

## *The Charlotte District E-Pistle*

October 8, 2005

In a recent E-Pistle I shared with you the exciting news that Rob Weber will be at Providence UMC for a great event. The date is Saturday, **October 15, 9:30-NOON**. Rob is one of the nation's most effective story-tellers and will be present for the *Beginnings Conference*—an opportunity for all of us to learn more about the marvelous curriculum, *Beginnings*. Andy Langford and Mark Ralls wrote the script and secured Rob Weber to produce an accompanying video. This combination of a well-crafted script and a compelling video (in a style comparable to Disciple Bible) is meeting the need within churches across the country for introducing seekers to Christ. Our number one priority as an Annual Conference is to live more faithfully into Christ's Great Commission by bringing the unchurched to a loving relationship with our Lord and the people of his Church. I encourage you to come to this unique event, meet Rob Weber, and have conversation with Mark Ralls about the content of *Beginnings*.

I promised a follow-up message about Rob Weber whose video presentation is touching the hearts of so many new believers. After serving as pastor of a rural church in North Louisiana for five years and leading it into a major relocation project, Rob was appointed as the founding pastor of the new church where he now serves, which has grown in twelve years to an attendance of +1200 at four weekend services. Grace Community United Methodist Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, is an example of how numbers increase when a church strives to fulfill the Great Commission through growth in carefully directed discipleship, an expectation of service for all, and a high commitment to formation of Christian community.

Rob Weber is a native of Atlanta Georgia, attended college in Jackson, Mississippi at Millsaps College with a degree in Theater and Philosophy, was trained for ministry at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, and earned a D. Min. degree from United Theological Seminary and the RSSP in Communication and Leadership. Rob has lived in Germany, England, and the United States. He has worked in a wide variety of settings, including construction, cooking, waiting tables, counseling, on the way to becoming a pastor. This diversity of experience gives him a specific passion for people who are not involved in the church, an understanding of their needs, and a fresh, humorous, down-to-earth style of communicating.

Rob's primary focus in his writing and in his congregation is to develop visual communication, effective leadership, multi-faceted worship and ministry to and with the surrounding community. He suggests that these four things are crucial for building a lasting and diverse Christian community in the midst of rapid change.

Rob is a pastor, author, video artist and storyteller. He has authored a video series called *ReConnecting*, which is designed to help churches develop a shared memory and identity that emerged from the origins of the Methodist movement. He is the author of

*Visual Leadership: The Church Leader As Imagesmith*, which shows pastors how to develop multigenerational leadership in an image-oriented culture. He is a co-author on the first volume of The Igniting Worship Series, which offers 10 multisensory worship services with video for Communion celebrations. Rob is the author/presenter for the video segments for *Beginnings: An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, the second in the Beginnings series, *The Spiritual Life. ReConnecting Worship*, a video-based workbook for churches that want to start new services, deepen their understanding of worship, or diversify their worship styles is his latest publication.

Since Rob is a clergy from Louisiana, he is deeply involved in the recovery effort in his home state. He has had to alter his busy schedule in order to be here with us and can share many insights into the situation in his home state.

I encourage each church to send a team of 3-5 persons who will return with invaluable insights into how *Beginnings* can make a difference in the way we intentionally relate the unchurched to Jesus Christ.

The gathering will be in the Atrium on the Providence Road entrance side of the church. **Ken Carter** will be our gracious host and will have a vivacious team of laity to meet our needs during the morning.

Grace and peace,

*George*