

REFLECTION

Presbytery of Riverside

July 2, 2018

The Presbytery of Riverside Discernment Team requests that you pray and reflect on this month's question. As you receive a word from the Holy Spirit, please communicate that to the Discernment Team through the Presbytery Office, riversidepresbytery.info@riversidepresbytery.com.

Genesis 12:1, 4a

"The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you... So, Abram went."

Mark 8.34-35

"[Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.'"

I remember boarding a plane at the tender age of sixteen to travel 18,000 miles away from my country, my people, and my parent's house. Although, I willingly applied to be a foreign exchange student, I certainly didn't realize how different life would be living with a British family in the Republic of South Africa under the rule of apartheid. Now Abram didn't apply for his adventure, instead God said to him, "Go" and so he went. Where is God calling us to go as a Presbytery? What is God calling us to leave behind? And hearing God's call to go, will we risk going?

In our Form of Government F-1.0301 there is a statement that epitomizes for me the reality of God's call to the church. We are first told that Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be Christ's body. Then we are told that we are demonstrate these gifts in our life as a community in the world. But, this next phrase always challenges all of my assumptions about being the Church: "The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life."

Church is not about survival, whether as a local congregation or a presbytery or even a denomination. We are simply to entrust ourselves to God and then risk demonstrating our God given gifts into the world.

As you pray this month, where is God calling us to go, even at the risk of losing our life as a Presbytery? Did not Jesus say to us, "but if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it?"

-Submitted by Cheryl Raine, member of the Discernment Team