

45 YEARS in the Ministry of Word & Sacrament: No Regrets

“Regrets? I’ve had a few . . .” Frank Sinatra!!



Retiring, September 11, 2022, National Presbyterian
Washington, DC, USA



Ordained, September 8, 1977, Christ Church
Wabush, Newfoundland, Canada

David Renwick

August 14, 2022

The story will seem to be about
BUT really . . .

It's all about →
& all kinds of →

Joshua 1:9 – I will never fail you or forsake you

. . . Me + An Adventure

. . . **The Faithfulness of God**

. . . **Amazing People**

who have blessed me

My Partner in Ministry: Currie

Pastors & Professors

Herbert Mekeel & Paul Achtemeier
Three Bills – Isaac, McAtee & Arthur
Jim, Dave, Ian, Sheldon

Lay Leaders . . too numerous to mention

Phyllis, Brenda, Ben

Helen, Betty & Jim; Booker & Ennis;
Carolyn, Ernest, Dick, Lynn & Ann
Bill, Linda, Helen & Tom
Dick & David

AND HERE AT NPC

Clerk, Staff, Session Members, Deacons
Chairs of Strategic Planning, Earthquake
Legal team, Facilities Master Plan, Construction

Home Background



Baptized –
Orchard Road
Presbyterian Church,
Singapore



Raised – Greenbank Church, Edinburgh

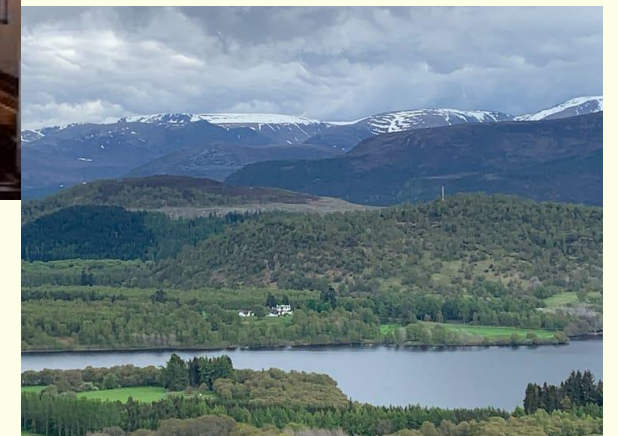
Commitment to Christ

– Kinraig, Summer Camp 1965

Trusted in the promise
of Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5
God would never fail me nor forsake me . .



Greenbank Church



Loch Alvie, Kinraig

Not a commitment to enter the ministry
At school in Edinburgh –
Wanted to teach Math



Accepted at the University of St Andrews, 1969



THEN Side-Tracked . .

Exchange Year 1971-72

Union College, Schenectady, NY



First Presbyterian, Schenectady, NY

- *The Mentors*
- *The Mission*
- *The Pastor – the challenge*
- *The Support*
- *The Generosity: Tithing:
For Seminary: How much do you need?*



The Return to Scotland, 1972

- & Guess who? An American Girl –
- Jr. Year Abroad . . .
from Georgia and Tulane

same faith; my companion & editor in chief



LESSON: Provision for Currie's career

Six Schools as Librarian

- Pingree School, Hamilton, MA
- Keystone, San Antonio, TX
- Sayre, Lexington, KY
- Carver MS, Spartanburg, SC
- Watkins Elementary, Washington, DC
- Key Elementary, Washington, DC



Pingree School, Hamilton, MA

1974 Graduation

What Next?

David: Seminary

Currie: Library
School

Both: Boston!

The Call -- 1973

- Summer on Cape Breton Island, NS. Canada
- Call To preach and teach:
 - No desire to be an associate . .
 - didn't care about the size

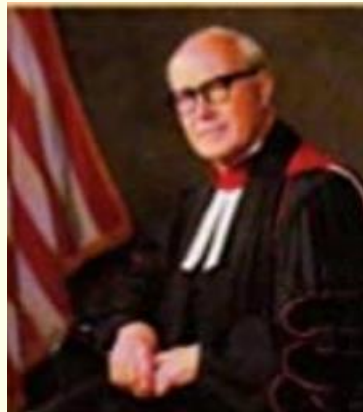


Overcoming Fear of Speaking & Reading

Exodus 4: *“Who made the mouth?
Is it not I, the Lord?”*

Jeremiah 1: *“Do not say ‘I am
only a boy’; for you shall go
to all to whom I send you”*

Meeting Dr. Elson,
Summer, 1974



Gordon-Conwell Seminary

North Shore, Boston, Mass, 1974-77

LESSON: God provides . .

Learned to **read & write!** . . and preach



1977: After Graduation

Scotland?

OR **USA?** → *Summer of 1975 in Dillon, SC*

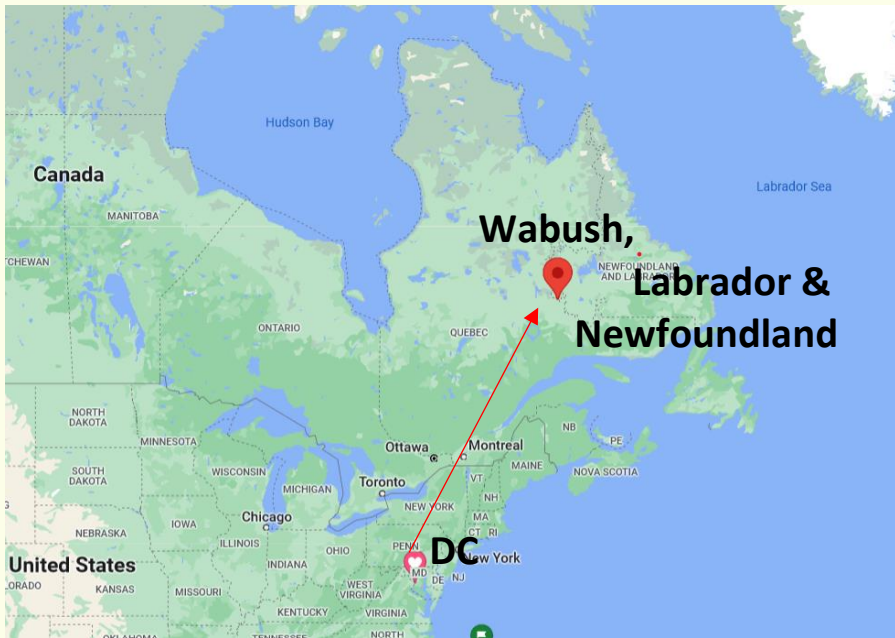
OR **Canada?** → *Three summers
in the Canadian Maritimes*

The Decision --



The Presbyterian Church in Canada
appointed new pastors to mission
churches for two years . .

and asked us to go . . . to . . .



WABUSH, Labrador

. . one of two “PCC Frontier Congregations”



15 hr 9 min (775.1 mi) via QC-389

WHY?

No one else wanted to go!!

5 ministers

in 5 years . . .

48 hours to decide . .

You only live once – ADVENTURE!

→ *Why go where everyone else wants to go?*



9 hr 30 min (582.9 mi) via I-87 N

WHO would want to live there?

IRON ORE MINERS! – blue collar, union town



Snow: Nov → May

Avg. Temp:
Dec-Feb → 6°F



LESSON: ALL Ministry is CROSS-CULTURAL

- No one operates out of pure reason . . .
. . .both union/management
- Can handle a rebellion and survive!
- Preached – morning & evening every Sunday
- Did Everything – *custodian, secretary, children, youth*
- Gained Experience: *School Board – Local + Province*
- *Watched the church culture change*
- *No kingdom but God's lasts for ever (Daniel)*



1982 - Yen to Study more:
Applied for Ph.D. → *Toronto*
& *Union, Richmond, VA*

Union = Top Biblical Studies

Professors in nation

Drs. James Mays, Pat Miller

Paul Achtemeier

= All Presidents of The

Society of Biblical Literature



Babies coming . . . Ran out of money

4 small Virginia country churches



for three years

Buffalo Presbyterian

Church formed in 1739

Present building built
sometime after the original
church burned in 1785.

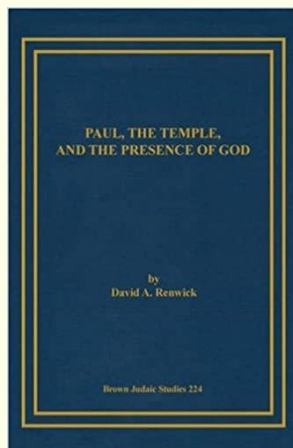
LESSONS: “Family Systems”

-- each congregation is like a family
both good & bad!!

-- The worst
does not define you

-- Some communities
are filled with love





After Grad School

WHAT'S NEXT?

3 Children!

Teaching or Preaching?

*I was always in the middle --
Caught between "the academy"
and the church . .*

Canada or Overseas?

(Father died – 1976; Mother in 1985)

Military City, USA – San Antonio, TX

1987-94



John Calvin P.C. (400 members)

- Mission – 20% . . *Mexican Border, City*
- Preach, teach, children, pastoral care
- Cross-Culture – 60% Military (1st Gulf War)
- Facilities!! Building too small . .

OLD →

NEW →



LESSONS:

- Gaining Support (Buy-In + Finances)
- Setbacks
 - Started with Renovation
 - An Unwanted Christmas Gift -- Asbestos
 - A Miracle: Bob Good! (USAF, Retd)

- Miracle # 2 – Currie’s school
→ A Job! A Reading problem diagnosed



The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Edwards Air Force Base once spent \$1 million to remove asbestos insulation from its hospital, which had been built in 1955.



Today, according to its website, Edwards Air Force Base follows strict guidelines to ensure that no one is exposed to asbestos-containing products during new construction or renovation.

Asbestos on Military Bases

**Building completed . . . 1994
Children heading to HS –
Where? Why the degree?**

THE ANSWER: Lexington, KY !

1994-2006



Second Presbyterian (1,100 members)





This is a list of top NCAA Division I Men's basketball teams ranked by the number of wins through the

Rank	College	First Season	Seasons	Wins	Losses	Ties	Win%
1	Kansas	1899	124	2,357	877	0	.729
2	Kentucky	1903	119	2,353	736	1	.762
3	North Carolina	1911	112	2,323	839	0	.735
4	Duke	1906	117	2,246	911	0	.711



Our Home as a Growing Family for 11 yrs . .

Closer to Currie's Family (*now NC*)

- Preaching & Teaching
- Ran Confirmation with Mentors
- Pastoral Care

LESSONS

- Organize/computerize the organization
- Community Building
- Personnel Manager

▪ A Pastor . .

▪ A Team . .

▪ A Youth Minister . .

Safe Place Policies = huge!

- **Construction!** → *Accessibility; Est. Over-Runs*

AND

- **Community Involvement** --
-- Non-partisan advocacy



BUILD addresses crime,
affordable housing during annual
Nehemiah Action event

“BUILD” – Community Organizing

Affordable Housing

Healthcare for the Uninsured

Mental health

Drug abuse Rehabilitation

Public Transportation

Ex-Offender Re-Entry

Reducing Recidivism

2004-05 – Happy but Restless

...

• **Construction Complete**

• **“Build” established**

.....

**Time to Look or Stay
for next phase . .**

HUGE LESSON --

From 3 churches in my time of seeking:

→ **Pastor was retiring: BUT NOT “leaving”**

→ *I said “No” . . .*
→ *The ministers who said, “Yes”
did not last long . .*

NATIONAL CAPITAL PRESBYTERY

In a time of pastoral change . .

It is most important is for all concerned to recognize some fundamental professional priorities, namely:

- (a) that the local church and its new ministry should be uppermost in everybody's mind;
- (b) that the new ministry will probably develop new directions and should be encouraged in freedom to do so;
- (c) that there will be a natural tendency for some in the church to resist change and that it is very important for the successor and the retired Teaching Elder (Pastor) to deal with this

resistance by reiterating with love and understanding that the mission of the church should be oriented to the future rather than the past.

The retired Teaching Elder or staff person who still remains within the bounds of presbytery or in proximity to the local church bears primary responsibility for making these priorities known.

Moreover, the retired Teaching Elder should make it entirely clear that "retired" means "withdrawn from active service," at least in that location.



**Just after
the third “NO”
search committee
from SC came . . .**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN SPARTANBURG, SC (2,500)



- Had a Really tough 5 year interim
after a much beloved pastor
- NO CONSTRUCTION!!
 - 90 miles from Currie’s mother
 - Not Lawyers . . but lots of Docs + Business
 - 45 elders + 45 deacons!!

LESSONS: . . .



Huge mission and outreach program

Creating Non-Profits

- Free Medical Clinic working poor;
- Mobile Meals program – serves 1600/day →
 - With chaplains, nursing staff
 - . . . brought the whole community together
- Women's Shelter

- Child Abuse Center: House brought law, social services and medical teams together
- Habitat – Major Supporter
- Overseas Mission: Assisted in purchasing
 - Surgery, Clinic & School in DR
 - Mobilized Doctors, Dentists, Nurses for Medical Mission 2 weeks/year



Thought we'd be there until retirement . . .
but . . . **a New Adventure . .**

NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
YOU ARE the story . .



Welcome to National!

