

Narrative Report  
“Technology: Facilitating God’s Ministries”  
Lake Junaluska, NC  
August 2-5, 2009

Sunday, August 2

- The 56<sup>th</sup> Annual SEJUMACBA Conference opened with a wonderful welcome session held at the Kern Student Center.
- We were blessed with singing by the Munsey UMC Praise Team from Johnson City, TN. Then we enjoyed supper together outside looking at the beautiful lake.
- Dr. Reginald Mallet shared his thoughts with us after reading the parable of the rich fool from Luke 12. He urged us to answer the questions: 1. What is my attitude toward material things? 2. What is my attitude toward people? Do I love people and use things or do I use people and love things? 3. What is my attitude toward the cross of Jesus Christ?
- More food! We enjoyed dessert and a time of fellowship before retiring for the evening.

Monday, August 3

- Linda McClarnon shared her musical talent with us by leading us in an “obscure” hymn.
- Dr. Mallet turned our hearts towards the scripture to John 15 – The True Vine. The thing that really spoke to me regarding reading and studying scripture was to let the Text become the master of me and not me the master of the Text. Wow! What richness to feast on! He encouraged us to abide in Christ which would produce stable, courageous and compassionate discipleship.
- Our first glimpse of workshop leader Steve Hewitt, the Technology Guru! Of the 300,000 churches in America, ½ have not seen one single addition as a result of first time commitment to Christ in two years. 86% of new membership is just Christians switching from church to church. He gave some great ideas about drawing people to church like videoing a testimony about how God saw you through difficult times and posting on YOUTUBE or posting it on FACEBOOK
- so someone doing a search might come across it and be drawn to your church! He told us we are in the Personal Communication Age. The Church needs to participate and be able to respond by using all the technology now available like podcasting, texting, blogging, twittering, etc... People don’t want to just be told, they want to have input.
- Alan Morrison, Director of Support Services and Business Manager of the General Conference with GCFA, reviewed the certification process for the United Methodist Church Business Administrators. He encouraged those who have not been certified to begin the process and those who have to keep up the recertification process. He also shared his insight on other issues we have discussed at this conference.
- We had Monday evening free to enjoy Lake Junaluska and the surrounding area.

Tuesday, August 4

- Linda graciously once again led us in some singing to set the tone for our opening devotion with Dr. Mallet.
- Dr. Mallet talked with us a few minutes about the indwelling of Christ – Philippians 4. He reminded us that living the Christian life is not dependent upon our circumstances,

our company and our willpower. Unless we have within us that which is above us, we will yield to that which is around us!

- Steve started our sessions with him talking about the various texting services, smart phones and church software. He reminded us that church software is no longer just for church staff but for the congregation as well. The need to have capability to be in “constant contact” with the membership has increased. He also spent some time talking about online giving and the folks needing a venue to give even when they do not attend services. There is still concern regarding this as not being a part of the worship service. He shared where he felt things are headed for the
- future such as no file servers...information being stored on “the cloud.” The Church needs to stay up with technology, not continue to lag behind for several years. After lunch we had an opportunity to ask Steve questions. We then had a couple of free hours to enjoy our beautiful surroundings at the Lake.
- We met at 5pm for our photo and then a wonderful communion service where the officers were installed. Dr. Mallet led us in communion and Rev. Morrison shared his lovely voice through worship in song.
- Around 6pm we shared a delicious buffet dinner at the Gateway Club downtown Waynesville. Dr. and Mrs. Mallet were presented with an honorarium from our group in appreciation for their time with us. Dr. Mallet felt this will be his last year with us. What a joy they have been over the years!
- The Storytelling Sims (a husband and wife team) gave an outstanding performance displaying their talent in comical and rather unusual storytelling.

Wednesday August 5

- Everyone except the Executive Committee began their journey home. The Executive Committee met for about 45 minutes to begin planning the 2010 conference.

What a delightful group to share these past few days with and take a short break from our day-to-day routine at the various churches we serve.

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