

# Next Executive Director Selected--Vol. 9, No. 11--March 13, 2015



The Administrative Council of the Churches of God, General Conference (CGGC) announced this week the selection of Pastor J. Lance Finley as the next Executive Director, effective July 1, 2015. Lance has been a friend and co-laborer these past eight years leading CGGC initiatives in disciple-making and leadership development. So readers may get a feel for Lance's faith walk and his vision for the CGGC, I offer the following excerpts (with his permission) from the application he submitted to the search team.

## 1. Tell us about your faith walk.

I was raised by parents who love and follow Jesus. My parents did their best to pass on their faith to me through regular and consistent involvement in a local congregation (East Harrison Street Church of God in Charleston, IL), and their genuine and sincere example of Christian faith. Around the age of seven or eight I made a decision to place my faith in Jesus Christ. To be completely honest, this was probably more about fire insurance and the escape from hell than an understanding of the Gospel and the call to follow Jesus. Be that as it may, I had come to understand my sinfulness, my desperate state, and my need for the forgiveness only found through Jesus and his life, death, burial, and resurrection. I made a public proclamation of faith and was baptized not long after my eighth birthday.



Lance (bottom right) at camp in 1993



Taking a break from the insanity of Impact with Brian Miller (left) in 1998

A critical step in my faith walk came in my teen years as I began to wrestle through coming to "own" my faith as opposed to simply adopting the faith of my parents. A key step of growth developed when a group of leaders from my local conference (Pastor Randy Jenkins, Pastor Donna Brandt, Pastor Brian Miller and Denise [Shuck] Kelly) invited me to serve as an officer in the local conference's CGYA (Church of God Youth Advance). This provided me with some of my first opportunities to serve others and was instrumental in my spiritual growth and my understanding of ministry. In the summer of 1987 (in between my junior and senior years of high school) I experienced a call to ministry.

This call would eventually lead me to enroll at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. My years as a student at Winebrenner were rich years of growth and development. The seminary experience provided many "crisis of faith" moments that



Ready for any challenge at Impact 2002

deepened my faith in Christ and grew my understanding of the Gospel. My initial years on staff in a local congregation quickly taught me that my ability to minister was not predicated on my own talents, gifts or charisma but rather a growing reliance upon Jesus and the transforming work he would do both in me and through me.

My marriage to Brenda and the raising of our growing children have provided some of the richest and most challenging seasons of growth in my walk with Jesus. Brenda has been the greatest gift to me outside of Jesus, and my children would be a close third. These precious gifts have brought to light my own rough edges that God is continually seeking to redeem and transform in his image: my self-centeredness, my lack of patience or gentleness, and my desire to be served rather than to serve. God has given me such a gift in Brenda in that she loves me like Jesus: she's patient, kind, long-suffering, caring, thoughtful, and refuses to give up on me despite my short-comings. Carter, Molly and Connor have taught me so much about my relationship with the Father and how often I exhibit the same behaviors and attitudes toward my heavenly Father that I see in my own children and their relationship with me.



The Finley family

Each phase of life and ministry has brought experiences which have simultaneously challenged and grown my faith. A theme I can now see more clearly is that God has been at work in me over the past 20 years through these experiences to develop and mold me more closely to his image. I am learning that God uses each season, whether good or bad, to deepen my trust in him and to shape my character to look more and more like Jesus. I am learning, ever so slowly, that my obedience and good works flow out of my identity as his son rather than the other way around.

## 2. Describe your philosophy of ministry.

My philosophy in ministry is rooted in my identity in Christ Jesus. The most significant work I can do in ministry has to do with my identity in Christ and allowing my work for Jesus to flow out of my identity in Jesus. Because of the work of Christ on my behalf, I am now a son of God who loves me, accepts me and is even pleased with me because of what Jesus has done for me. My most significant ministry will be to step fully into that identity because as I become more like Jesus, I become more like who he created Lance Finley to be.

Jesus taught that the greatest commandments were to love God and to love others as we love ourselves. I really don't believe that ministry is really more complicated than this. I love God through my obedience to him. I'm growing in my ability to recognize the voice of the Father and respond to him in obedience. To do the things he



Lance (right) with Scott Bons at the March 2015 Administrative Council meeting

asks me to do, to become more and more faithful to things he asks of me will result in me taking on the character and competency of Jesus. I'm at my very best when I look more and more like Jesus and offer my gifts, talents and strengths for the benefit and well-being of others.

**3. What do you consider to be the most pressing needs of the Churches of God, General Conference and how will you address these needs?**

Like most of our North American counterparts, we have many challenges ahead as we move into an age where denominational affiliation will hold less and less importance. First, we have an identity crisis in the CGGC. A second challenge is the growing number of aging congregations and lack of effectiveness in ministry to millennials. A third challenge would be our lack of intentional disciple-making strategies and vehicles. I would work to address these challenges as follows:

- We've got to address the truth: we don't know who we are, we aren't reaching the next generation, and we aren't making disciples like we should. Until we come to embrace the truth, we won't be inclined or motivated to see anything change.
- There are often outside voices that can speak into our present challenges and help equip and guide us through the process to changed behavior.
- Finally, we have to see the change process through to complete transition.



Lance gives the Transformational Ministries report to the Ad Council

**4. Share your vision of and commitment to local and global multiplication.**

Finally, we live in a global community now and this requires a different approach to ministry than we've seen in the past. What would be the end result if each congregation of the CGGC within the U.S. would commit to a global vision of ministry – fully committed to serving Christ and others in their local community, while simultaneously serving the global church outside of the U.S.? What would change in our culture of churches if each of our U.S. congregations would commit to supporting at least one foreign field? How would CGGC churches in the U.S. be transformed because of their partnership with brothers and sisters somewhere else in the world? How would our brothers and sisters around the world benefit from an ongoing partnership with a U.S. congregation? I'm committed to pray and work towards this goal to make it a reality.

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Incoming Executive Director, Lance Finley (left), with outgoing Executive Director, Ed Rosenberry

After reading Lance's responses I think you'll agree that we can all be grateful the Lord has brought Lance to this new work. I for one am very pleased he responded affirmatively to God's call and look forward to the growth of CGGC kingdom ministries in the years to come. Let us all continue to pray for the vision of making disciples and support Lance as he takes on this new role.

ONE Mission together,  
Ed  
*Soli Deo Gloria!*



The CGGC staff and Administrative Council pray for Lance in his new ministry role

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## WTS Presidential Search Continues



With Dr. David Draper's approaching retirement, Winebrenner Theological Seminary, Findlay, Ohio is seeking its next President. Candidates should have an earned doctorate; organizational leadership and managerial skills; demonstrated ability to understand, articulate, and carry out fiscal, academic, and institutional responsibilities; a welcoming and affirming spirit for a broad range of theological perspectives while maintaining an evangelical position; an understanding of governance within theological education; the ability to communicate and network with a variety of constituencies; and the ability to support the school's mission, vision, core values and basic beliefs. Details will be posted at <http://www.winebrenner.edu>, and *curriculum vitae* may be sent to:

Winebrenner Theological Seminary Presidential Transition  
Edward L. Rosenberry, Search Committee Chair  
700 East Melrose Avenue  
P.O. Box 926  
Findlay, Ohio 45839  
OR  
[director@cggc.org](mailto:director@cggc.org)

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**MAN-UP! Conference at WTS Scotland Campus Next Week!**

Scotland Campus

Christian Men, it is Time!

## **MAN-UP!**

Conference for Christian Men

March 20<sup>th</sup>. Friday –Saturday

Registration 7:00PM

Ends Saturday at 2:30

**Key Note Speaker: Ron Hostetler**

*Penn State/LA Rams/Speaker/Author*

**Comedy: David Dean**

**Band: Next2Nothing**

**Call 552-2220**

for more details, register and get  
your room assignment.

**\$75.00/pp includes event, meals,  
room.**

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