

DOC NEW LIFE NEWS

Volume 58, Issue 1

Winter 2017

Special points of interest:

- President's Message
- Back to the Basics
- Events!
- Retreat Summaries
- Psalms, Prose & Prayers

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Dear Members and Friends of the DOC

As I write the "President's Letter" for the Winter 2017 edition of our *New Life News (NLN)*, many across the country are or have been recovering from hurricanes, devastating fires, and other challenging events. Each day, we arise to the difficulties we see around us and around the world, but we are people of hope and faith. Most of our days are spent in the valleys, not on the mountain tops. As I have noted before, I am a fan of Oswald Chambers. Oswald points out that we are not to be concerned with where the Lord puts us, but He will use us right where we are, often without consciously knowing we are being used by Him.

Late in this issue you will see notes of those we have lost this year, but I would point out the passing of Cal Bream from the Western Region and Sue Greer from the Southeast Region. Both served the Order and were beloved by those who walked with them.

Our National Board continues to seek ways to expand what we know of DOC as a "wonderfully kept secret" of those that continue to meet together and those that are not able to physically meet but do so electronically or in prayer. Last year the Board approved funding for inspirational ideas to seek new members and to ensure we

retain those that want to continue to be a part of our groups. The Southeastern Region will be tapping into this grant as they evaluate a new place to meet in coming years that would meet the needs of those attending retreats and making the gathering more cost effective for all. Please continue to give your regional leaders ideas as to how we spread the word and draw more to join with us. If you have not attended a DOC retreat or day apart ever or in recent years, I encourage you to go to our website for information on an event: <http://dochr.org/category/regional-news/>.

Also last year we did a survey. I would like to thank all who participated in the process. We shared the results as a national composite and at the region level. I think this data will help each region to move forward and serve members, as this was part of the impetus for the SE Region to evaluate change as well.

I must also remind you about our Facebook page. Here is the link: <https://www.facebook.com/dochrorg/>. While I am not an active poster on Facebook, I realize that it can be a tool to quickly get information out and make it available to a large audience. Please do "like" the page so that you will receive notices when we post. While not

the most "tech-savvy" of groups, please help us to get there!

We also earnestly desire to have written contributions from you for the *New Life News* which we publish. While it is a great way for us to communicate, it is also an opportunity for you to share with others. If you are a regular reader, you will know that we include retreat recaps, Christian poetry, and Christian book reviews. Please send items to Pete Nehnevajsa at nln@dochr.org. And many thanks to Pete for his labors to edit and publish *NLN*.

Last year I closed by not asking you for financial support, but prayer and non-financial contributions. Again, we are managing as a purely volunteer organization with no paid staff. We do incur costs in publishing *NLN*, maintaining our website, and enabling the National Board to meet. To that light, we do appreciate those of you who do continue to support us financially and especially those of you who name the DOC in your estate planning. Many of us are indebted to those who went before us like Cal Bream and Sue Greer, so think about how you can ensure the DOC continues for those who follow us.

Sincerely in Christ,
, National President

DOC 2018 Events

- The **Southeast Region DOC Annual Retreat** is **July 11-15** and will be held at **Caraway Conference Center, Sophia NC**. The speakers for the retreat are **Bob Tuttle** and **Betsey Mulloy** with Music Worship services led by **Jim and Sheila Todd**.

If you have an event to publish, please submit it to nln@dochr.org or dochrist7@gmail.com

DOC: BACK TO BASICS 1: THE CAUSE OF OUR LIFESTYLE: WHY WE NEED DISCIPLINE

by Bob Moore, October 24, 2006

Editors' Note: Sometimes we need to go "back to the basics" of who we are in our faith and as members of the Disciplined Order of Christ. This article was published by the late Bob Moore in 2006 on the DOC website, <http://www.dochr.org>. Its' relevance still exists for us today and is worth taking a moment to read and reflect on its message. See whether you agree or disagree on his message of the grip of life and how it may lead us astray from God and our relationship to him.

Dr. Albert Day, founder of the Disciplined Order of Christ, suggested that persons like us take an interest in, and perhaps join the Disciplined Order of Christ "to seek for ourselves the highest New Testament standard of Christian experience and life," and to promote that experience and standard among others. By doing this, we desire "to seek first the Kingdom of God, not in our lives merely, but in the life of the world" (*Discipline and Discovery (D&D)*, Appendix, revised edition, 1961, p. 150-51).

I believe he was right. At least that was a major part of my motivation when I joined the Order over 40 years ago. I wanted then, and I still want, "the highest New Testament standard of Christian experience and life," for me and for others. That is the standard required by our Lord Jesus, and nothing less will do.

Of course some people challenge the idea that we are required to live up to the highest New Testament standard. But that challenge fails, if one takes the Scriptures and the Lordship of Jesus seriously. Jesus, near the end of his earthly ministry stood in the Temple and exclaimed, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind ... And ... you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mt. 22:37-39). And he proclaimed early in his ministry from a mountaintop, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Mt. 5:48).

There is nothing new or unusual in the standards of the DOC. They simply are the classic standards of Christian living that have been promoted by dedicated Christians through the ages. Therefore these emphases are important to our spiritual development, whether we have been on the way for many years, or we are just beginning. Thus we are launching this series, "DOC: Back to Basics." We want to call those of you who are part of the Order to remember the basics of Christian living, and we want those of you who are searching for a deeper walk with God in Christ to understand that the DOC is a fellowship in which you not only can find your way, but also one in which you will be loved and nurtured.

The Order recommends seven classic disciplines: Private Prayer (including daily reading of the Bible and spiritual classics), Personal Commitment (including eight virtues laid out in Dr. Day's 1947 book, *Discipline and Discovery*, which became the "Handbook" of the Order), Small Group Fellowship, Active Church Participation, Witness and Service, Stewardship, and Ecumenical Fellowship. Since the eight virtues that Dr. Day emphasized in *Discipline and Discovery* are at the heart of the DOC commitment, I am going to begin with them. They are: obedience, simplicity, humility, frugality, generosity, truthfulness, purity, and charity (the King James Bible word for love). We will explore those virtues together in the weeks and months ahead.

The title of this first essay, "The Cause of Our Lifestyle," comes from my conviction that there good are reasons for it. Thus the thrust of this essay is *why* we strive for the highest New Testament lifestyle. Dr. Day laid out these reasons rather well. The first is obvious. It is *our great need for it*. When we honestly examine our lives, we soon note that we frequently fail to be all that Christ wants us to be, and to do all he wants us to do.

DOC: BACK TO BASICS (continued)

And there are reasons for our failures. Two pop into my mind immediately. One is *the pressure of daily difficulties*. Sometimes it seems that problems keep piling up to the point of totally exhausting us: health problems, job problems, financial problems, car problems, house problems, problems with the children. We begin to feel like we cannot stand to face even one more problem. Indeed sometimes we begin to feel like Chippy the parakeet.

Have you heard about Chippy the parakeet? Max Lucado tells about Chippy in his book, *In the Eye of the Storm* (p. 11f.). This is the Moore revised version of that story.

For some time Chippy led a rather typical pet parakeet's life. Indeed it probably was better than most. For starters he had, and still has for that matter, one of those really large, fancy cages, with at least three perches in it, including one that swings back and forth. And Chippy's master provided lots of food and water, extra absorbent papers on the cage bottom, and everything else that a captive parakeet might want.

If pet parakeets can feel blessed by God, I am sure that Chippy would have said that he felt blessed, though I have no idea what the images in his little parakeet mind would be. But then it happened. One day Chippy's owner was cleaning the cage, using a relatively efficient method, a vacuum cleaner, with no attachment on the end of the hose. She had just begun the cleaning job, when the phone rang. She reached back to pick up the phone, and "sssloopp!" She looked at end of hose with surprise, and then exclaimed, "Chippy!"

Action was immediate! She disconnected that dirt bag as quickly as possible. Then she frantically unzipped it, jerked out the inner paper bag, and tore it open. There he was, still alive, but stunned. He was covered head to tail with dirt and grime, including birdcage dirt.

"O Chippy!" The owner's indecision lasted

only seconds. Taking the dirty bird in her hands, she charged into the bathroom, turned on the water in the sink, and plunged Chippy under the faucet to clean him up. And sure enough she got him clean.

But suddenly she realized that she had a new problem. Chippy was clean, but he was laying there soaked and shivering. Poor bird! Could pneumonia be far away? So like any compassionate bird owner, she grabbed her hair dryer and blasted him with hot air.

A few days later, someone who knew about Chippy's mishap inquired about how well he was recovering. "Well," the owner replied, "Chippy doesn't sing much anymore—he just sits and stares."

Many of us can identify with Chippy at one time or another. Sometimes things happen to us, one right after another, that simply knock the props right out from under us. It has happened to all of us. And sometimes those problems mount up so much that they begin to interfere with our relationship to God. We may get angry with God. We may become confused, and wonder if

God still is in control of the universe. And sometimes we just get numb. Like Chippy we sit and stare, unable to pray or do anything else constructive. So the pressures of daily life can cause us to fail in our relationship to God.

A second reason for our failure is *our tendency to be undisciplined*. Denominational affiliation has little to do with it. As Dr. Day reminds us, Christians generally, and Protestant Christians particularly, tend to lack self-discipline (D&D, p. 7). If we made a list of areas in which people lack discipline, it would not take long for us to recognize some of our own areas of weakness.

For example, some folks have difficulty controlling their basic appetites such as those for food and sex. Others cannot manage their time,

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DOC: BACK TO BASICS (continued from page 3)

money, or devotional exercises. Some people struggle with emotions and find it hard to manage fantasies, fears, anger, and guilt. Still others lack self-esteem; and many do not love others as we ought to love. And all of us in one way or another struggle with the use of power.

Dr. Day identifies three special areas of need, though he certainly realized that they are only representative. The three areas are self, things and people. When we are in the grip of these three enemies, we cannot be what God wants us to be, or do what God wants us to do.

First is the self. There is a selfish self that lurks within us all and measures everything—issues, causes, other people, even God—by their effects on the self. Thus I may tend to concern myself with *my* hopes, *my* plans, *my* benefits, and *my* security, even *my* salvation (D&D, p. 19)!

Now one of the ways that our selfish self dominates us is through overemphasis on possessions. Therefore *things* become a second problem area (D&D, p. 19f.). I would like to be able to say that little needs to be said about this, because everyone is aware of the tyranny of things. But I can't say that, because I know it isn't true. I see many Christians bound by the things they possess, or the things they *want* to possess; and unfortunately, they often don't even realize it.

Our culture is so things oriented that we often are blind to the drive within us for a home, cars, and clothes (with the right labels of course) that are far beyond our actual needs. And this problem does not end with a lust for objects. We often are guilty of desiring authority and power as well.

The third problem area, which also springs from the first, that dominating selfish self that we all have, is *tyranny of people*. Who among us has not on occasion allowed what other people think, or what they might think, to play a more significant role in our decision making than what *God* thinks!

Some Christians are so bound by the opinions of other people, they cannot be God's person in the Church, let alone in the world (D&D, p. 20). Thus we see the tyranny of the self, things, and people.

To summarize this discussion of the cause of our New Testament lifestyle, we have seen, first of all, our great need of it. We often fail in our relationship to God, because of the pressures of daily life; and like Chippy the parakeet, we get depressed and sit and stare. Secondly, we often lack discipline. We find ourselves so much in the grip of self, things and other people that we drift away from God, and again our relationship to him suffers. Obviously, if we are to fulfill God's dream for our lives, that tyranny must be broken. And of course the key is to break free from that dominating self that plagues us (D&D, p. 21).

Visit the [DOC website](#) for more installments of "DOC: Back to the Basics"



“Journaling Our Prayers”

by Ruth J. Moorer, St. Paul's Prayer Coordinator

One of my difficulties in prayer is to keep my mind from wandering when I am trying to pray. A multitude of thoughts seem to flit in and out and though I try to not wander down those “rabbit holes” they keep intruding. I keep thinking of things I should do that day, I think of something I read in the newspaper, or that my neighbor's dog is barking, or my nose is itching; And if I am facing some problem or I am upset by what someone said or did then I am focused upon that rather than praying.

Years ago, I read a helpful hint about dealing with those thoughts of what I do not want to forget to do. The idea was to keep a note pad handy and write down the thing you want to remember as it comes to mind and then you can go on with your prayer time. Then I became more familiar with the practice of journaling one's thoughts and the value it has for keeping one focused. If I am writing down something, then my mind concentrates upon it much more easily.

So I find that if I have a written conversation with God, I can stay on track much better. Through the years, it has developed into a listening time, after all, conversation is supposed to be a two-way street! Do we find satisfaction in talking to someone who does not let us get a word in “edgewise”? If I am talking to God why should I think that he would not have something to say to me!

The things which are bothering us are the very things we can talk to God about! “Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.” God is interested in every detail of our lives. He knows and cares when a sparrow falls and is concerned even more when one of his children are in trouble. Psalm 139 says that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. With this awareness of God's love and concern, can we not take everything to him in prayer?

Keeping a prayer journal is a wonderful way to grow deeper in our spiritual lives. It is a measure of how seriously we take our relationship with Jesus Christ. If we do not communicate with him how can we really know him? Our modern technology has provided for almost infinite ways to communicate. We can look at the younger generation and see how fixed they are upon talking to each other by way of text- messaging, Face Book, Twitter, etc. Paul, the Apostle, encouraged the disciples to “pray without ceasing.” Can we not hold a continuing conversation with our Lord throughout each day?

I encourage you, if you are serious about developing your prayer life, to take pen and notebook in hand and write the Lord a letter each day. Listen and wait for his response and be blest!

“Please Take Away My Bars”

by Sybil Austin Skakle

You do me an injustice to agree
 When you really disagree
 You have me suppose you and I
 See eye to eye
 While we remain virtual strangers
 With love we can examine how we differ
 And from our combined misconceptions
 Dare to salvage rubies and emeralds
 From the rubble -
 Durable, valuable, eternal truths
 Profound convictions would thus
 Unite, not divide, us
 If I've wronged you, you no less
 Wronged me by
 Not helping me to face myself.
 Love me for myself.
 Help me to become my best.
 Please, Oh please, do not
 Encourage me by too much by
 Tolerance to remain an
 Infant in long dresses
 With wrinkles in my face.
 Oh, vain regrets for years half lived.
 There is no blame!
 If we hurt one another not knowing
 That we injure
 Then we do not know true guilt-
 A symptom of threats to our psyches.
 How do we change? Why should we?
 Tiny splinters do not always fester.
 It has been desolate not to share my best-
 Having no one care enough, to love me enough,
 To tell me the truth about myself -
 And to reassure me that, in spite
 Of my faults, my best can be redeemed-
 And that I am loved for myself alone.

Hildegard: A Woman for Our Time by Karen Small

North Central Region held its autumn retreat in Maria Stein, Ohio the weekend of October 6-8 2017. This 12th century "holy spitfire" was brought to life for us by the gifted and engaging Rev. Sharon Seyfarth Garner. Ordained United Methodist Elder, Sharon has specialties in Spiritual Direction, Diversity Management, and Ecumenical Studies. Hildegard was imprisoned in 2 or 3 tiny rooms with an older child when she was 8 years old, and her title for the next approximately 30 years was anchoress. She yearned to run and experience the delights of the surrounding forests of Disibodenburg in present day Germany, but made due with seeds and sprouts nurtured in her little indoor garden. Finally released from her enclosure, she was joined over time by other women seeking the religious life, often as the only alternative to being "offered" in marriage to a man of her parents' choosing and for their own advancement or reward.

She studied the medicinal properties of herbs and roots and leaves and became adept as a healer. She devised plans for healthy eating, emphasizing spelt, fish, vegetables and fruits, rose hip or sage tea, beer and wine.

A rarity in her time and educated by the older girl and various monks, the adult Hildegard wrote *Scivias*, from the phrase "Know the ways of the Lord". (Wikipedia). The volume is over 150,000 words, describing her many mystical visions and containing small drawings of many. (See below)

Hildegard describes an experience of one of her visions, "When I was 42 years and 7 months old, Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain, and inflamed my whole heart, and my whole breast, not like a burning but like a warming flame, as the sun warms anything it touches." (from *Scivias*). Her life was dedicated to her love of God above all things. But her pursuit of freedom and independence from an oppressive church system was relentless, and finally won her an independent convent at Rupertsburg, Germany, near Bingen, when she was 51 years old.

Many glorious works of her music compositions exist today, and writings in addition to *Scivias* include an allegorical morality play called *Ordo Virtutum*, a book of healthy living, and a medical volume called *Physica et Causae et Curae*. I am enjoying her deeply moving music, for example a piece called *O Frondens Virga* and sung by a men's group called Chanticleer, plus *O Tu Illustrata* by 5 women calling themselves VocaMe. I find this and Reverend Sharon's book *Praying with Mandalas* to be delightful and deepening aids to my prayer times. We all enjoyed this stimulating and creative time together.

This drawing accompanies the third vision of part 1 in [Scivias](#).



Psalm 100, NIV



Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.
Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his; we
are his people, the sheep of his
pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and
his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his
name.
For the Lord is good and his love endures
forever;

“The Disciplined Order of Christ”

"The Disciplined Order of Christ makes no claim to perfection. But many of us have found that in its retreats and fellowships and through its literature, we have come to a more vivid understanding of what it means to belong to Him. We have also been inspired to so completely belong to Him that those with whom we associate will want to belong to Him too!"

—Albert Edward Day



New Life News Article Submission Guidelines

If you have a book review, article, poem, psalm, prayer, event, retreat summary or other item that would be of interest to DOC members, please submit them to the New Life News email address (nln@dochr.org or dochrist7@gmail.com). They will be reviewed by the National Board members and included as soon as possible in the New Life News newsletter.

Guidelines for submission:

- ◆ **Full name** of author
- ◆ **Title and date** of the submission
- ◆ Any **copyright/print permissions** (yours to print/edit the article; others for any referenced material)
- ◆ Please keep articles to less than **500 words** .

*For
Aspiring
New
Life
News
Authors*

Member News

In Memory & Thankgiving of Life

- ◆ **Ms. Susan (“Sue”) Alexander Greer passed away on December 4, 2016.** From her obituary: “She served as Registrar for Disciplined Order of Christ (D.O.C) retreats, where she fellowshiped and prayed with long-time friends from around the region each year for more than 30 years.” (<http://www.combsfuneralservice.com/latest-obituaries/>)
- ◆ With genuine joy and sadness, we celebrate the life and death of **Cal Bream**, our oldest member in the west, who died at the ripe age of 102. Cal a retired Whittier, California banker and his wife Shirley joined the Disciplined Order of Christ Western Region hungry for a deeper relationship with Christ. Cal's positive, outgoing personality and skills won him membership on the board of the region. He found his niche in a passion to attract others to the Disciplined Order of Christ. He wanted to start new chapters around the region and encouraged others to do so. Eventually, the long-running San Diego chapter formed led by one-time regional president, Nancy Nolen Miller. Long Saturday board meetings held at different places in the Greater Los Angeles metro area sometimes exhibited rancor over one issue or another such as the eligibility for scholarships. Cal and Shirley blunted the thrust of sharp tongues with their warm spirit and generosity. They lived at high-elevated, mountainous Big Bear Lake, then Idyllic sea side Santa Barbara, near family in Corvallis Oregon and then back to family in Camarillo, California, north of Los Angeles. He rejoiced at witnessing the healing of his son Gene's advanced cancer by medical treatment and especially prayer. Cal and Shirley remained active in their local churches, thrived in musically-rich worship and sought continual enrichment of their spirits in Christ.. As Cal approached and passed through his 100th birthday he consulted with his spiritual director. More than a decade ago, Mr. Bream joined our West Coast Prayer Conference calls. He participated until deafness limited his capacities just after his 100th birthday. Cal's compassionate Christianity and global awareness informed prayers for peoples and governments in crisis in Washington and around the world. Well-informed and spiritually formed in Christ, Cal supported our western region with generous gifts of time, prayer and financial support. Cal Bream: Absent from the body. Present with the Lord.

Support DOC

Through your membership and financial giving we can reach out to so many people. Please consider offering a donation this year to National DOC as well as your local DOC region. Please send any donations to: **Disciplined Order of Christ, Attn: New Life News, PO Box 3681, Florence, SC 29502.**

Colossians 3:12-17,
NIV

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.



And be thankful.

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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