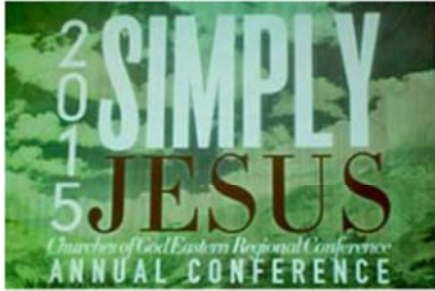


2015 ERC Sessions: Part 1--Vol. 9, No. 17--April 24, 2015



Jim Moss (left) with Mark Hosler

Our Eastern Region Conference (ERC) met for its fifteenth annual session earlier this week at Doubling Gap Center (DGC), the region's camp facility located in the Blue Mountains north of Newville, PA. A more beautiful setting can hardly be imagined, especially in the spring as the woods and flowers awaken from their long winter's nap.



The sessions focusing on the theme "Simply Jesus" began Monday morning with nearly 300 delegates present. After the opening organizational business, President Mark Hosler and Pastor Jim Moss, Jr. led the Conference in the observance of the ordinances.



Footwashing service



Monday Morning (April 20)

In its first business session the conference elected Amanda Lightner, Jim Noel, Dan Thomas, and Gilbert Thurston to the ERC Administrative Council; Jack Selcher as Conference secretary; Floyd Carlen, Katie Kane, and Steve Long to the nominating committee; Corey Britcher, Heidi Guyer, and Marla Sheaffer to the DGC board; as well as Brad Kearns and Greg Nauman to the Home Mission Council.

The morning concluded with Shane Claiborne addressing the conference session. He's the founder of The Simple Way, a faith community in Philadelphia, and serves as one of their board members. As a "peacemaker" he has promoted social justice issues in the USA and traveled to many troubled regions of the world (Rwanda, the West Bank, India, etc.) as an interventionist. He challenged the churches to find their "Calcutta" and be as Jesus in that context. After lunch he again spoke to the conference and stated, "The world is not looking for a perfect Church, but an honest one!" He encouraged all to fall in love with Jesus anew and with the people Jesus loves. Love must define the Church and its witness!



Shane Claiborne



Lance Finley introduces the CGGC staff

Monday Afternoon

Following the keynote speaker, President Hosler invited reps from the Churches of God, General Conference (CGGC), Winebrenner Seminary, Scotland Campus, and the University of Findlay to come forward to address the session. I presented Lance Finley, our new General Conference Executive Director, and he introduced the other CGGC staff. This is a time of transition in the CGGC as Linda and I return to the ERC and Lance steps into his new role. In addition Ben Tobias will take leadership of CGGC Cross Cultural ministries later this summer with Travis Helm as his associate and Don Dennison becoming a missions promo person. Bill Shoemaker as Director of New Churches stressed that the CGGC exists to help local churches fulfill the Great Commission which includes adopting and birthing new churches into the family. Rob Douglass from Winebrenner Seminary and David Newell of Scotland Campus updated the conference on recent developments at Scotland, PA and in Findlay, OH. In both locations many good things are happening but there are also critical needs, the number one being



Don Dennison brings news from Cross-Cultural Ministries



"CM 1500!"

stronger finances which translates into a need for more students. Will Miller (pictured at right) reported on campus ministries at the University of Findlay which is stronger than ever. There are about 20 Bible studies on campus and the Thursday night "Revive" service is seeing about 125 in worship weekly.

The afternoon wrapped up with commission reports and a memorial moment remembering those who have died in recent years. Since last year's conference the following pastors joined the Church Triumphant: Richard Smith (1924-2014), Dennis Killinger (1955-2014), Earl Yoakam (1938-2014), Billy Holmes (1929-2015), and Charlie Steinmann (1938-2015). After announcements and prayer, Jon Neely closed the session in prayer including grace for the evening meal.

Monday Evening

During the evening program a number of individuals were recognized for their service to Christ and the Church. Among these were Harry and Vera Cole who celebrated 70 years of ministry.



Harry and Vera Cole--70 years of ministry



Retiring pastor Cheryl Dorman honored for her years of service

In addition Charles "Bill" Fager, III was honored with the Towel and Basin Award for faithful service to the

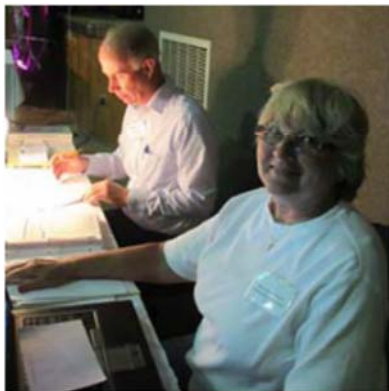
local church, the ERC, and the CGGC. After the recognition service Marie Monville, widow of Amish School shooter Charles Roberts, shared her story of grace and forgiveness in the aftermath of that tragedy. Her witness certainly affirmed the conference theme and the importance of keeping one's life focused on Jesus. Monday was a long, but spiritually uplifting day. I went home with more than one blessing.



Marie Monville



Stephanie DiFrancesco



Jack Selcher (left) and Mary Jane Wickard keep records of the proceedings

Tuesday Morning (April 21)

The morning started with a great breakfast served by the DGC staff followed by worship led by Chris Clugh and the Chambersburg Church praise team (pictured below).



In her devotion Stephanie DiFrancesco, who pastors the Yocumtown Church, talked about her call to ministry. As she said, "It was never about a piece of paper, but about simply following Jesus." This needs to be the heartbeat of all that the Church does. After Stephanie's prayer for the session, Mark Hosler convened the business session.



Nate Buck, Kim Shifler, and Don Dennison (left to right)

Ryan Long, DGC program director, came and reported that over 2000 people (the most ever) shared in the camping ministry in 2014, including 133 young people who came to Jesus and began their discipleship journey. DGC depends heavily on volunteers for whom Ryan gave thanks. He encouraged the delegates and the churches to continue this support and get even more involved. Steve Long, DGC administrator, reported on new developments around the camp property. The first will be the erection of self-sufficient cabins for summer wilderness camp as well as for year round use by individual groups.

Steve Dunn came forward next to present the following gifts from Harrisburg First Church as it will close its doors this coming Sunday, April 26th after 190 years of ministry: To Doubling Gap Center (\$50,000), Winebrenner Seminary (\$10,000), and Exponential.tv Church (\$10,000). Following the presentation, the conference adjourned to attend various workshops on the topics of evangelism, generosity, outreach, and prayer.



The Harrisburg First Church of God Bethel

After break, the conference reassembled and the ERC financial officers shared their vision and reports with the conference. Treasurer Colleen Gross informed the assembly that the 2014 budget was not fully raised through church tithes, but expenses were less than projected so there was sufficient. Colleen urged all the churches to be tithe partners. Frank Arva reported that last year 12% of the 151 ERC churches did not send any tithes to support ministries at the Regional and General Conference. Jim Brandt also gave a summary of the ministry of the Home Missions Council and its purpose to help finance the building and expansion of church facilities.



Jim Brandt



Church Frank introduces some church planters



Ken Robinson

A short film clip was shown, illustrating the importance of follower-ship to the creation of a movement of God's people. Although a movement needs a starter it's the first followers that set the pace of growth. After the video Chuck Frank introduced several church starters who gave witness to the variety of ways God is working to start new congregations in the region. Rich Thornton also introduced additional church planters including Caleb and Christina Acosta who lead CGGC Latino church expansion and Ken Robinson who is forming a new church network primarily in North Carolina. Dwight Lefever closed the church planting presentation in prayer and the assembly adjourned for lunch.

(To be continued next week)

One Mission together,
Ed
Soli Deo Gloria!

Pine River Church Seeking a Pastor



The Pine River Church of God is currently seeking a Part-Time Pastor who is a strong Biblical preacher with an emphasis on reaching those who need a relationship with God. Our church is located in central Michigan, 3 miles from the village of Vestaburg, which has approximately 2000 residents. Our church has been newly remodeled and currently has an average worship attendance of 40-45 on Sunday mornings which includes 10-12 children and youth. Our church is welcoming with very friendly people. We are looking for a pastor who reflects that same welcoming, friendly attitude and is serious about Biblical truth.

You may learn more about our church by visiting our Facebook page; PineRiver ChurchofGod. You may also check out the website <http://pineriverchurchofgodmi.webstarts.com>. If you are interested in this ministry opportunity or have questions, please send a resume or express your interest by **May 15, 2015**. Send your email to the church email address: prcgmi@gmail.com or Pine River Church of God, P.O Box 326, Vestaburg, Mi 48891. You may also contact Great Lakes Conference Director Earl Mills, glcdirector@cggc.org.

The John Winebrenner Chapel of the Nations

“From every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5)

This is the promise from the Lord we hold in heart as we see an ever-growing multinational crowd entering the Chapel of the Nations on Scotland Campus. Clearly, God’s plan since the beginning of time for this very moment includes an international community growing on this campus to educate and send forth the next generation of Catalytic Christian Leaders.

Building on God’s vision birthed through the life commitment of Elder John Winebrenner **we carry on**. Since the Churches of God General Conference leaders in 1942 moved in faith establishing Winebrenner Theological Seminary **we carry on**. And now as He pulls together this international community on His beautiful campus the vision gets clearer and **we carry on.....Join us!**

Comprehensive strategic plans for campus development and capital planning are prayerfully and carefully being completed. You will be hearing more! But first we are clearly establishing the focal point of ministry and mission on campus in this beautiful and functional chapel—the centerpiece of campus. It is right that this chapel bear the founder’s name as **JOHN WINEBRENNER CHAPEL OF THE NATIONS**.

The Winebrenner Chapel Naming Fund is set with a one million dollar goal. Those funds will provide for systems upgrades like sound and HVAC, much needed parking, widening and repair of access streets and handicap accessibility enhancement, to name a few. **The initial target is to have on hand the first 25% or \$250,000 by the time of CGGC Triennial Conference in 2016, when all churches and groups will be represented on site.** The sessions will provide opportunity for an official naming ceremony for the chapel.



This beautiful bethel will house a multinational CGGC congregation, a wedding chapel for the community and will be utilized continually as the campus chapel for faculty, staff, students, residents and our community neighbors.



This chapel sits within 50 miles of where John Winebrenner began his ministry. All who enter and exit the chapel pass by the bell that rang atop the “Mother Church” in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania from 1855 until just recently.

The ministry and vision of Winebrenner Theological Seminary carries on at this eastern campus as initially planned while the overall vision for Scotland Campus broadens exponentially. Elder Winebrenner would be blessed to see students preparing for a multitude of disciplines, living out their faith and impacting the world for Christ. Alongside WTS, other like-minded Christian educators and organizations are ministering on Scotland Campus as well. Some of those today are Broadfording Christian Academy, Global Vision Christian Schools (Korean), Providence Academy, The Academy for Global Leadership and Dale Carnegie.



This is a call for CGGC people and churches worldwide to help establish this international focal point of the ministry born with Elder Winebrenner and continuing through all of CGGC.....**we carry on!** Partner with this amazing work first by praying for continued clarity and progress as God leads, and secondly by contributing financially to the Winebrenner Chapel Naming Fund towards that million dollar goal.

Make all checks (fully tax deductible) to **Scotland Campus**, and note that it is for the Winebrenner Chapel Naming Fund (WCNF).

Mail those to **Scotland Campus, PO Box 370, 3583 Scotland Rd., Scotland, Pa. 17254.**

Check out the website www.wtsconference.com and take an aerial tour for a bird's eye view of this chapel and the entire campus. If you have questions or wish to discuss any part of Scotland Campus call the main office at 717-552-2220. You may also call Rev. Dennis Koontz, VP, Chief Development Officer directly at 717-729-2492 or Dr. David Newell, President and CEO directly at 717-491-0219. Visitors are welcome, so make the trip to Scotland and experience first-hand the chapel and other beautiful campus facilities.