

# *The Charlotte District E-Pistle*

September 21, 2004-09-21

The Charlotte District School of Christian Discipleship is really a concept by which we share the spiritual and didactic experiences available to all our churches in the district. If one is a faithful disciple in one of our small member congregations, the abundant resources of our denomination are at the disposal of that person and church. After all, the central mission of all people called United Methodist is **to follow Jesus, make disciples, and transform the world.** Nothing is more crucial for us as followers of Jesus than our faith formation. Thus, the School of Christian Discipleship is a means by which strong churches, with large or modest membership rolls, assist all the members of the district by sharing their resource of speakers, workshops, seminars, and small group participation. In addition, the Charlotte District will finance and sponsor periodic learning experiences which participants from the whole district will be urged to attend.

I encourage you to publicize the following events that will indeed strengthen the quality of discipleship in your local church.

**October 4> Wilson and Nora Boots from Cochabamba, Bolivia,** will be the guest of the Charlotte District, at Providence UMC, room A-106. Ken Carter and I first met this extraordinary couple when we were on the Christ UMC (Greensboro) work team. Nora is a native of Bolivia and has served on the staff of the General Board of Global Ministries in New York. Wilson has given leadership to Encounter with Christ in Latin America and other mission emphases of our denomination. **At 4 p.m.** you may join with the District Hispanic Ministry Committee in conversation with the Boots as we explore the possibility of forming a sister relationship with the Central District of the Methodist Church of Bolivia. This session will begin a district-wide conversation about the feasibility of our engaging in a continuing partnership with a people who are spiritually strong but weak in material resources. Medical, building and teaching teams are needed by the Bolivian Methodist Church. We shall explore the idea of designating this region as a place to focus our energies in a concentration of our zeal for and commitment to Christ.

**At 7 p.m.** Wilson and Nora will return to Providence (meeting in the Wesley Men's Bible Classroom, A- 101-3). Members of mission committees or outreach groups and those who have participated in Volunteers in Mission from throughout the district are encouraged to come at this time to meet with the Boots. Please notify your congregation regarding this opportunity for dialogue with these knowledgeable guests.

**Sunday, October 24, 7 p.m., at Myers Park UMC,** Dr. Allen Verhey, Christian ethics professor at Duke Divinity School, will speak on the topic, "End of Life Care and Belief in the Resurrection." Dr. Verhey will discuss how we weigh moral decisions surrounding death in light of our belief in Christ.

**Sunday, October 31, All Hallows Eve, 7 p.m., at Myers Park UMC,** James Howell will appropriately deliver an inspirational and informative talk about Martin Luther from his series, *Saints and Heroes*. This is the anniversary of Luther's nailing the

95 theses on the Wittenburg door. James will examine Luther's life and thought and what it means for the reformation of the church today.

**Sunday, November 7, at 7 p.m., Myers Park UMC**> Dr Ben Witherington, professor at Asbury Seminary will speak on the topic, "The Gospels and History." He will look at this topic in light of the movies and recent fiction and ask, "What is fact and what isn't?" and "Are the Gospels reliable?"

**Saturday, November 13, 9 a.m. - noon, at Providence UMC**> **Hispanic Ministry workshop.** This is a must for all churches in our district who want to explore how any congregation of any size can develop an Hispanic mission community. Put this date on your calendar. Rev. Frank Ramos will be one of the key leaders of the workshop. More details about this District School of Christian Discipleship event will be shared as the plans develop.

**Sunday, November 14 (at a time to be announced later) An afternoon with Stanley Hauerwas at Dilworth UMC.** Time Magazine named this Duke University professor the most influential Christian theologian of our time. Come and discover why. This will indeed be a lively and relevant event for all who attend.

#### COMING ATTRACTIONS IN 2005:

**Wednesday, January 19, 2005, 7 p.m., at Myers Park**> Dr. Jonathan Berkey, Davidson College, on the subject, "What is Islam? And How Do We Understand What's Going On in Our World?"

**Sunday, January 30, 2005, at 7 p.m., at Myers Park**> Bishop Kenneth Carder, "Methodism and Ministry Where We Are."

**February 13, 2005, University City UMC**> District Leadership Conference. Classes for specific leadership roles in the life of the church will be taught. A distinguished Keynote speaker has been invited but has not responded to our invitation at this time.

**Saturday, May 28, 2005, at Dilworth UMC**> Youth Rally with Tony Compollo (time to be announced).

I urge all laity and clergy of the district to post these events upon your church's calendar and publicize them regularly. As we learn from these resourceful and exciting Christian leaders, we shall all grow in our quality of discipleship and faithfulness to Christ. I invite all our churches to share from the depths of resources that are integral to the ministry of our congregations.

Grace and peace,

*George*