

## The Gathering--Vol. 8, No. 48

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In recent years the Churches of God, General Conference (CGGC) has sponsored a fall gathering of pastors and church leaders in Findlay, Ohio for the purpose of church development and theological reflection.



Getting ready for The Gathering

This year on October 14 - 15 Scot McKnight came and presented on the basic theme of "The Gospel" - its essence (What is it?), its purpose (Why is it?), and its impact (How is it carried out?). His premise is that the contemporary Church has accepted a lesser gospel than that proclaimed in the Bible and consequently missed the fullness of the mission of God in the world and the Church's role in that mission. In this eNews I offer a synopsis of McKnight's presentation. I hope we all may gain a greater understanding of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God, one that propels us forward in and on mission.



Scot McKnight

Scot McKnight is a New Testament scholar, historian of early Christianity, theologian, speaker, and author who has written widely on the historical Jesus, early Christianity, the emerging and missional church movements, spiritual formation and Christian living. He is currently Professor of New Testament at Northern Baptist Seminary in Lombard, IL, and an ordained Anglican with Anabaptist leanings. He earned his B.A. degree from Grand Rapids Baptist College (now known as Cornerstone University), an M.A. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a Ph.D. from the University of Nottingham in 1986.

In the first session McKnight focused the conversation on defining the Gospel as given by the Apostles (Acts 2, 6, 7, 10; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Timothy 2:8; etc.). Basically the Gospel is Jesus. He is the Christ, the son of the living God, the fulfillment of God's promised deliverer as revealed to Israel. The living Lord Jesus Christ transforms everything, from individual lives to the existing world order. The Church has sadly traded the life-changing Gospel for a transactional event, whether it's catechetical instruction and induction or a spiritual experience and "praying the sinner's prayer." Of the 90% who enter the faith via these routes as children or youths, only 20% remain in Christ at age 35. The issue is discipleship, or more specifically, introducing people to Jesus and helping them grow into deeper relationship with him. The Gospel centers in the answer to this one question: "Who do you think Jesus is?"



Beth Dunlap (left) and John Dodds



Lance Finley (left) with Scot McKnight



Candice and Bill Shoemaker



Paul Rutledge

The second session focused on the purpose of the Gospel, or God's mission in the world. Historically the Church has defined its mission/purpose from four perspectives:

- **Salvation** - a holistic view focusing upon individual social and/or spiritual needs
- **Church** - an ecclesiastical approach establishing a worldwide presence through local churches
- **Kingdom** - a tangible presence representing the rule of God in human society
- **Justice & Peace** - social activism fomenting positive change to existing realities

Each of the above is important and come into play in God's mission, but the Church often identifies with only one aspect of the total mission. To do so is a huge mistake as a full Gospel involves all four.

McKnight developed the third dimension in more detail to illustrate the components necessary to clarify the mission of God in the Church. He named five essential elements of biblical kingdom thinking. If there is a Kingdom, there must be...

1. **A King** - It's Jesus! He's at the center of everything, and everything is done for him.
2. **A Rule** - To be king, Jesus must rule as sovereign and redeemer.
3. **A People** - In the Old Testament it was Israel, but in the New it's the Church from all nations.
4. **A Law** - It was the Torah, but now it's the teachings of Jesus directed by the Holy Spirit.
5. **A Land** - Israel had a land, and the people of God today do also (Hebrews 11, Revelation 20-22).



Table of resources by Scot McKnight

In the final session McKnight talked about the impact of the Gospel for the local church. He shared 15 core ideas that came from his book, *Kingdom Conspiracy*. I will quote only the last of these, but I suggest reading the book for the rest as all were quite valuable to stimulate thinking and provide a guide for becoming a better New Testament church. Here's the quote: *The only place kingdom work is and can be done is in and through the local church when disciples (kingdom citizens, church people) are doing Kingdom Mission.* To this I can only add a hearty AMEN!

ONE Mission Together,  
Ed  
*Soli Deo Gloria!*

## Search for New CGGC Executive Director in Progress



The Churches of God, General Conference, based in Findlay, Ohio, is now receiving applications for the position of Executive Director of the denomination. Bill Reist, CGGC president, is serving as the chairperson of the transition team along with eight others from across the Church.

An application, position description and desired attributes of the Executive Director are available on the Churches of God website or by contacting [wreist@collegefirst.org](mailto:wreist@collegefirst.org) or [revrockey@gmail.com](mailto:revrockey@gmail.com). Applications received by December 15, 2014 will be given priority, with a decision to be made, Lord willing, by March 31, 2015.

For more information regarding values, beliefs and history of the CGGC you may visit <http://www.cggc.org/about/> online. Please direct all inquiries pertaining to the Executive Director position to the e-mail addresses above and not to the CGGC offices.

## Train Your Church Leaders

In the fall of 1988, my last semester of college, I filled in as the youth pastor at a local church. I was given a key to the church and wished the very best of luck. Truthfully it was a fairly frustrating few months.

I didn't know how to engage volunteers. I didn't know how to turn the youth into an effective team. I didn't know how to develop young leaders. I was young and available. Luck wasn't enough. I needed training. I wasn't the only one.



I have built a solution for developing leaders in your church. You may want to start with yourself. You may want to train your staff or key volunteers. There are three steps to this solution.

**Step # 1: Take our "Foundations in Christian Coaching" class.** During January and February of 2015, we are offering it at three different locations (Mattoon, IL, Findlay, OH, and Pittsburgh, PA), AND we are offering this class for the first time online.

**Step # 2: Take "A Coach Approach to Christian Leadership" class.** This class will be taught in Findlay, OH on March 23-24 (Mon-Tue) by Bill Copper, a seasoned ministry coach and teacher.

**Step # 3: Take our Mentor Coaching class** and hone your coaching skills to a level of confidence.

These three steps will also make you eligible for the Certificate in Christian Leader Coaching from Coach Approach Ministries.

It is very frustrating to be want to lead for your church and not know how to do it. These three classes will give your leaders confidence and tools to lead your church into the vision God has for it.

Can you imagine how much less frustrated and more effective your church leader could be by May of 2015?

To sign up for any or all of these classes, click here: <http://www.coachingclarity.org/become-a-coach/>

Because you are with the Churches of God General Conference, use the Promo Code "CGGC" for a 30% discount on any or all classes.

Listen to my interview with author Reggie McNeal, as he speaks about the importance of building a coaching culture in your church: <http://www.coachingclarity.org/?p=917>

Thanks!  
Brian Miller