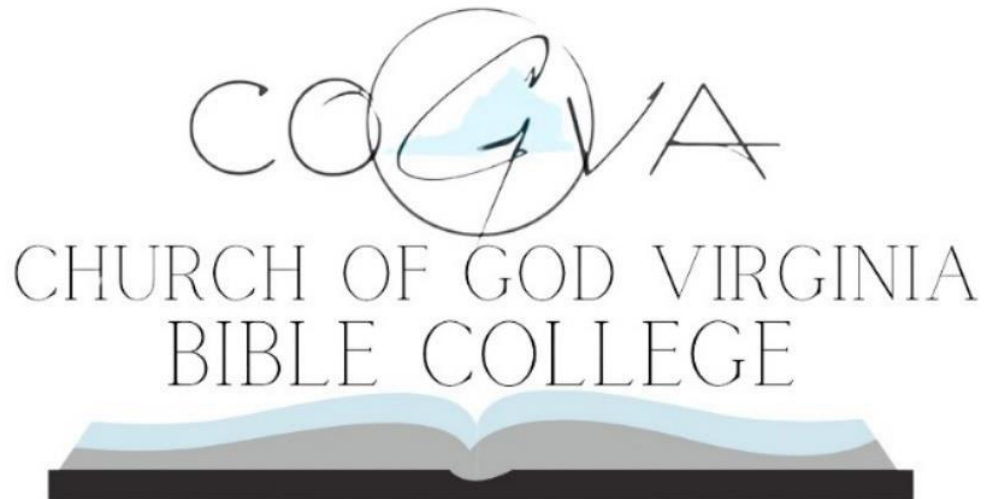


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Leadership School becomes COGVA Bible College

The Leadership School began when Sister Lucille Green met a need to educate ministers in Virginia. Reverends Gertrude Goode and Irnishel Drew, pastors at Emporia and Richmond 21st street were the teachers (Both of them were mentored by Reverend Linton who pastored both churches. Upon his death they stepped in as pastors and then teachers). Sister Green hosted classes in her home and upon her death left that home and library to the Leadership School. Sister Lucille Green asked Dr. Jim Milner to be the Dean of the school. Despite health issues, covid and other factors the school has continued to meet via zoom with Reverends Calvin Peterson and Silas Oliver teaching. Calvin Peterson has continued to teach as Silas Oliver has retired.

Several things have changed and the need to Strengthen Churches, Pastors, Leaders, and Lay-people has increased. We no longer live in a Christian Culture that helps shape us for Christ. Instead, we live in a post-Christian culture that distorts the image of Christ. We have largely missed mentoring a generation or two into ministry of all forms. Under Dr. Bob Neace's leadership, the Church of God in Virginia is getting very focused on fulfilling her mission of strengthening churches, pastors, leaders and lay-people. (Continued on page 4)



Dr. Bob Neace COGVA
State Minister

Neace's Pieces

Euodia and Syntyche, members of the fellowship in Philippi.

Who were these women and what was

their issue? Just like the old commercial that asked, "How many licks does it take to get to the center of a Tootsie-Pop?", the world may never know...

But the fact is, Paul, in addressing the church of God at Philippi, speaks to both of them in light of some issue that had caused a rift between them. His plea for them to be of the same mind implies as much. He even goes so far as to ask those in the church to "help these women who have labored with (him) in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of the fellow workers whose names are in the Book of Life." These two ladies, outside of this text are unknown in church history.

So why does Paul speak to them in light of a letter addressed to the larger body of the church in Philippi? Is there a doctrinal issue at stake? It would not appear so, as Paul has dealt with doctrinal issues throughout his letters, and even in this one. Among them, he speaks of maintaining a persistent prayer life, persevering in trials, taking on the humility Christ exhibited. It has even been said this letter to the Philippians was the most joyous and

encouraging of all the letters attributed to Paul in the scriptures.

The saints are praised, Timothy is commended, and Epaphroditus receives Paul's applause. The church is reminded of their citizenship in heaven and the prize that awaits those who persevere to the end. And then he calls out these two women.

It would appear Paul is addressing something that may seem small and insignificant to others but was a stumbling block between these women. If it were a discipline issue, I believe Paul would have addressed it head on. If that is in question, be reminded of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth when he dressed down the church for allowing a man in the fellowship to continue in the sin of shacking up with his father's wife. In addition, Paul says to the church at Galatia that he wished those pulling the church back into legalism by demanding circumcision were themselves cut off. The point is, Paul did not pull any punches when it came to church discipline.

This is why I believe this contention between the two women was not doctrinal, nor was it a discipline issue. If it were, his pattern shows a willingness to address either of them.

So, what was the issue? Look at the text again. "Be of the same mind in the Lord." And "help these women... whose names are in the Book of Life."

Obviously, neither of them is accused of sin or they would not be referred to as having their names in the Book of Life. I contend it is possible they may have had some disagreement between the two of them that **(Continued on page 5)**



“Together is Where We Belong”

By Rev. Jeremy Dunn

Romans 12:1-5

Every so often you might be asked, “do you belong here?” That question is generally asked within the context of a place where you feel out of place. When my wife and I married, we spent part of our honeymoon in Savannah Georgia. As it was our honeymoon, to quote Dr. Hammond from Jurassic Park, I “spared no expense.” I took my new wife to a local steakhouse just within walking distance from our hotel, Ruth’s Chris Steakhouse (I highly recommend it!). I was dressed in a t-shirt, a pair of cargo shorts and flip flops. My wife was dressed in a similar outfit. We were greeted by the Maître d’ who was dressed in a tuxedo. We were seated by an equally well-dressed woman. As we were making our way through the dining area, I noticed that all the waiters and waitresses were dressed in black suits, white shirts and ties. All the patrons looked like they had just returned from a royal wedding. I certainly stood out. I looked like Jimmy Buffet had just crashed someone’s black tie gala. My

wife and I were sat at our table and as if we weren’t uncomfortable enough, we opened the menu. Resting beside my steak of choice was a number. Just a lonely number. No symbols. Just a number – 50. I said to my wife, “I know they can’t mean ounces.” Everything about that placed screamed “we don’t belong here.”

One of the ways that Paul describes the church is to use the illustration of the human body. We do not have to stretch our imagination very far to make sense of it. The human body is made up of a variety of parts. The human body has 200 bones, 650 muscles, 79 organs that make up 11 different organ systems (digestion, reproduction, respiratory, etc.), along with a network of blood arteries that are designed (because someone had to design such a complex system) to sustain life. The complexities of human anatomy are far beyond my intellectual abilities. I can say with confidence that I am aware that it works, and I can feel, on account of the nervous system, when something is not functioning properly. Not every part is seen. If you look at your arm and can see bones, then something is frightfully wrong. Every part is vital. Every part plays a role, even when we do not understand entirely the role that it plays. The human body depends on a sound mind to operate it. If the head does not exercise wisdom, it could cause the entire body to be subjected to unnecessary risk or injury. For example, I may feel like I am in well-enough shape and condition to go down a water slide. But if I go, there is a very strong possibility that it will result in some kind of injury. Thank (Continued on page 6)



COGVA Leadership & Executive Board

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 Rev. Dr. Simeon R. Green III – Vice-Chair
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 Diana Aufrecht – Treasurer
 Dr. Bob Neace – State Minister Rev. Donn Sunshine – Credentials Chair
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 Dr. Velma Green Christian Women's Connection Coordinator
 Dr. James Milner Dean – COGVA Bible College

(COGVA Bible College Continued).

Dean, Dr. Jim Milner has directed the expansion of the Leadership School into the Church of God in Virginia Bible College. Along with a name change, the following changes will be effective beginning in October (see below for first 2 classes and textbooks).

1. Change the name to the Church of God in Virginia Bible College.
2. Dean: Dr James Milner, Professors: Reverend Calvin Peterson, Dr Robert

Neace, Reverend Donn Sunshine.
 Administrator: Diana Aufrecht, Editor: Dr. Robert Neace, Board of Directors:
 Credentials Committee of the COGVA

3. Degrees: Associate 60 hours, Bachelor 120 hours, Master 180 hours, Doctorate 240 hours. A minimum of 50% of those hours must be from class completions, not independent study. Graduations and the awarding of diplomas will take place with the credentialing service at camp-meeting.

4. The schedule will include two semesters. October 12 through January 11 and February 8 through June 14. Each semester classes will occur from 9-11 am the 2nd Saturday of each month. Each semester will consist of two classes with one hour of time per class. Each class will also have two in person sessions, the first and last Saturdays of the Semester which could be in 2 or 3 regions in the state (Richmond/Wytheville, or Richmond, Roanoke and Abingdon pending registrations. Accommodation may be made for folks unable to travel).

5. Each class would be 3 credit hours at a cost of \$10 per credit hour. Classes could be audited for free with no credits given (Auditing will not count toward degrees).

6. In addition to class time, each class would have required reading and a paper or project as determined by that professor.

7. Classes will be recorded on Zoom or other video for future use

8. Independent studies at 3 credit hours at a cost of \$10 per credit hour which



would consist of reading, writing and a paper or project would also be offered. A minimum of 50% of the credit hours earned must be from classes offered through the COGVA Bible College. The remainder may come from approved independent studies. Any independent study proposed by a student must be approved by the Dean

9. The Bible College will serve as the process for in-state licensing and or ordination. Individual combinations of classes and/or independent studies would be designed to meet the needs of candidates. Successful completion does not guarantee licensing or ordination. That decision is made by the Credentials Committee. This is not a substitute for Leadership Focus and is only for special cases where the Credentials Committee elects to credential in state. Only students having filed proper paperwork with the Credential's Team are considered as ministerial candidates.

10. Registration and payment for classes will be received through Tithely.com by clicking [HERE](#). Those looking to only audit the class need only to show up on the ZOOM link. Those looking for credit need are able register and pay registration costs until the day before classes. The ZOOM Link for each meeting through both semesters is: [COGVA Bible College ZOOM](#)

11. Each student will be required to buy their own textbooks. A link for the purchase of textbooks for this semester can be found in the links below.

12. Please understand that while we will be offering quality education and training, the COGVA Bible College is

accredited only by COGVA. You will learn and receive credits/degrees. The credits and degrees are not guaranteed to transfer to traditional schools nor are in-state credentials guaranteed to transfer to other states.

Class 1: "What the Bible Teaches" by F. G. Smith. Professor Calvin Peterson. This book can be purchased here - <https://a.co/d/bsHsEaV>

Class 2: "Sexuality: Contemporary Issues From A Biblical Perspective" Editors Ekkehardt Mueller and Elias Brasil de Souza. Professor Donn Sunshine. This book can be purchased through Amazon at - <https://a.co/d/iO6YajY>

(Neace's Pieces Continued) and all would be well, but if not dealt with between the two, could become a cancer in the body at Philippi. The Apostle no doubt had seen this before, possibly in his home/family life growing up, or even as a seasoned preacher of the Gospel. Personality quirks, minor slights, (often only perceived and not intended), or even simple differences of opinion can be the tools our enemy uses to cause larger dissension in the church. Our adversary seems to specialize in such things.

Paul admonished these women by encouraging those in the church to come along beside them to work out their differences. In no commentary am I aware that Paul ever took a side between these two. Nor did he encourage the church to do that. He simply called on the two to settle their difference, be of the same mind in the

Lord, and the church leadership to facilitate that goal. The end result would be that the church would receive hope and encouragement by living out Christian unity and as they continue to serve Christ together, there would be a “peace that passes all understanding.” This is much more preferred than the divisiveness that could have been the testimony of this church if Paul’s advice were not followed and this disagreement between these two women was allowed to fester.

It is interesting to be reminded most of Paul’s letters were written to the church or a member of a church he had planted. As he wrote, he encouraged the church, challenged the church, and administered discipline within the church. Our look at Euodia and Syntyche and our references to Paul’s letter to the churches at Corinth and Galatia should be reminder that all problems within the church, small or great, have the potential to destroy that which has been built. However, it also should also serve to remind us of that our reaction to church discipline can result in the spiritual growth of every member of the body of Christ. In return the growth and edification of individual members of the body of Christ will strengthen the entire body and bring us closer to the Father.

(We Belong Together Continued) the good Lord that in most cases wisdom has prevailed.

This holds true in the body of Christ. Paul writes in Ephesians 4 that we are to “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with (which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:15-16) Note the words, “him who is the head, into CHRIST!” When a pastor, or a church member, or a board member, assumes the headship the only result is chaos and dysfunction in the body. Recently after a preaching engagement in West Virginia, I spoke with a lady who found herself in a difficult situation in her church. She didn’t know if she should stay and fight or leave as most others had done. She had been attending a church that was entrenched in a power struggle. It’s funny that when parents argue, fight, and divorce, it’s most often the children who suffer. When there is infighting in the church there is always residual damage. She said that one of the ladies confessed, “I just wanted more control.” And I said, “it seems to me that someone has forgotten who the head is.” The spiritual body only functions properly when everyone, pastor and laity, does his/her part under the headship of Christ. A pastor must submit himself/herself to the headship of Christ. A trustee member must submit himself/herself to the headship of Christ.

When this happens, we function in unity because we are not living in isolation. We function with plurality because we are made up of different bits and pieces. We function in diversity because the functions of the body (physical body and body of Christ) are varied and



necessarily so. And we function in harmony because all the parts are listening to the head. If my head tells my arm to move and my arm refuses, or moves in a different direction, then most likely the nerves in my arm are no longer sensitive to the promptings of my head. Pastor and laity, we must always check the sensitivity of our spiritual nervous system. We do so through daily submission; submission of our wills and desires (both for ourselves and for our churches) and submission to His design for the body. As it is with our human bodies, and it is with the Body of Christ, "God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body." (1 Corinthians 12:18-20)

The more we understand the nature of the body of Christ, we better we understand whom we are and where we fit. As a member of the body of Christ, saved by grace through faith, you belong somewhere. When we were transformed by the grace of Jesus Christ, we find that it matters increasingly to us that we have not only been called into a relationship with Christ, but into relationship with one another. We are diverse. We are diverse in our giftedness. And yet we belong. The church is not a place for you merely to show up and attend. It is a body. It is your kin. You need your church. Your church needs you. And oh, the staff at Ruth's Chris? They treated me as good as the man dressed in his Sunday's best. I ate good that day. Our waitress even bought us a desert for our recent marriage. And I left a nice tip. I believe

everyone wants to be somewhere that they do not feel out of place. You have a place here. You belong here. Together. In Christ "we move and have our being." (Acts 17:28)



MINISTER'S FELLOWSHIP

SEPTEMBER 26-27

CAMP CHRISTI 4704 ROANOKE ROAD
CHRISTIANSBURG, VA

Join us as Rev Dr. Melissa Pratt leads us in teaching and discussion from her presentation of "Biblical Sexuality."



Thursday
5:30-6:30 Supper in the C.W.C. Cottage
7:00 pm Worship Service -
Rev. Dr. Melissa Pratt
Friday
9:00 am Business Meeting
9:30 Session 1 with a break
11:30 Lunch in the C.W.C. Cottage
1:30 pm Session 2 with break
3:00 pm Session 3

Area Hotels

Homewood Suites 540-381-1394

Holiday Inn Express 540-382-6500

Quality Inn 540-382-2055

Tru by Hilton (brand New) 540-251-3604

Lodging on the Grounds

call 540-268-2040 or email the

State Office at

cogvaoffice@gmail.com

REGISTER HERE

2025 Spring Minister's Fellowship
Gordon Road Church of God
Spotsylvania, VA
March 13-14

2025 Fall Minister's Fellowship
Venue to be determined
September 25-26



The Mountain Empire Churches of God

Unity/Fellowship Meeting will take place at
5:00 pm Sunday, September 29 at the
Groseclose First Church of God, 333 Citizens
Road, 24368. Our theme continues to be

“Doctrines That Make Us Different”.

Retired Pastor, Bobby W. Dunn will speak on the
topic of

“Congregational Autonomy”.

This particular doctrine within the church of God
indeed makes us different from denominational
churches, and yet, causes some unique challenges
for us in the areas of accountability.

Anderson CHOG in Bristol Celebrates Baptisms



Marion FCOG Celebrates Baptisms



Central Region Luncheon
Charrley's Restaurant and Catering
707 Graves Mill Rd
Lynchburg, VA 24502

October 12, 2024

12:00 p.m..

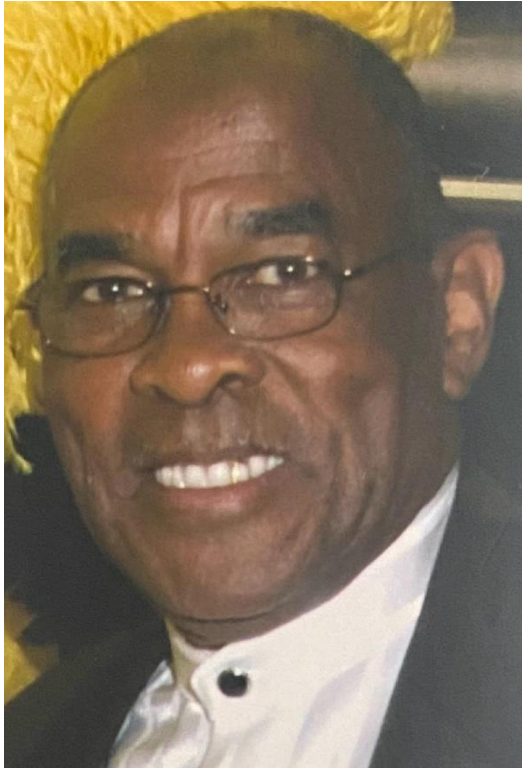
*\$20 full meal (choice of grill chicken,
chicken salad or fish) with beverage*

Desserts Extra

RSVP by October 6th

Naomi—(540) 397-0807





Reverend George Murrell, Jr. affectionately known as “June Bug,” was born in Southampton County, Virginia. November 11th, 1937, to the late Geroqe and Annie Murrell Sr. He attended elementary and middle school in Boykins, Virginia, and enrolled in Booker T. Washington’s adult night program where he graduated. He began his employment with Henry Kong Corn House, then later joined Thomas and Co. Plumbing as a warehouse driver. He maintained a career as a long-distance driver for Wilson Trucking Company in Norfolk, Virginia, where he retired.

George Married Miss Dollye R. Blow in 1957 (d. 2000) in Virginia. The union blessed them with three daughters, Jean, Doris and Trinedda. The Murrell family later moved to Norfolk, Virginia

and became affiliated with the Bellamy Avenue Church of God. George held several positions in the Bellamy Avenue Church of God movement and was an active member in church conferences. He was a Deacon as well as a member of the Trustee Board for the State Association of the Church of God. Manager of the Bedford and Camp Christi Campground facilities. Chairman of the Virginia State Finance Committee and a member of the State Ministerial Board.

In 1994 George was appointed by Reverend John Davis as Pastor of Pittman Road Church of God in Boykins, Virginia. He served as the leader of the church until his passing. Pastor Murrell’s service to Pittman Road and other believers extended beyond the pulpit. He served as the driver for the COG men’s group. “Salt of the Earth,” who traveled and sang at various churches, visited the sick and shut-in, served as an intercessor for those in need, and he served as the driver of the church van when necessary. He also played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Church of God Virginia (COGVA) with, Pastor Calvin Peterson, and Reverend Gertrude Goode, Pastor Don Neace, and Pastor Rawleigh Quarles.

In 2001 while attending the Church of God Pastor Murrell met his beloved Reverend Edna Floyd. They wed in May 2002 and Reverend Floyd relocated to Virginia Beach, becoming his co-pastor at Pittman Road Church of God in Boykins, Virginia. True followers of Christ and his word, their dedication to the Lord’s work led them to become true missionaries. They would often visit those unable or unwilling to physically

come into the house of the Lord, or who needed a prayer to meet the Lord's ears on their behalf. They traveled miles to visit and service those in need.

Loved by many. Pastor Murrell will be remembered as a devout follower of Christ who loved the Lord, his family and life. He met his heavenly father at the gates of heaven on Monday, June 17, 2024, in the comfort of his home.

He leaves to cherish his memory, his beloved wife Reverend Floyd, children from their blended family. Patricia (Patsy), Cassandra, Doris, Trinedda, Bertha (James, Lee (Janine) and Herman (Kendra). His grandchildren, Vidal, Monique, Alexa, Morgyn, Briana, Hailey, Tatyanna, Lee III, Aryelle, Aaron, Omari, Kaia, Xavier, Jessica, Janequa,

Courtney, Vincent, John, Shanelle and Tracey. Great grandchildren, Camren, Gustavo, Jr (TJ), Esa, Matthew, McKenna and Calaya. Loving brother, Milton (Martha), special daughter in love, Nichole, and his spiritual sons. Minister McKinley, Jefferson (Diane) and Brother Edgar Myers, Jr. (Shelby) and a host of family members and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, beloved daughter, Jean and siblings, Virginia, Ruth, Yvonne, Olivia, Jessie, Lynwood, Willie Allen, John Lee and Ellison.