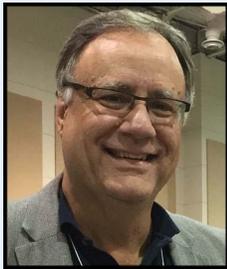


The **BEACON**

News from Virginia Conference United Methodist Men

President's Message - Rebuild!

"The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors"
(Nehemiah 3:5).



I was recently asked by a leader of a Farmville District fellowship, "What is the value of chartering? How can we revitalize? What are others doing to focus on God's work?" Believe me, we are all struggling with these issues! Questions such as these are largely addressed in chapter 3 of the Book of Nehemiah. **Pastor Steve Cole** from Flagstaff, AZ summarizes for us, ***"To accomplish God's purpose, we need a common vision, dedicated leaders and willing workers to do their part."***

The value of chartering largely comes from the connections it makes between men at the Local Fellowship, District, Conference and National levels. Chartering *connects* you to resources, people, and ideas and helps with specific plans for your fellowship ... just like Nehemiah did with the people willing to be part of his **God-given plans to rebuild**. The connections you make through Chartering can help give you a hope for the future while rekindling the spirit in your church.

Here's what's happening around the conference at successful fellowships:

- Younger men want projects not programs. In general they won't come to a meeting only to hear about a subject or eat a meal, but they **will** help build something or feed the hungry. They also want -- and often crave -- mentoring from men with experience in their same profession or vocation.
- A men's Bible study will positively impact your men and your church.
- John Wesley's church grew around the *class meeting*. Unlike a Bible study or an affinity group, the class meeting transforms believers. You owe to yourself and the men of your UMMen fellowship to learn more about the [Class Meeting](#).
- Boy Scout troops serve the community and grow the church; 50 percent of Scout families have no church home. Your men can serve as leaders, mentors and merit badge counselors.
- Leadership training: Men generally struggle more with relationships, are more goal oriented, and may suffer from a *father vacuum*. We have three **Men's Ministry Specialists*** in the VA Conference who are certified by the General Commission on United Methodist Men, and are ready to help you with training (see below).

Finally men, don't get discouraged! Nehemiah 3:5 teaches us that leaders must not be distracted by those unwilling to cooperate and work with us!

Andrew

Andrew Kissell

andrew.kissell@aecom.com

* **Virginia Conference Men's Ministry Specialists**

Johnnie Draughon
Johnnie.draughon@cox.net

Todd Hoar
thorb4u2@yahoo.com

David Bean
davkarbean@comcast.com

REPORT: United Methodist Men assembly at Randolph-Macon College

There's good news and ... Good news yet to come

The good news is ... After a 19-month disruption since the last gathering in Blackstone, the **2017 UMMen Spiritual Advance** came about without a hitch. In that respect, grade the event 99% flawless!



Sharing Group discuss
Max's first message

Men's low participation rate in this year's main event was not unexpected. But 63 men did turn out determined to be among their brothers in Christ in prayer, rest and refilling of the soul, joyful noise of music and singing and boundless fellowship.

Conversation among men was upbeat, much like that of an assembly numbering in the hundreds. Here's sampling of what was heard: "R-MC's facility was clean and bright," "The food was very good and plentiful, too," "College staff were most helpful and extremely courteous," "Sleeping rooms comfortable," "I'll be back in 2018."



Sharing Group discuss
Max's first message



Rev. Justin
Collins Rev.
Max Black

Our featured speaker, **Rev. Max Blacklock**, or "Max" as he prefers, kept men on the edge of their chairs hanging onto his every word as he skillfully blended real-life with topics that embraced love, joy and the Holy Spirit under the theme, Christianity in the 21st Century.

One of more memorable events was the Q&A session hosted by Max. There were many questions with answers that came straight from the shoulder and from the heart, responses that really stuck, generating lots and lots of discussion well after the session concluded. Max's presence as UMMen's guest speaker and mixing among all men present, even into late hours proved to be special and timely for those looking

for answers in today's topsy-turvy culture.

And the good news yet to come on the heels of a successful and inspiring *Spiritual Advance* for the men present, who helped dig and pour the footing, and laid the foundation upon which to REBUILD.

The opening paragraph of the President's Message expresses what comes next: **"To accomplish God's purpose, we need a common vision, dedicated leaders and willing workers to do their part."**



L-R: Lee Simpson, Bill
Lee, David Bean

A Forward Pass . . . via Email

'Catch it' if you want to serve



"Friends ...

"There are a number of opportunities at the conference level of United Methodist Men to serve - especially as Vice President for Spiritual Development and Vice President for Membership (There are other needs as well!). I would like to encourage you to search your heart, pray and decide if service in this area is something you would enjoy.

If you are interested, or would like to learn more contact our conference president, Andrew Kissell at Andrew.Kissell@aecom.com or phone 757-839-0790. I can think of no greater opportunity for you to serve the men of the Virginia Conference!

"Thank you in advance for your consideration - and for all the work you are constantly doing in your local churches and districts."

In Christ's service,

Note to Readers: Initially, this email message was sent to more than 50 men who recently completed the *Understanding Men's Ministry* course of instruction. The first few lines of the email, pertinent only to course participants, were eliminated, and now *passing forward* the very heart of the message that applies to *all* men.

An Opportunity Realized

Gone fishin'



(standing) Ben Rush, George Stephenson, Judith Curtis
(kneeling) Monica Adams, Norman Rush

Word got out that some of the **veterans at the VA Medical Center in Hampton** love to fish. They're often seen dropping their lines in Johns Creek from the boardwalk behind the hospital, which is just off the Chesapeake Bay. On the backside of this story is the fact that many of the vets cannot afford to purchase and maintain fishing poles and tackle. So, a letter was sent to the **York River District United Methodist Men** leadership to see what could be done to help all those deserving veterans who love to fish.

District leaders sprang into action by making calls to the men in the district with a message that went something like this: "*If any of you have poles and tackle boxes that you are not using and would like to*

donate them to a worthy cause, please let your UMMen Regional Laity Advocate know."

York River District UMMen from **Bethany, Chestnut, Crooks** and **Zion** churches galvanized their efforts and the veterans, in addition to the items that were donated as a result of the action call, received six new rods and reels and two well-stocked tackle boxes, courtesy of **Hampton Bass Pro Shops**.



Ben Rush, Norman Rush and **George Stephenson** from Zion UMC presented the equipment to **Monica Adams** and **Judith Curtis** of the VA Medical Center. Now, as a result of the United Methodist Men's effort, and the generosity of Bass Pro Shops to make poles and tackle available, on any given day you'll likely see more of those vets - great Americans all - gone fishin'.

Day 16

Addicted to Activity

"See how they run, see how they run, they all run after ..." duties, assignments, appointments, demands, deadlines! There are plans, programs, and people, so run, run, run!

How about taking a moment to sit down, let your motor idle, and take another sip from your coffee cup? Think about your pace. Are you a part of the rat race? How did you get trapped? Are you being fulfilled?

James Sullivan knows exactly how you feel. Back in the sixties he blew Oklahoma City wide open, developing the world's largest "Young Life Club" - a Christian group for young people. But that's not all he blew apart. In doing it, he sacrificed his family and his health. He was a very hard man to keep up with, let alone live with.

His wife and family were tired. Life lived at full-bore was, in reality, an escape technique. He wrote the book *The Frog Who Never Became a Prince*, and we lift one line from it. "I was a man who existed in a shell ... guilt, resentment, and hatred welled up within me. The resulting hard feeling I developed became almost insurmountable."

Wasn't James Sullivan working for Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God? Yes, but he substituted activity for living.

One Thanksgiving Day his wife, Carolyn, asked him a question as he was once

more racing out the door to speak at a youth meeting. "Do you know, or do you even care, that from the middle of September until today you have not been home one night?" Not very long after that incident, she broke down emotionally, while he contemplated suicide.

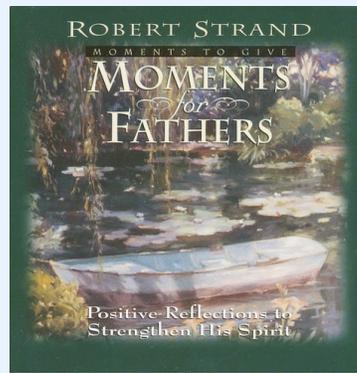
Does this story sound familiar? There are many churches in our land that boast, "Something every night of the week for everybody!" What a shame, and it's even worse that churches advertise it.

God's Word speaks often and loudly about cultivating a calm, peaceful inner spirit. Instead, we offer Him a life full of activity, noise, and more and more running! Could the reason we run so much be to deaden the pain of an empty life?

To change this activity, I suggest you start with admitting you are too busy; then learn the art of saying a small two letter word, "NO" - and mean it. It may take some practice. All together now, let's say it again - "NO!" And keep on saying no! There are a lot of us who are addicted to activity who would like to stop if we could. Do it before it's too late - for the sake of your wife, your children, and your relationship to God.

Today's Quote: *The stops of a good man are ordered by the Lord as well as his steps!* - George Mueller

Today's Verse: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:10).



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2017 Dates to Remember

Opportunities in *MEN*istry

- OCT 7** **UMMen Cabinet Meeting**
More information to follow
- NOV 10-12** **Southeast Jurisdiction UMMen Meeting**
St. Simon's Island, GA
- DEC 9** **UMMen Cabinet Meeting, 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**
Virginia United Methodist Center, Glen Allen, VA

Words to Live By . . .

**"Whatever makes men good
Christians
makes them good citizens."**

- Daniel Webster (1782-1852)