

# The Spirit of Youth

by Dan Vigilante

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While some commissioners kept themselves busy in long plenary sessions by playing solitaire on their laptops, several Young Adult Advisory Delegates began writing haikus in honor of our Presbyterian process.

(Haikus are three-line poems, each line having a set number of syllables. The first and third lines have five syllables; the second line has seven. None of the lines need to rhyme.)

Late one night, many hours into a particularly long session, the haikus started trickling in. For example:

Robert and his rules  
They make sense some of the time  
But tonight they don't

Writing a haiku  
While sitting in plenary  
It passes the time

Nonsensical voice  
Speaks with reckless abandon  
Where is the duct tape?

The world is ending  
Presbyterians don't know  
Stuck in plenary

These haikus reveal not only a sense of humor and tongue-in-cheek appreciation for the way we Presbyterians conduct our business, but also the YAADs' (Young Adult Advisory Delegates) imagination, creativity, and intelligence. The YAADs we had the pleasure of working with this year were awesome — engaged, articulate, capable, faithful, and of course, funny.

Our role was not in any way to sway their vote, but to support; to advocate; when we could, to educate; but most of all to connect. Being open and honest about who we are and what Covenant Network is all about is enough to draw them in. We are working toward making the PC(USA) a more inclusive church — a church as generous and just as God's grace. What an appeal that has for young people!

Another YAAD haiku:

Church is about love  
Please don't restrict anyone  
From full inclusion

Maybe the best way to talk about our work at GA is to share an email we received from a YAAD just after the assembly adjourned:

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*I cannot thank you enough for the amazing support that you all offered to the YAADs this week. I have to admit that I had a really transformative week.*

*I came to General Assembly as a YAAD who was only there because our presbytery didn't have one and they signed me up without asking me.*

*I have struggled with my relationship to the Presbyterian Church a lot this year, and was really resentful to arrive at General Assembly, but my experiences there changed my vision about my place in the church.*

*Rather than being upset by the issues of the church that made me want to run screaming to another denomination, I finally realized that it was my duty to work toward change in the church that I love.*

*I cannot simply disengage myself from a community that has raised me, but rather I should be dedicated to transforming that community into what I believe God intended for it to be.*

*It is people like the Covenant Network folks who are driving the future of this church and I cannot thank you enough. I would love to be a part of Covenant Network if there is any way to make that possible.*

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**Covenant Network is working to make that possible by offering the young adults of our church a place at our annual conference with special workshops, events, and speakers just for them.**

**Please encourage young people (ages 17-25) from your own congregation to attend the conference this fall and say hello to the young adults who make the trip to Minneapolis in November.**

The spirit of youth  
Inspiring us to grow  
One step at a time...