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Volume 11, Issue 6

What we're all about

Reach Out, Columbia is committed to presenting the heart and works of Jesus Christ in clarity and purity. We strive to encourage a deeper, more steadfast love toward others as well as provide a vehicle for the body of Christ to come together as one voice in corporate agreement and expression of faith.



Letter from the Editor

September 22, the autumnal equinox, marks the official end of summer. Southerners laugh at this, because we know it will be at least another month before we begin to experience fall-like temperatures. In the North, where I grew up, Labor Day marks the end of summer, because school always begins the following day.

No matter how you mark times and seasons, they continue their synchronized march. They are part of the promise God gave Noah and his family and a testimony of God's faithfulness.

"As long as the earth endures," God said in Genesis 8:22, "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

I have mixed feelings about the changing seasons. I rejoice when the cold of winter thaws into spring. I welcome the summer with its bountiful produce and beach trips. I embrace the cooler days of fall after the drought and heat of summer, and I dread the dark, cold days of winter.

I'm equally ambivalent about the seasons of my life. I lived the simple spring of childhood with enthusiasm and abandon, but chafed at the things I couldn't do because I was "too young." I burst into the summer of young adulthood full of hopes, and dreams, and physical strength, but felt a dawning awareness of how little I knew and how much I had to learn. I've entered the autumn of mid-life wiser and more grateful, yet increasingly conscious of the ever-ticking clock. And I see the winter of my life cresting the horizon, knowing that if the Lord wills, I'll be there in a few decades.

If I had to name the thread that stitches this issue of *Reach Out, Columbia* together, I'd call it *Seasons*. In our cover story, Grace and Bob Prichard tell the story of their life seasons, how God planted a ministry in their hearts as newlyweds that has continued to grow and flourish. Our community feature, the story of Cynthia Dewar's South Carolina Christian Dance Theater, tells a similar tale of how God faithfully grew not only her business, but her ministry.

Little by little, season by season, God grows, matures, and directs his people into the plans he has for their lives. "Plans to prosper them and not to harm them. Plans to give them a hope and a future," he says in Jeremiah 29:11.

We can learn two lessons from watching the earth's seasons. First, that God orders the seasons rightly. We can't enjoy the harvest of summer without the growing period of spring. We can't enjoy the cool of autumn without the heat of summer. Even winter has purpose and value, though it's never my favorite.

Second, we can be confident that the same God who orders the earth's seasons for our good and his pleasure will do the same in the seasons of our lives.

In addition to the stories I've mentioned above, you'll hear from Lael Arrington, who challenges the culture of today that devalues aging and the aged with her article, "We're Not Growing Older, We're Growing Closer." You'll hear from April White, speaking from the season of motherhood, with her reflection piece, "I Made That Face." And we've given a nod to one of South Carolina's favorite seasons, football, with Rob Buck's insightful piece, "Game Changer."

I hope you enjoy the bountiful harvest of goodness we've gathered for you. Happy fall.

Lori