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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)

Pastor's Turn Around Boot Camp Provides Great Instruction & Encouragement



Dr. Bob Neace, Dr. Alan MacMahon, Rev. Melvin Hooker, Dr. Simeon Green III, Rev. Scott Hodge, Rev. Lonni Wickard, Rev. Donn Sunshine, Dr. Gary McIntosh, Rev David Ansley, Rev. Rick Morris, Dr. Gordon Penfold, Rev. Bud Brown, Rev. Harold Boyd, Gary Westra, Rev. Tom Carnahan.

Nine COGVA Pastors and one West Virginia Church of God Pastor descended upon the grounds of Camp Christi for a time of intense training and great fellowship as relationships were began and education took place during the Pastor's Turnaround Boot Camp April 27-May 1. This boot camp was sponsored by the Ministry of Evangelism of COGVA. Those in attendance dealt with casting vision for their specific congregations, establishing clear mission for those visions shared. Help was given in that leaders must find better ways to articulate their vision/mission of the local church, getting it out of the pulpit and empowering our congregations to become all Christ expects us to be. (For more on this and how

it may relate to COGVA, see "I've Been Thinkin..." on page two.)

Each pastor was asked to read two books written by resource leader, Dr. Gary McIntosh entitled "Taking Your Church to the Next Level" and "There's Hope for Your Church". In addition to these tools, Jeff Patton's book, "If It Could Happen Here..." and "Leading Change" by John Kotter were part of the homework assignments. Any of the four, but especially the books by McIntosh are books recommended by the editor for each pastor to place on his or her bookshelf and place within their toolbox for ministry.

Within the context of study, each pastor was given a personality profile (several, as a matter of

fact) that seemed to carry a number of surprises and confirmed some things each person knew about themselves. In addition to recognizing personality strengths, weakness were brought to the fore-front, not to cripple anyone's ministry, but to help recognize what the needs might be for pastor to surround themselves with personality traits they might find lacking in themselves. This would enable each pastor to form a ministry team with which to share the load of ministry.

It is hoped that these pastors will continue to meet regularly, reading the same books and discussing/coaching one another throughout the next twelve months.

(Continued on page 3)

“I’ve Been Thinkin...”



Dr. Bob Neace, COGVA
State Minister

“To catch the reader’s attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

About things discussed in the recent Pastor’s Boot Camp. COGVA has a structure for the body to function as one body. We applaud the leadership that brought that into existence and will never forget the sacrifices made that two groups made to form a cohesive team. Since being tasked with the mantle of leadership in the State Minister’s position, my focus has been, and will remain, better relationships between individuals and churches. By-laws are necessary in the life of COGVA, but more important is the issue of building trust and relationship.

This unity process has been likened to a marriage in other settings, and I like that analogy. Kathy and I were two hurting and broken people who found themselves in the aftermath of the destruction of our homes. God, in His providence, brought us together, two broken entities to establish a loving home for those associated with us in that relationship. COGVA was the same way, two entities bruised by the enemy whom God has chosen to place together in harmony. Just as it has been with Kathy and I have worked diligently on our marriage, COGVA has worked hard to continue the legacy of

unity left us by previous leadership.

All of this has been said to lay the groundwork of some visioning given me by the Lord at the recent Pastor’s Boot Camp.

As we look at our individual congregations, (I trust I am not speaking alone), we have not always been people who are involved with things outside our local fellowship. After spending time with some of my colleagues, I have come to the realization that maybe our reticence to come together may not always lie in our inward focus, busy schedules, or even weak relationships, but rather, a lack of vision in knowing what we come together for can make a difference in our personal and corporate lives in the church.

In the church, we have not always done things well (again, I hope I am not speaking of myself only). Sometimes our gatherings have become simply a matter of gathering because it’s what we should do, when the truth is, often we need a reason to come together. Not a sense of obligation but gathering with purpose. This may be simply for fellowship and growth among individual pastors taking the time to get together, or it may be in providing opportunities of

education like the recent Pastor’s Boot Camp.

Luke tells us a parable of Jesus in chapter 14 of his gospel. The story is that of a great supper that had been prepared and each guest, when invited, began to make excuses like buying land unseen, oxen untried, and one even went so far as to blame his wife that he could not attend, as he had just been wed. As the story continues, once another round of invitations are sent, people began to come. Seeing there was still room, the master of the feast told his servants to go into the highways and hedges, and **compel** them to come. Compel means “to give a reason for” or “make those invited to the supper want to come. I wonder sometimes if we as leaders of churches, and thus COGVA would do well to look with a critical eye onto ourselves, “why should someone come to our fellowship?” If we cannot answer that question with an affirmation of Jesus’ love, encouragement to those who are hurting, healing for those who are sick, liberty for those bound in and by sin, we might need to do some soul searching to see if there are changes in our ministries that are mandated in order to compel those outside or even on the fringes to
(Continued on page 7)

Atkins First Church of God Sponsors Cross Walk

Around the world on Good Friday, many of the faithful mark the day with a brief journey carrying a cross, as Jesus did on the way to his execution.

Friday morning, so too did several members of the First Church of God in Atkins.

Justin Keene, senior pastor at the church, wanted to bring this tradition to his church. He said the idea of holding a Cross Walk in Atkins came from his time as a youth minister at a church in Mississippi.

"I thought, why not here?" Keene said. "People here have never seen this before. It is a wonderful way to bring the community together and to remember what Jesus did."

Keene and church member Harold Henderlite built three crosses using two-by-four lumber, making them about eight feet tall and six feet wide. They put wheelbarrow wheels on the bottom of the crosses to make them easier to carry along the roadway.

The Cross Walk took place Friday morning with the group of local and visiting church members walking about one mile north on Highway 11 from Atkins Fire Department to the First Church of God. The walkers were followed by a support van and protected in front and back by the Smyth County Sheriff's Office and Virginia State Police.

Prior to leaving on the walk, Keene led a moment of devotions reading

scripture and offered a prayer. In the scriptures he noted that Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

"Today we're going to do that," said Keene. "Every step we take is in remembrance of the price Jesus paid for your life and mine."

The rain held off long enough for the participants to complete the walk and afterward they gathered for lunch at the church.

"It turned out very well," said Keene. "This was a blessed opportunity for us."

www.SWVAToday.com
Friday, April 3, 2015
LINDA BURCHETTE | SMYTH
COUNTY NEWS &
MESSENGER



Members of Atkins First Church of God

Pastor's Turn Around Boot Camp (continued)

Dr. Gordon Penfold, and Dr. Gary McIntosh served as the primary resource leaders, and were backed up by Gary Westra and Bud Brown, Birkman Assessment Specialists, and Dr. Alan MacMahon. Each came to the Boot Camp with very focused agendas, including personality assessments, creating vision/mission

statements, team building, and dealing with conflict resolution.

Clusters for geographical areas will be announced soon and pastors who were not able to attend this boot camp are certainly encouraged to participate in the coaching clusters to be established. Conversations with

S.H.A.P.E. ministries in Anderson to help facilitate the organization of these coaching clusters are currently being held. If you are interested in participating, please begin reading "Re:Vision" by Dr. Gordon Penfold and please be patient as this tool of ministry get off the ground

Ministers' Coalition for Hampton and Vicinity (MCHV)



Dr. Simeon R. Green

The Ministers' Coalition for Hampton and Vicinity desires to promote, encourage and inspire Christian fellowship among the clergy, churches and community in the City of Hampton, Virginia and surrounding Tidewater area. Shortly after my arrival to Hampton, Virginia, where I am presently serving as Senior Pastor, Joynes road Church of God, I met Rev. S. Henderson, former President of MCHV. He and President, Bishop Samuel L. Cutler, Pastor, Canaan Baptist Church, Hampton, Virginia extended a warm welcome to Hampton and the MCHV. I became a member September 13, 2014.

Not only are we concerned with promoting Civic involvement among our local, state and national governments, but we endeavor to network with our local churches and its members to help advance Christian maturity, development and faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is our earnest prayer that

peace and love would reside in all of our hearts for mankind everywhere. It is our desire and hope that we would all remember the sacrifices of our military along with our poor and homeless on every corner.

As a Coalition of Christian Ministers, the Ministers' Coalition", empowered by the Spirit of God, will continue to encourage, support and promote Christian fellowship amongst the clergy, living and serving within the extended borders of this city. Our primary goal is to encourage action in matters related to the needs of the community:

- To lend support to organizations, which legitimately uphold the rights, principles and ideas of civil liberty according to sound Biblical Doctrine.
- To ascertain and disseminate information to clergy members which impact the communities served by the "Ministers' Coalition".
- To ensure a line of communication is

maintained between the "Ministers' Coalition", the City Council, the Board of Education, the Police and Fire Department, the Planning Commission, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and minorities, and any agency which impacts the lives of our citizens.

In addition, the "Ministers' Coalition" coordinates the Hampton City wide Thanksgiving, Christmas and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Services. The 2015 Thanksgiving service will be held at the Joynes Road Church of God.

We pray our gracious Lord will continue to lead and guide us as we pursue these notable goals in His Name.

Rev. Dr. Simeon R. Green, III

Senior Pastor, Joynes Road Church of God

“Empowered From On High”

C.W.C./W.C.G. Spring Convention



Wow, Wow, Wow!” This was the reaction from Carolyn Ansley after the CWC/Virginia Women of the Church of God completed their annual spring convention. Sixty-six women gathered at Blacksburg First Church of God on April 17-19.

The theme for the weekend was “Empowered From On High.” We were challenged by our keynote speaker, Minister Cathy Collins from Manassas, VA to tap into the source. We learned that we are carrying a “concealed weapon” in the form of the Holy Spirit, (this became our catch phrase all weekend). The power of the Holy Spirit will empower us to be the disciple God can use. We can be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit to serve and accomplish God's will in our lives. Brenda Hency said, “I felt the Holy Spirit challenge

me personally when Cathy asked us what God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit would say about me, if they were talking about me? Would they say they haven't heard much from me lately? Would they say that I'm not listening to them? Or would they say, “She's not going to handle her next trial very well at the rate she is going.”

Minister Collins brought along her worship team “Daughters of Thunder and Lightning”. The team consisted of 5 women and their piano player, Andre (also known as Lightening). We were so blessed to have them lead us into worship and into the presence of the Lord during each service. And they in return were blessed and received with open arms. Upon returning home, Minister Collins wrote:

“I am finally home after one of the most amazing weekends I have had in a very long time. This past weekend, I had the esteemed honor of being the keynote speaker at the 2015 WCG Women's Conference in Blacksburg, Va. What an amazing organization of the most beautiful ladies, inside and

out! The missionary work and support they do within and without the community, deserves the praise for all they are doing for our brothers and sisters around the globe. They greeted us just like family always does, and loved on us like no other. The Daughters of Thunder and Lightning, will never be the same as we were so blessed! Matter of fact, they blessed our socks off!”

We completed our convention with a concert, and were privileged to have “New Grace” from Roanoke with us on Saturday night for the concert. On Sunday morning, a number of us joined Blacksburg First Church of God for their Sunday morning service before heading home.

We praise God for the “mountain top” experiences that many received during the weekend. And, we look forward to the next convention which will be held at Atkins First Church of God in the spring of 2016.

Rachael Baez C.W.C.
President



Excitement Builds From Spring C.W.C./W.C.G. Convention in Blacksburg

On April 17, six CWC members from Joynes Road Church of God, Hampton, Va were blessed to attend the Annual State Spring Convention. The theme for this convention was "Empowered From On High". The very dynamic and inspiring speaker was Minister Cathy Collins of Fairfax, Va.

During Friday evenings program a video presentation entitled "Empowered" was shown. The worship service was led by the "Daughters of Thunder and Lightning", an awesome group of melodious singers including the speaker, who touched the heart and soul of each listener

Minister's Collins subject was "A Disciple God Can Use". To be a disciple God can use requires us to:

1. Put Jesus first in everything
2. Follow Jesus' teaching and be obedient to His Word
3. Be fruitful – abiding in Christ to produce fruit which is the result of obedience
4. Love others –some people make it hard to love them, but we must love them anyway for God is love. Love is an action verb.
5. Evangelize - evangelism is making disciples of others by sharing the word

with them. When evangelizing, we must determine whether we are in the right place, with the right people at the right time. A thought for remembrance is that we are packing a "conceal weapon" which is the Holy Spirit that empowers us at all times.

On Saturday morning the message was "The Power of the Holy Spirit". "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" Act 1:8 (NKJ). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace longsuffering, kindness, goodness faithfulness." Galatians 5:22 (NKJ) One shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon him or her. God is more interested in powerful service than polished service. The Holy Spirit is a necessity, He is our guide and He empowers us. The Holy Spirit (dynamus power) power of dynamite (impacts everything around it). When the Holy Spirit is poured in, praise is poured out. Ministry is not in the church, but it is the enactment of going out and impacting others.

Saturday night's subject was "Plug into the Power Source". "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a

lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" Matt5:14-16 (NKJ). It was shared that we must tap into the power source which is the Holy Spirit, and we must be a power source so that others may see Jesus. There are four applications needed to do this.

1. Preparation – obtaining the right equipment – the Word of God (Bible)
2. Season – waiting for the right season
3. Transfer – being a strength exchanger– the Holy Spirit within us is transferred from us to others.
4. Clean-up -

The CWC convention was outstanding, and the messages were enlightening, encouraging and powerful.

The JRCOG members attending the convention were Dr. Velma L. Green, State Vice President, Sis Helen B. Lawrence, JRCOG President, Sis Velda Witcher, JRCOG Vice President, Rev Marian Thomas, Dr. Gwendolyn Porter and Sis Amie Hamlin.
Submitted by:

Sister Helen B. Lawrence JRCOG's CWC President

“I’ve Been Thinkin...” (continued)

become part of the family of God.

Among the visions I have for COGVA are these:

Finding opportunities of ministry that bring us together with the goal of reaching the lost for Christ.

Building trust among ourselves with the goal of reaching outward rather than inward for those who need Christ.

More effective ways of communicating with one another with the end result that we are stronger and better fitted for reaching others for Christ.

a time when we begin to plant churches, rather

than maintain our status quo, for the purpose of reaching others for Christ.

A time when COGVA begins to tithe its income to fund opportunities for the local church and its leadership to be better equipped for ministry through things like Pastor’s Boot Camp, for the purpose of reaching others for Christ.

A time when COGVA better serves the local pastor and local church in that we are able to provide resources for ministry that will enhance our ability to reach others for Christ.

A better visibility of the office of State Minister that would foster greater

cohesiveness among the body as each ministerial team functions with one another, again so we might better equip the local church and leadership with the ability to reach others for Christ.

There is more to the visioning I am seeking from the mind of the Lord, and I look forward to sharing and working with the ministries and leadership of COGVA to see these things, and others, come to fruition.

Please pray for me and the leaders of COGVA as we serve Christ together.

Blessings,

Dr. Bob

Mark Your Calendars

Southern Gospel Gathering May 15-16

Chilhowie FCOG
Two Night “Kick-off” to this years annual Indoor Camp Meeting - Five Great gospel groups 7:00 Friday 6:00 Saturday

Heritage Day Rally –

Southeastern Association of the C.O.G. May 16
11:00 am 1607 Forest Street CHOG Augusta, GA

Indoor Camp Meeting

May 17-22 Chilhowie FCOG Host congregation- Rev. Garry Bates – Evangelist

Church of God Convention

June 22 – 25 Church at the Crossings, Oklahoma City, OK

<http://www.jesusisthesubject.org/church-of-god-convention-2015/>

Middler Camp

July 8 - 11th Camp Christi

Junior/Senior High Camp

July 20 - 25th

Camp Meeting/Camp

Christi August 2 – 8,
Annual COGVA Business Meeting August 7 1:00 pm

Church of God in Virginia

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Back Page Story Headline

COGVA News is a tool for the Church of God in Virginia to disseminate news of the Church at large and has begun to grow where clearer guidelines are necessary. Under direction from the Executive Board in their meeting of March 13, 2015, COGVA News will operate temporarily under the following guidelines. What follows is a work in progress as other State Newsletters are consulted.

All articles should be limited to a length of 500 – 700 words. Submission to COGVA News implies permission to edit submitted articles for clarity and space availability. Priorities of

space will be given to items of news of local congregations/ministries, COGVA functions, regional activities, and COGVA Entities (C.W.C/W.C.G., M.C.G., Christian Education, and all ministries of COGVA).

Non-news items and editorials must be original to the author and quotes attributed to its proper sources.

Priorities of space will be given to items of news of local church news, COGVA Ministries.

Submission of articles should be limited to a minimum of one article per local church/ministry per quarter. A quarter will be

defined as Aug.-Oct., Nov. – Jan., Feb. – Apr., and May –Jul.

Please remember, these guidelines are a work in progress and a future set of guidelines governing COGVA News will ultimately be submitted to the Executive Board of COGVA, the entity to which COGVA News holds itself accountable

About the Church of God in Virginia..

The Church of God in Virginia consists of 50 churches across the Commonwealth and according to current accounting serve over 2,500 constituents each

Sunday Morning. Our current State Leadership consists of Chair - Rev. Gertrude Goode, Vice-Chair – Rev. Steve Hency, Secretary – Rev. Sylvia

McDorman, and State Minister – Dr. Bob Neace.

CHURCH OF GOD IN VIRGINIA

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