

**Annual Report to the Presbytery of Grand Canyon**  
**Ken Moe, Executive Presbyter**  
**Mission del Sol Presbyterian Church, Tempe, Arizona**  
**January 21, 2006**

The January report each year is a state of the presbytery report from the perspectives of the outgoing Council Moderator and the EP. So you will hear differing takes on the same enterprise, that is, our life together as a presbytery. Gale Watkins and I will look at differing aspects of the presbytery experience, each with our individual mixes of optimism and realism.

You've heard me speak repeatedly about the financial health of the presbytery, so I will forego that subject today, in favor of a few miscellaneous observations.

A quick survey of the churches in our presbytery directory reveals an interesting thing about our pastoral leadership. Most of the women and men serving our congregations are relatively new to their posts. Roughly 70% of those serving as pastors, associate pastors, stated supply pastors, and commissioned lay pastors in our churches began that service in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The number of long-tenured pastoral positions – ten years or more– is comparatively small, about 20%.

So, most of our parish pastors are still in the formative early years or months or even weeks of their calls. The good news is that they bring to these recent calls high energy, enthusiasm, new ideas, and fresh approaches to ministry. This is a blessing for congregation and presbytery alike. And yet the churches now showing the greatest growth in the presbytery enjoy the leadership of long-tenured pastors. From my perspective, then, the task before us as a presbytery is to support and encourage the 70% of relatively new pastors so that as many as possible will become long-tenured pastors doing effective ministry and encouraging growth in their parishes.

I see our mutual support and encouragement for parish leadership as a major effort within the presbytery in the years ahead. The presbytery can only benefit from a stable and effective corps of pastors who feel encouraged to stay with their congregations providing confident leadership through times of change, including all the consequent pain as well as joy that comes with our unfolding ecclesiastical life.

And speaking of pain and joy, I want to address two property-related subjects that are coming to major transitions in this new year. First the joy. The Biehn Colony Trust has been administering land in the Town of Guadalupe which was given to the Presbyterian Church in the 1920s. Over the years, the presbytery (and synod before that) devoted countless hours and dollars to administer and grant portions of this land to residents and institutions in Guadalupe, for homes and for organizations beneficial to the community. Among the beneficiaries has been the Guadalupe Presbyterian Church, which sits on land once bequeathed by Jenny Biehn to our denomination.

In recent years, the major cost associated with managing the remaining land in the trust has been property taxes. Last year, the county revised dramatically upward the property taxes on this land, providing the presbytery with a significant

incentive to disburse the remaining parcels. But it has been complicated. In the six plus years I've been working with the Biehn Colony Trust Board, I've discovered it is not easy to give away land. It's much easier to sell it. But the provisions of the trust are such that the land must be given away to benefit the people of the community.

After years of diligent effort by the board, and with concurrence from the Town of Guadalupe, a plan is now complete and ready for petitioning the Superior Court to distribute all but two of the remaining home parcels to Habitat for Humanity, with the two exceptions going to the Town of Guadalupe, and all the commercial lots to Las Fuentes Clinic to work in partnership with the Town to develop a dialysis clinic and related medical facilities. I look forward with great joy to the approval of the Superior Court and an honorable end to the corporate entity called the Biehn Colony Trust.

And I want to go on record today offering huge thanks and great appreciation to attorney Phil Robbins, of the Robbins and Green law firm, for providing the presbytery and Biehn Colony Trust three decades of pro bono legal services to get us to this point. His dedication and skill have been a wonder to behold. We owe Phil a great debt of gratitude, the acknowledgement of which should be spread upon the minutes of this meeting.

Now the pain, although it is pain tinged with potential blessings. The Navajo Health Foundation, operating as Sage Memorial Hospital at Ganado, has announced its intention to build a new hospital facility at another location, on land leased from the Navajo Nation. This will take some time, but we are on notice that the NHF will not be using presbytery property for the nearly twenty-eight years remaining on their lease with us. The Ganado Task Force (appointed by Council) is working at developing transitional recommendations and setting the stage for the presbytery to renegotiate the lease to facilitate the changes in the best interests of the presbytery and NHF. But this is a task that will quickly fall to the Council and the presbytery for major decisions about our future use, maintenance, and rehabilitation of our fee-simple acreage at Ganado.

Some wonderful opportunities lie before us with resuming control of large portions of the Ganado property, but major responsibilities also. In the year ahead, expect to hear more about Ganado. And some of you with particular skills and experience may be tapped to assist the presbytery in this enterprise. If you have any interest in helping out, please talk to Ann Poulis, Convener of the Ganado Task Force, or Cecil Patterson, Chair of Council, or to me.

The year 2006 promises to be an exciting one in the life of Grand Canyon Presbytery. May we meet that excitement with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. Thanks for listening.