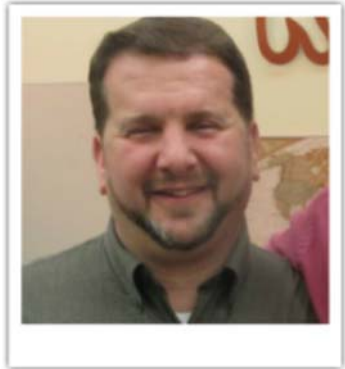


A Message from Lance Finley--Vol. 9, No. 13--March 27, 2015

Certainly a lot has happened over the course of the last two or three weeks and I'm still taking it all in while trying to learn and get up to speed on several transition issues. I'm truly honored and humbled to be selected to serve as the next executive director of the Churches of God, General Conference. So many of you have offered such kind and encouraging words over the last couple of weeks which have reminded me over and over again of how many folks across the CGGC have invested in me, encouraged me, and given me opportunities to grow and develop over the years. I'm so grateful for the many, many friends and brothers and sisters who have poured into my life and played vital roles in my own faith journey. I'm humbled and grateful to be a part of this beauty family of believers and honored that I've been asked to serve in this capacity.



Over the next several months we'll have opportunities to dialog and work together as we seek to clarify how and where the Lord is leading us in this next season of ministry. Today I just want to share briefly from my heart as I look across the landscape and the years to come.

We're living in an exciting and somewhat frightening time of enormous shifts and change in our world and our North American culture as well. Whether you consider larger trends of the church in North America or look more specifically at the current trends within the CGGC, there is cause for concern. Take for example, that 65% of the churches within the CGGC (U.S.) are stagnant or in decline in worship attendance over the past ten years or the fact that nearly one-third of our churches reported no conversions over the past three years – things are not headed in the right direction! Couple these trends with the reality that our society is fast becoming a Post-Christian culture and we're left with a rather daunting task.



But there is hope! Jesus has told us that he will build his church and that the gates of hell will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18). He calls us to make disciples (Matthew 28:19) and to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Our heavenly father isn't unnerved by the current state of crumbling Christendom or somehow taken by surprise by our less-than-stellar statistics. Instead, he's advancing his kingdom agenda and invites us to follow him in his grand unfolding story. His church is going to be just fine and his kingdom is going to continue to advance and unfold until he makes all things new (Revelation 21:1-5). The question is this: Will the CGGC be a part of God's grand redemptive story or will we simply fade into history? It is my hope and prayer that we will embrace Jesus' invitation to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. I'm committed to pray and work toward that goal.



I'm looking forward to attending most of the regional conference gatherings this spring and summer. I always enjoy connecting with old friends and meeting new friends too. Please take a moment to introduce yourself if we haven't already had the opportunity to meet one another. I look forward to continuing to serve you as we seek to understand and embrace what it means to live into God's mission.

Lance

Disaster Help Needed for Moore, OK

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Moore, Oklahoma has once again experienced a devastating tornado last night. We are blessed that the church and church family are fine. Firehouse Community Outreach Church is already in disaster relief mode and will be a lighthouse and blessing in the community, I would like to ask that each church prayerfully consider taking a love offering this Sunday and sending it to Firehouse to help in disaster relief.

Funds may be sent to:

Firehouse Community Outreach Church
800 South Santa Fe Ave.
Moore, Oklahoma 73160

Thank you for considering this request and your prayers for Moore, OK.

IN HIM!

Pastor Kendall D. Hughes
WR Director/President



Firehouse Disaster Relief Team mobilizing for action in the wake of more tornado damage

WTS Conducts Presidential Search



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:

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