

August 10, 2006

Electronic  
Newsletter



Charlotte District

## E-Connections



### OUR FALL CLERGY FELLOWSHIP GATHERING *A Unique Opportunity*

When the Charlotte District Clergy Fellowship gathers on September 6<sup>th</sup> at Dilworth UMC, we shall have the privilege to hear a presentation by one of this country's most gifted speakers and theologians—Dr. Gregory Jones, Dean of Duke Divinity. He will share insights into his latest volume, *Resurrecting Excellence*. You may read a review of this book by calling upon this resource: <http://www.divinity.duke.edu/publications/2006.05/features/excellence/index.htm>.

This volume is the culmination of the work that Greg and Kevin Armstrong have done with a variety of pastors from around the country who are in pursuit of faithfulness and excellence in the pastoral vocation. They fill the book with a plethora of inspiring examples of excellence in the contemporary church and provide invaluable illustrations from the lives of saints through the centuries who have pilgrimaged toward a more excellent way. This writing is not an exercise in guilt-provocation for those of us who already feel inadequate in our performance. It provides an incentive for us to imitate the ways of Christ, acknowledging our weaknesses and remaining receptive to empowerment from on high. Dr. Jones asserts, "Resurrecting excellence calls us to work outside the boundaries of our strengths and interests, to cultivate the whole of who we might become by the power of the Holy Spirit."

I strongly urge all the pastors to read this amazingly insightful little volume, attend this unique opportunity for dialogue with an outstanding author on September 6th, and to engage in conversation about its content with other colleagues. Lunch will be provided. The cost is \$6 per person. Please call the District Office (704-525-3395) no later than Friday, September 1st to make your reservation.

Grace and peace,

*George*

George E. Thompson  
Charlotte District Superintendent



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## Disciple Bible Outreach

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Mark Hicks, the Executive Director of Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries of North Carolina, Inc., has supplied our office with envelopes and promotional materials for use in all our churches in the district and nearly all of you have picked up your supply. Mark has suggested that we elevate this ministry in the minds of our laity on Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, but you may choose to use a date convenient to the rhythms of your local church calendar. In addition, copies of a 4 minute promotional DVD that can be shown by the churches is available in our district office. This DVD can also be downloaded from the DBOM website: [www.disciplebibleoutreach.org](http://www.disciplebibleoutreach.org).

In the years I served Providence UMC as pastor, a team of veterans of the multiple levels of Disciple Bible started visiting the prison in order to initiate this ministry as an outreach of their congregation's mission. One of them, Mike Smith, has enthusiastically agreed to be our district coordinator of this program and is available to speak to interested persons in your church. I am including in this edition of *E-Connections* a timely message from Mike.

--George Thompson

### Disciple Bible Outreach Ministries ( DBOM )

You will hear about this ministry during August, hopefully from a member of your church who is serving to bring this blessing to some prison inmates. If not please call me. I would love to tell your congregation about how this changes the lives of the prison inmates, their families, and the servants that bring the message.

I want to tell you how I got involved and to invite you to join me. You can do this by prayerfully considering a contribution to DBOM during the Special Sunday offering on August 27, 2006 and or by joining me as a Servant in this Ministry. If you are interested call me at 704-442-0450 or email me at [mikesmith19@bellsouth.net](mailto:mikesmith19@bellsouth.net).

I first learned about this ministry during my Disciple Bible Study Facilitator Training in 2001. Our instructor was very excited about her visits to a women's prison in West Virginia. She told us about how prison inmates who complete Disciple Bible Study are 6 times less likely to return to prison. (75% of prison inmates return to prison and 12% of Disciple Bible Study graduates return to prison). I turned to my wife Cathy and said, "This is something I have to do." It took a little while and a lot of prayer to get up the nerve to go to prison the first time – September 2002. Shortly after I began serving these men through prison ministry, I told my pastor, Dr. George Thompson, "You can count on me in this ministry from now on; this stuff is life transforming."

I don't mean transforming just the lives of the prison inmates. It not only improves a prison inmate's chances of rehabilitation by 6 times, it gives us an opportunity to share God's word with some of God's children who are starving for help, and it creates a trust/love relationship between those of us who are so blessed and others who need some of the love we can give. This list of blessings could go on and on.

Another confirmation came while I was preparing to give a *Diakonia* (a witness during worship to a service opportunity). As I read Jesus' teaching concerning Final Judgment, I heard anew his message to those on his right to take their inheritance. He listed some of the things counted as righteous, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew 25:35 & 36, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me..." According to the parable, the righteous wanted to know when they had done these things, and in verse 40 the King replies, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

The Special Sunday offering will support the mission of DBOM. This money will be used to conduct and support Disciple Bible Study programs, bringing the Word to smaller churches in NC and to prison inmates.

Thank you all for your generosity and God bless you.

--Mike Smith, Charlotte District Prison Ministries

## Opportunities in the Charlotte District

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### James Howell's eWisdom: *Subscribe today!*

A new email series begins August 22 and runs through Thanksgiving. Dr. Howell will look at Wisdom, considering what we glean from Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, the teachings of Jesus, James and Paul, and also wisdom through the ages from Augustine, Luther, Therese, Francis, King and many others.

Where can Wisdom be found in a world that is smart but superficial? How does Wisdom impact relationships, family, friends? How is the life of the Church enriched by Wisdom?

It's free, emails are secure, and readers can access Dr. Howell directly. Three emails appear per week, each around 300 words, with links to more study for those who have time or interest. Many groups use these emails for study in person, or for conversations via the internet. You can sample previous series on [Following Jesus](#), [Worship](#), [Bible Questions](#), or [The Shape of the Christian Life](#) at [www.mpumc.org](http://www.mpumc.org).

Now is a good time to let friends, or your congregation know of this opportunity! To be included, simply email James at [james@mpumc.org](mailto:james@mpumc.org) and you'll be online.



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### District Mission Society Grant

Application deadline is September 15, 2006.

The form is available at the District website [www.chardist.org](http://www.chardist.org) at "downloads".

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### Journey to Financial Freedom Seminar

Financial problems are the most significant source of family conflicts today. Although most of these problems arise because of a lack of funds, there are many due to the mishandling of a sufficient amount. New Covenant UMC will sponsor a seminar on Saturday, September 16th to teach families how to bring the financial area of their lives under God's control. The seminar will result in changed lives, as families dedicate themselves to living principles of stewardship. "Journey to Financial Freedom" will be taught by Crown Financial Ministries. Contact Pastor Wade Childers at New Covenant UMC for additional details: 704-827-4468 or [newcovenantumc@bellsouth.net](mailto:newcovenantumc@bellsouth.net).

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### Charlotte District Laity Council Hosts Prayer Breakfast

Saturday, October 14, 2006 • 9:00 a.m.

Salem United Methodist Church, 378 Pilot Knob Road, Denver, North Carolina 28037



This event is sponsored by the Charlotte District Laity Council. The guest speaker will be Reverend Angela A. Pleasants, pastor of Wingate United Methodist Church in Wingate, North Carolina. Angela was the preacher for the Holy Communion Worship Service at our 2006 Western N.C. Annual Conference. It is our goal for all laity to attend at least one prayer breakfast during this conference year for fellowship, prayer, inspiration, and renewal. Two additional prayer breakfasts will be held (January and April) in other cluster locations of our district. Please advertise this event in your church. All clergy and laity are welcome to attend. Reservation information will be mailed to pastors and lay leaders in early September. Contact Mary Lou Roller at 704-545-2430 if you need additional information.

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## Around the Charlotte District

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Summer is a wonderful time for all our United Methodist children who participate in the activities at Camp Tekoa. Here are three children who are sponsored by the Bethlehem Center. Soon they plunged into the cool lake waters and met new Christian friends from throughout the region. We are grateful for the ministry of Bethlehem Center and the programs of outreach that make such wonderful experiences possible for children who might not have the resources to attend a summer camp.

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Mallory Evans is certainly enjoying the time of clergy family welcome at Simpson-Gillespie, for she has found a wonderful grandmother-like friend in a member of the church, Mrs. Alma Houge. Mallory's father, Dr. Mark Evans, is the new pastor at St. Francis UMC.



Jeff Copley is the newly appointed pastor of a congregation that will take form under his leadership as a planter. The church will take the name of The New Room--taken from the inspiration of John Wesley's outreach ministry in the Eighteenth Century. Bev Copley is an Associate Pastor at University City UMC and has a newly defined role in the area of evangelism at a church that received 55 persons by profession of faith in 2005.

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Here Tom and Amelia Stinson-Wesley are joined at the table by their children, Kyra and Evan, at the clergy dinner welcoming new clergy, July 25th. Tom is the newly appointed pastor of Pineville UMC and Amelia continues her work as Director of World Connection for Women.



The Gospel Choir of Simpson-Gillespie sang two inspiring anthems at the fellowship meal at which we greeted the new pastors and their families on Tuesday, July 25th. Approximately 70 persons were treated to a scrumptious meal, courtesy of a most-hospitable congregation.

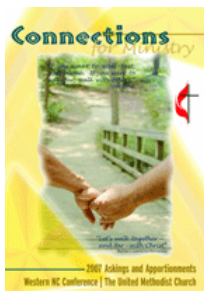
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One of our new local pastors is Tou Her, pastoral leader of First Hmong. He dropped by the Charlotte District office this week in order to complete his paper work on records for beginning. Rev. Her is employed by Fed Ex and serves on a second shift. His morning job consists of parental chores with these marvelous children: Ethyn, Autumn, Caleb, and Dillon. This deeply dedicated local pastor will attend a second session of the Course of Study school in Evanston, Illinois, this summer. The First Hmong congregation worships in the chapel of Hickory Grove UMC and is embraced and affirmed by the membership and staff there.



## Conference Updates

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### “Connections for Ministry”

Connections for Ministry is now available online at [www.wnccumc.org/stw/stewardship.htm](http://www.wnccumc.org/stw/stewardship.htm)

The booklet provides financial interpretation on how conference funds are used in ministry. Pastors and laity will find this tool useful as they prepare for the fall Charge Conferences.

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### 2007 Holy Land Trip Update



Due to the circumstances in the Middle East, the Holy Land trip with the McCleskeys (January 16-17, 2007) has been cancelled. Let us put our energies to praying and working for peace in this dark and troubled time. The next trip Bishop McCleskey has scheduled is the First Missionary Journey of Paul departing March 31, 2008. More information will be provided in future issues of the E-Connections.

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### Western NC Conference Charge Conference and Year-End Report Workshop

Thursday, August 24th ■ Registration at 9:30 a.m. ■ Workshop 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.  
(Lunch Included at Noon)

Myers Park UMC, 1501 Queens Road, Charlotte

This workshop is designed to assist clergy and office staff as they prepare for Charge Conference and the Year-End Report. The cost of the workshop is \$10 per person. The registration deadline has been extended to August 17th. Visit [www.chardist.org](http://www.chardist.org) to obtain a registration form.

You're invited each week to visit [www.wnccumc.org/nws/news1.htm](http://www.wnccumc.org/nws/news1.htm)  
for additional conference and UM connectional news.

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