

Charlotte District E-Connections

October 5, 2006

The pundit Sidney J. Harris has offered this perceptive insight: “The two words ‘information’ and ‘communication’ are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.” We spend a considerable amount of time, energy, and resources in the life of the church in giving out a plethora of information. When anyone asks me, “Did you receive my e-mail?” I invariably reply, “I am sure that I did.” That candid, but evasive retort does not suggest that the information sent has gotten through, provided me with relevant data, or changed my perspective or performance.

Everything we do in the life of the church is contingent upon the quality of our communication. Sermons may provide information; but, until they ‘get through’ or connect with the listener, we have failed to communicate. Newsletters that are unattractive or poorly written may provide valuable information, but run the risk of being discarded if they do not touch the pulse-beat of the congregation.

Recently the Charlotte District Committee on Communication engaged in a critique of our district website—<http://www.chardist.org> We quickly discovered that our format is not very user-friendly. Our information needs constant updating, and we need a better linkage with each of our seventy-nine congregations. Our District Web Master, Tommy Pharr, is performing a valuable service, but he has been working with insufficient resources and is eager to re-design the website. In order to do so, he will need accurate and current data. He has requested a constant flow of resources and information from the local churches. Tommy can be reached at tpharr@carolina.rr.com

Here are a few ways you can assist him and enhance the ministry of your district:

1. Make sure that the information on your church’s website is up-to-date.
2. Examine the listing of churches on the district website. If your church does not have a current photo of the church’s edifice or a visual representation of your congregation, provide a digital image by sending a photo to both Tommy Pharr and DeEtta Rivens at our district office.
3. On a regular basis send to Tommy digital photos of activities and ministries within the life of your congregation, with captions identifying persons pictured. (Do not send us photos of children. We shall evaluate each picture to secure the safety and anonymity of youth and children.)
4. Maintain a linkage to <http://www.chardist.org> on your church website and specifically link your members who use the internet to this resource—*Charlotte District E-Connections*.
5. Print hardcopies of this resource and distribute to your staff and all members of the Church Council.

6. Send to the Charlotte District Office current articles and photos that highlight ministries carried out by your congregation that will inform, inspire, motivate, and invite participation from other churches of the Charlotte District.
7. If your church website provides a link to either an audio stream of each Sunday's worship service or the written document containing the pastor's weekly sermon, give us permission to provide a direct link to that resource on our district website. An e-mail to DeEtta or me will suffice. We pastors rarely have the privilege of hearing our colleagues preach. This resource will invite clergy and laity to receive the inspiration of services from around the district. The Communication Committee would like to feature a variety of pastors on the Homepage, with links to a current sermon preached at your church.

If you have suggestions regarding the enhancement of our district website, send your comments to Tommy or me. And if you ask, "George, did you get my e-mail?" I'll likely reply, "I'm sure I did."

Grace and peace,

George