

EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER'S REPORT

Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

Saturday, May 17, 2014

Korean Presbyterian Church, Nashville

"Was not at all what I expected, but I enjoyed it!"

"Format was effective in getting us out of our 'comfort zones.'"

"Praying with my small group was meaningful."

"Great way to meet new people and share ideas from the ground up!"

"The day was a blessing and I look forward to seeing the 2020 vision emerge...."

Such is a sampling of the overwhelmingly favorable comments shared in the wake of the four Vision Discovery Cluster Gatherings held around the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee this spring!

On behalf of the Special Visioning Task Force (SVTF), I want to express deep and abiding thanks to all who gave up a Saturday morning this past March or April in order to participate in one or more of these cluster gatherings in what was the second phase of our 2020 vision casting process. A total of 43 teaching elders, 105 ruling elders, and several non-ordained persons, from the four quadrants of our mid-State region shared, in these gatherings. The prayerful pondering of participants yielded a wide range of dreams and aspirations for future mission and ministry possibilities for our Presbytery.

The Special Visioning Task Force has labored since the last cluster gathering on April 26th to try and pull together the varied strands of ideas and potential themes of our mission moving forward. The SVTF has captured all the responses to the question, "How might the light of Christ shine better in the future?" and collated them in four categories – Connections/Mission, Communications, Leadership and Transformation. The next step in our discernment and vision discernment process is to solicit further small group feedback and input at our May Presbytery Meeting. From all that has been received and recorded thus far, the SVTF has drafted four (4) "Provocative Proposals" that it will present to small groups that will gather after lunch. Each group will be invited to hone in on one (pre-assigned) proposal in a 20-25 minute discussion period, and then to spend another 10-15 minutes commenting on one or more of the other three proposals. The thoughts, ideas, strategies that we anticipate percolating up from these provocative proposal conversations will surely help to distil the vision for our corporate future that we believe God is calling us to fulfill.

I know that after lunch segments of a Presbytery meeting often experience an energy drain, even a thinning of commissioners, but I am anticipating the opposite to be the case at this May meeting. Given the enthusiasm expressed in our small group gathers at our October 2013 Presbytery Meeting in Cookeville, and at our Vision Discovery Cluster Gatherings this spring around the region, there is every likelihood that along with Opening Worship and the Midday Meal, the Special Visioning segment of our meeting will be counted among the highlights!

Here's seeing you and serving you,
Warner R. Durnell, Executive Presbyter