

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW TASK FORCE  
ON THE PRESBYTERY OF DAKOTA  
REPORT PRESENTED AT THE FALL MEETING  
OF THE SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2007

This Task Force was created at the January 2007 meeting of the Synod (Action 11-96, Page 2444-6, Minutes, Fifty-ninth Meeting of the Synod, January 2007), with the task to determine if the Presbytery of Dakota “is or, in a reasonable amount of time, can become viable ...” and to make recommendations based on these conclusions.

Moderator Kathleen Dooley appointed the following people to the Task Force: The Reverend Robert Bouton, Cedar Rapids, IA (EI), CLP Kevin Kaufmann, Devils Lake, ND, (NP), The Reverend Val Putnam, Sioux Falls, SD (SD), Elder JoAnn Simser, St. Paul, MN (TCA), and Elder Betty Walker, Burnsville, MN (TCA). Each of these members has significant experience with the Presbytery of Dakota, Native American people, and/or the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Staffing the Task Force are Synod Executive Phil Brown and Stated Clerk/Treasurer Jay Wilkinson.

Since the last Synod meeting, the Task Force has met twice: on June 7-8 at the Synod office and on August 23-24 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

In June, the Task Force talked about the meaning of “viability” for a presbytery. We also talked about partnering between Dakota Presbytery (and its churches) with others, such as Chicago Presbytery, Eastminster Presbytery, and Baltimore Presbytery. The Task Force also talked about the need for leadership training in Dakota.

At the August meeting, the Task Force met with some of the leaders of the Presbytery to get their view of things. Again, partnership was a big part of the discussion, especially partnerships between Dakota churches and churches in the geographic presbyteries. We have a model to follow: there is already a partnership that seems to be working between Bdecan Church in Tokio, ND and the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Devils Lake, ND parish. Also, at the August meeting, the Task Force heard the need for “self determination”. There is much resistance to the idea of transferring churches to geographic presbyteries, as has been in the case of earlier Task Forces and Commissions on this topic.

The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for October 25-26 at the Synod office.