



Charlotte District Connections

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Special Points of Interest:

- ◆ *George at Ginghamburg*
- ◆ *Apportionments Update*
- ◆ *Conference Memoirs*
- ◆ *"Mi Casa, Su Casa"*
- ◆ *Disaster Response Needed*

GEORGE AT GINGHAMSBURG...

The last place most of us would expect to see me would be at Ginghamburg UMC, at the rural fringes of Tipp City, Ohio. After all, this is one of those postmodern churches without an organ or hymnal. The praise band is loud and bounces all over the place. I am much more at home with the music of Edward Grieg than I am with the garish guitars and sonorous saxophones of the Ginghamburg band. I prefer music that invites quiet reflection and the inner journey of solitude. The choral music that touches my mind, heart, and soul is produced by the likes of John Rutter's Cambridge Singers or Robert Shaw's Chorale, Chanticleer or the Monks of Taizé.



George Thompson and Doug Anderson

So, why did I go to Ginghamburg? Simply because it isn't about me and my preferences in worship. This congregation has defined its mission: to bring the message of Christ to young adults, 20 and 30 - somethings. I wear ties older than most of the folks who attend Ginghamburg. They wear jeans and carry their coffee cups into that dimly-lit sanctuary.

It's not about me. So I mustered the courage to attend this year's School of Congregational Development, sponsored by the General Boards of Global Ministries and Discipleship. The faculty included our friend Doug Anderson who never ceases to amaze me with his fresh, positive strategies for church growth. We have booked him for Charlotte District seminars in March of 2006. I told him that the content of his presentation here last spring will be the agenda for this fall's charge conferences in the Charlotte District. At Ginghamburg Doug told many of his friends about the quality of ministry he experienced among the church leaders in the Charlotte District. I am convinced that our district is on the right track in our effort to pursue the vision of a people who are committed to following Jesus, making disciples, and imitating the servant role of our Savior. My experiences in the classes at Ginghamburg confirmed the following facets of our district program emphases:

1. ***We are right in celebrating a diversity of form and style in worship within our seventy-seven churches.*** Each Sunday we practice diversity in style, but uniformity in theological content. On Sunday, August 8th all the delegates to the School of Congregational Development attended a variety of United Methodist churches in the Dayton region. The two places I visited were thriving, lively congregations with outstanding preachers. Both of these churches offered advocacy and support for their neighboring United Methodist congregations.

Many of the Dayton churches utilize the connectional system in order to evangelize the region more effectively by providing diversity in style and variety in service opportunities.

This is likewise our strategy for evangelism in the Charlotte District. Each of our churches has something unique to offer in styles of worship, levels of intimacy, and opportunities for service. When we reach out to seekers and those unacquainted with the Gospel, we can recommend a great variety of options and engage in authentic connectional evangelism.

- 2. Congregations that maintain high expectations and quality of discipleship grow.** Ginghamburg, with a membership of around 2,000 persons, averages well over 5,000 in attendance each Sunday. Orientation classes are required for membership: 12 sessions, 1.5 hours each. Every member is expected to be active in a small group, engage in a servant ministry, attend worship with regularity, develop vital prayer disciplines, maintain a spiritual life journal, and practice the generosity of tithing. These are essential Wesleyan disciplines and minimal requirements for membership at Ginghamburg.

Some churches in our district are likewise raising the bar of expectation and concentrating upon discipleship rather than membership. Note: We are developing here a district **School of Discipleship** that will teach many of these same principles of growth with integrity.

- 3. Healthy large churches encourage and inspire smaller congregations.** Lay pastors from the Ginghamburg Church have been appointed to many struggling congregations in the Dayton North District, and many of them have stimulated amazing vitality at the places of their appointment. I attended Sunday worship at a re-missioned church—Stillwater UMC. Its pastor had modeled much about the congregation’s vision by emulating the best features of Ginghamburg. Stillwater UMC has now grown so fast that the church has planted a satellite in another neighborhood of Dayton – Livingwater UMC. Healthy large churches do not feed upon weak, smaller ones in a truly connectional body. Thriving congregations offer their resources to all other United Methodist churches within the region. Thus, we become a denomination of abundance, never scarcity.



Stillwater UMC in Dayton, OH

Sound familiar? Check out last year’s “mission statement” on the Charlotte District website. These three insights are components of our vision for a revitalized district. We are truly in the business of following Jesus, making disciples, and transforming the world by the power of Christ’s covenant love.

Grace and peace,

George

One Nation Under God

On Saturday, September 11 at 7:00 PM in the University City UMC sanctuary, the UCUMC Celebration Choir and Orchestra will present **One Nation Under God**, - a patriotic musical created by Jay Rouse, Randy Vader, and Camp Kirkland. During this musical, active and veteran members of our military services will be recognized for their branch of service. **Military personnel are encouraged to wear their uniforms or uniform pieces to this concert.** Colors will be presented by a CMS JROTC unit. This is a free concert, and a love offering will be received to help defray concert expenses. Preceding the concert at 5:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall, a meatball sub dinner sponsored by our HIS HANDS Puppet Ministry will be available for purchase. Active military and their families will be served at a reduced price. Childcare will be provided at no charge, but reservations must be made.



be provided at no charge, but reservations must be made.

To make reservations for the meal, for child care, or to get directions to the church, please call 704-596-4092 before Wednesday, September 8. We invite you to join us for food, fellowship, and a musical celebration of God’s blessings on America.

Matthew J. Guild, Minister of Worship and the Arts, University City United Methodist Church

Apportionment Reminder

We are approaching the final quarter of our apportionment year. Each pastor and local church is asked to review the status of their conference and district apportionment commitments for the year. As of the end of July the Charlotte District Conference Apportionments received was 43%, which ranked 12th out of the fourteen districts. The pastor's insurance apportionment received was 45%. We have 49% paid toward the district apportionments as of August 15. We expect all of our churches to fully complete their conference and district apportionment commitments. Congratulations to Duncan Memorial who has paid 100%.

Direct questions regarding your conference apportionments to Bill Wyman's office (704-535-2260). District Fund apportionment questions can be answered by Dan McIntyre, District Fund Treasurer (704-483-5585).

District Mission Society Grants

DMS grant requests are due in the district office by September 15, 2004. Applications are available by download from the district website www.chardist.org. Final approval of requests will be made at the November DMS Annual Meeting. Feel free to contact the district office if you have questions regarding the application process.

The Howell Series

This fall, Rev. James Howell, Senior Pastor of Myers Park UMC, will develop a multi-week series entitled, "The Shape of the Christian Life." These reflective messages will be e-mailed, one or two per week, 400 words or so each. If you would like to subscribe to this informative and inspirational message series, send your email address to james@mpumc.org.

An Opportunity to Serve

2005 Clergy Health Benefits

Annual Rates

Pastor's (paid by church)	\$5,040
Spouse/Child	\$3,720
Family	\$5,700
Retirees without Medicare	\$5,040
Retirees with Medicare prior to 1/1/03	\$1,464
Retirees >65 after 1/1/03:	
With less than 10 yrs. service	\$2,440
With 11 to 49 yrs. of service	\$2,416-\$1,488

Election of Laity Members for 2005 Western NC Annual Conference

As you prepare for your Fall Charge Conferences, please remember the care which should be given to the election of laity who will serve as members of the 2005 Annual Conference. According to the Constitution of the church, such persons must have been active in The United Methodist Church for four (4) years and member of The United Methodist Church (Although not necessarily of the church/charge electing them) for two (2) years preceding their election. These requirements apply even to persons elected by new congregations.



Churches are entitled to one laity member for each clergy appointed to that church. Pastors of churches with multiple clergy staff have received a communication indicating the number of laity members their churches are entitled to elect. Please be sure these names are included in the entry of your Local Church Leadership Contact List.

St. Luke UMC is seeking a full-time, experienced church music director. He/she must have experience with keyboard or organ and choir direction. Contact at 704-536-5868.



“Mi Casa, Su Casa”

Central United Methodist Church, like so many other inner-city churches in Charlotte, has a unique opportunity to be in ministry to and with the burgeoning Hispanic population. The opportunities abound for creative interaction on many levels. Central UMC is presently the host for “*Mi Casa, Su Casa*” a social outreach ministry which endeavors to be a clearinghouse for material, legal, and medical needs of the Hispanic Community in the Charlotte region. In the coming months, it is our desire to expand this ministry to encompass a Spanish radio program which will include spiritual devotions and issues. God is gracious, and we realize that *Mi Casa* is just the beginning of what God desires to accomplish in our midst.

My wife (Vivian) and I have been involved in Hispanic ministry for most of our married life. Vivian was born in Manhattan, NY and moved to Puerto Rico at the age of nine. We met and married while we both were attending Pfeiffer College. Through the years we have had the privilege of ministering in the context of Spanish culture through preaching, social witness and ministry, and establishing a Spanish congregation in Texas. We have also learned a number of things about ministry in the Hispanic context, most of which are common sense, practical, and readily observable phenomena.

First, many Hispanics in America are not legal immigrants, and by consequence, they are often taken advantage of in the work place and in the social affairs of their lives. They are a highly mobile population, which adds to their feeling of estrangement and alienation. Since many Hispanics are unable to appeal to our legal system for help, they are often reluctant to open their lives to public scrutiny. As such, they find public worship settings to be somewhat frightening.

When we minister with Hispanics, the “trust factor” is always near the top of the list of barriers that must be overcome. I believe that this “barrier” can be broken down through cell group ministry, home bible studies, and genuine Christian outreach to the Hispanic community with no strings attached.

Second, many well-meaning Methodists are seeking to have cross-cultural worship experiences with our Spanish-speaking neighbors. This usually means that there should be, in their mind, a blending of Anglo and Spanish worship styles and methodologies creating a *new* homogeneous worship experience. This generally does NOT work well! Our experience has been that Spanish worship is much more akin to charismatic worship, or at least it is highly expressive and contemporary in nature. Beyond this theological truth is the barrier of language. It is not necessary to utilize verbose analysis: we all recognize that language is at the heart of our expression in worship. It is very difficult to worship God, to pray, to sing hymns or praise medleys –on a continued weekly basis- in a language you don’t fully understand! There is definitely room for occasional Anglo-Spanish worship, but generally a “blended” service will not, in my opinion, attract many Anglos or Hispanics on an on-going basis!

According to the National Plan For Hispanic Ministries of the United Methodist Church, the emphasis for reaching Hispanic persons with the gospel of Jesus Christ is centered on utilizing lay missionaries to help establish small *faith communities*. In my estimation, this is the best option currently being proposed. The concept is much like John Wesley’s “bands” and “societies” that helped fuel the growth of the early Methodist movement. Many churches, or clusters of churches could begin to look seriously at supporting such a venture. Speak to your Pastor about this possibility, or call the District Office and chat with our District Superintendent about what your church can do to reach the Hispanic community in your neighborhood.

Rick D. Fite Pastor, Central UMC, Charlotte



Upcoming UM Women Events

September 10-12 - WNCC Annual Meeting,
Lake Junaluska

November 6 & 7 - Training for Local Unit Officers
(Saturday, 9:30 a.m. at Denver UMC/
Sunday, 2:30 p.m. at Mouzon UMC)

Contact your local church UM Women President or
Sandy Hieronymus, District UMW President (704-545-6910)
for more details.

Golden Years Fellowship Fall Luncheon

Thursday, October 21, 2004, 12 noon,
Aldersgate - Ray Hall Dining Room

Cost: \$7.50 per person.

Mail payment to Sara Clinard, 2224 Cardinal Loop,
Stanley, NC 28164 (704-827-2421).

Deadline for reservations is October 14, 2004.

Conference Memoirs

by Larry Hansen

This past June, I attended my first Western North Carolina Conference at Lake Junaluska. I was selected by the Charlotte District Nominations Committee to be a District Delegate. When I found out about the request, my wife told me I had to accept, that it was a great honor.

I stayed on the grounds in one of the hotels. Cottages that can house a family and let you do your own cooking are also available. I parked my car for the entire Conference and rode the trolley. A small per diem honorarium is provided for a delegate to help with lodging and meals. Meals at the Conference hotels are sold in advance. You can buy a ticket for the number of meals you think you will eat. The food is good, not exactly gourmet, but better than the average food service meals.



Ride the Trolley - FREE!

Once there I began to think that if it weren't for the honor of the thing, I'd rather have stayed at home. But in the long run, it was a very worthwhile experience. All conference decisions and plenary sessions are held in Stuart Auditorium - a round wooden auditorium that is very hot in the

month of June. The windows were opened and overhead fans were circulating. When hand held fans were distributed, I felt like a character out of "Inherit the Wind" in the courthouse scenes.



Inside Stuart Auditorium

Delegates are free to attend or not attend sessions, but attendance is vital in making decisions about our Conference. I tried to attend as many as I could, for this is the United Methodist Church deciding its future, from the ground up. The first day's business included discussing the 'New Funding Paradigm'. Concerns were expressed by many smaller churches. No one told me how to vote. It's not like Congress; no one lobbied me to vote one way or the other. The 'New Funding Paradigm' was approved.

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**When it comes to technology, this Conference is no slouch.**  
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There is always a crowd outside Stuart Auditorium

There are kiosks everywhere to allow access to the internet and email. In Stuart Auditorium, there are many remote controlled television cameras. On either side of the stage are huge screens so the audience can see the proceedings. If you are so inclined, you can also watch the action from your room on cable television.

If you do attend Conference, I can guarantee that you will encounter at least one former Minister from your church (maybe 2 or 3). You will bump into one unexpected person from your everyday life and say, "Oh hi, I didn't know you would be here...". You may, or may not come across fellow attendees from your church, but you will meet and make new acquaintances.

If you are ever invited to attend as a delegate, accept on the spot. It is a very worthwhile experience.

District Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER

- 6 District Office Closed/Labor Day Observance
- 9 District Clergy Meeting, Dilworth UMC, 9:30 am
- 10-12 UMW WNCC Annual Meeting, Lake Junaluska
- 12-14 **Cabinet Meeting**
- 15-16 Charlotte District Clergy Retreat, Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, NC (Beginning at 9:30 am on the 15th and ending at 12 noon of the 16th)
- 15 District Mission Society Grant applications due in District Office
- 30 District Program Council Orientation, 6:30 pm, Trinity UMC

OCTOBER

- 11-13 The Art & Craft of Preaching - Duke Convocation & Pastor's School, Duke Divinity.
- 18-20 **Cabinet Meeting**

NOVEMBER

- 4 District Mission Society Banquet, 6:30 pm, Location TBA
- 4 District Clergy Meeting, 9:30 am, Dilworth UMC
- 17-18 **Cabinet Meeting**
- 25-26 **District Office Closed/ Thanksgiving Observance**

IMMEDIATE DISASTER RESPONSE NEEDED!!!

Visit http://www.wnccumc.org/vrm/disaster_response.htm for information related to how we can assist victims of Hurricane Charley.

Please send your offering to the Volunteer Response Ministries office payable to: Treasurer, WNC Conference, using the Conference Remittance Form designating your offering to Disaster Response.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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