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“...Write the vision and make it plain on the tablet so that it might be read quickly.”

Habakkuk 2:2 (LEB)

Live Ministries Moves National Offices



Rev. Gary Campbell
Executive Director/L.I.V.E. Ministries

It's been called "One of the most significant ministries within the Church of God today" and we couldn't agree more! LIVE Ministries has shared a rich history with the Church of God for over 40 years now and the founding fathers of this ministry, the late Pastor Gerald Marvel and Christian businessman Dale Warman created a legacy that is still revolutionizing churches and the lives of people around the world today by the power of Jesus Christ, and it all began in the Vancouver First Church of God in Vancouver, WA.

In recent years, the

Vancouver church has experienced an explosion of growth within their affiliate program the Kingsway Christian Academy. Kingsway has grown so exponentially that it could now rival many public schools in scope and size. Of course where there is growth, there is also a demand for space and so the decision was made to move the LIVE Ministries international offices to Virginia - which was no small endeavor. After several flights to Portland, OR and nearly 3,000 miles later, the moving van pulled up to the ministry's new office space at 116 West Lee Highway in Chilhowie, VA just a few weeks ago.

Over the past several years LIVE Ministries has undergone many deep structural and program changes that have created a broader foundation for long-term growth. LIVE Ministries has invested significant resources into many areas including restructuring its web presence that is a departure from a static, information style webpage

to a dynamic, interactive site where people can connect and share their God story, go shopping at the LIVE Ministries shopping network, make donations plus much more. That new website can be accessed now at www.LIVEMinistries.Org and amazingly, hosting a LIVE Connect in your church can still be done at little or no cost to the host church.

I am sure the Church of God in Virginia is as proud as I am to call Virginia its home. Many new and exciting things are ahead for LIVE Ministries in the very near future and I look forward to what God has in store for each of us as we partner together to impact our culture for the cause of Christ. Give us a call or stop by our offices anytime. You can reach us toll free at 1-855-251-7247 or drop us a line at LIVE Ministries P.O. Box 5001 Chilhowie, VA 24319. I look forward to hearing from you.

Pastor Gary Campbell,
Executive Director/
L.I.V.E Ministries

In Praise of the Small Church and It's Pastor



Reverends Beth & Richard
Gilbert

"There are precious souls in big and small churches, and all those in between, even in the "dying" congregations. ."

In our society we place great value on "Big." We talk about the "Big day" or the "Big man" on campus. In sports, there is the "Big game" or a "Big inning." With relationships, there is always the "Big date" or 'when is he going to pop the "Big question?"'. Even in a negative situation it can apply. For example, if a person gets in trouble, they may go to the "Big house." These applications are all well and good for society and it's systems, but when it comes to God's Church, should we follow the ideology of the world and apply the same carnal logic? I don't think so.

The idea, whether we confess it or not, seems to be what we deem significant and what is less or insignificant. If we apply the afore-mentioned logic then then only the large or mega-church has real meaning and worth. We then simply view the medium or small church body as a means of getting people on to the more significant larger body or congregation. But let me assure you this is not the picture scripture projects to us. Jesus did not tell us, "Where two or three are gathered in my

name I will send one of my lesser angels to check it out." For the true wording, we must look at Matthew 18:20 that says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (NRSV) Nor does the scripture say, "The fervent effectual prayer of the righteous horde is powerful in its effects. Rather, James 5:16 says, "...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." (NKJV) Do we love our "big" children more than our "small" ones? As far as I can tell from Scripture, the Lamb's Book of Life only records names, not numbers.

Unfortunately, much of the blame for this way of thinking can be placed at the feet of religious establishments almost desperate to be viewed as relevant by the world at large. This attitude is played out over and over again by pastors who hop to the next size church as soon as one comes open. This is very much akin to climbing the corporate ladder for the "corner office."

Please don't get me wrong. I am not against the large and mega-churches. They have their

place, but it is not the "only" place. They are no more precious in God's eyes than those churches with only a handful of faithful attendees and whose youth group consists of anyone under 60 and still working. There are precious souls in big and small churches, and all those in between, even in the "dying" congregations.

Remember, God called the Apostle Paul to pastor a shipwreck in Acts 27-28. Those aboard were saved because a man of God was present with faith and courage in the God whom he served. And later, on the island of Malta when Paul was attacked by the snake, God was glorified because Paul did not fall, but continued to stand at his post.

So small congregation and small church, take heart. You are standing; continue to stand firm in your posting. Your King sees you and knows.

Rev. Richard N. Gilbert/Pastor Slusser's Chapel Church of God - Blacksburg

Local Church News



Rev. Dr. Simeon R. Green III

Joynes Road Church of God

announces the arrival of Pastor-Elect Rev. Dr. Simeon R. Green III. Drs. Simeon and Velma Green arrived at their home in Richmond November 28, 2013 and has assumed the leadership role of Pastor. The actual installation of Dr. Green as Pastor will take place March 30 with details to follow in the February

edition of COGVA NEWS.

At the Annual Camp Meeting of the Southeastern Association of the Church of God, Rev. Dr. Green was elected to the position of Chair. This election took place Saturday, December 28, 2013. The S.E.A.C.O.G. is the oldest Church of God camp meeting in existence and has church affiliations in five states –

Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Please lift Dr. Green in prayer as he begins his new assignments locally and nationally.

Richmond First Church of God/Walmsley Blvd.

Little Church involved in Big things!

It was about five years ago at the Roanoke Church of God Missions Event, we met Pastor Stanley Hollowhorn from the Wounded Knee, South Dakota Mission. From the time we heard his testimony, there was kindred spirit and we felt God's leading for our small church in Richmond, Virginia to support this important ministry. Bunny Harris of the Roanoke Church of God was instrumental in getting our church involved. Our first

project was provision of new mattresses for the bunks that mission workers use throughout the summer season. Since then, we have visited three times in the last five years and each time we have received such a blessing through Pastor Stanley's ministry. This year, our church bought a 2012 twelve-passenger van to provide much needed transportation for the church's outreach. Thanks to Josh Carnahan, Tom Carnahan's son (Gordon Road Church of God), we were able to get the van lettered. We have come alongside Missionary-elect Emily

Clark to support a family-life center (Place of Promise) to be built at the Wounded Knee Mission. Emily Clark is scheduling speaking engagements for 2014 to share the story of the Place of Promise. If you would like her to share with your church, Sunday School class, women's group, business, or club please call her at (937)-855-6907.



Van purchased for Wounded Knee

In Memoriam



Dr. Lucille V. Green

Lucille Virginia Green, 100, of Richmond, VA, went to be with the Lord on Friday, December 20, 2013, at the Elizabeth Adams Crump Golden Living Center, Glen Allen, VA, surrounded by her family.

Lucille Virginia green was born August 20, 1913 in Bedford, VA. She married Rev. Simeon R. Green, Sr. who preceded her in death. She attended and graduated from Lucy Addison High School, Roanoke, VA. She was the first African American LPN nurse to integrate Stratford Hall Nursing Home, Richmond, VA. She served with her husband, Rev. Simeon R. Green, Sr. with the Church of God Mission in Petersburg (Pocahontas

Island), VA for 50 years. She served as Sunday School Superintendent, Chair of the Board of Christian Education, conference leader and youth leader for the former Association of the church of God for over 30 years. She was the founder and Emeritus Dean of the Church of God in Virginia Leadership School from 1998 until the time of her passing.

Lucille Virginia green received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on December 12, 2009 for casting a vision and for education and training in the Church of God. She was an outstanding cook. She loved to read, talk history, and most importantly she loved reading the Word. Her

favorite scripture was Psalm 121. Some of her favorite hymns include: A Child of God, All In Jesus, I'll Follow With Rejoicing, and A Song of Joy.

Lucille Green is survived by one step-daughter, Viola Green Carter (Charles); and a host of grandchildren, among them, one granddaughter, Naomi Green; two grandsons, Rev. Dr. Simeon R. Green III (Velma) and Frederick D. Green, Sr. (Jacquelyn); a host of great grandchildren, among them, Aaron Johnson; Frederick Green, Jr.; Crystal Green; Mikelyn Green, Charmayne Green and Marcus Green; a host of great great grandchildren, other relatives and friends.

Rev. Don Hackney Honors Dr. Lucille V. Green

Dear Bro. Simeon, May I take this opportunity to express my condolences on the passing of your grandmother, Sister Lucille Green. God had certainly blessed her with many years of fruitful ministry, but we are never really quite ready to bid "farewell" to one we loved and admired so much. Your grandmother was such an extraordinary stateswomen in the life of the Church of God in Virginia. Her vision and commitment to see the work of the church go forward has served as an inspiration to us all. She

will be sorely missed. I was always impressed by her forethought to take a personal dream of ministerial training and practical preparation for service to the local church and by the force of her own effort and resources plow the ground until her dream became reality. The effect of her efforts and influence are so far reaching that only in heaven will we finally understand just how many lives she touched. We know that for her, this marks a great home-going where she will certainly hear her Savior say, "Well done, my good and faithful

servant!" She has fought the good fight of faith and has finished her course. There is certainly a crown of victory and righteousness awaiting her in heaven. However, we who remain do sorrow for a great warrior of the Kingdom who is no longer among us.

Our prayers and best wishes are with you and your family during this difficult time. May God bless you and yours with His great peace and comfort.

Your friend and brother in Christ,
Don W. Hackney

"Lucille Green was an extraordinary stateswoman in the life of the Church of God in Virginia."

Mark Your Calendars

Fellowship Gathering
January 27 @ 6:30 pm -
Teppanyaki Grill, 49 West
Mercury BLVD Hampton,
VA. This is a time of
fellowship and relationship
building. This is not a
business gathering, but
opportunity for us as
leaders in COGVA to build
relationships. This
gathering is designed for
church leaders in the
eastern part of the state,
but everyone in COGVA
will be welcome.

**W.C.G. Central Regional
Prayer Retreat -**
Jan. 18, 2014 at 12:00 pm
Old Liberty Station,
Bedford, VA

**W.C.G. Eastern Region
Prayer Retreat -**
Feb. 22, 2014 at 12:00 pm
Clarion Hotel Historic
Williamsburg, VA

**Spring Youth
Convention -**
March 21 – 23 at the

Tanglewood Holiday
Inn/Roanoke, VA.
Worship Leaders
scheduled for the
weekend: "Relinquish" and
Dr. Andy Stephenson will
be speaking to our youth
and adult leaders as well.
Registration can still take
place by going to
www.vasyc.com and
downloading the forms
and sending them the
address listed on the
packet.

**Spring Minister's
Fellowship –** April 4-5
Hosted by the 21st CHOG
Richmond. Details will
follow soon, with hotel
information and
programming. Please take
note of the shorter time
frame which will begin on
Friday morning and wrap
up midday on Saturday.

**W.C.G. Spring
Convention -**
April 25 – 27 at Joynes

Road CHOG, Hampton.
Programming and hotel
details will soon follow.

Middler Youth Camp
Grades 1 – 5
July 16 – 19

Senior High Youth Camp
Grades 9 – 12
July 21 – 26

Junior High Youth Camp
Grades 6 – 8
July 28 – August 2

Camp Meeting -
August 3 – 9
Opportunities for camping
and refreshing times of
worship and growth in a
family atmosphere. Rev.
Howard K. Hammond of
Springdale Community
Church, Springdale, MD is
our scheduled evangelist
with Rev. Jimmy Swogger
of Distant, PA leading us
in worship.



Churches Seeking Pastoral Leadership and Pulpit Supply Names

**Current open
congregations in the
Church of God in
Virginia include:**

Staunton First Church of
God
1850 Shutterlee Mill Road
Staunton, VA

Contact Pulpit Committee
Chair Sylvia McDorman
mcdormans@verizon.net

Dublin First Church of
God
6330 Courtney Lane
Dublin, VA

Contact Pulpit Committee
Chair Mary Wright
mary@nrvgateway.com

**Names submitted for
Pulpit Supply include:**

Bill Watson
Saltville, VA
(276) 496-9196

Mike Potter
Chilhowie, VA
(276) 685-3938

Dr. Gene Miller
Gate City, VA
276-690-2368

Gary Campbell
Chilhowie, VA
276-759-2821

Karla Campbell
Chilhowie, VA
276-759-2825

Justin Keene
Marion, VA
276-782-2747

Trevor Belcher
Bristol, VA
276-669-2319

David Rohacek
Spotsylvania, VA
540-760-3552

Ben Stultz
Reedville, VA
804-453-6647



If you are a licensed
or ordained minister in the
Church of God and would
like to have your name listed
in COGVA News as available
Pulpit Supply, please email
your information to
drbobneace@virginiachurchofgod.com

Women of the Church of God (W.C.G.) Activities



A big thank you goes to Abingdon First Church of God for hosting the W.C.G. Prayer Banquet on Saturday, November 2. Women from six churches across the southwestern part of Virginia and one church from Blacksburg gathered for an afternoon of fellowship, fun and spiritual refreshing.

The theme for the day was "Diamonds of the Rarest Kind." Racheal Baez, the

W.C.G. state president, was the guest speaker. As Racheal shared her personal testimony, she reminded the women that they all were unique and rare diamonds. God, as the master jeweler, wants to shape and remove the impurities and imperfections in their lives so they may shine brightly for the Lord.

The Central Region will hold their Prayer Banquet on January 18, 2014 at "Old Liberty Station," in Bedford. The guest speaker will be Linda Haskins from Richmond.

The Eastern Region's Prayer Banquet is on February 22, 2014 at the Historic Williamsburg Clarion. The guest speaker will be Tammy Clark from Lynchburg. "Diamonds of the Rarest Kind" will be the theme for both banquets. The women across Virginia are invited and encouraged to come to these banquets.

For more information, please contact Racheal Baez at beltbaez@gmail.com

An Open Letter from Jim Lyon, General Director – Church of God Ministries

The following is an open letter Jim Lyon, General Director of Church of God Ministries posted on his Facebook account December 23, 2013. In an effort to create clear communication from our national offices, I spoke with one of Brother Lyon's staff people to place his letter in COGVA NEWS. The letter has been copied from <http://jesusisthesubject.org/openletter/> To my Church of God family:

One hundred forty days have passed since I first stepped into my new post as General Director at Church of God Ministries. My life has been a whirlwind since then; I have been on the road more days than I have been at home; I have been listening to voices from across the Church of God, from coast-to-coast and even abroad; I have been thinking and praying earnestly, waking and sleeping, breathing and wondering about the Church of God and the role Church of God Ministries might play in its future course. I've been handed (Providentially, I believe) both a sobering and exciting opportunity; I have been humbled and challenged by a task at once daunting and exhilarating.

On some days, I feel as if I have been prepared for a lifetime for just this moment. On other days, I feel overwhelmed and altogether spent, thinking myself foolish and unprepared, wrestling with the fear that accepting this appointment has been the stupidest thing I have ever done. "Why, oh why," I ask myself quietly, "did I surrender a ministry I loved and in which I felt secure, to tackle this brief of impossibles, uncertainties, and towering mountains to climb?" At the end of every day, though, I am persuaded once more that the Lord has called me to walk onto this stage and to lead in this hour. About this, I am daily made more certain.

I'm still learning the ropes, of course. I have fumbled a few balls, no doubt about it. On the other hand, I've been able to complete a few passes, too, and believe the Lord is coaching the whole. Thanks to all who are on the field with me, working as a team. And, thanks, as well, to all those watching from the sidelines, who have cheered, prayed, and been graceful even when confused about the game plan.

I'm making this post online as a way of connecting with my Church of God family, in these days of accelerated change and death-defying challenges. And, yes, I mean: death-defying. The Church of God we know and love, this Movement of God's people that has clothed many of us (myself included) from earliest memory, the sacred calling of a people by God Himself, is in jeopardy, its very existence hanging by a thread stretched thin.

How so? The Succession Committee (established by the Ministries Council in 2012 to nominate a new General Director), spent a year surveying the Church of God in the United States and Canada, attempting to take the pulse of the nearly quarter million who call the Church of God home. To do so, two independent consultants were retained to develop and pursue a credible process. These two firms worked in tandem, conducting interviews (for example, exploring the thoughts of a broad demographic of 1,500 people representative of the church), facilitating focus groups with key influencers across the continent, objectively assessing the metrics and hard data, and producing a profile of who we are and where we are. This elaborate study (its reliability on par with a Presidential poll) brought the consultants to the same overwhelming conclusions: (1) the Church of God as we know it is near death, and (2) the Church of God desperately wants to live, but only if sweeping changes can be made to make it worth living for.

Great men and women have poured their lives into the Church of God over many generations and up to the present hour; there are times and seasons for every work. The world around us is experiencing exponential change, our churches are often buffeted by wind and rain we cannot control; how to tack the sails, unload cargo that is unnecessary, and stay true to a fixed course is the imperative of our time.

There is much to talk about in this research, but suffice it to say, the analysis spoke strongly into the Succession Committee's (and ultimately the Ministries Council's) recommendations for the next General Director (which proved to be me). The data was delivered to me in a presentation by the chief consultant and then, again, in writing, in the first quarter of this year, as I was asked to consider accepting the appointment. The whole enterprise was bathed in prayer, measured by Scripture, and governed, we believe, by the Holy Spirit.

My charge, affirmed by the Ministries Council, has consequently been to "bring sweeping, substantive, dramatic, and Biblically-grounded change to the Church of God, for the purpose of re-energizing the Movement." Whew. That's one tall order.

Of course, I know that the office of General Director—indeed the whole of Church of God Ministries—is not empowered to mandate change, affirm the status quo, or compel anybody to do anything. The most we can hope to wield is influence; I know, as everyone knows, that every congregation in the Church of God is, at the end of the day, its own master, every pastor a kind of free agent. The only leverage any of us have over any others is the power of ideas, an anointing of the Holy Spirit to persuade, the chance to be heard and to listen.

With this in view, Church of God Ministries does have a role to play in speaking into the course of the Church of God; we believe it can be an instrument in Heaven's hand to help vouchsafe the future of a sacred trust we all hold dear. God called the Church of God into being; I believe He is calling us again to renewed life and purpose.

(2) But, time is not on our side. The rapid secularization of our culture, the pale of a post-Christian civilization, and the splintering of the church among us (with competing agendas, rival meetings that vie for precious time and resources, independent visions and methodologies that tug the Body first this way, then that, and more)—conspire to hasten our end if we are not determined and ready to act. The status quo cannot be maintained; we will grow or we will die. We will come together or we will fly apart. We will find ourselves again in common purpose or we will divide again into devolving weakness. Hell is not perturbed as we wrestle with ourselves, focus on our disagreements, and view each other warily. Hell's greatest fear is that God's people will become one. If we exacerbate our fault lines, we will find ourselves at fault for crippling the Kingdom's advance.

The Movement is at an intersection today that will define its next generation. The contest is real. The stakes are high. Time is short.

If we are to meet the test, we must meet together.

The key to focusing our congregations and reclaiming our identity and purpose is held in the hands of our pastors—the shepherds the Lord has called to lead His flock in the separate congregations across the land into which He has placed them. No congregation can embrace a new day, no congregation can hold true its legacy, no congregation can fulfill its destiny if its pastor is not engaged and at the point. A church cannot grow past its pastor; no pastor can grow in isolation, separated from his or her peers. In the Church of God, the meeting of our pastors has been historically dubbed the General Assembly. In this crisis hour, the General Assembly must be revitalized, reconstituted, and reborn as the vital forum it once was to galvanize the church once more.

Of course, our General Assembly now also includes lay delegates, chosen by local churches to be eyes and ears and voices for them. The General Assembly also includes members of our church agency boards (like our universities and college) and ordained and licensed clergy who may not now be serving in a local pastoral ministry, but who have been recognized by the church for their calling. Each member, by whatever criteria they are made eligible to participate, is important. The active pastors, more than any others, hold the keys to the engine of their local parishes.

There are 11,182 eligible voting members of the General Assembly in the United States and Canada. Less than 4% of those eligible have participated, on average, in recent years. The Assembly's quorum was lowered from 400 to 300 in 2011, because the quorum could not be routinely met; a quorum of 300 represents just 2.7% of the whole.

Our annual Church of God Convention (meeting in Anderson since 1906, but moving around in the quarter century before that) includes the annual meeting of the General Assembly. These two events (one originally a campmeeting, the other a spiritual forum for church leaders) have been joined at the hip, always. It is no secret that participation in both meetings has fallen drastically in the last fifteen years, and especially in the last decade (despite the best efforts of all involved in the planning and development process). Huge sums of money (budgeted at \$100,000 each year) and countless hours have been invested in maintaining the meetings in Anderson, over time.

The reasons for the decline in participation have been hotly debated for many years; no definitive single answer probably exists (or, at least, can be agreed upon); but these truths are beyond dispute: (a) attendance is withering, (b) attendance is aging, (c) participants are reluctant to camp (few campsites are engaged), (d) participants are reluctant to stay in Anderson University dorms (fewer than 100 Americans and Canadians choose the dorms each year), (e) families no longer attend in significant numbers (less than 50 teenagers are on the grounds each year; Kids Place attendance in 2013 was 111, 30 children less than the year before, with many children present those of the local volunteers working the program), and (f) regional participation is narrowing (fewer participants come from afar, the percentage of those within driving distance is increasing: 53% of those attending in 2013 came from Indiana and adjacent states, representing just 33% of the whole church; only 6% attended from the 13 states of the American west, 13% from the seven southern states, and so on; 19% of those attending lived in Anderson).

These realities must be seen by the light of some other truths: (a) 25% of the whole Church of God is found in just 30 of our largest congregations—twelve of these are in the west (nine on the Pacific coast, three in the Rocky Mountain west), eight are in the Great Lakes, and the rest are spread everywhere else, (b) 50% of the whole Church of God is found in just 200 of our largest congregations (which includes the 30 largest); (c) 50% of the whole Church of God is found in the remaining 1,899 congregations in the United States and Canada; (d) we have 160 congregations with 25 people or less meeting together each weekend; (e) the growing edges of our church family are increasingly moving to the west and the south (reflecting, perhaps, population shifts in the United States and Canada generally).

Another startling truth with which we must contend is the shortage of housing in Anderson. There are less than 200 acceptable hotel/motel rooms within 20 miles of the Anderson University campus. Indeed, two of the largest (the once-Holiday Inn and, across Scatterfield, the Ramada-turned-Day's Inn both closed within the last year and are abandoned. If our church family will not camp or stay in the University dorms in large numbers (and that is irrefutably the case in recent

years), Anderson does not have sufficient housing infrastructure to support critical mass for the Convention or the General Assembly.

But, we used to see 5,000 or 8,000 come to Anderson for the Convention each June. What's different now? Again, in days gone by thousands camped—and the campus dormitories could house another 2,000. Anderson was an economically vibrant community with hotels and motels lining the approaches to both the north and south sides of town, which were booked with convention-goers. Many stayed with friends in homes, bearing witness to relationships forged over the years. But, few would consider staying in those same motels these days (and few remain open), the community's economic fortunes have declined (sending many who once opened their homes to convention-goers in search of jobs elsewhere), and folks will not take days off to camp on the campus or populate the dorms.

With the 2014 Convention looming and decisions forced to be made by the march of time, the Convention Planning Committee, previously formed before my time (and comprised of both Church of God Ministry staff members and clergy from outside the building), stared down these facts in September and recommended to the Ministries Council that the primary venue be relocated to the Crossings Church in Oklahoma City, with a satellite location in Anderson. The rationale was grounded in six truths: (a) the Church of God must, in this critical hour, when its very life is in the balance, call together its own and facilitate a meeting that reaches for far greater participation in the General Assembly and Convention than has been the norm in recent years, (b) Anderson no longer possesses the infrastructure (given the demonstrated reluctance of our people to camp and populate the University dorms) to host such a meeting—and that convening the meeting there again in 2014 will necessarily deny access to the church that cannot drive to the site for a day, requiring overnight accommodations (that includes nearly 222,000 people—or 92%—who worship with us each week), (c) the cost of staging the event in Anderson is steep, drawing huge sums away from other missional needs (at home and abroad), (d) the Crossings Church (with seating for 6,000 under one roof) in Oklahoma City is available to us without cost and is proximate to 3,000 hotel/motel rooms, (e) Oklahoma City is as accessible as is Indianapolis for travel by air or car, with similar costs; additionally, the Oklahoma City airport is 17 miles from the Crossings site; the Indianapolis airport is 65 miles from the Anderson University campus, and (f) like Anderson, Oklahoma City has a substantial Church of God constituent base, able to help facilitate the event with volunteers, support, and helping hands.

The Ministries Council received this recommendation and approved it unanimously in October. A second Ministries Council meeting was held in November, a month later, to review the decision and it was, once again, affirmed.

This decision is for 2014 only. How and where the Convention and General Assembly convene in subsequent years will be discussed at the meeting in June.

The Ministries Council spent time considering a General Assembly motion carried in 2012, calling for the 2014 meeting to be held in Anderson and a satellite location. While it is clear that the Constitution and Bylaws of the General Assembly and the Ministries Council Bylaws (set in motion by the General Assembly some years ago) empower the Council to act on the Assembly's behalf when it is not in session (the General Assembly's own constitution describes it as a "temporary presbytery" and says the Ministries Council "plans and convenes the annual General Assembly and North American Convention"), the Council, nevertheless, weighed carefully the Assembly's decision captured in the 2012 motion regarding venue and arrangements.

The Council even requested legal counsel in its deliberations, to be certain it was not misreading or misappropriating powers not properly within its purview. Church of God Ministries legal counsel, Ken Hatch (himself a Church of God stalwart and son of the same, with a long history with the Convention and General Assembly), studied the record of the 2012 General Assembly meeting, the General Assembly's Bylaws, the Ministries Council Bylaws, and all other relevant material and concluded that the Council did have the capacity to act, scheduling the Convention's and General Assembly's primary venue in Oklahoma City. One interesting outcome of the legal review was the identification of several inconsistencies in the General Assembly and Ministries Council charter documents, which can lead to confusion about who does what and how on several fronts; these must be addressed by the Assembly's Committee on Bylaws and Organization.

The Council determined that the conditions of the Assembly's motion, as read to require the primary venue to be in Anderson, could not today be met, given the new information and imperatives on the table today that were not available then. The interpretation of the motion itself has some elastic (depending on how it is understood). Rebecca New Edson (who placed the motion on the 2012 General Assembly floor following a committee report of which she was a part) was asked if the move to Oklahoma City with satellite access in Anderson was within the spirit and intent of the original and she replied, "Yes." Considering all of the evidence, the legal brief, Rebecca's testimony, and the critical juncture at which the church now finds itself, requiring a concerted effort to dramatically expand access to and participation in the Convention and General Assembly straightway, the Council concluded that the change for 2014 was unavoidable.

I was one of the 96% of the General Assembly that was not present in 2012 to hear the motion presented, its context, and its debate, or to cast a vote. I know there are some who were present who have been greatly disturbed by this change. The fact that less than 4% were present to vote is not cause to upend the outcome, but it does bear witness to the problem-at-hand: the Movement cannot move forward with such a tiny representation in the Assembly. If there is nowhere for Assembly

members to stay (and the Assembly is necessarily limited by Anderson's lodging), how can a credible General Assembly meeting that speaks for the whole church be constituted?

The satellite plan in Anderson will allow participants there to not only see and hear what happens in Oklahoma City in real time, it will allow voting and voice interaction between venues. In other words, someone at Madison Park in Anderson (which is also making its facilities available without cost) will be able to speak on the floor of the General Assembly (even though the Chair, for instance, is in Oklahoma City). Eligible voting members in both locations will be able to vote on every issue brought forward.

I realize this venue change is a huge marker in the church's life and history. I also believe it is consistent with the Movement's legacy. We are not people bound by tradition or place, but wholly on the move. Our founders gave no prominence to an address, but were bound by inspired ideas. Their identity was not drawn from a location here below but by a fixation with Heaven above. They understood they were just passing through—by riverboat, by coach, by train, by foot. Theirs was an ambition, like that of Jesus, to go from village to village with the Good News of the Kingdom, without regard to the place where they would lay their heads. Jesus is the subject, after all. And, I am persuaded that He is altogether pleased for us to throw open the doors wide in 2014 in two houses for as many and all that will come.

Yes, Be Bold. That's what the time requires; that's what the Church of God requires.

The move to Oklahoma City has one object and one alone: to strengthen the whole Church of God and to make the Convention and General Assembly as accessible as possible to as many as possible. Anderson has been my home for over twenty-two years and it is a community into which I have poured my life; I live here. But, my calling today requires me to look beyond my home and what I can see from the windshield of my car and speak up for the church everywhere. I am confident most members of our church family are doing the same.

(3) Soon after I arrived on the job, Church of God Ministries began to review its logo. Introduced for the first time in 1980 (one hundred years after the Movement's beginning), the familiar-to-some-but-not-to-others flame art posed a few challenges. Panned when it arrived on the scene as "sectarian," bearing too much likeness to denominational imprints already then in play (e.g. the United Methodist Church), today it is even more similar to other, newer faith brands (see for instance the Metropolitan Community Church logo—a group with some emphases quite different from our own). The flame logo has never been embraced by the whole church (nor was it necessarily intended to be) and is unknown in many (if not most) of our congregations across the country.

Furthermore, the flame does not communicate abroad what many of us take for granted in the United States and Canada. In western Christian culture historically, fire has been seen as an emblem of the Holy Spirit—and with good reason, found in the Bible (e.g., the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost in the form of visible tongues of fire, famously). In the Orient, though, this symbolism for the Holy Spirit has little traction. Fire can suggest many other themes (in Hindu India, e.g., fire often burns before the idol, inspiring worship) and rarely would lead an unbeliever to think about Jesus. Even in the Occident, traditional Christian emblematic representations are falling out of the common cultural core and do not speak as they once did.

There is one symbol, however, which is recognized universally, in every place Jesus has been preached, as the mark of the Gospel and that is the Cross. If Jesus is the subject—and I believe He is—the beginning and the end, the Word become flesh, the Way, the Truth, and the Life—then the Cross is His signature.

I listened to the graphic designer engaged in the development of the new logo present a very careful and reasoned case for the how and why of the new look, developed by his hand (after elaborate research and exploration of core ideas and themes, listening to Church of God people) and understood it. But, my assessment of the new look was much simpler and straightforward: (a) the logo places the Cross at the center—in the middle of everything; it makes Jesus the subject (the appearance of the Cross in the logo was strengthened, after initial response and review contended it was too faint), (b) whatever the pieces of my world might be, whatever the challenges, the relationships, the shapes and sizes of life, they all come together at the Cross—Jesus makes everything whole, (c) the circular form of the logo spoke to me clearly of wholeness, unity, holiness: something shattered and disparate coming together, again, drawn together by the Cross. It's all about Jesus.

Of course, it's a subjective exercise, discerning messages from art, ink stamps, logos, and the rest. And, like the flame introduced on letterhead in 1980, no church or agency or pastor or school is required to employ the brand. But, in a world of global exposure—when thousands can access our website from every continent every day—when correspondence I send reaches not just to Kokomo but Kolkata, the Cross-in-the-middle, pulling all things together in unity, is an imprint I believe will serve Church of God Ministries well.

Some today have panned the Cross-in-the-middle logo as others did the three-colored flame in an earlier age. Some have readily grabbed it, praised it, and already employed it in their ministry publications and online presence. Whatever imprint our state and local ministries use, let's focus our message on Jesus. Making Him the subject is our best hope for coming together and changing the world.

Whew. Thanks for reading this far.

(4) I rarely visit Facebook; I cannot monitor every stream; I can't even keep up with my own page. My Facebook posts all originate with my Twitter account; Twitter allows me to throw out ideas, but is not so interactive. One of my great challenges in my new role is managing my time—and especially the time it takes to respond to all of the surface mail, electronic mail, and social media I now receive daily from across the continent and around the world. But, I'm working on it. Thanks for understanding.

For all of the challenges that stand before us, I know that the Lord has positioned the Church of God to overcome, outrun, and prevail over every scheme Hell can throw in the way. God has called His church into being and He is calling us to take up the mantle and, once again, be bold. We must be measured, tough, smart, confident, savvy, and gracious. We must believe the best about each other (the proof of our love) and stand together. Jesus is the subject. If He is for us, who can be against us? And, if He is in us, we will change the world. Transformed lives will bear fruit in a transformed society.

It's Christmas week and I and the other wonderful folks who are a part of the Church of God Ministries team are taking a few days off. As the New Year dawns, there will be time to press forward and share more. For now, I am ready to take a deep breath, and a step away from the ordinary routine that so often occupies our days. May God's unspeakable Gift be at our every table, at the heart of our conversation and fellowship, may His Spirit bless and hold each one close, calling the best out of us and blessing others around this Christmastime.

It is a sacred privilege to be a part of the Church of God. I am humbled to be, with you, in Christ, your brother,
Jim

COGVA Budget Concerns

August 1, 2013 - July 31, 2014

Categories	Budget	August	September	October	November	December
1000 STATE OFFICE						
1100 Business Office	\$3,800.00					
Postage		\$60.66	\$ 6.74	\$ 67.30	\$46.00	\$46.00
Telephone		\$54.53	\$76.15	\$42.46	\$42.10	\$41.73
Internet		\$50.00	\$35.00	\$35.00	\$36.00	\$36.00
Office Supplies					\$27.88	\$370.00
Web Page		\$9.94	\$ 9.94	\$9.94	\$9.94	\$9.94
Yearbook			\$70.00		\$26.00	
Credit Card Finance Charge		\$22.73	\$20.89	\$25.15	\$26.90	
New Computer		\$235.78				
1200 Insurance	\$13,000.00					
Property				\$2,756.25		
W/C				\$353.25		
Special Risk					\$82.50	
Van/Camp Christi					\$123.00	
1300 Office Manager	\$14,437.50	\$1,203.12	\$1,203.12	\$1,203.12	\$1,203.12	\$1,203.12
1400 Income Taxes and Social Security	\$3,800.00					
VA State		\$56.25				
Federal		\$261.39	\$293.28	\$238.11	\$293.05	\$291.06
SUBTOTAL	\$35,037.50	\$1,954.40	\$1,715.12	\$4,730.58	\$1,916.49	\$1,997.85
2000 STATE MINISTER						
2100 Salary Package (Salary, House, Etc.)	\$12,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
2200 Travel & Expenses	\$2,500.00	\$670.30			\$406.56	\$238.88
2300 Expenses for State and National Meetings	\$1,100.00	\$107.42				\$446.59
SUBTOTAL	\$15,600.00	\$1,777.72	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,406.56	\$1,685.47
3000 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL/STANDING MINISTRIES						
3100 Executive Council	\$1,000.00					
3200 Ministry of Church Service/Credentials	\$450.00			\$ 117.32		
3300 Ministry of Christian Education	\$125.00					\$ 41.46
3400 Ministry of Evangelism	\$125.00					
3600 Ministry of Program	\$125.00					
3800 Ministerial Fellowship	\$1,000.00					
3900 Church Property	\$125.00					

SUBTOTAL	\$2,950.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$117.32	\$0.00	\$41.46
5000 PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE						
5110 Camp Bedford						
5110 Caretaker	\$5,000.00	\$416.67	\$ 416.67	\$416.67	\$416.67	\$ 416.67
Health Insurance	\$840.00	\$70.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 70.00
5120 Campground Expenses (Maintenance)						
Vehicle Maintenance	\$1,000.00					
	\$500.00					
5140 Utilities						
Power		\$132.39	\$198.33	\$194.34	\$ 305.84	\$ 518.27
Propane		\$105.00	\$25.00	\$ 50.00	\$155.00	\$ 30.00
Telephone		\$34.34	\$35.86	\$ 33.32	\$ 33.29	\$ 33.31
SUBTOTAL	\$12,340.00	\$758.40	\$745.86	\$764.33	\$980.80	\$1,068.25
5200 Camp Christi						
5210 Caretaker	\$26,565.12	\$2,213.76	\$ 2,133.76	\$ 2,133.76	\$ 2,133.76	\$ 2,133.76
5220 Health Insurance	\$7,000.00	\$596.00	\$ 596.00	\$ 596.00	\$ 596.00	\$ 596.00
5250 Utilities						
Power		\$2,045.66	\$ 1,020.46	\$ 719.18	\$ 671.22	\$ 705.32
Water			\$ 1,154.83		\$ 118.60	\$ 75.53
Propane						
5260 Maintenance	\$4,000.00	\$333.33	\$ 333.33			
5270 Capital Improvements	\$1,500.00					
5280 Vehicle Maintenance	\$500.00					
5300 Legal Fees	\$500.00			\$ 66.50		
5400 Ministry Expenses	\$400.00					
SUBTOTAL	\$52,965.12	\$5,188.75	\$5,238.38	\$3,515.44	\$3,519.58	\$3,510.61
TOTAL	\$118,892.62	\$9,679.27	\$8,699.36	\$10,127.67	\$7,823.43	\$8,303.64
Total Income for Each Month		\$6,218.87	\$ 7,254.02	\$10,279.29	\$10,475.43	\$ 8,751.72
Difference between Expenses and Income		(\$3,460.40)	(\$1,445.34)	\$151.62	\$2,652.00	\$ 448.08

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See us at:

www.virginiachurchofgod.com

Help Us Stay Connected!

COGVA News is always looking for positive things occurring within the Churches of God in Virginia. Please keep us informed as we share encouragement with the saints. Please tell us what is going on in your local congregation. This

newsletter is an attempt to connect the churches of God in Virginia by supporting one another as we serve the Lord together. Take a moment to think what you might share with the church at large. Pictures are welcome and we ask that

articles be limited to 700-800 words. Articles are asked to be submitted by the 27th of the month prior to print date to drbobneace@virginiachurchofgod.com.

COGVA NEWS Willing To Promote Your Church's Local Newsletter

If your local church has a newsletter in electronic format you'd like to share with the rest of COGVA, please send it to drbobneace@virginiachurchofgod.com and we'll forward it to the rest of the Church of God

congregations as a means of continued cooperation and sharing of information. We ask that it be placed in PDF Format in order for it to be opened easily by each recipient.

CHURCH OF GOD IN VIRGINIA

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