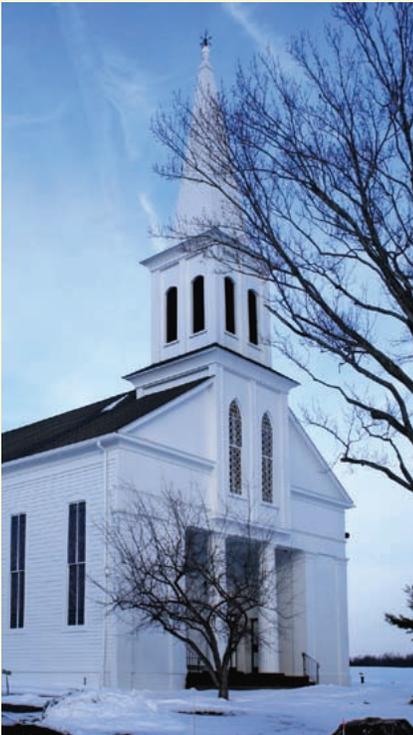


CHURCHRIGHT

Volume 1 Number 5

Striving to do church right.

In This Issue

Doing Discipleship Right . . .	1
Reality Check	2
Focus on Discipleship	2
November Emphasis: Missions Ministries	3
Culture of Excellence Award	4
December Emphasis: G. C. Ministries	5
Ministries Highlights / Calendar Events / News and Notes	6-7
No Greater Love	8

Doing Discipleship Right

Scripture is clear that the responsibility of parents is to guide the physical, emotional, and spiritual development of their children. Scripture is also clear that the church's responsibility is to guide the spiritual development of new Christians. Their faith, spiritual disciplines, duty, and devotion need careful cultivation. Children who are not nurtured but left to figure life out on their own usually end up on juvenile row. Likewise, new believers who are not spiritually nurtured but left to figure out the Christian life on their own usually end up on the back row, and often out the back door of the church.

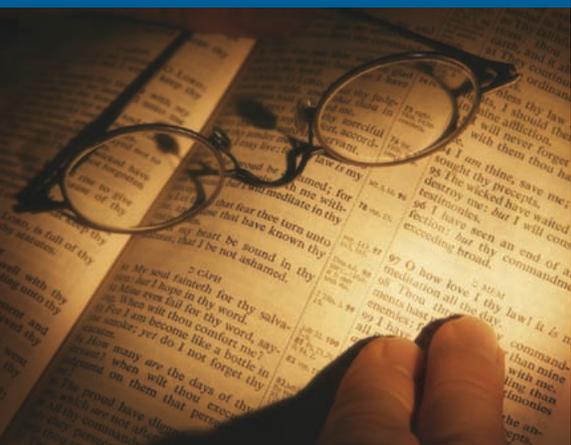
The process of cultivating the spiritual development of new believers is called discipleship. It begins when a person is born again, and is a lifelong commitment. Discipleship is the church's strategic process for helping new converts become more like Jesus in every aspect of their lives.

Taking this seriously starts with understanding how important discipleship is to Jesus. His final instructions to His followers include this statement: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20, NIV).

This is called the Great Commission, not the Great Suggestion. Failing to give priority to this instruction is disobeying what is dear to the heart of our Lord. In fact, the church forfeits its claim to be the church when it neglects His mandate. In this commission, the church is called to not only reach people but also teach (disciple) them. Note the threefold call to evangelize the lost, baptize new believers, and disciple them. Some churches do better than others when it comes to evangelism; baptism generally gets the greatest emphasis of the three elements. But discipleship is where most fail miserably. Fishing can be fun; cleaning fish is not nearly as appealing. It's the dirty work, and many tend to avoid it.

The good news is, however, that discipleship is more commonly discussed in our circles these days. It is part of our Conference vision. It is the motivation behind LITES (a CoG7 grassroots ministry) and beats in the heart of LifeSpring Director Larry Marrs. I am grateful to God for pastors and lay pastors — Mike Vlad and others — for whom discipleship is a major priority. And I pray it will increasingly become part of our corporate culture, causing our energy and resources to bear more heavily upon it as we grow, not through programs, but through the God-ordained process through which every person is made complete in Christ (Colossians 1:28).

— *Whaid Rose*
Denver office



Why Bother With Discipleship?

by Dallas Willard

If we are Christians simply by believing that Jesus died for our sins, then that is all it takes to have sins forgiven and go to heaven when we die. Why, then, do some people keep insisting that something more than this is desirable? Lordship, discipleship, spiritual formation, and the like?

What more could one want than to be sure of their eternal destiny and enjoy life among others who profess the same faith as they do? Of course everyone wants to be a good person. But that does not require that you actually *do* what Jesus himself said and did. Haven't you heard? "Christians aren't perfect. Just forgiven."

Now those who honestly find themselves concerned about such matters might find it helpful to consider four simple points:

First, there is absolutely nothing in what Jesus himself or His early followers taught that suggests you can *decide* just to enjoy forgiveness at Jesus' expense and have nothing more to do with Him.

Some years ago A. W. Tozer expressed his "feeling that a notable heresy has come into being throughout evangelical Christian circles — the widely-accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need Him as Savior and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to Him as Lord as long as we want to!" (*I Call It Heresy*, Harrisburg, PA.: Christian Publications, 1974, p. 5f)

This 'heresy' has created the impression that it is quite reasonable to be a "vampire Christian." One in effect says to Jesus: "I'd like a little of your blood, please. But I don't care to be your student or have your character." Can we really imagine that this is an approach that Jesus finds acceptable?

And when you stop to think of it, how could one actually trust Him for forgiveness of sins while not trusting Him for much more than that? You can't trust *Him* without believing that He was right about everything, and that He alone has the key to every aspect of our lives here on earth. But if you believe *that*, you will naturally want to stay just as close to Him as you can, in every aspect of your life.

Secondly, if we do not become His apprentices in kingdom living we remain locked in defeat so far as our moral intentions are concerned. This is where most professing Christians find themselves today. People, generally, choose to sin. And they are filled with explanations as to why, everything considered, it is understandable to do so. But, even so, no one chooses to be a sinner. It is amusing that people will admit to lying, for example, but stoutly deny that they are liars.

We want to be good, but we are prepared to do evil — should circumstances *require* it. And of course they do 'require' it, with deadening regular-

Reading the Fine Print

A number of years ago, a church in Jamestown, North Dakota, took its baptisms to another level. Candidates were asked to make four commitments: 1) regularly attend church; 2) live a consistent Christian life; 3) seek opportunities to share their faith; 4) support the church with tithes and offerings

The senior pastor believed that committing to this "fine print" helped new believers mature in their Christian walk.

Many believers have settled into a comfortable routine of being Christians in name only. They may put in a weekly appearance at church, but they neglect other disciplines that cultivate spiritual growth. The fine print that this Jamestown church devised for baptism candidates originated in the Bible. For a refresher, read Hebrews 10:25; Colossians 1:10; 4:5, 6; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; Malachi 3:10; and 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Maybe it's time we reread the fine print and recommit ourselves to grow in our faith.

— CR

Adapted from Fresh Ideas for Discipleship and Nurture, p. 12.

continued on page 4

People need the Lord. How can we reach them?

Missions Ministries
shares the good news
of Christ around the
corner and around the
world through . . .

- ▶ Church Planting
- ▶ Home Missions
- ▶ Missions Abroad

Learn more at www.cog7missions.org or contact
Director Bill Hicks at office@cog7missions.org or 423-
546-0374.

November is Missions
Ministries Emphasis.
Your offerings are
appreciated.



Bill Hicks
Director

ity. As Jesus himself indicated, those who practice sin actually are slaves of it. (John 8:34)

By contrast, practicing Jesus’ word as His apprentices enables us to understand our lives and to see how we can interact with God’s redemptive resources, ever at hand. This in turn gives us an increasing freedom from failed intentions, as we learn from Him how to *do what we know to be right*. By a practiced abiding in His words we come to know the truth which does, sure enough, make us free. (John 8:36)

Thirdly, only avid discipleship to Christ through the spirit brings the inward transformation of thought, feeling and character that “cleans the inside of the cup” (Matthew 23:25) and “makes the tree good” (Matthew 12:33). As we study with Jesus we increasingly become on the inside

exactly what we are on the outside, where actions and moods and attitudes visibly play over our body alive in its social context.

This requires a long and careful learning from Jesus to remove the *duplicity* that has become second nature to us — as is perhaps inevitable in a world where, to ‘manage’ our relations to those about us, we must hide what we really think, feel and would like to do if only we could avoid observation. Behavior is, however, driven by the hidden or secret dimension of human personality, from the depths of the soul and body, and what is present there *will* escape.

By contrast, the *fruit* of the spirit, as described by Jesus and Paul, does not consist in actions, but in attitudes or settled personality traits that make up the substance of the “hidden” self. “Love” captures this fruit in one word, but in such a concentrated form that it needs to be spelled out.

Thus, “the fruit (singular) of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22)

Finally, for the one who makes sure to walk as close to Jesus as possible there comes the reliable exercise of a power that is beyond them in dealing with the problems and evils that afflict earthly existence. Jesus is actually looking for people He can trust with His power. He knows that otherwise we remain largely helpless in the face of the organized and disorganized evils around us and unable to promote His will for good in this world with adequate power.

However we may understand the details there can be no doubt, on the biblical picture of human life, that we were meant to be inhabited by God and live by a power beyond ourselves. Human problems cannot be solved by human means. Human life can never flourish unless it pulses with “the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.” (Ephesians 1:19) But only constant students of Jesus will be given adequate power to fulfill their calling to be God’s person for their time and their place in this world.

But, someone will say, can I not be saved without any of this? Perhaps you can. God’s goodness is so great, I am sure, that He will let you in if He can find any basis at all to do so. But you might wish to think about what your life amounts to *before* you die, about what kind of person you are becoming, and whether you really would be comfortable for eternity in the presence of one whose company you have not found especially desirable for the few hours and days of earthly existence. And He is, after all, One who says to you now, “Follow me!”

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Culture of Excellence Award:

Arnold Werley

Congratulations to **Arnold Werley**, another recipient of the Culture of Excellence Award!

Arnold has been a Sabbath school teacher for many years at the Owosso, Michigan, church. Elden Fischer says that he does an excellent job of preparing and teaches all topics with interest and enthusiasm. Arnold knows what several versions of the Bible say about a doctrine, and he brings maps to show locations of events.

Elden observes that though

Arnold is younger than most of his students, he can communicate on everyone’s level. Arnold graduated from Spring Vale in 1969 and learned under Elden’s instruction there. But Elden feels that Arnold has surpassed him in his quality of teaching, and deserves recognition for his dedication.



GC Ministries

General Conference Ministries

- publish CoG7 literature
- prepare young men for pastoral ministry and other service
- inspire youth, young adults, and women in their spiritual growth
- reach unreached places with the good news of Jesus

December is G. C. Ministries Emphasis. Your offerings are appreciated.



Whaid Rose
Conference President

A man in blue overalls and a plaid shirt is plowing a field with a wooden plow pulled by a horse. The field is dry and brown, with some green plants in the foreground. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a clear sky.

Putting our hands
to the
gospel plow.

Ministries Highlights

SWORD

- ▶ December 2009 - January 2010 Pioneer Missionary Training in Mexico. Scholarship available from SWORD to cover the cost of registration fee for one young adult. See details at <http://sword.cog7.org>.

Spring Vale Academy

- ▶ First day of classes January 12, 2010

Publications

- ▶ Time to renew your commitment to Editor's Circle!

Calendar Events

Districts

- ▶ December 31- January 3, 2010 SWD Winter Youth Retreat - Midlothian, TX - Salvation Army Camp Hoblitzelle. Contact: Jason and Rose Rodriguez, 832-797-9916 or jandrrodriguez@att.net.
- ▶ December 31- January 3, 2010 - Western Canadian District Winter Youth Retreat, Long Island Conference Center, Crownsnest, Alberta. Contact Cisco and Debbie Chavez, fm.chavez@shaw.ca.

Emphases coming up:

NAWM (January)

SWORD (February)



Are you wanting to reach out to your community but don't know how? *Outreach Magazine* can help. Visit www.outreachmagazine.com or call 760-940-0600 for more information.

News and Notes

License and Credentials Applications

Applications to be considered at the **License and Credentials Committee** meeting in February 2010 must be received by December 15, 2009. Remember to request a letter of endorsement from your district board and from your local congregation.

NFYC Registration

National FYC registration for 2010 begins January 1! Get your group information ready now. The first youth group to register will receive a special gift from the **NFYC**. Just go to <http://nfy.cog7.org/register>, or e-mail nfy@cog7.org for more details.

LifeSpring School of Ministry

Fall online classes for **LifeSpring** have begun, and regional classroom sites are being chosen within a day's drive of 177 men who have declared for the diploma of pastoral ministries across the U.S. and Canada. Meanwhile, a team of 20 Church men and women will be meeting November 6-10 to begin studying how to bring training in CoG7 to a new level in a four-year accredited college.

Please pray for this team and for the group of men across the country who are stepping forward to combat the ministerial crisis facing us. To share input about training in CoG7, please e-mail larrymarrs@LifeSpringSchool.org.

Growth at Spring Vale

Spring Vale Academy reports an increase in enrollment: 59 students so far and more coming in the second semester. God is good!

Improvements have been completed by the school's Energy Team, including added insulation to the building. The building looks great, but more important are the long-term effects of reduced heating bills during the winter, as well as cutting the cost of future maintenance.

The Lord continues to bless the ministry of Spring Vale Academy. Thanks to your faithful prayers and support, the school is meeting the needs of our youth and preparing them to take their place in the Church of God (Seventh Day).

Lessons for First Quarter 2010

Adult lessons. *The Beatitudes* is the title for the first quarter 2010 issue of Bible Studies for Adults. This series opens up a deeper understanding of the ten short verses in Matthew 5:3-12, the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. These lessons will inspire students to search their own hearts and relationships with the Lord and with one another.

Senior high youth lessons. The senior youth title for the first quarter is *The Tabernacle — Salvation in the Desert*, a series that explores the old covenant administered by Moses. It is a study of the sacrificial system that typified the ministry of Christ and was climaxed by His ultimate atonement. Now we are justified, not by obeying the Levitical law but by accepting Christ as Lord and Savior and by living in the Spirit and grace of God.

Junior high youth lessons. *The Light of the World* is the title for the junior high first quarter lessons. They reveal why Jesus is the light of the world and the importance of inviting that light into our lives. Many of the daily readings are from the Gospel of John.

Helpful teacher's guides are available for these studies. The price for the adult student book is \$3.25, and the teacher's guide is \$5. (Prices for the senior youth and junior high student books are \$2.50, and \$3 for the teach-

er's guide.) Order from Bible Advocate Press, P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233; 303-452-7973; or bap.orders@cog7.org.

They Serve

Two members of the Conference office staff were recognized for long-term service during a staff gathering in early September. **Rebecca Van DeWyngaerde** has served as an employee for 21 years and **Sherri Langton**, for 20 years. The faithful service of these workers follows the pattern set by others, such as Hope Dais (35 years), Keith Michalak (35), and LeRoy Dais (53). Our church is blessed by their long tenures.

Year-End Giving

The General Conference is the sum total of its ministries, districts, and local congregations, made up of individuals just like you who read our various publications and contribute to the welfare of our church. Thank you for your commitment to the work of the Church of God (Seventh Day) locally and corporately.

As 2009 draws to a close, thank you for your offerings and prayers both throughout the year and now, at year's end. Your gifts in support of ministries are tax deductible.

—Denver office

Sabbath Resource

A History of the Seventh-Day Sabbath Among Christians in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, by Blaine Neumann, will be a valued addition to the library of all Sabbath observers. Its teachings feature the annual Lord's Supper observance and Jesus' literal three-day and three-night entombment. Such teachings make the book especially valuable to Church of God (Seventh Day) readers.

This well-researched and documented history combines readability and scholarship. Its 94 information-packed pages include extensive notes, an appendix, and an impressive bibliography. You will be impacted by evidence of God's protection upon His people, and you'll read of their faithfulness through centuries of much opposition and hardship.

Order from Bible Advocate Press — \$10, postpaid, in the U.S.

Prayer Request

Pray for the Children's Education Committee as the members work on new curriculum for children's Sabbath school classes. Also pray about how the Lord may want you to become involved with this effort.

Convention DVD's

- Encounter the Holy Spirit: Again, for the First Time** — presenter Israel Steinmetz
- Encounter Growth: The Spiritual Disciplines** — presenter Ken Knoll
- Encounter the Commission: Sharing Jesus** — presenter Larry Zaragoza
- Encounter Grace: Free At Last!** — presenter Calvin Burrell
- Encounter the Father: Life Changer** — presenter Whaid Rose
- General Session** — presenter Whaid Rose
- Children's Program / Singspiration**

Individual DVD's: \$10. Set of seven: \$50. Send orders to Church of God (Seventh Day), P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233 or orders@cog7.org.

The screenshot shows the iGive.com website. At the top, it says 'How iGive Works' with steps: STEP 1: SELECT My Cause, STEP 2: SHOP & RAISE MONEY, and STEP 3: GIVE. Below this, there's a section for 'Church of God (Seventh Day)' with a description: 'The mission of the Church of God (Seventh Day) is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, introduce others to the Lord, teach them to obey His Word, and restore spiritual growth in all believers.' It also lists the address: 'Address: P.O. Box 33677, Denver, Colorado, 80233, USA' and 'Total iGive Support: \$1,000.00'. At the bottom, there are logos for various retailers: GAP, STAPLES, Expedia.com, BEST BUY, eBay, Office DEPOT, drugstore, and others.

iGive Donate money to our church every time you shop online. Register with iGive.com, then click through their site each time you shop online. If your retailer is a participating member, a portion of your purchase will be given to the Church. It's not much if only one person (or even one congregation) participates, but if every CoG7 member who shops online uses it, we could raise a few dollars!

iGive sends out checks (over \$25) each month. If the Church collects under \$25, the money carries over to the next month. Most retailers give 1-3 percent to participating causes.

Churchright Online

Read more about what's going on in the CoG7 at www.cog7.org. Click on "Churchright."

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World Premiere Screening

Your church can host a world premiere screening of the new ministry film *No Greater Love*, from executive producer and Spring Vale Academy alumnus Russ W. Rice.

No Greater Love is a deeply moving Christian romantic drama dealing with marriage, faithfulness, and forgiveness. The movie is being distributed nationally by Lionsgate and Thomas Nelson Publishing, and is the biggest faith-based film scheduled to be released in 2010.

Please visit www.parablecinema.com to watch a preview of the film. Pastors and leaders, click on "Screening Room" for a free online screening of the entire film.

Special offer: If 50-100 CoG7 churches register to screen this film, each church will receive a \$25 rebate off its screening license. If 100+ CoG7 churches register, each church will receive a \$50 rebate. In addition, ask a Parable Cinema rep how you can easily turn this event into a ministry fundraiser.

All our churches are encouraged to sign up to screen this powerful film. For more info, visit www.parablecinema.com or call 800-645-3863.

When registering, be sure to enter "CoG7" in the Offer Code box to qualify for rebates.

