

Paul Miller's Notes
on Years at First Presbyterian Church –
Public and Personal

Rev. Paul Miller was pastor of First Presbyterian Church of
Bloomington, Indiana, from 1965-1977. These notes were presented
to the congregation during Rev. Miller's visit to the church on March
30, 2014, during the Faith Forum Sunday school class.

We arrived in early November of 1965 after an eleven year pastorate in Wilmington, Delaware. In retrospect, I now see three time frames on which to reflect and to the best of my memory provide some priority and order via substance and meaning.

The times frames are roughly as follows: November 1965 to the end of 1967, 1968 thru the summer of 1972 and the summer of 1972 thru our departure in January of 1977 for a new pastorate in Cincinnati, Ohio. The first time frame represents my early initiation to Bloomington, a kind of getting your feet wet, a relatively benign time of becoming acquainted. The second time frame catapulted me into the issues of the war in Vietnam and our communal response, the impact of the Civil Rights Movement and its effect on our Bloomington and University communities fully centered in the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as these larger events were felt and responded to locally, plus the congregational struggle to define our future. The third time frame had a feeling of being settled, knowing our congregation, being at home with who we are and finding myself and our congregation at the center of things in the various communities to which we belonged.

I - November of 1965 to the end of 1967. - "Days of Learning and Hours of Agonizing"

Bringing with me some anxiety against the enlarging war in Vietnam, I found myself offering a resolution on the floor of Indianapolis Presbytery in January of 1966 in opposition to the war. After much discussion, the Presbytery voted to table the motion and to call a special meeting in February to give exclusive attention to the issue. Come February and three hours of debate, the Presbytery passed a motion considerably watered down from my earlier proposal and put the emphasis on a negotiated settlement as the best course of action albeit making no reference to the war. I think I learned quickly that Indiana was much more conservative than I had anticipated.

Meanwhile back at the local church, i.e. First Pres, we had a number of local issues to be concerned with though I shared with the congregation my thoughts about the war. At this time, I spoke much more in a pastoral vein point rather than prophetic. In due course, I would become more active in my opposition.

When I was called to First Pres via congregational vote, the major concern was what to do with the church physical facilities. Officially we were 753 members with some real growth in the last 10 years of Joe Walker's 20 year pastorate. Continuing growth was sort of taken for granted, hence questions about the adequacy of the church plant were paramount. We had three options, 1) Renovate, 2) Rebuild on the present site or 3) Relocate. All of these options were somewhat captive to an agreement we entered into in 1963 with members of the church who upon their death agreed to give the Church an adjacent apartment building facing on 7th Street that encompassed about one fourth of the half block property. In exchange, it was incumbent upon us to continue paying both taxes and insurance on their apartment complex property. At the time, it seemed like a good arrangement. It merely needs to be said, they lived a long time.

Our church rolls were not in the best of order and in reworking the membership list, we discovered that the count was slightly over 800, but with a good number having already departed Bloomington for vocational opportunities elsewhere and retirement locations, so we were actually somewhere in the low 700's. When I left in January of 1977, our membership had declined to 684, perhaps a portent we did not fully appreciate, let alone understand. We had about 75 to 85 students attending regularly, two worship services and a fairly good size church school coordinated very effectively by Dorothy Johnson who had been our Director of Christian Education since 1960. If I remember correctly, the first time we had students on the campus for Easter, we had almost 900 in attendance for our two Easter services

There were two other issues that needed addressing. The first was our relationship to the Presbyterian Campus Ministry under the direction of James Ollis who was on sabbatical 1965-1966. His Associate, Kenneth Spillman had facilitated the beginning of a year-long study trying to get a focus on campus ministry from a fully ecumenical perspective involving town congregations and campus ministry groups (for the most part traditional denominational churches). As I became a part of that study, we profited by becoming more open and more honest and sometimes more helpful. No reformations occurred inasmuch as we were all sufficiently funded to continue as masters and mistresses of our own turf. Here is a doctoral degree for someone from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, maybe even I.U.'s Religion Department (Lilly Foundation Money). For a title, let me suggest, "The Changes and Challenges of Campus Ministry in Indiana – 1925 to 2015).

The second issue that confronted us was the need to rethink our community ministry at The Christian Center on the west side of Bloomington undertaken and supported by the town congregations in proportion to our size and resources. Marvin Jones, a Presbyterian Minister from Louisville was the Director of The Christian Center, hence giving it both rationale and content. Marvin told us about his forthcoming departure which gave us time to rework in a somewhat formal style if not structure a new entity called Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM). Paul Crafton arrived and with both charisma and passion got things humming so that there was a whole new spirit being generated that sought to be both issue oriented as well as service oriented. As I look back, lo these many years, I am amazed at how much time it took for us to rethink, restructure and to relate to one another in order to get things done whether in town or on the university campus. It needs to be said that at this point in time, we believed that we were to "redeem the time" as well as the society of which we were a part. We were hopeful, but I daresay equally confident.

In the national church, we were very much in full discussion of what would eventually be adopted as the Confession of 1967. The Confession of 1967 once formally and fully approved by the General Assembly in Boston in 1967 was initially called the New Confession. For over three years prior to its adoption in Boston in 1967, the whole Church had been involved in working together on a contemporary statement of faith, hence the appellation, Confession of 1967. Its ultimate and underlying theme became "the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19)

meaning the Church is called to be an agent of reconciliation in areas of conflict, hence we sought to declare our theological marching orders as a Church believing this was what God was calling us to be and to do. In modest ways, we endeavored to address the issues of war and peace, race, poverty and sexual relationships believing that if possible we needed a common mind. From 1965, we worked at it both locally and in our presbyteries. Initially the impetus for this labor of love had been a promise we Presbyterians made to one another coming out of the merger with United Presbyterians in 1958, though at that time we had hoped the Southern Presbyterians would join us. That had to wait until 1983. Our local discussions were lively. I discovered that not that many Presbyterians in Bloomington were conversant with respect to our larger Confessional heritage. What started out as two night commitment for presentation and discussion with the congregation ended up lasting six nights. The Presbytery of Indianapolis worked it through in three special meetings prior to the final vote to ratify. I am not sure we ever fully digested the shift in theological orientation the Confession of 1967 represented. The basic theme of “reconciliation” made sense for some, but it was a stretch for others who still longed for the “simple gospel”. As Dorothy Johnson observed, “We were not used to working that hard”.

Our Associate Minister when I arrived was Thomas Arthur, a prince of a human being who was in a kind of vocational crisis and taking some graduate courses at Indiana University. By the end of 1966, we ended our relationship with Tom and he went on to full- time graduate work. In the summer of 1967, we called George Reed, a recent graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary to be our Associate Minister. George and his wife Anita plus Jeff and Missy were with us until the summer of 1971 when George received a call to be pastor of the Reading-Lockland Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio

These first two years in Bloomington were in many ways delightful, but in no sense a harbinger of things to come. With nary a murmur from the socially aware, one of the floats for the Homecoming Parade on campus in 1966 proudly proclaimed, “Kill a Hippie for Homecoming”. The 1967 football team under John Pont had a miraculous year defeating Purdue with a goal line stand in the waning minutes enabling a Big Ten tie, hence an invitation to the Rose Bowl. Gonso, Isenbarger and Butcher, football stars all were household names. In basketball, there was still hope that Lou Watson, Branch McCrackin’s successor would dig in and make happy Hoosier hearts once more, especially now that Cazzie Russell had departed Michigan.

Things began to change in the spring of 1967 and I remember teaching a course for our downtown churches on Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X dealing respectively with the issues of “peaceful non-violence” and “black power”. It needs to be recalled that at this point neither King nor Malcolm were necessarily heroes of the American struggle for justice. Another significant issue on campus in the spring of 1967 was the sit-in at the I.U. School of Business by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) protesting Dow Chemical’s interviewing of students for jobs, all the while producing chemical agents for use in Vietnam. I remember the hustling in which many of us were involved in order to provide bond money for those who were arrested.

In the fall of 1967, Harold Rudolph came to town as the new YMCA Secretary on Campus succeeding Brad Bayliss who was off to teach at Central Missouri. "Rudy" got us started with a modest group of students, faculty, clergy and administrators to look at race relations on campus. The figure that sticks in my mind was that only 1.5 percent of the student body at I.U. at the time was black, while the black population for the State was 7 percent. So we started with the question, how come? As we plumbed this issue, we discovered that patterns of racial isolation and segregation if not overt racism throughout the State fostered essentially no vision of Indiana University being a possibility for most black high school students. To paraphrase Norman Dixon, a member of our Task Force, "to see no prominence, prosperity or power demonstrated in our black role models in our local communities regardless of occasional and modest success does not cultivate a vision of aspiration, let alone the minimal if not absence of encouragement and enablement of local community support. Add to this local experience, a large state university only modestly engaged in the solicitation of minorities as potential university students. As one black student put it bluntly, "From the outside, I.U. looks like a white man's country club".

II - 1968 thru the summer of 1972 – "The Years of Turbulence"

The winter of 1968 was the last respite we would see for some time. The war in Vietnam was beginning to percolate in the American psyche. Even Bloomington could not remain isolated from the mainstream. I was beginning to counsel students opposed to the war about their draft status. Draft boards across the State would not accept conscientious objector classification especially when focused on the particular war in Vietnam. The Bloomington Draft Board was a little more lenient, hence the working through of one's statement to one's draft board and the consideration of transferring one's appeal to Bloomington. Haines Turner, a Quaker and a professor in Labor Education approached me about forming a Bloomington Peace Coalition which we did with only modest community support until 1972. I preached a sermon against the war rooted in the conviction that we were using another country and the destruction of their way of life to protect ourselves and that "might does not make right" I didn't win many converts, but began to acquire patient listeners. In March, President Johnson announced he would not seek re-election followed by the scurrying of Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy to fill the void left by Johnson and as to who would get us out of Vietnam the quickest. Somewhere in here we had a visit to the campus by Secretary of State Dean Rusk speaking at the I.U. Auditorium. He suffered a rude reception by a vocal minority.

Meanwhile, Harold Rudolph's YMCA Committee became that much more aware of the bigger picture of Civil Rights and the increasing tension in the larger society with particular attention to Martin Luther King's difficult struggle. Always the issue was how to wake up the Bloomington community. Then came the night of April 4th in Memphis, Tennessee. Al Hirt, national trumpet player par excellence said it for many of us, "The King of Love is dead". I learned just after our Maundy Thursday service what had happened. Like many I was stunned. Closing up the church,

I came out on the front walk of the church and found Mayor John Hooker parked alone in his car and waiting to talk with me. He asked, "How do we respond". I said, "Let's go to Second Baptist Church and share our sympathy and grief and above all to listen." Second Baptist was one of two black congregations in Bloomington and the one most active in Civil Rights, plus the greater inclusion of black students. We found many of Pastor Ernie Butler's people already there voicing anger, despair and a letting go of long pent up emotions now heightened by the enormity of their loss. We said very little. Ernie was able to guide his people into a time of prayer asking for direction, courage and hope. I daresay it was the finest moment of his ministry. Late in the evening, we sang "We shall overcome" with not a dry eye in the sanctuary. Hugs abounded. Jack Hooker and I both agreed, we could never come close to feeling what these people had suffered for so long and now the death of one whom they trusted and loved, their strong hope of a new deliverance. Somewhere on Walnut Street, Jack and I found a restaurant open. We needed food and a chance to think together how to respond in the context of the larger community.

The next days and weeks were almost a blur. On Friday night, we met again at Second Baptist Church. This time there was a larger group of black students from I.U. They were accusatory of the local black community being "Uncle Toms" and "Aunt Thomasinas". They contended we needed to be bolder and public in dealing with the racism at both the University and in town. Elizabeth Bridgewater, highly esteemed member of Second Baptist Church and matriarchal in the best sense of the word gave an articulate response in defense of the struggles of the local black community. Norman Dixon who had been on the committee working on racism at I.U. facilitated an increasing constructive dialogue. Norman was in for the year from Southern University in Baton Rouge finishing up his doctorate in the School of Education. He became a bulwark for many as the racial dialogue continued until his departure in June for the University of Pittsburgh. The students under the tutelage of Norm Dixon with major input from Orlando Taylor and John Joyner of the Speech Department at I.U. pulled together a memorial service for Dr. King which was held at the I.U. Auditorium the following Monday. It was somber. The pain was palpable. People spoke in measured tones. It was truly a service of grief. We got through it by holding on to one another. I will go to my grave hearing Orlando Taylor finishing the service with those immortal words, "Free at last, free at last, thank God almighty, free at last". In the Kubler Ross wisdom of "death and dying", we were bouncing between "anger" and "depression." Acceptance" was nowhere in sight.

The following Sunday at First Methodist Church, the community churches under Monroe County United Ministries held a public memorial service for Dr. King in late afternoon. I preached on the text, "Without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sin" (Hebrews 9:22) The point I tried to make was, consistent with the text, that only in the death of one both innocent and esteemed can we break the hold of evil, violence and hatred. Martin Luther King's love like the love of Jesus can set us free. Without a sizeable black community in Bloomington, it was tough for white folk especially in public gatherings to identify with and to be supportive of those who lost so much. Not knowing people in a personal way almost always

limits our capacity to empathize, let alone any strong ties to the civil rights struggle and in particular Dr. King's leadership

Issues continued to abound. Black students put together grievances and presented them to Dr. Elvis Stahr, I.U. President at the President's home in late April. I later participated with mostly students in a modest march from the Campus to the Court House on a beautiful Saturday morning, remembering all too well a remark from the car of one of our City Councilors, "What are you going to do when we (i.e. white people) are the last of the minorities"? Black members of the I.U. football team wanted to meet as a group with Head Coach John Pont. He declined saying that he would only meet with them as individuals enunciating a team policy. Some of those players eventually elected to leave and to transfer to other schools.

The concern for establishing a black studies program at I.U. was resolved in due course. Dr. Herman Hudson came on as the first director. In the midst of all of these issues we had the "Ballantine Lock-in" in the spring of 1969. The "Lock-in" was in Ballantine Hall and involved some black faculty and black students allegedly confining I.U. administrators against their will in an exchange related to racial issues in the University. Subsequently a Grand Jury reviewed the case, but no indictments were forthcoming. In the aftermath of this event, the University lost some black faculty members including Dr. Orlando Taylor, a member of First Presbyterian who departed for Federal City College in Washington, D.C. Orlando grew up in Fort Wayne and at one time had relished "being back home again in Indiana". The fire-bombing of the "Black Market", a kind of mercantile and cultural center for African American art, clothing and posters (historical and contemporary) on Kirkwood, took place in the winter of 1969-1970. I recall clearly the frustration and hurt of Rollo Turner one of the initial leaders of the forming of the "Black Market". I believe the location of the "Black Market" is now the "People's Park". As I lived through these days and years, I came to realize that "racism" has many forms. Its essence is a not so subtle superiority and the belief that we are in charge and we know what is best. I can only trust that things have changed and that both Bloomington and I.U. have become more inclusive publicly, personally and existentially. As one of my black pastor friends, E.O. Thomas in Cincinnati put it to one of our groups in our Cincinnati congregation 20 years later, "On the surface, things are much better, but underneath, I am not so sure – only you can answer that".

The spring of 1968 was not yet over. That June, Robert Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles. We held a modest memorial service for him at First Baptist Church, sparsely attended. Two weeks later, it was standing room only for the much beloved pastor of First Baptist, Doug Rae who died at the Cleveland Clinic undergoing coronary by-pass surgery. Doug had suffered angina for years. His 33 year ministry at First Baptist had blessed many. Dying at 60, he still had many years to give. June was a complete bummer. The Poor Peoples March on Washington under the leadership of Ralph Abernathy was scheduled to come through Bloomington with Dick Gregory as the main speaker. It fizzled due to lack of funds. America was tired, but it was also without leadership and tough years were still ahead.

In addition to how Martin Luther King's death and the reaction to that death impacted us locally, one narrative that played out with respect to the Vietnam War beginning in January of 1968 was the news of the death of Lt. Charles Wuertenberger. Chuck was the brother-in-law of David McCrea, a member of First Presbyterian. Chuck had graduated from West Point in 1967 and as a newly minted officer was off to Vietnam. David called me on a Sunday afternoon and asked me to come over to the house to talk with him and Sandy, whose sister Tam was married to Chuck. I learned that Tam was about seven months pregnant. Four months later in May with Chuck's parents (his Father was a career military officer) and other family members present, we baptized the Wuertenberger's son in First Pres in Bloomington. During the service of baptism, one of our members, Niki Steitz became emotionally overwrought due to the fact that her brother, an Air Force pilot in Vietnam, had been missing in action for three years. In the midst of the baptismal service, she came forward unannounced and pleaded with the congregation to pray for the safe return of her brother. We learned together as a congregation the personal dimension of the war which still had a long way to go.

While I was on vacation in the summer of 1968, we had three deaths in our congregation in a little over three weeks, Bill Little, the 17 year old son of David and Phyllis in an accident in a summer program at Culver Military Academy, Georgianna Mitchell (Mother of Alice Rivlin) at 65 of a heart attack and Jack Sheehan, professor of Television and Radio at I.U. again of a heart attack at 44. When I returned, our Associate George Reed informed me as to how glad he was to see me. He then told me of the death of Gil Sirotti, Methodist campus minister at the Wesley Foundation who at 31 died in a fishing accident in Maine. The transitory nature of life began to take hold. We faced also the turnover of clergy, Curt Stephan after 37 years of ministry at St. Stephan's on campus, Bill Eddy leaving Trinity Episcopal, Joe Emerson leaving St. Mark's Methodist and Rabbi Norbert Samuelson departing the Hillel Foundation, colleagues all.

As I recall the many clergy very much part of ministry in these years, I reflect briefly here on our interface with our Roman Catholic clerical friends. Given the reality of Vatican II and Pope John XXIII (early 1960's) and the reforms being instituted in the Roman Catholic Church, I was surprised in coming to Bloomington how little the changes had resonated with our local priest friends, Monsignor Thomas Kilfoil, Father James Higgins and Father Robert Borchertmeyer, good men and conscientious priests, but very different from my priest colleagues in Wilmington, Delaware who had gone out of their way to welcome their Protestant counterparts in hailing a new day. Perhaps it was the isolation of Bloomington or perhaps a more conservative Catholic culture than what I had lived through in Delaware. Delaware that was indeed fortunate in having a chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and hence perhaps had nurtured a more open context. Monsignor Kilfoil (37 years at St. Charles, 1937 - 1975), over breakfast, used to lament the changes and on occasion shared his sense of frustration in not building a Roman Catholic High School and a Catholic Hospital. He was curmudgeonly warm and represented the Barry Fitzgerald of movie fame (Going My Way) of an earlier time. I enjoyed his honesty and friendship.

In two and a half years, we had been through a lot. We needed to get back to the parochial concerns of congregational life. That meant putting together a Long Range Planning Committee to once again address the issue of what to do with our church physical facility. We were fortunate to have Bill Wheeler become Chair of this Committee. Little did we realize that we would consider many options before settling on a temporary if not interim accommodation.

As some will remember, the Democratic convention in Chicago in August of 1968 was a disaster. Given the quixotic personality of Senator Eugene McCarthy, Hubert Humphrey was nominated and not surprisingly, at least in retrospect, Richard Nixon prevailed in the November election. New clergy came to town such as Charles Perry and Larry Larson at Trinity Episcopal, Hardy Nall at St. Mark's Methodist, Rabbi James Diamond at Hillel, Ron Leaseman at University Baptist whose folk for a number of years would use our facility at First Presbyterian and in due course Keith Gerberding at St. Stephan's Lutheran, Hubert Davis at the Wesley Foundation and A.E. Lacy at First Baptist, all to become good friends. The Religious Studies Program at I.U. was in its third year under William May, a Presbyterian Minister (formerly at Smith College), Wayne Meeks (I personally profited with some good courses from Wayne) soon departed for Yale and Frank Neuman to Virginia Tech, leaving David Smith in Ethics. New professors would in time come aboard and continue to enrich the community as well as the University. In some ways, although I had been in town less than three years I was beginning to feel like the proverbial "old man" among the clergy even though Howard Anderson was still at First Christian and Robert Gingery recently at First Methodist. They too would depart in due course. Do note the dominance of male clergy if not the absence of female clergy.

In 1969, we began to get our act together as to what to do with our church facility. We found essentially no interest in relocating believing that center of town would continue to be to our advantage. We heeded the wisdom and experience of Doug Rae, formerly pastor of First Baptist who once told us, "You get a new congregation every ten years". He added some caution about the difficult process of relocation not to mention the cost which we judged to be beyond our resources. Given the property on our northwest corner and the uncertainty of when it would be available, we began to ruminate about the strategy of renovation and refurbishment of our existing physical plant. We found many had reservation fearing a kind of "patch and make-do". We found ourselves at an impasse and hence began to wonder if we ought not to explore the possibility of merger with another denominational church. So conversations began.

In May of 1969, while our General Assembly of the national church was meeting in San Antonio, the story came out that our national Commission on Racial Equality had given a gift of \$50,000 to the Angela Davis Fund. Dr. Davis was a black activist and college professor who was facing trial related to the shooting of police and legal authorities and a death in Oakland, California. As a friend of the Black Panthers who were involved in the shooting, she was facing trial for her complicity in relationships leading up to the event. I remember it was a long summer for Presbyterians locally and nationally. We essentially polarized. After a number of session meetings, we rejected the motion in Session to withdraw our benevolence support from the

national church. We eventually lost two of our active elders and their families and a few of our other members from the congregation. Merle Gray, a retired Public School teacher, then on Session stood firm in her conviction that Angela Davis being both female and black needed the help that our gift represented if she ever stood a chance at a fair trial. The vote was close in the Session, but Merle could be very persuasive given her high standing in the church and in educational circles in Indiana. Angela Davis was later acquitted. Through all of this, I consistently supported the gift of our Commission on Racial Equality as falling within their assigned responsibility much to the consternation of some who believed I should either remain neutral or condemn the action of the Commission and the failure of the General Assembly to take immediate punitive action. One needs to remember that Moderators of Session did not have a vote except in the event of a tie that in this case did not prove necessary.

Here I need to back up, recalling an event in the spring of 1969. Coming out of my previous peace concerns, I had become Chair of the Synod of Indiana's Church and Society Committee (not many volunteers) as well as Chair of the Convocation's Committee for the Indiana Synod Summer week at Hanover College. These positions gave to me a much broader involvement across the state with both the opportunity and expectation for leadership. In a March address to the nation, President Richard Nixon offered what heretofore had been his secret plan for ending the war in Vietnam, namely "Vietnamization" of the war, i.e. turning the war over to the South Vietnamese army and people. Our Synod Church and Society Committee then sent a pastoral letter to all of our Presbyterian congregations in Indiana indicating that continuing the war would only result in many more deaths. As expected, we received criticisms from the churches and the war did not abate. In the Nixon years, 28,000 more Americans died in Vietnam plus hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese both south and north.

By this time (Fall of 1968 and Winter of 1969), Elvis Stahr, the I.U. President had departed and Joseph Sutton of the Political Science faculty and Vice President of Indiana University had replaced Dr. Stahr. In the summer of 1969, Mrs. Sutton (Dorothy) was under siege with cancer resulting in her death. Dr. Sutton eventually remarried, but following a serious automobile accident he died in 1970 to be replaced by Dr. John Ryan. The Suttons had been members of First Presbyterian Church. In this larger time frame, Ann Derge, wife of Dr. David Derge and a close friend of Dr. Sutton as well as colleagues and members of First Presbyterian Church died accidentally. There was an air of tragedy and uncertainty for many. I remember that within a relatively short time we lost five younger women in the Bloomington community to cancer and heart attack. We were weary but as Robert Frost once observed, "Life goes on."

In the fall of 1969, we began to wrap up our Sesquicentennial celebration of the life of First Presbyterian Church. Holly Arpan and Joe Kingsbury had done a bang-up job tracing our local history back to 1819. Their good work, I trust, is secured somewhere in the church's archives. After hearing from George Sweazey, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church on one occasion and Dr. L.C. Rudolph of I.U. on Presbyterian history in Indiana, we moved on to two additional speakers. The first was Ed Dowey of Princeton Theological

Seminary who had served as Chair of the Committee that drafted and wrote the Confession of 1967. Dr. Dowey recounted the long process, but wondered openly and honestly, will the Confession survive, i.e. continue to be a useful document and resource for the well being of the Church. He frankly would not make a conjecture. He did say that the whole process was worth it because at least for that brief time, i.e. 1958-1967, the church was theologically alive and proved itself quite capable of being open, honest, and learned, which for him was a sign of maturity if not grace. Our final speaker was Elwyn Smith from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He served there as professor of Church History. He reminded us of what a roller-coaster ride Presbyterian history had been in the United States, some significant great moments, but also down times given our penchant for separation if not division. His remark, which I have long valued, is that “the Presbyterian Church by and large has always been one degree left of center.” Dr. Smith paused and with a smile said to us, “which did you hear ‘one degree’ or ‘left of center’?” He made his point that we have probably always been in the middle of the road for good or ill depending upon your druthers if not expectation. Reinhold Niebuhr’s dictum that “the ultimate test of faith is not zeal, but charity” kept ringing in my ears.

Spring is always beautiful in Bloomington and 1970 was no exception, despite Horace Karsell’s oft-repeated maxim that to survive the spring rains, “one had to be a Monroe County Ridge runner.” I had the good fortune to be one of the moderators for the Environmental Day event down in French Lick under the sponsorship of the League of Women Voters. I recall driving down on a bright sunny day with Stine Levy, a member of the local chapter of the League. She was such a positive personality and strongly suggested that things had to get better. In less than a month, the Kent State tragedy of 1970 occurred. Richard Nixon’s remarks and James Rhodes adamant defense of the Ohio National Guard did not help. The night of the shooting of the students at Kent State, our Indianapolis Presbytery was meeting in one of the churches south of Indianapolis. We were fortunate that night to have as our guest speaker, Gerhard Elston, a Lutheran pastor and a man who had served recently in Southeast Asia for Church World Service. When it came time for Gerhard Elston to speak, he put aside his prepared notes and asked us to share in thoughtful and prayerful reflection on what we were going through as a society and country. He suggested that we can divide even more deeply or we can begin to move toward resolution, noting that more bumps in the road were ahead for our own country and especially for the people of Vietnam. “Never easy,” he said “to extricate from war – always a downside.” I realized that night that the downside had begun.

Back the next day in Bloomington, various folk gathered out of a sense of protest, sympathy and identification in order to plan a march from Dunn Meadow on the I.U. campus to the Bloomington Square. They were desirous of commemorating the four Kent State students who had been killed recognizing the need to maintain order and to the best of our abilities to allow those students who needed to deal with their feelings constructive opportunity to express themselves. Campus and town clergy volunteered to serve as monitors sensitive to perhaps acts of vandalism and property destruction. I recollect about 3 thousand students gathered at Dunn

Meadow that following Monday to eventually march to the town square and back. Keith Parker, who was then I.U student body President and an African-American from Indianapolis, was eloquent in his emphasis on a peaceful witness to both allow and encourage healing to take place. As I was asked to lead in prayer, I recognized the hurt and bewilderment in many eyes. As we began to march, I remember singing together, "Let us break bread together on our knees" and different segments of the march group improvising words to the familiar song. In particular, I heard our group singing, 'Let us pray for peace together on our knees.'" I realized once again how much the black community had taught us about making a public witness for peace.

Two remarks, one direct and one indirect, were shared with me after the march. An FBI man, member of our United Presbyterian sister congregation in Bloomington and officially on duty said to me after the March, "Paul, we had you covered, but you did a good job of moving things in the right direction." The other remark not so flattering came from an I.U. administrator also observing the event who eventually said to my beloved friend, Joe Kingsbury, "Paul Miller is a menace." I will always treasure Joe's reply to my critic. Joe simply said,"we love him." That day had very little to do with Paul Miller. It marked the end of support at least at I.U. for the continuing war in Southeast Asia. I will always hold fast to what two graduate students who participated in the march said to me en route as we discussed what was taking place. Their disillusionment was deep and their parting word was, "We will always be reluctant participants in our American society". The war divided many and left others shattered and embittered. Just add to that the many who gave their all and the families who never saw loved ones return.

Through the latter part of 1969 and 1970, our Long Range Planning Committee participated in conversations with both Trinity Episcopal and First Baptist Churches of Bloomington with respect to the possibility of merger. You need to remember that this was a time of serious discussions at the national level relative to church unions and we were still living in the glow of Vatican II initiated by Pope John XX111. Charles Perry had come as rector of Trinity Episcopal in the spring of 1968.He was a strong voice for shared ministries and beginning in the fall of 1969 we undertook a quarterly pulpit exchange among our four downtown churches inclusive of our two churches along with First Methodist and First Christian. We had already been involved with Lenten programs of lay education during the week in prior years. This sharing enabled us to be that much more knowledgeable of one another both as clergy and laity. This exchange continued until the departure of both Charles Perry and Robert Gingery at First Methodist in 1971 and the retirement of Howard Anderson at First Christian.

Our discussions with Trinity Episcopal were fast paced inasmuch as they were looking to building a new parish hall. We soon ran into two stumbling blocks from a Presbyterian perspective. The first was the relative smallness of the Trinity sanctuary for either shared use of time and/or combined services. The second issue had to do with the concern of some of our Long Range Planning members with the remembrance that when the Jordan River flowing out of the I.U. campus was engineered to go underground just a little South of Kirkwood, it provided

anxiety about the size of building that could be safely built on the Trinity site. Our engineers prevailed so that further exploration was short lived.

We found ourselves in full blown discussion with the representatives from First Baptist and by the fall of 1970 we were into regular discussion, pulpit exchanges and some sharing of program. We were of course surprised and delighted to discover how much we already knew one another given the smallness of the town. I can recall one conversation with the Baptists in their sanctuary in late fall. I was explaining to them the meaning of infant baptism which they were receiving both graciously and a little wistfully. I said to them, "How will you feel when we baptize infants here in your sanctuary in the sharing of worship"? John Figg, one of their saints and much beloved in the Bloomington community said to all of us, "You won't mind if an old Baptist shuts his eyes"? I assured John that I would not drop the baby in his arms or disturb his meditation. Before we continue this history and its outcome, I hasten on to a few public and political matters.

We in the Bloomington community and given our relationship to the University were confronted with the growing drug culture primarily in the University, but beginning to impact our public schools. Mayor John Hooker was under increasing pressure to put together a City Drug Commission. He gave me a call asking if I would chair the Commission. I said yes, little realizing what lay ahead for the next five years as we did our best to develop a reasonably well-rounded program. I knew that I was going to stay awhile at First Presbyterian having just turned down the offer to become Director of Presbyterian Campus Ministry at Purdue succeeding the recently retired Richard Rasmussen, an icon in his own time at Purdue.

In early January of 1971, David Rogers, a local attorney and State Democratic Senator for our district came by my office and to my complete surprise asked me if I would be willing to run in 1971 as the Democratic candidate for the Mayor of Bloomington. I told Dave that I could not because we were headed in mid-February for a vote in our First Presbyterian and First Baptist congregations to determine whether or not the two churches would merge. I indicated how much work had gone into the process and that any public declaration on my part for public office would only muddy the waters. He didn't necessarily agree with me, but asked that I not speak publicly inasmuch as there were other candidates to be considered. In 1968, John Stoner had been after me to seek the congressional seat in our district which was quite a concession on John's part especially when he was vocal about how "wrong-headed" I was on the war in Vietnam. He assumed I would mature. I declined then because I simply felt that my basic calling was to the ministry and in part I think that also influenced me to say no to the gracious invitation from David Rogers.

If I remember correctly, the merger vote occurred on Sunday, February 14, Valentine's Day no less. Given the requirements of the Presbyterian Church's Book of Order and similar guidelines in the American Baptist denomination, a two thirds vote of those in attendance was necessary for approval. Our sanctuary was packed and it was gratifying that after a very full and gracious discussion, we Presbyterians voted with a 70 per cent approval. To our dismay, we learned at the

conclusion of our meeting that the Baptist's were in the 60 per cent range, hence thwarting the aspirations of a strong majority. I was off the next morning for a two week study leave at Princeton Theological Seminary.

They were two great weeks at Princeton. In particular, I want only to interject that in the second week at Princeton our leader was Paul Crowe, then Secretary of the Consultation on Church Unity. Paul was very supportive of me personally reminding me that mergers are tough to come by because people are always more comfortable voting their past than their future. As Paul shared with us the current state of church union talks, he said that the biggest hurdle, from his perspective, was the different positions of the participating denominations with respect to the role of women. He was very animated about the coming place and power of women in the life of the Church. He told us and this is almost an exact quote, "The women's movement in the church will make the Civil Rights movement look like a Sunday School Picnic". He believed that nothing would hold it back despite the resistance that was already mounting.

On returning home from Princeton, we discovered rumblings at First Baptist reflective of their 60 percent vote on February 14. They were to vote again feeling that the congregation had not fully and responsibly considered all the issues in their vote of February 14. I can still hear Jack Ray of First Baptist saying to me, "Paul, there is some fear in our congregation that we will become too big and that the sense of being a family will be lost". In late March, they voted again and easily surpassed the requisite two-thirds vote for merger.

Our Session with a sense of maintaining fairness and balance to all parties elected to call a congregational meeting for First Presbyterian for mid-April in order to respond to the second vote of First Baptist. In a very long and draining meeting, we fell five votes short of the necessary two thirds as required by the Book of Order for a Union Church.

From a very human point of view, retrospectively, I had three observations. The first was that that we had different people voting and not voting at the second meeting which I suspect was true also for the people of First Baptist. My second observation was that the loss of Bill Wheeler via a Westinghouse transfer to Pittsburgh in early January had left us with a very difficult void to fill. Bill had served for five years as Chair of our Long Range Planning Committee and headed up the merger talks for First Presbyterian. Bill had given yeoman's service and had major credibility with our congregation. His presence might have made a difference. My third impression was that we had not been able to win over enough people on what we thought were the merits for merger apart from what to do with our building. They were: 1) An ecumenical witness very much needed for the secular world into which we were now entering; 2) A much stronger program for our church members at many levels and something we thought many were ready for and 3) Opportunity and challenge for a greater stewardship related to broader benevolence support for our respective denominations as well as our Bloomington community. In conversation with Doug Rae, pastor of First Baptist at the time of my arrival in Bloomington, I asked him. What was crucial in your relocating First Baptist from downtown to the East Third

Street location? Two things, he said, “Being on a major thoroughfare and adequate parking if you are interested in growing”. Back then, I don’t think any of us realized how much Bloomington would grow. We were still a small town.

Exhausted and strung out by the many ups and downs of struggling with our future, we pulled ourselves together and elected to do modest and necessary renovations of our existing facility. We achieved support for a \$150,000 renewal program. Money was absorbed in a basement make-over, refurbishing the lounge, painting the sanctuary and re-plastering where there were moisture problems, reworking of office facilities, plumbing and electrical wiring replacements and above all the securing of the Church cupola and its underpinnings. The renovation project was ably overseen by Martin Burkhead who gave many lunch hours sweating the details and coordinating the requirements of the contract. We were indeed training Martin for larger undertakings in the future of the church.

The one thing that has given me considerable pause over the years that we did not discuss at the time was the ultimate disposition of the downtown property if the merger had been approved. We had concluded that the decision would have to be left to the new united church. Given the commercial values of that day, not to mention the emerging aesthetic and commercial values of a changing urban landscape, plus the binding arrangement with the bequeathed adjacent property, such a decision would not have been readily forthcoming. Having served on the Planning and Zoning Committee for the City in 1975-76, I became acutely aware of all the factors that come into play when you are dealing with community history, values, hopes and visions plus its relative desirability on an open market. Winston Churchill probably got it right when he wrote, “We shape our buildings and then our buildings shape us.”

One other note is that in the fall elections to government positions in the fall of 1971, I was elected to serve as Chair of the Bloomington Township Trustee Advisory Committee, as a kind of shotgun for our newly elected Trustee, the Reverend Ernest Daniel Butler, pastor of Second Baptist and a good friend. Elected with me were Evelyn Frenz and George Heise. I served on the Advisory Committee for four years and learned to fully appreciate the talent, wisdom and compassion of E.D. Butler. As Ernie would say, “Ernest means I am sincere and Daniel means I am courageous.” He was every bit of that.

1972 began as a relatively peaceful year. Henry Kissinger’s historic trip to China essentially guaranteed the re-election of President Richard Nixon. Beneath the surface of things, the Vietnam War dragged on.

With the departure of our Associate Minister George Reed to the Reading-Lockland Church in Cincinnati in the summer of 1971 and the fall retirement of Dorothy Johnson (11 years) as our Director of Christian Education, we took time to rethink our staff needs. Dorothy had served us well. Her contribution to the life of First Presbyterian had been formidable. She impacted many lives. The consensus was to look for a strong educator who was ordained who could then

function as overseer of our Christian Education program, serve as a teacher of teachers, do some teaching and be a colleague in ministry with some pulpit and pastoral responsibilities. Typically, the process was slow, but we were fortunate to secure as Associate Minister Robert H. White who had been serving as Associate Pastor of the Tabernacle Church in Indianapolis. Bob came on in the summer of 1972, giving us a new perspective. He stayed with us until the fall of 1974 when he became Director of Monroe County United Ministries, persuaded that he would like to combine education and community service in behalf of all the churches of Monroe County.

Despite our focus on local congregational matters, the Vietnam War was still close at hand. When Richard Nixon ran for the Presidency in 1968, he announced he had a secret plan for ending the war in Vietnam. Once President, he announced his "Vietnamization" policy, namely turning things over to the Vietnamese people. Three years later in the spring of 1972, still trying to find a way out, he re ordered the bombing of Hanoi in the North in April and then the mining of Haiphong Harbor in early May. The fed-up-ness of many in our country erupted coming to a focus locally at a Bloomington City Council meeting in mid-May. The Council voted 8 to 1 in favor of our withdrawal from the war. I remember Tom Berry, our County Attorney calling me and saying, "You better get down there, all hell is going to break loose." To be sure, it was a heated discussion leading to a late-night consensus to hold a town meeting on the Square in early June welcoming input from all sectors of the community. Somewhere in the mix, I got drafted to moderate the public meeting.

It was a beautiful day when we gathered on the north side of the Square with about 400 in attendance. For speaking purposes, we operated off the end of a flat bed truck equipped with microphone and public address system. Voices and stories rang true to the diversity of our community. I heard no one in favor of continuing the war. Eight years had been a long time, at that point over 50,000 American military and countless Vietnamese people were dead. Spokesmen from the American Legion wanted us to be loyal and respectful to our troops serving in Vietnam and coming home. They passionately pleaded that we remain faithful to America. Personal stories from those who had served or whose family members had served painted the human dimension of loss, suffering, frustration and heartache. We made the late evening news on television stations in Indianapolis. We all came away exhausted, but I think amazed that community discussion was not only possible, but healthy as well. It dawned on us, where else in the world are people free to have such a discussion?

Some of us remember that in June of 1972, there was an office burglary in a Watergate complex in Washington, D.C. It was a minor incident at the time. Little did we realize the meaning of that incident would grow and in due course dominate the political and moral dynamics of a society increasingly on edge.

Life at First Presbyterian was calm and in many ways we looked forward to the renewal of our congregational life come the fall of 1972. I had been in Bloomington six years and eight months. Never did I expect such a ride.

III – The Fall of 1972 to January 1977 - “The Accumulating Weight of Ministry”

Before I undertake fleshing out the highlights of our last four years together in Bloomington, I need to reflect on what seemed to me then and even now in retrospect with the passage of time the cultural, ideological, psychological and theological upheavals that were occurring and marking the explosive pluralism of our American society. I believe the Church is still living with these realities in both conscious and unconscious ways and in reality for both good and ill, depending of course on how one reads and interprets change.

In the late 1960s, I would travel back to Princeton Theological Seminary (my home base stretching back over 25 years) from time to time for study leave and on occasion for fund raising purposes for Erdman Hall, the new Continuing Education Center for the Seminary. Dr. James McCord, the President of the Seminary would say to us a number of times almost as if he were in a cultural and psychological fog, “Theology is in shambles – whatever you do, don’t build any new church because if you do, it will have no theological integrity”. His other chronic lament was that half the students in Princeton Seminary were there to avoid the war in Vietnam and that he was not persuaded of their longer range intent of being in service to the gospel ministry. A generational study of those years via the Seminary Alumni Office could be very interesting. Fragmentation was upon us taking many forms. What is it that William Butler Yeats once penned, “Things fall apart, the center won’t hold”.

Apropos of James McCord’s concern was my invitation at about this time to speak to our local Rotary Club on the “God is Dead” theology. I do not have the notes of my remarks for the occasion, but I recall saying very strongly that our more traditional concepts of God, however cherished, were under scrutiny if not siege, that our images and practices were under fire and “it did not yet appear what we shall be”. I suggested that we should hang on because it was going to be a bumpy ride.

In subsequent months stretching into years, I (and the Church) continued to deal with the change and fragmentation as we reacted to and discussed together major Hollywood films such as “The Graduate”, “The Way We Were”, “Easy Rider”, “Deep Throat” and “Carnal Knowledge”. Our reading again reflected the turmoil with books like “Honest to God”, “Future Shock”, “The Brightest and the Best”, “Jonathan Livingston Seagull” and “The Greening of America”.

The theme songs that emerged and some will remember them well were “Do your own thing”, “Never trust anyone over thirty”. Bill Webster of Ecumenical Campus Ministry had us do a summer study together around the theme of “Authority”. The only thing we concluded was that “it was gone.”. Some days I felt like an old fogey and I had just crossed forty. Bob Dylan kept reminding us via his haunting melody and prophetic voice, “The times, they are a changing”.

This fragmentation as well as the movement toward change affected our way of doing morning worship, compelling us via University student input to be more informal and to have a genuine sharing of our concerns and needs for ourselves and the world prior to the morning prayer

(pastoral prayer) which became in reality our community prayers. One young student put it to me this way, “Paul, you see these older people here, they are saying ‘Take care of us, we’re dying’ – what the younger folk are saying is ‘Take care of the world, it’s dying’. Do you get it”?

I found myself shifting to a more informal style of preaching (no more manuscript). This was strongly recommended to me and encouraged by John Sweet, a graduate student in Religious Studies who simply argued, “You are a better communicator speaking informally without notes”. It was a game changer for me in terms of both my style and discipline of preaching. What I discovered was that I had to work harder. This meant emotionally owning the substance of the sermon, committing to memory an outline of the sermon which freed me from previous dependence on the manuscript. In a nutshell, I began to discover that preaching was far more than an intellectual exercise.

Reflective of these dynamics were two series of sermons I preached in this time frame. I think the first was in the summer of 1973 when I did a series on “Liberation Theology” indicating the term came out of the struggles in Latin America. The term had also been incorporated into aspiring groups within our own country, women, blacks, Latinos, gays and the young and of necessity producing new ideas and new theologies; e.g. “black theology” or “feminist theology”. In some cases we had little familiarity or were not comfortable with such persuasions including the New Left’s political perspective. All these, I suggested had something to say to the churches. In retrospect, I don’t think these sermons really registered, in part due to my own limitations and in part because it represented more than most congregations can absorb, but they were my attempt to help us come to grips with a new day, note I did not say a brighter tomorrow necessarily.

In the midst of all of this change was the zeitgeist evoking the need to get in touch with our feelings. Some will remember the mantra, “If it feels good, do it”, even then patently superficial, but at a deeper level, Fritz Perls of gestalt psychology fame was contending, “Trust your gut”. The “I’m O.K., You’re O.K.” best seller by James Harris received major societal response. Out of all of this, I did a series (spring and summer of 1976) of sermons on “How do you feel about?” using Pablo Casals dictum, “Don’t think, feel”. It covered many of the isms of that time (racism, feminism, sexism, patriarchy, homosexuality), not to mention the great touch stones of truth, grace, beauty, faith, hope and love with a very definite focus on the common experiences which shape us and give validity to our experiences. Richard Niebuhr was contending at that time that the ultimate authority shaping our lives is our own human experience. I grappled with all of this, but I need to share the response of one of my good friends, “Paul, it was a good try, but you have to admit that reason came in second”.

Having now bared my soul, I want to recall five events and relationships that kept me deeply rooted in both the life of the church and the community. As in the above reflections, they manifest in part what I simply call “the accumulating weight of ministry”.

The first was the national Presbyterian Church's decision to re-organize itself under what was then called Overture H, the plan to restructure the Church into strong Regional Synods; consistent with the perception that our political, economic and cultural life was becoming increasingly focused in our large urban areas. This reality raised the question of how could we more effectively facilitate the programming of the Presbyterian Church. Heretofore, Presbyteries were the center of action and program and Synods had responsibility for things which the Presbyteries were too small or limited to handle. We spent a lot of time on this in 1971-72, resulting in new alignments come the summer of 1973. These new alignments meant pulling former Synods together across state lines.

The State of Indiana prior to the 1973 restructure had seven presbyteries with no staff. The State of Indiana was one Synod ably served by John Fox, Ralph Strong, Lorraine Riggs and Don Nead. They were our program resource leaders who were from time to time augmented by Presbyterian national staff. The Synod of Indiana met annually at Hanover College and was overseen by elected commissioners from the seven presbyteries. This arrangement worked well for a state as homogeneous as Indiana. Add to this the Synod School also at Hanover College as well as the regular committees of the Synod and what we had going for us was a well organized, nurturing, encouraging, facilitating entity that allowed local participation and ownership. Having served as Chair of the Church and Society Committee for five years, plus Dean of the Convocations Committee for the Synod School each summer, I had a very positive experience. We obviously did not agree on all things, but there was a respect, a willingness to hear each other and to work together in many areas. Given our history, structure, experience and spirit, Hoosier Presbyterianism was strong.

Part of my satisfaction with the structure of the Presbyterian Church prior to Overture H and I daresay members of First Presbyterian who served on committees and worked for program/mission both of the Synod of Indiana and the Presbytery of Indianapolis to which First Presbyterian belonged, came out of the regular interaction with the Synod and the Presbytery. Inasmuch as I served at given times as Chair of Strategy, Inner City and Mission and Witness committees of the Presbytery, this usually meant about three trips a month to Indianapolis including the Presbytery meeting. We did not have Presbytery staff until 1971 when the Presbytery hired Isaiah Pogue to work with the Inner City churches. In looking back, it is hard to believe we had a budget for Inner City work slightly in excess of 360,000 dollars sustained and supported by other Presbytery congregations and allocations from the National Missions budget of the national church. I worked closely with our Inner City pastors of Indianapolis Presbytery. In due course, many became good friends. They were Robert LaFollette, Herb Valentine and Frank Ichishita, who eventually would become Presbytery Executives in Lake Huron, Baltimore and Genesee Valley respectively. Herb Valentine was elected Moderator of General Assembly in 1992 which I attended as a Commissioner from Cincinnati Presbytery. Other Inner City pastors were John Burbank, Richard Hutcherson and Sherman Ott. It was not as bad as herding cats, but never under estimate the individualism of Presbyterian ministers.

Overture H once approved was an abrupt change. The Synods of Indiana and Illinois were merged into one Synod, duly named the Synod of Lincoln Trails which should have been an indication that we were going to be increasingly distantly related. The seven presbyteries of Indiana were reduced to three in number geographically reflective of our river valleys. Bloomington and Columbus which had embodied much leaven in the Presbytery of Indianapolis were assigned to the Presbytery of Ohio Valley, not a good fit for either and not chosen freely. It should be remembered that Bill Laws, pastor of First Presbyterian in Columbus had served as Moderator of the General assembly in 1970, a wise and passionate counselor in all things Presbyterian, but very much a product of Indianapolis Presbytery who readily conceded his leadership skills were nurtured by the give and take of church life in the greater Indianapolis area.

Bob Sackmann came on in the spring of 1973 to be our Ohio Valley Presbytery Executive. The Sackmanns (Helene and 4 children) joined First Presbyterian in Bloomington, the city in which they elected to live. It should be said here that Bob and Helene, my wife Peg and I had been contemporaries at Princeton Theological Seminary. In digging into a presbytery newly-minted, Bob spent many hours in meetings and visitations and in his early years put on 40,000 miles per year on his odometer. My own judgment was that we were too spread out and that the churches along the Ohio River had too little in common with our hinterland congregations. Take note that Bob Sackmann spent 20 years as Presbytery Executive and as some will recall provided yeoman service to the Presbytery. He was a good friend and in the long run very helpful to pastors and congregations.

The new Synod of Lincoln Trails initially had its offices in Champaign, Ill. under the leadership of Gordon Skadra. In due time, the offices came to the Inter Church Center in Indianapolis. Former Indiana Synod staff people eventually relocated to other positions both within Indiana and beyond. They had served us well. In particular Synod Executive John Fox was a wonderful friend and a man of wisdom and passion for the things of God's kingdom.

What I found in the new Synod was again little knowledge of one another, infrequent meetings, more time traveling and at least from the Illinois folk constant complaining about the independence and self-sufficiency of Chicago Presbytery (commensurate with size and dollars) with respect to the rest of us. I was assigned to the Committee (Commission) on Higher Education for the Synod along with Vi Taliaferro, an Elder from First Presbyterian in Bloomington. We were responsible for liaison to our Presbyterian colleges in both states and emerging oversight for all of our campus ministries in two states. We did a lot of paper shuffling and I got the feeling local campus ministry boards were as baffled as we. Admittedly, start-ups are never easy. Yet we had created a larger entity to facilitate the sense of the whole without recognizing our innate limitations to be meaningfully involved in such a far-flung operation not to mention community. In a time of increasing emphasis on participatory democracy, we elected to "more top-down" at the expense of "from the bottom-up".

One personal benefit I received from the re-structuring were monies previously allocated from the Synod of Indiana for a five day leadership-training event in Louisville in the spring of 1973. Our leaders for the week were Jesse Jackson and Ralph Nader with considerable grass roots participation from the churches in Louisville, both black and white. Jackson and Nader were both young, controversial for some, but articulate, breathing fire and filled with hope and vision. I can still hear Jesse say, "Don't put drugs in your veins, put knowledge in your brains" and "If you don't vote, you will not be free". He was at his charismatic best. Nader argued the case for regulation at many levels saying that we could do better in so many ways and believed that real profits include moral responsibility and accountability for your products and the impact on people's lives and our physical environment. I don't think I had ever seen or heard two individuals together more hopeful about America.

Enough said about Overture H and the Presbyterian way of doing things (not always right) and on to the Bloomington City Drug Commission and Michael Shoemaker who eventually became a legend in his time.

I was appointed in December 1970 as Chair of the Bloomington City Drug Commission by Mayor John Hooker. When Jack was pressed why Paul Miller, he responded, "He is proven". I never did figure out what that meant. In the first few years we struggled in the Drug Commission to get a hold of our task(s). I think some people believed we were appointed to stop all drug usage in Bloomington and especially Indiana University. In our conversations, we were greatly helped by Randy Bridges (Deputy County Attorney), Eve Berry (Brigl) and Clarine Nardi (Riddle), I.U. students in the Class of 1971. Eve Berry later became our first Executive Director of our City Drug Commission giving substance, direction and enthusiasm along with stellar leadership very much needed. Clarine helping with our grant-writing, worked through her law degree and graduated from I.U. School of Law in 1974. We did a number of workshops getting input from a cross-section of the Bloomington and Indiana University communities. Initially we had no money so we were dependent on the good will of community professionals as well as feedback from various drug users at different levels of rehabilitation. Eventually we focused on public education as well as projecting and establishing a residential weekend community designed for rehabilitation. Necessary monies were forthcoming from the Lilly Foundation in Indianapolis and block grants via the Bloomington Township Trustee's office.

We were fully aware of the public safety (criminal aspect) issues and were in touch appropriately with our public officials. In summary, we were to facilitate: 1) Understanding via public education, 2) Deterrence, 3) Control and 4) Rehabilitation. My own persuasion out of many interactions eventually brought me to the point where I believed that the so-called drug culture wars (exclusive of marijuana) had been blown out of proportion. It was the alarm and anxiety they produced, re-enforced by stereotypical images of the University as a place of too much pleasure and essentially no restraints on freedom. As one parent lamented to me, "if only we could build a wall around Indiana University". All this meant was that our task became a

matter of being available to explain that parameters were in place to address and alleviate issues and consequences of our drug culture in the Bloomington and University communities.

It was in this context dating back to early 1972 that I met Michael Shoemaker, the young founder and leader of the Ashram community who had come to Bloomington primarily to address the drug problem in our Bloomington University community. Michael had been sent by his Kundalini Yoga mentor in New York City affectionately known as Rudi who himself had been trained and disciplined in India. Michael was boyishly young, shaven head, always direct in his eye contact, charming and a young man with a mission. He believed that there were many lost souls: partly due to drugs, partly due to the soft materialism of American culture, partly due to the failures of both parental and family discipline as well as the failure of the churches to inculcate values and structures in one's life.

Raised in Connersville, Indiana, and at one time seriously exposed to his Roman Catholic faith, yet at a very young age, the vacuum in his life was filled with the spirituality of his new found faith. Michael was committed to the daily practice of kundalini yoga and the building of residential life in smaller communities and the daily discipline of a useful vocation, e.g. painting, renovation construction, cooking, baking and eventually the establishment of a restaurant (the Dao) on East Tenth Street, a few blocks west of the I.U. campus.

Michael Shoemaker, worldly wise and being sensitive to community relations, recruited me as Chair of a Citizen's Advisory Committee to be of help to him and the work that the Ashram community would be doing in our community. We met informally from time to time to raise questions, seek information and discuss the impact and consequences of kundalini yoga spirituality. Before we knew it, they had become a very efficient and sophisticated organization. Michael was always forthright in these discussions and readily admitted that Ashram life was not for everyone, but that it could provide a real anchor for a season which in the longer run would equip people to get a better grip on life. My hunch is that in his Bloomington years, the Ashram community did more to address the drop-outs from the drug culture than all of our other efforts. My instinct tells me that there must be a sociological study somewhere in the University archives providing a more objective appraisal. I hasten to add that almost everyone enjoyed the Dao restaurant for its food and the tangible reminder that dietary realities combined with moderation in all things makes sense.

I am cognizant of Michael Shoemaker having moved on in matters of the spirit and communal living to other places. His journey has been intense. Via the internet, I have learned of gathering criticism for his alleged improprieties of sex, money and the abuse of power focused in his spiritual community in Portland, Oregon. Whatever merits these criticisms might have (which Michael has denied), he was both a healthful and helpful individual in my years in Bloomington. He represented for me one more way of trying to make sense out of life (always prone to exploitation) in a fragmented and troubled time. Conformity was not his suit. Michael longed for and needed something more challenging.

Given my Drug Commission service, I slowly, but surely became a friend of our new Mayor, Frank McCloskey, who was elected in November, 1971. This was a Democratic upheaval and sweep replacing a Republican majority in the office of Mayor and City Council. Some of the change was due, I think, to war weariness, some to the Democratic cultivation of the University community, particularly students and some I suspect to a longing for younger candidates with fresh faces and new ideas. The Democrats delivered big time. I remember two of my clergy friends, Jim Ackerman, Presbyterian minister and professor of Religious Studies at I.U. and Hubert Davis, Methodist campus minister at the Wesley Foundation, who had come on to replace Gil Sirotti after Gil's tragic death in the summer of 1968. Jim and Hubert came to town in 1969 and in a little over two years both were elected to City Council, again reflective of the constant change that was occurring at that time.

Jim Ackerman became a bulwark in the Religious Studies program at I.U. and for a long time has been one of the teaching saints at First Presbyterian. Hubert Davis and I became colleagues. He did some teaching for the Synod of Indiana for a couple of summers at the Synod School at Hanover College. One spring in the early 1970's, we shared commentary for the I.U. radio station when "Jesus Christ - Super Star" came to town. The time came (1974) when Hubert developed an incurable nerve disease leading to paralysis of the body and an early death at the age of 38. His wife Flo was like a rock, steadfast, caring and compassionate, undergirding their children and becoming a calming presence to the many friends who came to their home to visit Hubert across those long months. Amazingly, she took Hubert's place on City Council and finished out his term.

Back to political change and my emerging friendship with Frank McCloskey. He needed to touch base with me with respect to my service on the City Drug Commission. He began to stop by my office for conversation and on occasion we would meet at Nick's English Hut for a beer in late afternoon. Our discussions were primarily personal and pastoral, only secondarily political. He was working through personal identity issues as well as vocational aspirations and visions. Frank was raised Roman Catholic in Philadelphia and was a devotee of Thomas Merton. Out of these conversations, he decided to join First Presbyterian and was a fairly regular attendee with some interest wanting to discuss the substance of occasional sermons. One could say he was at work in developing his own personal theology. He was of a philosophical bent with a hunger to use Matthew Arnold's words "to see life steady and to see life whole". I sensed his friends were few and as people will remember if they were around at that time, he leaned on Jimmy Register for advice and in due course Bill Finch, Ted Najam and Jim Wray plus a few of his I.U. Law School contemporaries and advocates. Public life is often a lonely venture.

About the time of Frank's fourth year in office and with the matter of continuing service on the horizon, he shared privately with me (perhaps others) his reluctance to run again due to some stresses in his life. It came as a surprise when he suggested I should seek to run and that he would be willing to drop out. I counseled him that he was doing a good job and that I had no

interest in running because my plate was already full and that my primary vocation was the ministry and not service in the public arena.

A few months after my conversation with Frank, I received a call from Jimmy Regester asking if I would serve as Chair of the Re-election Campaign for Frank McCloskey as Mayor. I said yes, but telling Jimmy I would be gone in the summer of 1975 on sabbatical at Ghost Ranch in Northern New Mexico. Jimmy assured me that we could work around my absence what with the real campaign taking place after Labor Day which proved not altogether to be true. Shortly after receiving Jimmy Regester's call, I heard via phone from Charlotte Zeitlow asking me to head up her committee for Mayor. The phone conversation was brief with my indication to Charlotte that I had already committed to Frank. It proved to be an interesting campaign with Frank winning the Primary and going on to re-election in the fall.

A cloud on the horizon that began to take larger shape in particular ways about 1974 was the issue of homosexuality, both in the church and in the larger society. We did have members in First Presbyterian who were gays and lesbians, yet for the most part wanting to maintain their own privacy. Their lives were reasonably well ordered. In those years, I had become a friend of Al Klassen who was with the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University and a man very much involved with peace and justice issues. Al had grown up a Mennonite in a small Kansas town. Somewhere in this time frame, his Father died and he had to go home to do the service and asked for some counsel from me relevant to his preparation for that task. In this context, I learned that he had come out of the closet, leaving his wife, yet maintaining ties to his family and their four children. For a number of months we met regularly dealing with his history, his inner struggles and his need for a continuing Christian faith and the support of a church family. Al opened up for me the difficulty of people of that time coming to grips with their own personal integrity as well as their true sexuality. This friendship and counseling responsibility was the nudge I needed to change my heretofore position of psychotherapeutic change for individuals who were homosexual. Little did I realize then how wrong so many of us had been dating back to my early years in the church and all of my previous experience with homosexual persons as well as the ethical, psychological and theological teachings of my mentors and peers. John R. Tunis once wrote, "Only the game fish swim upstream". It was time to swim upstream. If only I had the time, energy and money to document the lives of the many with whom I shared both bad counsel and good counsel across the years – how much those narratives could tell us. At least, to the credit of our Elders on Session, we were able to talk about the change taking place without at that time initiating any action or program.

The winds of change were already blowing even in Bloomington. In the fall of 1975, the City Council introduced a resolution, hence a city ordinance to "prohibit discrimination against homosexual persons in employment, housing and public accommodations" which after much public discussion passed 8 to 1. I was the only clergy person who spoke in favor of the resolution. A few months later, Letha Scanzoni of Bloomington, a member of First Presbyterian and a journalist of note on women's issues now spilling over into homosexuality and vice versa

had published in the Christian Century our community's bold action, not minimizing the struggle with respect to homosexuality. She was suggesting a new day is coming. If you will, we made national press, but more importantly, the City Council action opened up conversations at many levels within our city and the university community. As had happened before and would happen often again, the secular society would lead the churches into areas we assumed we understood, if not controlled given our greater wisdom and experience. What are the words of that old hymn, "His Spirit floweth free, high surging where it will."

It had been only a few years earlier that I welcomed the Reverend Troy Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Church to speak to our clergy group in Bloomington about his coming out of the closet and what led him to establishing the Metropolitan Church. The Metropolitan Church was the newly-minted National Church welcoming gays and supportive of responsible homosexual relationships. Troy Perry had formerly been a Pentecostal minister. Not all of my colleagues in ministry at that point were in agreement and some voiced strong disappointment in my gullibility and complicity.

Come the spring of 1976, I was elected a Commissioner from Ohio Valley Presbytery to our General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church meeting in Baltimore, Md. It was quite a soul-stirring Assembly. Two issues were paramount. The first was who was to be elected Moderator of the Assembly. We had five credible candidates including P.E. McAllister, an Elder from formerly Indianapolis Presbytery (now Whitewater Presbytery). I cannot recall how many ballots were needed to elect a Moderator, but Thelma Adair, a black college professor from New York City, prevailed (a first black woman so elected) and whom I supported. A person who came close in the election was Elder Virginia Davidson out of Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York, and the Presbytery of Genesee Valley. What the Church discovered was that God was not yet finished with Virginia Davidson.

The second issue before the Assembly was an overture from New York City Presbytery to have the Moderator of the Assembly appoint a special committee to study (a favorite Presbyterian word) the issues of church membership for homosexuals and whether or not to ordain gays and lesbians to the gospel ministry assuming all other requirements would be met. The special committee was to report back to the 1978 General Assembly with definitive recommendations. After considerable debate the motion passed by a comfortable majority. Moderator Thelma Adair formed the Committee and selected Virginia Davidson as Chair of the Committee. Virginia Davidson became in so many ways and for so many years an eloquent and indefatigable advocate for the full inclusion of gays and lesbians in the life of the Presbyterian Church.

From time to time across a span of over twenty five years, Virginia had one constant observation, if not complaint, namely that tall steeple, tall stem (referring to height) pastors "stood for nothing" germane to faintheartedness and pusillanimous style and behavior, hence deficient in necessary leadership. One of my Episcopal colleagues in ministry who became a

Bishop once referred to the ordination of Bishops in the Episcopal Church “as the removal of the spine without breaking the flesh.” Virginia Davidson would have understood.

Two further footnotes to this early struggle in the Presbyterian Church for full inclusion of homosexual people should be added here given the initiating process begun in 1976.

The 1978 General Assembly meeting in San Diego rejected the majority report and conclusion of the 1976 Study group to ordain gays and lesbians ultimately crafting a modus vivendi of what was called “definitive guidance” which stated explicitly the welcome of gays and lesbians into full membership in the church, but to take no action on the matter of ordination which included Elders, Deacons and Ministers. This latter stance eventually became an Achilles heel inasmuch as it relegated gays and lesbians (should be noted did not come into the church in great numbers) into second class citizens, not to mention disciples.

The Chair of the Standing Committee of the 1978 General Assembly dealing with the 1976 special committee report was Thomas Gillespie, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Burlingame, Calif., of San Francisco Presbytery and the chief architect of “definitive guidance”. Tom was a seminary contemporary of mine who later (1984) became President of Princeton Theological Seminary. Tom relayed to me that in the 1992-93 academic year of the Seminary that the Seminary Community spent the full year (note gay and lesbian students were attending Princeton) in debating, discussing, praying and bearing witness to one another on the matter of homosexual ordination. He said to me personally. “Paul, it was a good year, we spoke in love, we prayed together, we cried together, we laughed together; every heart was touched, but not one mind was changed”.

Although all of the history, struggle and dynamics alluded to above impacted some of us in our local pews, I am persuaded that unless we know gay and lesbian people personally, much of the long struggle for justice and inclusion, not to mention Christian love may well not have registered on our personal and spiritual psyches. There is a sense in which the struggle goes on even as we honestly remember we have lost friends from within our ranks who were not persuaded of our greater openness. Gerald Green, writing two generations ago about the difficulty of change, probably got it right, namely “that truth comes not in great chunks, but in bits and pieces”.

It has been said that “once it rains, it pours,” surely applicable to the issues of sexuality and human freedom as well as human responsibility in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. The issue of abortion vs. right to life had been popping up in various ways since my Seminary years at Princeton and pastoral clinical training at Philadelphia General Hospital under Chaplain James Reeb, a mentor and friend. Jim was later killed in March 1965 in the March on Selma.

When I arrived in Bloomington, in just a matter of months, one of our members asked me to counsel with his nephew who was a student at I.U. and the nephew’s girl-friend. She was a few months pregnant and they were deeply involved in considering an abortion, which they assumed

could be arranged in Indianapolis. They professed their love for each other and indicated their intentions of some day getting married. They were very open to whatever counsel I might provide. After checking out various factors, I said to the young woman, “You have to be honest about what you want, and why, knowing that ultimately the decision rests with you”. I am not sure I knew then I was advocating “freedom of choice”. I was conscious of my counsel in my previous pastorate which leaned heavily toward sustaining and delivering life leading to adoption or perhaps taking responsibility for an unplanned pregnancy. I was aware of the wisdom of a grand-mother, in our Wilmington, Del. congregation, who stood by her unmarried granddaughter through two unplanned pregnancies. She said to me, “Paul, don’t preach, don’t scold, stand by her in whatever way you can. Having a pregnancy can be a very lonely business”.

I then said to our young counselee given our conversation up to this point, “I am just old fashioned enough to have a hunch you might want to keep this child”. Her nodding response said it all. They (he had been listening carefully) decided against abortion.

By the early 1970’s, the Presbytery of Indianapolis had been wrestling with “the right to abortion”. If memory serves me correctly, the vote was taken sometime in 1971, at least a year or more before Roe vs. Wade (1973). It was a passionate debate and “right to abortion” carried with about a two third vote. The one strong dissenting objection came from the black members of our Presbytery who saw in “right to abortion” a possible drift toward another form of genocide – a vivid reminder of how much we live in different worlds. Little did I realize at that moment, how many more times I would be involved with these issues across all the years of my ministry.

Time to move on and to move back to life in the local church in my era. Perhaps my greatest joy came from the exemplary leadership we had in First Presbyterian Church. I begin with the Pastoral Nominating Committee, chaired by John Stoner in 1965. He was joined by Dick Pigott, Mary Lou Miller, Mac Fleming, Louise Spangler, Jim McDowell, Steve Braden and Marvin Howard, a good cross-section of the congregation at that time. From our first visit with John Stoner in our Wilmington home in June of 1965 through subsequent informal interactions with the Committee, together they conveyed both insight and enthusiasm with respect to the congregation’s needs and visions. Given my intellectual bent, I was very much open to serving in a University community. Little did I realize the full scope of what the future held. Do we ever? I did sense in the members a warm humanity, years of experience and great love for First Presbyterian Church. The Pastoral Committee members became good friends as the years unfolded.

I had the feeling that at all times we were very fortunate to have very strong members of Session and even the Deacons who voted themselves out of office believing power and responsibility should be more centered and coordinated. The Trustees worked well as a sub-committee of Session. From church school teachers to youth leaders to members of our Choir we were blessed. Memory prods me to recall the work and leadership of the Choir at somewhat greater length. Student voices from the I.U. School of Music greatly enriched us for nine months a year. Their

great shepherd or should I say maestro for our purposes was Ozzie Ragatz. In my time frame, he served as our Choir Director and Organist until September 1975 to be succeeded by Lidetta Rice Matthen, a former student of Ozzie's. Ozzie used to say that for him to be Organist and Choir Director was "just a matter of dessert" remembering his work at I.U. as head of the Organ Department. His knowledge and skill in church music impacted us all in remarkable ways. His core leadership in the Choir were people like Ruth Stumpner, Lois Meessen, Dorothy Heiser, Alice Duncan, Martin Burkhead and Mac Fleming. They were the anchors as turnover was constant. I was regularly grateful for the quality of the Choir and the music selected, especially for holiday seasons such as Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. All of us knew what a gifted musician we had in Ozzie Ragatz. Some of us also knew he was a gem of a human being.

For those who can remember that long ago, it was my privilege and joy also to have Joseph R. Walker as our Pastor Emeritus. Probably no one loved First Presbyterian more than Joe. Few understood the people of First Pres as well. His span in the congregation covered 43 years. I think he fully understood that text from the Pastoral Epistles, "Count it all joy" in referencing the shared Christian life. And who will ever forget Audie Walker, humor and wisdom incarnated and Joe's inseparable companion? Why is it that life is so clear in retrospect?

After Virginia Bowen had retired as our church secretary, we eventually secured Mildred Thornburg. Mildred was well organized, discreet, a friend to many and kept things running smoothly at many different levels. She was a rock and still serving when I departed. Les Bohall had been our church custodian, but following his stroke, his wife Pearl became a "jack of all trades". There wasn't much that Pearl Bohall couldn't do. She covered a multitude of bases and each year would bless our inner circle at the church with persimmon pudding. She was a colleague for so many of us, always having the right word packed with the wisdom of experience.

When I was in Seminary, some of our professors indicated regularly that the most difficult part of ministry is when death comes to the members and families of your church. Even at the College of Wooster (1948-1952), Vergilius Ferm, former Lutheran pastor and professor of philosophy at the college used to say to us, "Don't go into the ministry unless you have something to say on Easter Sunday morning". Preaching is indeed crucial, but without the resurrection community of faith supporting and sustaining us, we are bereft of that embodied love enabling us to be "more than conquerors through him that loved us". The really hard times for me were when we lost folk often in their full bloom of maturity and the productive years. I think of people beyond those previously mentioned e.g Bob Stumpner, Jack Backer, Bobby Hughes, Tom Gines, Betty Miller, Horace Karsell, Missy Bohall, Charlotte Clapham, Clyde Bolig and Bob McCrea. Then subsequent to my departure: Trudy Calloway, Fred Coons, Bob Gray, David Johnloz, Betty Schilling, Dana Griffiee, Norman Dixon, Jodi Miller and Bill Wheeler. All of these for me were real flesh and blood saints. As one of my saints said to me many years ago, "what keeps me going is that vision of that great get together morning". I don't know whether Jim Steele ever read for the people of First Pres Vachel Lindsay's "General Booth

Goes to Heaven” but it was an Easter morning read each year for his brother David Steele, a seminary classmate forever reminding us of how all inclusive is the amazing love of God.

One of the unexpected shifts in our culture that came full bore in the late 1960’s was the reality of divorce. When John Stoner, Elder in First Pres attended General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio in 1965, the Assembly was debating to change the Book of Order to allow clergy to marry divorced persons without the counsel and approval of presbyteries who heretofore sat as somewhat stern and wise judges of whether those who had missed the mark were to be granted the right to remarry. In my eleven years in Wilmington, Delaware, prior to coming to Bloomington, I had only two divorces in a congregation of a thousand members. Almost overnight, by 1970, I was involved in counseling people who were headed for divorce both within the church and in the larger Bloomington community. Few of us were either ready or trained for such a phenomenon. Sometime before I left Bloomington, I preached a sermon, “Toward a Theology of Divorce” not altogether happily received, but reflective that once again the larger culture had caught us unawares. We still react when people whom we know and love call it quits whatever the reasons, but by the grace of God we have learned to be more understanding and supportive. Let me quickly add that some of my brothers and sisters in the gospel ministry have not been immune to this upheaval in our society

There are many ways to measure the relative strength of a congregation’s life. One is the membership count. When I came, we were 753 members. When I left, we were 684 members, approximately a ten percent decline perhaps a portent of larger declines still on the horizon. One overlooked factor in these declines is that family sizes became smaller – from 3.7 children per family in 1957 to 1.7 in 1977. In my early years in ministry doing pre-marital counseling, couples would glow with the expectation that they really wanted three or four children. My pecuniary Presbyterian theology was, “Have as many as you want as long as you can afford them both financially and emotionally”. Then came Paul Ehrlich and “The Population Bomb”. By the time I left Bloomington, some of the couples for whom I performed wedding ceremonies (both at First Pres and students at Beck Chapel on the I.U. campus) were of a mind to forego children given the anxieties over eventual population. It was the rare couple who was thinking of more than two children. In a sense, we Presbyterians stopped reproducing ourselves and as the Christian Century (note no longer upper case) once observed the Second Children’s Crusade was over.

Thanks to Barbara Burkhead in checking out the records in the Church Register, I add one other piece to the work of ministry in my years at First Presbyterian. In 11 years in Bloomington, I personally performed 126 weddings cognizant of the fact that Joseph Walker, Thomas Arthur, George Reed, Robert White and James McDonald also conducted wedding services. The overwhelming majority of services were for university students with about a four to one ratio choosing First Presbyterian over Beck Chapel (once dubbed by James Ollis as the Church of the unknown God). This is one statistic that perhaps indicates that the service First Presbyterian Church was providing was consistent with the pastorally supportive, hence traditional function of

the church at that time. As I counseled with these couples, I always sensed a high expectation of marriage and the intent of a life-long commitment. My guess is that about one third of these couples had been active in morning worship at First Presbyterian and only a handful in the larger life of the church such as Choir and educational ministries.

A second way to measure a congregation's health is in the matter of benevolence giving. Despite the fact that we were a congregation of modest resources, we had a sense that we should do more in supporting Christ's work beyond the local congregation. When I came, we were somewhere in the 10 to 15 percent of our local congregational expenses and eventually we moved toward a commitment to reach 25 percent. Obviously, we were not helped by the Angela Davis affair (alluded to earlier) in 1969. I think also that a potential fund raising campaign for a new building acted as a brake on our larger aspirations. We did participate in the denominational fifty million fund campaign ably led in First Presbyterian by David Little. We were a major player among the churches of Bloomington in supporting the Christian Center and later the expansion of the newly created Monroe County United Ministries wherein Georgiana Mitchell, Elizabeth Cleland, Mary Lou Miller, Louise Spangler, Betsy Ellson and Charles Hoffer were staunch advocates. Presbyterian campus ministry was espoused and interpreted by Phil Peak who was there at the creation, so to speak, never slacking in his vision and commitment. The Heifer Fund was an annual event underscored as being so practical and helpful by John Stoner and Dorothy Johnson. Every Member Canvass was a must, thankfully undertaken by people like Dick Pigott, Bill Wheeler, Bill Spangler, John Donnell and on one occasion by Rick Pigott, son of Dick and Anita's when he was a Junior in the I.U. School of Business. I will never forget Rick's summary judgment as to his greatest impression in leading the canvass. He said to me, "Paul, I was amazed at how much some people give and equally amazed at how little some people give". I was glad that Rick didn't ask me, "Why is that?" I am not sure I could have given him an answer.

As we think of Stewardship, one person who quickly comes to mind is Ethel Louise Lynam. Ethel Louise was a singular individual without guile, always straightforward, who loved First Pres and enjoyed immensely the good works of the Choir. She lived a totally Spartan existence, a one bedroom apartment on East Third. Her personal needs appeared to be non-existent. When she died in 1974, there were modest numbers at her memorial service. We learned eventually of her generous bequest to our congregation, matched with equal gifts to her congregational church in Northampton, Mass. where she was Music Librarian at Smith College, then to I.U. where she served as Music Librarian with both schools receiving equal amounts of her largess, four recipients in all. As Lyle Dieterle of our Trustees observed when the good news was shared, "Invest it well, it will be needed". It is amazing what one saint can do out of the abundance of her heart. I do recall in my pastoral visits with her how much she loved her parents and her comments of how much they had given to her. Quiet gratitude may well be added to the Be-attitudes from The Sermon on the Mount.

I believe that in the overall matter of stewardship we were greatly helped by our involvement in the Presbytery of Indianapolis and the stimulus we received from other congregations in the Presbytery who gave to us the larger sense of the Presbyterian Church in mission. Biblically speaking, we were stirred up by one another to do good works.

In our Adult Education program, we were wonderfully sustained by faculty from Indiana University cutting across the various academic disciplines, but in particular faculty from the newly- minted Religious Studies Program. In my first year, the Indiana School of Religion was in its last year ably headed by Harold Hill, a legend in his own time and who was revered as a first rate teacher given our needs at First Presbyterian. Harold moved on in 1966 to become Professor of Religion at Tulsa University. Bill May and Wayne Meeks from the Religious Studies program were most helpful, but other faculty such as Ralph Cleland, S.Y. Teng, Sam Braden, Frank Westie, Taulman Miller, Ken Gordon, Jim Pollock, Leroy Hay, Doug Ellson, Bill Miller, Sam Westfall, Floyd Arpan and L.C. Rudolph were stalwarts that we could count on. Then came Jim Ackerman who most assuredly sustained the faithful with generations of sound scholarship, theological acumen and a boundless effervescence beyond measure. One of these days he should be given some kind of official “emeritus” status consistent with feeding the sheep in every season of life. In our Church School, Barbara Burkhead, Betty Dodd, Phyllis Little, Doris Wheeler, Ruth Fleming, Joann Dodd, Joyce Grove and Bob Few were to be counted on never flagging in zeal or energy.

What was somewhat unique to First Presbyterian in my tenure and again reflecting the health of the congregation were the number of men and women who ultimately pursued theological studies and in not a few cases were ordained to the gospel ministry, some of whom are still serving in active ministry today. They include Steve Braden, Robert Burdette, Paige Hardin Cantwell, Katherine Cunningham-Kaboth, David Cuttino, Joseph Hartswick Jr. (deceased), Chris Ianucelli Thorpe, Gary Kornell, Ted Miller, James (Valerie) Pohlhammer (deceased), Michael Riggins and Charlene Williams. How much all of these received via nurturing, support as well as that first sense of calling to church service is always a matter of individual narrative, but suffice to say that somehow in the workings of the Spirit we were a part of that larger context. We made our contribution and they enriched us fully as well and the larger Church beyond.

An essential footnote to the past inclusive of my years at First Pres was the role and contribution of the Women’s Association to the life of the congregation. From Beth Braden, Betsy Ellson, Georgiana Mitchell, Elizabeth Cleland, Holly Arpan, Libby Dodds, Eurselia Barton, Mabel Giddings, Louise Spangler, Mary Lou Miller, Jean Holsinger, Doris Wheeler, Barbara Roberts, Margaret Stoner and many more nurturing and being nurtured, we received outstanding service and leadership. What is clear in retrospect is the way in which the Women’s Association through regular monthly meetings, the Circle meetings and numerous projects in which they were involved, contributed significantly to coherence, continuity, support and healthful networking for the life of the congregation. I would be remiss if I did not reflect on how much we loved and appreciated Elizabeth Cleland. Home bound due to rheumatoid arthritis, she was remarkably

savvy in things communal, warm and sensitive in things personal and her hospitality to a host of people in the Bloomington community was legendary. “When she passed over, all the trumpets sounded.” One of the humbling lessons in parish ministry is how clearly one sees in hindsight that which we took for granted played such a helpful role in the well being of the Body of Christ.

In my first pastorate in Wilmington, Delaware (1954-1965), we lived through the growth and phenomenon of the National Council of Presbyterian Men. In those years, we regularly had men gathering, one hundred strong, for dinner once a month and program. By the early 1960’s, the Wilmington Church was honored with the election of one of our men, James C. Stewart to the Presidency of the National Council of Men. This wave of enthusiasm and male bonding had not taken place in First Presbyterian in Bloomington. I made no attempt to initiate efforts to encourage such a group. I sensed that Bloomington, being a smaller city, had some of the male needs being met through the service and fraternal groups such as Rotary, Lions, Optimists, Kiwanis and the Elks. Wilmington was a much more corporate city with many traveling during the week and hence not as free for breakfast or lunch time gatherings. Our Wilmington group always met on Monday night anticipating travel for many during the week. Accepting these realities, we accepted that need was minimal for such an entity, if not non-existent.

In due time, Presbyterian Men’s groups faded from the scene with Elton Trueblood of Quaker fame pronouncing the death knell observing that any phenomenon in the church had “to get beyond meeting and eating to have a real hold on people and to prove productive for the society”.

I mention the above reference to the life of men in the life of the church somewhat in contrast to our discovery by the mid-1970’s at First Presbyterian that we had more single individual member units in the life of the church than family member units (two or more). Given this discovery, we modestly espoused and supported a weekly supper group (potluck) to provide a handle for individuals whom we assumed would respond to regular familial church ties even raising the question of what kind of discipline we should pursue. It sputtered, but has left me for years with the questions, how can the church be a supporting fellowship, not to mention a nurturing and witnessing community beyond the limitations of the Sunday morning worship service?

Other activities at given times that stimulated our fellowship and nurture included the following: a Couple’s Group greatly sustained by Don and Janet Harnett, Bob and Joann Dodd, Steve and Ruth Pierson, Jim and Alex Ackerman; a continuing commitment to the development of the Larry Crow Retreat Center in Brown County undergirded greatly by Dana and Alice Griffie as well as Ray and Miriam Crowe; and a Men’s Slow Pitch Softball Team, ragtag though we were, led by and pulled together through our Coach and Mentor, facilitator par excellence, Carl Zager.

When the Watergate break-in occurred in June of 1972 In Washington, D.C. – no one imagined the eventual machinations that would bring down the Presidency of Richard M. Nixon. In many

ways, it played in slow motion, titillating and exhausting a public still recovering from the tragedies of Vietnam and the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King Jr.

For awhile Mr. Nixon was a master playing off the loyalties and disaffections of a host of personalities and parties. The more he played the greater the stakes until his last strategies collapsed. His resignation in August of 1974 came quickly. I spoke briefly on Sunday morning during worship saying that Mr. Nixon did the courageous thing saving the country a longer drawn out public debacle healthful to no one. Our Nixon critics of long standing in the congregation were not pacified. They thought I let him off too lightly. Most members just said they were glad that it was all over and that President Gerald Ford needed our prayers. I did not say so at the time, but I believed that what Cardinal John Henry Newman had once written struck very close to home, namely that “every man (person) left solely to himself will sooner or later self-destruct”. I might add from the highest to the lowest.

In June of 1975, as I began my summer sabbatical at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico, Jim McDonald, our new Associate Minister along with his wife Dean and son Andy arrived from Union Theological Seminary, in New York City. They brought to our congregation much needed youth, vitality and engaging spirits. For the next four and half years they gave much and blessed many with their love and considerable skills of ministry. When I came over from Cincinnati in December of 1979 for their farewell departure to campus ministry in Philadelphia, I sensed how much they were appreciated and loved. In part, I have always regretted that I had not stayed longer to further share in ministry together.

As many of you know, Jim and Dean exercised significant ministries in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. Not surprisingly in 2011, Jim was elected President of San Francisco Theological Seminary, enabling them to relate to children on both West coast and East coast with attendant grand-children to spoil and nurture. In a brief telephone conversation with Jim as they were in Albuquerque en-route to San Francisco, I reassured him that he would not have to give up golf inasmuch as I had just read that President Dwight D. Eisenhower played 900 rounds of golf in his eight years in the White House. I said, “Jim, if you get any static about your indulgence, just pop the historical question germane to one of our great leaders”.

Time marches and come the summer of 1976, we celebrated as a nation our 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It was a quiet time in Bloomington as most summers are. Basketball is played in the winter. Peg and I along with our daughters, Anne and Susan, got away to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in August and then up the East coast to Washington, D.C. As luck sometimes has it, Washington was quiet and empty and the weather beautiful. We had the good fortune of having our Congressman, Representative John Myers in town. John was gracious and gave us the red carpet treatment. He said something to us then which I will always remember, “it is very difficult to get anything done in Washington and I don’t know how much longer I can keep at it”. I believe John Myers stayed another eight years (16 in all) and was succeeded by our own Francis Xavier McCloskey in 1984, thanks to a D.U.I.

of Frank's Republican opponent a week before the 1984 election when Ronald Reagan carried many on his coattails to political victory.

When the summer of 1976 arrived, I was not thinking about re-locating, but I discovered George Reed, our former Associate serving in Cincinnati, had given my name to the Pastoral Nominating Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Wyoming, 12 miles up the Mill Creek River, parallel to Interstate 75 and north of the city of Cincinnati. In July, the committee came to hear me preach and then asked if I would visit with them in Cincinnati. I was not able to do this until September due to local commitments and vacation plans. In early October following the September visit, the PNC of the Wyoming Church invited me to consider a call to the Wyoming Church. In that same time frame, I received calls from old friends serving on Pastoral Nominating Committees in Wilmington, Delaware and Trenton, New Jersey, asking me if I was open to re-location. Back then the ground rules were that you engaged in conversation with only one committee at a time, hence I had to decline. When I finally decided to say yes to the Wyoming Committee, I asked Bill Martin, the Chair of the Wyoming PNC what they liked about me, he put it in one word, "maturity". They had been looking for a nominee for 15 months. I was flattered and could only assume that there are some advantages in reaching the middle years.

It was a wrenching decision for me to make. I had remembered Joe Walker saying to the pulpit committee of First Presbyterian back in 1965, "Be sure you like him because once he comes, he will never want to leave". Bloomington can become a very seductive place as I suspect most predominantly college communities are. I recall counsel to the contrary from various individuals. Bishop John Crain of the Episcopal Diocese said to me after Charles Perry's brief tenure at Trinity Episcopal (1968-1971), "most ministers stay too long – best to get some things done and go". Our own Joe Hartswick offered, "You can go to seed in Bloomington". Norbert Samuelson, our Jewish Rabbi from 1960 to 1977, loudly trumpeted on his departure, "Seven years in Bloomington is a lifetime".

There were other voices offering opinions and some counseling "stay with us," ranging from Merle Gray who said, "The boy needs a promotion" to David Little who was very solicitous asking, "if we paid you more, could we keep you"? My old friend Roger Eckert, professor at Purdue, put it bluntly, "do you want to be a big fish in a little pond or a little fish in a big pond?" In my 11 years in Bloomington, we had a complete turnover of clergy and I had taken on a kind of senior role to everything and everybody, becoming a kind of community chaplain. As Arnie Pierson, pastor of our local Lutheran Church put it to me, "How can you give up all that power?" This perspective made me wonder whether such power was good for First Presbyterian or for me personally, given my Calvinistic and Niebuhrian understandings of the pretensions to power.

I believe also that the placing of the Bloomington Church and others in the newly created Presbytery of Ohio Valley in 1973 in many ways took us out of the loop of significant interaction with an urban presbytery, plus the meaningful and supportive friendships some of us had

established with pastors and congregations of Indianapolis left us with a sense of being cut off from the larger whole. Presbyterian blood needs regular replenishment.

In my three plus years of service in Ohio Valley Presbytery, isolated though we were, I came to appreciate and love the folk of Southern Indiana, but there was an acute home sickness for recapturing the give and take of urban life. My emotions were strained and not fully resolved until I had a long conversation with Bob Sackmann, a Seminary contemporary and our Presbytery Executive. Bob reminded me that I had done my job in Bloomington and that most clergy respond to new challenges beneficial to their own growth and he did use the word “maturity”, plus most congregations soon recover and indeed prosper under new leadership. So much for indispensability! It took me a couple of years to make the emotional break, but in retrospect I can only assume that Bob was right. After all, Robert Frost never tells us what would have happened had we taken the other road.

Let me say here that my seasons of life in First Presbyterian were very happy, challenging, demanding and inwardly rewarding years, out of all proportion to what the casual observer might perceive. I gave much, but I received even more, a solid confirmation of the biblical witness and persuasion.

I close with a personal note reflective of our family's experience in the Bloomington congregation and community. When we arrived, as mentioned previously, our children were David (10), Anne (7) and Susan (2), hence they did a lot of growing up in Bloomington. They all thrived and have wonderful memories.

David established friendships which continue to this day. At the urging of Dick Pigott, we took our ten year old sons (David and Rick) to the Indy 500 race in 1966. Our David has never recovered. He has only missed three races in the last 48 years. Some of these early friends from across the United States show up every May without fail. Maybe Herb Shriner got it right, “You can always tell a Hoosier, he gets thirty miles from home and he starts to cry”. At 14, David started as a bus boy at the Guest Haus Restaurant, later King's Arms Inn, Imperial House and Fireside Inn within walking distance from our home out on East Third Street, adjacent to Park Ridge East, graduating eventually to be the cook in his high school years. From there, with a year out as a Chef's apprentice in the Hotel DuPont in Wilmington, Delaware, he migrated to Cornell University. Following graduation from Cornell, he did a brief stint at Humarock Lodge on the Massachusetts coast, eventually working in management for casinos from Atlantic City to Kansas City to Florida with time out for running his own restaurants in the greater Cincinnati area. He is currently Senior Vice President of Development and Operations for the Seminole Tribe of Florida and works with the Tribe's subsidiary, Hard Rock International. He resides in Tampa, Florida.

Our Anne very swiftly became at home acquiring friends, singing in the Church Choir at 14 and leading her high school church youth group. Her great mentor in all of her years from the time of her arrival was Virginia Bowen Dixon, who involved Anne on Saturdays doing volunteer work at the Christian Center in arts and crafts. Ginny, who had been Secretary at First Presbyterian in my early years, poured her love of art and her compassion for people in need into Anne's DNA. Don't underestimate the power of environment and the influence of people shaping our ultimate dispositions toward life.

Given this example as well as love of Spanish along with a summer's exposure to Northern New Mexico, Anne served as a volunteer upon graduation from high school at a Presbyterian Mission School, John Hyson in Chimayo, New Mexico. After one year at Chimayo, she elected to do a social work degree at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. For the last 30 years plus, Anne (now Mrs. Armando Hernandez) has been doing social work in El Paso, Texas including direct services and team management. She is currently Project Director of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) in El Paso. Expecting to retire soon, working part time, she is hopeful of doing that much more with her art. We all need models and mentors, but how fortunate for our Anne that Virginia Bowen Dixon was there at the right time and in the right place

Susan was only two and a half when we arrived. Our next door neighbors in Park Ridge East were Nick and Ruth DeWitt. Their daughter Connie was our Susan's age and they grew up together like "peas in a pod". They added others to their friendship circle so as they moved through school together they seemed to know everyone. Susan's great adventure was in the summer of 1975 during our three month sabbatical at Ghost Ranch in Northern New Mexico. It was there that she fell in love with horseback riding, assisting the wrangler in taking groups for daily rides. It gave to her a sense of accomplishment as well as a feel for taking charge and getting things done. When we left Bloomington during her eighth grade, Susan was crushed. She thought she would never come back.

Eventually (it was slow), Susan recovered and found her niche in journalism. Following graduation from Wyoming High School, she earned degrees in Journalism from both Wisconsin and Columbia Universities with time out for two years as a reporter for The Patriot Ledger in Quincy, Mass. From there to Columbia and then to work for twelve years with Newsweek and People magazines in New York City. At the Indy 500 in 2000, she met a former Bloomingtonian, Paul Wiltz, whose Dad had taught at Indiana University and whose Mother was still living in Bloomington. They were married in 2001 at First Presbyterian and now live in Indianapolis where Susan is the Content Director for "Angie's List". One might say, "you can take the girl out of Indiana, but you can't take Indiana out of the girl".

All of the above would not have been possible without the love of Peg who dug in early, raising all of us with steadfastness and selflessness. In less than a year after our arrival, her mother, Carolyn B. Stout, came to live with us due to having been diagnosed with Parkinson Disease in

1958 and no longer able to live on her own. She eventually transferred her residence to Hospitality House where she died in September of 1972. We had good support from the Bloomington congregation through these demanding years.

In due course, Peg went to work for Dr. Marc Smith, an experience she greatly enjoyed until our departure in January of 1977. Especially meaningful to both of us was our friendship with Barbara and Martin Burkhead and their daughters Marta and Kiah continuing to this day. It has been 48 years. One group friendship that was particularly meaningful to Peg was an inter-racial group of six women who met monthly for dinner consisting of Florence Donnell and Rachel Pollock from First Presbyterian and Mary Norris, Frances Gilliam and Lenora Hopkins from Second Baptist.

As I finish up writing this, Peg and I have been married for more than sixty years having spent the last 15 plus of them meaningfully retired in the southwestern climes of Las Cruces, New Mexico where we moved upon the birth of granddaughter, Isabela Hernandez in 1998. Our three children have given us eight wonderful grandchildren in all, as well as our first great grandchild, Jude Emmanuel Lopez born on our 60th wedding anniversary in El Paso, Texas. Given all of the above reflections, you contributed so much to who we are. Thanks be to God.

Suffice to say, all of these reminiscences can be used for whatever purposes may prove helpful to understanding a little of our common and obviously receding past. I will not testify in court, but I am conscious of perhaps things left out or perhaps too superficially recalled. I have been slow in putting all of this together over the last year and appreciate the prodding of Judy Holy who reminded me that a bicentennial celebration looms come 2019. So too, I am thankful to our Susan who has been a wise, helpful and indefatigable editor. My slowness has been due in part because the labor has provoked my emotions as well as tender remembrances, in part because with age I have become more deliberative and nostalgic as well as the need to be comprehensive if not judicious with respect to what I think needs to be said. With the sunset of life beckoning, I see clearly how fulfilling the Bloomington years were for us and how gracious God is in the calling and sustaining of ministry. I close with a light touch, a bit of wisdom passed on to me from a Wilmington colleague in the early years of ministry. As Henry Jacobs was leaving Wilmington, he said, "Ministry is God handing us an axe and asking us to chop away at a redwood tree. We chop and chop and finally the tree falls and we are delighted and relieved. No one notices. We look up and God hands us another axe and says, do you see that tree over there?" For all the chips from that tree that we shared together, I am humbly grateful for the love and support of the people of God in the First Presbyterian Church of Bloomington, Indiana.

Paul R. Miller – Las Cruces, New Mexico

March 5, 2014 – Ash Wednesday

