

THE ACADEMY FOR LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

The Vision and Mission of the Academy:

The level of the leadership effectiveness of a pastor and the lay leadership of a church determines the level of effectiveness of how well a congregation reaches people for Jesus Christ. It was the awareness of this fundamental leadership principle, which gave birth to the founding vision of the Academy for Leadership Excellence. Believing that leadership can be learned, the mission of the Academy is to raise the level of leadership effectiveness of church leaders through continuing education events, coaching, mentoring, and its two year leadership fellows program.

Unlike, theological seminaries, the focus of the Academy is not on the theological and theoretical aspects of spiritual leadership, but on the enhancement of practical leadership skill sets, such as how to handle conflict, how to build a team around you, how to be a transformational leader, how to balance your ministry, how to plan worship that works, how a rural pastor can become a catalyst for community transformation, time management, empowering the laity and being a servant leader.

The Academy leadership development strategies have come as a result of extensive listening sessions with the Bishop and Cabinet, the Academy clergy and lay Advisory team and listening sessions held within many districts. This “ground level” data inform what leadership development needs are addressed and the selection of Academy faculty or resource leaders.

Leadership Development Tracks:

During the past year, the Academy Board has adopted a five-year strategic plan that includes implementing the following leadership development tracks.

- Days of Learning:

These quarterly, day training events bring national leaders to address leadership development issues. Since last Annual Conference, these have included “*Managing Conflict More Effectively*,” led by Russ Moxley; “*Building the Team Around You*,” led by Mark Beeson and the leadership team of Granger Community Church (United Methodist) in Indiana and “*Being a Transformational Leader*,” led by Jorge Acevedo and his leadership team from Grace U.M.C. in Florida. All events were well attended and received extremely positive feedback.

During the 2010-2011 Conference year, Jim Harnish, Hyde Park UMC, Tampa Bay, Florida, will lead a September 16, event on “*Planning Worship That Works*,” in Raleigh; Sue Nilson Kibbey, Ginghamburg U.M. Church, Ohio, will lead “*Ultimately Responsible*,” on November 9 in Greenville and November 10 in Raleigh; on March 2, 2011, Alan Hirsh, author of *ReJesus will lead “Reintroducing Jesus to the Church: Being a Passionate Spiritual Leader,”* in Raleigh; on May 10, Bill George, Harvard School of Business and former CEO of Medtronic and author of

best sellers, *True North* and *Authentic Leadership*, will lead “Being an Authentic Leader,” in Raleigh. The planned Days of Learning and their venues for September 20 and November 8 are still being negotiated.

- The Academy Fellows Program:

The purpose of this leadership development track is to bring together 20 -25 annually selected emerging leaders to form a community of leadership learning. The community will meet two days each month and follow a curriculum module which addresses a variety of leadership development skill sets such as being a spiritual servant leader; self-awareness, ethics and integrity in leadership; maintaining emotional and physical fitness, time management; defining mission, vision and congregational values; creative management of church conflict; staffing your church for excellence; making decisions that make a difference; guiding your church through size transitions; understanding church finances, etc.

The Academy Fellows Program will have a faculty of highly skilled resource leaders serving as both instructors and life coaches. This community of learning will also include an annual retreat for a more intensive, clinical concentration for mentoring and developing leadership skills that come from self-awareness exercises such as outward bound, working as teams, receiving 360 degree feedback. The prime purpose of the Academy Fellows Program is to raise-up passionate, Christ-centered servant leaders with leadership hearts, along with highly honed and effective leadership skills sets, dedicated for carrying-out the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

- Coaching:

In concert with the Bishop, Cabinet and Conference Connectional Table, the intent of this leadership track is to provide a delivery system of accredited coaches, who will respond to the particular needs for enhancing the level of leadership performance within the life of local congregations. Through this system, coaches accredited by the Academy will guarantee the provision of a credible level of leadership development expertise and spiritual maturity for helping clergy and laity to respond creatively in building healthy and ministry effective congregations.

Such coaches will provide services, such as responding creatively to leadership transitions within a congregation; coaching associate pastors appointed to become lead pastors; coaching pastors, who transition from a congregation without a staff or with a small staff to a

congregation with a multiple staff; assessing the life of a congregation six months after a clergy leadership transition; coaching and empowering lay leadership; building healthy systems of accountability and trust. This delivery system of providing accredited coaches will inspire confidence and trust among recipients. Assigned coaches will not only share a Wesleyan vision of ministry and mission but come with the guarantee that they meet the required standards of excellence of the Academy's coaching "brand."

- District Continuing Education Events:

This leadership track of the Academy provides continuing education events for districts within the Conference. Such events are intentionally designed in concert with the expressed needs of each recipient district. Each District Superintendent and the district ministry team provide the Academy with identified leadership development needs and the Academy serves as the provider and delivery system for meeting these requests.

For example, on Tuesday, October 5, 2010, the Academy will hold a day workshop for the Fayetteville and Rockingham districts on "The Rural Church as a Catalyst for Community Transformation," at Solid Rock UMC Church, Fayetteville. Designed in partnership with The Thriving Rural Communities at Duke Divinity School and the two districts, the day workshop will include as leaders, Jeremy Troxler of Duke; Dr. Alan Rice, Executive Director, Rural Faith Development; Robb Webb of the Duke Endowment and Billy Ray Hall, President, N.C. Rural Economic Development Center along with case study panel, "On How to Lead a Community Transformation: Solid Rock," with Rick Wise and his staff.

At this writing, the Academy is presently negotiating a continuing education day with the New Berne district and recently partnered with the Burlington, Durham and Raleigh districts on "Being a Mission-Centered Ministry" featuring Doug Anderson, Executive Director of the Reuben Job Center. Held in early May, these respective districts designed and implemented this event by themselves with the Academy helping in the marketing.

Future Directions and Financial Support:

Although the N.C. Conference of the United Methodist Church provides the core constituency for the Academy, the Academy stands as a non-profit that is self-supporting. This reality requires the building of a wider donor base. Furthermore, the vision of the Academy is also ecumenical and already the Academy is providing leadership development resources to the Raleigh Diocese of the Catholic Church. The May 10, 2011 "Day of Learning," led by Bill George will not only be marketed for the church

community but also for the business, educational and political community. Likewise, the faculty of the Academy will be available for provide leadership services for such non-church communities. The Academy is presently negotiating providing continuing education credits for Academy events with Methodist University. This in a frequently expressed desire of participants in Academy events.

The Academy is fortunate to be led by a superbly gifted, passionate and Christ-centered Board of Directors, a dedicated Advisory Team drawn from cross-section of clergy and laity, and the excellent staff of Leah Wiebe-Smith and Shannon Williams. The Academy is also grateful for the passionate support and guiding wisdom of Bishop Al Gwinn and his Cabinet. Further information about the Academy can be found on the Academy website, [nccumc Academy for Leadership Excellence](#). A new website is in the making.

Submitted by Brian Gentle, Executive Director

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