

**Presbytery of Giddings- Lovejoy – November 12, 2011
Design Team Gathering at Dardenne Presbyterian Church
Tables Responses on Book of Order**

Listed below are the written responses of the Presbytery commissioners at different table groups, on November 12, 2011. Tables were arbitrarily assigned numbers by the collator. This summary reflects the language, spelling, abbreviations, and verbatim words of the group. No attempt was made to interpret or classify any responses. Two questions were asked:

1. Phrases or ideas that drew our attention:

Table 1: Together congregations form community for mission
United in bonds of communion
Transformation of creation; substance

Table 2: Calling all people to discipleship in Christ
Form of the church is not sufficient to carry out work of the church. It requires a community of congregations to carry this out and keep the covenant.
Discipleship in the church is sufficient alone, unity in Christ
Transform, engage, bound together, enjoy
Participating in Christ's mission

Table 3: Enjoy God; strengths of individuals is good for all
Congregations blend together in communion
Transformation creation in humanity; witness
Proclamation in Sacrament - Covenant

Table 4: Presbytery is a collection of congregations having faith, hope, love and witness
Accountability of congregations through communion with one another
Participate with God's mission
Presbytery is responsible. Witness to the love of God.

Table 5: Church life and works. Purpose of life is to glorify God and enjoy God
Transformation
Presbytery leads and guides
Believers are equipped for the ministries of witness to the love and grace of God in and for the world
Speak for social justice

Table 6: Be who God wants or meant you to be. To what God wants you to do.
All people in covenant with God & each other
Participation in God's mission of bearing witness to the truth
Speak of social justice outside an individual church
Accountability and responsibility

Table 7: God's mission. Grace for all. All gifts are necessary. All congregations united. In Christ, God gives us the strength & tools. Christ gives life and shape to Church. Human beings have no higher goal... calling all to discipleship

Table 8: God has chosen us with all our shortcomings to be a part of this transformation. No higher goal than to glorify God. Disciples in Christ. Congregations bound together for accountability. Congregations is basic – but not sufficient. To share the truth of Jesus Christ – the Good News

Table 9: Individual responsible for mission. We are in covenant fellowship with God. Human beings have no higher goal than to enjoy God and be in covenant with God

Table 10: Focus on all people are God's children. We noticed beginning with individuals moving up through congregation – church – Presbytery. United in our mission whatever the context

Table 11: Transformation of humanity. Contrary to our human nature. Living in covenant life. Reaching and participating. Bearing witness to truth. Faith, Hope, Love. Mission of the church is to glorify and enjoy God. God's people are to reach out together.

Table 12: Humans have no higher... Congregations are alone but bound together. United in relationships and accountability. The presbytery is responsible for assisting and support the witness of congregations.

Table 13: All People; no higher priority than to glorify God. God gives the gifts to each church in that context. Mission gives shape and substance to church. Priority of God's mission. Engaged in God's mission.

Table 14: God's mission carried out. Enjoy. Reign of Christ. Congregation reaching out. Congregation is not the church. What is a covenant relationship.

Table 15: God gives all gifts necessary to be the Church. Glorify and enjoy; discipleship. Congregations are bound in Communion with one another. Participation in the transformation of individual and Communities. Mission of God. Human beings have no higher goal than to glorify and enjoy God forever.

Table 16: All people; Communion; reaches out; 6 Great Ends of the church; Church engages in God's mission. Gospel gives shape to church's mission. Presbytery assist. Assist in faith & development of congregation.

Table 17: Congregations bond together – interesting. No higher goal than to Glorify God.
Responsibility of congregation. All called to discipleship in Christ. Covenant fellowship – life with God. Bear witness to the truth. Mission of Christ substance of Christ.

Table 18: Glorify God and enjoy God now & forever.
God gives all gifts of the Gospel necessary for the congregation.
Individual churches become the instrument of action.
There is no higher calling than to serve the Church.
The mission of God in Christ gives mission shape to the Church.
The congregation is the Church engaged in ministry of the Gospel in its particular context.

Table 19: Shape; redemption of creation in addition to humanity; offering to all people the grace of God at font and table; making discipleship; no higher calling in life than to glorify God; congregation is basic but not of itself sufficient; participating, proclaiming

Table 20: Purpose of each person is to glorify and enjoy God now & forever.. Covenant fellowship. Gift of God to the congregation and our passing it on to others.
Transformation of all creation and humanity. Highest calling is participation in God's mission.

Table 21: Reaches out to all people. Congregations contribute their individual strengths for the good of the whole. Congregations become communities of faith, love, witness. Congregation itself is not a sufficient form of the church.
Promotion of social justice – great ends of the church & righteousness.
United in relationships of account. & responsibility

Table 22: Church & mission have meaning only as based on God's love, grace.
God gives congregations all the gifts necessary to be the church.
Calling all people to mission.
Enjoy God now & forever.
Bear witness to the truth
Congregations should reach out to the community

Table 23: Mission – transformation of all people to become disciples
Sharing Good News with each other and the world
Shape and substance
(Repeated use of word) “ALL”
Congregation launches/grounds the mission
Congregation is the basic form of the church, but is not a sufficient form of itself.
Congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness, and shape and guide the witness.

2. Reflections on the meaning of ideas or phrases in relation to our presbytery and/or congregations:

Table 1: Congregation is the church engaged in mission

Valuable for confirmation classes to discuss congregation + presbytery = Church
Series of sermons or 1 sermon on congregation discussion of relation to
presbytery

Presbytery responsible for helping churches become places of faith, hope, love,
witness

Important for church to provide care & nurture

Caring of others is transforming to others

More powerful if congregations + Presbytery have side by side relationship
instead of top-down or down-up

Stronger Presbytery provides stronger connections between congregations,
which provides stronger church

Congregations don't reach out to other congregations or Presbytery like they
should

Perceived disconnect between congregations & Presbytery

Table 1 (cont): Greater proportion of churches in need now than in past

How do we transform to new community reality & still be church?

Table 2: No higher goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever.

Reflection: God's work in us, not our work, should be the basis.

"Assist and support" and "responsible for the gov't of the "church" seems to be
from opposite directions (above and below)

There is no reference to Scripture here. Where is the Biblical grounding for this?

Table 3: Enjoy God – responding to God's Grace; knowing self as beloved child of God

Reading act – How do we present ourselves to all? Be satisfied with smaller
response

Assist, support, guide – all the gifts

Witness many references: overwhelming theme, tendency to avoid, tied to faith,
hope and love

Become relevant: back to "enjoy feed"; need a new word?

Table 4: Help us understand what God is calling us to do.

Help us unify our message

The factions of the denomination will continue

Help us focus our participation in God's mission

Can we ever resolve our differences?

Congregations are basic but not one is all. Differences come with baggage.

Presbytery is responsible for congregations in sharing love, help and love

Table 5: Church carries mission to all people. We are bound together. We speak for social justice.
 Presbytery is our support system. Presbytery has important role to witness for social justice.
 We are a connectional church, not a congregational church.
 Congregations need to “catch up with what God is doing” by being active in mission in their own context. God works with community of believers
 One structure should follow/respond to dynamic changing situations/culture – be adaptable
 Need to know how to become “_____?___” for God so we can share the Gospel with others
 Need for churches to be accountable for guidance in the truth of the Gospel
 Important believers are equipped for witness/ministry in the world. Witness important

Table 6: Congregations being bound. Clergy & Presbytery – highly intellectual
 This approaches the mission with compassion & love. We as Presbyterians have a hard time living our words in mission
 What was the Design Team asked to do? Spiritual direction

Table 7: Feel a little manipulated. United (Accountability) of congregations need to be done more often. Should be doing automatically.
 Does faith include “repentance?” Not sure of we’re watering things down. Only if we all repent and turn to God can we better unify the church.

Table 8: Order of how congregations are bound together – need community to fulfill calling to proclaim the truth of J.C. Equipped for the ministry of witness.
 The Lord gives us all that is needed to accomplish His mission – yet is insufficient without God
 We know how far short we fall to do such important work – but God does entrust us with that task.
 In communication with God all things are possible. The Triune God a 3 part relationship as model for how we are to interact with others.
 The positive aspect of Discipline – make disciples for Christ. Make a commitment to the Lord. Help to fulfill that through Church/Presbytery.

Table 9: Congregations become communities of faith, hope, love and witness
 It talks of a greater mission for the congregation: to be involved in justice and mission
 Reference to Triune God – emphasis on Trinity – mission - who we are is rooted in God’s own being – Mission is the nature of God.
 Concluding paragraph – emphasis on supporting role of Presbytery
 If this were all true of every church, the Church would be stronger
 The first sentence in that all we do and are to be about is modeled after Christ. If everything we did was modeled after Jesus/ if our goal is to glorify God, then how does that change what we do?
 The meeting in midst of the worship of Presbytery is key. Consent agenda aids this.

Table 10: N/A

Table 11: Remind us of the work of the Holy Spirit. Freedom of diversity, but still a part of the bigger picture. Cannot function alone – connected and not separate. Assist and support congregations in the sovereignty of God.
What does it mean to be holy?

Table 12: Should be the mission of the church. We may be reforming ourselves out of existence. Less emphasis on mission, more emphasis on congregations.

Table 13: Great commission was heard in these words. Congregations are bound together in communion. Assisting and supporting congregations to become congregation of faith, hope, love and witness. Churches support one another & are accountable to one another. Being a part of social work & justice.

Presbytery can achieve these by:

- bringing us together and build relationship & use omnimotions for business w/2 day meeting.
- Help us to listen to one another intentionally
- Mission projects together
- Have Presbytery meeting in smaller churches too
- Not getting wrapped up in finances, but relate to each other, people first

Table 14: Inclusive language important. God's people of the congregation carry out the mission of ministry. God gives the gifts of the Gospel.

Table 15: Leads and guides (the work of presbytery). How that is collaborative and supportive (not horizontal and pontifical).

Assisting and supporting the witness of congregations. What does that look like and how?

Community and communion – cannot have one w/o the other.

Elegant simplicity and focus on Mission of God & transforming of creation & humanity & leads to the how.

Font & table; community of faith, hope, witness – they are intrinsically connected.

F-1.01 & congregation basic form of the Church & together, collectively.

Role of Presbytery: Marks of the Church & Great Ends of the Church. Communion is essential for understanding the mutuality and supportive & transformative nature (being) & _____ of the Church; mutual conversation & discernment, mutual accountability. On going work at every assembly a practice of discerning, learning and discovering own identity.

Table 16: N/A

Table 17: Great challenge – not sure we measure up. 3rd para: we forget the focus. Discipleship the method Christ used. Mission of God in Christ. Last para: shapes which are determined of structure substance. Importance of reaching out to others. Building covenant relationship within the presbytery.

Table 18: The congregation is the place where members are living with God and one another. The direction of our presbytery should be based on the second paragraph – all the gifts necessary are given.
 We need to remember & ponder the idea that the congregation is the basic form but not a sufficient form.
 Reciprocal relationship between congregations & presbytery is important.
 Presbytery's role is to support, encourage and help congregations.
 _____ that Presbytery's role is to hold congregations together in mission & mutual accountability is a starting point for mission design of Presbytery
 How can the Presbytery find ways to be helpful without dominating?
 Congregations struggle with the idea of their independence.
 The most critical element of mutuality in Presbytery is the pastors; their commitment to cooperation and mutuality.
 Paragraph 3 – Congregations are responsible for equipping individual believers. Which also means discerning their own gifts for ministry.
 One way to achieve cooperation and mutuality is to have more individual members serve at Presbytery level.

Table 19: As the members are to the congregation, so the congregations are to the Presbytery. No one congregation can be the do-all in a community. Do your particular mission well, and assist others in doing theirs well. Expect Presbytery support in doing that – individually and collectively.
 How does what we (a congregation) do come as shape and substance from God?
 Touch-point of whole mission is grass roots.
 The individuals within a cong. have their own strengths which benefit/contribute to the whole congregation and likewise congregations can do the same together in a Presbytery.
 Confusion keeps us working through the process.
 God does have a plan. God gives us resources to carry out that plan. Created for community in the image of the triune God.

Table 20: As members of the church both individually and in communion. We must serve God's mission, in faith, hope, love and witness. To share the Grace of God for all people.
 Keep us in order and reflect God's unified order among churches.
 Communities of faith, hope, love and witness are key.
 Mission of God informs all – local church carries out its perceived mission;
 Presbytery supports and encourages and guides.
 Presbytery meeting is like a family reunion, not just parents telling children what to do.
 Speaking for social justice is very important.
 The grace of God for all people is very important.

Table 21: Where does mission/social justice/witness fall into the life of PGL? We @ the Presbytery should help support/foster cong. ability to do mission in our own backyard.

BUT Presbytery gives the feeling local justice/local mission work is on the way out. Budget is one place that is reflected. Small churches not connected – lift up small cong. to emphasize that together we have strengths. How can we be one body together? [esp. Metro east] Not enough input from Presbytery. Does not help when liaison are from out of area/different size church.

Proclaiming to all people – esp. concerning amendment issues. To step back from the body because of one issue is discouraging the connectedness.

Faith Hope Love Witnessing

What is PCUSA focus? We come with our individual struggles – within cong’s indiv. Are equipped to be in the struggle to witness to the love and Grace of God by the community.

It’s difficult to see/discern the PGL leadership of all its congregations.

Table 22: Individuals in the congregation are equipped for ministry which can be in many forms if activity.

Human beings have no higher goal than to glorify God, live in fellowship, participate in God’s mission.

Congregations of the Presbytery show work together in order to reach into the community to proclaim God’s word and love.

Table 23: Keep our own congregation viable and going; to welcome our own and new members w/ open arms

Retired clergy remain in Presbytery, what does it mean to assist congregations in retirement?

Congregation engaged in mission of God in it’s particular shape and substance.:

Shape – outline of Body of congregation

Substance – organs of Body of congregation

Change – according to context of substance of congregation is changed by context of that particular congregation

Cong. – dynamics changes; new paradigm shifts; new times; witness.

Celebrate – dynamics take different forms

Affects relationship with Presbytery