

# *The Charlotte District E-Pistle*

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## *An Invitation to Raise the Bar for Christian Discipleship*

Some critical lovers of the church have convinced me that one of the reasons why the United Methodist Church has lagged behind in its evangelism and that the members we do receive are obsessed with matters that do not really matter is that we have not sufficiently challenged new members with the exciting demands and dimensions of authentic discipleship.

Teague Higgs, grandfather of my colleague on the Cabinet Bob Roach, was my pastor in Forest City during my college years. In one of his summer sermons (about 1962) he introduced me to the writings of Elizabeth O'Connor, the ministry of Gordon Cosby, and the amazing vision of the Church of the Savior in Washington. Bishop Hunt selected Rev. Cosby to lead the retreat for my ordination class of 1967. In subsequent years, I have been inspired by my participation in retreats at Wellsprings and conversations with Gordon and several leaders of that extraordinary web of communities.

Apparently I am one among many to be transformed by the spirit inherent in prophetic and pastoral witness of the Church of the Savior. Much of the motivation and vision of Greensboro Urban Ministry emerged from on-going collegial contact with the devout and visionary leaders of that exemplary faith network.

The Urban Ministry Center here in Charlotte has likewise been profoundly influenced by the methodology for training disciples of Jesus Christ practiced by the community that was founded through the vision of Gordon Cosby. The Center here in Charlotte offers those who want to be authentically challenged in their pilgrimage with Christ a very resourceful Servant Leadership School. Participation in this school is not for the faint of heart nor novices in matters of faith. But the various facets of this school's curriculum provide an opportunity annually for high-octane members of your church to go much deeper in their walk with Christ.

I am here attaching information from their current brochure. Print copies for a few of your finest leaders who want to be challenged beyond their present level of discipleship. I apologize for getting this information to you somewhat late, but I intend to keep you updated regarding this unique opportunity for nurturing special people in your flock. Do not delay in getting this information and application form to the few.

Warning: they may change your church!

Grace and peace,

*George*