



Members of the COGA Praise & Worship Team perform.

Photos by Layla Garms

National COGA gathering comes to St. Peter's

BY LAYLA GARMS
THE CHRONICLE

The Church of God Apostolic, Inc. National Family & Growth Conference is in town this week.

St. Peter's World Outreach Center is hosting the event, which began Monday and ends tomorrow. St. Peter's traces its roots back to the more than 100 year-old Church of God Apostolic (COGA) tradition. The late Bishop Reuben Hash Sr., the father of current SPWOC Pastor James C. Hash, served as presiding overseer for the COGA for many years prior to his death in the early 1990's.

Bishop Charles Hash, COGA first vice general overseer and one of R.K. Hash's 10 children, says he has fond memories of past Family & Church Growth Conferences.

"I've been coming to the conference from a child, and one of my greatest recollections is the people," said Hash, the pastor of Word of Life Fellowship in Roanoke, Va. "It's great people here. It's like family. It's people that you love - they treat you with the utmost respect. We're a small organization, but when we come together, the people enjoy one another."

Bishop Cecil Reid, pastor of Refuge Temple Evangelistic Center in Jonesville, has served as Presiding Overseer since 1993. The annual conference is a staple in the Apostolic tradition, said Reid, whose church currently serves as COGA national headquarters.

"It's a traditional part of our organization that we have an annual meeting," explained the Greensboro native, who was baptized in the Apostolic church over 60 years ago. "We all come together and we have fellowship and carry out our national and international business."

Reid said he expected around 300 attendees from as far away as Michigan, Florida and Arizona. The conference is intended to be a source of encouragement, inspiration and education for attendees, he added.

"It's not just coming for a good time, but for a learning time," said the grandfather of 15, who was slated to speak on the fundamentals of leadership during the conference. "The teaching will be well worth their coming."

Though education and promoting growth of COGA congregations are key components in the conference, many of those who attend the event year after year cite the fellowship among its greatest assets.



Presiding Overseer Cecil Reid (left) with Bishop Charles Hash.

"It always has a positive effect on people," said Bishop Donald Newkirk, pastor of New Beginning Christian Development Center in Lexington. "They like to come and they like the fellowship. The fellowship is one of the most important parts. We just like to get together."

Music is also a major component in the COGA tradition. The church even has its own songs, courtesy of COGA Music Director David Reid,

Bishop Reid's son and the conference's longtime music guru. Reid, a Greensboro resident and alumnus of UNC School of the Arts, has composed 375 original hymns for the church to date. He introduced several new songs during the conference this week. Reid, a pianist, says he has found music to be a highly effective tool for reaching people.

"Songs have a way of ministering to people

where a sermon will never touch," said the father of three, who is set to lead voices from across the COGA conference in recording a CD later this year. "I've learned a lot of times to put the messages to the melody, and they are well received."

The COGA tradition has played an integral role in his life, added the Share the Lamb Ministries pastor.

"It was through this that I found my wife," said Reid, who met his spouse, Justina Reid, at a COGA Jubilee at the age of 13. "It was through this that I've discovered and grown as a minister, as a pastor. It has a great foundation, and the organization's full of love."

Bishop Elbert West, pastor of Mount Zion Church of God in Ashburn, Ga., made the 450-plus mile trek from his home in the Peach State to participate in the conference this year.

"I haven't missed a one in 40 years," related West, who represents COGA's Southern District. "We have good growth so far. It's not like it was back years ago, but

we are growing. We're just praying that COGA continues to grow."

For more information about COGA, visit www.cogainc.org.



James C. Hash



Bishops Elbert West and Donald Newkirk (right).



COGA Music Director David Reid with his wife Justina.

WINSTON LAKE Y TNT PARTICIPANTS DROP 630 POUNDS

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Transformation Nation Triad (TNT), a free 16-week group training program, helped participants at the Winston Lake Family YMCA lose 636 pounds.

Across the region, the program helped more than 1,200 participants lose a cumulative 11,996 pounds. The program was led by YMCA personal trainers and wellness coaches to provide support, motivation and instruction to make healthy lifestyle changes. YMCA locations across Northwest North Carolina participated.

The top two winners at each participating YMCA of Northwest North Carolina branch were awarded prizes based on the highest percentage of weight loss. First place winners received a free six-month membership to the YMCA and second place winners received a free three-month membership to the YMCA. A third winner was selected randomly from all participants who attended 12-15 sessions to receive a YMCA Gift Certificate.



File Photo
Winston Lake Y Wellness Director Robert Edwards.

First place was awarded to Cassius Adams, second place was awarded to Deanna Walker and Michelle Cherry won the random drawing.

"We are so proud of the hard work from all of the Transformation Nation Triad participants," said Robert Edwards, wellness director at the Winston Lake Family YMCA. "Our YMCA trainers and nutrition experts from Novant Health provided the knowledge and motivation, but the participants really put in the effort to make this possible."

The program was a partnership between WXII News 12, Novant Health, and local YMCAs. The weight loss journey was featured on air by WXII News 12 and included weekly group workouts at the YMCA, weekly weigh-ins, daily exercise schedules, nutrition information from Novant Health, childcare provided during normal operating hours, and a free t-shirt for all participants.

"The weight loss achieved is incredible, but what we hear from participants is that the relationships they form with their trainers and fellow group members, as well as the changes that happen with their self-confidence and overall health are the best benefits of TNT," said Edwards.

To learn more about health and wellness programs offered at the YMCA, visit winstonlakeymca.org or call 336 724 9205.

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