Our Sense of Call

For Presbyterians, the call of God to serve is confirmed by God’s people in community. Leadership is not just an individual call, but a gift conferred and cultivated by the community.

That has truly been the case, for Elona and Gregory, as we celebrate our roots in the collective spiritual fortitude of our communities of origin – Native American and African American.

Neither of us considered the possibility of running for the office of Moderator of General Assembly prior to the insistence of colleagues and mentors across the PCUSA. The community brought us together, as it should be: two persons of color in such a time as this, who, through extended conversation with one another, felt the Spirit moving and saw the immediate connections in our theology, cultural heritage, and church experiences.

Only after prayerful discernment listening for the whisper of that still small voice of God could we step forward to be considered for such a remarkable honor.

Together we understand this call and shared candidacy as an opportunity to bring our personal experiences and the collective experience and wisdom of our people to the task of helping the PCUSA become the best version of itself. We sincerely believe we can help to facilitate a path to a preferred future, in part through the perspective and resilience forged by our collective past. We believe God has shaped us for such a time as this to faithfully respond to and navigate the cataclysmic times in which we live: to use the best of our past as a guidepost rather than a hitching post, to guide us through this pandemic and to build solidarity with those whom Jesus called “the least of these.”

We know what we’ve been through to get here and made it by grace, persistence, curiosity, and hope. Like the Sankofa bird of our logo, we look back beyond this time of uncertainty and fear to learn from those who have gone before, even as we look forward to a faithful and fruitful future. We stand here together today to bring gifts of our people to bear upon the PCUSA being and becoming all that God has called it to be.

The ministry of the church is more important now than imagined even just two months ago. The dangers of COVID-19 are obvious, but we also believe this pandemic presents an opportunity for us to be the body of Christ in such a way as to be a compelling witness of the exhibition of the kingdom of God to the world.

We are resolute in our response to this call to serve as co-moderators to those present in the church today and for those whose participation is just beginning to unfold. As elected commissioners from the presbyteries of North Alabama and Twin Cities Area to the 224th General Assembly, we humbly seek the yet broader voice of confirmation of a shared call as co-moderators, to serve our Risen Christ and our beloved denomination.

Faithfully yours,

Elona Street-Stewart and Gregory Bentley