



Joined Together

To Grow More and Better Disciples

Heaven is Not Enough!

I know I'm getting old(er), but I'm still competitive. I've reached the age when injury can more easily occur, but I still take risks. I once cracked a rib "shooting hoops"...all by myself, but that doesn't keep me from picking up a ball now and then and even beating my boss in a game of "horse." I'd one day like to challenge my grandsons, but they better learn their skills fast while I can still dribble the ball (dribbling food on my shirt is getting easier!).

Even though life is filled with uncertainty, I love the fresh challenges and new discoveries each day brings. There's so much more I want to learn and to experience. For that reason, some Christians annoy me. I don't understand why so many believers seem obsessed with heaven. It's like their lives are idling in neutral, ready to make their great escape to the beyond. It is true that the older we become, more people we've known and loved will precede us to the "other side." We will naturally be drawn to them as well as to the Resurrected Lord whom they now serve in glory. But heaven is not enough.

Heaven is a part of my endowment as one who has professed Christ as Savior, but I don't think about it every day—yet. I don't relish singing the old-time favorites like "When We All Get to Heaven" as so many

do. I don't spend my time thinking about the anticipated delights of heaven as though that's all there is. There has to be more.

From my perspective, the "typical" Christian in America seems to think that life is all about comfortably enjoying God's blessings while you wait for heaven—that once you decide for Jesus, all that remains is to inherit what God has planned for you in eternity. But God leaves you here for a reason: not to coast toward the sunset, but to aggressively pursue His purposes for our lives until the very end.

A life redeemed by Christ should seek to glorify God by serving as a witness to that salvation which He purposes for the whole world. If we are simply content to get us and our loved ones safely to heaven, then our goals are not only selfish but short-sighted.

If "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), then we have a responsibility to be actively engaged in ministry as long as He gives us breath. Heaven should not be our only goal. When we go, we should want to take as many people with us as possible.

Don Dennison

CCM Director

If you have a question or concerns for the Director to address in "From the Heart," please write to Wayne Boyer at the CGGC office, PO Box 926, Findlay, OH 45839, telephone at 419-424-1961 or email him at director@cggc.org.

Executive Director

Wayne Boyer

I read today that Josh Billings said that a dog is the only thing in this world that loves you more than it loves itself. If you've got a dog, that really hits home. I don't sleep well and there was a night when our dog curled up by my feet. I turned over and inadvertently punted the poor thing clear across the room. Kay was happy it was our dog and not her! Instantly awake, I went over to the surprised pet and began to soothe her nerves...and she licked my hand! It was okay. No offense. I was forgiven! But Josh Billings was wrong. There is another who loves us even more than that, in fact He loves us enough to lay down His life for us! That's awesome! Happy Valentine's month—loving each other as He loved us!

Calling all Ladies!

Do you need a little time to get away and relax? There's still time to register for **SPA for the Soul**, a "Spiritual Pampering Adventure," the CGWM's Spring Retreat held at Winebrenner Seminary in Findlay, OH on March 10-12, 2006. Women of all ages will relax and connect with God and others through meaningful speakers, singing, spa stations and lots of rejuvenating fun. Singer/speaker Kim Bolton is the keynote speaker for the weekend. For more information, call the CGGC office at (419) 424-1961.

Stewardship

Bob Stephenson

For churches and individuals trying to wrap up 2005 business expense activity, the IRS approved standard mileage rate for January 1 through August 31, 2005 was 40.5 cents and for September 1 through December 31, 2005 rate was 48.5 cents. Beginning January 1, 2006 the standard rate is 44.5 cents.

The deductible standard mileage rate for medical and moving expenses was 15 cents for January 1 through August 31, and 22 cents for September 1 through December 31, 2005. Beginning January 1, 2006 the rate is 18 cents per mile.

The deductible standard mileage rate for charitable mileage is set by statute law enacted by Congress and not periodically reviewed and established by the IRS. This rate for 2005 and the beginning of 2006 is 14 cents per mile.

A reminder to donors who may have donated a vehicle to a church or other charitable organization, you must obtain the charity's written acknowledgement of the donation and a qualified appraisal of the vehicle. The charity did not have to sell the vehicle during 2005.

Youth & Family

Charlene Bunch

February is here, and with it come many changes for Youth and Family Ministries. Lance Finley has officially stepped in as director and my position has changed

to involve overseeing Children's Ministries. Please let either one of us know if you have any questions or need anything at all. We're excited about what God is doing in Youth and Family Ministries in the CGGC!

Don't forget... ACTS Team registrations need to be in by March 15, 2006. IMPACT will be here before we know it, too. Get in your Early Bird registration by June 16th. You won't want to miss Reggie Joiner, Gary Staats, Ari Crockett, Mime Time, Gary Borders, Phil Telpher or Greg Hench... just to name a few. Check out www.cggc.org/Impact.htm for more information. We hope to see you there!

Communications

Rachel Foreman

The Church Advocate has a new look and we need new information to include in it. We want to hear about special events, service projects, missions trips, building projects, etc. If your church is involved in something you would like to share with the rest of the Churches of God, please write a brief story (approximately 500 words) and send it, with any photographs you may have, to *The Church Advocate*, P.O. Box 926, Findlay, OH 45839. If you would like any items returned to you, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. You may also email articles and pictures to communications@cggc.org. We look forward to hearing from you!