

An Open Invite

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Video Transcript:

Good afternoon faithful eNews readers. This is Lance Finley coming to you from the Wilkin Centers for Christian Ministry here in Findlay, Ohio. Hope you had a great Thanksgiving and I know this is that season where things get a little bit busy in church world as we ramp up towards Christmas and the holidays and all that's a part of that.

I wanted to actually give you a little bit of a heads up, July 2016 seems like it's a long way away, but it will be here before we know it. And next summer, of course, is the Triennial Sessions of the General Conference where delegates from across the Churches of God will gather for three days in July to do the various things that need to be done business-wise in the church and also I hope benefit from just a great lineup that we've pulled together for this special time. July 25, 26, 27 are the dates, Chambersburg, PA is the location.

We know some of you will be coming as elected delegates from your region, to represent your region. But we just want to let folks know that really, we'd like to see as many folks from the Churches of God as possible come and be a part of the General Conference Sessions. Whether you're a voting delegate or not, we think there are things that will happen there that will be of benefit to you.

One of our keynote speakers is Mike Breen, some of you may recognize his name. Our theme this year is "On One Mission—Discipleship," and I was in a meeting a few years ago with Al Hirsch, which some of you probably recognize Alan Hirsch's name. He wrote the books, "Forgotten Ways," "The Shaping of Things to Come." Al was basically summarizing that a lot of the struggles we see in the western church aren't so much creativity problems or a lack of resources, but really a discipleship problem—that we haven't made disciples the way Jesus made disciples and calls us to make disciples. And somewhere in that discussion, someone asked him, "Well, if that's the case, who's doing

discipleship well?" And Al said, "Mike Breen and his folks at 3 Dimensional Ministries. They're probably ahead of most of the folks I know." And so we're going to have Mike Breen with us for three different keynote addresses, talking about the importance of discipleship and what that looks like in a post-Christian context. And I think you'll be really blessed just by the interaction with Mike and the time to hopefully hear some things that help us move forward and actually make disciples, not just talk about making disciples.

But then secondly, we have another keynote speaker, Christopher Yuan, which is probably a name not a lot of folks recognize. And Christopher's story is one that I think is really important for us to understand, and especially today in light of our changing culture. Christopher is a Chinese immigrant, first generation to our country, and grew up understanding himself as a gay young man and pursued that lifestyle completely. And then came to experience the grace that only comes through Jesus and has seen his life transformed, even in the midst of very painful circumstances and a lot of struggle. And I just think it's critical for us as evangelicals who care deeply about truth, and also deeply about grace, that Christopher is one of those voices that can help us understand how we proclaim the truth about the gospel and the truth about sin in our world, and yet extend grace and mercy to folks who often feel shut out from the church. And so we're going to have Chris with us for a couple sessions as well. And of course we'll do some business and other things too. And have some times of fellowship.

I want to encourage you to mark down those dates, July 25, 26, and 27, Chambersburg, PA. There will be more information out on the website (www.cggc.org). You can learn more about the speakers and the schedule and all of that. But I just want to put that out there on your schedule ahead of time that we would love to have you join us, whether you're a voting delegate or not. We think this is going to be a rich time of worship and of ministry and of preparing for the things that God wants us to do over the course of the next three years ahead of us.

So we just wanted to let you know that that was on it's way. Enjoy this rich holiday season. I hope Jesus works through your local church and your local ministries in a really rich way, and we look forward to talking to you again next month. So take care.