

## IN MEMORIAM



**Ambassador  
Josiah Horton Beeman**

# NORTHERN IRELAND JOURNAL

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN  
COMMITTEE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND  
Volume 2 Number 2 July 2006

## Memorial Service Held for PCNI Founder

**O**n June 24, 2006, a memorial service celebrating the life of PCNI founder Josiah Beeman was held at the Falls Church Presbyterian Church in Falls Church, Virginia, where he had served as an elder. He is survived by his wife, Susan, and children, Olivia Louise, and Josiah Horton Beeman VI.

The Rev. Dr. James Macdonnell, current chair of the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland and a close friend of the Beemans, was asked to speak at the memorial service. Excerpts from that tribute to Joe Beeman are printed on pages two and three of this newsletter, giving a history of his commitment to the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Joe Beeman was born

and raised in San Francisco. His career has involved many leadership positions in the Presbyterian church and in government, in California and in Washington, DC.

Mr. Beeman was named U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa in April, 1994. During his tenure, relations between the United States and New Zealand were markedly improved.

Following his return from New Zealand, Ambassador Beeman was chief of staff for the U.S. International Broadcasting Agency, which consists of the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia. After his formal retirement from government service, he served on several boards and committees.

Ambassador Beeman began his governmental

career as Chief of Staff to California Congressman Phillip Burton. In 1975, Mr. Beeman was named Staff Director of the U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Caucus, and then served as Director of the State of California Washington Office. In 1980, he was named Director for Political and Legislative Affairs of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. From 1983 to 1994, Mr. Beeman served as President of his own government relations firm, Beeman and Associates.

In 1970, he became director of the Washington office of the Presbyterian Church. He served many elected positions in the PCUSA: the Advisory Council on Church and Society, 1965-69; the General Assembly Council, 1983-89, which he chaired in

1988-89; and chair of the Mission Design Committee that designed the new structure for the reunited PCUSA in 1987. He was a General Assembly commissioner in 1958 and again in 1978.

Ambassador Beeman's career moved back and forth between government and church, and he was devoted to both.





## PCNI COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2006

**James Macdonell**  
*Chair*

**Pierce Buford**  
*Vice Chair*

**Robert Conant**  
*Secretary*

**Walter Lindsey**  
*Treasurer*

**Bill Barker**

**Josiah Beeman**

**Marj Carpenter**

**Gary Ferbet**

**Steve Grace**

**Fiona Grimshaw**

**Marie Hilliard**

**Jane Hines**

**Gordon Jewett**

**Barry Keating**

**Carl Koch**

**Tracy Peters**

**Hank Postel**

**Barbara Reichers**

**Richard Young**

## NORTHERN IRELAND JOURNAL

Published by the

Presbyterian

Committee for

Northern Ireland

9708 DePaul Drive

Bethesda, MD 20817

Jane Hines, Editor

Carl Koch, Communications

Committee Chair

## Chairman's Message

By

The Rev. Dr. James G. Macdonell

### Memories of our Founder

In Joe's incredible lifetime of service in support of justice and equality concerns, **only** his devotion to his wife and children, his love of God and the Presbyterian Church USA, and his delight in anything that had to do with Democratic Party politics, was more important to him than was the cause of permanent peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland!

Back in the late-1980's when he was already a well-known national Presbyterian leader who had served as Chair of the General Assembly Council, and as the architect of the new structure for our re-united denomination, Joe Beeman became aware of the tragic plight of the people of Northern Ireland, caught in the midst of terrible, sectarian violence which was ripping their small nation apart.

The long festering religious and political bitterness in Northern Ireland finally exploded into bloody sectarian violence during the 1960's, 70's, and 80's, a period which euphemistically became known as "**The Troubles.**" More than 3,000 people died during this violent 30 year period, resulting in almost every family in the nation having family members who were either killed or wounded. Suddenly the whole world observed that in Northern Ireland, Roman Catholic and Protestant Christians were killing one another in the name of Jesus Christ!

When Joe discovered the disturbing fact that most of the money paying for guns, ammunition and paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland came from Roman Catholic and Protestant sources here in the United States....a lot of it from misguided Presbyterians, he decided that something needed to be done.

Together with a small group of concerned Presbyterian colleagues including former General Assembly Moderator Ken Hall, Joe decided that American Presbyterians should be a part of a hopeful **solution** to Northern Ireland's sectarian violence, rather than just remaining a part of its **prob-**

**lems.**

To make this happen, Joe created and organized the **Northern Ireland Working Group** so that American Presbyterians and others could give positive support to peace efforts in Northern Ireland. Today that group which Joe founded back in 1989 has evolved into the **Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland.**

Very soon, Joe forged strong, enduring relationships with Northern Ireland leaders such as **Roman Catholic Cardinal Cahal Daly**, SDLP founder **John Hume** and Unionist leader **David Trimble.**

Years later, **Hume** and **Trimble** both received the Nobel Peace Prize for their leadership in helping to produce the 1998 Belfast Good Friday Peace Agreement.

Joe always told his American colleagues, "Remember, we are here to listen and to support our Irish colleagues in their efforts to establish peace and reconciliation. We are **not** here to tell them how to do it!".....wise counsel which indicates why Joe Beeman was such a consummate church leader, wise statesman and successful politician!

Today, the successful initiatives and programs created by the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland **all** bear the mark of Joe's mind and heart on them. The longer I serve as Chair of this committee, the more I am awed by Joe's brilliant organizational skills in putting it all together!

Under Joe's leadership the PCNI created the **Interchurch Committee of Northern Ireland**, to annually bring together members of our committee representing the PCUSA, representatives of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and representatives of the Irish Roman Catholic Bishops and representatives of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.....the only ecumenical gathering of Irish and American church leaders which annually gathered together to discuss and support the church's role and response to the chal-

lenges and needs of the Northern Ireland peace process.

These annual meetings have produced strong, enduring trust relationships between Irish and American Presbyterians and Irish and American Roman Catholic leaders. We are grateful for these warm and collegial friendships, and we treasure them. They have made a **huge** difference in our ecumenical efforts to support the Northern Ireland peace process.

Seeking to find a way to tackle unemployment problems in Northern Ireland, while strengthening its economic situation, Joe and his Irish colleague **Gerry Laughran**, head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, created an entity called the **Business, Education Initiative.**

For the past 10 years the **B.E.I.** program has annually provided full scholarships for approximately 150 university students from Northern Ireland to study for a year in church-related colleges and universities here in the United States. Over the years, these **B.E.I.** students have returned home from their year of study in the U.S. to become successful leaders in the Northern Ireland business community, thus helping to greatly improve their country's economic situation.

Another of Joe's extraordinary initiatives in support of the Irish peace process was the creation of the **Bi-Annual Irish Summer Institute**, a two week long travel /study seminar which provides American Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Christians with a unique first-hand exposure to reconciliation efforts in Northern Ireland.

This August 15 to 27, I will direct the **11<sup>th</sup> Bi-Annual Irish Summer Institute** and nearly 2 dozen American Presbyterian and Roman Catholic participants will travel all across Northern Ireland, meeting with its top religious, political and community leaders who are working to establish permanent peace and reconciliation for their nation.

Back in 1991, I was a member of one of the very **first** Irish Summer Institutes which Joe personally organized and directed. **That** Institute included three past and future Moderators of the PCUSA, Chuck Hammond, Ken Hall, and Marj Carpenter.

I will never forget a remarkable incident that took place during our visit to the ancient walled-city of Derry. Joe had

scheduled us to participate in a special ceremony celebrating the opening of a new Integrated School on the outskirts of Derry.

An Integrated School in Northern Ireland is a school operated by courageous Protestant and Roman Catholic parents who are determined that their children will grow up studying, learning and playing **together**, thus hopefully breaking the cycle of **separateness** which has for so long tragically divided their society.

Joe had arranged for us to plant a ceremonial "**peace tree**" in the school yard, as a symbol of American Christian solidarity and support of the Irish parent's courageous reconciling efforts on behalf of their children's future.

As we gathered with students, teachers and parents around the newly planted little tree, one of our American colleagues noticed a little boy standing off to one side solemnly watching what we were doing. He asked the boy,

"Hi there. Are you going to attend this school?"

The little boy shyly replied, "Yup."

"Are you a Catholic?"

"No I'm NOT," the boy replied indignantly.

"Well then...are you a Presbyterian?"

"NO," the boy answered, "I'm an ATHEIST!"

"I see....," our colleague replied,....."and what is an atheist?"

To which the little boy answered enthusiastically, "My Mum says that an atheist is a

kid who won't get killed going to school in Northern Ireland!"

That sobering commentary illustrating the failure of the religious community to resolve tensions in a divided society is a good example of why Josiah Beeman determined that the Presbyterian Church USA should do everything possible to help put an end to sectarian divisiveness and violence in Northern Ireland!

This past week, after learning about Joe's death from Susan, I contacted Joe's many friends in Northern Ireland with the news. Immediately from all over the six counties, replies came pouring back.....a vivid display of the deep level of admiration and affection felt for Joe by his Irish colleagues.

From **Sir Gerry Laughran**, now retired Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, came these thoughts:

"The people of Northern Ireland will never forget Joe's contributions to our peace and welfare. Every day I run into young adults who studied in the United States as **B.E.I.** students. Today, thanks to Joe's efforts in founding this program, they have become the leaders of our Irish society! His vital work on behalf of our country will flower and live on for generations, and we will never forget him."

**Sir Desmond Rea**, who heads the Northern Ireland Policing Service Board wrote:

"I am filled with sadness at the news of Joe's death. He was a good man who served his God and his country with great distinction. Joe cared much for the people of the North of Ireland and its problems, and always sought to assist us in the most constructive of ways. We will be forever in his debt."

And finally from perhaps Joe's long-time closest friend in Northern Ireland, **The Rt. Rev. Dr. John Dunlop**, former General Assembly Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland I received this tribute:

"I worked with Joe for many years as the Co-Convener of the Church and Government Committee and later as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Joe was physically and relationally larger than life! He was amazingly generous with his time and energy. It was a privilege for me to work with an elder of the PSUSA who possessed such vision, understanding and organizational skills that under his leadership things happened, and were not just talked about. The people of Northern Ireland give thanks to God for his long and generous life of service on our behalf"

On behalf of the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland, the organization that Joe founded, loved so much, and served so long and

well....I promise that the remarkable reconciling work in Northern Ireland that Joe first began back in 1989 will go on .....just as long as Irish reconciliation is needed, and as long as those of us who are a part of the PCNI today, still exist!

This summer as the **11<sup>th</sup> Irish Summer Institute** journeys across the Northern Ireland countryside with its 40 shades of green, we will remember times we visited lovely towns, quiet glens, and storied ruins with Joe Beeman....and we will rejoice in our blessed memories.....even as we remain eternally thankful that Joe was our friend, our colleague and our mentor!

For those of us who were fortunate to have known and admired him... ....those of us whose lives were touched and enriched by his visionary, larger-than-life magnanimous spirit.....Joe Beeman was an **absolute original!**.....a lover of peace and reconciliation.....and a peacemaker par excellence.....and his like is not likely to pass our way again!

Thanks be to **God** for the long, wonderfully-productive life of **Josiah Horton Beeman!**  
**Amen.**

*Tribute delivered by the Rev. Dr. Jim Macdonell in Memory of Josiah Horton Beeman, at the Falls Church Presbyterian Church, Falls Church Virginia, 4:00 P.M., 6-24-06*

## The committee continues the work that Joe Beeman started



Members of PCNI met in Louisville May 20-22, 2006, to discuss plans for the 2006 Irish Summer Institute, for fund raising, and for the booth at the Presbyterian General Assembly. From left to right: Bob and Joan Conant, Bill Barker, Fiona Grimshaw, Jean Barker, Jim Macdonnell, Gordon Jewett, Steve Grace, Walter Lindsey, Pam Ferbet, Jane Hines, Gary Ferbet, and Tracy Peters.



While in Louisville, committee members met at Presbyterian Center with staff representatives of the Presbyterian Worldwide Ministries Division. From left to right: Gordon Jewett, Bill Barker, Jean Barker, Jim Macdonnell, WMD Director Marian McClure, Pierce Buford, Bob Conant, and Steve Grace.

# COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILE

**BILL BARKER** is one of the newer members of the Presbyterian Committee for Northern Ireland and already one of the most active members, raising funds and traveling long distances to attend meetings. He is a retired Presbyterian minister, but stays busy filling pulpits all around New England. He has been a supply preacher in Scottish parishes on several occasions.

Bill and his wife, Jean, who were married in 1950, live year-round on Cape Cod, in a house in Wellfleet, MA, which they named Balindor. Even in winter, they are well prepared to enjoy the unique ambiance for which the Cape is famous. They have traveled all over the world: to Scotland, Ireland, India, Europe, Australia, Thailand, Canada and Indonesia, as Bill has served in lecturing, preaching, organizing and educational capacities. He was a delegate to the Ecumenical Peacemaking Conference in Northern Ireland in 1979,

A graduate of Haverford College, the University of Edinburgh, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, with continuing studies at the University of Pittsburgh and St. Andrews University in Scotland, Bill is a Pennsylvania

native. He is the son of the Rev. Dr. John B. Barker and the father of the Rev. Dr. John B. Barker.

He was founding pastor of Bower Hill Community Church in Mt. Lebanon, PA, 1950-68. He was Director of Continuing Education at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1968-72; and head of staff at First Presbyterian Church in Allentown, PA, 1972-1991.

Dr. Barker is the author of twelve books: *TWELVE WHO WERE CHOSEN*, *SAINTS IN APRONS AND OVERALLS*, *KINGS IN SHIRTSLEEVES*, *PERSONALITIES AROUND JESUJS*, *AS MATTHEW SAW THE MASTER*, *EVERYONE IN THE BIBLE*, *THEY STOOD BOLDLY*, *WHO'S WHO IN CHURCH HISTORY*, *SAINTS AND SWINGERS*, *WOMEN AND THE LIBERATOR*, *WHEN GOD SAYS NO*, *TO PRAY IS TO LIVE*, and *A SAVIOR FOR ALL SEASONS*. He was editor of "Tarbell's Teacher's Guide" from 1982-2001.

Bill has received numerous awards, including: Distinguished Alumnus of the Year, 1991, Pittsburgh Seminary; honorary doctoral degrees from Muskingum College and Huron College;



Bill and Jean Barker

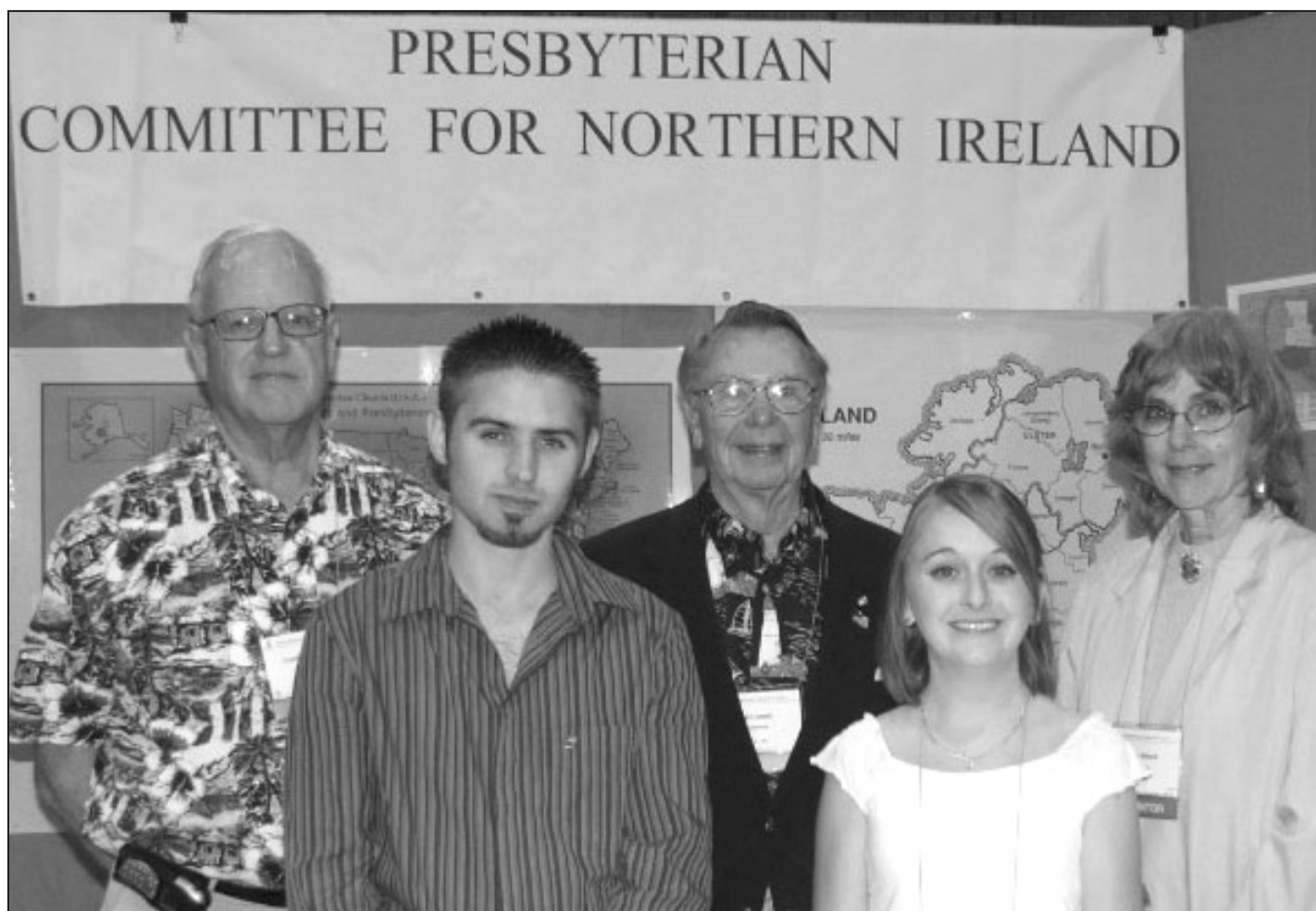
Photo By Gordon Jewett

B'NaI B'Rith Humanitarian of the Year in Allentown, PA, 1991; and in the same place in the same year, the Hispanic-American Organization Community Service Award. He has been recognized twice by Rotary International and received the Raoul Wallenberg Award, Institute of Jewish-Christian Understanding, Muhlenberg College, 1999. (All subsequent awards may possibly be traced to the fact that he was an Eagle Scout (BSA) in 1941.)

In 2004, "Cape Cod Life" included Bill Barker in a list of 400 top people - influential, famous and intriguing, past and present. One of the most inter-

esting facets of his incredible career may be his providing voice and puppetry for "Dr. Bill Platypus" and "Elsie Jean Platypus" on *MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD* television program, 1968-2001. He is a piper in the Highland Light Scottish Pipe Band in Cape Cod. In addition to PCNI, he is serving on several boards, including the McFeely-Rogers Foundation; Family Communications, Inc.; the American Red Cross, Cape Cod Chapter; and the Interfaith Council for the Homeless, Cape Cod.

He was recruited to serve on PCNI by Bob Conant, PCNI secretary.



## PCNI Has Booth At Presbyterian General Assembly

Hosting the PCNI booth at the Presbyterian General Assembly in Birmingham, AL, in June, 2006, from left to right: committee member Gordon Jewett; BEI student Niall McDermott; committee member Bob Conant; BEI student Whitney Wilkerson; committee member Pierce Buford.

Read the JOURNAL  
on the Web  
[www.pcni-pcusa.org](http://www.pcni-pcusa.org)