

The Charlotte District E-Pistle

April 17, 2008

The Cabinet met Monday through Wednesday of this week (April 14-16) at the Comfort Suites in Gastonia for the purpose of fine-tuning the appointment projections. I began Monday's work with the superintendents who will be affected by the new alignment of churches: the superintendents of Charlotte, Lake Norman, Gastonia, Statesville, and Salisbury. The first announcement that Bishop Lawrence McCleskey shared was his reconsidering the leadership of the Lake Norman District. He has decided to continue Rev. Donald Jenkins in his present appointment at St. Paul's UMC in Winston-Salem. **Dr. Lillie Jones will be the new District Superintendent of the Lake Norman District** and Rev. James Graves will be appointed to the Conference Staff as Director of Ethnic and Justice Ministries, replacing Lillie in this role. This crucial change of projected leadership will have significant impact upon about thirty churches in the current Charlotte District that will constitute the predominant core of churches in the newly created district.

Most of our subsequent agenda focused upon the requests from pastors and churches for reconsideration in the previous projected moves. The Cabinet did not rush through the written concerns of individuals and churches. When the consideration was reasonable, we made every possible effort to address personal or congregational needs. Most of the requests were related to location, due to family circumstances or the employment of a spouse. Since every elder has already pledged to go where sent by the bishop, these appeals cannot always be honored. When they are honored, one should always be willing to assume that the request for location will be granted at loss of salary. The Cabinet makes every effort to avoid this from happening; but, without flexibility, the Cabinet has little other choice.

This Sunday, April 20th, the chair of the SPR/PPR committees at churches in pastoral transition may announce the name of the person coming, with words of hospitality and affirmation. The pastors who are moving may choose to say something about the location of their new appointment if they so desire.

I am ever so grateful that the good Lord has allowed me fully to participate in all these transactions. Today I met with Dr. Eric Skipper of the Sanger Clinic. He is a very well respected cardiac surgeon who reviewed with me the results of my cauterization process that took place last Friday. He showed me the video evidence of four significant blockages that will require surgical correction by the creation of arterial bi-passes. Dr. Skipper scheduled this procedure for Monday, April 21st, beginning around 10 a.m.

At every step of this medical pilgrimage, I have felt a profound sense of gratitude to God for this remarkable discovery. My general practitioner, Dr. Ralph Green, had the wisdom to insist that I take a stress test in order to explore the reasons for a gradual development of fatigue. An annual exam has perhaps saved my life, for I have had no other symptoms of physical difficulty.

I regret that time does not allow me to respond to your generous e-mails and phone calls. Each is appreciated. Most important to me is your time in prayer. Continue to offer petitions of thanksgiving for this fortuitous disclosure and prayers of intercession asking for healing in order that I may continue effectively to remain in God's service.

Grace and peace,

George