

# TEAMMATES

Greater Ohio District Ministry Bulletin  
May, 2006

---

“The DaVinci Code” is generating significant talk in and out of the church. I have asked Ken Murphy, pastor at Cypress, to give a glimpse into the issues raised in this book. Thanks Ken for providing this insightful piece.

## **Interacting with Popular Culture**

I've often heard that one of the great preachers from centuries ago urged young clergy to preach with the Bible in one hand and a local newspaper in the other. I do not know for certain if it was Spurgeon, Wesley or one of their contemporaries, but what I do know is that we must continually communicate the relevancy of scripture to daily living.

We all remember the great media and cultural phenomena surrounding the movie, *Passion of The Christ*. This Mel Gibson movie drew the attention of America for a season, and had everybody talking about Christ. There is another movie coming out May 19<sup>th</sup> that some say will dwarf the *Passion of The Christ* as far as capturing the attention of America ~ *The Da Vinci Code*, directed by Ron Howard, based on the book by Dan Brown. This movie has people and media already talking.

The novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, has sold 43 million copies and it is estimated that nearly 100 million people may have actually read the book. A recent survey notes only 3% of evangelicals have read it, but once you leave the four walls of the church the number skyrockets. In addition, never before in the history of cinematography has a movie been so highly promoted six months prior to its release than has *The Da Vinci Code*.

## **Why be concerned as the church?**

With the increasing publicity the movie and book are receiving, it raises questions and doubts for many who attend your church on a given week. Recently, I watched a two hour special on the “Gospel of Judas” produced by the National Geographic Channel. Information such as this conflicts with our Biblical account and is causing our people to ask questions about what is truth. We, as their pastors, need to help them find the answers.

What are the secret gospels?

Why believe the Bible is true and the Gnostic gospels or secret text are false?

How did the Bible come into being?

Why do we believe the things we believe...what is the basis of our faith?

## **Different reactions to the book:**

1. People believe the material presented in the book ... problem = basing life on falsehoods. A recent article on ChristianityToday.com states that 13% of Americans believe the claims of the book are true.
2. People don't know for sure what is true and what is false ... problem = a cloud of doubt hangs over beliefs once held factual.

3. People still believe what they always have believed to be true about the Bible, the church and the nature of Christ, but are uncertain of the evidence for their belief... problem = unable to carry on intelligent conversations with those who hold differing viewpoints ... I Peter 3:15 becomes more difficult.

### **What are some of the concerning themes of *The Da Vinci Code*?**

- Jesus and Mary were married and had children
- The royal blood line exist yet today
- The church took part in a “smear campaign” and participated in the greatest cover-up in human history
- The Bible as we know it is the product of man, not God
- Jesus was a good man, not divine

### **Goals**

My goal is to use *The Da Vinci Code* as a springboard to teach our people so they will be able to stand for truth.

I want to be certain I am doing my part, as a pastor, to teach my people how to think and process life according to the Word of God.

Ephesians 5:15-16

I am in the midst of a five week sermon series.

- 1 = The Authority of Scripture ... what's truth?
- 2 = God's idea of sex
- 3 = The Divinity of Christ ... what difference does it make?
- 4 = The Role of Women in Scripture
- 5 = Q & A panel discussion

### **Four Resources I'd recommend:**

1. The Wesleyan Church homepage has resources available to aid preparation.
2. [jimgarlow.com](http://jimgarlow.com) ... pastor, Skyline Wesleyan Church
3. *The Da Vinci Deception* by Erwin W. Lutzer
4. [cypressonline.net](http://cypressonline.net) ... to listen online to our current sermon series

Let's all pull together and not miss this great opportunity to be The Church in today's world.

Ken Murphy – Sr. Pastor Cypress

### **YEAR OF THE BIBLE**

Finally, Israel is home. She has crossed the Jordan River and is in the process of taking possession of the land. God is Israel's sword and shield as they experience victory after victory. Unfortunately, it won't be long until God's wrath turns against Israel as they forget the God of their fathers and they begin to worship the pagan gods of their neighbors.

In the NT the Christian church is taking shape as preaching points and churches are being established throughout the Roman empire. Read Paul's letters carefully. Our theology is being fleshed out as he addresses local church issues.

## **EASTER REPORT**

Easter weekend worship attendance topped 12,500. This total represents a 50% increase over our typical weekend worship attendance in Greater Ohio. More importantly, it begins to demonstrate the kind of potential our churches have for regular attendance. What is required is the same kind of special attention that goes into planning for Easter, the same degree of promotion and publicity for attracting new people and a change in thinking that concedes certain individuals to being only Christmas and Easter attenders.

We received some exciting reports from pastors indicating conversions that occurred, the return of missing in action members and a great spirit of worship that has not been present for some time.

Some highlights from cards submitted:

Marion Dayspring had more than 1000 attend an Easter musical that lasted three nights. They also received an Easter offering of \$166,853.

Cypress had 2,835 in their weekend worship services.

Columbia Station set a new worship record with 215 persons present.

Vida Nueva had 5 persons saved.

## **FAMILY GATHERING PROMOTION**

Promotional materials for Family Gathering will be in the mail this month. A DVD has been produced using scenes from last year's gathering. It is being included in mailings to churches where we know projection systems are in use. If you do not receive a DVD but desire one please contact us and one will be mailed to you.

## **WELCOME TO NEW PASTORS**

Coolville Whites Chapel has called Charles Martindale to serve as pastor. Dayton First voted to receive William Stringer as their pastor. We welcome these two men and their families to the Greater Ohio District.

## **CHURCH OPENINGS**

Currently the following churches are searching for pastors: Crooksville Oakfield; Londonderry Pine Ridge; Port Clinton; South Webster, Springfield Faith and St. Marys.

## **DENOMINATIONAL NOTES**

INSURANCE- Information packets with applications have been sent to all churches regarding the new health insurance plan being promoted among Wesleyan churches. It is offered by Aetna Insurance and is available to all Wesleyan ministers and employees of Wesleyan churches, full/part time. The open enrollment closes on May 17<sup>th</sup>. If you did not receive information you may contact 1-888-772-9682.

**Whether you choose the coverage or not you are asked to return your enrollment form indicating your choice!!**

## **W. CHESTER CHINESE ESL**

Members of the W. Chester church recently recognized an opportunity for ministry in their area. The ministry, reaching out to persons of Chinese descent in their community. "Friendship Classes" were offered through the church which primarily focused on establishing a relationship and teaching basic English. The initial session is over, but a second is planned for fall.

## **MISSIONS NOTES**

Joshua Gordon, son of Danny and Marilyn Gordon, has just arrived in Bosnia to begin a 16 month term of service working in the ministry of church planting. Please pray for him as he becomes acquainted with the language and develops a network of contacts.

Rev. Martin Torres, National Supt. Of The Wesleyan Church of Mexico, has called for a day of prayer on June 4<sup>th</sup>. I want to extend his prayer base beyond his Mexican churches to also include us in the Ohio. One important prayer request is for Martin's application for a visa to visit our district this summer for District Conference. Past efforts have been turned down by the Mexican government. Please pray that this attempt will be successful.

Many of you are familiar with Jim and Judy Keilholtz, missionaries to Papua New Guinea. They have written to express their desire to link up with new ministry partners from Ohio. If you have an interest in sharing in their ministry you may contact Global Partners at 317-774-7950.

## **DISTRICT BOARD OF MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS**

The DBMD is scheduled to meet with ministerial students and licensed ministers on May 19 & 20. If you are not contacted for an interview but wish to meet with the DBMD please contact Rev. John Brock, DBMD chairman at 419-253-7034.

## **WESLEYAN YOUTH CAMP**

This year's camp theme is "Fusion." It will be held at Higher Ground Camp & Conference Center near Cincinnati. The cost is \$175 per person. Additional information can be obtained either by visiting their web page which can be accessed through our district's website or by contacting Rick Rucker, WY President at 614-878-8192.

## **REPORTS**

A gentle reminder: do not forget to complete your various reports and submit them by their deadlines. Annual Service Reports are coming due soon. District Conference Delegate Certification forms and Local Church Conference Information forms are due immediately after your Local Church Conference. Annual Statistical Reports are due by June 12<sup>th</sup>. Please give prompt attention to these. THANKS!

**DISTRICT BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION** will be meeting on Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for these district leaders.

## **DS NEWS & NOTES**

Since January 23<sup>rd</sup> I have been writing a weekly News & Notes email and sending to all of our pastors and ministers. This was an idea that grew out of a denominational meeting I attended in Orlando. I am pleased with the responses I have received to it. However, I think that not everyone is receiving it. Because it goes out in a bulk format it may be that it is being diverted to some persons spam or bulk folder. In other cases it may be that we either do not have a current email or an email at all.

If for whatever reason you are not receiving it please let me know and we will work with you to resolve the problem. This piece often has some very important information that I do not want you to miss.

## **NEW RESOURCE FROM WESLEYAN PUBLISHING HOUSE**

Looking at Life Through My New Bifocals is a new book written by Jerry Brecheisen. Jerry is a popular speaker and currently serves as director of media for The Wesleyan Church. Suggested retail is \$8.99.

## **HARNESSING THE POWER OF A FOCUSED LIFE**

The General Department of Stewardship Ministries is pleased to offer this life planning workshop on May 31<sup>st</sup> at the World Headquarters building in Indianapolis. Topics include the four building blocks of self-leadership and clarifying life purpose. To register contact 800-627-2537 or [www.wesleyan.org/sm](http://www.wesleyan.org/sm)

## **ORVILLE AWE PASSES**

Rev. Orville Awe passed away May 3<sup>rd</sup>. He had pastored several churches in Ohio and served as a District Superintendent in Illinois. His daughter is Deborah (Ron) Jurski who pastors the Toledo Hope Wesleyan Church.