

*If you have any questions about this report, please call the Chairperson,  
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**Committee on Preparation for Ministry**  
Report to The Presbytery of Elizabeth  
June 27, 2006

**A. Motions for Presbytery**

1. To receive Brian Madison of The Presbyterian Church at New Providence as a candidate for minister of the Word and Sacrament. [Sense of Call on reverse]
2. To present for a FIRST READING the Proposed Policy for The Presbytery of Elizabeth Commissioned Lay Pastors

**B. Actions taken by the Unit/Committee**

1. **Voted unanimously** to receive Claire Colcord of the Central Presbyterian Church in Summit as an inquirer.
2. **Voted unaimously** to receive Jong Nam Kim of the Korean Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth as an inquirer.

**C. Items for Information**

1. Rev. Victoria M. Ney (Westfield) and Rev. Diane M. Curtis (MaL) will read 2006 ordination exams as directed by Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations (PCC), a General Assembly permanent committee.

**Brian P. Madison**  
**Sense of Call to Ministry of Word and Sacrament**  
**June 2006**

Most fundamentally, I experience my vocation to ministry of Word and Sacrament as an intense desire to help the Church faithfully witness to the reality of the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and the reign of God in creation. I trust that God has not called the Church into existence in vain, and that the community of those called Christian is truly able, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to mediate the presence and power of God. I see my gifts and interests as enabling me to serve the Church as one who reminds the baptized of the calling they have received, fosters the communal fellowship of those being knit together as the Body of Christ, and encourages thoughtful, faithful, and faith-filled reflection on what it means to live as a disciple of Jesus.

Specifically, I possess a strong desire to help the Church be “the Church” through the following gifts and their uses. Primarily, I understand myself as possessing intellectual and academic gifts, well-suited for sustained scholarship and conversation in a seminary or divinity school setting. I believe that I can best serve as one who teaches and “pastors” students through the rigors of intense intellectual and practical engagement as they delve into exploring the riches of the Christian tradition, particularly in terms of theological and doctrinal training. For me personally, I would understand my work as a professor of theology to be intimately entwined with the regular preaching of the scriptures and administration of the sacraments: I have found all too often in my journey that if I attempt to foster the life of mind without attention to accepting humbly the responsibility of proclaiming the written Word, I careen into vain speculation at worst, unedifying and non-transformative intellectual exercises at best. I imagine a call to training seminarians and divinity students in theological reflection as best implemented holistically as part of preaching the scriptures and presiding over the administration of the means of grace by which we are all drawn closer to our Lord and each other.

I do not think that working as a full-time professor/theologian is the only way in which I might fulfill my desire or use my gifts to encourage the Church. Ministry within a local congregation or as a campus minister at a college or university would also afford me opportunity to teach, train, and serve in the spiritual formation of adults in particular. Catechesis, faithful questioning, and creative engagement with the context in which we find ourselves are lifelong tasks for all believers, as all are called into a royal priesthood. If I were to find myself called into ministry at a local congregation, either full-time or part-time, I would expect that my role would primarily fall into these lines of encouraging faith seeking understanding in order that we may together be faithful witnesses to the gospel. Even if not ordained to congregational ministry, I cannot picture myself burying my talents for teaching, listening, and encouraging. I will always endeavor to offer such gifts to my brothers and sisters in Christ in whatever status in whichever local congregation I find myself.