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United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

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News At a Glance

Internet Literature Requests Up 58 Percent

In the 2004-2005 fiscal year, requests for *The Good News* magazine and other literature totaled 193,676 through the Internet. This is an increase of 58 percent over last fiscal year, and a 171 percent increase over two years ago.

Our advertising at Yahoo.com is still working very well. We receive new subscribers for around \$1.75 each, and these are usually people who have browsed our Web site and understand the type of literature they will receive. Yahoo is also partnering with most other major search engines on the Internet, and so our keyword listings appear in many places.

We have also begun using Google's keyword advertising tools. Between these two companies, we blanket the Internet. We had more than 20 million impressions of our ads in July, compared to under 5 million impressions last July.

Peter Eddington

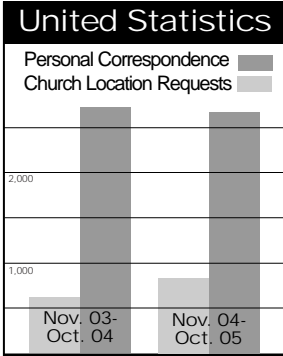
2004-2005 Media Stats Announced

Media and Communications Services operation manager Peter Eddington provided the following statistics to the Council of Elders in August:

- Total incoming mail from all sources was 512,336 pieces, a 10 percent increase over the 2003-2004 fiscal year. We are now processing around 50,000 pieces of mail a month.

- 490,777 individual pieces of outgoing literature were sent from the home office mail room through the fiscal year. This is a 9 percent increase over last fiscal year. Millions of other pieces (*The Good News*, *United News*, *World News*

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Beyond Today Program Videotaping to Begin

President Clyde Kilough said Oct. 6, "I am pleased to announce that the Council of Elders recently approved the name for the new video program (for both television and Internet) that we will soon begin producing at the home office. We are going to call it, *Beyond Today: Understanding Your Future*.

"The main title, *Beyond Today*, obviously speaks to the hope we preach of God's soon-coming Kingdom, but we will also focus on helping viewers grasp the gospel's relevance to their lives today, how that 'godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life

that now is and of that which is to come' (1 Timothy 4:8). We are pleased to have a program name that is as visionary as the gospel it conveys."

Plans are to begin recording the first four programs during the third week of November. United's new video program will be aired on free cable-access community TV stations, and "we will capitalize upon the latest streaming technology to broadcast the message of God's Kingdom on a new multimedia Web site that will operate night and day," said Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager.



The new media center studio opens with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Nov. 4 (photo by Dee Kilough)

"Selecting a title was actually a tremendous challenge, and we evaluat-

ed nearly 300 suggested titles!" said Mr. Eddington. A Web site domain name has been secured, www.beyondtoday.tv, and also a toll-free telephone number with "TODAY" in the numbers.

Using "Understanding Your Future" with the video program will help tie it together with *The Good News* (subtitled "A Magazine of Understanding") and *Vertical Thought* ("A Magazine of Understanding for Tomorrow's Leaders").

"Please continue to pray for the success of this new endeavor as we work

See "Video," page 2

United Brethren Enjoy Feast at 59 Sites



Quillano Sabello and Renante Angana perform at Davao City, Philippines, variety show (photo by Charles Macaraeg). Right, people from the Baltic area with a few Americans at the Feast in Estonia (photo by Wayne Stephens).

About 20,000 brethren celebrated the Feast at 59 United sites around the world. The 11 U.S. Feast sites reported a highest attendance figure of 11,398.

The Feast reports include themes such as preparing to help others in the Kingdom and unity, and many mention the importance of Feast fellowship in recharging members' batteries for the coming year. Many reports also include comments from hotel and convention staff

about the good examples of members and their children.

Several firsts: It was the first time the brethren in Zambia had electricity and running water at the Feast, and all the brethren in Ghana were together for the first time.

At least 36 baptisms were reported at nine Feast sites, and two deacons and three elders were ordained.

Reports on 55 sites are included in this issue, beginning on page 9. We hope to have the other reports next issue. UN

Africa Conference Proves Profitable

Sept. 6 and 7 a conference was held at the home office for the three areas in Africa that are administered from the United States: East Africa (represented by senior pastor John Elliott), Nigeria (senior pastor Fred Kellers) and Ghana (senior pastor Melvin Rhodes). Other ministers who have helped serve in Africa and home office staff members also attended.

Mr. Rhodes, senior pastor for Ghana, said: "The African conference was very profitable. It was good for the pastors and others involved in Africa to get together and discuss common problems and challenges.

"Africa is very fertile ground. According to a recent report in the *Financial Times*, 1,400 new denominations a month are started across the continent. Almost everybody wants to be a member of a church. It is very common to see people reading their Bibles wherever you go. There are always lots of questions!

"Of course, not all of the people who contact us are being called by God. Just like people in the West, many want to follow God but do not want to obey Him or live His way. The challenge for us is to serve those who genuinely are being called, while not allowing the others to divert our attention.

"Africa is a unique continent with problems that are also unique. By meeting together, we were able to discuss better and more efficient ways of serving the people there." UN

Members Help Brethren Affected by Hurricanes

by Ken Giese and Jon Erickson

The outpouring of care, concern, contributions, offers of housing, food, clothes and supplies from the UCG home office and members, and also from the community, has been absolutely astounding! Scores of Church members have been willing to open their homes, their hearts and their wallets to respond to these disasters.

Hurricane Katrina, which first made landfall north of Miami, Florida, as a Category 1 hurricane on Aug. 25, and again on Aug. 29 near New Orleans, Louisiana, as a Category 4 hurricane, was the most destructive and costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States. The death toll was near 1,337 and damage is estimated at over \$200 billion. The damaged areas cover

90,000 square miles, which is almost as large as the United Kingdom.

Hurricane Rita is on record as the strongest measured hurricane to ever have entered the Gulf of Mexico, and was the third most intense hurricane ever in the Atlantic Basin. Rita also struck Florida before making landfall as a Category 3 hurricane between Sabine Pass, Texas, and Johnson's Bayou, Louisiana, on Sept. 24, leaving a death toll of 119 (as of Oct. 3). Many areas in Louisiana, including New Orleans, that were affected by Katrina were also affected by Rita.

Brethren Blessed

With such widespread and intense destruction and loss of life, UCG members in the affected areas were blessed by God to not suffer loss of life or seri-

ous injuries. Most had some home and property damage, but even most of this was relatively minor. The UCG Good Works Program "Katrina Disaster Relief Project" was aimed at raising funds for brethren impacted by Katrina (and later Rita) to provide food, clothing, emergency shelter, transportation and to aid attendance at Sabbath and Holy Day services. It raised more than \$125,000 and has been closed to further contributions, as needs are not expected to top this total.

The home office appointed Ken Giese, regional pastor in the areas affected by Katrina and Rita, as UCG relief coordinator to oversee that the specific relief help provided to brethren matched their needs in a timely way

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News At a Glance

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and *Prophecy*, *Vertical Thought*, etc.) are mailed directly from various printers.

- 111,500 copies of the *Bible Study Course* were reprinted during the year—some of all 12 lessons. This all equates to 1.1 million total copies printed so far.
- 11 percent of *Bible Study Course* graduates are either coworkers or donors, and 95 percent of them have ordered other pieces of literature beyond *The Good News* and *BSC*. In contrast, only 2.8 percent of our entire subscriber base are coworkers or donors. Therefore, it seems that our *BSC* readers are four times more likely to make a donation.

- Over 12,400 responses to *GN Radio* have been received in five years.

- Print promotions for the *GN* magazine went into 9 million homes (a 20 percent increase over the 2003-2004 fiscal year), with 72,003 new subscribers being added to our files. The overall cost per response was \$3.65.

- For the 2005-2006 fiscal year, our print advertising model calls for reaching over 4.9 million households with the expectation of adding over 50,000 new *GN* subscriptions, particularly targeting younger demographics.

- *World News and Prophecy* was being sent to 34,821 subscribers as of July—a 33 percent increase.

- The 2004-2005 Operation Plan called for 5,000 copies of each issue of *Vertical Thought*. Interest in this new publication was far beyond expectations, with a current print run of 18,800!

Elder Ordained

Dempsey Bruton III was ordained an elder on Oct. 4. He and his wife, Susan, serve the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation.

E-mail Updates Show Significant Growth

As of June 2005 we had 10,680 subscribers to our www.ucg.org Web site updates, a 12 percent increase over a year ago. This service provides our users with the latest new items on our site. In addition, there are 7,662 people receiving UCG member updates, which give our members updates of Church news and other important developments.

The *Vertical Thought* magazine e-mail update alerts teens and young adults to new material posted at www.verticalthought.org and links to new material as it becomes available. We have 1,363 current subscribers to this service (a 27 percent increase over a year ago).

An exciting development is the number of *Good News* readers who are now signed up to receive our monthly “GN Reader e-Letter.” At present we have 12,457—a very encouraging 21 percent increase. Samples of what our

See “News at a Glance,” page 23

Subscriber Letters Help Develop Relationship With Readers

A subscriber development letter offering *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension* was mailed to the largest list yet, to 200,000 U.S. households.

As of Sept. 30, 18,776 responses were received, a 9.39 percent response.

We hope to do three letters for this fiscal year, offering the *Bible Study*

Course and two booklets.

In April 2005 we did something new for us: We sent an offer to 95,000 former U.S. *Good News* subscribers who have not renewed their subscriptions to see if we could woo them back. We have received 6,357 responses—a 6.7 percent response to add some old subscribers back on the list.

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diligently to preach the gospel message,” said Mr. Eddington.

New Hire

Video producer Clay Thornton will be devoting much of his time to work-

ing directly with the *Beyond Today* video program. Therefore, Clint Porter is being hired as associate video producer to take on Mr. Thornton’s current responsibilities.

Mr. Porter’s job will include the regular sermon tape program, special educational videos, tape dubbing,

inventory, the radio program, etc.

“We believe that he will more than bring the necessary experience and talents to the job,” said Mr. Kilough in announcing the hire. “He has a degree in mass communications, plus broadcast radio station management and programming experience. He is very tal-

ented in the computer field, and will be a great fit for the growing needs of the Media and Communication Services area.”

Mr. Porter and his wife, Joy (nee LaBissoniere, a 2002 ABC graduate), are moving to the home office from the Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation. UN

“Hurricanes,” continued from page 1

and was coordinated with what they receive from the Red Cross, FEMA or insurance payments. Local pastors in the affected areas are assisting in this effort.

UCG efforts to locate members and determine what help they needed was handled by the pastors in the affected areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Texas.

New Orleans, Covington and Laurel Area

Andy Burnett, pastor of the New Orleans and Covington, Louisiana; and Laurel, Mississippi, congregations was assisted by Rick Avent, elder, in contacting members. As of late September all members (except for one) had been located and were safe.

We have been able to temporarily relocate to Houston one family who had flooding in their home on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. A member in Houston opened up a home that was on the market and invited the family to stay there as long as necessary.

Houston members are furnishing the home with necessities and will continue to assist the family until they are able to return home to Louisiana.

Brethren from Florida donated a car to the family, filled it with household items and delivered it to Houston!

Dozens of brethren have offered shelter for members displaced by Katrina. A few of the members have temporarily relocated (some permanently) to other areas due to job transfers as a result of Katrina. The funds donated by the Church have helped immensely with relocation costs.

Six members’ homes were flooded, perhaps seven. In addition, almost all of the brethren who live in Covington and New Orleans and eastward through Mississippi incurred some type of damage to their homes or property, be it from fallen trees or wind damage with subsequent water damage from rain. The clean-up efforts are colossal, but the brethren are up to the task.

Concerning the rest of the brethren, with the exception of those whose homes were flooded, all have returned to their homes and all have power. As of



John Baggett and daughter, Chris Rohillio, UCG members from Slidell, Louisiana, were Katrina evacuees. Members from Houston, Texas, provided use of this home and members from Florida provided the car (photo by Thomas Henager)

mid-October, we still had a few brethren who were waiting to have trees removed from their houses. Many still had debris to be removed from their property. Locally, we have mobilized

work crews to help brethren with their needs and will continue to do so while there’s work to be done.

Mobile, Geneva and Pensacola Area

Harold Rhodes, pastor of the Mobile and Geneva, Alabama; and Pensacola, Florida, congregations was able to locate all members, including those from Mississippi. Many, if not most, homes along the Mississippi Gulf Coast were destroyed, and Mobile, Alabama, had the worst flooding in many years. Most of the members had some damage to their homes and property, and some had non-member relatives who lost everything.

One family, who lost their apartment to storm damage in Biloxi, Mississippi, was relocated to Augusta, Georgia, where a brother is in real estate and is helping them get settled in a house. The Red Cross is helping them with a motel room until they can get settled. In Ocean Springs, Mississippi, one member family received

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Mission Statement: The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples.

President: Clyde Kilough

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Internet access on your computer:

The United Church of God, an International Association, has a home page on the Internet’s World Wide Web. The address <http://www.ucg.org> gives you access to general information and news about the Church, issues of *The Good News* and *United News*, as well as our booklets. The address <http://www.ucg.ca> accesses the Church’s Canadian Web site. <http://www.ucg.org.au> the Australian Web site, <http://www.labuonanotizia.org> the Italian Web site, <http://www.goodnews.org.uk> the British Isles Web site, <http://www.ucg.org.ph> the Philippines Web site, <http://www.ucgeastafrica.org> the Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda site and <http://www.ucg-rsa.org> the Southern Africa Web site.

Caring for the Called Through Correspondence

by Cecil E. Maranville

A consequence of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God is that some of our readers and listeners contact us for further information and guidance. A relationship develops as we provide them with supplemental publications to answer their questions and to aid their Bible study.

Some questions cannot be answered by literature alone and require a personal response from a United Church of God elder. Increasingly, those who hear our message contact us through e-mail, and we respond the same way. E-mail comes to our info@ucg.org and

info@gnmagazine.org mailboxes, from which Terri Eddington in the home office distributes it to a team of field pastors, who respond to each one.

Their replies are channeled back to Mrs. Eddington, who proofreads the responses with Mike Bennett and e-mails them to the original sender from the official UCG e-mail address. The messages are signed by the ministers who answer them, establishing a personal contact with the people reaching out to us. Mrs. Eddington maintains a database of answers by topic. (See below for more on Internet Personal Correspondence as well as *Vertical Thought* PC.)

In addition to the burgeoning Internet

services we provide, we still receive approximately 100 letters by surface mail each month that require a personal response. Alec Surratt and Barbara Antion, in the home office, read and note the portions of these letters that require a response. Wendy Lovelady faxes them to Cecil Maranville, who answers them, working out of his home in Glendale, Arizona.

He e-mails the answered letters back to Mrs. Lovelady for proofreading, printing and mailing from the home office under the supervision of Richard Pinelli, operation manager of Ministerial Services. Mr. Maranville also maintains a topical database for the sake of

monitoring and reporting on trends and interests.

Although we do not have a toll-free telephone line for subscribers, people will occasionally call the home office with questions of the type we handle through the Personal Correspondence Department. These include chaplains who want information on the Church, due to the application of an inmate for time off for the Sabbath and Holy Days or for a pork-free diet. These telephone calls are also routed to Mr. Maranville.

Form Letters and Personalized Responses

Many years ago, the Church had a series of printed form letters that it sent in response to questions. By contrast, today we are able to personalize every response. We have a complement of over 300 form letters to assist our writers in answering letters. These letters were written and reviewed by a team of elders and approved by the Council of Elders. Using computers and the Internet, our writers incorporate information from the form letters as appropriate, but always include a personal touch.

Mr. Maranville generates a detailed report on the PCD activity every month, keeping the administration abreast of trends. The president usually shares highlights of this report with the ministry and membership via the "Home Office Updates."

Inmate mail continues to be a sizeable

minority of surface PCD mail. One of the most common requests from men and women who want to live God's way of life is for a letter of support in their pursuit to keep the Sabbath, Holy Days and the food laws.

We send out many letters of encouragement to people who are dealing with difficult trials. For example, we sent a letter of encouragement to one of our readers who asked for help a few months ago, because she is unable to overcome smoking. She feared she has committed the unpardonable sin. We also provide counseling to subscribers who write for advice and guidance. Some other counseling situations this year include how a mother could improve her relationship with her teen daughter and how a person could deal with her marriage breaking up.

Our members often enjoy hearing about the unusual requests we receive. This year, we heard from a 90-plus-year-old asking about attending church. Another octogenarian asked if she was too old to attend! A teacher in Africa inquired about ABC, having learned of it from a newspaper in which his groceries were wrapped.

Subscribers asked various questions about the rapture doctrine all year long, including one who was thunderstruck by the revelation that the doctrine is false. He asked, "Are you absolutely sure?"

See "PC," page 8

Internet PC: Handling Questions From All Over

Internet Personal Correspondence was designed primarily to answer questions from nonmembers who do not have access to a pastor. We receive an average of about 1,500 messages per month from our Web site e-mail addresses. Approximately 100 to 120 of those are Internet PC e-mail questions that cover a broad range of subjects.

Most of these questions are doctrinal in nature; however we also receive a number of messages from individuals who write in for encouragement and advice on how to deal with trials and difficult situations in their lives.

A Sampling of Messages

Recent messages asked how to fast, how to keep the Sabbath, when the Holy Days are kept and whether baptism is necessary. Others took exception to our teachings on the second resurrection and military service. One asked questions about ghosts and others asked for help with marital problems. Here are a couple interesting letters:

"I just found out yesterday that you existed. I am presently a Seventh-day Adventist who has been keeping God's Holy Feast Days ever since I first read about them in the Bible nine years ago. However, Seventh-day Adventists don't keep the Feast days, so it has been lonely for me. Imagine my joy to learn that you do keep them, and the Saturday Sabbath! . . . Will you please help me find you? I want to learn more . . ."

"I read the *Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God*. The topic that really struck my mind was 'Military Service and War' . . . I am serving in the military since almost all Eritreans are in the army at this time due to the bloody war with Ethiopia . . ."

The Team

The Internet PC team consists of 26 pastors who are on a monthly rotational list. They are responsible for writing a personal response to each message they receive, in addition to their regular duties.

These men include: Gary Black, Michael Blackwell, Randy D'Alessandro, David Dobson, Dan Dowd, Bob Fahey, John Foster, Jim Haeffele, Michael Hanisko, Vernon Hargrove, Don Henson, Joe Horchak, David John-

son, Doug Johnson, Frank McCrady, Dave Mills, Steve Moody, Camilo Reyes, Earl Roemer, Larry Salyer, Rex Sexton, Gary Smith, Herb Teitgen, Larry Walker, Roger West and William Winner.

In addition, Noel Horner is helping answer questions every month. More recently, some of our retired ministers have also begun to help with this task.

Internet PC Insights

Many of the men who serve in this way have found that the PC experience gives them a unique perspective, and a few have shared their insights:

"Serving on the Personal Correspondence team has been very rewarding to me. The thing that stands out in my mind is that the Web is a very powerful and pervasive tool for preaching the gospel into all the world. We receive questions from people from every [inhabited] continent; some of them have only a limited usage of English, but they are intrigued by our message. Many of them reflect limited understanding, but they are searching. Our Web site will lead them to deeper understanding as they continue their studies."—*Dave Mills*

"With the technology today, many of us are able to sit in our own homes and answer questions that come from around the world and from most of the United States. We respond to people we've never met about doctrinal issues and how to apply God's way of life to everyday living. It's an awesome responsibility, and mentally stimulating, to write to people on behalf of the Church."—*John Foster*

"Many of these individuals have different and varying philosophical and religious beliefs from our own. We find ourselves communicating with devotees from other beliefs who may not accept our teachings of Christianity. They challenge us to prove our premise, some even taunt us.

"This is a new manner of discussion for many of us, but it helps us to better understand the commission of going to all nations with the good news. It also forces us to go back to the simplicity of the message and to the accuracy of the biblical statements. It's all well worth the effort when some few reply and tell us how the words we spoke to them via the Internet helped to change their lives and

give them an accurate view of themselves and a positive view of the future."—*Vernon Hargrove*

"It reminds me of the days when we were visiting prospective members on a regular basis. They always had many questions to ask that were important to them. I have conducted several local Bible studies for the members during which we simply dealt with some of the questions that would come in over e-mail. The members appreciated this, and often found that questions were asked about subjects that they had wondered about as well."—*Steve Moody*

"It has been a real pleasure to be a part of the Personal Correspondence team over the last couple of years. It's a challenge to look at the questions that are submitted and to seek to prayerfully and accurately give a reply. Some of the questions are so heart-wrenching and the hope is to write a response that hopefully gives them some comfort, hope or guidance for the question or challenge that they are facing. More than anything, answering questions for Personal Correspondence has emphasized how desperate this world is for answers to its spiritual questions."—*Gary Smith*

"I have tried to improve my approach and techniques to be able to relate individually to each person who writes to us and to address each topic in a clear and caring way, even if the reader obviously disagrees with the specific teachings of UCG. I have probably learned as much or more in researching and pondering an appropriate answer than the person asking the question!

"There is the challenge in deciding how much material to give to the reader and yet to encourage them to explore the Scriptures and our booklets more thoroughly to understand and own the answer themselves. It is quite rewarding to get feedback from a reader who expresses appreciation for the answer."—*Herb Teitgen*

"Answering PC Internet mail is a challenge each month as we receive questions from all around the world. Regardless of where people live, God's Word applies to them. It keeps us aware of what people want to know and sharpens our ability to explain and defend God's way (1 Peter 3:15)."—*Roger West*
Terri Eddington

Personal Correspondence Statistics

Year	Surface "Snail" Mail	Internet PC	Vertical Thought PC
2000	756	462	
2001	1,086	551	
2002	931	793	
2003	1,081	1,087	
2004	1,248	1,223	841
2005*	719	937	573

*(through September)

Vertical Answers for the Next Generation

Vertical Thought Personal Correspondence (VTPC) has the opportunity to answer the questions of younger readers within and outside the Church of God.

The *Vertical Thought* magazine was created to address the needs and concerns of the teen through young adult age group. As the circulation of the magazine continues to grow (both in print and online), we are finding a steady increase in the number of questions that are being asked by readers and their parents. Since the younger generations are very computer literate, nearly all of the questions to *Vertical Thought* are sent in via e-mail.

We have a team of 10 pastors who serve on a rotating basis to answer the approximately 70 questions we receive each month. Andy Burnett, Todd Carey, Tom Clark, Tom Damour, David Dobson, Mike Hanisko, Doug Horchak, Jim Servidio, Gary Smith and Ken Treybig work to field the questions. As one writer said, "Being part of VTPC has been a very rewarding and exciting part of my ministry in the past several years."

The questions we receive run the gamut from comments sparked by a recent article to serious doctrinal questions. Very often we are asked about matters of relationships, dating, marriage and God's view of sexual activities before marriage. Not only do we receive questions from teens and young adults, but occasionally also from their parents. We find that parents both in and out of the Church often struggle with the task of guiding and teaching their children to live uprightly with their growing maturity and freedom.

With the Internet, questions come from literally all over the world. An interesting phenomenon has been the number of questions that come from disadvantaged parts of the world—especially Nigeria. In this regard Ken Treybig wrote: "I'm not sure of all the reasons why we have such a response from Nigeria, but I think part of the reason is 'hope.' In an area of the world where economic hope is minimal, *Vertical Thought* offers a positive message of hope, since the plan of God is the only sure hope for all humanity."

Tom Clark

UCG's Audited Financial Statements Reflect God's Blessings

■ After the end of every fiscal year the United Church of God has an independent auditing firm examine the books. Here are the audited financial reports from the last fiscal year.

by Tom Kirkpatrick

We are publishing here the audit opinion and the audited financial statements of the United Church of God, an International Association, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, and the previous year.

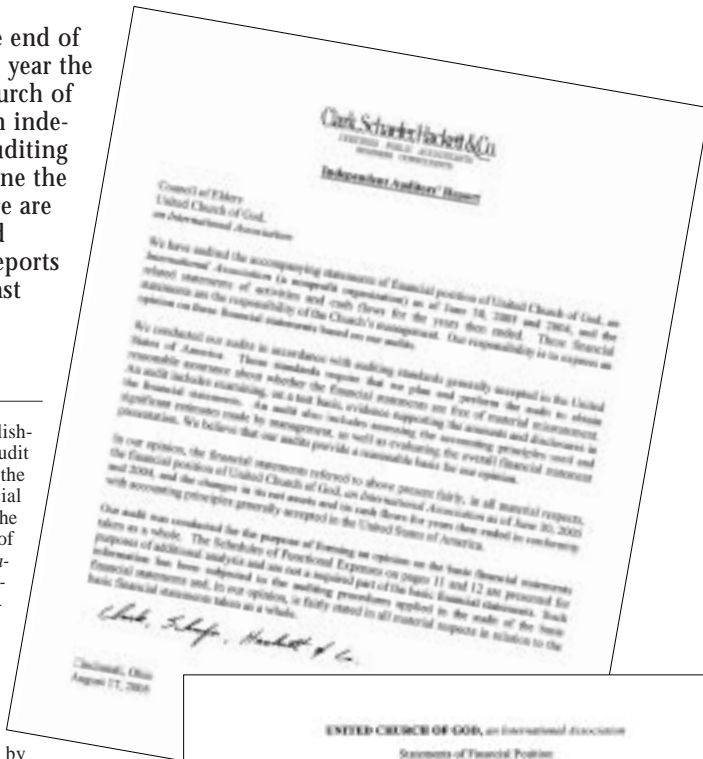
These statements were audited by Clark, Schaefer, Hackett & Co., a firm based in Cincinnati, Ohio. We also have included a sidebar that includes a few summary statistics taken from these statements.

The statements reflect the financial results of another in a continuing series of years during which God has blessed the Church abundantly in many ways, including finances.

As a result of this provision of resources, the Church has been able to operate another year to fulfill its mission of spreading the seed of God's truth and spiritually caring for those God has called.

We give thanks and credit to God, and also to the members and others who support the work of the Church. UN

Shown on this page, scans from the auditors' report: cover letter, Statements of Financial Position, Activities and Cash Flows. On the next page: the Schedules of Functional Expenses from the last two fiscal years



	2005	2004
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 6,223,332	\$ 5,469,964
Cash designated for retirement fund	842,784	788,726
Total cash and cash equivalents	7,066,116	6,258,690
Prepaid expenses	44,823	48,078
Property and equipment, net	3,238,936	3,121,644
Total assets	10,335,875	9,629,514
Liabilities and net assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	270,248	233,188
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	168,638	521,428
Payroll taxes withheld and accrued	1,381	1,267
Accrued matching thrift plan obligations	83,316	48,707
Accrued insurance obligations	368,594	371,123
Mortgage payable	1,263,812	1,468,154
Total liabilities	2,394,390	2,376,809
Net assets		
Unrestricted	6,941,399	6,460,969
Unrestricted - designated by Council of Elders	842,784	788,726
Temporarily restricted	196,782	-
Total net assets	8,029,514	7,252,725
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 10,335,875	\$ 9,629,514

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

	2005	2004
Unrestricted net assets:		
Revenues, gains and other support:		
Contributions - individuals	\$ 11,670,029	11,811,711
Contributions - local congregations	623,059	548,209
Holy day offerings and festival food contributions	5,487,861	5,362,263
State/personal property donations	113,276	-
Dividend and interest income	188,691	41,583
Other income	123,488	136,749
Net assets released from restrictions:		
Satisfaction of restrictions	72,898	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	20,087,576	19,096,637
Expenses:		
Program services:		
Field Ministry - Local Congregations	8,779,823	8,576,204
Festivals	958,617	984,341
International	1,778,535	1,817,173
Public Proclamation	4,077,682	3,886,727
Total program services	15,578,157	14,794,637
Management and general:		
Council of Elders / Home Office / Insurance & Benefit Plans	3,899,719	3,887,896
General Conference	77,818	83,871
Total management and general	3,977,537	3,971,767
Total expenses	19,515,519	18,725,224
Increase in unrestricted net assets	872,057	371,413
Temporarily restricted net assets:		
Contributions	239,989	-
Net assets released from restrictions:		
Satisfaction of restrictions	(72,898)	-
Increase in temporarily restricted net assets	167,091	-
Change in net assets	688,760	371,413
Net assets at the beginning of period	7,252,725	6,881,312
Net assets at the end of period	\$ 7,941,485	7,252,725

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

	2005	2004
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 688,760	371,413
Adjustment to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	148,887	152,284
Effect of change in operating assets and liabilities:		
Prepaid expenses	4,147	8,987
Other assets	-	6,285
Accounts payable	34,798	14,452
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	42,180	82,795
Payroll taxes withheld and accrued	(83)	(19,799)
Accrued matching thrift plan obligations	9,609	9,962
Accrued insurance obligations	(11,471)	(18,672)
Net cash provided by operating activities	828,717	617,663
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchases of property and equipment	(43,970)	(10,838)
Net cash used by investing activities	(43,970)	(10,838)
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Payments on mortgage payable	(75,343)	(70,563)
Net cash used by financing activities	(75,343)	(70,563)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	89,344	536,442
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	6,258,720	5,722,278
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	\$ 6,348,064	6,258,720
Supplemental Cash Flow Disclosures:		
Interest paid	\$ 88,687	95,444

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

	Fiscal Year 2004-5	Fiscal Year 2003-4
Cash and cash equivalents	\$6,223,332	\$5,469,964
Total assets	10,335,875	9,629,534
Total liabilities	2,394,390	2,376,809
Unrestricted net assets	7,784,782	7,252,725
Total income	20,087,576	19,096,637
Change in net assets	688,760	371,413

Financial statements continue on next page

	UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association						
	Schedule of Functional Expenses						
	Year Ended June 30, 2005						
	Program Services			Management and General			
	Ministerial Services/Field Ministry/Local Commissions	Outreach	International	Public Relations	Office/Secretary & Benefit Plans	General	Total
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 5,180,246	489,179	--	884,158	1,444,812	--	8,118,395
Contracted services and fees	2,819	129	--	65,717	120,299	5,409	395,234
Breakfast meals and advertising	--	--	--	377,205	--	--	377,205
Print media and advertising	19,204	9,309	--	1,012,427	11,131	1,140	1,252,011
Postage and shipping	31,897	5,612	--	782,798	30,207	3,001	853,515
Building and equipment lease/rental	--	125,776	--	9,811	108,089	550	244,212
Telephone and utilities	84,294	309	--	1,308	77,838	9,810	171,249
Supplies	76,284	1,247	--	38,208	18,370	6,788	130,797
Travel, mileage, meals, and lodging	975,088	41,423	--	12,438	207,290	76,828	1,299,617
Depreciation	--	--	--	--	140,887	--	140,887
Grants and charitable support:							
International support	16,109	1,201	1,779,533	798,814	484	--	2,697,141
Domestic support	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Assistance to the needy	804,487	113,613	--	--	--	--	918,100
Allocations to local congregations	1,480,218	--	--	--	--	--	1,480,218
Insurance and health care	--	--	--	--	1,611,850	--	1,611,850
Other	78,022	46,738	--	11,118	78,047	1,460	205,375
Total expenses	\$ 8,759,522	699,617	1,779,533	1,077,687	1,869,752	77,410	12,813,211

	UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association						
	Schedule of Functional Expenses						
	Year Ended June 30, 2004						
	Program Services			Management and General			
	Ministerial Services/Field Ministry/Local Commissions	Outreach	International	Public Relations	Office/Secretary & Benefit Plans	General	Total
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 4,084,097	490,474	1,361	818,080	1,407,825	--	7,362,837
Contracted services and fees	3,804	376	--	49,524	114,758	7,819	186,671
Breakfast meals and advertising	--	--	--	505,274	--	--	505,274
Print media and advertising	11,860	11,844	--	677,969	17,718	1,744	711,677
Postage and shipping	34,930	4,124	--	698,260	20,347	4,743	762,364
Building and equipment lease/rental	--	111,371	--	19,452	140,670	--	371,593
Telephone and utilities	44,701	468	--	6,615	79,113	1,241	142,158
Supplies	71,050	4,506	--	18,319	59,840	791	136,467
Travel, mileage, meals, and lodging	877,111	17,987	--	12,464	197,536	41,640	1,146,840
Depreciation	--	--	--	--	152,284	--	152,284
Grants and charitable support:							
International support	16,814	1,069	1,625,712	694,264	2,819	--	3,440,678
Domestic support	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Assistance to the needy	842,074	117,789	--	--	--	--	959,863
Allocations to local congregations	1,461,211	--	--	--	--	--	1,461,211
Insurance and health care	--	--	--	--	1,609,828	--	1,609,828
Other	170,960	30,104	--	70,087	61,817	1,893	364,761
Total expenses	\$ 6,725,114	684,141	1,627,112	1,604,712	3,867,896	63,811	12,572,826

Hurricane Wilma Severely Affects Three Members in Cancún, Mexico

Larry Roybal, manager of the office in Mexico, submitted this report Oct. 28: Hurricane Wilma hit Cancún very hard while we were at the Feast. We have three baptized members there: Graciela de la Parra; her daughter-in-law, Jannine de la Parra; and Amulfa Hernandez. Jannine and Mrs. Hernandez were unable to attend the Feast this year. Hurricane Wilma furiously hit the city with winds up to 300 kilometers per hour. They received more than 2 meters of water (more than 6 feet).

Mrs. de la Parra lost all she had while she was at the Feast. All the windows in her apartment on the third floor were broken and the rain poured in. She has no home to go to now. After the Feast she went to Guadalajara, where she has a brother who took her in. She will stay there until she can decide what to do. Her son and daughter-in-law's home is in better condition, but also suffered much damage. Hector and Jannine de la Parra's income property, however, was totally ruined. Hector also sold time

shares in Cancún for a living and, as you would expect, is now out of work. They say that things are terrible and that the vandalism is causing more havoc than the hurricane itself. There is no easy way to leave the city either. The highways are flooded and there are thousands of people trying to fly out. Hector called me Friday, Oct. 28, and told me that he is coming to Monterrey to seek work as soon as he can. If he can find work, he will eventually bring Mrs. de la Parra to live with them. Hector would

come with Jannine and their two sons. The situation facing our other member, Mrs. Hernandez, is probably the worst. Before the hurricane, Mrs. Hernandez was already poor. She lives with her two grandsons and her daughter, who is a single mother. She told me that her home is up to their neck in water. All of her few possessions are ruined. She does not work since she is elderly, but her daughter makes and sells tacos at an improvised stand, which by some miracle was not blown away. She wants

to start selling again as soon as she can. But only one supermarket is selling limited amounts of food, and the lines stretch out for blocks. Mrs. Hernandez, her daughter and two grandsons are living off what they were able to buy before the hurricane. We hope to get her some money so that as soon as there is food available, she can buy some. The Church is planning to use funds from the Good Works Program to help. Please keep these brethren in your prayers. UN

"Hurricanes," continued from page 2

some damage to their home, but it is livable and under control. God spared these brethren. The same is true a little further east in Gautier. We have one couple there who also escaped major damage for which they are very grateful. Two member families in Mobile, Alabama, lost everything to the flooding. We are in the process of relocating these families to the Cleveland, Tennessee, church area. One of our members there has a second home and has

offered this home to them until they can get reestablished. A member family in Gulf Shores, Alabama, had just completed repairs from Hurricane Ivan a year ago and received further damage from Katrina. **Houston Area** As reported by Texas pastors, Jim Franks and Ken Giese, Hurricane Rita was a nonevent for the Houston area except for loss of power. It made landfall east of Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange, Texas, and the evacuation of

nearly 3 million people was the big story. The Texas governor made reference to the Exodus from Egypt and referred to this as the largest evacuation of people since biblical days! Considering the magnitude of the evacuation, things went fairly well, with the mood of the evacuees remarkably calm. For the most part, folks were more than willing to help each other out along the way. We have one elderly lady in Groves, Texas, who is unable to attend Sabbath services, and we confirmed that she was with family and everything is OK

with her. Instead of striking an area where many members live, Rita hit an area where there are almost no Church members. One news reporter commented that the area where Rita hit is the least populated area of the whole Gulf Coast, which of course makes little difference if you lived in Cameron, Louisiana (which was destroyed). **Receiving Other Aid** Our members are beginning to receive financial aid through the Red Cross, FEMA and insurance benefits. The process of obtaining funds is

steeped in red tape, and many are falling through the cracks. Because of members' donations, though, we have been able to provide emergency assistance to meet brethren's immediate needs as well as other needs that would have otherwise been unmet. On behalf of our affected congregations, thank you for your generosity. The brethren here feel very blessed through all of this. Everyone's continued prayers on behalf of the affected brethren are very much appreciated, as it will take months, if not years, to return to normal. UN

UCG Members Help Hurricane Katrina and Rita Victims

by Ken Giese and Jon Erickson

In response to the urgent human need caused primarily by Hurricane Katrina, UCG members across the United States and around the world contributed to the American Red Cross and other relief agencies to immediately help alleviate the suffering (see related article for information on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita). Starting just prior to Aug. 29, upwards of 250,000 people evacuating from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama came initially to Texas and most of these, numbering some 150,000, came to the Houston area in Texas. Two UCG Houston South members took evacuees into their homes, six in one case, and five in another, for as long as needed, providing food, clothing and supplies in addition to finding beds, sofas, mattresses and sheets and blan-

kets. Another member family provided a temporary home for evacuees from Slidell, Louisiana. Members also made crocheted afghans for the victims. With Harris County and the city of Houston opening the Astrodome, Reliant Center, Reliant Arena and the George R. Brown Convention Center to house over 25,000 evacuees, the Houston South congregation was given the opportunity to provide volunteers to work in these shelters due to its established relationship with the concessions vendor (Aramark) for Reliant Stadium, which had been given the job of feeding these evacuees the first week. Ron Hutto served as Houston South project coordinator and volunteer worker, working with Aramark, the Houston Volunteers Organization and the United Way to provide numerous Houston South volunteers for various

work periods for nearly a month. Over 100 other shelters were opened in the Houston area by churches, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and other relief agencies. Some Houston South volunteers worked in these shelters also. The evacuees also filled the hotels and motels in the area and many homes were opened to victims. On Sept. 3, Houston South members brought food and supplies to services for Katrina evacuees in the Houston area and distributed these to shelter collection points on Sept. 5 for immediate aid to many victims. A charity headed by Victor Kubik, LifeNets, provided \$3,000 immediately for distribution to Katrina evacuees in the Houston area, and these funds were converted into Wal-Mart gift cards and distributed by Ken and Kathy Giese. The emotional response to this help by the



Sabbath school class in the East Texas congregation makes cards for Katrina victims; right, Brian and Arthur Taylor raid their grandmother's cupboards for donations victims who had lost everything and did not know what to do next, was overwhelming and heartwarming. LifeNets provided another \$5,000 the next week and this was again converted into Wal-Mart gift cards, and subse-



quently distributed to Katrina victims by 24 members of Houston South under guidelines approved by Mr. Giese. Again, the emotional response from the victims was heartfelt appreciation, with many breaking down into tears and giving hugs and kisses. One member couple was even called "God's angels." This response by victims gave those who were providing help such a wonderful feeling that they wanted to repeat the experience over and over. Of course, this is only a small foretaste of the spiritual help and love we will all provide to those in need in the world tomorrow. UN



News From **Around the World**

Southern African Ministers Meet for Conference

Seven ministers and their wives from southern Africa met for a conference from Aug. 29 to 31 at Golden Gate in South Africa.

Kambani and Shirley Banda from Zambia and Gladstone and Alice Chonde from Malawi were in attendance. This was the first time that the Chondes had visited South Africa. Mr. Banda and Mr. Chonde gave split sermons in the Johannesburg congregation the previous Sabbath. Mr. Banda was also able to have repairs completed on his vehicle.

Several topics of relevance for the ministry were covered during the conference. Audiotapes and handouts from conferences in the United States were sent and used at the conference.

André van Belkum gave a lecture on baptism, and he especially emphasized the need for those seeking baptism to have "godly sorrow." There is more to the baptism covenant than just understanding the technicalities of doctrines. This godly sorrow needs to be directed towards God as David showed in his psalm of repentance (Psalm 51).

Bill Jahns gave a lecture on leadership, emphasizing four characteristics of a good leader. A leader must be able to convey to those who follow him the vision he has for the organization or cause. If vision is not communicated, then human beings will look for a place where they can find a cause to follow. A leader also learns how to make people feel important.

John 3:16 shows that God places great importance on mankind and a leader in God's Church must convey the importance of members' participation in God's way of life.

Two very interesting videos were shown at the conference. One video had interesting facts about the coming European Union and the similarities between images used by the European Union and the Beast power in the book of Revelation. Another video showed the evidence that "ancient" man was like men today and that evolutionary "missing" links have never been found.

The presentation by David Johnson on "Affecting Change in People's Lives"



Gladstone and Alice Chonde, André and Elise van Belkum, Stan and Barbara Botha, Cheryl Jahns, Neville Smith, Kambani and Shirley Banda, Erlene Becker (not pictured), Neil Becker and Bill Jahns)

was played at the conference also. Ministers must be concerned about the development and spiritual growth of those in their congregations.

The conference ended with Mr. van Belkum reminding the ministry that we have been appointed by God. It is important that we all work together as a team and always keep our calling in mind.

Bill Jahns

Elders Conduct Visits, Baptisms in Zimbabwe

by André van Belkum

On arrival at Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, I was greeted with the news that my luggage had been left behind in South Africa. After waiting for about three hours to fill in the necessary lost baggage documentation, I was met by the smiling, happy faces of two of our Zimbabwe members, Mike Mukarati and Harris Hlazo, who had waited patiently in the arrivals area.

Baptisms in Kariba

We left immediately for Kariba, a town situated about a four- to five-hour drive to the west of Harare, on the border with Zambia. By the time we neared our destination it was already dark, and two wild elephants standing in the road further hampered our progress. Mike stopped and waited for the lumbering beasts to move off the road, before daring to pass.

Finally we arrived at the home of Mike and Primrose Mukarati. Mike and Primrose handle all the incoming and outgoing mail and *Good News* and other literature circulation from their home for Zimbabwe. A small group had gathered, including brothers Cephas and Denis Sawona. Sikhathete, the wife of Cephas, and their two children, Yolanda and Angelina, were also part of our group. Kambani and Shirley Banda and their two children had also traveled from Lusaka, Zambia, to join us.

After a hearty meal, we counseled with the Sawona brothers about baptism until close to midnight. They have been attending the weekly Sabbath

Bible study held in the Mukarati home, and had read every single one of our 32 booklets.

The next day we visited the largest crocodile farm in the world, and the place of employment for Mike. We left Mr. Banda behind as he was confined to bed with a severe form of stomach virus. We visited three possible future Feast of Tabernacles sites located on Lake Kariba, one of the largest man-made lakes in the world. The area would be ideal for a Feast site, with natural beauty, wild animals in the vicinity, fishing (including the famed tiger fish), boating and other places of interest to visit.

That evening we once again counseled the Sawona brothers, and decided that they were ready for baptism. They were baptized in Mike's swimming pool, and there followed the usual delight and elation that accompanies baptisms.

The next day we departed early to return to Harare in order to collect my luggage at the airport. Fortunately Mike and I are the same size, and his shirts, trousers and shoes fit me perfectly. Even though weak, Mr. Banda had recovered sufficiently to join us for the trip.

Along the way, we came across two lionesses walking on the side of the road. As we approached, they left the road and disappeared into tall grass. We stopped at the spot, and for a moment could not see them. Then we noticed four eyes staring at us barely a few feet away.

When they realized we had seen

them, they scampered off to a ledge close by and stared at us before disappearing into the bush. At the same time a herd of about 50 to 60 elephants were moving away from us in the valley below. It was a true African wildlife experience.

Visiting Members

After collecting my luggage at Harare airport, we said good-bye to Mike and Harris. I proceeded with the Bandas on our journey.

Our next stop was at a place called Kadoma where one of our widow members, Theresa Chichaya, lives on a small farm. She handles the farm with distinction, and she showed me her chickens, fruit trees, vegetable garden and maize field. Due to the drought this past season, she only reaped nine bags of maize, instead of the usual 50 bags. However, she is able to provide adequately for herself and family.

After staying overnight, we left to visit our next member along the way, Elsie Nel and her husband, Tinie, who are dairy farmers. We were delighted to see each other after many months, and spent that night and next day talking about the many positive developments in the Church, and various other subjects of interest. We were also able to spend time with the Nels' three children.

The Nels are feeling insecure at the moment as a result of the Zimbabwe government policy of taking possession of certain farms. They have been given

See "Zimbabwe," page 7

International News At a Glance

Canadian Literature Requests Up

From Jan. 1 to Sept. 8 of this year, the Canadian office received more subscription and literature requests via the Internet than we did in all of 2004. This was more than twice as many responses as we received in all of 2003. If the trends continue for the remainder of the year, the Canadian office will receive about 5,000 Internet requests—about 50 percent more than last year. This year, we have received a subscription or literature request by e-mail every hour and 45 minutes on average.

The Canadian subscriber development letter sent in July had drawn nearly 350 responses by early September, for a rate of 15.6 percent.

Canadian income for the month of August was stronger than expected. This made up for the shortfalls that occurred in the previous months.

Edwin van Pelt

Google Canada Ad Campaign Gets 9,170 Clicks

UCG-Canada is using a keyword ad campaign with the Google search engine. As many as 15 keywords are being used to promote a number of booklets, magazines and related material. Webmaster Paul Wasilkoff, a consulting member of the UCG-Canada Media Team, reported:

"We have just passed the one-year anniversary of our Google.ca ad campaign efforts. Google.ca allows us to target Canadian-based viewers of the Internet and charges us only when a viewer clicks on one of our ads, which feature booklets and articles on our Web site. Google also allows us to create and publish a new ad in minutes; we can also pause or suspend an ad in seconds.

"We are able to spend as little as \$0.05 on a keyword and spend as much as we want (our current average cost per keyword is \$0.08). There are currently a number of active ad campaigns. The most popular in terms of clicks is *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* (3,965). The ad that has been clicked upon with the highest percentage compared with the number of times it was displayed is *What Happens After Death?* (3.6 percent). Our ads have been displayed over 1.4 million times and clicked upon 9,170 times!

"The number of booklets ordered has totaled 284. This gives us a cost per response of \$2.58."

Excerpted from the September-October United News Canada.

Drought Threatens Members in Malawi

Members in Malawi face difficult challenges on a daily basis during normal times. This year, however, the brethren face a special challenge—drought. Even those in the cities are being affected because of the high cost of the staple food, maize (corn).

The Associated Press reported Oct. 16, "With the food crisis worsening, President Bingu wa Mutharika declared all of the southern African nation a 'disaster area' Saturday and appealed for international help. He warned that 5 million people, almost half the population, are threatened with hunger."

One of our families in Malawi has already requested special assistance because they were eating anything they could find, even grass. Assistance was quickly given to this family, and others are probably going to need assistance in the future. Many Malawians raise maize in small plots outside of their homes and this is a major source of food for them. If the rains don't come, they have serious problems feeding their families. This is a very serious problem in the rural areas of Malawi and some estimates of starvation are as high as 4 million.

The Church in Malawi continues to grow with a record attendance of 112 at the Feast this year. We are in the process of registering the United Church of God in Malawi. However, as usual in African countries, the process is slow and has been delayed by the normal bureaucratic difficulties.

A Malawi National Council meeting was held at the Feast to discuss the situ-



Malawi Council, from left: Elfrazi Salawila, Dr. Sam Chilopora, Gracious Mpilangwe, Bill Jahns and Gladstone Chonde

ation. Gladstone Chonde is planning to open an account in order to assist in transferring funds to Malawi. An account for the Church will be opened after our registration request is approved. The council decided to change the name of the Church to "United Church of God MW" in order to facilitate the registration process.

LifeNets projects continue to help the brethren in that area. Some grants have been given to help farmers in the Church plant seed and purchase fertilizer. Last year, however, even though the crops were planted, little maize was harvested because of the drought. We pray that this year the rains will come and food will be more plentiful.

Bill Jahns

Campers From Five Countries Enjoy 2005 Caribbean Camp in Jamaica

Yeah, Mon! As part of a United Youth Corps project, two dozen campers and staff from many different countries participated in the second Caribbean camp that took place from Aug. 22 to 30. The camp was located at the Madge Saunders Conference Center in St. Mary's, Jamaica, just outside of Ocho Rios, less than a mile from the Caribbean coast. Campers from St. Vincent, Barbados, Bahamas, Jamaica and the United States descended upon this small little town for a week of fun, fellowship and education.

Activities ranging from popular sports like flag football and speedway to educational classes on health and modesty were offered to excited campers and staff along with uplifting and thought-provoking Christian Living classes. Mix-and-mingle time was filled with learning how to play Jamaican dominos, singing karaoke and participating in relays and wacky Olympic games.

A favorite activity for all was the 900-foot climb up Dunn's River Falls across slippery rocks and through cascading waterfalls. Campers and staff also had time to relax and swim in the ocean at Reggae Beach.

The theme of Camp Saunders this year revolved around the apostle Paul's admonition to "imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). This theme carried through from our daily camp routines to our Christian Liv-

ing classes and Bible studies. The Christian Living classes covered a wide range of subjects, including the spirit world and the events on the world scene just before the return of Jesus Christ.

The campers combined with the brethren from the Ocho Rios congregation on the Sabbath day, and enjoyed services in a newly remodeled, air-conditioned room.

A second-time counselor at the Caribbean camp, Nathan Ekama, spoke enthusiastically about serving at camp. "Seeing the growth and changes in the kids from the last camp until this year was awesome. The Caribbean youth have such energy and zeal for God's way

of life, and being able to work with them and take even the smallest part in helping to focus that zeal has been an exciting experience for me."

"It was a humbling experience seeing young people's passion for God's truth and how camp focused that enthusiasm toward a deeper relationship with God and each other," added counselor Stephen Woodson. First-time counselor Melody Schmidt also reflected, "Camp in Jamaica was a blessing beyond expression. I couldn't believe how close we became, and it felt wonderful to be a part of such a loving family. Leaving was the

hardest thing I've ever had to do, and I can't wait until all of God's people will remain together."

Overall, this Caribbean camp allowed brethren from many distant places to come together in unity to learn and grow in God's way of life, while building positive and lasting relationships with each other through various activities and Bible studies.

willing to pull together and forge bonds of friendship for years to come. Our



Campers and staff get wet at Dunn's River Falls; above, karaoke time; above right, posing for a group photo

"Our youth camp this year exceeded all our expectations," said Todd Carey, the camp director. "We were blessed to have such fine young people who were



counselors and activity staff are to be commended for their commitment to God's way of life, and making a significant impact on the lives of our young people."

As a counselor, I found the opportunity to serve and experience another culture along with others who are striving to live God's way was amazing.

Everything from eating traditional Jamaican food to building relationships with campers and other staff members really made my time in the Caribbean memorable and helped me focus on the promise of God's coming Kingdom even more.

Leslie Schwartz

UCG—British Isles National Council Discusses Growth

The National Council of United Church of God—British Isles met for its quarterly meeting on Sunday, Sept. 11, in Gloucester.

Council chairman Bryan Ellams formally welcomed Brian Penheiro as the newest member of the National Council.

In her financial report, the treasurer, Barbara Fenney, reported that the final figures for the year ending June 30, 2005, show a surplus of income over expenditure of £1,832. In response to the increased requests for literature highlighted in the circulation report, the treasurer confirmed that the cost implications will be closely monitored throughout the year.

The Council discussed the issue of the increased number of hours being worked by the staff in the Northwood office in response to the recent high levels of demand for Church literature.

Peter Hawkins updated the Council

concerning this year's Feast of Tabernacles in Winchester. There have been a few more requests from overseas to attend with us this year; also several families from the U.K. have recently made contact with the Church regarding possible attendance at the Feast in Winchester.

A summary of the 2005 summer camp was provided by David Fenney. Council members present at the camp were unanimous in their view that the activity had been a great success and that the young people of the Church had set a fine example. A record of camp will be at www.verticalthought.org.uk.

In taking account of the changing demographics of the older children, teenage and young adult components of the Church, the Council reviewed a number of options for camps in the next couple of years, including the possibility of the older teens and young adults

participating in an activity in continental Europe.

The National Council's committees reported on their work since the last meeting. Highlights include:

- **Feast Site Selection:** David Fenney presented a report that contained a proposal for a Feast site in 2006 and summarized the current options for 2007 and beyond. The Council concluded that in some years it may be best to have two separate Feast sites in different parts of the country.

- **Media and Internet:** Peter Hawkins highlighted the fact that most media responses the Church is receiving at present come from the Internet, with responses being forwarded from the UCGIA Web sites or from the results of a Web advertising program undertaken by UCG—Australia. The Australian program included offers of literature to users in the United Kingdom and has

proven to be a cost-effective source of subscription requests. The Council agreed to reimburse UCG—Australia for the costs of these responses.

Peter Hawkins next discussed the update and maintenance of the UCG—BI websites and informed the Council that a Church member in the United States with particular experience in this field had offered to take on the task.

- **Strategic Planning and Finance:** David Fenney mentioned that perhaps the most urgent matter for the committee to consider is the subject of literature mailings, with its impact on costs, manpower availability and office location and space. The committee will meet prior to the next National Council meeting to consider these issues and formulate some recommendations.

Mr. Ellams proposed the creation of an Arbitration, Reconciliation and Mediation Committee (ARM). The purpose

of this committee is to provide a process to help resolve conflict situations. Mr. Hawkins commented that the ministry is supportive of this proposal. The committee will be comprised of both National Council members and others, and would be a mixture of elders, deacons, deaconesses and Church members. The Council selected Mr. Ellams as its chairman.

In other business the National Council approved the draft of a child protection document "Youth Protection Guidelines," which is adapted from the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Youth Protection Guidelines of United Church of God, an International Association.

The National Council also agreed to contribute £1,000 to UCGIA's Good Works Program "Katrina Disaster Relief Project" and will add any personal donations from members. UN

"Zimbabwe," continued from page 6

a favorable response by the government, allowing them to remain on the farm. This is a relief and a blessing for them.

Bible Studies in Bulawayo

On Friday, Aug. 19, we left the Nels and proceeded to Bulawayo where we

spent the Sabbath evening fellowshiping with Stephen and Vetina Tshabalala and their family. Stephen and Vetina have been faithful members of the Church for many years, and handle the distribution of *The Good News* and other literature in the city of Bulawayo.

On the Sabbath we had a morning Bible study for the members, with 15 adults present. After a delightful midday meal of chicken and vegetables, we

held an afternoon study to which a number of *Good News* readers had been invited. All of those invited turned up, and prospects of growth are encouraging.

The next day I bid farewell to the Bandas and Tshabalalas and headed back to Durban, South Africa.

Hope Amidst Trials

Zimbabwe is presently facing many

challenges. Food prices are beyond the reach of the average Zimbabwean, and the country is facing large-scale food shortages. The international community is helping to provide food aid, especially to the rural population. However, even then, people are going hungry.

It is common to see long lines of cars at filling stations, with many waiting all day long without getting any fuel. Fuel is available on the black market, but the

cost is more than double the price at filling stations.

What a blessing to understand the plan and purpose of God, and to share with our members the profound truths of God as the world faces ever-increasing problems. One scripture we shared at our Sabbath Bible study is Romans 8:16-25, truths that give hope and confidence no matter what present conditions exist. UN

Meet Some of Our Scattered Brethren in Asia

by David Baker

During the last part of July, I had the opportunity to visit some of our scattered brethren in Asia. The trip included the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Hong Kong, Macau and Shanghai. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to some of these brethren.

Philippines

The first stop was the Philippines for a scheduled ministerial meeting. On the Sabbath of July 16, I had the opportunity to speak to our mem-



The Philippine ministry meets in Davao City; above, Benedicto Lorenzo and Cora Evangelista ordained as a deacon and deaconess

bers in Manila, Philippines. Prior to the sermon, I had the privilege of joining Mindanao pastors, Rey Evasco and Eriz Dizon in ordaining Cora Evangelista to the office of deaconess and Benedicto Lorenzo to the office of deacon. We are very grateful for their tireless service to the Church.

After Sabbath services in Manila we traveled to Davao City. Saturday evening all the elders and their wives enjoyed an evening of food and fellowship.

Sunday, July 17, we held our minis-

terial meeting at the Waterfront Insular Hotel in Davao City. It is always a wonderful opportunity to spend time with our ministry. We discussed several issues facing the Church and how best to serve the members.

Much of the day was spent discussing the location of the national office. After much thought and discussion, we decided to temporarily locate the national office in Davao City for approximately two years. During this transitional two-year period, we will be able to assess ways in which the national office can best serve the needs of the Church through functions, personnel and location.

Monday, July 18, I traveled to Bacolod in the Visayas region to visit members and view a possible future site for summer camp. After a very enjoyable visit with Florante and Lina Siopan and their family, I returned to Manila in route to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka

I arrived in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Thursday evening, July 21. The following morning I traveled south along the coast to Beruwela to view the facility that we will use for the Feast of Tabernacles this year. As I traveled along the western coast I could still see damage



Sri Lankan members in Mt. Lavinia, just south of Colombo

from the tsunami. It was nice to see that some progress had been made since my previous trip in March but much work remained as was evident from many people still living in tents.

I had the privilege of spending the Sabbath with our members in Mt. Lavinia, located just south of Colombo. After the morning service and a very delicious lunch, the afternoon was spent in a Q&A session. The members were very excited about the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles and hosting some of our brethren from outside of Sri Lanka.

Thailand

Late Sunday evening, I flew to Thailand. My first stop was Chiang Mai where I visited some of our young adults temporarily residing there.



Fil Olimpo and his daughter, Abbey, in Bangkok, Thailand

From Chiang Mai I traveled to Bangkok and spent a couple of very enjoyable evenings with Fil Olimpo and his daughter, Abbey. Fil is a Filipino national and has lived in Bangkok for about five years. He is an editor of a number of English-language magazines directed toward tourism. During our visit, his wife was in the hospital expecting their second child. She gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Congratulations to the Olimpo family! Fil listens to a sermon each Sabbath via the Internet.

Hong Kong and Macau

I was able to spend the Sabbath of July 30 with our brethren in Hong Kong. In addition to the Ming Tak family, Edwin Mogul and Rodia Siopan, Anita Ng from Singapore was able to join us for the Sabbath. After the Sabbath service we were able to continue our fellowship and enjoy a very delicious Chinese meal together at a nearby restaurant.

On Sunday, I had the pleasure of traveling with the Ming Tak family to Macau. Macau is about a one-hour high-speed ferry ride (60 kilometers) west of Hong Kong. Unfortunately there was a typhoon off the coast of China and the sea was a bit rough so a large portion of the passengers experienced seasickness. Macau was the first European settlement in the Far East and is a former Portuguese colony. It became a part of the Special Administrative Region of China in 1999.

The purpose of the trip was to visit Mark Evangelista and his family. Mark has been working in Macau for some time, and it was wonderful to visit him and his family at their home. During our visit, I was able to speak with Mark's mother, father and sister (back in the



Above, the group in Hong Kong; right, the Evangelista family in Macau

Philippines) via the Internet. Technology is truly amazing! After a

walking tour of the city with the Evangelistas, we boarded the ferry to return to Hong Kong. Thankfully the sea was calm!

Shanghai

On Tuesday, August 2, I had the pleasure of visiting with Gaddi Alberto in



Gaddi Alberto in Shanghai, China

Shanghai, China. (I am accustomed to seeing McDonald's and Pizza Hut in Asia but for the first time, I saw a Wal-Mart Supercenter in Shanghai!)

Gaddi is a Filipino national and has lived in China for a number of years. He faces many hardships trying to live a Christian life in China far away from his family in the Philippines. After spending most of the day discussing the Church, God's way of life and his life in China, Gaddi remarked several times, "I have to go to work, but I don't want to leave." Gaddi is able to listen to our sermons via the Internet each Sabbath.

Please remember your brethren scattered throughout Asia in your prayers. Most of us have the opportunity of gathering each Sabbath for instruction, fellowship and encouragement, but some of our brethren do not have this opportunity. Let's never take for granted the wonderful blessing that God has given us. UN

New Faces for Australian Council; Transfer of Treasurer's Tasks

by Bill Eddington

As a result of the lay member elections to the Australian National Council in 2004, Howard Pope, of the Melbourne West congregation, became a National Council member for the first time. As well as serving as a National Council member, he is also a member of the Policy and Planning Committee.

The 2005 Australian National Council election was for elders, and the following men were elected for two-year terms to conclude on July 31, 2007: Bill Bradford, Stephen Clark, Bruce Dean,

Bill Eddington, Allan Hambleton and Trevor Huthnance. Bill Eddington was elected National Council chairman and Trevor Huthnance was elected deputy chairman.

The new faces on the Council are Stephen Clark and Allan Hambleton, although Mr. Hambleton served a previous term on the National Council before going to the United States for a few years.

Mr. Clark is employed by the Church in Queensland where he assists Bill Bradford in pastoring a growing number of congregations now beginning to

spread up the coast from Brisbane. He has been a member of some Council standing committees for a number of years and brings experience and energy to his new role.

Allan Hambleton returned to Australia in early 2005 with his wife, Helen, to take up the position of national office manager, which became vacant following the retirement of Reg Wright. His previous term on the National Council and his position as national office manager will enable him to contribute very positively to the many matters dealt with by the Council.

The terms of Don Goodger, Reg Wright and Barry Williams ended on June 30, 2005. They each deserve thanks and appreciation for many years of dedicated service.

National Office Manager to Serve as Treasurer

For the last several years Drew Efimov has performed the role of treasurer of United Church of God—Australia, as well as being a member of the National Council and chairman of the Finance Committee. Following Mr. Hambleton's appointment, it is now possible to add

the treasurer's task to his other responsibilities as national office manager. The transfer was effective Oct. 1.

Mr. Efimov's work as treasurer has been invaluable. The amount of work he has managed, and the support he has provided the National Council, while also having a full-time job outside the Church, has placed great demands on his time. The current sound financial position of the Church can be attributed in no small measure to his diligence and work as treasurer. He will continue as a National Council member and the Finance Committee chairman. UN

"PC," continued from page 3

Another common category of questions is on the role of women in the Church, as well as specifically in our organization.

And, we regularly deal with people who are attempting to convert others to

their new understanding. For example, we corresponded with one teen who is using our literature to conduct private Bible studies for her friends.

Sampling of Questions

Here is a sampling of the doctrine or Christian living questions from this year:

- Is anointing oil for anyone to use or only for the ministry?
- Can every sin be forgiven?
- What significance is the recently formed Sanhedrin?
- How is it possible for true believers to fall away?
- On military service and war, doesn't the United States have the right to defend itself?
- Will one have visions and dreams if God is truly calling a person?
- How can a layman recognize a false prophet?
- Is potassium bicarbonate a leavening agent?

- How can a person tell if he is spiritually dead?
- Do we view Paul's letters as changing Christ's teachings?
- Can we pray to saints?
- Should believers go to a prom?
- Why did God allow war in the Old Testament? UN



The Feast of **Tabernacles**

More Than 20,000 Celebrate the Feast With United

Feast 2005 Attendance Figures

Argentina	550
Australia	
Hobart, Tasmania	51
Merimbula, New South Wales	142
Noosa, Queensland	433
Bolivia	66
Brazil	59
British Isles	149
Cameroun	37
Canada	
Kelowna, British Columbia	460
Kingston, Ontario	272
Regina, Saskatchewan	81
St. John's, Newfoundland	45
Chile	109
Colombia	118
Costa Rica	619
Estonia	63
France	99
Germany	194
Ghana	710
Guatemala	522
Guyana	19
Italy	324
Ivory Coast	15
Jamaica	265
Jordan	238
Kenya	339
Malawi	112
Malaysia	40
Mauritius	4
Mexico	341
New Zealand	95
Nigeria	174
Peru	151
Philippines	
Baguio City	125
Davao City	335
Iloilo City	164
Portugal	55
Rwanda	60
St. Lucia	135
South Africa	
George	57
Uvongo	243
Sri Lanka	30
Togo	51
Tonga	24
Trinidad & Tobago	17
United States	
Bend-Redmond, Oregon	873
Branson, Missouri	1,378
Escondido, California	1,007
Jekyll Island, Georgia	1,297
Kerrville, Texas	978
Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii	494
Lexington, Kentucky	838
Panama City Beach, Florida	1,936
Steamboat Springs, Colorado	637
Wildwood, New Jersey	890
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin	1,070
Zambia	153
Zimbabwe	28
Shut-ins who received Feast tapes from the home office	589
TOTAL	20,360

Note: Highest daily attendance figures. Webcast connections (198+) include some shut-ins counted above, and so are not added into this total.

Argentina

Mendoza

God's blessing was on Mendoza, Argentina, as beautiful spring weather and a picturesque mountain backdrop greeted 550 happy brethren who enjoyed an excellent facility and affordable pricing. Every day was full of spiritual messages, special music, family-style banquets and exciting activities for young and old. Three new members were baptized and nine children were blessed during the Feast, which was followed by two weddings.

This site for members from Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay and Brazil



Mendoza, Argentina

was attended by brethren from 10 countries on three continents. Services were translated into English, with two English services and a Bible study given by Council of Elders member Aaron Dean translated into Spanish. To overcome the limited number of headsets, the simultaneous Spanish translation was broadcast over the main speakers.

Activities featured live music and dancing by members and included family and teen dances, a special "niño" party for children, a banquet dinner concert and outdoor barbecue, soccer matches and a talent show of dances and music from around the world and a senior citizens' banquet.

The soccer match between the men of God's Church and the hotel personnel finished 2-2, which allows them to continue the game next year. The same match has continued for the last four years, and both teams try hard for the match to finish with equal points. The reason is that all want to come back the following year!

A special women's breakfast featured a fashion show with handmade ladies' and children's garments, including dresses, pajamas and a wedding dress for a bride married at the end of the Last Great Day.

The physical feasting included a winery and a chocolate factory tour allowing all to taste the specialties of the region. Taxis are cheap, and a mouth-watering Argentinean beef filet mignon dinner with wine was less than \$10 at restaurants.

Transferring internationals stayed at the Ibis hotel for about \$15 per day, including breakfast. Being "off season," many North Americans were able

to make the trip with half-rate frequent flyer miles, making it affordable to have this wonderful experience for less than the cost of many U.S. sites.

The local Spanish-speaking members completely filled the Hotel Ejercito de los Andes for \$10 per night with all three meals included. Internationals often joined them for lunch or dinner for \$3 a meal. The hotel, a converted recreation and training center, included soccer fields, tennis courts, an Olympic pool, dining hall, entertainment dome, meeting hall and gardens, which truly was a blessing from God, allowing all activities to be easily attended without transportation costs.

The hotel staff stated that UCG is their most enjoyable occupant all year.

Minister and Feast coordinator Saul Langarica said the hotel is planning to build an even larger hall. He has also purchased a new translation system that will transmit on an FM frequency. Internationals will then be able to bring a simple portable FM radio with headset to hear the messages instead of the limited number of single frequency receivers they now use.

Aaron Dean

Australia

Hobart, Tasmania

The fellowship at the Feast in Hobart truly represented a foretaste of the world tomorrow. The harmony, peace, joy and spiritual enrichment experienced by the brethren left those present zealous and longing for the promised fulfillment of God's glorious Kingdom.

Fifty-one brethren from across Australia congregated to attend the Feast in picturesque Hobart this October. The weather was mild, but the brethren were warm, hospitable and joyful to be gathered together to rejoice at God's Feast.

Brethren enjoyed activities such as meandering through the historical Port Arthur Penal Colony, sampling the delicacies at the Cadbury Chocolate Factory, cruising on the blue waters of the harbor entrance while soaking in the majestic and colorful coastline and interesting inlets leading into the port of Hobart. Other highlights included a wilderness treetop walk 45 meters (about 150 feet) above ground level on the Tarhune Forest Air Walk; feasting on home-baked goodies at a progressive dinner; and enjoying a family games night and sing-along with special guest, Bill Bradford.

The convention center personnel commented on the good behavior of all who attended the Feast site, especially the children.

The focus of the speakers was the wonderful world tomorrow, a time when the light of God's Word will fill the earth with joy and prosperity for all. All agreed, this is the best Feast ever!

Ruth Edge

Merimbula, New South Wales

This year 142 people enjoyed the Feast at the small seaside town of Merimbula. This is a very popular site with members because there is a fine mixing of churches from Victoria and New South Wales. It was a very warm and friendly site with members inviting many people over for meals and barbecues.

This year we met in a new facility at the Merimbula RSL. They had a bistro with very inexpensive meals, and many members stayed for lunch after services, which gave more time for fellowshiping.

After the first Holy Day service we had a get-acquainted mixer activity with cheese platters, tea and coffee and the bar was opened. This was a wonderful start to the Feast with old friends catching up and new friendships forming. Other highlights were a Family Day at the Mandeni Resort where families enjoyed miniature golf, a nine-hole chip-and-putt course, a driving range into a lake, bike hire, bocce and afternoon tea. The over 60s enjoyed a fine meal at the RSL Club followed by indoor bowling.

The highlight of the Feast was the Family Dinner Dance. Families enjoyed the music of a four-piece band called "Gone Fishin'." It was such a joy to see the little children dancing around while the older members danced to the music of the '60s and '70s. The Feast concluded with our traditional Last Great Day luncheon.

The speakers were all local men from Victoria and New South Wales. We had a number of local men do split sermons and they all did a wonderful job in focusing us on reaching for the Kingdom of God.

The best way to summarize the sermons was by a phrase given by Roy Thomson, a member from Melbourne, who spoke to the youth and the whole Church when he said there are two worlds that are in conflict. One wants us to look down, look backward and look toward darkness. The other wants us to look up, look forward and look to the light.

Bruce Dean

Noosa, Queensland

We had a record attendance again this year with 433 in attendance on the last Holy Day. Unlike previous years where we have had absolutely gorgeous weather, we had storms and some spectacular lightning displays. We welcomed the rain this year because we have been in a drought for most of the year and the rains actually broke the drought. The overseas visitors we had from the United States, Canada, France, New Zealand, South Africa and Singapore all claimed to have brought the rain to us.

The rain did not dampen the spirits or the activities for the Feast, and all activities went off almost as planned. The seniors this year visited Underwater World and enjoyed a guided tour of the giant tropical aquarium, complete with seal show and shark tunnel. Other activities included Family Day on the river, a country-and-western dance and a young adults' get-acquainted dinner.

We enjoyed hearing from three elders and their families visiting with us from the United States—Tim Pebworth, Dan Anderson and Richard Eckman. All messages carried the idea of urgency, but the main theme was God's plan to save the nations of Israel and the world, and the incredible part God has prepared for us in His great plan.

One of the great hallmarks of our Feast was, as always, the willingness of so many to support the operation of the Feast. The atmosphere created was truly uplifting and inspiring.

Bill Bradford

Bolivia

Achira, Santa Cruz

This year God put His name on a green valley, full of vegetation, big gardens and beautiful flowers, surrounded by spectacular hills. This place was Achira, a tourist complex located 70 miles from the city of Santa Cruz on the east side of Bolivia. There the brethren from La Paz and Santa Cruz rejoiced together with God and the visitors from the United States, Mexico, Peru, Chile and Argentina. All together there were 66 brethren during the Feast.

The whole Feast was filled with fellowship in a wonderful, positive spirit of collaboration. But the center of the Feast was the inspired messages we received every day.

Normally, the climate in Achira is hot, but God protected us because almost all days we had a very comfortable climate. Only two days were actually normal for that place at that time of the year: Hot.



Bolivia (photo by Giovanna Machicao)

The spirit of brotherhood that reigned during the Feast was marvelous. All of the brethren participated in all of the activities, not only with their presence, but also in the organization. All of the local brethren considered the presence of our brethren from other countries a real gift and really did their best to make them feel welcomed.

The fact that all of us stayed together and ate together made the Feast even more special. After each meal we all stayed much longer in the dining hall just to talk and encourage one another for this coming year.

We also had a great time with the unforgettable outings we had during the Feast. One was to Las Cuevas, where we were able to see the natural waterfalls.

While there, some took advantage of the fresh water to play with one another.

The second outing was to the Fuerte Samaipata, which is a very interesting archaeological reserve where we were able to appreciate the ruins from the ancestors who inhabited Bolivia thousands of years ago. We all were able to see the huge stone sculptured thousands of years ago by the natives of this land.

We also had some dances and a talent show that gave even more happiness to the Feast. We danced to international music, Peruvian folklore, Chilean music and, of course, music from Bolivia as well.

The special music for services was also very nice. All of the presenters were really inspired and grateful to God for the opportunity He gave to us to keep His Holy Days.

Raúl Machicao

Brazil

Maloca

The Feast was held again in Maloca, a remote area of northern Brazil. Of the last 80 kilometers of road to the village, only about 5 kilometers were paved. So I came to the village with a lot of dust on me, but very happy to see these brethren for the first time.

Before the Feast started we all worked hard to prepare the kitchen for the coming eight days, because we all were going to eat together there. Because of the economic needs of the brethren, the



Maloca, Brazil

Church provided funds to buy food for the Feast. We also brought gasoline and oil for the electric generator we would use for the Feast, since they do not have regular electricity in the village.

On the opening night, besides having the welcome message, the brethren received the Feast program and many gifts the Santiago, Chile, congregation had sent for them. They were all very happy.

I was gladly surprised when I found that all of the brethren understood and spoke fluent Portuguese—my first language—besides English and the local dialect. Because of that, there was a lot of camaraderie. I just felt at home with people with the same Spirit even though this was the first time I had met them.

The highest attendance was 59, with 19 children and 40 adults. We had special music every day, and everyone especially enjoyed the children's choir. It was very exciting to hear special music in the local dialect. We also had special music in Portuguese and English. We all sang the hymns in Portuguese.

The first Holy Day Geraldo de Souza read a letter to all written by our pastor, Saul Langarica. All of them were very

excited to see that other congregations are interested in having communication with them and sharing with them. They were also happy to hear they will receive a ministerial visit as soon as possible after the Feast.

Unfortunately on the sixth day of the Feast the food we brought ran out and also the money. The first days of the Feast we had many visitors from the village, so the food was not enough. However, some of the brethren decided to make contributions to buy food for everyone for the rest of the Feast. We then went to the city 80 kilometers away to buy the food necessary for all.

We did have a marvelous Feast full of Christian fellowship. We spoke a lot on the sufferings and problems of this world and the only solution to those sufferings: the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

We also spoke a lot about the need to send the brethren Church publications in Portuguese so they can preach the gospel in that language in their village and close towns. There are people outside the Church who are asking for material in Portuguese.

At the end of the Feast everyone was very happy, and all agreed this Feast was really unforgettable. Tears came to our eyes when we had to say good-bye. Even though they are poor physically, spiritually they are very rich.

Giovanni Macedo

British Isles

Winchester

Weather, which was unseasonably mild with occasional rain, formed the backdrop for 150 happy Feastgoers in England.

Inspiring sermons and Bible studies from visiting speakers (Leon Walker, Tom Kirkpatrick, Roger West, Paul Luecke and Noel Homor) and the local ministry provided the spiritual content of a memorable Feast.

Nelson's victory in the Battle of Trafalgar exactly 200 years ago was celebrated at nearby Portsmouth with a visit by Queen Elizabeth II. That victory had signaled the end of the Napoleonic era of the Holy Roman Empire.

Cathedral watchers were surprised to



Frank Jarvis in Winchester, England (photo by David Jardine)

see the Winchester Cathedral transformed into the Vatican by a film crew recording footage for a film on the *Da Vinci Code*, starring Tom Hanks.

Holy Day offering figures demonstrated that God's people really do have their hearts in His work.

Everyone was so friendly and helpful, and Festival coordinator Peter Hawkins found there were always willing helpers to assist in any way they could when the need arose.

Social activities were enthusiastically supported. Music, dance and informal entertainment were put together by the members, and enjoyed by young and old.

Trips to places of interest, such as Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, Bath, Stonehenge and Portsmouth, added a sense of culture and history, appreciated by our visitors.

Engagements are always happy events, as was the engagement of Caroline Kirkpatrick to Ryan Luecke. This happy news enhanced the feeling of family among us all.

Reunions in the future will be much anticipated as everyone agreed that the highlight of the Feast was the warmth of happy and meaningful fellowship.

Frank Jarvis

Cameroon

Douala

Thirty-seven people gathered on the outskirts of Douala, Cameroon, for the Feast this year. The brethren were very encouraged to be able to use a room in the new Church building funded by United's Good Works Program. Though the building is not yet completely finished, one room has been completed and is just large enough to hold services. No running water was yet available, which caused some difficulty, but Cameroonians are not unused to dealing with that type of problem and it was overcome by hauling water in by hand.



Brethren in Cameroon meet in completed room of new building

Services were held in French using sermons and sermonettes recorded at the Feast in France in 2004. The 2005 Festival video was viewed, and everyone appreciated watching the video from 2004 again as well.

With some assistance from brethren in French-Europe and the United States, meals were supplemented with special treats such as meat for everyone, some wine or beer for the adults and sodas for the children. Eating well three times each day was all it took to make the Festival a wonderful time of physical plenty and joy.

Other Festival activities included nightly Bible studies and discussions and a family activity day that was enjoyed by everyone. The brethren were also particularly encouraged by a Festival card signed and sent by brethren in the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation.

Moïse Mabout and Joel Meeker

Canada

Kelowna, British Columbia
The Feast messages in Kelowna were

inspiring, uplifting and enriching, showing a world that one day will be at peace, a world where human nature will be changed, a world that will be gentle, loving and kind, a world that will recognize its Creator, a world that will enjoy perfect justice and mercy.

It was an energetic week with activities for all 460 attendees. A bowling and pizza "getting to know you" evening was enjoyed by the teens. Another afternoon, 70 young children had a mar-



Chloe and Jessica Hendrickson at variety show in Kelowna (photo by Jean Jantzen)

velous time going from table to table (14 in all) at the Penny Carnival. Each youngster left the activity happily loaded with loot. Most everyone loved Family Day at Scandia Golf and Games, playing miniature golf, riding bumper cars, eating pizza or playing arcade games.

On Youth Day, from the smallest child to the biggest teenager, all appreciated the stuffed animals they received. Don Hooser (pastor of the Sedro-Woolley, Washington, congregation) and John Lusk Jr. emceed the variety show Saturday night with good old-fashioned Texas humor. Young and old demonstrated and served the brethren with their many talents. The variety show and special music will be archived at www.ucg-fort.org/2005/canwest/archives.html.

The family dance, decorated in an oriental theme, was a rollicking success. Dr. Music Entertainment played selections from the big band era to today.

The seniors' luncheon was brim to overflowing with smiling faces and a hearty turkey dinner. LeeAnn Luker chose the theme "Young at Heart."

David and Bonnie McCreery from Prince George, British Columbia, who were attending their very first Festival, commented, "It was much better than anticipated, more rewarding. To a thirsty soul the spiritual food was a meaty message—we gained till we were literally bursting at the seams." Bonnie said, "It's one time we won't have to go home and diet . . . and we never felt left out—seasoned members included us . . . sometimes to the point we were overwhelmed by love and kindness."

Jean Jantzen

Kingston, Ontario

A day of clear blue skies amidst fresh fall colors welcomed Feastgoers to Kingston and the 1,000 Islands. The first evening service for 187 assembled at the Ambassador Hotel Conference Resort began under a bright full moon in a chandelied ballroom. Local people expressed they had never seen a fall so late or frost-free. Temperatures remained mild with flowers still in bloom—an inspiring testament to God's sacred calendar. Highest attendance was 272, with a daily average of 213.

An afternoon scenic boat cruise was enjoyed, while others dined and danced on an evening cruise. A well-attended family dance with entertainment came early in the Feast along with buffet dinner get-togethers for singles, elders and deacons. Preteen children enjoyed an indoor multilevel climbing structure, while teens drove go-karts. Fifty seniors enjoyed a luncheon with teen entertainment and servers.

Hotel restaurant staff members commented, "Your children are so good." Reception staff members said of check-in, "Your people have been so nice." On the afternoon scenic cruise, one crew member said to an elder, "You must be a church group." Our elder responded, "Why do you say that?" The response was, "Because of the beautiful weather."

Feast messages carried our recent UCG call for increased motivation and commitment to the work. The messages focused on transformation, white robes of righteousness, daily motivation for Christ's return and the need to be ready, a call to make changes and redeem the



Kingston, Ontario: The Ambassador Resort sign shows mild late fall temperatures of 13 Celsius (55 Fahrenheit)

time and the exciting possibilities of the first moments on becoming spirit.

Graemme Marshall

Regina, Saskatchewan

This year proved to be another memorable Feast of Tabernacles in the city of Regina, Saskatchewan. Though Regina commonly has fewer in attendance than many Feast sites (with the highest attendance being 81 this year), the brethren here experience a unique intimacy that creates lasting friendships and special memories.

A beautifully decorated hall with vibrant fall colors and millennial themes proved to be a perfect setting for the many inspiring messages throughout this year's Feast. Special music consisted of vocal solos, duets, beautiful instrumentals and many inspiring selections performed by the Regina Feast choir that served to raise spirits and enrich the insightful messages.

Bowling, miniature golf and a special dinner theater outing, were just a few of the many activities enjoyed by the brethren in Regina this year. Young and old alike had the opportunity to participate in a special family fun show that



Fellowshipping in Regina

featured entertaining skits, stories, music, as well as poetry.

The region was blessed with beautiful blue skies, sunshine and crisp fall temperatures for the majority of the eight days. There was a spirit of vision and unity throughout this year's Feast, as the brethren ended the final service on the Last Great Day with high spirits and a renewed picture of God's coming Kingdom on earth.

Glen White

St. John's, Newfoundland

Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). With a maximum attendance of 45 at the St. John's site, we were a little more than two or three, and the presence of Jesus and the Father was very evidently there, as witnessed by the unique experience that all of us had. Festival attendees said: "It was a Feast of miracles, love, laughter and unity." "I learned greater knowledge of God's love for us and all mankind." "It was the best Feast ever; we truly mean this!" "What a wonderful family we are part of!"

Being small in number was conducive to developing a truly family atmosphere. We had full attendance at almost all the activities. We ate together. We played, listened to tremendous spiritual messages and viewed very inspirational videos together.

Having Mr. and Mrs. Dale Schurter with us added a new dimension to the Feast here. Their wisdom, knowledge and love heightened our Feast experience greatly. In addition to Mr. Schurter, we had a good complement of elders and other speakers, each of whom added greatly to making this Feast a tremendous success in directing us toward God's great Kingdom, expounding His great love for us and our part in bringing all mankind into an everlasting relationship with Him.



Festival choir in St. John's

Special music was very inspiring as well, with the choir consisting of almost half the congregation. We had individuals doing special music as well. Everyone wanted to serve.

The Lavrock Family Day was the usual success. We did have a couple of canoe incidents, but everything worked out fine in the end. Fine food was enjoyed, as well as an enjoyable sing-along and family dance.

The weather was good for the first four days; after that we had some rain, but by then we were too engrossed with enjoying family time together. It didn't snow and the temperature did stay above freezing.

Some of the attendees had attended in previous years and many would like to return. It looks like we will be planning the Festival for 2006!

David Smith

Chile

Trailanqui

In the beautiful tourist complex of Trailanqui, in the south of Chile, we again had the chance to have the marvelous Feast this year. Trailanqui is located 70 kilometers south of Temuco and 750 kilometers south of Santiago.

We rented a bus to take our members from Temuco to the Feast site. Most of the brethren at this site were from Temuco and other small congregations in the vicinity. This Feast site has been a blessing to them because it solved the problem of distance and money if they had to travel to Mendoza with the rest of the brethren from Chile. Trailanqui has also been a blessing because if we all had to go to Mendoza, it would be impossible to fit everybody in the same place. The Church membership has grown in the area, and so Trailanqui has been the logical Feast site for the south of the country.

This year 109 brethren, including children, attended the site in Trailanqui. Three years ago the attendance was 66. Last year we were less than 100.

During the Feast we had the blessing to have two baptisms and several more



Chile (photo by Christian Rosales)

activities that contributed to the success of the Feast. We had a ladies' night organized by the Spokesman's Club of the region. We also had a ladies' lunch, and there was a talent show event. All present showed their desire to make everybody else happy and comfortable.

Because the Feast site is surrounded by a river, some of our men were able to go fishing and caught some salmon that they shared with the rest!

Because the site is so isolated from towns and villages, everybody was together in every activity. After activities we just stayed until late at night talking and comforting each other to have the energy to face this world for another year.

We rented all of the cabins in the complex. Some of the brethren stayed in the main hotel, but for meals they also came to the cabins.

We were sad as we departed to our hometowns but ready to face the world and ready also to prepare for the Feast of Tabernacles 2006!

Jaime Gallardo

Colombia

El Rodadero Beach

A joyful Feast of Tabernacles was observed by 118 brethren at the Hotel Yuldama, El Rodadero Beach, Santa Marta, Colombia. Members came from all parts of Colombia, as well as several from Ecuador, one from Venezuela and one from the United States.

Sermons were given by Eduardo Hernandez, the pastor of the churches in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela, and Ralph Levy, an instructor from Amba-

sador Bible Center. One person was baptized by Mr. Hernandez on the Last Great Day.

The Caribbean setting was very warm and humid, but the site was unaffected by the hurricanes, except for a day or two of heavy rains. In spite of Colombia's reputation as a dangerous country, the Feast location was tranquil and safe, and brethren felt comfortable strolling along the beach at any time of the day or night.

Activities included a games night, a family dance, a ladies' social and crafts exposition, a pool party for the children, a dinner for the whole church and an outing to the beautiful Playa Cristales, a beach located in the Tayrona National Park, about a 90-minute bumpy ride from Santa Marta by *chiva* (open-sided bus) and motor boat.

Ralph Levy

Costa Rica

San Jose

The first thing that a visitor noticed was the warmth—not only in the weather, but more so in the Latino people who make up God's Church in El Salvador.

The El Salvadorian Feast was held at the Hotel Herradura in San Jose, Costa Rica, which provided a millennial setting for the Feast.

There was ample opportunity to take trips to see the beautiful beaches, mountains, volcanoes, rivers and waterfalls of Costa Rica. For the more adventurous (or the insane!) white-water rafting, bungee jumping and rappelling through the rain forest canopy were available.

Unity quickly developed as the theme for the Feast, and although there was a huge language barrier between some of the Spanish- and English-speaking brethren, this was not important, as everybody knew that they were there for the same purpose. We were reminded that the Feast teaches us that we are only temporary in this world, but we were pointed toward looking for the Kingdom with Christ as its King, and we as the teachers, helping the rest of humanity to obtain salvation.

The majority of the 619 brethren attending the Feast resided in the one hotel, being able to eat and socialize together freely. This sense of unity was easily galvanized, making it a most profitable and enjoyable Feast.

David Payne

Estonia

Tartu

For the first time in five years we held a Feast in Tartu, Estonia, open to transfers from outside the Baltic Republics. We had five from Sweden, one from France, 12 from Estonia and Lithuania, one from France and the remainder of the 63 attendees from the United States.

For the northern climate that Estonia is in, the weather was wonderful, with mostly sunny days. We felt we fulfilled our goal to rejoice together before God and learn to respect His will for us.

Sermons were translated by three members for the Estonians into Estonian and Russian. When Henrikas Klovas spoke in Russian, we also had English translation.

Tartu is Estonia's second largest city, and it is very easy to get around in on foot. The daily walk to services was about 10 minutes. Restaurants and sites of interest were all close by. A highlight was a two-day excursion to Saaremaa, the largest island in the Baltic off the coast of Estonia. There we held services in a spa hotel.

The Feast was a good opportunity to get together with all who are involved in translating our Church literature into the languages of the area. We have or are translating several booklets and the *Bible Study Course* into Estonian and Russian. Also, three booklets have been translated into Swedish, but not yet printed. Henrikas Klovas and his family have translated literature into Lithuanian. He maintains our Eastern European Web site that is linked to from our main UCG Web site.

Victor Kubik

France

La Colle-sur-Loup

The marvelous French Riviera was the scene of the Festival in France this year. Ninety-nine people attended in the village of La Colle-sur-Loup just a few kilometers from the coastal city of Nice. Temperatures were warmer than usual, and though the first few days were rainy, sunshine warmed the last part of the Feast. Since services, lodging and meals were all at the same site, each day allowed many hours of fellowship.

Services were held alternately in French and English with simultaneous translations provided. The very encouraging sermons and sermonettes concentrated on expanding understanding of the Kingdom of God to be established on earth at the return of Jesus Christ. The presence of Mr. and Mrs. Don Waterhouse and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hendren as visiting pastors and wives, was particularly appreciated.

A group coach excursion to Monaco included a tour of the royal palace, residence of the late Princess Grace and Prince Rainer, as well as the port, the site of the Monaco Grand Prix race and the famous Casino of Monte Carlo (where none of the Festival attendees tried the gambling . . .).

Another coach excursion visited several "perched villages," medieval stone villages built on mountain or hilltops to protect them from pillaging armies. A third excursion included the heights overlooking Nice and its Mediterranean port, as well as shopping time in the picturesque quarter of the old city.

A final excursion went to Cannes, a city famous for its film festival and beaches. This excursion also included a visit to Saint Marguerite's island, the island on which the famous "man in the iron mask" (who actually existed and whose identity is still a mystery) was imprisoned for many years.

Other activities included the annual meeting of the United Church of God-France association, an evening of slide and video presentations about the work of UCG in French Africa and a delightful talent evening that included music, skits and jokes.

Ingrid François from Liège, Belgium, fell and broke her leg early in the Feast, but her treatment and healing progressed without any complications (a number of complications were expected because of her age and previous health problems), and the doctors and nursing staff said they were surprised and encouraged by her example of courage and confidence. Her husband faithfully spent the rest of the Feast at her side.

Next year's site will be in the pink-stone village of Collonge-la-Rouge, in the Perigord region of France, midway between Bordeaux and Clermont-Ferrand. Anticipation of the Feast 2006 is already building!

Joel Meeker

Germany

Schluchsee

As the crisp autumn air descended on southern Germany, 194 of God's people gathered to celebrate the coming Kingdom of God in Schluchsee, a quiet village nestled in the Black Forest. Clear blue skies, a forest ablaze with color, and winding trails along the shore of a shimmering lake served as reminders of God's wonderful creation and the coming restoration of the earth.

The brethren were blessed with abundant fellowship, beautiful special music and inspiring German and English messages about our role in the coming Kingdom and how to live our lives in anticipation of it. The rejoicing was increased by the addition of members to the Body of Christ: three attendees were baptized during the Feast.

Activities during the Feast included youth go-karting, volleyball, kegling (European-style bowling), youth Bible studies, a family dance and a seniors' afternoon. Fifty-five toured nearby Meersburg castle, the oldest continually inhabited castle in Germany. There were also two Ambassador Bible Center seminars conducted, giving a sample of what the ABC program offers its students.

At the farewell party on the final evening, brethren said *auf Wiedersehen*, or "till I see you again." This was a fitting farewell, recalling the exciting symbolism of the Last Great Day as we eagerly anticipate the fulfillment of God's promises and the completion of His plan of salvation for all mankind.

Debbie Whittlark

Ghana

Kumasi

Over 700 brethren kept the Feast at the Kumasi Polytechnic in Kumasi, Ghana's second biggest city. Most of the members and their families were able to stay at the Polytechnic itself, solving the problem of transportation in a country where very few people have cars. This was also the first time everybody was able to keep the Feast together at one Feast site.

Melvin and Diane Rhodes were guests. Mr. Rhodes is the senior pastor of the congregations in Ghana.

Sermons focused on the meaning of the Holy Days, the uniqueness of our calling and God's blessings for obedience.

Kumasi is the capital of Ghana's ancient Ashanti kingdom and is rich in Ashanti culture. Members had the opportunity to visit the royal palace, the airport and the zoo. There were also opportunities to play games, to fellowship and simply to get to know others from different parts of Ghana.

Melvin Rhodes

Guatemala

Antigua

Some days before the Feast, Guatemala was in chaos: destroyed bridges, collapsed highways and hundreds of dead because of the effects of Hurricane Stan. Several of our brothers in the Church were isolated in the western part of the country, and we feared that it would be very difficult for them to get to the Feast site.

Those of us living in the center and east side of the country were almost unaffected by the hurricane, but were praying fervently for our brethren. Finally we were able to contact the affected people, and we gave them the best routes they could take to the site. Everybody arrived successfully (though it took three times the usual travel time for some).

By Oct. 17, we had sunshine and fabulous weather to start the Feast.

The powerful spirit of the Feast brought happiness to the faces of those who came tired and afflicted because of the long road and the disasters that they experienced. Because of all this, we all were very happy and thankful to our Almighty God.

It was a wonderful Feast, with messages of encouragement to fight this world, exhorting us to live our lives with diligence according to God's ways.

The Feast showed us how close the Kingdom of God can be. And it's so urgent for us to see it in this way so we can make deep changes in our lives, so God will be pleased with each of us and will open the route to reach the Kingdom and give us eternal life.

We had a day for the family, with many activities and happiness that ended with a lunch. We had an afternoon for the ladies, with gifts, games and surprises. We had two activities for the youth that were very unifying to all of them.

The meeting hall was decorated with the beauty of the flowers that the ladies placed with grace and care. The Feast sermon video made us feel very close to our brothers in Africa, and we thank God for the opportunity to know more about their lives and activities. We will have them in our minds and in our hearts and will pray always for them: Greetings, dear brothers in Africa!

The harvest of fruits this year was very great in all the spiritual aspects, and was even greater with five persons who were baptized during the Feast. God's family keeps growing and God's gospel continues growing. This year the attendance was an average of 522.

Luis Eliseo Mundo Tello

Guyana

Lethem Rupununi

It was a moving moment when the opening hymn was sung to begin the

2005 Feast in Lethem, Rupununi, Guyana. There were 19 present on the first day, including Maxwell Victor, a deacon from Dominica who spent four days at the site. Brethren also got a surprise visit from John Carvalho, a member who traveled all the way from Curitiba, Brazil, to keep the Feast with them. The brethren were elated that he remained for the entire Feast.

The group enjoyed lots of fellowship and a number of planned activities. The congregation eagerly anticipated each video sermon. The Festival video presentation was a special treat that was enjoyed by youth and adults. The children performed special music and entertained the congregation. The teen Bible study was much appreciated by everyone.

The Feast also presented an opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God to the staff at the hotel. Two workers at the hotel were so impressed that they have requested audio and video sermon tapes from the local congregation.

All who attended were very grateful for the help that was given to make this first Feast possible. The brethren left the site with one purpose in mind: to work hard to make the next Feast a better one with God's help and blessing.

Gary Atkinson

Italy

Sabaudia

The Feast in Italy had a maximum attendance of 324 participants (including children) from various countries: Australia, Chile, Holland, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, United Kingdom, United States and, of course, Italy.

We were a small but enthusiastic group of God's people enjoying heartfelt sermons, delicious food and Christian fellowship with one another. We were living proof that language need not be a barrier to getting to know and love one another in Jesus Christ. Your Italian brethren would like to express their heartfelt thanks to all those who have celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles with them in Italy this year.

During the Feast, God added three more members to His Church, two from the United States (Mr. and Mrs. Webber) and one from Italy (Vincenza Burgaretta). We give our new brethren our warmest welcome to the family of God.

During the eight days of the Feast, the weather was wonderful, nice and warm. We participated in cultural tours to famous historical places like Pompeii, Rome and the Vatican museums. We also had memorable social activities like the talent show, the Family Day on the beach and the evening dance.

On the last day of the Feast, Giacomo Pizzuti, a member of the Italian national council, was ordained as a deacon. At the end of the Feast there was a send-off to say "Arrivederci" to all of our brethren before their departure from the Feast site.

Many brethren have already written to us in appreciation. Yet we are the ones who need to sincerely express our gratefulness for their brotherly presence, friendship and support. And, of course, we thank all Feast participants for their generous offerings to support the



The baptism of Mrs. Vincenza Burgaretta in the Tyrrhenian Sea during the Feast in Italy

preaching of the truth in Italy. A heartfelt thanks to all indeed.

Carmelo Anastasi

Jamaica

Montego Bay

This year 265 brethren from six countries rejoiced at the 400-acre Rose Hall Resort in Montego Bay, Jamaica. God protected us from Hurricane Wilma, though we were provided with the "blessing" of liquid sunshine on several days.

We experienced wonderful daily spiritual nourishment with a focus on our need to prepare for our destiny as children of God in the Kingdom. An inspiring variety of music was presented from the combined choir, Jamaican choir, solos and children's choir. Sabbath school was offered on two days and the young adults and teens participated in a thought-provoking Bible discussion on the Millennium.

Physical food and fellowship took place on the veranda overlooking the blue waters of the Caribbean Sea or at nine other on-site restaurants. At the



Jamaica

annual Family Day, young and old alike were involved in lively yet friendly competition on the beach. The Fun Show gave everyone an opportunity to display his or her talents.

Afternoon activities included shopping, golf, water sports and a trip to Dunn's River Falls. Most spent time in fellowship and relaxation at the resort's pools and spectacular Sugar Mills Falls water complex.

This wonderful spiritual and physical Feast of Tabernacles enabled us to learn about and experience the coming Kingdom of God in a wide variety of ways.

Randy and Kay Schreiber

Jordan

Amman

With the theme of "Ambassadors for Peace" and a special invitation extended by the royal family, approximately 238 participants enjoyed a fun-filled, educational, safe and spiritually inspiring Feast of Tabernacles in sunny Amman, Jordan. Feastgoers were warmly welcomed from the following locations:

Australia, Canada, Cyprus, France, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, United Kingdom and the United States.

Special presentations included messages from Prince Ra'ad bin Zeid, lord chamberlain to King Abdullah II, and Akel Biltaji, personal advisory to King Abdullah II on interfaith cooperation, peace in the region, terrorism and specific needs in the country.

During a visit to the Al Hussein Society for the Physically Challenged and the Young Muslim Women's Association Centre, the Feastgoers gave a donation of assorted school and art supplies to each facility with the intention of beginning service projects in the near future.

Other highlights of the group's touring opportunities included the Dead Sea, Jerash, the Jordan River, a day in Petra and other historical sites surrounding Amman. One day an especially inspiring church service was conducted outdoors on a hilltop above the valley at Pella, believed to have been a place of refuge for the early Church around A.D. 69.

To learn more about becoming "Ambassadors for Peace," each day of the Feast we received an ambassadorship tip of the day, such as: smile, be a light to others by displaying a positive attitude, build mutual respect and happiness is a choice, so enjoy the ride!

Youthful assistants taught a few helpful Arabic phrases each day to increase cultural awareness. Delicious ethnic dishes complemented the daily buffet at the beautifully renovated Le Meridien hotel in Amman.

The millennial-themed messages further enhanced the biblically significant landscape of this Feast of Tabernacles' mission to be "Ambassadors for Peace" in Jordan. To discover more adventurous details, view awesome pictures taken by this year's participants and find out how you can participate in future service projects or Feasts in Jordan, please visit www.ucgtp.org/jordanfeast in the coming month.

Karen Halvorsen

Kenya

Mosocho

This year 339 attendees celebrated the Feast at Mosocho, Kenya. Members came from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and the United States. The lush, high-altitude equatorial climate provided moderate temperatures and daily afternoon rain showers. The all-inclusive facility provided everyone with full-board amenities in an intimate family setting.

Family-oriented activities included a bus convoy safari through Ruma National Park. Brethren were fascinated by many game animals including a large herd of giraffe galloping across the plain. Family Day was accentuated with gift bags provided for the third year by the Phoenix North and Northern Arizona congregations and special children's treats provided annually by Anna Brill of the Yuma, Arizona, congregation. A teen trip to a geothermal eruption site reunited last year's attendees to United Youth Camp Kenya.

Guest speaker Vernon Hargrove and

his wife, DeLee, were warmly appreciated by all and contributed greatly to the spiritual cuisine that was the heart of our Feast experience. Leadership seminars, Bible studies for families and teens and baptism counselings provided extra opportunities for personal development.

Africa offers many challenges for its inhabitants and even its visitors. Not everything went as smoothly as anticipated including problems with three of the buses carrying members on the safari, a permanent collapse of the hotel's water system on the second day of the Feast, and various illnesses impacted many of us, including malaria and stomach ailments.

These not uncommon challenges for members in the region remind us that God's Kingdom is not here yet, but is



Feastgoers in Kenya

most welcome!

In a post-Feast leadership meeting the leadership began assessing the needs for next year as we begin the search for the 2006 Feast site.

John Elliott

Malawi

Lake Malawi

The Feast in Malawi was held on the shores of beautiful Lake Malawi. The sermons focused on the Kingdom of God and the light that will be brought by this new age. The highest attendance was 112, which beat the previous record.

A special night of entertainment was presented by the brethren of Malawi. A goat roast was held on Thursday evening during the Feast where all had the opportunity to really "feast." During the entertainment several youth presented memorized readings from the Bible.

Malawi is in the midst of a drought, which is causing hunger to be a problem there. The Feast was a time where they were able eat plenty, thanks to some special donors in Canada and Britain.

Elifazi Salawila was ordained a dea-



Malawi

con on the first day of the Feast.

The Feast in Malawi has a special meaning to those attending because of the conditions that they live under. They are looking forward to the coming of the Kingdom where their dreams will be fulfilled.

Bill Jahns

Malaysia

Melaka

Fine tropical weather welcomed 40 brethren from eight nations to the Malaysian port city of Melaka (Malacca). Local members from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore joined visitors from Australia, England, Mauritius, New Zealand and the United States at the newly renovated City Bayview Hotel.

Scattered brethren from distant parts of Indonesia and Malaysia normally come together for church services just once a year—at the Feast. They observe the Sabbath and Holy Days alone, listening to taped sermons and literature in their homes.

So the Feast is a special time for catching up with friends, relating life experiences and becoming spiritually rejuvenated for the coming year. Eating, fellowshiping and laughing together in large groups—sometimes late into the evenings—featured greatly in Melaka.

Tours of local historical attractions were a special treat for many visitors. Over the centuries, Portuguese, Dutch, British, Chinese and Islamic traders and colonial governance have shaped Melaka's unique architecture and cuisine. Although Malaysia is now a predominantly Islamic nation of some 24 million people, Christians and other religious denominations are normally permitted to practice their faiths publicly and in peace.

After the major natural disasters and other challenging events in Asia this past year, brethren were reassured by messages focusing on the coming Millennium, the solutions to mankind's problems and their part in God's plans, both now and into the future.

Jeff Caudle

Mexico

San Miguel Allende

We had an excellent Feast in San Miguel Allende. Our maximum attendance was 341 for services and 261 for Bible studies. Most members from throughout Mexico attended, as well as three visitors from Chile and 12 visitors from the United States.

The spiritual nourishment that God provided was a true spiritual banquet. We had five Bible studies, 10 sermons, 10 sermons and the Feast video. The Feast site coordinator was Lauro Roybal, a church pastor in Mexico and manager of the office in Mexico. He was assisted by five ministers, eight deacons and deaconesses, and all the ushers and many other people that served during the Feast.

The sermons, Bible studies and sermons focused on the meaning of the Feast and on the family. Some of the topics covered were: "The Brotherhood of the Mat," "Our Inheritance Is to Be Like Christ," "Perspective From the New World," "What Our Reward Will Be," "The Last Great Day" and "Called to Overcome." God's inspiration was evident in all the topics covered, as well as in the prayers, singing and special music presented during services.

The Feast video was very inspiring. The joy and zeal of our brethren in Africa is very motivating. And the introduction by Mr. Kilough of the members of the home office staff, gave us all a better perspective of the work that Jesus Christ is doing through our organization.

We enjoyed a very pleasant climate in San Miguel Allende, warm and sunny during the day and pleasantly cool early in the morning and during the evening.

The activities included, in chronological order: a talent show (with Mexican folklore dances, some folklore dances from Chile and other joyful numbers, including a solo mimic of the Figaro opera); a ladies' afternoon tea; a children's party; a family brunch with live music by a guitar trio; a Mexican night with a delicious dinner and dance with live music performed by the Mineros Band; a *callejoneada*, which is a night stroll and music show through the colonial streets of San Miguel Allende, led by an *estudiantina*, which is a music group of young people with typical dress, music instruments and songs; and a special brunch for all the Church people who served during the Feast, as a recognition of their service, not only during the Feast, but throughout the years in their respective areas.

As a highlight of the Feast, God blessed us with six baptisms and an ordination: Alberto Gonzalez, deacon in the Tepic congregation, was ordained into the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As usual, there was much emotion



Dancing in Mexico

and tears as the brethren said good-bye and embraced each other, expressing their desire to meet again at the coming Feast, which Mr. Roybal announced, God willing, would once again take place in San Miguel Allende next year.

Pablo Dimakis

New Zealand

Napier

Almost 100 people attended the New Zealand site in Napier, a sunny, seaside city. The local Kiwis were joined by over 40 visitors from the United States and Australia. As Napier is a small site, it provides a great opportunity for people to meet almost everyone and enjoy fellowship. Overall it was a happy, relaxing and friendly Feast.

The activity highlight was a 1920s-themed dinner and dance, where many Feastgoers dressed up in costumes, hired for the occasion from local costume and theater companies. The women looked magnificent in their glamorous 1920s-style dresses, feather boas, long gloves,

headbands and headdresses, while the men looked dashing in suits and a range of hats! It was fun, and many danced the night away to a fantastic live band.

There were also plenty of opportunities to fellowship at restaurants and



Indoor rock climbing in New Zealand (photo by Michelle Mills)

cafes, and enjoy the hospitality of members in their temporary homes. Some of the more active enjoyed indoor rock climbing, deep-sea fishing, feeding dolphins and bike rides through wine-growing areas.

The highest attendance was 95. During services, the children's choir treated us to two special music performances.

Visiting speakers, including Robert Dick, chairman of the Council of Elders, described New Zealand as a "millennial" location because of the peaceful and scenic setting. A visitor from Arizona loved New Zealand and the friendly locals so much that he is planning to move permanently down under. And two young men from Australia rated this year's Feast as one of their best.

Michelle Mills

Nigeria

Owerri and Badagry

My wife, Ruth, and I had no idea, as we flew from Brisbane, Australia, to London and then to Lagos, Nigeria, what a life-changing, memorable experience, we were in for. We were kindly picked up from the airport and made to feel very welcome in Nigeria.

The next day we flew to Owerri, where we enjoyed three wonderful days of the Feast with 104 of our brethren, sharing a Nigerian-style resort facility. We felt overwhelmed by the genuine love extended to us by our members, who made us instantly feel like part of their families. It was like a foretaste of the kind of love that we will all enjoy in the Kingdom of God.

Unfortunately, Nigeria is a fledgling democracy battling ingrained corruption, bad management, unreliable infrastructure such as erratic power supplies, defective communications, poor water supply and sanitation and decrepit road networks with numerous roadblocks.

My prayers for Christ's urgent return have taken on a deeper fervency, when considering the blights imposed upon decent, hardworking Nigerians.

In the Owerri area, Fred Kellers relies on faithful leaders in the Church such as Romanus Okere and Peter Aluyi, who have a good family-team of assistant leaders. Joseph Forson and his wife, Gloria, also traveled all the way from Abuja, in central Nigeria, and he gave a very fine sermon about building holy, righteous character.

The next morning we tearfully said good-bye to our friends to whom we had

become magnetically attached, and were driven to the airport to fly to the other Feast site in Nigeria, Badagry (near Lagos).

In the Badagry Feast site we were equally honored by the respect and love of the 70 brethren in attendance.

We also deepened our love and respect for them as we discovered more about their lives and the daily challenges that they face. We found them to be converted followers of God who are highly intelligent. Many of them are very well educated and hold responsible positions, high in the government and commerce.

This Feast was special, too, because Mr. Kellers was able to ordain a very fine man as a minister of Jesus Christ, Olu-dare Akinbo (affectionately called Dare, pronounced Dahree). We enjoyed getting to know Dare; his wife, Oluwato-hungbogbo (Tohun, in short, pronounced Tong); his children; his mother; and his wife's mother and family.

Dr. Akin Ogundegi serves as the deacon, and we also enjoyed getting to know him and his wife and family.

I guess it is needless to say that our



Children in Nigeria

beloved brethren in Nigeria need your fervent prayers for God's daily help in their lives. I asked Mr. Kellers why he and his lovely wife, Lucretia, have kept coming back to Nigeria, since their first visit in 1990. "It's because of these wonderful people," he said. My wife, Ruth, and I totally agree.

Ken Murray

Peru

Huanchaco

This year 151 people gathered in Huanchaco, a very peaceful town on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, to joyfully celebrate the last two Feasts to our Heavenly Father. We were educated in the wonderful meaning of the Feasts and on how to improve our marriages and family relationships while waiting for the return of Jesus Christ.

One of the highlights of the Feast was the video sent from the home office, which, many brethren commented, was very encouraging. Another reason for us to rejoice was the baptism of two ladies, Veronica Aguirre and Clarivel Zegarra.

On the physical side we had many family-oriented activities. We had family dances, family outdoor activities, our traditional children's party (where we parents have a lot of fun), a lively talent show and also a seniors' get-together.

By the end of the Feast we left with the strong desire to persevere in God's way and maintain the close friendships we were able to develop with our brethren to encourage each other to finish the Christian race.

All the managers of the hotels we stayed in, with no exception and without me asking them, complimented us for the "well-behaved" people we brought to this town and asked us to "please return next year."

Manuel Quijano

Philippines

Baguio City

Baguio City once again was one of three Feast of Tabernacles sites for the United Church of God in the Philippines. For five consecutive years now, the Feast has been held at the conference hall of the "Ang Ating Tabanan" grounds of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines located in Baguio City.

The Feast started out with the opening night message being given to us by our minister from Dagupan City, Eriz Dizon. We were expecting attendance to be about 90, lower than last year due to brethren transferring to other Philippine Feast sites; but we were very much encouraged to see the number exceeding our expectations, as the attendance reached its highest on the sixth day at 125!

We were likewise encouraged by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Franks, who shared the Feast with us for the first two days before proceeding to our Iloilo and Davao Feast sites. Mr. Franks gave very inspiring and encouraging messages that helped us focus more on our mission of seeking first and foremost God's Kingdom and being fully determined to make it there with God's help.

We were excited to see this year's Festival video featuring our brethren in Africa. The video helped us better appreciate our brethren in that part of the world, and the challenges that they are facing. In spite of those challenges, we are sharing in that very same hope of a wonderful world tomorrow, as pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles.

The brethren enjoyed an earlier than usual Festival show on the second day of the Feast. A variety of songs, music and folk dances were performed and presented by the brethren themselves to the delight of everyone present, especially our honored overseas guests. Other activities were likewise enjoyed by both the young and old alike. Among the activities were the youth and family day, city tour and the seniors' dinner. There was also a film showing and a "videoke" activity as well.

With all the enjoyment and the spiritually inspiring messages we received during this Feast, we again felt the Feast had ended too quickly. Nevertheless, we felt that this was indeed the best spiritual Feast ever.

Rey Evasco

Davao City

Amidst several firsts, the Davao Festival site registered an in-camp attendance count of 335, which was a 10 percent increase over last year. Other statistics included nine infants blessed, five baptisms and one ordination into the eldership—that of Paul M. Cebrian Sr. Those baptized were Herculano Baring, Renante and Lorena Angana, Anndy Lou Cuizon and Meryl Lynn Macaraeg. Apart from the standard daily morn-

ing services, afternoon activities included livelihood workshops on various trades, a new and challenging youth and singles activity; a seniors' social; a family sports day with fruit festival; and a Bible study with Q&A on the Sabbath afternoon.

Evening activities included a presentation of the Festival video on the opening night and on the eve of the Last Great Day, fellowship and family nights, a Spokesman's and Graduate Club graduation dinner, a colorful variety show and a helpful Bible study.

This Feast featured other special blessings: a roasted calf was served on both the first and last day and many gifts and goodies were distributed during the Feast.

Topping our list of spiritual blessings were the three inspiring sermons delivered by Council of Elders member Jim Franks, who was visiting with his wife, Sharron.

Looking from both the physical and spiritual aspects, the Feast this year was blessed by God to be our greatest thus far.

Edmond D. Macaraeg

Punta Villa, Iloilo

At the Feast in Punta Villa, Iloilo, attendance soared to 164, almost double from the year 2002. Attendance for 2004 was 130, 105 for 2003 and 85 for 2002. This year, for the first time, foreign guests from the United States numbered 16; Australia, 6; Sabah, East Malaysia, 13; and Hong Kong, 1.

Activities during the Feast included Family Day, Youth Day, Entertainment and Dance Night and Seniors' Night. Each congregation contributed a number for the Entertainment Night.

Added to the rejoicing and enjoyment of the brethren was the roasted calf and overflowing ice cream, offered to everyone through the generosity of the brethren from Manila. The brethren also enjoyed the gifts that were given by our foreign brethren.

Another highlight of the Feast was the baptism of eight people from Manila, Leyte, Antique and Sabah.

We were blessed with the messages given by our visiting minister, Jim Franks, whose excellent contribution left us all spiritually uplifted. The Festival video, which focused on the work of the Church to preach the truth of God and giving light to those who are in spiritual darkness, was very inspiring and was very much appreciated by the brethren.

The venue of the Feast in Iloilo promoted closeness and unity as all of the Feastgoers stayed in one resort. The brethren ate their meals together and had the privilege of using most of the resort facilities for free. That included the use of three swimming pools, a playground and a basketball court, all granted exclu-



Family in Iloilo, Philippines

sively to us by the resort management.

Resort personnel were always happy to welcome our group as they have experienced how we conduct ourselves. Many comments were heard that we are the only group that is responsible, orderly, humble and always radiating joy.

What made this Feast truly a great success was the love and concern of everyone toward each other. All expressed gratitude and heartfelt thanks to our loving Father for His calling and the opportunity to keep the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

Florante Siapan

Portugal

Costa da Caparica

Inspiring messages, beautiful weather and a warm, friendly atmosphere characterized the Feast of Tabernacles in Portugal. Services were held at the picturesque fishing village of Costa da Caparica. This year 55 brethren attended from the United States, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and Portugal.



Entertainment in Portugal

Activities included a boat ride down the Tagus River to the Oceanarium. The Oceanarium allowed us to admire God's creative power and humor in some very unique animals. Other tours included a visit to Sintra, Boca do Inferno (natural craters formed by the sea) and Cascais/Estoril.

A definite highlight was the Lisbon-by-night bus tour, which ended at a typical Portuguese restaurant where the meal was accompanied by the traditional Fado singing and folk dancing. This was enjoyed by all, young and old alike. A ladies' breakfast was also enjoyed on Sunday.

This year we had the added blessing of baptizing Maria Conception Laguno Serrano of Spain, wife of Maassoud Zojaji, also a member in Spain. The two with their lovely daughter form the first family in United in Spain. We rejoice with this addition to God's family.

Special music was also enjoyed during the Feast under the direction of Ross Coffaro and the able piano playing of Nigel Scott-Williams. The youth and family choir sang a special hymn in both English and Portuguese.

God was present in an inspiring Feast and many positive comments were received. "The Feast was a very special learning experience for me," said Valerie Waddle.

"What a tremendous Feast in Portugal. So many thoughts keep running through my mind about it. So many things remind me of it, and it is such a pleasure to think of how special it was," said Lois Boughman.

Other comments about the Feast were "a warm and friendly atmosphere," "a great Feast," "the messages were excellent and very clear" and "I am thankful for all we heard, and I plan to put it into use in my life."

As a song goes that we heard during the Lisbon-by-night tour: "Cheira bem... cheira a Lisboa!" Translated and adapted to God's way we can really say: "It's a lovely aroma, it's the aroma of God's Feast."

See you in Portugal next year!

Jorge and Kathy de Campos

St. Lucia

Rodney Bay

The Feast this year was held at the sprawling Rex Resorts complex of three adjoining hotels—Royal, St. Lucian and Papillion—in the popular Rodney Bay area. Our high attendance was 135.

Brethren came from several islands in the Caribbean—St. Croix, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Bahamas, Barbados and St. Lucia—as well as Canada and the United States. The tropical environment was very relaxing, as it gave us a small foretaste of the world tomorrow. We had timely messages on refocusing our attention on that future event.

The brethren had the opportunity to participate in two organized activities. One was a "Welcome Night" hosted by the local brethren. We were entertained by a local folk band and dancers. The other was a sea cruise to the region of the island called Soufrière.

After the Feast ended and most of the brethren left, several of the hotel staff commented that things were not the same. A couple of them stated, "It just seems dead around here since the church people have gone."

Well done, good and faithful servants, in shining the light of God. This has indeed been a memorable Feast.

Arnold J. Hampton

South Africa

George

Fifty-seven brethren kept a truly inspiring and encouraging Feast in George. Guest speakers Les McCullough and Bill Jahns focused the brethren on that time we yearn for when Christ will come back as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The fellowship was a highlight of the Feast and the young adults in the group set a wonderful example of serving and letting their light shine wherever they went.

A new hall for services next year at the Feast has been secured in a millennial setting on the outskirts of the town bordering the natural forests. A new shopping mall outside the town has also been built. The new facilities will make



Bill Jahns speaks in George, South Africa

transport to services and shopping much easier next year.

Stan Botha

Uvongo

More than 200 brethren celebrated the Feast at Uvongo, the highest attendance being 243 on the Last Great Day.

Uvongo is situated on the east coast of South Africa in the province of Kwazulu Natal and boasts some of the finest



Second and third generation attendees in Uvongo (photo by Neil Becker)

and most reasonably priced accommodation in the country. The moderate climate, warm ocean and beautiful scenery make it an ideal Festival site, and this year we were blessed with exceptionally fine weather.

Visitors were from the United States, New Zealand and Germany. Les McCullough and his wife, Marion, spent the last six days of the Feast with us contributing to the many inspiring sermons and sermons focusing on the coming Kingdom of God and our future role during the Millennium and beyond.

Some of the topics covered were: Our example at the Feast as ambassadors for Christ, celebrating the establishment of God's government, appearing before royalty, holding fast to "the hope within us," recharging our spiritual batteries, looking forward to the world tomorrow, mid-Feast checklist, remembering Joseph, the sockeye salmon run and our spiritual journey, a Millennium of teaching, a laminated beam demonstrates how many members make a united church, righteous rulership, back into the world, lessons from Elijah and the history of man, from creation through the future Great White Throne Judgment.

The Festival film was of particular interest, since it focused on the congregations of southern Africa. Many present saw themselves being interviewed.

The physical activities included a family morning on the Uvongo beach playing volleyball, touch rugby, soccer and tug of war, while the smaller children played games and participated in a sand castle competition (enthusiastically assisted by their parents).

The youth enjoyed a trip out to sea in search of whales. They were rewarded with the sighting of two adult whales and a calf.

Our seniors, 60 and over, were treated to lunch and fellowship at a nearby restaurant called the Croc Pot (so named because it is situated on a crocodile farm).

All too soon it was time to say our good-byes and return to life's challenges "in the world."

Neville Smith

Sri Lanka

Beruwala

Thirty brethren from Sri Lanka, India and the United States observed the Feast this year at the Neptune Hotel in

Beruwala, Sri Lanka. Beruwala is located 58 kilometers (36 miles) south of the capital city, Colombo, along the beautiful shoreline of the Indian Ocean.

The Neptune Hotel is an all-inclusive beach resort with a friendly and courteous staff offering Feastgoers a wonderful example of South Asian hospitality. The hotel was one of many Sri Lankan beach hotels damaged by the December 2004 tsunami. However, due to the diligence of the staff, the hotel was fully functional during the Feast.

Brethren enjoyed an abundance of delicious food featuring Sri Lankan curries and international fare. Most dinners featured entertainment with a live band playing Western and Sri Lankan music. The waiters even performed magic tricks to fascinate the children as well as entertain the adults. Brethren were treated to an evening show of Kandyan dancing. The weather was enjoyable, featuring warm temperatures with sunny skies tempered with the cooling effect of some tropical rains.

Brethren heard many messages focusing on the millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God. Festival activities included a Family Day on the beach that included novelty games such as water balloon toss, pass the ring and tug-of-war, as well as prizes for the children and swimming and games in the pool.

Brethren also enjoyed an outing to the Kosgoda Turtle Hatchery and Galle Fort. At the turtle hatchery Feastgoers were allowed to hold sea turtles that had just hatched the previous day and would be



Sri Lanka

released into the sea the following day. As the group continued from Kosgoda to Galle, the damage from the tsunami was very apparent. Some people are still living in temporary shelters among the ruins of what were once houses and shops.

Galle Fort was originally built by the Portuguese in 1589. The present fort was constructed by the Dutch in 1663. Brethren toured the National Museum and walked along the fort wall overlooking the Indian Ocean.

One of the highlights of the Feast was the talent show. The Sri Lankan brethren did an outstanding job in providing an evening of entertainment for the Festival attendees. Perhaps the most memorable part of the Feast was the wonderful fellowship among brethren from different countries and cultures. By the end of the Feast we truly felt like members of a large family anxiously awaiting our next reunion!

David Baker

Togo

Tsévié

Fifty people from Benin and Togo, and one visitor from the Democratic Republic of the Congo gathered in

village of Tsévié, Togo, for the Feast. In spite of recent civil unrest in this West African nation, God blessed this site with peace and calm.

Two uninhabited houses with walled compounds were rented for use as dormitories at the Festival site. Services were held in the shade of a large tree in one of the compounds.

Members who are subsistence farmers in Togo brought their Festival tithe in the form of food they had grown. This was supplemented with food purchased with assistance from other parts of the world, which allowed special treats such



Feastgoers in Togo

as sodas for the children and an occasional glass of wine or beer for the adults.

The ladies present took turns preparing the meals over charcoal fires. Eating three meals a day, including meat for lunch or dinner, made this Festival a true feast of joy and plenty. People in this part of the world often don't eat all they would want, and only eat meat once a month or so, if that.

Services were held in French with translation into the local Ewe language. Deacon Kossi Fiaboé organized the services and played the cassette-recorded sermons from a previous Feast in France.

French regional pastor Joel Meeker was present for the opening night and the first day of the Feast. He gave one sermon and answered many questions during a wide-ranging Q&A Bible study. He was also able to present a one-hour live telecast on the topic "Will Christ Return?" on a local Christian television station.

During the Feast, several local villagers, including the owner of one of the houses rented, became intrigued by the example of our brethren, and by the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles. Several indicated a desire to learn more and asked if they could begin attending services on the Sabbath. Our brethren in Togo really let their lights shine, and it seems our heavenly Father used that light to further the work of the Church!

Koffi Fiaboé and Joel Meeker

Tonga

Mu'a

This year 24 brethren attended the Feast in the Kingdom of Tonga. We started off with a theme of "To Focus," which drove this year's Feast to be the best that we have ever observed.

We were blessed with wonderful weather throughout the Festival. The services were blessed by powerful and inspiring sermons along with some wonderful special music.

Our youth stepped up this year and hosted all the activities, including a special night where everyone enjoyed a buffet dinner and fun games. One of the highlights was the annual Feast barbe-

cue, which was prepared using the Tongan underground oven. We also held a picnic and sports day at one of the beautiful beaches in the kingdom.

We were so blessed, both spiritually and physically. This Feast encouraged us to keep our focus on the wonderful world tomorrow, when everyone will dwell in peace and harmony.

Heamasi Ta'ufu'ou

Trinidad & Tobago

Chaguanas

This was the second year the United Church of God has kept the Feast of Tabernacles on the island of Trinidad. The initial plans were thrown off when brethren had to change the Feast site at the 11th hour. Satan was quite busy as the Feast days approached, but the group was determined that he would not get the better of them. Services were held at the church hall, which is located in the borough of Chaguanas in central Trinidad.

The brethren all helped to decorate the church hall, which looked very beautiful and celebratory. The highest attendance was 17. Feastgoers had the pleasure of celebrating the Feast with Mr. and Mrs.



Feastgoers in Trinidad

Kingsley Mather and their daughter, Janice Lynn, as well as Maxwell Victor, a deacon from Dominica who kept the second half of the Feast in Trinidad.

Once again, the group had Family Day at the beautiful and serene La Vega Estate, which is nestled in the foothills of the Central Mountain Range. This estate is over 100 acres and is beautifully landscaped with ponds for fishing and paddle boats, nature trails for biking, exotic fruits and plants. The estate also offers picnic areas like the "Bamboo Nursery" with its tall, overarching bamboo plants that create a shady place for relaxing with friends and family.

It was a joyful time, despite the obstacles. The spirits of the brethren were lifted as they heard the live and video sermons portraying the wonderful world tomorrow. The brethren look forward to planning for next year's Feast.

Marsha Basant

United States

Bend-Redmond, Oregon

Over 800 Feastgoers enjoyed one of the best Feasts ever at the Bend-Redmond site. Weather was nearly perfect—warm, sunny days with temperatures ranging from mid-60s to mid-70s Fahrenheit. Cold, rainy weather set in the day after the Feast was over.

Attendance far exceeded registration figures every day and peaked at 873,

along with over 60 cybercast viewers from as far away as Hamburg, Germany. Many brethren from other groups attended with us. Also, at least five former member families from Central Oregon attended the Feast for the first time after many years of absence.

Sermons and sermonettes were exceptionally good this year. Several followed a theme of our destiny of helping others during the millennial rule of Christ. A wide range of activities was available for all age groups. The nice weather allowed members to enjoy the many scenic attractions of Central Oregon.

One member's purse was stolen on the Last Great Day, threatening to end the Feast on a negative note. However, it was found in a shopping cart at a nearby supermarket and returned with all the credit cards and driver's license intact and only part of the cash missing. Unsolicited donations from concerned members more than made up for the missing cash.

Larry J. Walker

Branson, Missouri

Almost 1,400 enthusiastic members gathered to celebrate the Feast in Branson, Missouri, where the weather was beautiful, starting out warm and then cooling off later during the Feast. Peak attendance for the Feast was 1,378.

The messages were very inspiring and freshened our vision of the Kingdom of God. God's Spirit was clearly inspiring the speaking and the listening. Sermons covered many aspects of the coming Kingdom of God. The first day we heard about the world without war and the need for restoration of all things. The Last Great Day we saw the fact that those who reject the annual and seventh-day Sabbaths of God in favor of the eighth day (Sunday) will have to wait until the symbolic eighth day of the Feast for their opportunity for salvation.

Many guests from other Feast-keeping fellowships were at services with us at different times. Our UCG literature display was a very popular area, and we exhausted most of our booklets again this year.

Over 300 senior citizens enjoyed a delicious senior citizens' luncheon. Family Day was again held at an area amusement park with young and old joining in for an afternoon of fun and fellowship. Although rain was supposed to fall throughout the day on Family Day, it turned out to be one of the most beautiful days of the entire Feast—even though it was quite a bit cooler.

The special music this year at the Feast was very inspiring and the messages were particularly appropriate for the Feast of Tabernacles. The general Bible study on family in the world tomorrow, the young adults seminar and the teen Bible study were all well attended. The overall climate at the Feast this year was very positive and left us with a sense of urgency about completing the work God has given us to do.

Michael Blackwell

Escondido, California

One thousand brethren assembled together in the lovely Performing Arts Center of Escondido to hear encouraging and uplifting messages regarding the

coming Kingdom of God.

Jim Tuck began the Festival by reminding us through vivid historical accounts how God has intervened in world history. He showed that the same God who controls massive events is also our personal God and invites us into this year's festival experience to make a difference.

This year's special Bible study featured Robin Webber presenting a subject titled "When I Brought Them Out," showing the parallels between the books of Exodus and Revelation.

Clyde Kilough, the president of the United Church of God, reminded the audience on the opening Holy Day of the importance of "Keeping Our Eyes on the Horizon" lest we despair in the moment. He used the very vivid analogy of seasickness, and an accompanying practical cure that has tremendous spiritual overtones of keeping our eyes on the Kingdom of God.

The Escondido Feast site experienced cooler weather than usual this year, but the warmth and fire of the brethren's enthusiasm and desire to learn more than made up for a few degrees on a thermometer. Each year nearly 40 to 50 percent of our people stay in the nearby beach communities of Oceanside or Carlsbad and commute to services.

While metropolitan San Diego has world-class attractions, the primary attraction at the Escondido Feast site rightfully remains the Festival activities themselves and the brethren, who plunge in to "keep the Feast" in all its aspects. Throughout the course of the



Escondido, California

week, our people were able to experience young adult and teen drop-in socials, a teen beach party in Oceanside, and a senior citizens' banquet.

The most popular event continues to be the old-fashioned Family Day picnic at nearby oak-shaded Felicita Park that brings all the brethren together to experience in type the peaceful harmony of the wonderful world tomorrow.

Robin Webber

Jekyll Island, Georgia

Since 1963 members of the Church of God have been convening on this peaceful nature preserve to enjoy a foretaste of the coming Kingdom of God pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

The long-standing tradition continued this year as 1,297 brethren packed the convention center on the first Holy Day. Although we came close to having to set up an overflow room, we managed to get everyone in the main auditorium.

In addition to listening to inspiring messages and outstanding special music, attendees enjoyed the typical island activities including a family beach party, a scramble golf tournament and



Jekyll Island (photo by David Treybig)

lots of fellowship in the nearby hotels and homes.

Three new activities were added this year, including bus tours to Savannah and the Okefenokee Swamp, plus a special Sabbath buffet brunch at the prestigious Jekyll Island Club Hotel.

The weather was beautiful with warm, sunny days before turning slightly cooler by the end of the Feast. Although our weather was great, we were closely watching the path of Hurricane Wilma and praying that the homes of our members would be spared.

David Treybig

Kerrville, Texas

The third year in Kerrville met and exceeded our pre-Feast high expectations. God truly blessed the 2005 Feast of Tabernacles. Once again the hill country of Texas was a big draw for our Texan brethren and for those who transferred in to be with us.

The Sabbath between the two Holy Days was our highest attendance with 978. This was 100 more than the early preregistration numbers. Attendance for the entire Feast was consistently high and greater than anticipated. Sermons were exceptional this year, with many people commenting on how inspiring all the messages were.

Our weather was clear with bright blue Texas skies. The temperature was in the mid 80s and low 90s, with a cool front on the last two days that brought cool evenings and fall days in the low 70s. There was only one brief rain that came late at night toward the end of the Festival.

Family Day at a real working ranch was replete with barbecue, a world-renowned trick roper and entertainment provided by our own brethren. The Myers brothers, Dave, Skip, Steve and John, provided a concert that raised almost \$6,000 for the Good Works Program.

One of the hotel directors mentioned several times how much they appreciate having our brethren and that our group was the best group they have ever had.

It is to God we give thanks and the credit for the wonderful example that was set and for His gift of the wonderful Feast of Tabernacles.

Britten M. Taylor

Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii

We had a wonderful Feast in beautiful Lahaina, Maui. There were about 500 brethren attending services one block away from the seashore. We were blessed with excellent weather and pleasant temperatures.

Our keynote speaker was Gary Antion from the home office, who spoke about how everything begins

with Israel and gave another sermon on hope.

There were activities for all ages: a children's/teens' party at a miniature golf park, a family dance, Family Day at Kaanapali beach, the traditional luau and a seniors' luncheon.

The singles and young adults enjoyed a kayak and snorkel tour. They were able to experience part of God's creation as they snorkeled in crystal-clear waters, "chased" turtles, saw exotic fish and tried not to step on the coral.

For their capstone social activity, the singles and young adults boarded the premiere sailing catamaran of Maui, the



Children's choir in Hawaii (photo by Gary Antion)

Shangri-la, and left on a sunset cruise of Maui's west shore. God blessed the weather, which had threatened to cancel the event, and they enjoyed clear skies and smooth sailing.

This is the third year for the Feast in Maui, and the personnel at the Maui Theatre, where we meet, remarked how much they looked forward to our arrival. The same was mentioned by the people at nearby shops and restaurants. A special collection and nonperishable goods were given to the Lightbringers charity to help out the local community.

Maui must be one of the most beautiful and appropriate places to have the Feast, since the peaceful and verdant surroundings, the weather and a host of activities all combine to make it possible to truly rejoice during the Feast.

Mario Seglie

Lexington, Kentucky

Whether we were fellowshiping at services, dancing at the family dance, having a nice meal on My Old Kentucky Dinner Train, picking bluegrass music together or spending the afternoon out with family and friends at Kentucky Horse Park admiring or riding horses, the atmosphere was electric. Thanks to the powerful Feast messages and the excitement of all attendees, God blessed us with a rewarding and uplifting Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

Our high attendance was 838 on the first Holy Day, but we also cybercast services around the globe to another 130 connections with no telling how many people on the receiving end. Some sent their thanks for the ability to share the Feast from remote locations. Others who could not attend due to health reasons were also thankful for being able to participate in this year's Feast.

The weather was sunny and warmer than normal for the first part of the Feast (in the 80s Fahrenheit), but cooled dramatically the last couple of days, bringing us true fall Feast weather and some rain along with it.

As we will be moving to northern Kentucky for the Feast next year, the Lexington convention bureau and the

convention center shared their disappointment that we will not be coming back. We were told we are one of the easiest and most enjoyable groups they work with.

In the opening message by Doug Johnson we were told, "Now that the Feast is here, it is almost over." And as we all knew would be the case, it certainly proved true once again this year. The time together flew by, yet we all left Lexington filled both physically and, most importantly, spiritually.

Mark Winner

Panama City Beach, Florida

We keep saying it because it's true, "This really was one of the best Feasts of Tabernacles ever!" This year 1,936 brethren were fed an outstanding spiritual banquet about God's soon-coming Kingdom and our part in assisting Christ in reeducating the world. The messages were exceptionally inspiring and spiritually fulfilling this year. Special music was indeed "special" and the performance on Youth Day of the 110-member children's choir was delightful.

All of our planned activities were successful and well attended. We had over 200 teens participate in the bowling/skating activity and 197 seniors attended the luncheon held in their honor.

This was our sixth year to keep the Feast in the tropical setting of beautiful Panama City Beach, Florida. The weather was picture perfect, with the exception of a couple of days of "red tide" (an algae-like growth in the sea that can irritate the eyes and throat), but that soon passed on out of the area.

Last year we attended the Feast just days after Hurricane Ivan devastated parts of the Gulf Coast. Once again, God was very merciful in answering our prayers by keeping Hurricane Wilma from affecting the Panama City Beach Feast site as well as our Feast site at Jekyll Island, Georgia. It was all appreciative of being able to keep God's Feast another year in peace and safety.

Harold Rhodes

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

Snow seemed likely for a late October Feast, but instead we had over a day of rain with otherwise gorgeous, somewhat warm, fall weather. The aspens were way past peak, with only a few patches of gold here and there. Steamboat Springs is a very convenient site, with the majority of brethren staying in the host hotel. Other condominiums are only a couple of blocks away, with the farthest housing only a little over a mile.

The high attendance of 637 came on the first day. Seating was tight, but definitely better than last year. The sermons were well received and centered on the Kingdom of God in the millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment.

The family dance, a long tradition in Colorado, was quite well attended and enjoyed. But the most popular activity we've ever had was this year's fun show, with around 450 present. Of that number, 240 enjoyed a Western dinner before the show. Spirits were high throughout the Feast and many expressed appreciation for the positive attributes of this site.

The hotel management asked that we make a prayer request for bellman Chris Nappi, who has contracted lung cancer. This we gladly did and also asked for prayers for a 17-year-old close friend of one of our attendees. There were medically diagnosed internal injuries from an auto accident, and following the prayer request, those injuries were not to be found!

Larry Neff

Wildwood, New Jersey

The seaside location of Wildwood, New Jersey, hosted nearly 900 brethren for the Feast of Tabernacles. Warm breezes experienced during the early portion of the Feast soon turned blustery and rainy, but didn't dampen the spirits of God's people.

The Wildwoods Convention Center personnel commented that of all the religious groups holding meetings and conventions at their facility, the United Church of God was by far the most friendly and filled with kindness.

Even though the city of Wildwood had entered its hibernation season, the brethren dug around until they found restaurants and venues to satisfy their palate and touring interests.

The opening message centered on the place where God had placed His name and closed with the admonition to be lights in an ever-darkening world.

Brethren enjoyed two specially designed trips during the Feast. The first involved a dinner cruise on the *Spirit of Philadelphia* where the Church took up almost an entire deck of the vessel. Brethren enjoyed an evening of fine food, music, entertainment and dancing.

A trip to New York was the other activity where five busloads of Church members arrived on 42nd Street and enjoyed a meal at B.B. King's and Applebee's. Following a brief sightseeing tour, 275 Feastgoers spent the rest of the evening at the Lunt Fontaine Theatre viewing the Broadway production of



Vola Boaz and Todd Carey in Wildwood (photo by Dempsey Bruton)

Beauty and the Beast. Our seniors enjoyed a wonderful luncheon given in their honor at the convention center, which included live entertainment and gifts for the oldest member and oldest married couple.

A Hawaiian theme night was enjoyed by the teens, which included games, dancing and a pineapple-eating contest.

Many of the brethren commented on the beauty of the Wildwoods Convention Center and its location on the Atlantic Ocean. Because of the facility's almost transparent ceiling, which makes the meeting hall quite bright, it was decided that the Festival video would be

played in the evening. This allowed the brethren to have a whole day of fellowship, touring and relaxation.

The brethren now look forward to next year when Lancaster, Pennsylvania, will open its doors to God's people, but Feastgoers will never forget the one year when God placed His name in a city called Wildwood.

Todd Carey

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

Spectacular fall foliage greeted 1,070 brethren from at least 25 states and several Canadian provinces as they attended the Feast of Tabernacles at Wisconsin



Wisconsin Dells Festival choir and Festival orchestra provided special music (photo by Dale Black and Shirley Buckmaster)

Dells. Inspiring messages on reconciliation, various aspects of Christ's judgment, the glory of God and healing waters encouraged brethren to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness in their lives. Brethren remarked how peaceful and encouraging the Feast was for them. Everyone watched out for one another as the family of God.

Outstanding special music by the large Festival choir and Festival orchestra, small ensembles and a children's choir added to each service. Weather ranged from the low 70s to the mid 50s toward the end of the Feast.

Live music was provided by a dozen talented brethren at the ever-popular family dance. Two hundred twenty-five senior citizens enjoyed a hot beef dinner and entertainment at the seniors' luncheon. A special singles' luncheon, Bible study and discussion was held early in the Feast. The Family Day activities included boat rides on the Wisconsin River, go-karts, indoor water park activities, indoor games and roller-coaster rides.

In addition, more than 50 children enjoyed their Festival Youth Instruction classes, which began before services and ended during the announcements. Three special Bible studies were offered as well. A spirit of cooperation, joy, wonderful Feast fellowship and unity prevailed among God's people.

Many brethren served in a variety of ways and really contributed to the enjoyment of the Feast. Our collective thanks go to God for His blessing during His eight-day Festival.

Steve Nutzman

Zambia

Lusaka

This year's Feast was held at Paray's Game Farm, which seems like a good coincidence since *paray* is an Afrikaans word meaning "paradise." The farm is located 23 kilometers west of Lusaka,

on the road toward Mumbwa where most of the members live.

Attendance was a record 153 even though some members left some children home because of limited finances. We ate together and stayed in tents, a first and big improvement in terms of accommodations.

André van Belkum, Council chairman of UCG Southern Africa, opened the Feast and delivered inspiring sermons describing and pointing members to the Kingdom. Sadly, he had to leave for the Zimbabwe Feast site midway through the Feast.

There was power and running water



Wisconsin Dells Festival choir and Festival orchestra provided special music (photo by Dale Black and Shirley Buckmaster)

at the Feast site! Some Feastgoers, as a first-time experience, took a cold shower and enjoyed it. A swimming pool was a special treat for the children.

A big morning and evening attraction was watching a large number of animals come to drink from the dam (thankfully none were dangerous animals). Other activities included a Family Day, dance and a variety show.

Overall, this was the best Feast ever and by far. This is no exaggeration. Thanks to the brethren from overseas who funded the Feast expenses.

Kambani Banda

Zimbabwe

Lake Kyle Recreational Park on the shores of Lake Mutirikwi, 32 kilometers south of the historic town of Masvingo (formerly Fort Victoria), was the Feast venue for up to 28 brethren in Zimbabwe.

This beautiful, unspoiled site features a tranquil African bush environment with scenic views of the lake and rolling granite hills. Members were housed in fully equipped thatched roof self-catering lodges.

Visitors from New York and minister André van Belkum from South Africa added international flavor to the site.

Activities included a game drive in a hired bus where members were able to see a white rhino and calf, giraffes, eland, zebras, kudu and the ever-present warthogs and monkeys.

Walking and pony trails, angling and boating were also available.

A most interesting sight was a huge fig tree in front of the meeting hall that scores of monkeys would climb to feast on the figs in harmony with different kinds of birds. The warthogs, unable to climb, roamed under the tree, feeding on the figs the monkeys dropped.

On the whole, this was an inspiring Feast characterized by rich messages, brotherly love and sharing.

Mike Mukarati



From the Word

Our Children and Sabbath Services

■ We want our children to love and look forward to the Sabbath. We also want them to not distract other people too much at services. What are some tips in working toward these goals? What's the balance? How can others in the congregation help in what can be a very trying time for parents of small children?

by Doug Horchak

It's 2:45 on a Sabbath afternoon. Services began 15 minutes ago and the sermonette just started. I'm rocking our Little Sally to sleep, while our son, Timmy, gets settled by Dad on the floor with some Legos. Then it happens! The toddler two rows down begins to cry. The crying and screaming continues and gets louder while the mother tries to "reason" with her child to quiet down. Then my little one awakens in tearful moans due to the noise and distraction. The cycle of crying toddlers and infants waking begins to unfold once again! Ugh.

Does this sound familiar? Have you ever struggled with your own children during a Sabbath service or been distracted by others? There is a "way of escape"! Or, better put, there are some strategies that can make services better for you and your children. Sabbath services do not have to be the laborious experience that it can be for parents, children and the congregation.

The Sabbath Is Special

We all know that the Sabbath day is a unique and special day. It's a day that our families (including our children) are to observe and enjoy (Exodus 20:10). One element of observing the Sabbath day is worshipping together with God's people. And it is usually when bringing a small infant or toddler to services that many parents start the "work and struggle" of trying to have their children content and settled during that two-hour period.

However, whether we have children or not, it is important for all of God's people to remember that this convoca-

tion is unique and special. We come together to worship God and learn His truth and way of life. We also sing praises to God in a unified voice showing our appreciation for His many blessings.

What Is Expected?

Since the convocation of Sabbath services is very special, all of us should know what is expected. This would include our dress and our behavior—for young and old alike. Small children are no different. They, too, benefit from knowing what is expected of them at services with their mommy and daddy.

We know that Sabbath services are the one occasion when we collectively come before God as His people. Unlike the ancient Israelites, we come to worship Him in various locations "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). God established the Sabbath and sanctified it (Genesis 2:3). Our Sabbath services are a convocation when we come before God, and they should be viewed as such by us all.

In fact, the Sabbath itself is a day that

show respect for God and others at the service, and get more from the Sabbath service themselves, as well.

Children learn what we teach them and what they *see* and *experience*. They are also creatures of habit (as we all are!). So we should help our children by striving for age-appropriate teaching goals for the Sabbath and services:

- Teach them the uniqueness and special nature of the Sabbath and services.
- Teach them that their behavior and "playing" while at services should differ (quieter and controlled) than other days of the week.
- Teach them that Mommy and Daddy are at Church services to learn, to sing hymns and to let God know how much we appreciate and love Him!
- Teach them that Church is for them too—that God wants them to pray, to sing, to learn and worship Him on that day, as well.

By having well-defined goals for our children's experience of Sabbath services, we can then consider some teach-

change in nap time is minimal, and more consistent for the child (not to mention easier on Mom or Dad!).

Some children spend the week in an environment of little or no limits—all day, every-day, nonstop "run and gun" playtime. While any of us as parents know that a growing toddler is the epitome of exploration and inquiry, teaching a child *some* measure of self-control and relatively structured quiet time during the week is a good parenting practice.

Not only does it help prepare them for the Sabbath day and the unique environment that exists at Church services, but it gives them a sense of order in their lives and a healthier environment for learning and preparing for schooling.

Mothers' Rooms

In many congregations, mothers' rooms (parents' rooms) are provided to help those with small children. While the locations vary, it is important to keep in mind the general purpose of mothers' rooms.

In most cases, the mothers' room is intended to be a quiet room set up for changing diapers, feeding infants or comforting and/or putting a young child to sleep. This room should be used for the minimum amount of time needed. Mothers should return to the meeting room when finished with the care and comforting of their child.

Parents should be considerate of others using the room by refraining from talking or visiting, and from bringing noise-making toys. If older children accompany a mother and infant into the room, parents should make sure the toddler sits quietly and does not disturb others. Again, this expectation for the toddler is most effectively taught at home, during the week.

Sick children should not be brought into a mothers' room (and should not be at services, for that matter). If there is a need to chastise or punish a child, this should also not be done in the mothers' room.

It is understood the father will occasionally be tending to a young child, or even feel the need to walk with a fussy toddler. But even those occasions should have the goal of settling the child in order to return to services.

Work . . . Gives You Rest on the Sabbath!

Many years ago, I heard a wise grandfather who was also a pastor in God's Church give this advice to all of the



young parents in the congregation: *Work with your children six days and they will give you rest on the Sabbath.*

A catchy phrase, isn't it? Yet, there is great truth and wisdom in that simple statement. If we, as parents, strive to give some focused attention to working with our children during the week, the dividends will pay off for both us and our children. The goal of enjoying and appreciating Sabbath services with God's people, rather than dreading the *two hours of torture* that it ends up being for some can be reached by:

- Helping our children to value structured "quiet" time occasionally during the week.
- Encouraging them to enjoy life as they learn and play—but doing so with self-control and a sense of responsibility.
- Making the Sabbath unique and special at home, so that when our children go to Sabbath services, they do so with great anticipation and joy!

After a service that might last two hours, some children are anxious to burn some energy. If the parents have struggled with a child, they are often ready to "let the calf out of the stall" themselves!

However, we should resist the temptation to allow our children to begin running circles around the brethren and scooting cars and trucks in the aisles of the meeting hall. While it is normal and appropriate for children to want to play and visit with friends, parents should take care that this isn't a danger to others. Their children should only play and visit in areas of your Church hall that are not deemed off limits.

Balance Is the Key

There is no question that "children will be children." They are small, immature and dependent little tikes that are generally looking for fun, learning and a good time! As parents, our expectations should be realistic and age-appropriate.

However, just "going with the flow" and letting your children's life just happen is not the way to help model the behavior that will make the Sabbath and services special. Reasonable expectations and training of our children for six days can bring us the well-deserved "rest" that God promises the Sabbath day should be! UN



should be unlike any other day of the week—even to a child. Parents should strive to teach their children that the Sabbath should *look and feel different* to them. Children can begin to learn at a fairly early age that their activities and the family's activities are notably different on that special day.

Training and Discipline

Since the very nature of Sabbath services is different from being at a day-care center or a playgroup that might happen during the week, it will take some diligence on the parents' part in training and instruction to help their children learn how to behave so that they can

ing and discipline strategies to assist us in training our children in a loving and meaningful way.

One of the biggest frustrations for young parents is striving to teach their children to act and behave in a manner that is so very different from their routine the other six days of the week!

This can be a confusing challenge for the parent—and even more so, for the child.

Here are a couple of important considerations that can help young parents as they train their children to appreciate Sabbath services:

- Work toward consistent sleep times for very small children. This can take some work, since baby's nap schedules can change as they get older. Still, it helps to strive for a routine that will match church services.
- Plan some controlled or structured quiet playtime during the daytime throughout the week for toddlers.

Sometimes very small children don't want to go to sleep at 2 p.m. if their normal nap time is 12 noon or so. What is helpful for some parents is striving to have a child's "nap" or "quiet" time very similar to the time that your local Sabbath service begins. This way, the

If You're Not a Parent: How the Congregation Can Help

Many years ago, the phrase "We Are Family" was touted within the Church. The fact is, we are family. As such, we should greatly value the blessing that little children are—to the entire congregation.

All of us as brethren in a local congregation need to be loving and patient with each other. This includes patience with the parents who are teaching and training their precious little children. Rather than criticizing or judging, *offering to help* a single mother or parents who have small children while at church can be a real service and example of love.

Treasure Digest

Whatever Happened to Thanksgiving?

The wonderful fall Holy Day season is now over, and we're back home remembering what a great Feast we just enjoyed, both physically and spiritually. Now the Christmas season is going full blast, with all ads geared toward Dec. 25.

In all this hullabaloo, a traditional holiday is forgotten. Whatever happened to Thanksgiving? "Thanksgiving" is "the act of giving thanks; grateful acknowledgment of benefits or favors, especially to God; a public celebration in acknowledgment of divine favor; a day set aside for giving thanks to God" (*American Collegiate Dictionary*).

The United States has been celebrating this holiday as far back as 1621 starting with the Pilgrims. President Abraham Lincoln thought it important enough to make it a national holiday in 1863. He set aside one day a year to honor God and thank Him for the rich blessings He had poured out on this nation. His Thanksgiving Proclamation dated Oct. 3, 1863, states in part:

"The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added. . . I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States and those who are in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens."

The Bible is full of scriptures regarding giving thanks. There are 28 scriptures on "thanksgiving" and 73 on "thanks" (31 in Psalms alone). Altogether on this subject there are at least 139 scriptures. It's easy to see that God wants us to be thankful.

Most people plan a family get-together on this day. It's the big "turkey day," with all the trimmings and the emphasis is on feasting. Thankfully, this day has not become too commercialized; after all, people don't buy gifts, new clothes or other items for this holiday. Unfortunately, they also tend not to

remember what this day stands for. If a prayer of thanksgiving is said, it usually is short and seems to be an afterthought.

This is one holiday every year we can enjoy with our family and friends and those who don't share the Holy Days with us. We should always be thankful for our blessings, and this is an opportunity to share our thankfulness with others. Open up your homes, share your abundant blessings and generosity with those near and dear to you.

Start some new family traditions on this day. Ask each person, including the children, to share what he or she is thankful for this year. Oh, yes, make sure there is a prayer of "thanksgiving" to our Creator God for His richness toward us each and every day of our lives. "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving" (Psalm 95:2). "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations" (Psalm 100:4-5).

Shelby Faith
St. Louis, Missouri, congregation

A Mother's Gratitude

I don't remember when Anna and Elizabeth Hastings became permanent fixtures in the St. Louis congregation, but I do remember coming to realize there was a big hole when they weren't there.

We expected to see Anna coming in the door, pushing her daughter's wheelchair and depositing their belongings on the front row. And we had also come to expect Liz's smile, which literally lit up the room, as she greeted first one and then another.

Brethren made sure to get a "Liz fix" before leaving services. She was such a vibrant part of our congregation. When she felt good, everyone felt good. And when she was having a bad day, we all left feeling a little low—as Paul described in 1 Corinthians 12:26: "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it."

In a recent letter, Anna asked me to pass on some things about her daughter. Liz was 14 months old when they found out she had cerebral palsy. "She was a beautiful child in heart, mind and body, and always had a beautiful smile," Anna wrote. "Liz was never able to talk except for a few words and sentences, but she understood everything she heard. She could never walk alone, only with the help of the arms of another person holding her up. So she was confined to a wheelchair or a chair made especially to fit her body."

Turning the Hearts Remember Your Roots

When a man and a woman in love marry, the couple has to blend together two family systems. These family systems may be somewhat or very different from each other. Neither was completely right or completely wrong. They are just different. Which traditions will be kept from which family? How many of each mate's family traditions, rules and rituals will be retained?

With families on the move so much today, it is difficult for children to be given roots for stability in their lives. Not only are relatives far away, but traditions, values and family rituals may also be lost.

It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to give our children a connection with the past. What makes your family what it is? When we form a new family unit by marrying, we certainly have the prerogative of choosing which lessons and experiences of our family of origin we will bring into our newly formed family. We also may choose to make sure our children have frequent connections to our family of origin through visits and by retaining some or many of the rituals, experiences, values and rules that we lived by when we were growing up.

Deuteronomy 4:9 gives the sense of carrying on the teachings and traditions of our families. "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren" (emphasis added).

So, for the family to feel a sense of stability, it is important for parents to make sure their children have a connection with the past. This may be done by spending time frequently with grandparents and relatives to grasp family tradition and stories. It can also be done by parents discussing what past family traditions they want to carry on with their young children.

By developing and retaining family rituals, traditions, values and rules, we will be "remembering our roots" not only for our generation, but for generations to come.

Gary Antion



One might think that someone so physically challenged could offer very little to others. Liz proved that wrong. "Her heart went out to people. . . When they were sad, hurting or had problems, she always tried to give comfort the best she could—holding their hands or listening. When they cried, she cried, and when they laughed, she laughed." (Brethren in St. Louis know that Liz's own hearty laugh and expressions of delight were highly contagious!)

Anna mentioned her daughter's love of giving gifts, like handmade cards, even though it took her a very long time to laboriously print her message and sign her name. "She loved God's people, and her happiness was seeing the happiness of others," her mother wrote. "God, in His kindness, gave her the gifts of loving and caring."

At age 48 Liz received some devastating news. She had ovarian cancer and the doctors gave her six months to a year to live. In spite of such a blow, Anna and Liz continued to take their places on the front row as often as they could make it.

Her health began to deteriorate. She suffered several strokes, and ultimately was ravaged with

a stubborn infection that led to gangrene, and the amputation of both legs. Our congregation grieved and prayed with every downturn. Finally on June 15, 2004, at age 50½, God gave her and her family release from all the suffering.

During this ordeal, numerous prayer requests went out, and the Hastings received hundreds of cards. Anna worried that they could not express their appreciation to each individual. She decided the best way was to share a little of Liz's life, and the following expression of her gratitude:

"I am Elizabeth's mother, and I would like to thank all of you for the many prayers and cards that she and we, her parents, were blessed to have. . . She was a unique young lady, and we miss her very much. She's in God's hands waiting for the resurrection. We can't wait until we see her again and her beautiful new healed body. May God speed the day when Christ returns to make all things new. Thank you all, brethren, for your love, prayers, concern and kindness. We will never forget that, and you. Sincerely, Anna Hastings."

Karen Meeker
St. Louis, Missouri, congregation

Be Ready to Give an Answer: Didn't You Follow a False Prophet?

A friend of mine brought it to my attention that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong has been purported to make several prophecies that have failed through the setting of dates. Now, my friend's argument is that, if this is true, the teachings that we understand from the Bible today have been handed down to us by someone who is, by biblical standards, a false prophet. And if this is so, my friend goes on to ask, how can I put my faith in the teachings that I hold dear, knowing this?

No, we do not agree that the late Herbert W. Armstrong was a false prophet. He did not claim to be a prophet, nor did the church regard him as one. We believed he was striving to be a faithful minister.

If you read his writings or heard his messages, you would encounter admonitions he often repeated with great emphasis: "Blow the dust off your Bible! Do not believe me! Believe the Bible!" So, we respectfully disagree with the idea that he interpreted the Bible for the Church. It is the responsibility of each person to study and prove his or her own biblical beliefs.

When I say that we regard Mr. Armstrong as a faithful minister of God, I mean that we do not venerate him as a recipient of "holy writings" in the way that many religions look to men who once led them. He was not infallible. He served well, and now he is at rest. We are moving on, addressing the present, continuing to look to the Bible for our beliefs, continuing to do what we are commissioned to do: preach the gospel of the Kingdom and care for those whom God calls (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20).

You will immediately recognize the same biblical message Mr. Armstrong taught when you read our magazine, newsletter, booklets and brochures. However, we should note that Mr. Armstrong saw the need to constantly grow in knowledge. Similarly, you may well find minor changes in our teachings, reflecting better research tools that bring out previously unseen nuances in biblical teaching. But the foundation is the same as it was in the Church of God decades ago.

Regarding what Mr. Armstrong taught about when the end would come, he definitely had a passionate belief that Christ would return in his lifetime. In that regard, he shared a perspective with the apostles and elders of the first-century Church of God. The history of the Church begins with their expectation that Christ would establish the Kingdom immediately after His resurrection (Acts 1:6).

In the first recorded sermon, Peter quoted a prophecy from Joel about the last days of the age of man (Acts 2:17), applying it to what was happening in A.D. 31. Decades into the century, the book of Hebrews says, ". . . in these last days" (Hebrews 1:2).

James, the brother of Christ, wrote: "You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!" (James 5:8-9).

Paul wrote: "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:15), obviously believing that some of those then alive would see Christ's return.

The apostle John wrote: "Little children, it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18). He concluded the book of Revelation, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly'" (Revelation 22:20).

Where did they get such an idea? Notice that both Paul and John said they were repeating what Christ told them. If you read Matthew 24, perhaps the primary presentation by Christ about the end of the age of man and the beginning of the Kingdom of God on earth, you see where all believers get the idea that Jesus would return in their lifetime.

Christ spoke in such a way that those who heard Him in person, as well as everyone who heard or read His words down through time, would gather the same impression: He could return in their lifetime.

Why did He do that? He obviously wanted us always to have hope and a sense of urgency about the future. Some would say that is misleading, but consider that in the next waking moment for all of God's servants, they will find themselves rising through the air to meet Christ as He returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Jesus is the Prophet foretold in Deuteronomy 18:18. Certainly, He was not a "false prophet," in spite of the fact that countless disciples took His teachings to mean that He was returning in their lifetime.

In Deuteronomy 13:1-5, God addressed the subject of those who are false prophets. Interestingly, He presents a scenario in which the man foretells something that actually happens, pointing out that this is no proof of his authenticity. The proof lies in the man's message. Does he teach God's Word accurately, or does he seek to mislead people into rejecting God's law and His way of life? Mr. Armstrong strove to faithfully teach the Word of God.

Cecil E. Maranville



Local Church Updates

Auckland Enjoys Family Day at the Zoo

The young and the young at heart from the Auckland, New Zealand, congregation gathered on Sunday, July 11, at the Auckland Zoo for a family day. An occasional shower did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of those present and was a reminder that rain is a blessing from God!

The brethren enjoyed the variety of bird, animal, fish and reptile life that was on display, including many endangered and threatened species, but it was the company of God's people that made the day so special.

A highlight for the children, and a few enthusiastic adults, was crawling through a tunnel system that has been constructed underneath the meerkat enclosure, with glass domes every few



Auckland, New Zealand, congregation enjoys a day at the zoo meters allowing one an eye-level view of the meerkat families at work and play, and the parents of the intrepid explorers eventually lost count of the amount of times the network of tunnels was crawled through.

Many remarked on how they appreciated the beauty of God's creation, and the scripture from Genesis 1:31 was brought to mind: "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." All returned home in the afternoon with tired legs and good memories, and thankful for the time spent with those of God's family in Auckland.

Sharon Maguire

31 Attend ABC Sampler

The sixth ABC Sampler was held at the home office near Cincinnati, Ohio, from Aug. 22 to 26.

This year's sampler was attended by a group of 31—a few who were ABC graduates, others who were veterans of the ABC Sampler program and some first-time attendees.

A variety of material was covered during the five-day sampler. Gary

Antion covered the book of Haggai, communication in marriage and the interesting topic of secularism. Ralph Levy expounded on the biblical characters of Jacob and Joseph from the book



ABC Sampler students gather for group photo

of Genesis and also presented the "fun" book of Esther. Clyde Kilough presented the topic of godly leadership.

A variety of tasty snacks and refreshments were enjoyed at each break time.

All evaluations of the sampler were very positive. Everyone commented on how much they learned from the material that was presented. Many have

already mentioned they would be returning for the sampler again next year.

Kathy de Campos

East London Celebrates 10 Years

On Sabbath, Sept. 10, the East London, South Africa, congregation commemorated 10 years in the United Church of God.

In the sermon the pastor, Neil Becker, traced the history and various experiences of the congregation over the previous 31 years.

On June 1, 1974, the congregation was raised up as the fourth congregation in South Africa of the Worldwide Church of God fellowship. Twenty-one



East London, South Africa, congregation prepares to eat cake (photo by Neil Becker)

years later on Aug. 20, 1995 it became one of only two congregations of the United Church of God fellowship in South Africa at that point in time.

After the service the congregation posed for a photograph, viewed many photo albums depicting various events and individuals over the previous 10 years and shared a large cake that had been appropriately worded before being demolished in quick time!

Neil Becker

Cleveland Hosts Fifth Cookout-Campout-Softball Weekend

Cleveland held its fifth annual Cookout-Campout-Softball Weekend under sunny skies and warm temperatures on July 9 and 10.

More than 150 brethren from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana and West Virginia spent a delightful Sabbath afternoon fellowshiping and consuming hot dogs, hamburgers and chicken almost as fast as the two short-order chefs could grill them.

By nightfall, 85 people remained, and the backyard had been transformed into a tent city with nearly three dozen tents as well as a couple of vans and a pop-up camper. During the evening, a bonfire was lit to roast hot dogs and s'mores.

Most people went to bed at a reasonable hour and actually got some sleep; some of the younger people decided an opportunity to be together and visit was more valu-



Scenes from Cleveland's cookout and campout

able than sleep, and they sat out and talked quietly until very late. But, being young, they were able to function rather well on very little sleep and were enthusiastic participants in Sunday's softball games.

As daybreak came and the crew entered the kitchen to start work on breakfast, they found a group of ladies already up . . . searching intently for a can of coffee and a coffee maker. Shortly after the pot started brewing, a pair of young adults entered the kitchen asking for a big metal pot and a large spoon. They were not interested in mak-

ing soup—their plan was to go through the tent city offering a metallic serenade to roust their still horizontal friends.

The softball game schedule was cut short by one game due to extreme heat. Everyone managed to stay hydrated while playing in the hot sun and came back to the pavilion for lunch and later to round up belongings with big smiles and lots of laughter. While the heat was not really what everyone had hoped for, God always makes sure to give us what we need. And He gave us exactly what we needed—time together to form bonds, strengthen existing friendships and create new ones. The softball was just icing on the cake.

Diane Webber

Spokane Enjoys Pancake Breakfast in the Park

After a rainy Sabbath, the sun shone brightly at Mirabeau Park near Spokane,



Spokane, Washington, pancake chefs: Art Kottke, Roger Maine, Mike Iiams, Drew Finnegan and Jerry Oliver

Washington, on Sunday, July 17. The aroma of hot coffee, sausages and eggs wafted through the area and made the brethren's mouths water.

At 9 a.m. a line began to form, while the men stood up to the grueling task of keeping lots of pancakes and all the trimmings moving right along.

Throughout the morning more smiling brethren joined the group, and everyone enjoyed delicious pancakes with strawberries and whipped cream, scrambled eggs and beef sausages, along with much joyous fellowship.

Connor Finnigan (age 12) and Art Kottke (much older) were champion cherry pit spitters! And the youngsters filled the air with rainbow-colored bubbles.

Twelve dozen farm-fresh eggs were scrambled, along with 240 beef sausages and more pancakes than you can count.

Bette Young

Teen's Dream Comes True

Marc Buchholz and his family (parents, Donna and Andy; and brothers, Matt, 13, and twins Kiel and Kreg, 8) and two of Marc's nurses traveled to

Washington, D.C., in March. After a private tour of the White House and grounds, the family was greeted by Barney, the president's Scottish terrier. Following the "first dog" were President George W. Bush and Laura Bush.

Marc and his brothers were each given a lapel pin of the presidential seal, and Marc received a baseball personally



Marc Buchholz, his family and nurses with President George W. and Laura Bush in March

autographed by President Bush that also featured the presidential seal.

After the family spent time asking the president questions, they watched him board Air Force One as he departed for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

President Bush extended his invitation to Marc through The Dream Factory of Rochester, New York, an organization that tries to fulfill the wishes of critically and chronically ill children. Marc, a quadriplegic, applied to meet the president more than a year ago, and received the invitation just weeks before their trip.

In addition to the White House, the Buchholz family visited local attractions in the Washington, D.C., area and the battlefields in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Marc is the grandson of Edward and Dolores Bock of the Elmira, New York, congregation.

Chicago Celebrates 50 Years

On the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, April 30, 2005, 296 people from 13 states and various church groups gathered together for a special UCG service to celebrate the establishment of the Church of God in the Chicago area 50 years ago.

In 1955, the Radio Church of God, as it was known then, first met with eight people. Bea Roenspies and her son, Dave, were recognized as some of the initial members who were also present at the anniversary service.

Richard Pinelli, who attended the Chicago congregation in 1956 before leaving for Ambassador College, gave the first split sermon of the anniversary service. Roy Holladay, who was pastor in Chicago from 1978 to 1983, gave the second split sermon.

Over 200 stayed for the dinner dance that evening. The 11-piece orchestra played songs from the '40s and '50s and set the tone for an elegant evening. Everyone appreciated the opportunity to



Australian Young Adults Get "Back to Basics" at Leadership Camp



Sylvia and Ted Efimov, Chicago members since 1958, pause for a photo; photo collage displaying the history of God's Church in Chicago see old friends and reminisce over old photos.

ReNae Shaw

ABC Presents Mini-Sampler in Nashville

The Nashville, Tennessee, congregation hosted a very successful ABC Mini-Sampler over the weekend of Sept. 17 and 18, with Melvin Rhodes, a senior writer for *The Good News* and *World News and Prophecy* and pastor of the church in Lansing, Michigan, and Ralph Levy, an assistant professor at Ambassador Bible Center in Milford, Ohio.

The weekend began at 10:30 on Sabbath morning with approximately 185 in attendance at services in Brentwood, Tennessee. Many had traveled from adjacent churches and other states to attend. Dr. Levy gave the first split-sermon, titled "Can Second-Generation Christians Be Zealous Christians?" and Mr. Rhodes gave the second split-sermon, titled "Are You Safe From Spiritual Terrorism?"

After a break for lunch, four hours of ABC classes were presented from 2:30 to 6:30 Sabbath afternoon.

Mr. Rhodes' subject for the two days was "Topics in Bible Prophecy," and he included lectures on the importance of the Bible in the English-speaking world, the prophecies of Daniel 7 and lessons on government from the book of Daniel.

Dr. Levy expounded on two biblical heroines of the Old Testament, Ruth and Esther.

Sunday's events began at 8 a.m. in the Garrett Conference Center in Franklin, Tennessee. There were four hours of classes in the morning, followed by a lunch break and four more hours.

At the conclusion of the lectures, diplomas were awarded to the 86 who had attended all 12 hours. Special recognition was given to the youngest attendee, 7-year-old Kaylee Parent, and the two "most senior," 78-year-old Jerry Styer and 77-year-old Charles O'Grady. Elisa Botta was also recognized as the person who had traveled farthest; she had come from New York City to attend the Mini-Sampler.

Ralph Levy

From Friday, July 29, to Sunday, July 31, 28 young adults and the young at heart gathered together from all over Australia and even New Zealand, for a weekend of great chats, awesome speeches and really tasty food. The theme of the weekend, "Back to Basics," focused all on the essentials of Christian living and the incredible future that God has invited us to enjoy.

The discussions started on Friday night with the traditional question, "What is the most exciting/interesting thing that has happened to you this past year?" As usual, all of us initially struggled to think of what to say! It was really inspiring for me to hear about all the blessings and answered prayers God had provided for everyone in that past year.

The next morning at the caffeine inspiring hour of 9 a.m., Trevor Huthnance woke us all up with an inspiring talk about being "Dedicated to a Vision." Regan Campbell, a young adult in the Sydney church, then moved all of us with his personal story of "How to Rekindle the Flame."

We started the Saturday afternoon session after a satisfying lunch, much laughter (about how every Church kid seemed to be the only one at school eating brown bread!) and much discussion thanks to David King's "Growing Up in the Church—How Did I Ever Stick to It?" We all found that it was really help-



Australian young adults attend leadership camp July 29 to 31

ful hearing from another young adult who knows what we all face and had been through it all before us.

We also heard from Jeanette Dean on "Becoming Keepers" and from Jacqui Afionni on how to become better *doers* by focusing on the "Why? What? and How?" of serving.

After the end of the Sabbath, people engaged in friendly table tennis matches, pool competitions and conspiratorial Google Earth searches. The more adventurous went swimming in the sub-arctic pool and then tried to defrost in the sauna, while Dave Archer instead chose to heat things up with some don't-try-this-at-home-kids fire twirling.

On Sunday at the more civilized 9:30 a.m., Trevor Huthnance expanded on his previous talk by emphasizing that Christian leadership is what people can see in us, not what we say.

The director of the weekend, Bruce Dean, concluded the discussions and the weekend by reiterating that we must now take all of this encouraging knowledge and DO something with it.

Sarah Gray

Teen's Miraculous Recovery After 18-Foot Fall

Randy Shoemaker, 16, of the Portsmouth, Ohio, congregation, had a severe accident on June 9, 2005. He was helping on a yard project at home and fell from the bucket of a construction bucket truck at the height of 18 feet.

As the land phone was dialing 911, the cell phone was dialing ministers, family and friends. Immediately, prayers for his healing were being sent to God. A true miracle was performed that day.

Randy was life-flighted to Children's Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. Gary Smith, Portsmouth pastor, anointed Randy there and then the doctor came in to explain the seriousness of his situation. From the doctor's perspective at that time, there were many uncertainties about Randy's prognosis.

After only three months, Randy's multiple fractures (pelvis, tailbone and head) were nearly healed. Each time he has gone to appointments, the doctors remind Randy that he is definitely a "lucky" person.

One of Randy's most serious fractures was the temporal bone. Dr. Choo, a specialist in temporal bone surgery, stated, "The temporal bone is the most complex bone in the human body. It houses the carotid artery, jugular vein, facial nerve, hearing, and affects your balance or equilibrium. Randy is very fortunate to

have all of these areas working with no lasting complications."

Randy has been released from most of the doctors in Cincinnati and only has a few more visits to Children's Hospital. "We want to thank all of our friends, family and the many churches that prayed for Randy," said his parents, Rick and Carol Shoemaker. "The miracle healing hand of God is a true witness of His existence."

Hammond Honors "Lydia Ladies"

On Aug. 27, the Hammond, Indiana, Women's Workshop sponsored a special potluck dinner to honor the "Lydia ladies" (those women who are widows or have mates who do not share their



Some of the "Lydia ladies" honored by the Hammond, Indiana, congregation Aug. 27

faith at this time) of the congregation. These ladies meet many challenges daily while living their convictions and continue to put one foot in front of the other on the right path.

The honorees each received a personal invitation and were happily surprised to find tables decorated in their honor with purple tablecloths, lace placemats, candles and floral arrangements.

Each lady received a magnet with a different Bible verse. A specially wrapped chocolate bar with the honoree's name reserved the seat of each of the 19 "Lydia ladies."

During the meal the pastor, Vernon Hargrove, summarized the life of Lydia and her hospitality as noted in Acts 16:14-15. Afterward everyone enjoyed a special cake.

Polly Waggoner

Wisconsin Brethren Raise Funds for Katrina Victims

In response to the disaster created by Hurricane Katrina, the Wisconsin Dells and Beloit, Wisconsin, congregations conducted a community service project that raised over \$5,300 in donations for the Red Cross and another charity to help the hurricane victims on the Gulf Coast.

Wisconsin Dells members organized the effort, which reached out to the Madison and Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, communities through television and radio community service spots, asking the public to donate clothing and baked goods for the rummage sale.

The public response to this publicity was incredible. The public dropped off mountains of clothes and household items at the Wal-Mart parking lot. Brethren stored it in a donated semi-truck until the sale day. They also



Brethren from Wisconsin Dells and Beloit, Wisconsin, put on a fund-raiser for Hurricane Katrina victims (photo by Joe Jacoby)

donated many baked goods for the sale.

Very early on Sunday, Sept. 11, more than 30 brethren converged on the Sun Prairie Wal-Mart to set up tables and unload the truck. By 8:30 a.m., the rummage sale began when Wal-Mart opened its doors.

All day long, literally hundreds of people stopped by the outdoor sale to buy or to donate money. As people bought clothing items, many sincerely thanked the brethren for organizing the effort. The brethren in turn thanked them for donating or buying items. It was very heartwarming to see the generosity of the public to the hurricane victims in another part of the country.

Including the Wal-Mart donation of \$500, the fund-raiser totaled \$5,339. Most of the money was donated to the local Red Cross and was designated for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. A local citizen offered to drive a truck to Mississippi that contained the large amount of remaining clothing items. Additional household items that did not sell were donated to a local charity.

The brethren felt God really blessed their efforts. They appreciated the fact that many hurting people on the Gulf Coast were helped by the fund-raiser and that the local community was very enthused about it.

Steve Nutzman

Durban Seniors Have Lunch, Youth Take a Hike

The Durban, South Africa, congregation had two activities the weekend of Sept. 24 and 25.



Durban, South Africa, senior citizens enjoy lunch at the Burgess Garden Nursery; youth hike at the Stainbank Nature Reserve

After services on Sabbath, Sept. 24, the senior citizens were treated to lunch. The very pleasant and relaxing venue was the tea garden at the Burgess Garden Nursery. A fine afternoon of food and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Then Sunday morning, Sept. 25, the youth met at the Stainbank Nature Reserve. The weather was warm, a typical spring day in Durban. The morning activity was a short hike through forest and grassland, and zebra and impala were sighted along the way.

After the hike everyone was hungry and thirsty and a fire was soon burning ready for the braai (barbecue).

Neville Smith

See "Local Church Updates," page 23

Announcements

Births

Richard and Andrea (Huizar) Beymer of San Antonio, Texas, are happy to announce the birth of their



Jane Laurel Beymer

first child, Jane Laurel. She arrived July 25, 2005, weighing 8 pounds 8 ounces and measuring 20 inches long. Grandparents include James (Bud) and Sally Beymer of Houston, Texas, and Peter and Linda Huizar of San Antonio, Texas. Great-grandmother Ruby Seale lives in Victoria, Texas. Jane was named in memory of Richard's mother, Martha Jane (Janie) Beymer.

Annabelle Marie Fox was born Aug. 29, 2005, to Alex and Danielle Fox in Salt Lake City, Utah. Annabelle was 8



Annabelle Marie Fox

pounds and 18 inches long. New mom, dad and baby Fox are happy and healthy. All grandparents and great-grandparents are pleased and thankful to God for adding such a beautiful child to the family.

Joe and Kelly Thomas Mango of the Cleveland, Ohio, congregation are very pleased to announce the birth of their



Olivia Rose Thomas Mango

second daughter, Olivia Rose. Olivia was born on June 24, 2005. She weighed 7 pounds 15 ounces and was 20½ inches long.

Grandparents Greg and B.J. Thomas of Litchfield and Nick and Doris Mango of Leetonia are thrilled with the new addition. Big sister, Reagan, is adapting to the newest member of the family!

Tom and Tracy Bulharowski are pleased to announce the birth of their second child, Ethan Patrick, on May 5,



Ethan Patrick Bulharowski

2005 (our Cinco de Mayo baby!). Ethan was delivered at Community Memorial Hospital in Ventura, California. He weighed 6 pounds 6 ounces and was 19 inches long. Ethan is the second grandchild for Clay and Stephana Thornton and the seventh grandchild for Jack and Bobbie Bulharowski.

Engagements

Nick and Nancy Sass of Prescott Valley, Arizona, would like to announce the engagement of their daughter Larissa Marie to Mark Frederick Patton, son of



Larissa Sass and Mark Patton

Fred and Linda Patton of Big Sandy, Texas. Mark and Larissa were raised in the Church in Southern California but never crossed paths until the 2004 Feast of Tabernacles in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. A late November 2005 wedding is planned in Prescott, Arizona.

Lora Opal Wenzel and Chad Aaron Mortier, of the Oshkosh, Wisconsin, congregation, are pleased to announce their engagement.

Lora is the daughter of Leonard and Kathryn Hatter of Brodhead, Wisconsin. Chad is the son of Donn and Alice Mortier of the Oshkosh congregation.

A Dec. 17, 2005, wedding is planned in Brillion, Wisconsin. The couple plans



Chad Mortier and Lora Wenzel

to reside in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Weddings

Jorge and Kathy de Campos are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter Clarissa Anne to Oliver Randall Hooser, son of Randall and Christine Hooser, on Sept. 4, 2005. The ceremony and reception took place in Covington, Kentucky, on a beautiful sunny day.

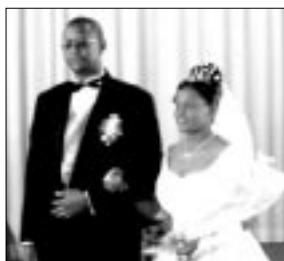
The bridal party consisted of the couple's siblings and two of their best friends. On Clarissa's side stood



Clarissa and Oliver Hooser

Michelle, Stephen, Eric and Jennifer de Campos and best friend Claire Gordon. On Oliver's side stood Lori and Mark Holladay, Liza and Ellie Hooser and best friend Jeremy Winters. Brooklyn Booth was the flower girl, and Josh Cook, the ring bearer. The ceremony was performed by the bride's father, Jorge de Campos. The happy couple now resides in Dallas, Texas.

Mark Chonde and Charity Chanza were united in marriage Sept. 11, 2005.



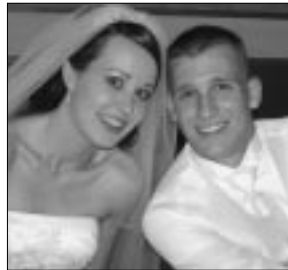
Mark and Charity Chonde

This was the first wedding performed in the United Church of God in Malawi, and the ceremony was performed by Bill Jahns.

After the wedding a typical Malawi reception was given to the bride and groom. This is quite different from weddings in the Western world. The bride and groom were recipients of plenty of advice. The good news is that while they were receiving advice from parents, friends and relatives, a donation was also given to them. After this "advisory" session, the bride and groom went to another reception where a large number (around 300) attended and there was plenty of dancing.

Mark's employer, Reserve Bank of Malawi, is sending Mark to England to pursue his master's degree. Charity is also planning to pursue her doctorate degree in England. The young couple plan to return to Malawi after a year of study in England.

Ray Sipple and Jody Kruse of Mount Orab, Ohio, and Peter and Terri Eddington of Cincinnati, Ohio, are happy to announce the marriage of their children,



Lindsay and Camden Eddington

Lindsay Rae Sipple and Camden William Eddington. The ceremony was performed by the father of the groom, Peter Eddington, in Cincinnati on July 17, 2005.

The bridal attendants were: matron of honor Candice Swope and bridesmaids Cortney Sipple, Katelyn Driggers and Charity Mullen. The groom's attendants were: best man Matthew Eddington and groomsmen Sean Hill, Robert Davis and David Eddington. Ring bearer was Marc Eddington and flower girl was Chelsea Hill.

The couple reside in Cincinnati where Camden owns his own grounds keeping business and Lindsay is a registered nurse at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. They attend the Cincinnati East congregation.

Anniversaries

Glenn and Sherry Erickson celebrated their 25th anniversary on Aug. 23,



Glenn and Sherry Erickson

2005. The Duluth, Minnesota, congregation honored them with a reception after services. Their family also honored them in Orr, Minnesota, with a barbecue at their family residence.

Glenn and Sherry were married in Orr in 1980. They have three children: Andrew, Megan and Meredith. Glenn and Sherry were both baptized on March 23, 1985.

Glenn is a self-employed logger and beef farmer. Sherry works for the city of Virginia, Minnesota.

Paul and Janet Dzing celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on Sept. 20, 2005. Church friends and neighbors were invited to a special catered event called, "The DaZing Thing," at a local



Janet and Paul Dzing

hotel to commemorate the anniversary. The program included a presentation, "This Is Your Life," and a series of speakers to "roast" the couple. Leif Bjoraker moderated the event and gave a presentation on the Dzings' life, in a historical timeline from birth to now, with photos and music.

The "roasters," Ellis LaRavia, Yale Joseph, Nate Gatlin and Walt Tannert, acclaimed many humorous and pleasing things about the couple. Dorothy Paglianti-Burnet, with the help of Darlene Diller, concluded the event by presenting the happy couple with some humorous and some unique, sincere and useful, gifts from the guests.

The Dzings, both retired for a number of years now, moved to Tucson, Arizona, from Chicago, Illinois, in 1994. They began attending God's Church in 1971, and now are members of UCG. Janet worked for the telephone company, and Paul was employed by the Illinois Transportation Department. They have traveled over the years to numerous overseas Feast sites, vacationed on cruise ships and spent their inheritance wisely, for they have no children.

Jim and Barbara Chapman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary June 6,



Jim and Barbara Chapman

2005, by spending a week at Lake Tahoe, which is where they spent their honeymoon. Throughout the week they were

joined by family and friends to help them celebrate this very special occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Earl Roemer joined them for two days to celebrate their 39th anniversary, which was also on June 6. The celebrating was to continue at the Feast where they were to be joined by all their children and grandchildren.

Obituaries

Shirley Marie Sanders, 77, a member of the East Texas congregation, died Aug. 25, 2005, in Big Sandy. She suffered from cancer for the last several years of her life but continued to remain a positive example of determination and



Shirley Marie Sanders

faithfulness. Shirley will be greatly missed by family, friends and brethren.

She was baptized in 1953 and was preceded in death by husbands John P. Mooney, Jr., Mannie Cessna and Robert Sanders. Survivors include sons David Mooney and Kelvin Mooney and

daughters Carol Pendley and Eva Mooney. She is also survived by a sister, Janey Baird; a brother, Rex Willis; eight grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Ken Treybig conducted the graveside service on Aug. 28.

Linda Yvonne Kersey, 54, died at her home in Sandpoint, Idaho, on Aug. 10, 2005, the result of a five-year battle with cancer. She was born March 9, 1951, in Los Angeles, California, and grew up and graduated from high school in Orange County, California.

Linda served in the U.S. Air Force, being stationed in California and Hawaii. It was during her assignment in California that she met and married her husband, Tom Kersey, in 1971. After her discharge, she lived in the LA/Orange County area of California and began attending Church in 1974. She and Tom were baptized in May 1975.



Linda Yvonne Kersey

Three years later Linda and Tom moved to Stockton, California, where they bought their first home. Wanting to get away from the city life, they moved to Valley Springs, California, to build their new home and raise their two daughters in the country. They remained there until June of 2005 when she and Tom relocated to Sandpoint.

Linda is survived by her husband of 34 years, Tom, of Sandpoint; daughters Jennifer (Ed) Barba of Fresno, California, and Laura Kersey, of Cincinnati, Ohio. She is also survived by her parents, Tom and Bonnie Nelson, of Stockton; a brother, Alan (Vonna) Nelson, of Turlock, California; a sister, Michele (Gary) Given of Joshua Tree, California; and three grandsons, Bryce, Seth and Blake Barba of Fresno. Her infant son, James, preceded her in death.

Linda enjoyed many activities, including backpacking/camping, traveling, cooking, sewing, playing cards and being with her family and friends. She was very strongly committed to the growth and development of her children, and her family and friends. Linda remained faithful until her death, and her faith and endurance are an example to all who knew her. She will be missed.

An outdoor memorial service, conducted by Jim Tuck, was held on Aug. 14 in Clements, California.

Aleda Chakhaza of the Lilongwe congregation in Malawi died after a long illness on Sept. 2, 2005. Aleda was born in 1955 in the Chikumba village in Malawi. She was baptized in 2003 and



Aleda Chakhaza

was a faithful member of the Church.

She attended several primary schools in Lilongwe before going to Blantyre secondary school. After secondary school she went to the University of Malawi, and there she met her husband, Brighton Chakhaza. He died in October 2004. They were married in the mid-1970s, and they had four children.

Brighton and Aleda had the opportunity to serve on a diplomatic mission to France in 2002. When she returned, she joined the newly established Finance

Bank of Malawi as a banking officer and was responsible for several departments.

She will be remembered for her charm, humility and generosity. The funeral was conducted by Elifazi Salawila and was attended by thousands of people.

Harold (Hal) A. Chapman, 68, a member since 1971, died Sept. 4, 2005, at his daughter's home in Massachusetts. He leaves three daughters, Robin Andrzejewski, Marcy Mahan and Jody Marcille; a son, Jason Chapman; his former wife and friend, Cindy Chapman; three step-daughters, Katriana Miller, Charlotte Martin and Sara Rigney-Smith; and several grandchildren. A daughter, Cindy Chapman, died in 1961.

He was born in Southbridge, Massachusetts, the son of Harold and Esther Chapman. He graduated from Cole Trade High School in 1955 and from Ambassador Bible Center in 2004. He was eager to learn about God's Word and did what he could to help others

Tribute: Margie Seiver

Margie Nell Eaves Seiver was a "Texas Original," a native Houstonian born March 23, 1932. Margie has an older sister, Dorothy, a younger brother, J.W., and a younger sister, Nancy (and now numerous nieces, nephews and grandnieces and grandnephews).

Margie graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1950 and it was there she met her future husband, Richard Seiver. They were true high school sweethearts.

Margie and Richard were married on June 6, 1951. Margie worked for Houston Lighting and Power. In the early years of their marriage, she and Richard both worked so he could finish college at night. Sometimes it was tough, but Margie could make a chicken go a long way!

Margie and Richard have four children—Pam, Carolyn, John Mark and David—and four grandchildren. Margie became interested in the Church in 1962. She was baptized in July, about six months after Richard. For over 43 years they have been doing things together, serving in the Church in many capacities.

Her life was based on caring for others. She was always concerned about what was going on with her family and made sure they were doing well and were taken care of.

She was especially excited to finally become a grandmother when her grandson, Jordan, was born in 1983. Then, five months later, her joy was enriched when her first granddaughter, Vanessa, was born. Her second granddaughter, Kelly, was born nine months later. Six years later, Stephanie arrived bringing the joy and happiness of another new life into the family.

Margie was very much involved in her children's and grandchildren's lives. When the oldest three grandchildren were teens, she enjoyed taking many road trips to teen church functions in Houston and out of town, enjoying Bible Bowls and sports



Margie Seiver

events. She made sure her children and grandchildren understood the importance of good manners, caring for others and proper decorum.

Margie was also talented in music. Many years ago she performed special music as a soloist. She was in the choir (which she loved) until health problems prevented her. She encouraged her children and grandchildren to play musical instruments and loved to hear them play.

Over the years, Richard and Margie made quite a team as they cared for their own family and their Church family. Richard was ordained an elder on April 13, 1968, and their service to the Church expanded. Their home was often the location for parties, meetings, Bible studies and fellowship. Margie was a wonderful hostess and made everyone feel at home. She would not rest until everyone was comfortable and had what they needed!

Despite several health setbacks toward the end of her life, she kept going, determined to regain her strength and mobility. She was an encouragement to many as she dealt with her own adversity.

Marge died at home Sept. 20, 2005, at the age of 73. She and Richard enjoyed over 54 years of happy marriage. She will be missed and remembered as a wonderful sister, wife, mother and friend. There is no doubt that she died in the faith and we look forward to our reunion with her at Christ's return.

Tribute: Jack Yeager

Charles John (Jack) Yeager died on Sept. 1, 2005, at the age of 76. He is survived by Gloria, his wife of 54 years; his three children, Jack Jr., Bruce and Kimberly; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Mr. Yeager's funeral took place in New Brighton, Pennsylvania, on Sept. 6, officiated by Don Henson, pastor of the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, congregation.

Mr. Yeager was born in Daugherty Township, near the community of New Brighton in western Pennsylvania on Feb. 26, 1929. He was the second child of Anna (McCarthy) and Charles William Yeager. His older sister was named Ruth and his younger brothers were Robert and Eugene (known as "Butch"). His early years were spent on the family farm, where his father ran a greenhouse business.

Mr. Yeager graduated from New Brighton High School in 1947. While he was still in high school, he also received training in repairing appliances, which became his profession. Mr. Yeager was born a mechanic. His mother often complained that whatever they bought him, he'd take apart to see how it worked. But at least he was also able to put it back together. Mr. Yeager also enjoyed woodworking. He built soapbox-derby cars for his sons and in about 1965 Bruce advanced to the national finals in Akron, Ohio, where his car won the award as the

"Best Built" racer in the competition.

Jack and Gloria met through a mutual friend in the summer of 1947 at a local carnival. Jack had just graduated and Gloria was 15 years old. Soon after they met they started dating. They married on April 25, 1951.

Except for a couple of years in Southern California and two years in the U.S. Navy (1951-1952), Mr. Yeager spent his life in western Pennsylvania. After working as an appliance repairman for Sears for some 20 years, he started his own successful appliance sales and repair business in 1973. Mr. Yeager went into semi-retirement a few years ago, turning the business over to his son, Bruce, who still runs Yeager's Appliance Repair.

Mr. Yeager was baptized into God's Church in August 1973. Mrs. Yeager had begun attending the Church more than four years earlier. At first, Mr. Yeager was none too impressed with his wife's newfound beliefs. But through her good example and faithfulness, God called Mr. Yeager into His Church and he dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the faith. He was ordained a deacon on Pentecost 1978 (Mrs. Yeager was ordained a deaconess at the same time) and an elder in April 1989.

As a lay member, deacon and elder, Mr. Yeager served his congregation in many ways for more than three decades. He and his wife always worked together as a team—whenever there was a need, they were there to pitch in. As an elder in United, Mr. Yeager gave sermonettes and split sermons,



Jack Yeager

conducted the Passover service, anointed and encouraged members. He and Mrs. Yeager also organized activities for the senior members. He was very highly respected and admired by all the members, known as one who was always approachable and friendly and for his quiet, humble, yet determined and strong personality.

His faith was demonstrated by his courage in dealing with serious health problems in the last two years of his life. He suffered a major stroke in June 2003, which left him physically weak and unable to communicate clearly. Mrs. Yeager devoted herself to caring for her husband. They were at services together each Sabbath. Mr. Yeager listened attentively to the messages, smiling and fellowshiping with the brethren before and after the service. He was always encouraging to others and never complained about his situation.



Harold A. (Hal) Chapman

learn it as well.

He was a weight lifter and was titled Mr. Texas in 2002. He enjoyed playing the harmonica, banjo and bluegrass music. He was a U.S. Navy veteran, and was an independent truck driver for many years.

A private family memorial service was held on Sept. 23, conducted by Dan Dowd, associate pastor of the New England congregations. The family was very complimentary toward the Church and its interest in Hal before he died. He had been attending the Worcester, Massachusetts, congregation.

Ruby Elnora Horne, a member in Houston, South, Texas, died Sept. 27,



Ruby Elnora Horne

2005. She was born on Sept. 18, 1917, in Anacoco, Louisiana. She had one brother and one sister, both of whom preceded her in death.

"Local Church Updates," continued from page 20

Elder's Wife Protected From Falling Tree

Charles Franke, an elder in Soldotna, Alaska, who is recovering from cancer treatments, reported Oct. 5 on the following miraculous protection:

"Two Sabbaths ago, my wife narrowly escaped being killed as we were leav-

Tribute: Yvonne Young

Yvonne Barbara Young was born in 1933 in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, to Joseph and Doris Gebhard. Her siblings were Robert, Marion, Ila and Bill. She spent her youth in the Milwaukee area, where she graduated from Messmer High School in 1951. She later furthered her education and graduated with credentials in accounting.

She came in contact with a doctor who was a member of the Church in 1960 when her son Kenneth was born with health problems. She was baptized in 1962.

She has six children: Michael (deceased), Patrik, Kathe, Kenneth, Cindy and Kurtis. She has 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She met Joe Young in the Long Beach, California, congregation, and they were married in 1991. In recent years they have attended the Garden Grove, California, congregation. Their contribution and dedication to the Church and congregation has been vast and generous. They always looked for ways to support, help and nurture those in need.

Yvonne died Sept. 9, 2005. Joe handled the "Celebration of Life" service at the Garden Grove congregation Sept. 15. Joe's wishes were that instead of flowers, donations were



Yvonne Young

directed to LifeNets in the name of Yvonne Young.

Tribute: Jo Ann Dennis

Jo Ann Dennis was born in Oregon as Jo Ann Moore Oct. 19, 1936, and died suddenly on Aug. 14, 2005. Jo Ann's parents preceded her in death. She was an only child and became a schoolteacher in Oregon. Her husband Alvin Ray (Al) Dennis preceded her in death on March 10, 2004.

Al Dennis's first wife (Mary) died Oct. 3, 1969, leaving Al a widower with three children: Tom, Pattie and Debbie. While pastoring the Eugene, Oregon, congregation, Mr. Dennis met Jo Ann Moore, and they were

married June 10, 1970. Jo Ann became the loving and devoted mother to the three young children and became the mother of one son, Andy.

Jo Ann is also survived by three sisters-in-law: Marjorie Friddle, Norma Kelly and Anita Dennis.

Jo Ann's mother-in-law, Dolores Dennis, died just this past March 25, 2005, just days before her 102nd birthday.

Jo Ann served with her husband, Al, in congregations in California; Oregon; Chicago, Illinois; and Cincinnati, Ohio. She was a member of the Cincinnati North congregation and died unexpectedly after returning home from Sabbath services and



Jo Ann Dennis

entered her "rest," awaiting the resurrection.

When Elnora was about 24, and living in Lake Charles, Louisiana, she met Robert Horne. He frequented the diner where she worked and thus began a courtship that led to their wedding in January of 1942, 63 years of happy marriage and two daughters, Carolyn Robertson and Nora Horne.

This was a time of war, and a few months after their wedding, Bob was sent overseas. Carolyn was born while her father was serving in North Africa. A

year or so after he returned home, Nora was born. In 1948, the family settled in Houston and remained there ever since.

Elnora was a wonderful wife, mother and homemaker. She was an excellent cook and an accomplished seamstress who made all her own clothes and those of the girls. She loved gardening. In the center of the front yard she had a beautiful rose garden, and in front of it, she seeded the grass with bluebonnets. The neighbors called her the Bluebonnet Lady.

Bob died suddenly, Jan. 18, 2005, four days after their 63rd wedding anniversary. Elnora was strong during the first few months following Bob's death, but sadly, several months later she had a stroke, and from that point on, her health began to deteriorate, ending in her death. Her funeral was Sept. 30.

Elnora Horne was a quiet, loving woman with a strong, abiding faith in God. She will be missed and remembered by family and friends.

Student Named to Dean's List

Heather E. Buchanan, a sophomore at Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania, was named to the Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the 2004-2005 academic year.

She is the daughter of Hugh Buchanan of the Columbia, Maryland, congregation. Heather plans to pursue a career in art therapy.

Letters

Graduating Seniors

I want to thank you and the staff of *United News* for including all the pictures and accompanying information about this year's graduating seniors [July]. It is quite encouraging to see so many young people who are a part of God's Church. As a high school teacher and mother of three adult chil-

dren, I realize that all of these young people may not regularly attend Church, or may not continue attending after they leave their parents' care. However, they have been greatly influenced by God's truth, and it will make a difference in their lives. Thanks again for including this information in the *UN*.

Also, I would like to thank Janet Hendershot ("Dealing With Death") and Joe Dumond ("How Will You Be Remembered?") for these articles.

Texas

"That We May Be One"

I am writing to seek permission to copy an article that appeared in the

August 2005 *United News* on page 12 in "Treasure Digest" titled "That We May Be One."

I want to print it so that I can share it during the Feast of Tabernacles. I enjoyed the article so much because there is a straight message in it.

Nigeria

Permission was of course granted.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

News readers have been getting can be seen at www.gnmagazine.org/gnupdate.

The latest e-news program titled "This Is the Way," goes to 1,808 readers. You can view samples of past messages at www.thisistheway.org.

Peter Eddington

Church Faces Rising Shipping Costs

Fuel surcharges and increased postage costs are impacting the budget, especially for shipping literature outside of the United States. In some cost centers more than 50 percent of the annual shipping budget was spent in the first quarter of the fiscal year. This is particularly true for booklets, *United News*, *World News* and *Prophecy and Vertical Thought*.

To help reduce some of these expenses we have altered our online literature request forms to accept a maximum of three pieces of literature ordered at one time, down from a maximum of five up until now. We have also discontinued our Internet advertising in Africa and Asia. We continue to meet with various shipping representatives to get the best possible cost savings.

In addition, we are encouraging our Web site visitors to read as much material online as possible to cut down somewhat on the number of hard copies being mailed. The Internet continues to be one of our most cost-effective tools.

Also, we are in the process of renewing all of our *World News* and *Prophecy* subscribers in countries outside of the United States where the home office handles the mailing list. (This excludes areas where a national office handles its own subscribers, but includes about 100 other countries to which we mail.)

So please pray that God will continue to provide the resources so that we can be as aggressive as possible in fulfilling our mission.

Peter Eddington

Good News Subscribers and Print Run Up

The July/August print run of *The Good News* went from 414,896 in 2004 to 461,163 in 2005—an increase of 11 percent. It's encouraging to see this growth after several years of decrease (from our all-time high of 526,173) since our waiting room program copies and newsstand programs were trimmed. We had planned for around 480,000 average print run for the fiscal year as per the Operation Plan. We came out about 10 percent short of that goal.

There is an encouraging trend—the number of actual subscribers is continu-

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News At a Glance

Continued from page 23

ing to rise. Over the past two years we have made a concerted effort in the United States to replace waiting room program and newsstand program copies with actual subscribers. We have dropped more than 100,000 waiting room copies and more than 55,000 newsstand copies.

Having actual subscribers' addresses on file gives us greater opportunity to directly communicate with our readers through various offers and updates—something impossible to do with the publicly displayed copies.

Now that we have pruned our print run, we expect to see our overall circulation rise back toward the 500,000 mark as our advertising efforts get underway this fiscal year. In the United States we still have 6,180 waiting room copies being displayed and 24,250 newsstand copies. However, putting less-expensive advertising brochures and subscription offers on display in public venues is proving to be less expensive than tens of thousands of actual copies of the magazine itself.

The following chart shows the growth of *GN* subscribers for the July/August issues over the past eight years.

Year	Print Run	U.S. Subscribers
1997	58,829	
1998	109,874	35,000
1999	199,837	81,919
2000	284,582	93,290
2001	378,066	170,893
2002	517,791	249,364
2003	460,167	274,254
2004	414,896	293,057
2005	461,163	340,676

Peter Eddington

Ministerial Services Announces Transfers

As announced previously, Jim Franks, pastor of the Houston North, Texas, congregation, is moving to the home office to become operation manager for Ministerial Services. He will be replaced in Houston North by Jim Servidio, currently pastor of the Minneapolis, Duluth and



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ Compass Check

See video of home office weekly meeting.
www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice/compasscheck.htm

■ UCG Commentary on This Week's News

Weekly commentaries by UCG written on world news and trends, from a biblical perspective. Read these and more:
"The Powerful Effects of Decisions!"
"Addressing World Hunger: 'Waste Not, Want Not'"
"A New United Nations"
"A Radically New Version of Humanity"
www.ucg.org/commentary/

■ Current World News & Trends

Browse up-to-date world news events by subject categories!
www.ucg.org/worldnews/

■ E-mail Updates and UCG eNews

Receive e-mail updates relevant to UCG members and weekly HTML newsletters with ucg.org updates. Sign up today!
www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm

On vcmagazine.org

■ The November *VCM* has articles on "Seven Principles That Lead to Success," "The Golden Rule," "Circle of Friends" and more.
vcmagazine.org

On verticalthought.org

■ New articles posted on the Web site for November are "KNOCK, KNOCK: God, Can You Hear Me?" and "Overcoming Depression in a Depressing World."

verticalthought.org

Featured Links of the Month

■ *Youth and young adults' Web site.*

www.ucgyouth.org

■ *Singles' Web site for singles in the Church.*

www.ucgsingles.org

If you have any questions or comments, please contact: webmaster@ucg.org



Little Falls, Minnesota, congregations and a regional pastor.

Taking on Mr. Servidio's circuit in the spring will be Mike Hanisko, currently pastor of Milwaukee and Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He will also become regional pastor of the North Central Region.

Mr. Hanisko's replacement in Milwaukee and Oshkosh and the new regional pastor for the Central Region had not been announced at press time.

questions, please contact Mark Winner at mark_winner@ucg.org. See you in December!

Mark Winner

The next issue of *United News* will have the finalized daily itinerary, pricing and application process.

Charles Melear

Sabbath fellowship will continue into the evening, when drinks and dinner will be served, after which a dance will conclude the weekend's festivities.

Additional details will be provided soon; however, if you would like further information at this time, please access our local congregations' Web sites at www.united-church-of-god.org or www.ucg-houston.org, or you may call Frank or Nelda Pierce at (409) 945-6256.

Biblical Feast Tour of Turkey Planned

Details for the 2006 biblical Feast tour are in the final planning stages. However, due to logistics of travel, time and pricing, the tour for 2006 will not be able to offer Athens and Corinth except as a pre- or post-Feast extension.

Currently, plans are to arrive in Istanbul and then visit the biblical sites of Ephesus, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Sardis, Pergamos and Laodicea. The tour will also visit the ancient city of Aphrodisias (archaeological ruins only surpassed by Ephesus), Hierapolis and Pammukkale where the hot springs fed ancient Laodicea.

This will be unlike any tour previously sponsored by the United Church of God. This tour will be highly educational, focusing on biblical geography, the travels of Paul, early Christian congregations and the life and culture of the early Church. Notebooks with detailed information about each location, maps and study papers will be provided for each participant.

Houston Plans 50th Anniversary for March 10 and 11

A 50th anniversary celebration for the Church in Houston, Texas, is being planned for the weekend of March 10 and 11, 2006. Former Houston ministers and members will share their memories of the past 50 years that God's work and His Church have been active in Houston.

The weekend will begin with a reception on Friday evening, March 10, at the Houston North church hall. A church history photo gallery and personal photo to mixer will get the evening's events underway, which will be followed by former Houston ministers sharing their memories of times long since past, as well as memories that some probably hoped would be long since forgotten.

The Sabbath of March 11 will begin with morning snacks and socializing, followed by a special service from 2 to 4 p.m. This commemorative service will include a Houston history presentation, special music presentation and sermon.

Calendar of Events

- Dec. 9-14: Council meetings.
- Dec. 21-26: Winter Camp, Wisconsin.
- Dec. 23-27: Winter Family Weekend in Louisville, Kentucky.
- Jan. 8, 2006: ABC orientation.
- Jan. 13-15: Women's Enrichment Weekend, Garden Grove, California, area, "Accentuate the Positive!" (jeanupde@sbcglobal.com). Registration deadline Dec. 19, 2005.
- Feb. 18-20: Annual Presidents' Day Ski Weekend, Salt Lake City, Utah (www.cgca.net/ucg-saltlakeut/).
- Feb. 24-March 1, 2006: Council meetings.
- May 7-8, 2006: General Conference of Elders annual meeting.
- May 9-11, 2006: Council meetings.
- May 26-29, 2006: Memorial Day Weekend, Kansas City, Missouri.

Top Booklets Announced; 3.7 Million Printed

Since United began, more than 3.7 million booklets have been printed.

The top 11 titles and the number printed are:

- *What Happens After Death?* (195,000).
- *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* (191,000).
- *What Is Your Destiny?* (165,000).
- *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* (160,000).
- *Making Life Work* (144,000).
- *Is the Bible True?* (140,000).
- *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* (140,000).
- *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension* (140,000).
- *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* (134,000).

• *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind* (130,000).

• *The Ten Commandments* (130,000).

What Is Your Destiny? slipped from first to third position over the fiscal year.

These titles left the top 10: *The Gospel of the Kingdom, Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?* *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy and Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?*

These titles are new to the top: *Is the Bible True? You Can Understand Bible Prophecy, Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension, Why Does God Allow Suffering?* and *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind.*

Peter Eddington



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