



Synod Snaps

*Weekly e-news from the Synod of Alaska-Northwest,
A judicatory of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

October 16, 2009

Know What You Eat

by the Rev. Joyce Martin Emery, Transitional Synod Executive

We grew up with egg laying chickens in our backyard. Our chickens had names. The family was not eager to eat these pets. The chickens who were done laying found their way to a church potluck. The three Martin children were eager to tell everyone the name of the pet in the pot. The delicious chicken would go uneaten (after a lot of effort to prepare it from the chopping block to pot). Our Mother brokered a deal with us. We did not have to eat the chicken and we were NOT to utter the name in public or speak of the chicken's demise. Deal. We did not have such intimate relationships with the beef that we ate growing up, and yet we knew the ranch where it came from and the names of the owner. We also knew that our cousins were eating the same beef, for they had gotten the other half. There really was something about knowing where your food came from. I once read an article that stated that most ground beef patties that we eat today can have up to 100 different cattle represented in the one patty. And we could go on and on about food safety in this society.

I am a typical baby-boomer who likes to eat produce grown locally. I will pay extra for hormone free, antibiotic free chicken and beef. I can just taste the different additives in beef. This past week Moderator Roger Lee and I had the privilege to travel to the North Slope for the Yukon Presbytery meeting. We got to experience first-hand some of the patterns of a subsistence lifestyle. I caught a glimpse of the cultural merits of living off the land and sea. Strict guidelines for taking just what you need are woven into the culture and the current Federal regulations. Here was the shock for me: a nine-year old landed one of the final whales in Barrow for the season. ([Click here for the full story](#)). He was a local hero. The pictures of his face beamed with pride. His uncles were training him in some of the best practices of their culture. Words in the media to the south began to scorn these practices since everything is now available to sustain life in the local grocery store, they said. (Please note the picture of the \$2.99 a pound bananas. Prices are really, really high in the local market!)

The other surprise for me took place in the Presbytery meeting when the Rev. Mary Ann Warden stood to make a plea for the polar bear. They are being tranquilized so that tags and collars can be installed on their bodies. Polar bears have been in danger and [there is a desire to protect them](#). Here is the rub: once a polar bear has been tranquilized,



their meat is never good again. So, if a village hunter tracks and kills a polar bear for food (which I believe they should be able to do) the meat is no good – and all the meat must be thrown away. What are we doing to the food of our neighbors? Who is my neighbor?

Yukon Presbytery and Tayal Presbytery Sign a Covenant

It was thrilling for me to watch the elected leaders of both Tayal and Yukon Presbyteries sign a covenant at the Yukon Presbytery meeting last Friday night, October 9, 2009 in Barrow, Alaska. For you see, I've had the privilege of working with Taiwan congregations in my ministry. I had the honor of traveling to Taiwan in 2002 at the request of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Some of the greatest moments were preaching to the Bunun people up in the hill country, visiting Yu-Shan Theological College and Seminary in Hualien, and being captivated by the Amis and Paiwanese pastors I met. They were both indigenous and seemed to be able to articulate the Christian faith in their culture with great integrity. When I learned that Yukon Presbytery was looking to the Tayal Presbytery, I could only say "Amen!" Maybe we can get some help with our indigenous or as they would say aboriginal ministries.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has at least eleven indigenous people groups. Several of those groups have their own Presbyteries. I know that the Amis and the Tayal have their own Presbytery. I know that this is the very first partnership for the Tayal Presbytery. This is a very big deal for an indigenous people. They look to Yu-Shan Theological Seminary to train their pastors. Yu-Shan was founded in 1946. The purpose of the college is to equip students to be faithful workers in the church and society and to participate in God's mission among the indigenous people. Indigenous theology always responds to the issues of society. The President and half of the faculty members are indigenous people. Others are Han Taiwanese and missionaries from foreign countries. Most of the students come from indigenous communities. To help them appreciate other cultures and races, they allow 20% non-indigenous students to attend. I am going to begin praying that one day soon we will have two young Yupik or Inupiaq young people from Yukon Presbytery heading off to Yu-Shan Theological Seminary to get a theological education. Is that a crazy prayer? Join me.

Looking Ahead

October 15-17	GACOR 2009 Biennial Training Event
October 20	SDOP Conference Call Meeting
October 20	Presbytery of Inland NW, Council Meeting
October 22	Synod Finance Committee Meeting
October 23-24	Presbytery of Central Washington Meeting
October 26	Synod Personnel Committee Meeting, Synod Office
October 27-28	Synod Council Meeting, Seattle University & Synod Office

Proverb of the Week

*Those who till their land will have plenty of food,
but those who follow worthless pursuits have no sense.*
Proverbs 12:11

Prayer for the Week

O LORD, you hear the desire of the meek; you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear to do

justice for the orphan and the oppressed, so that those from earth may strike terror no more.
-- Psalm 10:17-18

Noteworthy News and Events

Having trouble viewing the links? [Click here to go to the web version.](#)
<<http://www.synodnw.org/Resources/Publications/SynodSnapsenews/tabid/1773/Default.aspx>>

A New Meaning of 'Partnering'

Mission co-worker shares stories of mutual relationship between Russian, U.S. churches

by the Rev. Dave Templin
Special to Presbyterian News Service

Editor's note: This is the second in series of stories about the more than 50 Presbyterian mission workers and international peacemakers who are speaking in more than 150 presbyteries in the coming month as part of [Mission Challenge '09](#). - Jerry L. Van Marter



Gary Payton

OAK HARBOR, Wash. - One program hosted by a Russian Baptist church reaches hundreds of children and is just part of that congregation's outreach to 16 orphanages across the region.

"It's like Vacation Bible School in the woods," said [Gary Payton](#), the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s regional liaison for Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland.

This same Russian congregation, Smolensk Baptist Church, also engages in evangelistic outreach through sports programs. Members even built a boat on which to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to many small unchurched villages along a nearby river.

Viktor Ignatenkov, the pastor of the church, is the grandson of one pastor who lost his life - along with tens of thousands of Soviet citizens, pastors and church leaders - during the Marxist-Leninist oppression in the U.S.S.R. in the 1930s.

Payton spoke about Ignatenkov and his church's outreach Oct. 3 at [Whidbey Presbyterian Church](#) in [North Puget Sound Presbytery](#) as part of the [Mission Challenge](#).

The challenge is intended to connect mission co-workers with Presbyterians across the country. From Sept. 25-Oct. 18, 45 co-workers will visit 152 presbyteries, sharing their stories and educating listeners on how to become engaged.

Payton spoke about the people he's met and the stories he's heard during his travels.

"Even more amazing in those dark days is that when the pastor of a church would be 'disappeared,' some other person in the church would emerge, called by God to pastor the congregation," Payton said.

So it went, each in turn. As Ignatenkov said, "They knew they were just standing in line. They gave their lives to the church."

Built on that foundation of faith and ministry, Smolensk Baptist Church is now partnering, or "twinning," with [White Memorial Presbyterian Church](#) in Raleigh, N.C.

The Smolensk church is part of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Russian Federation, one of the denominations with whom the PC(USA) has close relationships and partners to extend Christ's ministry across the globe. These two congregations are engaged in a mutual spiritual journey, caring for and ministering to one another and deepening their faith together.

"Over the years, dozens of folks (from White Memorial) have served in mission with Smolensk Baptist Church ... teens, young adults, parents, retirees," Payton said. "Extraordinary stories of transformation have emerged from their time and their commitment."

God is at work in such communities as Christian faith is lived out in different cultures across the earth. Mission co-workers like Payton are developing ministry connections of common support, prayer and shared work to gain new ministry insights and provide mutual encouragement in proclaiming Christ's gospel worldwide. Today in Russia alone, a country spanning 11 time zones, the PC(USA) is partnering with Baptist, Lutheran and Russian Orthodox churches and ministries.

Payton spoke about how the work of Presbyterian [World Mission](#) in the region seeks not only to engage individual churches in mutual support and ministry, but also to support theological and Christian education through a Lutheran seminary and Christian schools. The PC(USA) is reaching out to the marginalized Roma people (sometimes called gypsies) by supporting a network for spiritual growth. And the church is engaged in ministries of compassion through partnerships in orphanage outreach, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and HIV/AIDS education and prevention as well as disaster assistance.

The Rev. Dave Templin is pastor of Whidbey Presbyterian Church in Oak Harbor, Wash.

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09873.htm>

Board of Pensions Offers Tax Tips Webinar

[BOP](#) is offering a Tax Tips Webinar for Ministers and Churches on **December 9 at Noon to 3 PM** Pacific time. [Click to register now](#). This is a free event that helps ministers and churches understand clergy taxes. Clergy and church tax expert Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL.M., CPA, will explain recent tax law changes that will affect ministers and churches, deductible expenses, a ten-step year-end checklist, how lending money to a minister could put a church's tax-exempt status at risk, and other important tax issues.



[Visit the Board of Pensions website for more information.](#)

Training to Help Veterans and their Families

The Washington Association of Churches is sponsoring a workshop to equip clergy and lay people with powerful ways to support military personnel and private contract individuals returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families will be held on **Wednesday, November**



4, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Spokane, WA.

The Washington Association of Churches is co-sponsoring this workshop spearheaded by Catholic Charities Spokane and Lutheran Community Services. It is also sponsored and hosted by St. Anne's Children & Family Center, lower level, 25 W. 5th Ave (corner of 5th & Division). A free will offering will be taken for lunch. Presenters will be from Veteran's Outreach Center and ACT Ministries.

The workshop is free and lunch is included, but please RSVP to (509) 358-4273. Contributions encouraged.

This training is open to religious leaders of any faith tradition.

As people of faith, we are called to provide support and compassion to many of our brothers and sisters facing challenges today. We are all aware of the particular challenges faced by men and women returning to our communities from war zones with physical and mental health issues including post-traumatic stress disorder. We need to learn how to walk with them as they heal from their experiences. These workshops will offer concrete strategies for faith communities to provide appropriate and effective support and outreach.

The WAC would like to make these trainings available in other communities. If you or you know someone who would be interested in co-sponsoring a similar workshop, please contact us at wac@thewac.org or 206-625-9790.

Development of New Presbyterian Hymnal Continues

Contact:

[David Eicher](mailto:David.Eicher@pcusa.org), (502) 569-5915

LOUISVILLE - Work on the monumental new Presbyterian hymnal continues at the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. The project began in 2006 when the 217th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) authorized the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to research, develop, and produce a new hymnal - the first new Presbyterian hymnal since 1990. Featuring more than 600 selections from celebrated classics to the latest contemporary selections, the project represents a huge undertaking.

Press Release
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Whether deciding which translation of a beloved hymn to use, or how to handle "thee" and "thou" language, the Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song (PCOCS) is following a two-pronged process of articulating general guidelines and deliberating case-by-case examples.

Language questions are not the only ones requiring such guidelines. In June, the group engaged in lengthy and helpful interviews with nationally-recognized experts on global music, seeking criteria to apply in selecting materials from that expansive body of work to include in the denomination's next worship resource. In August, similar interviews invited input from experts on "contemporary Christian" or "praise and worship" music.

In further conversations, the PCOCS also arrived at general questions to use in assessing materials sent to the committee for review through the [Open Submissions process](#). Such questions include the following: How would my congregation sing or pray this hymn or song? Could it be used by a congregation that does not have professional music leadership? Is the music effective? Is the text theologically sound? Do the words help tell the faith story, transmit the biblical narrative, or serve a liturgical function? Does the song progressively unfold its riches (musical, textual, poetic)? Is there some chance that this text and tune would catch on?

Members of review teams worked between the two summer meetings, applying such questions to texts and tunes that had been submitted to the Louisville office and then distributed electronically for assessment. Texts or tunes gaining a favorable majority from their review teams came to the overall committee for further discussion at the most recent meeting.

Gradually, a list of tentative contents for the next hymn and song collection is forming. A "No Brainer List" of some 160 items has been identified to form a preliminary "core." These items come primarily from hymns that carried over from the 1955 to the 1990 hymnal and received strong recommendations from PC(USA) congregations surveyed by the Research Services office of the denomination. (The informal, in-house name for the list refers to the fact that it takes "no brains" to recognize that any next worship resource would be incomplete without "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "Silent Night.")

Newer - and older - materials join the "no brainer" core as they pass through layers of scrutiny. One group of the committee in particular, for example, has been charged with looking back at the 1955 hymnal to see if it includes hymns which were not included in the 1990 hymnal for an array of reasons, but which it might be time to reconsider. Other groups are exploring recent hymnals published by other denominations, as well as global, contemporary and single author collections.

To stay in touch with Presbyterians in the pew as such considerations unfold, the committee is identifying congregations with a variety of sizes, locations, constituents and worship styles to serve as test sites for materials being developed. Congregations interested in participating in this fashion are invited to contact the hymnal editor, [David Eicher](mailto:David.Eicher@pcusa.org), via email.


While all the committee's deliberations require "decent and orderly" thinking, it ultimately misrepresents the process to suggest that such matters exclusively involve "the head." Singing together every hymn or song under consideration, PCOCS participants repeatedly pose the questions: Do these textual and musical expressions of faith touch our hearts and arouse our spirits? Do they and will they help us draw together as the body of Christ to worship God?

<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/pressreleases/ppc09005.htm>

Sheldon Jackson College Steps Forward

October 16, 2009

University of Dubuque Hosts Joint Venture Exploratory Delegation

The logo for the University of Dubuque, featuring the text "University of Dubuque" in a serif font, enclosed in a dark blue rectangular border.

University President Jeffrey F. Bullock hosted a combined delegation from Sheldon Jackson College and the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska Monday, October 12 – Wednesday, October 14, 2009 to discuss further options for cooperation between the University, Sheldon Jackson, and the City and Borough. This series of meetings in Dubuque follows a visit by President Bullock and college officials in August 2009.

Participating in three days of busy and productive meetings with senior University and City of Dubuque officials were Scott McAdams, mayor of the City and Borough of Sitka; Jim Dinley, city administrator; Garry White, executive director of the Sitka Economic Development Association (SEDA), and David Dabler, president of Sheldon Jackson College.

"When we were in Sitka late last summer, we were impressed by the spirit of cooperation that existed between city and college leaders and their desire to consider a plan for what might be possible at Sheldon Jackson," commented President Bullock. "There is no doubt that the history of the state of Alaska, Sitka, and Sheldon Jackson are tightly intertwined. Pivotal events that have brought progress to the people of Alaska have deep roots in this place. We believe that in this new century there is the potential for the college and the city to write a new chapter in this distinguished history with the

reinvention, revitalization, and re-missioning of Sheldon Jackson. Our purpose this past week was to continue exploring detailed conversations with college and city leaders and about what role the University might play in such a plan if it were to move forward.”

Representing the University in continuing consideration about the potential for engagement between the University and Sheldon Jackson College were President Jeffrey F. Bullock; John Stewart, vice president for academic affairs and dean of the College; James Steiner, university chief financial officer; Peter and Susan Smith, vice presidents for enrollment management and university relations; and John Puotinen, vice president for advancement.

“I was extraordinarily impressed by the University of Dubuque story,” stated Mayor Scott McAdams. “Over a period of ten years under President Bullock’s leadership, UD is now recognized as one of the most dramatic turnarounds in American higher education. Moving from the brink of closing to strength, vitality, and purpose is nothing short of remarkable. Those of us who have been in Dubuque, witnessed the University’s progress and the synergy of the public/private partnership between the University and the city, firmly believe that they have given us – by us I mean the city, Sheldon Jackson College, together with UD – a roadmap to revitalization that we can follow and, working collaboratively, achieve success. I am absolutely convinced that public/private partnership is the key that opens the door to our future in this venture and others.”

Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol, Mike Van Milligan, city manager; Rick Dickenson, executive director of the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, Molly Grover, CEO of the Dubuque Chamber of Commerce; and Nancy Van Milligan CEO of the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque held several meetings with the Sitka delegation. The focus of their conferences was to share the Dubuque Model of public/private partnership that has earned the city of Dubuque national recognition for the dynamic, mutually beneficial accomplishments that can be realized – most recently, the decision by IBM to locate its first domestic call service center in a decade in Dubuque, generating 1,500 new jobs.

“I am deeply grateful to all of the city officials who gave so generously of their time and their willingness to share insights about the ‘how to’ and the synergies possible in public/private partnerships,” commented Jim Dinley. “The positive and productive relationship between the University and the city is a model for us to follow. Strong leadership in both the city and UD welded to a carefully crafted, thoroughly thought thru plan, has brought tangible results that we have seen during our time here. UD and Dubuque know how to do it. I look forward to our benchmarking against winners like the city of Dubuque and UD. They model what can be accomplished in a public/private partnership.”

Garry White, SEDA’s executive director, commented, “This has been one of the most energizing site visits that I have made in my time with SEDA. In spending time with my counterpart in Dubuque, Rick Dickenson, my belief in what the college and city, working together, can accomplish is only limited by our will to do it. I believe a public/private partnership is what is necessary on our part to grow the potential of a UD-Sheldon Jackson relationship. Public/private partners, working on a jointly produced plan, will play a major role in revitalizing our city, our region, and Sheldon Jackson College.”

Dr. David Dobler was an active participant with Sitka city officials in all meetings with university and Dubuque leaders. He has also been in regular contact with UD President Jeffrey F. Bullock prior to and following the University team’s August visit to Sitka. “At its best, Sheldon Jackson College offered an Alaska education in a Christian environment and was a significant resource to native peoples,” said Dobler. “Sheldon Jackson College, as it has been for more than a century, is not coming back. We need to consider with prayer and care what SJ’s mission is to be in the 21st century in partnership with the University of Dubuque. How do we do this? Perhaps most importantly, we need to ask the ‘why Sheldon Jackson?’ question. In re-missioning SJ and partnering with UD, we need to be certain that what we do matters for Alaska, for native peoples, and for Sitka. SJ trustees are excited about what a SJ-UD partnership can accomplish – new for the 21st century yet with same soul and spirit.”

Dobler continued, “There is a long, rich, and productive history of what SJ and Sitka can do as public/private partners – the Alaska Raptor Center, the Sitka Summer Music Festival, and the Sitka Fine

Arts Camp. I believe we have a fresh and exciting possibility as we come together once again to work hard to make a strong UD-SJ viable."

Focused discussions between the University, Sheldon Jackson leaders, Sitka, officials, and other stakeholders in this potential partnership will progress to the next level following this series of meetings in Dubuque.

Seattle Area CLP Leads Relief Team in Samoa

Lina Thompson is a CLP from Mt. View Presbyterian Church in White Center, WA. She is also Director of National Programs for World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization based in Federal Way. Lina, a Samoan American, is leading a team from World Vision to Samoa, to assess the situation and coordinate a response. News of World Vision's response to the disaster can be found on the [World Vision website](#), as well as below:



Quake, tsunami in Samoan islands prompts World Vision response October 2009

World Vision is coordinating a response to the massive 8.0-magnitude earthquake and ensuing tsunami that struck the islands of Samoa and American Samoa, killing at least 110 people. Leading our response is World Vision's national program director and Samoan American Lina Thompson, who has traveled to the islands.

'In complete shock'

"The Samoan community here in the U.S. is in complete shock at what has happened," said Lina. "I myself have been unable to reach my aunts and cousins to check on their safety. At the same time, there's already a groundswell of people, churches, and other groups wanting to do something to help."

Former NFL quarterback and Lina's brother, Jack Thompson, known as the "Throwin' Samoan," is also calling on Americans to help through groups like World Vision: "I was just there this summer to help deliver medical supplies and encourage young athletes through a football clinic. Now with the immediate needs Samoans are facing, it's important for us on the U.S. mainland to do whatever we can to show our support."

Emergency assistance being deployed

World Vision will be working through partners in Samoa to distribute emergency items that are most needed by survivors, including things like personal hygiene items, clothing, and first aid supplies. Lina is deploying to the islands along with World Vision's U.S. disaster response director, Phyllis Freeman, to oversee the distribution of goods.

"Churches and community leaders have been contacting us eager to help, especially people...in the Pacific Northwest, where there is a sizable Samoan community. We'll be moving quickly in the next few days to ensure we can deliver help effectively and efficiently," said Lina.

Help now

Please continue to keep in prayer the children and families affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami in the Samoan islands, as well as those devastated by the earthquake in Indonesia and the typhoon that tore through the Philippines and Vietnam. Pray for the efforts of organizations like World Vision, who are working to bring relief and assistance to those in greatest need.

Donations can be made to World Vision's [U.S. Disaster Response Fund](#). Because the tsunami took place on American soil, our team is treating this as a domestic disaster response. Any gift will help World Vision and its partners provide critical, life-saving assistance to survivors of the tsunami in the Samoan islands.

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Links & Resources

Synod MDC Loan Program: www.synodmdc.org

Presbytery of Alaska: www.presbofak.org

Presbytery of Central Washington: www.cwpresby.org

Presbytery of the Inland Northwest: www.presbyinw.org

Presbytery of North Puget Sound: www.npspresbyterians.com

Presbytery of Olympia: www.olypres.org

Presbytery of Seattle: www.presbytery.org

Presbytery of Yukon: www.yukonpresbytery.com

Presbyterian Church (USA) www.pcusa.org

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance www.pcusa.org/pda



"God's grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love imperishable." - Ephesians 6:24 [NEB]

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