

IV Daily Proceedings

DAY TWO

Friday, June 14, 2013

MORNING SESSION

ORDER – The morning session came to order at 8:30 AM. Bishop Bickerton read Acts 9:1-9 (Saul’s Damascus Road encounter with Christ). He pointed out how many would claim that this passage is the account of Saul’s “conversion.” The Bishop challenged that assessment and suggested that it was simply the beginning of his conversion. Christ continued to work on him, and in him, throughout the rest of his life. The same happens when we come to the Lord. Christ begins to “save” us, but doesn’t treat it as just a one day event. He continues to lead us, call us, remold us, and remake us as we daily come to the Lord and yield our lives to him.

STOP HUNGER NOW – Floor manager Bill Patrick introduced Andrew Sullivan of the Stop Hunger Now ministry. Sullivan invited the members to take 15 to 20 minutes today and help package meals at the group’s exhibit in the hallway behind the display area. Yesterday, WPA members packaged 5,000 meals. The goal is for WPA members to pack 25,000 meals during the three days of this conference session.

Sullivan then challenged the members to exceed the number of meals packed by the Susquehanna conference, which is also meeting this week. (Yesterday the Susquehanna Conference packaged 20,000 meals!).

PRACTICAL EVANGELISM – Bishop Bickerton related the story of one of our African bishops who had helped distribute nets in seven heavily Muslim communities. Later, seven Muslim leaders, representing each of those communities, showed up at the bishop’s office and asked him to come and start a United Methodist Church in each of those communities. The bishop was surprised and asked why? The answer was “We trusted you to care for our bodies and you did. Now we want to trust you with the care of our souls.” Bishop Bickerton emphasized how outreach programs for physical needs can lead to future evangelistic efforts.

SOCIAL MEDIA – The Bishop also encouraged the members to use their social media connections as a way of sharing the hope we have in Christ, not as a place to negatively comment and whine and complain about the world around us. Social Media can be an evangelistic opportunity. We have the chance to spread hope and the message of Christ to all those who follow and friend us. The bishop invited the members who are on twitter to tweet about insights and praises from the conference this week: #WPAUMC13

SETTING OF APPOINTMENTS OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS – The bishop introduced the District Superintendents for the 2013-2014 ministry year including new Butler DS Joel Garrett and new Indiana DS James N. Pond.

BISHOP’S CABINET - The Bishop defined his “cabinet” in Western PA as the bishop, all DSs, as well as the Director of Connectional Ministry (Greg Cox), the

IV Daily Proceedings

Bishop's Assistant (Robert Higginbotham), and the Conference Treasurer (Pat Morris). The bishop also announced the Cabinet's officers for 2013-2014: Dean – William Meekins, Jr., Secretary – Thomas Strandburg, Treasurer – Alyce Weaver Dunn.

CABINET REPORT - William Meekins, Tom Strandburg, and Alyce Weaver Dunn shared the Biblical story of Hannah seeking God (1 Samuel 1:9-17). They also read about Samuel learning to hear and respond to God (1 Samuel 3:1-10). Learning to seek, hear and respond to God is key if we want to be disciples who make more disciples.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS FROM ZIMBABWE – Sandra Matoushaya, Western PA's Zimbabwe Partnership Director, introduced the visiting guests from The United Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The members welcomed: Bishop Nhwatiwa and Greater Nhwatiwa, his wife (Zimbabwe Episcopal Area), Rev. Joseph Bonga (DS, Chimanimani-Chipinga District), Mrs. Dianah Chideya (Associate Lay leader, Zimbabwe West AC), Rev. Pathias Hlahla (DS, Makoni-Buhera District), Mr. Tinashe Felix Makarau (Youth President), Mrs. Alice Matiza (Episcopacy Chair), Mr. Singiyaphumula Doitwell Mlambo (Men's Chairperson for Zimbabwe West AC), Rev. Zebediah Tendayi Marewangepo (Assistant to the Bishop), Mr. Shadreck Mataruka (Lay Leader, Zimbabwe West AC), Rev. Musafare Mususa (DS, Masvingo District), Mrs. Viola Mutema (Stewardship Taskforce Chair, Harare East District), Rev. Daniel Mutidzawanda (DS, Mutusa Nyanga District), Mrs. Molly Hlekani Mwayera (Associate Lay Leader, Zimbabwe East AC), and Rev. Farirayi Margaret Nyabote (Bulawayo Midlands District).

CONSENT CALENDAR – Kellie Wild presented the Legislation and Corporation Consent Calendar (*Daily Journal* pp. 623-629). Items on the consent calendar are legislative resolutions which had at least 75% agreement in its legislative section. Therefore, these items will be voted on as a group on Friday. She gave instructions for removing items from the consent calendar for debate and action. (Submit a request to move a legislative item off of the consent calendar accompanied with 25 signatures of conference members.)

Kellie Wild also presented the non-consent calendar (*Daily Journal* p. 630). Items on the non-consent calendar are items that did not have at least a 75% majority of agreement. These will each, individually, be considered by the members of the conference in plenary session.

The Bishop noted that our conference rules and the *Book of Discipline* prevents legislative matters with a financial impact from being placed on a consent calendar without first being reviewed by the Council on Finance and Administration (CFA). Thus, P 1206 (*pre-conference booklet* p.498) and RS 506 (*pre-conference booklet* p.463) will be removed from the consent calendar.

The bishop recognized Nancy Denardo who raised a question regarding RS 1103 (*pre-conference booklet* p.485), which also has financial implications. The Bishop agreed, therefore RS 1103 will be removed from the consent calendar as well.

CREDIT UNION – The bishop introduced Patty Columbe, director of the Keystone United Methodist Federal Credit Union (KUMFCU). Columbe announced that KUMFCU is celebrating its 60th anniversary. To help the members understand how long

IV Daily Proceedings

ago that was, she shared that the cost of a new car back in 1953 was less than \$2,000 and gasoline was 20 cents a gallon! She highlighted the services the credit union is able to offer, with the goal being “to help as many people as we can.” She also presented a check in the amount of \$5,000 to Bishop Bickerton to assist in the conference’s ongoing ministry. The total amount given by KUMFCU to assist with new church starts is \$55,000.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS – The bishop introduced the process of voting on proposed constitutional amendments (in *pre-conference booklet*, pp. 501-505) which had been passed at General Conference 2012. In order for an Amendment to be approved, it first needs a 2/3 vote by the General Conference and then ratified by 2/3 aggregated vote at each of the annual conferences. Following instructions and completion of the ballots, tellers collected the ballots. The results will be announced at a later time.

YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM – The Bishop recognized the Youth Ministry Team (YMT). Polly Zilhaver & Luke Fugate introduced the basic ministry of our conference’s efforts to work with youth. Courtney Kunselman presented a gift to the bishop! Tyler Killby presented the Youth Worker of the year award to Amy Scott, a youth worker at Bethel: FUMC for the past 18 years. Zilhaver and Kunselman, along with Alex Hoffman, presented the Pineapple Award to Keith & Alice Dunn. Drew Barnhart highlighted the Youth Service Fund (YSF).

RESTORATION GENERATION – Stephanie Gottschalk (young adult representative) emphasized the need for our UM congregations to reach out to our youth even after they stop being youth. There is a movement in our jurisdiction called “Restoration Generation” targeting graduates from youth into adulthood. She encouraged the members to stop by the young adult ministry table in the display area to get more ideas for ministering to these young adults.

DISCIPLES MAKING DISCIPLES – Jim Walker, Greg Cox, and Chris Kindle presented a skit explaining the Scriptural and theological background of what it means for Christians to be disciples who then, in turn, make more disciples.

WORD OF THE DAY – Linda Chambers shared a good word: “I used to think that God wouldn’t talk to me... but now I know I just tend to be selective in my hearing.”

PRAYER – Don Scandrol introduced Grace Killian who will begin working with the General Board of Global Ministries. He then led the members in prayer for Grace and for the lunchtime meal.

RECESS – At 11:35 AM the bishop declared a recess until 1:00 PM.

AFTERNOON SESSION

ORDER – the conference came to order at 1:00 PM.

IV Daily Proceedings

RETIRING PASTORS – James N. Pond led the members in honoring this year’s retirees. Bishop Bickerton presented each retiree with a certificate and retirement pin. A booklet was prepared and distributed in which each retiree was given a chance for a “last sermon.” The retirees are: William M. Chittester, Ralph C. Ciampa, Elizabeth S. Cooper, Ralph K. Culp, Ronald Fleming, Paul C. Friedhof, Edwin J. Herald, John P. Hoffman, Betty Lee Hollabaugh, William E. Hufford, Roger A. Johnson, C. James Kutz, D. Ronald Libengood, Marjorie E. Lindahl, Ron C. Lindahl, Scott R. McCormick, Kathleen A. Mikesell, Dennis L. Miller, Ruth A. Moore, Edd H. Myers, Alice Jean Parker, David L. Parker, William L. Parker, Edward C. Patterson, Cathy Newport Poff, Lee A. Pomeroy, Ellen M. Rezek, Wayne D. Sedei, Terry L. Shaughnessy, Paul L. Thompson, Aimee W. Twigg, August B. Twigg, Janet R. Wensel, and Dean D. Ziegler.

AFFIRMING OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE BUTLER DISTRICT – Bishop Bickerton welcomed Joel S. Garrett, incoming District Superintendent for Butler District and then read the names of pastors being newly appointed to the Butler District for the coming year. As names were read, the pastors came to the front of the room and greeted each other.

AFFIRMING OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE CONNELLSVILLE DISTRICT – Bishop Bickerton read the names of pastors appointed to the Connellsville District for the coming year. As names were read, the pastors came to the front of the room and greeted each other and Connellsville District Superintendent William Blair.

“HEALTHY YOU” PRESENTATION – Don Inman, Conference Board of Pensions, introduced Dr. Michael D. Parkinson, the Senior Medical Director of Health & Productivity with UPMC discussing a “Road Map” strategy to creating a healthier church by creating healthier people.

LEGISLATION: RS 103 PREVENTION OF GUN VIOLENCE – After prayer, Les Hutchins and Kelly Smith, representing Section One, moved non-concurrence 20-49-2. Non-concurrence was approved.

LEGISLATION: RS 702 CREATING ISREAL-PALESTINE DIVESTMENT TASK TEAM – After prayer, Steve Morse and Rita Platt, representing Section Seven, moved non-concurrence 25-28-0. Non-concurrence was approved.

LAITY REPORT – Sharon Gregory, Conference Lay Leader, spoke of the importance of spark plugs in engines. In our spiritual lives, the Holy Spirit is the spark plug. Without the Holy Spirit guiding and leading a Christian, it is impossible to be a living, functioning disciple. After her message, she introduced the district lay leaders who are committed “to rethink, revive, and rekindle the meaning of discipleship making.” Bishop Bickerton expressed his appreciation to Sharon for her leadership.

BOARD OF PENSIONS – Tom Parkinson, representing our conference Board of Pensions, likened our health and pension plans to a home’s plumbing system. If it’s working well, the family never thinks about the plumbing. With that analogy in mind, he

IV Daily Proceedings

offered ways that pastors and churches can help “keep the plumbing clear” by making healthy choices. He also encouraged future planning by financially investing in the individual pastors’ pension plans. He also informed the conference on other changes in the clergy health and benefit program and pension plans.

BLACK COLLEGE FUND – Barb Hess introduced Noah Moore, who spoke of the positive impact of the Black College Fund which helps to support eleven historic black colleges related to The United Methodist Church.

LEADERSHIP RECRUITMENT AND NOMINATIONS – J. LaVon Kincaid presented the nominations report (*preconference booklet p. 301-328*). He also drew the conference’s attention to the nominations errata sheet (*preconference booklet p. 329*) and the “willingness to serve” sheet (*preconference booklet p. 330*).

AFFIRMING OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE JOHNSTOWN DISTRICT – Bishop Bickerton read the names of pastors appointed to the Johnstown District for the coming year. As names were read, the pastors came to the front of the room and greeted each other and Johnstown District Superintendent Alyce Weaver Dunn.

AFFIRMING OF APPOINTMENTS TO THE PITTSBURGH DISTRICT – Bishop Bickerton read the names of pastors appointed to the Pittsburgh District for the coming year. As names were read, the pastors came to the front of the room and greeted each other and Pittsburgh District Superintendent Don Scandrol.

MOMENT OF PRIVILEGE – Linda Chambers introduced Jim Bickerton, the bishop’s father, who shared a story about receiving a Garmin GPS as a gift once. It reminded him that, like the GPS, God is always with us, even when we end up on the wrong road.

COKESBURY – Robert Higginbotham, a member of the United Methodist Publishing House board, introduced Cheryl Cotten, the new Cokesbury regional representative for the Western PA area.

PRAYER- Robert Higginbotham led in prayer for the evening meal.

RECESS – At 4:40 PM the Bishop declared a recess until 7:00 PM for the worship service.

EVENING SESSION

WORSHIP – At 7:00 the members gathered for a time of worship with Rev. Rudy Rasmus from Texas sharing the Word.

FELLOWSHIP RECEPTION – followed worship at 8:30 pm.

COSROW Monitoring Report

Friday, January 14, 2013

Today, as we began to look more closely at this theme of Disciples Making Disciples, I am reminded of a quote by Marian Wright Edelman, "You can't be what you can't see."

That applies to us at Annual Conference and to our call as Disciples and Disciple Making, in some basic and profound ways.

First, it impacts our ability to take that first step toward a faith life, toward trusting this Jesus story. Is this a story for me or just a story for them? Do I see myself in this story?

Second, once I do take a step out in faith, will those who are to nurture me in my faith see my gifts and talents? Will they see me as an equal Child of God and prosper me in participating fully in God's Church, that I may truly live out what God would have me to do and to be.

Third is best illustrated with an image of a fish that swims around in the water. It thinks that is what the world is. The water is so common for the fish that it doesn't even name it, it just is. The water informs the way the fish sees and experiences the world. When it is taken out of the water, it interprets this new experience through life in the water. It requires relearning and rethinking the world before the fish can leap out of the water and accept that new reality, without first remaking it according to the world of water.

If Discipleship is collaborative, as Rudy Rasmus told us, we cannot define who we collaborate with and what the participation will be.

Today many people, male, female, white, People of Color; expressed their concern with how male and how White our annual conference session has been. We have heard from many talented, gifted and passionate people, some of them female and some of them People of Color. But there are others, waiting to share their talents, to have their gifts lifted up and used that they may grow as Disciples and make Disciples.

This matters. When we see the youth on the stage; we want every youth to say, "There is a place there for me". When those feeling the call of ministry look to the stage, they should be able to say, "I can answer the call and grow and serve out my full call, here". When we show representations of congregations, everyone seeing them needs to be able to say, "I belong there". And we wish to "Do No Harm" to those already with us whom we call our Brothers and Sisters.

We can't be what we can't see. And we can't be in 4 days, what we are not striving to be every day. We each need to look beyond the context of our present realities. Beyond the scarcity and into the abundance of God-sized Dreams of what the WPA UMC can be and is called to be. There is room at the table.