

# COGA NEWS



## WHAT'S IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

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## GOD FIRST ... Details To Follow



Bishop Cecil Reid

"Putting God first puts your good first. And all else "comes with the territory": *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."*  
—Matthew 6:33

Grazing cattle do not become angry or distressed if their pasture changes. Fish do not grow resentful as the mighty currents change their water. The cows will have grass to eat, and the fish still have a home. Animals, it seems, accept change as a fact of life.

If only we humans could do as well! How shockingly easy it is for us to jump off the path, only to chase down one blind alley after another in desperate pursuit of something—anything—which waves a seductive promise of fulfillment and satisfaction. But one by one, each alley leads to the same dead-end: another alluring mirage which grows dim, disappears, and disappoints.

And so the days of our lives spin by as we quicken our pace to get more ... more ... more. Or to do more ... more ... more. Or to be more ... more ... more. And the more we get, the more we want. The more we do, the more that needs to be done. The more we become, the more we want to be. Finally, in a frenzy of getting and doing and becoming, we exhaust our-selves, despairing of our hollowness.

If you've ever looked into the night sky, undimmed by city lights so that you can see all the stars, you know the feeling of insignificance which can overtake you.

You can feel swept away by the incomprehensible magnitude of outer space. Yes, we are "out here in the stars." We are in and of the stars, but we are not lost!

Right where you stand is the hub of the universe, and you are the star of a cosmic extravaganza even more vast and grand than outer space. It is your own inner space. When you discover that universe, it becomes quite natural to live each day putting God first.

### WHAT DOES PUTTING GOD FIRST MEAN?

1. **Being true** to the Presence which made you.
2. **Thinking and acting** from your highest level and always being open to God's will as it seeks to unfold itself through you.
3. To use the farmer's metaphor, **putting your hand to the plow** and furrowing straight ahead rather than in meaningless circles, eyes neither to the left nor right but always fixed on God.

Then the healing, the prosperity, the peace, or the whatever you have been hoping for will take root in your life.

When you place God first in your life, everything else easily sprouts and grows naturally. This is simply another way of phrasing Jesus' "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

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## AIM FOR THE CENTER

What a freeing concept this is. It implies that:

1. We don't have to concern ourselves with each aspect of our lives.
2. We don't have to fret about our health.
3. We don't have to worry about our prosperity.
4. We needn't be anxious about our relationships.
5. Our responsibility is to seek the kingdom of God and put God first in our lives. The promise is that when we do this, everything we need to make us happy and complete will be provided for us.

The degree to which you place God first in your life is directly proportional to the amount of ease and joy in your life. Putting God first lets your life experience flow out of your relationship with God rather than trying to use God to change your life experience.

The idea, therefore, is to aim not for healing or prosperity or any of the other "things" (noble or deserved as they may be), since they are merely symptoms or a deeper problem—a separation from God.

Rather, aim for the experience of the presence of God, be "tunnel-visioned" toward God, one might say. This means release anything that blocks you from such an experience. In this way, what you seek is able to seek you. The healing, the love, the prosperity, "all these things shall be yours as well."

## WORKING OUT THE DETAILS

It's so heartening to know that with God first in your life, you don't have to concern yourself with the details of how things are going to work out. The need to manipulate other people and the pressure to control events disappear. Changes can take place all around you, and they will merely be experiences to learn or grow from or to accept or to ignore. The pastures may be relocated or the water changed, but that which counts the most and means the most can never change—the presence of God within you. The more you allow it free rein in your life, the less crucial the "pastures" and "water" become.

Perhaps you are already discovering this for yourself. Your concern over the details of life wane as your desire for something more, something greater, increases. The further you travel in your spiritual journey, the more you need and feel God.

Remember, the Power within you has infinite patience and comes forward only when it is called. As you enter this leg of your journey, do so with a joyful shout. Let your voice ring out through the primeval forests of your inner world: "Oh, Lord of my being, live Your life through me."

**PRAYER:** *I decide right now to place God first in my life. I am filled with Your Presence. I release all concerns. Oh, Lord of my being, live Your life through me.*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

- 8th > So. District 2024 Auxiliary Appreciation
- NWSE Fall Retreat

### OCTOBER

- NWSE One Day Women's Conference
- 14-18th > Southern District Convention

Find more information on [www.cogainc.org](http://www.cogainc.org)



## A LITTLE SOMETHING TO LAUGH ABOUT

- Fall is that awkward time when you start with a jacket in the morning and regret it by noon.
- Pumpkin spice season is just a socially acceptable way to drink pie.
- September: When the school supplies aisle becomes a war zone for parents.
- Fall is nature's way of letting us know that change can be beautiful... and chilly.
- The leaves are falling, and so is my motivation to do anything productive.
- September: When your lawn goes from needing a mower to needing a rake in just one week.

