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It takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else.
Erma Bombeck

Reflections From Ron

Hello Colleagues and friends ...

Well, Annual Conference is over and another conference year has begun. I will continue to serve as your District Superintendent for another year but, there are some new faces on our district. So, be sure to place Monday, July 23, 2007 from 9 AM to 2 PM at the Ottawa First UMC on your calendars. We will have our first District Clergy meeting on that Day. You will also receive email notification about the location and our luncheon menu. I will also try (no promises) to have a sign up sheet for the fall charge conferences. There are still some fall dates for the cabinet that have not been confirmed yet, so any dates may be tentative. As always, first come – first served. We will go over some of the events that may be taking place this year, celebrate communion and

hopefully our community together. This will be an exciting year for all of us.

As you know, the Annual Conference Mission of “Inviting, Equipping, Nurturing and Sending” disciples into the world is integral to the main theme of our district mission of “Cultivating Christian discipleship and strengthening the connection of United Methodist churches...” Our mission is not just about cultivating discipleship on the local church level through the various spiritual formation events we have there. It is about creating an environment where clergy can cultivate their discipleship, as well, beyond their structural education of seminary or course of study. The question is, “How do we do that?” I have some ideas, but I need your input in order for this to have some relevance to who we are. So, come looking toward

some open discussion about how we as clergy can cultivate our own discipleship within the covenant.

To those of you who are new to our district, I offer you a most sincere “Welcome”. To those of you who are returning to your appointments for another year, I offer my most sincere, “Welcome back”. It is my prayer that this year will be a year of cultivating discipleship and growth in our churches, in our personal lives, and in our district.

Agape and shalom,
Ron

Web Links:

District:
www.fiveriversdistrict.com

Conference:
www.kansaseast.org

There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other, wings. Hodding Carter

Are you living like an anorexic hermit crab? And other things I learned at Annual Conference 2007

By Marvé Ralston

“Equipping The Body of Christ.” was the theme for the Kansas East Annual Conference this year. As a district administrative assistant and a member of Baldwin 1st, I felt led to attend conference this year. I must admit that I do best to attend something, if I have a part in it. So, I volunteered to help with photography. After meeting with conference photographer, Steve Burnett from Westmoreland, KS, and setting up the functions I would help with, I was ready to find out a little about the Kansas East Annual Conference.

I attended all the Annual Conference worship services, which I encourage you to do. The cost to me as a visitor and non voting member was \$10.00. I also attended the Bishop’s Health Walk which cost \$5.00, this included a donation to the Healthy Ministries of the KEC, two bottles of water which we used as hand weights and began with devotions given by the Bishop at 6:00 a.m. For those of you like me, who want to get a glimpse of how the conference operates, this was a good beginning.

The opening worship service was led by Bishop Scott Jones. You could definitely feel the spirit of the Lord when songs were sung by so many believers in one place. Bishop Jones gave a great introductory and we had communion. I have had the pleasure of attending Bishop Jones Evangelism Workshop, as well as hearing him speak to our PAUMCS Fall Meeting of Kansas secretaries and administrative assistants last year. He is very motivating and I encourage you to meet him and find out for yourself at your earliest opportunity. You can also read blogs he has written on the Kansas East website at www.kansaseast.org.

The Plenary Speaker for Thursday and Friday worship services was Gregory Jones, a Dean at Duke University and also the brother of Bishop Scott Jones. He began on Thursday with an analogy about hermit crabs. It was about not being like *anorexic* hermit crabs. Hermit crabs outgrow their shells at different stages, molt (an interesting process where they actually shed and produce a new exoskeleton) and will find a new shell if one is available. He likened those of us unwilling to grow as being like anorexic hermit crabs. We stay in the same old shell and cannot grow because we are too afraid to move out of the old shell and into the new one. Thus we cannot grow. He encouraged three themes of friendship.

1. *Holy friendships*

Communities with God and one another partnering to challenge the sins we love.
 Dream the dreams we wouldn’t have ordinarily dreamed.
 Affirming the gifts we haven’t claimed.

2. *Hospitality to strangers*

He gave examples of the habits of a lifetime of hospitality.
 Focusing on God, not what is in it for *me*.

3. *Loving our enemies*

We can’t pick our enemies to love.
 Following Christ is our most important identity.
 Destroying our enemies by making them our friends.

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JULY 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 <i>4th Of July District Office Closed</i>	5	6	7
8	9 <i>Admn. Asst. on Vacation</i>	10 <i>Admn. Asst. on Vacation</i>	11 <i>Admn. Asst. on Vacation</i>	12 <i>Admn. Asst. on Vacation</i>	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 <i>District Clergy Meeting 9:00 a.m.— 2:00 p.m. Ottawa: 1st</i>	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

(Annual Conference continued from page 2)

On Friday he used the analogy of the *Emperors New Clothes (a fairy tale written by Hans Christian Anderson)*. When we rely on appearances we are not living in truth. We have lowered our standards and are not *equipping* one another to be disciples. We need to expect that each day of our lives we are moving closer to God's perfection. We need to reclaim the robustness of Christianity and be schooled in the practice of Christian life. Returning to the Wesleyan DNA, being shaped by the gospel and apprenticed as disciples through **practice** and **discipline**.

He gave 4 Critical Means to Equip Leaders for Learning as a way of life.

1. Lifelong focus on **"formation"** forgiveness – forgiving one another, being forgiven. Patterns of thinking and living Christianly. Keeping the main thing the main thing.
2. **"Imagination"** Ephesians 3. Nurtured by a mission to see what might be. A world opened up – comprehension of Christ. How often we settle for such a low bar, when we could have abundantly more. Be "Easter People" making, all things new.
3. **"Development of skills"** The example was Olympic swimmers and the rest of us. The key difference is attention to detail and the "grace of daily obligation".
4. **"Strategy"** Focusing on the long term. There should be a time of pruning (missional obligation to launch into the next church phase.) A diversity of gifts, thinking beyond- about what is possible. Thinking imaginatively for the common good. Commitment to missions, willing to act boldly beyond the resources currently on hand. Using a heightened sense of accountability.

These are definitely the short notes on the worship services I attended. I am sure if you ask your pastor or lay member to conference, you could get another, probably better picture of Annual Conference. Perhaps you were there and were fortunate like I was, to be blessed with the encouraging and challenging words. (You can now purchase DVD's from this years conference if interested.)

I attended several other functions but did not attend much of the business sessions (maybe next year ☺.) For those of you who take the time, financial resources, and for many, have been faithful to do this through the years...it seems like a coming home of sorts. There is a lot of hugging and conversation, sort of like a family reunion.

I hope you get the chance to at least visit Annual Conference next year and learn more about the Methodist community, the bigger picture and connectional power of our church. I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and do it.

Church or Charge Conference? What is the Difference?

Charge Conference: The basic governing body of a United Methodist pastoral charge composed of all members of the Administrative Board or Administrative Council. The *Charge Conference* must meet at least once a year. The district superintendent presides or designates another ordained minister to do so. The *Charge Conference* serves as the *connecting link* between the local church and the Annual Conference and general church, and directs the work of the pastoral charge according to the policies and plans of *The Book of Discipline*. Among its responsibilities, the *Charge Conference* reviews and evaluates the mission and ministry of the church, receives reports, adopts objectives and goals, elects the members of the Administrative Board or Council and other officers, sets the salary of the pastor and other staff, and recommends to the district Committee on Ordained Ministry candidates for the ordained ministry.

Church Conference: The convening of the *Charge Conference* as a meeting in which **all members** of a local United Methodist church are **invited** to attend and are **extended the privilege of vote**. A *Church Conference* is called to have the broad participation of the members of the congregation. The *Church Conference* may be authorized by the district superintendent. Definitions taken from the *Dictionary For United Methodists* by Alan K. Waltz

You can always tell a real friend: when you've made a fool of yourself he doesn't feel you've done a permanent job.
Laurence J. Peter



July Birthdays

Bill Nelson	July 13th
Pam Morrison	July 22nd
Marjorie Cox	July 22nd
Kathleen Ketchell-Ferris	July 25th

Welcome to our new pastors and returning but moved pastors

Clearfield-Baldwin: Ives Chapel	Rev. Harriett Bechtle
Edgerton	Rev. Gayla Rapp
Hiattville	Pastor Andrew Smith
Iola: Calvary-Salem	Rev. Jim Uhlig
After 9/1/07	Rev. Gene McIntosh
Mound City-Blue Mound	Pastor Dallas Peterson
Fulton	Pastor Charles Russell
Osawatomie-Lane	Rev. Gary Gooding
Ottawa: First	Rev. Felix Burrows Sr.
Ottawa: Trinity Associate Pastor	Pastor Charlotte Raby
Wellsville	Pastor Richard Fitzgerald
Williamsburg	Pastor Billy Hughes
Yates Center	Rev. Jan Justice

Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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4th of July

It's time again to fly our flag,
With much respect and pride;
It is our country's birthday,
This 4th day of July!

As we enjoy the fireworks,
The picnics and parades;
Let us reflect on all the things
That make our country great:

Is it those 'rights' we cherish,
The freedoms we enjoy;
Equality in law - that's guaranteed
To every girl and boy?

The answer's YES for most of us –
Not all – of that I'm sure!
For many in our country still
Much suffering they endure.

The many that are hated,
Because they "don't fit in";
'cause they have different customs,
or for the color of their skin.

Yet, we are all Americans,
From every walk of life;
Claiming equal and fair treatment –
Protection from all strife.

We're in this land together,
We're brothers, sisters, all;
United we'll attain great goals,
Divided we shall fall!

So, on our country's birthday,
Let's pledge, for all to see:
We'll strive to live together,
In peace and harmony!

Our future will be brighter,
"God bless us", I do pray.
And, with one voice now let us sing:
"HAPPY BIRTHDAY, USA!"
Author Unknown

