Leadership Gathering

Two hundred Virginia Baptists from dozens of churches came together May 1-3, 2015, at Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center in Lynchburg, VA, for the annual Leadership Gathering. Planned by the Empowering Leaders team of the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV), this year’s gathering featured a new format based on the TED Talks model.

Dr. Joey Faucette, author of Faith Positive in a Negative World and former pastor of First Baptist Church of Danville, was the keynote speaker. He shared the need to dwell on the positive in a world of negativity. (Faucette is currently interim pastor at First Baptist Church of South Boston.)

Working with Scripture, Faucette came back several times to Philippians 4:8 (MSG), asking attendees to recite it with him: “Summing it all up, friends, I’d say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.”

Other speakers included BGAV pastors, staff, and other guests who presented topics related to leadership, ministry, and evangelism. All speakers had a timer visible both to them and to the audience with 5, 10, 15, or 20 minutes available.
“The Empowering Leaders team was creative in using the TED Talks format,” commented Rev. John Eure, pastor of Ferry Farm Baptist Church, Fredericksburg. “The timed segments provided abundant inspiration and information without overwhelming us.” He added, “It was great hearing speakers share the ways the Holy Spirit has led their churches to be agents of encouragement and reconciliation.”

Before the main conference, attendees had the opportunity to attend one of several breakout sessions, including a pastor’s dialogue with Dr. Faucette, as well as sessions on deacon ministry, Sunday School, and stewardship.

Going forward, the Empowering Leaders team is looking for ways to expand the influence of the Leadership Gathering approach, including adding a regional component in various locations. “We believe that the Leadership Gathering at Eagle Eyrie has served us well,” said Ken Kessler, team leader. “Congregational leaders are telling us that by offering a regionalized approach, they can then share their learnings with more of their leaders.”

For more information about leadership learning opportunities, contact:
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Ken Kessler facilitates a panel discussion during the Leadership Gathering.

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