

Rev. Gale Watkins, Presbytery Moderator  
Orientation to the November 13, 2004 Presbytery Meeting

**Presbytery 103**

It's a beautiful Saturday morning in Arizona, and you're in a meeting! A very long meeting! Why are we here today? We come together as something called a "presbytery," ministers and elders in equal numbers, a governing body of the church. But why this Presbytery? What is our reason for being together? I call your attention to our written agenda. After "adjournment," you will find a statement of mission, the duly approved mission of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon.

Our mission is to celebrate and proclaim the gospel. We intend to do this in four ways that are listed. Note that three of them deal specifically with congregations. The Presbytery's very reason for being is the health of its congregations. Thus, when the Presbytery meets on a Saturday morning, there ought to be some connection between what we do here and the life of our congregations. Congregations and ministers ought to receive some benefit as a result of our gathering here on a Saturday.

You may have a more modest hope for a meeting of the Presbytery. You may see it as something to be endured. Your idea of a good outcome may be for us to "do no harm." But our mission statement would tell us to expect more — expect to be nurtured, expect to be challenged, expect to be encouraged. Today, we will worship God, we will make decisions, we will be given some information, and we will learn together about how to respond when conflict crosses cultural lines. Cross-cultural conflict transformation addresses a need within our Presbytery. But I wonder if a workshop here might also assist and challenge a congregation in the cross-cultural conflict that is found among its own people. If so, this gathering could help us fulfill our mission.

Some elders and ministers come here weary and discouraged. I wonder if something we do here today might fulfill our mission of nurturing each congregation and minister member. A word of encouragement, spoken at the right time in the right way, can make a difference.

So we're spending a beautiful Saturday in Arizona in a meeting. Wouldn't it be great if it were time well spent, not wasted but invested in a mission that results in stronger and healthier congregations? May it be so!