

## *The Charlotte District E-Pistle*

October 6, 2004

None of the political debates seem to address the deeper issues surrounding the issue of terrorism. What are the origins of attitudes that produce such violence? What is a rational, faithful Christian response to the threat of terror? Is this a real 'war' that our nation is engaged in; and, if so, when will it end? What is the best path to peace? Every devout, thinking Christian wants to know this and much more; but we are fed sound-bites from media sources and political rhetoric.

A forum on the *root causes of terrorism* will be held at the Davidson United Methodist Church on **Sunday, October 24, 6:30 p.m.** An exciting and diverse panel of experts has been selected. Participants include **Dr. Cindy Combs**, Political Science Professor at UNCC and editor of *The Encyclopedia of Terrorism*; **Dr. Ken Menkaus**, Political Science Professor at Davidson (he will look at terrorism from the perspective of the middle east); **Dr. Abed Lakhasassi**, visiting Fulbright scholar from Morocco (he will share a view from Islam); **Ambassador Jack Perry**, former ambassador who will offer a global perspective (note his excellent editorial in today's *Charlotte Observer*); **Dr. Bob Ruth**--Prof of Sociology at Davidson College who works with home land defense issues; and **Gary Mitchell**, former member of the military special forces. The panel will be moderated by **Dr. Chris Alexander** from the history department of Davidson College.

Jody Seymour, Senior Pastor of Davidson UMC, is the driving force behind this initiative. He is profoundly disturbed that the Christian community is so very silent on the issue of terrorism. We live in a climate in which concerned disciples of Christ are asking significant questions that are not being addressed in our pulpits or educational programs of the church. Jody has said to the Charlotte District Office, "We are pulling this together at our church because I believe we must better understand those who seem to hate us so much. The Christian perspective calls us to ask why. If Jesus said, 'love your enemies and pray for those who spitefully use you,' we must at least attempt to understand our enemies."

I am personally grateful to Jody and his congregation for providing this opportunity for all of us to learn from such an array of scholars and experienced personnel. I encourage you to advertise this event in your newsletters and other forms of communication.

Grace and peace,

*George*