- To nurture the prophetic voice of the church;
- To equip Presbyterians for faithful participation in the church and world;
- To challenge unjust relationships of power;
- To advocate for peace, justice, the integrity of creation, and the full inclusion of all God’s people in church and society.

We seek to revitalize the church’s proclamation and action, informed by the whole gospel, and living into the promise of God’s reign.

Roberto Jordan on “This is not a pipe”: The Accra Confession seen from Latin America

Following the presentations Tuesday morning on the Accra Confession, Roberto Jordan offered his perspective as an Argentine citizen and one of the drafters of the Confession, looking at both the Confession itself and the wider framework of ideas that accompany it.

Jordan began by calling our attention to a picture that was distributed to the participants: René Magritte’s painting of a pipe, which is titled “This is not a pipe.” And, said Jordan, just as you can’t put tobacco in a picture of a pipe and smoke it, so an affirmation of “Being Neighbors” (as in the theme of the conference) is not the reality. The reality of being neighbors is more than being close to one another; it involves “sharing our different gifts and being willing to learn from each other, to respect others.” And the Accra Confession was an effort to do just that: to move from representations of reality – as in the Empire’s affirmation of “the good life,” which is really not life at all, but death – to real life, the kind of life affirmed by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches when they talked about “Fullness of Life for All.”

Roberto Jordan then described some of the difficult process by which the WARC gathering in Accra came to approve the Confession and related documents. He mentioned specifically the statement on spirituality, which sets forth to call to “hearing the cry for life in our joy and our pain”; the document on mission, which provides the definition of Empire on which the Confession builds; and the statement on “Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth,” which includes the “Confession.”

One of the long series of meetings, held in London, saw the whole project nearly derailed by a number of delegates who had been elected by their churches with the apparent goal of stopping the document. (This led him to point out to us all that the selection of delegates to

international conferences can be far more important than it may seem.)

Once the Accra General Council had passed the “Covenanting for Justice” statement by an overwhelming majority, it took only half an hour for the drafting committee to be brought under intense pressure to soften the language. These people wanted “we reject” to be changed to something like “we strongly object.” And they clearly did not like the term “neo-liberalism,” which they said meant nothing to them and their people of the North, although the meaning of the term is all too clear to people of the South.



René Magritte, “This is not a pipe”

To Jordan, this was simply one more example of the fact that “we all have ideologies,” but the most dangerous people are those who don’t acknowledge that reality.

Why was there such intense opposition to this statement? It was, he said, that the Accra Confession not only makes faith statements, but also condemns injustice. One reflection of this attitude is that churches from the North are quite willing to fund WARC staff positions in many areas ... but not in the area of economic justice.

Jordan then gave us a quick and sobering tour through the history of Latin America, both for its own sake and as an example of the experience of the whole of “the

South” as that vast part of the world came under Northern dominance. Highly developed cultures were wiped out; entire people were decimated (which was why the Europeans needed to import Africa slaves to South America); the local economies came under the control of Northern corporations, and then of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

He then spoke more specifically about the role of the U.S. in Latin America – demanding free access to markets while protecting its own markets; punishing any government that defied its demands by a coup; training South American military officers in torture and coup-making. (So, he noted, the Argentine army was unable to defend the nation in the Falklands conflict, because it was not trained for its most basic task of defense of the nation.)

The churches have become accomplices to this, Jordan added, when they defend an economic policy more than they defend the people who are being hurt by it. So they have gone along with the global North, supporting dictatorships in Latin America that have been based on a system of fear, whose results continue to lead people even today to choose “not to get involved.” The

system of Empire needs masses of people who cannot read or write, and are in poor health – good slaves. “This is how the Empire builds the pyramids of the 21st century – with the new slaves.”

While the macro economic picture in Argentina looks better today than a few years ago, said Jordan, the people are still poor because the system of distribution leaves them out.

This powerlessness and suffering are not what God wants for the world, Jordan insisted. Faced with all this, the Reformed Churches were called to respond with a “decision of faith commitment,” which we now have in the Accra Confession. After all, we worship a God who hears the cries of the people and comes down to set them free from slavery in the Empire of Pharaoh.

So, said Jordan, we have to define what we believe – and what we reject. That means a total change of life, repentance, change of life-style, and working together. But some nations are accustomed to leading, not listening.

So he called on us – in the church of North America – to analyze the situation of our own country from the point of view of the victims. After all, he added, faith is not security, but vulnerability, even to the point of being afraid. To do this analysis we must be suspicious, because “they may not be telling you all the truth.” So we need to acknowledge that we are formed by our culture – and that it is not sacred. We need change, and that can happen only as we gain some freedom from the image of reality that the Empire has been giving us. That image, he said again (remember the pipe?) is only an image, and not the reality. We are called to choose between Fullness of Life, and Empire.

Let’s make the choice and work for it together, he urged. “That’s the gift of the Accra Confession.”

He closed by listing some “issues I would invite you to take with you and consider in depth, always within the framework of the God of life in Fullness:

- Empire: characteristics, origin, ideology and development: Theological critique.
- Fundamentalisms: economic, religious, political.
- The role of media conglomerates in colonization of minds (internal and external).
- USA Foreign Policy and Military intervention; Migration, United Nations, Economics.
- Political and social commitment, i.e., the importance of voting for world democracy.”

WitherspoonNews

“Issues Analyst” to become plural

For a number of years, the Witherspoon Society has been privileged to share insightful articles and comments by our “issues analysts,” the most recent being Gene TeSelle. Their works, thought provoking and informative, have been an important part of our efforts to bring to the forefront the wide range of social justice issues facing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its members. We have realized, though, that we haven’t been “good stewards” of the talents of our members, especially those serving on our Board. Our members are actively working with labor concerns, GLBT issues, interfaith dialogue, and a host of other social justice interests.

As another General Assembly looms on the horizon, we thought it was time to change that. Whether it’s in *Network News* or on the Witherspoon Society website, look for analysis of these many social justice issues from a variety of contributors, reflecting the varied experiences and backgrounds of each person who is actively involved in a particular issue. We believe it will make our efforts even more productive as we do our best to keep you informed, “enlightened,” and engaged in the work of our church in our communities and around the world – the work for social justice.

At our recent Board meeting just before the Witherspoon conference in Louisville, board members volunteered to take on these areas of interest:

- Trina Zelle: labor - US and global
- Bill Dummer: poverty
- Mitch Trigger: interfaith relations
- Peter Barnes-Davies: global issues
- Jake Young: foreign policy
- Darcy Hawk: science and religion

Gene TeSelle will continue doing what he has been doing so well: focusing on issues of particular concern within the Presbyterian Church (USA), including both internal matters and Presbyterian concerns with matters social, economic, political and international.

Volunteers invited! If you would like to take on some issue of particular interest to you, please get in touch with Trina Zelle and Jake Young, our co-moderators, to discuss it.

The next issue of *Network News*

will focus on **economic justice**, especially in connection with issues relating to the labor movement and immigration.

Witherspoon Co-Moderator Trina Zelle will be assembling the material for this issue, and she welcomes suggestions and submissions. Please contact her at her address, phone or e-mail listed on the back cover.

For anything else, please contact *Network News* editor Doug King:
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Practicing Global Discipleship

We began Sunday evening by looking at the practice of global discipleship, seen through the experience of two Young Adult Volunteers in Mission, and one former “YAV” who is now serving as a Presbyterian Volunteer in Mission.

Libby Hunter and Kori Phillips spoke in a prepared dialogue about their recent one-year experiences as YAVs – Libby in Northern Ireland and Kori in Lima, Peru.

Both described their shock at “confronting adversity.”

Libby found herself in North Belfast, pairing Protestant and Catholic boys for a treasure hunt in an after-school event. Things went fine until the last two boys, one Catholic and one Protestant, refused to be paired, showing a hostility toward one another that was beyond anything she had ever seen before.

As Kori walked along the street in Lima, she passed a man lying by the road, apparently having given up on life. She felt she could do nothing to help. “The following days I struggled with what I had seen and done – or not done.” Later, talking with one of the staff of the Joining Hands Network of Peru, she heard him explain that “poverty is our common problem here.”



Kori Phillips

Both of them, working mostly with young people, found themselves being “changed from the inside out,” as Libby helped high school students produce a play, and Kori helped one young woman, who had been silent for two days in a center for sexual victims, finally begin to tell her own story.

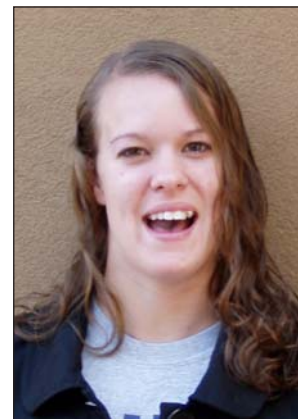
They wrapped up their dialogue:

- Kori: There were times when I knew I was in the right place at the right time.
 Libby: This was where I was supposed to be, needed to be.
 Kori: God asks us every day to reach out,
 Libby: To step across our boundaries
 Kori: And overcome our fears.
 Libby: By breaking down the barriers of exclusion
 Kori: Of poverty
 Libby: Of hostility
 Kori: We begin to see God’s work in our world.

And that’s clearly just what they did – and did well.

For the full script of the presentation by Libby and Kori, please go to http://www.witherspoon.society.org/2007/witherspoon_conference__07_p5.htm

Shannon O’Donnell then spoke out of her experience in Jerusalem during the past year as a Volunteer in Mission. The Witherspoon Society has become a partial sponsor of her work, and she has generously shared thoughtful reports with us through these months – and will continue to do so.



Libby Hunter

She served earlier as a Young Adult Volunteer in Thailand, then for some time on the staff of the Worldwide Ministries Division in Louisville, and came to feel “called to the Middle East.” For the past year she has served on the staff of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem.



Shannon O’Donnell

Shannon revealed something of the tone of life in Jerusalem (a.k.a “Occupied Palestine”) by telling of a time when boys on a bus finally screwed up their courage to ask her “Why are you here?” She thought explaining liberation theology (the core of Sabeel’s mission) might be a bit too much for 6-year-old boys, so she simply said, “We’re here to work for peace.” Their response was immediate: “You should just go home. You can’t do anything here.” So “part of our job,” she said, “is to help the people interpret the chaos around them.”

She met some South Africans in Palestine who were part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program there. She asked them how the situation in Palestine compared with the situation in South Africa. The answer was pretty simple: “Here it’s much worse.”

For more reports from Jerusalem by Shannon O’Donnell, please go to http://www.witherspoonsociety.org/2007/from_palestine.htm

Let’s keep in touch!

If you’re a Witherspoon member, we’d like to include you on our special e-mail list for members. You’ll receive only occasional notes, whenever we have a special bit of information or concern to share with you. Just send a note to Doug King at douging2@aol.com.

Three Current Mission Movements ... and a look toward New Directions

On Monday morning, following morning prayers, we heard three lively reports on current mission movements. As Co-Moderator Jake Young said in introducing the speakers, we were clearly beginning the conference with “praxis,” and then moving to hear and think about the theological “theory” which is reflected in the mission actions. Hunter Farrell, the newly appointed director of the PC(USA)’s World Mission program area, also spoke, both on his own experience in Peru and on his understanding of mission today, facing the challenges of Empire.

Trina Zelle on the New Sanctuary Movement

The Rev. Trina Zelle, also a Co-Moderator of Witherspoon, is now serving as staff for Interfaith Worker Justice in Arizona. She spoke first on the New Sanctuary Movement, and began by telling a bit of her own story, and how it has led her to this form of ministry. Years ago during the U.S. war (well, “low-intensity conflict”) in Central America, she was living in Northfield, Minnesota, where she became aware of Rene Hurtado, a Salvadoran who was in sanctuary at St. Luke Presbyterian Church, near Minneapolis. Since then, through pastorates in Hawaii and Arizona, she has seen many dimensions of immigration. September 11th then, as she put it, “provided cover for a new initiative against the working class,” because the labor movement has generally been a movement of recent immigrants, except for the craft unions. Now the strength of the union movement is coming largely from the immigrants from Latin America. And while “nativists” resent the new immigrants, the people who hold power and wealth want them here as a source of cheap labor with minimal rights.

Currently the Administration’s campaign against immigrants, she explained, is directed at the “best,” most established immigrants. Many of them are being picked up for minor offenses, and sent to prisons – private, for-profit prisons at that – and then deported.

The New Sanctuary Movement is looking for “poster child” immigrants, who can bear witness to the plight of many innocent immigrants. Faith communities are being sought who could provide sanctuary for some of these people – a safe place to stay while their situations become better known around the country. But, she said, “we find that churches today – both evangelical and progressive – respond with ‘Why should we do anything about this?’ So we’re aiming lower: simply asking people to sign letters asking a sheriff not to set up a hot line through which people will be encouraged to report their neighbors.”

Finally, she said, this is a pastoral challenge to our churches: “How can we really care about these people, while ‘using’ them for our own economic interests?”

Noelle Damico on the Fair Food Campaign

Trina Zelle was followed by the Rev. Noelle Damico, who is serving as the PC(USA) liaison to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, speaking about the broader Fair Food Campaign. This effort began as a campaign by the farm workers –



Noelle Damico & Son

mostly immigrants from Haiti, Guatemala and Mexico – to gain fair compensation for their work in the Florida tomato fields – wages which are still the same as those paid in 1978. Last spring their agreement with Taco Bell was extended to all YUM brand companies, and now McDonald’s has gone even further, creating an independent group to monitor the fulfillment of their agreement with the workers. This movement, said Damico, is growing into an effort to transform the U.S. food industry – fast-food corporations, grocery chains, and more.

And the system needs transforming, she said. Farm workers are not covered by the National Labor Relations Act, so they have no rights to organize, to register complaints, to bargain. “There is slavery here,” she said. “People have no control over their own lives, no rights, and they are constantly subjected to violence and intimidation. ... So this is about survival and decency and the ending of horrendous violence.”

She noted that this is not a question of “illegal immigration.” Certainly undocumented workers can be exploited more easily than those with papers, but she cited a study by the Pew Foundation showing that only about 14% of the farm workers are undocumented. But the problem comes from the pressure on fast food and grocery corporations to compete and to cut costs; the easiest way they can do that is by cutting what they pay the growers that supply their food. And growers then cut the easiest place they can: the least powerful part of the system: the workers.

Damico talked about the success of the Taco Bell boycott, which started this whole process of change. It succeeded, she said, because two critical groups acted: students, who form the major market for fast food companies, and people of faith, who provided a “moral power” in support of the struggle. “We brought pressure,” she added, “by boycotting, by writing letters, and by getting out of our comfort zone and marching” to press the corporations and their stock-holders directly. And she noted that the decision of the Presbyterian Church in Louisville to take part in the action with YUM brands was a crucial element in the success of that effort.



Finally she described “three theological points that have come out of our mission work:”

- *God is sovereign over the world, and not the markets.* So “justice can be good business” in a very new way.
- *Our choices matter.* We are stewards, and have been empowered by God to make choices – even hard choices. And sometimes we have to say No in order to affirm what we really believe – or the holders of power won’t think we’re serious.
- *The church must not be neutral when people are being violated and exploited.* “If we had stayed neutral,” she added, “YUM Brands would have felt no pressure to negotiate. Being neutral simply allows the status quo to continue.”

Andrew Kang Bartlett on the Sweat-Free Consortium

Andrew Kang Bartlett presented the final glimpse of a creative venture in mission, as he told about the National Sweat-Free Consortium. Bartlett, who is on the staff of the Presbyterian Hunger Program in Louisville, began by saying that interdependence is the reality in our globalized world. As Christians, he said, we manifest our love by how we treat each other. And even this year, which marks the 200th anniversary of the end of the Atlantic slave trade, we find ourselves still confronting slavery in many forms.

The sweatshops, which produce many of the clothing and other items that we use every day (and that we buy because we like their low prices), are one major form of that slavery.

Sweat-Free Ts is one specific program that helps Presbyterian congregations and other groups find and purchase t-shirts that are sweatshop-free. The program also helps to educate church members about sweatshop conditions where most of our clothes are produced.

Sweat-Free Ts is part of Enough for Everyone, a PC(USA) program that offers hands-on options for congregations to participate in the global economy in faithful, just and responsible ways. Enough for Everyone is a joint effort of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Self-Development of People, Women’s Ministries, Presbyterian Women, Environmental Justice, Justice and Compassion and the Stewardship Office.

This effort has energized people on many campuses and in some cities, leading some cities and states to adopt sweat-free procurement policies. Bartlett described their effort as urging producers “to compete for the high road, rather than racingvvvvvvv to the bottom.”

The question now is how to get independent verification of procurement practices and producers. A consortium is needed for this, which would pool resources to provide independent monitoring of practices, and could focus on three principles: public disclosure, independent investigations, and rewarding fair practices.

Concrete action is needed. The Sweat-Free Consortium is a promising initiative to bring justice to the garment industry and beyond. We can encourage our mayors and governors to join the Sweat-Free Consortium and to institute sweatfree procurement policies. He also asked the Witherpoon Society to endorse the Consortium.



Andrew Kang Bartlett

Hunter Farrell on World Mission in an Age of Empire

The Rev. Hunter Farrell addressed a broader topic: “World Mission in an Age of Empire.” His talk provided a great introduction to him in his role as the newly appointed director of the PC(USA)’s World Mission program area. He had been back, he noted, just 63 days after 10 years in Lima, Peru, where he worked with the “Joining Hands Against Hunger” program, which is affiliated with the Presbyterian Hunger Program. He began by relating the story of his own growth in understanding of the meaning of mission, and then described his experience in La Oroya, Peru, as an example of the new meaning of mission today.

He spoke of growing up in a “mission-oriented church,” where mission meant “crossing the tracks, but coming back to our own safety zones.” He eventually attended Fuller Seminary, where, he said, “I never heard a lesson or a sermon about justice. This was a term that was vaguely unknown, or suspect.”

Once he took a Latin American friend to his church in Dallas for Christmas Eve. As is the custom there, he said, even in Dallas the women attended this service all wearing “some kind of animal” for the special occasion. His friend observed the display of furs, and walked out. Farrell caught up with him and asked what was wrong. “I don’t think we worship the same God,” came the reply. Other such experiences have led him on a long journey, to the point where now he says, “We’re tumbling into a new age of Empire, and we need to give voice to a new awareness of the threat of Empire.”

“World mission today is sexy,” he said, with 1.2 million Americans going overseas this year in some kind of short-term mission experience. But what are we doing, he asked, to help these people as they encounter people who are “different” – with dark skins, poor, and all the rest? What are we doing to help them understand why these people are poor? These mission travellers will too likely think that “if they’re poor, it’s because they don’t work, they’re lazy ...” And that view, he said, “fits so neatly into the theology of Empire.”

“Does this Emperor of mission,” he asked, “have any clothes on?”

Having told a bit about his growth in understanding mission, Farrell went on to tell of his more recent involvement in it. In La Oroya, in the mountains above Lima, a U.S. multi-metal smelting operation has left 97% of the children with lead poisoning. And the differences between the owner and the workers is stunning. In any 24-hour period, said Farrell, the owner, in his new home on Long Island with its 100-plus bedrooms, will make about \$400,000. In those 24 hours, 1,000 tons of toxins will rain down on the children of La Oroya. In such a situation, he added, “If we can’t speak the truth to power, we have no right to say anything.”



Hunter Farrell

Farrell and the Joining Hands program have worked to gather data on the growing incidence of cancer in La Oroya. They tested 99 children, and found that all 99 had cancer. The University of St. Louis public health experts (who’ve dealt with the same problem much closer to home) sent a team, and Joining Hands set up an “interfaith” meeting (which means Catholic and Evangelical/Protestant there). The Catholic archbishop was encouraged to join in, thus giving the effort real legitimacy.

This effort has gained world attention – from NPR, BBC, CBS, the *New York Times*, and even the Peruvian press. So people are beginning to see that an outrage is being committed on Peruvian children “by a Yankee business.”

So, said Farrell, “world mission is a sexy enterprise. But if people don’t have an encounter with justice, we’re not being faithful to God’s mission in this world.” He then spoke of an all-church gathering on world mission, which is being planned for January 16-18 in Dallas. Through this gathering, he said, “we must ‘get it’ that we must step out of our comfort zone, seeing world mission as something that’s not just ‘out there,’” but that it involves all of us and the structures of power and wealth within which we live.

Living out the Accra Confession

Presbyterian Church in Cameroon takes lead in the struggle for justice – social, economic and environmental

Following the presentation of the Accra Confession by Clifton Kirkpatrick and Setri Nyomi, we had a chance to hear very directly about one expression of the commitments made by those who shared in the Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth.

Valéry Nodem, the coordinator of the Presbyterian-supported Joining Hands Network in Cameroon, along with Christi Boyd, a PC(USA) mission co-worker serving as the companionship facilitator for the “Joining Hands” program in Cameroon, described the work of RELUFA, the Network for the Fight Against Hunger. It is a national network of Cameroonian churches, along with ecumenical and secular non-profit organizations, working since 2001 to take common action against hunger, poverty, and social, economic, and environmental injustice.

For more on RELUFA, see <http://www.relufa.org/>

One of their strong programs provides micro-credit loans to many poor people in remote areas of the country, providing training to equip people – many of them women, often without basic literacy and business skills – to start and manage small businesses of their own.

Confronting the oil industry for justice

A major effort has been to deal with the great damage being caused by extractive industries – specifically the construction of an oil pipeline running some 1000 miles through Cameroon, to carry oil and gas from Chad, where it is mined, to the Atlantic coast for shipment. Said Nodem, “this is the first time for the people of Chad and Cameroon to have a say in the use of the natural resources in our own countries.”

This has meant confronting the giant oil corporations – Exxon, Chevron, and Petronas (Malaysia) – to fulfill their promises and agreements by compensating people and communities for land that has been taken for the pipeline, environmental damage. The companies have promised that the construction would benefit the communities around it, but RELUFA has become aware of at least 500 people who have not received the compensation that they were promised. “After three years,” said Nodem, “they [the companies] are still denying their responsibilities.” Whatever they claim about the benefits they will offer, “the companies are just doing business.”

Nodem talked about how much the group has learned through their struggle for justice. They have seen, for instance, how many

of the countries with rich natural resources are among the poorest nations in the world, suffering from civil wars, hunger, environmental devastation and much more.

As part of this struggle, Nodem has encouraged a number of churches in Cameroon to join in a "Covenant of Cameroonian Churches on Social, Economic and Environmental Justice." Many of the church leaders were uneasy about this, he said, feeling that "it's too political, too sensitive." But finally representatives of many of the churches gathered, and Nodem took them to visit some of the people who are being affected by the pipeline project. Then they sat down to talk about possible responses, and finally "we wrote a covenant, saying we have seen the suffering of the people, we want our churches to respond, and we want our government to help." It took some time and some encouragement, but he said finally top leaders of all the churches – including the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon – did sign the covenant.

For the text of the Covenant >>

<http://www.relufa.org/updates/documents/COVENANTOFCAMEROONIANCHURCHES.doc>

Tracing where the money goes

On an even wider stage, the struggle against multinational extractive industries has led some 300 non-governmental organizations into a new effort to trace where the money goes in the operations of these giant corporations, so that more just compensation can be claimed for the people whose lives are so deeply affected by their operations.

The worldwide Publish What You Pay campaign, according to its website, "aims to help citizens of resource-rich developing countries hold their governments accountable for the management of revenues from the oil, gas and mining industries. Natural resource revenues are an important source of income for governments of over 50 developing countries, including Angola, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and Venezuela. When properly managed these revenues should serve as a basis for poverty reduction, economic growth and development rather than exacerbating corruption, conflict and social divisiveness."

This coalition of over 300 NGOs is calling for "the mandatory disclosure of the payments made by oil, gas and mining companies to all governments for the extraction of natural resources. The coalition also calls on resource-rich developing country governments to publish full details on revenues. This is a necessary first step towards a more accountable system for the management of natural resource revenues."

What can we do?

Valéry Nodem and Christi Boyd were asked about how the Presbyterian Church (USA) might be involved in their efforts for justice in Cameroon.

First, they said, we can help by simply making people aware of what's happening in their part of the world as the giants of

extractive industry impact their people and countries, often without much concern for the effects of their operations.

And second, they urged us to endorse and join the worldwide Publish What You Pay campaign, as a way of making the operations of these industries (and the governments involved) more transparent, and thus more accountable to the people.

They also suggested that we might support an overture being sent to the General Assembly by the presbyteries of Chicago and the Twin Cities Area – both partners with the Presbyterian Church of Cameroon – by which the PC(USA) would become a signatory of the Publish What You Pay Campaign.

A gentle reminder about membership dues

As we have announced earlier, rising costs have forced us to raise our membership dues, effective at the beginning of 2008.

The new membership rates will be:

Regular membership	
1 year	\$60.00
2 years	\$110.00
Student/limited income membership	\$24.00
Group membership	\$100.00
(10 copies of <i>Network News</i> sent to one address -- or fewer than ten, if you don't need that many)	
Subscription	\$40.00
(You receive each issue of <i>Network News</i> for one year, but are not considered a voting member of Witherspoon.)	

When should you renew your membership?

Any time you want to send us a renewal is just fine. You can always check the expiration date of your membership by looking at the mailing label printed on *Network News* – or on some of the letters you may receive from us. The date should be in the upper right corner of the label, with the words "exp date."

Let's keep in touch!

If you're a Witherspoon member, we'd like to include you on our special e-mail list for members. You'll receive only occasional notes, whenever we have a special bit of information or concern to share with you. Just send a note to douging2@aol.com.

The New Social Creed

We are fast approaching the hundredth anniversary of the so-called Social Creed of the Churches, which was adopted in 1908 at the founding of the Federal Council of Churches. It was a dramatic statement by what we have come to call “the public church.” Currently the Methodists and the Presbyterians, as well as the National Council of Churches, are looking ahead to an appropriate commemoration. One central element in that commemoration is the drafting of a new, updated version of the Social Creed, responding to the new concerns of the 21st century.

To help us think about this important new statement, a panel of three people, all of whom have been involved in the Presbyterian drafting team, helped us understand the process and the content of the draft. After some question-and-answer exchange, the Rev. Roberto Jordan, a pastor from Argentina, was invited to offer his perspective in light of his experience in the drafting of the Accra Confession, which was intentionally written for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to reflect the perspective of the Global South on today’s issues.

The panel consisted of the Rev. Dr. Christian Iosso, a long-time Witherspoon member who is now the Coordinator for Social Witness Policy of the PC(USA), the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth L. Hinson-Hasty, Assistant Professor of Theology at Bellarmine University in Louisville, and the Rev. Dr. Gene Te Selle, Witherspoon’s Issues Analyst, who is Emeritus Professor of Historical Theology at Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

Chris Iosso opened with some background about the project. Perhaps most important, this New Social Creed is to be ecumenical, serving both to express and to build consensus within the ecumenical movement. He added that the Presbyterian team is preparing a booklet which will give some background for understanding

the Creed and its phrasing.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) began its participation in the process with an action by the 2004 General Assembly approving a Commissioners’ Resolution, which was proposed by two commissioners who represented roughly the two “ends of the theological spectrum” in the church. It was passed strongly by the Assembly as a whole. The 2006 General Assembly adopted an interim report of the Social Creed Resolution team. It is slated for final consideration and action by the 2008 Assembly.

Iosso explained that virtually none of the content of the Creed will be new to Presbyterians. For some members of the National Council of Churches though – especially the Orthodox churches – this is a new venture. They have been particularly concerned that the Creed have a clear theological framework, which is provided in its Trinitarian structure. For these churches it has also been important to make clear that this statement is not “a Creed,” which would have very high status for them, but a Social Creed, with its standing limited by that extra word.

Gene TeSelle, who has written extensively on the Social Creed over the past couple years (most recently in an essay entitled “Time for a New Social Awakening”) outlined some of the context in which this statement is being shaped. There are, he said, important differences between the setting in 1908 and that in 2008. “Then” the major social development was the rising industrial economy; “now” we face the realities of the post-industrial era and a global economy. A century ago the church operated within what was assumed to be a largely “Christian society.” Today “Christianity is on the sidelines” of the social and political life of the nation. In 1908 there were two major political parties, each including a large measure of diversity within its ranks; today the parties are each quite homogeneous, and the divide

between them is wide.

He noted also that the team considered many issues which are very important in today’s world, but which they understood as less central to U.S. society, and therefore did not try to address.

The 1908 Social Creed was drafted in the midst of a long-running struggle for social reform, which began after the Civil War with the rise of an industrial economy, and accompanying protests against the evils that arose within that system. That phase, he added, did not see much real change, but it did show that alternatives could be offered to the existing social system.

From 1900 to 1920, a number of major reforms were put into effect. This happened largely with the help of a few major leaders, including Robert LaFollette (a Republican), William Jennings Bryan (Democrat), and Theodore Roosevelt (“a maverick”). Mass circulation periodicals helped to raise the pressure for reform.

In the years that followed, it became clear that legislative programs “couldn’t do everything.” At the same time, Christianity saw a growth of fundamentalism and Pentecostalism, which gave evidence that social reform could not meet all of people’s needs.

TeSelle commented that the Social Creed overlooked a number of urgent concerns of its time, including race and racism, and the women’s movement. Yet, he added, leaders of the women’s movement saw legislation for “the protection of women” as the best progress they could hope for at the time.

He concluded by pointing out that many Christians outside the “Social Gospel” movement have always been aware of the social dimensions of the Gospel. Jim Wallis’ “Covenant for a New America” represents a significant evangelical movement of social concern. Catholic bishops

have for years been issuing statement about social issues – particularly about the dignity of labor and the importance of participation in decision-making. “We may differ over the wedge issues – sexuality, gun control, abortion, and such – but we agree on much more,” he said.

Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty began by citing a favorite blooper in a student paper she once received, where a student described the importance of faith being based in ethics by writing, “Faith is liberating when it is rotted in its own ethical teachings.” And so, she said, the new creed is a reminder of our need to be rooted (not rotted, we trust) in our ethical teachings.

“The Social Gospel was great and it has formed many of us,” she said, “but the authors of the Social Gospel were formed by their own setting, too.” Thus Walter Rauschenbusch took twenty years to decide whether he should support women’s rights.

The movement, after all, was led largely by white, middle-class men, people of privilege. But many of them were in fact aware of that, which made a great difference.

Our denomination, she added, is predominantly white, well-educated, and Republican. So, she went on, “We’re great at making statements ... but my concern is not just what we say, but what we will do in response,” and how we will relate with the people outside our usual circles.

Hinson-Hasty went on to outline her two major concerns about how this creed “can be enacted.”

First, she said, real change will come only in and through local communities and congregations, and helping this creed to take root in those communities will be a challenge.

And second, “we must find ways to listen to the people most affected by the problems highlighted in the creed.” We live in “an apartheid economy,” she said, and we must not simply propose for others, but rather listen to them.

This led her to challenge the conference participants “to listen to the people most affected” by the issues dealt with in the creed. “Look around this group,” she said. “Who else needs to be in the room? How are we going to take seriously the concerns of those evicted from their homes, those being deported ...?” She expressed the hope that this creed might lead us toward more creative forms of service, for “this creed will only live not in our words, but in our actions.”

The panel discussion elicited numerous comments from the group. One participant said there seem to be many of the same points raised in this document as in the one drafted 100 years ago. “So,” she asked, “what’s changed?”

Don Beisswenger commented that the draft document is basically aiming at “reforming the present system, but we need more than reformation.” As an example he cited efforts to reform the racism in education with the “separate but equal” doctrine, which quickly showed itself unable to challenge the basic problems of racism.

Roberto Jordan then offered some sharp observations from his vantage point as a participant in the drafting of the Accra Confession, and his place as an Argentinian resident of the “Global South.”

A few of his opening points:

“I missed the word ‘justice’ in the final paragraph.” (Indeed, it hardly appears in the whole document.) Saying that “that is implied” is not enough, since “implications depend on who’s doing the implying.” Beyond that, he asked what exactly are the aims of the document.

“I missed any reference to the media of communication and ‘the colonization of minds’” that is being carried out under their dominance.

He called for some clear “dividing line” between the “people of good will” (“Good will is very ambiguous!” he added.) and the people or powers that stand against them. He raised this concern again a few moments later, saying that “you haven’t mentioned what

causes these problems.”

He continued with a few other concerns about the document, including the fact that it affirms interdependence and solidarity, without ever making clear our readiness to be changed by the other persons with whom we stand in solidarity. “There’s a paternalistic attitude here,” he said – “doing *for* others, not *with* others.”

As the discussion proceeded, it became clear that this Social Creed is aimed to achieve a new kind of common ground among the wide range of churches in the National Council of Churches. To achieve that goal, the drafters have been striving to avoid language that would create resistance, and terms like “justice” and “dividing line” are seen as likely to do just that.

As we saw the next day in discussions of the Accra Confession, words and ideas that may be absolutely appropriate and necessary in a global or “Global South” context may be viewed as very negative – perhaps even inflammatory – in the U.S. context.

The latest draft of the New Social Creed that is available online (from November 2006) is on our website at http://www.witherspoonsociety.org/2004/social_creed.htm#social%20creed%20draft

We have posted previously a number of essays by Gene TeSelle on the Social Creed, including ...

- Some Background on the Social Creed (Sept. 2004)
- The “Social Creed” of 1908: Some Background (Nov. 2006)
- The ‘Social Creed’ after a Hundred Years: Time for a new Social Awakening

There are many other articles on that page, as well >>

http://www.witherspoonsociety.org/2004/social_creed.htm

**You don't need to wait 12 more months for an election.
You can vote now for Witherspoon officers!**

The Nominating Committee is happy to present nominees for positions on the Board of the Witherspoon Society. Serving on the Nominating Committee have been Edie Gauss, chair; Jude Michaels, Fred Sanner, and Bruce Tischler. They now present this slate of officers to take office immediately upon election, to serve through mid-2009.

Co-Moderator: Jake Young

Jake is nominated for another term in this position, to serve from the present to the Fall of 2009. For the past three years, he has been pastor of North Anderson Community Church, Presbyterian, in Anderson, SC.

Secretary/Communicator: Mitch Trigger

Mitch is nominated for a second term as Witherspoon secretary. He and his wife Sue have recently moved to First Presbyterian Church in Rockaway, NJ, where they are serving as co-pastors.

- At-Large Members:** **Gusti Newquist**
- Barbara Renton**
- Catherine Snyder**

These three members are nominated for at-large positions on the Board, to serve two-years terms to the fall of 2009. We have asked each of them to say a bit about themselves.

Gusti Newquist is enjoying her final year as a Master of Divinity student at Harvard Divinity School, where she has been active in WomenChurch, Seminarians for Choice, and the interfaith Noon Service Steering Committee. Having completed field education internships at Clarendon Hill Presbyterian Church (Somerville, MA) and the Massachusetts Bible Society, she is happily incorporating creative writing into ministry by facilitating a writing group at Clarendon Hill and completing her own book of poetry.

Barbara Renton was raised in the Bronx (NYC), and began attending a Presbyterian Church at the age of 5. She has had dual interests: musicology (a Ph.D., specializing in Czech music) and theology (M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary). She has served in every capacity in the PCUSA: deacon, elder, Moderator of Presbytery (Long Island), Moderator of Synod (Northeast), Moderator of the General Assembly Council. She served as Executive Presbyter of Susquehanna Valley Presbytery until her retirement in July 2002.

Catherine Snyder is a life-long Presbyterian who has served as chaplain to Mary Baldwin College, as associate of Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, and as Presbyterian Campus Minister at Virginia Tech since 1995. She feels blessed to serve in a ministry that has a very long history of working for peace and justice. Since April 16, she has been dreaming of living in a land with strict gun control.

Please vote! You can use the ballot on page 13.

We know we have named just enough nominees to fill the vacancies on the Board, but this really is intended to be an election. If you would like to cast a vote for someone else (or even yourself) please do so. And as a very modest way of giving your support to the work of the Board – past and future – please vote!

**My Vote for
Witherspoon Officers**

Here is the slate of officers described in the column to the left. Please check the names you those you want to support, and write in the names of anyone else you would like to vote for in preference for the nominees

Co-Moderator (for 2008-2010)

- Jake Young
-

Secretary/Communicator
(for 2008-2010)

- Mitch Trigger
-

At-Large Members
(for 2008-2010)

- Gusti Newquist
- Barbara Renton
- Catherine Snyder
-
-
-

And if you'd like to suggest anyone else (including yourself!) for next year's officer election, please write their names and contact information here:

.....
.....
.....

Please send your ballot, by January 15, 2008, to:

The Rev. Trina Zelle
169 W. LeVieve Lane
Tempe, AZ 85284

A copy of this ballot is acceptable, too.

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Network News

The Witherspoon Society of the Presbyterian Church
2800 White Oak Drive
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Periodicals
U. S. Postage Paid
Decatur, GA 30030-2974
ISSN 0745-418X