



Spanish ministers listen to translation at GCE. Right, Roy Holladay, chairman of the Council of Elders (photos by Victor Kubik)

GCE Highlights Need for Urgency

Urgency was the major theme for the General Conference of Elders (GCE) annual meeting May 6 and 7 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Ministerial Services

Council chairman Roy Holladay opened the meetings Sunday, May 6, and introduced a report from Ministerial Services. Operation manager Richard Pinelli began by using a business cycle comparison—noting that “forming, storming, norming and performing” might well describe the experience of United to date. Citing Haggai 2 and Zechariah 4, he stressed that the focus should be on the forward movement in the Church, accomplished by the power of God’s

Spirit. God’s work often starts small, but Philippians 1:6 assures us that He intends to finish that work.

He expressed gratitude to the ministers and wives for their efforts in the six years since the inception of the United Church of God. Many have had to learn to contribute in new ways, proving, in Mr. Pinelli’s words, that “you can teach an old dog new tricks!” Combining latent talents with spiritual gifts has produced some amazing results, in the salaried and unsalaried ministry together, standing shoulder to shoulder to get on with the job of the Church. Using a familiar phrase, he simply stated, “Well done, good and faithful servants.”

Mr. Pinelli outlined some of the progress in continuing to implement the findings of the Ministerial Task Force on Workload and Remuneration, which reported to the president in February 2000. He spoke on progress in numerous areas, including:

- Resolution of the ministerial partial salary issue.
- Restoring full-time service of all pastors.
- Staffing from strength.
- Institution of a ministerial candidate program.
- Employee job assessment program and identification of those doing an outstanding job.

- Development of a program to encourage and aid the wives of the ministers.

Mr. Pinelli passed on results from a ministerial job satisfaction survey recently sent to salaried elders, listing both positive sectors and areas for administrative improvement. But mostly, he stressed, he just wanted to say “thanks for a job well done.”

After Mr. Pinelli, six international areas gave reports of growth in their areas. The other areas had

(See “URGENCY,” page 4)

Clyde Kilough Named to UCGIA Council of Elders

Clyde Kilough was selected by the GCE May 6 to serve a three-year term on the Council of Elders, and Victor Kubik, Les McCullough and Leon Walker were returned to the Council.

Mr. Kilough and his wife, Dee, currently pastor the Sacramento and Stockton, California, congregations, and he has been serving as regional pastor for the Northwest Region. In light of his new Council responsibilities, he has asked to be replaced in the regional pastor role.

May 7 Mr. Kilough gave a presentation at the GCE on “Why We Need to Promote and Practice Christ-Centered Servant Leadership,” based on the task force report endorsed by the Council in March. He also served on the task force which met with Church of God, a Christian Fellowship, and was the Council reporter from 1997 to 1999.

“We have the most important mission in the world right now, and our effectiveness depends primarily on our ability to maintain a single-minded view of that God-given task,” said Mr. Kilough. He also stressed the desire to improve communication. “We all want to

be part of the family and be included as much as possible in the circle of knowledge about what is going on,” he said.

Mr. Kilough was born in 1951 and came into the Church with his parents in 1963. He graduated from Ambassador College Big Sandy in 1974, and served congregations in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, Canada, from 1974 to 1981. Since then he has served congregations in Arkansas, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Ohio and California.

He and his wife have two children, Dave (24) and Becca (20).



Clyde Kilough (photo by Victor Kubik)

He takes the seat vacated by Burk McNair. “We deeply appreciate [Mr. McNair’s] service during these formative years of UCGIA,” said Mr. McCullough. *UN*

U.S. Ministerial Transfers Announced

So far this year transfers and circuit changes have been announced affecting 23 congregations.

Frank McCrady moved from Texas to serve as pastor in Dayton, Ohio, which opened up when Dale Schurter was transferred last year.

Doug Horchak has moved from Colorado to serve the Dallas (North and South are being combined) and Sherman, Texas, congregations. The congregation he served in Loveland, Colorado, is now served by Larry Neff; and Grand Junction, Colorado, is now served by Bill Jahns.

Don Hooser will move to Austin, Texas, and pastor congrega-

tions in Austin and Coleman, while continuing to serve the Waco congregation and saying good-bye to Dallas South. According to an announcement of the moves in Texas, “This would allow Gary Petty (the current pastor of Austin) and Britt Taylor (the current pastor of Coleman) to pastor one congregation each and devote more time to the additional responsibilities each performs.”

James Capo, recently hired as a pastor, will serve the Sierra Vista and Tucson, Arizona, congregations. Steve Buchanan will continue in the area in another career.

Randy Schreiber continues to

serve Las Vegas, Nevada (Reno is now served by Jim Chapman), while taking on Phoenix Northwest and Camp Verde, Arizona. Jim Tuck is giving up Camp Verde and adding Yuma, Arizona, while Chuck Zimmerman continues in the area in another career.

Dave Treybig is moving from West Texas to serve St. Petersburg and Ft. Myers, Florida, where Arthur Suckling is retiring. Tom Damour is moving from Illinois to serve the Amarillo, Lubbock and Odessa, Texas, and Las Cruces and Lovington, New Mexico, congregations. A replacement for Mr. Damour has not yet been announced. *UN*

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Q&A: Clean and Unclean Meats, etc.

Q. Why is the swordfish listed as unclean in the new booklet?

A. Because the Church in the past ruled that swordfish was “clean,” according to the guidelines of God’s food laws, some members were surprised to see it listed with the “Unclean Animals” on page 11 of the recently published booklet, *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?*

The previous ruling was based upon the fact that juvenile swordfish has scales, although the adult does not. Subsequent research has led us to conclude differently. The most complete presentation we have found follows.

“This reply is based on several sources in halacha [the entire body of Jewish law and tradition, including the laws of the Bible, Talmud and oral law]. Most notably, extensive research by Rabbi Moshe Tendler, Chairman and Professor of the Biology Department at Yeshiva University, March, 1966.

“The halachic [status] of swordfish (xiphias gladius): *it is a non-kosher fish*. It has been presented to halachic giants of our generation such as Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and from previous generations such as Rabbi Itzel of Ponovitz, *and they have all concluded that it is not kosher*.

“The biblical term for scaled kosher fish is ‘kaskeses.’ Nachmanides comments in Leviticus XI:9 that based on Biblical and Talmudic sources this refers to a type of structure like the nail of a human which can be removed from the skin of the fish by hand or with a knife. But if it be affixed to the skin and not separated therefrom at all (i.e. no free margins), then the bearer of these ‘scales’ may not be eaten.

“Ichthyologists recognize four types of fish scale. The kosher variety of scales are cycloid (round) and ctenoid (comb-like). The ganoid scale found on sturgeon, or the placoid scale of the shark are specifically excluded from the Biblical term kaskeses since they are not ‘removable’ scales without tearing the skin from the flesh. Even an educated layman would not see any similarity between the heavy bony plates of the sturgeon or the needle-like projections on the shark skin and the classic kosher scale of the whitefish or carp.

“In Fishery leaflet #531, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Wash. D.C., it states ‘swordfish during early juvenile stage of life (up to 8 inches long), have “scales” that are markedly specialized and rather unique. They are in the form of bony tubercles or expanded compressed platelike bodies. These scales are rough, having spinous projections at the surface and they do not overlap one another as the scales in most

fish do. With growth the scales disappear and the adult fish including those sold commercially have no scales.’

“The Talmud (Chulin 66A) lists but two exceptions to the absolute requirements of having visible scales:

a) fish that shed their scales when netted, like the mackerel. A black cloth placed in the net beforehand can verify this;

b) fish that have scales developing later in the life cycle; consequently the juvenile fish that lack scales may be eaten since they DO have scales at maturity.

“Nowhere in the Talmud or in responsa literature is there any reference or precedent to such a deviant: a fish that has scales as a juvenile but not as an adult. Therefore, based on the above, swordfish (xiphias gladius) do not possess scales of the kosher variety and is a non-kosher fish” (www.koshersupermarket.com/rabbidavis.htm).

Because of the scientific evidence listed here, we’ve listed the swordfish with other unclean animals.

Other technical questions have been raised about how some of the fish have been designated and we are doing further research.

Cecil E. Maranville

Q. Why did you say llamas are clean? They do not have a cloven hoof.

A. A veterinarian and other readers provided new resources about llamas that led us to check this more closely. Further research showed that the llama is unclean. We deeply regret the error in the booklet.

Llamas chew the cud, but do they have cloven hooves? Encyclopedias list llamas as part of the order *artiodactyla*, which includes even-toed, hoofed mammals. However, this order includes pigs, goats, sheep, cattle, giraffes, deer and camels. Obviously, some of these are clean and some are unclean.

The llama’s footprints closely resemble those of clean ruminants, giving the appearance of a cloven hoof. However, thanks to the references sent to us by a reader and additional research, we’ve been able to ascertain that what are sometimes called hooves on the llama in reality are two toenails from the third and fourth toes of the animals. The foot is also padded, like that of a dog, and isn’t actually a hoof at all.

Since clean ruminants must have cloven hoofs (split in the front, as opposed to separate toes), llamas clearly are not clean. Llamas, along with other lamoids (alpacas, vicuñas and guanacos) are members of the *Camelidae* family, which includes camels. They are all unclean.

We will correct this error in future reprints of *What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?*

Cecil E. Maranville

Q. My wife and I read the article, “Sowing in Fertile Ground” by Aaron Dean in the March/April edition of *United News*. The promise Mr. Armstrong gave in 1984 concerning an Ambassador College scholarship to the Thai baby was a kind and generous offer....

If there is any way possible, and if the boy desires it, I think we should keep the promise Mr. Armstrong made before God and at least offer a spot at ABC to this young man.

A. Thank you for your thoughts regarding my article. Others have e-mailed me as well asking what happened to the boy. I know he was being raised by a close staff member of the Queen. I am making discreet inquiries into where he is, what he has been taught, and if he speaks English. The King and Queen know about the closing of the college and the forsaking of the truth taught by Herbert W. Armstrong. As such they would not hold him to this promise.

Ambassador College, as a full liberal arts school, would have been great for the Thai young man. He would see the way of life while getting a degree, and if indeed God called him would see the truth. To invite him to what would strictly be a Bible program at ABC would make us look like missionaries trying to gain converts and the boy would probably get lost in the intense Bible program which would have been spread out over four years.

I too feel an obligation to keep promises made wherever possible and am looking at other options. This one might be best served by helping with tuition for this boy to go to college. If his English is good, he can be given a copy of his benefactor’s book (*Mystery of the Ages*). If he reads it and shows an interest, then perhaps God would bring him to understanding and perhaps to ABC.

There are others in Asia who need help as well. We are trying to help them with limited resources. I do believe UCG is a continuation of the work of the true Church, although not all God’s people attend with us. We can only do what we can to the best of our ability. The Council of Elders, president and staff are dedicated to God’s service. These situations provide many challenges to us all.

Our biggest promise to keep for Mr. Armstrong is to the truth of God and to serve those God calls. Someday this boy will be called, but it may not be in this present situation. The royal family does know that many of us have not abandoned the truth and are “regrouping” as best we can to practice “the way of give versus the way of get.” Hopefully God will give us the chance to help this boy.

Aaron Dean

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Developing Our Pastors—the New Annual Review Process

by Doug Horchak

From the beginning of our efforts to reorganize the Church at the Indianapolis conference in May of 1995, the United Church of God has been striving to build on a strong foundation. Those foundations have been and continue to be established within the biblical basis of the doctrines, policies, processes, publications and organizational structure of the Church.

One of the many areas that United has striven to focus on in this entire process is our ministry and their effective shepherding of and service to the precious people of God. It is no secret that we have all grown to appreciate the important things in our Christian lives more over the past several years. In that regard, I believe that the ministry of the Church has grown to deeply respect and appreciate God's people more than ever before, as well.

Code of Ethics and Pastoral Job Description

Our role as ministers and more directly as pastors within the Church defines a responsibility of full-time dedicated service to God's people that we should and do take very seriously. Many will recall that in 1996 the Council of Elders adopted a "Ministerial Code of Ethics" for the ministry to assist in defining that role. The "Ministerial Code of Ethics" was developed with the input of

many members within the Church and was based on the scriptural foundation of Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3. Its ongoing purpose is to give both the ministry and the membership of the Church a clearer expectation of what ministers of Jesus Christ should be striving to achieve in service to their families, to the Church, to each other and most importantly—to God.

While the "Ministerial Code of Ethics" addressed the fundamental principles as outlined in Scripture, the specific expectations that we have of our paid pastoral ministry within the Church have been further defined in our "Pastoral Job Description" that was refined at our U.S. regional conferences over the past three years.

This job description thoroughly outlines the responsibilities of the UCG pastors, such as: to effectively teach God's people through regular sermons and Bible studies; to offer counseling to the brethren in areas of Christian life, marriage, family and other subjects; to be available to visit, encourage and anoint the brethren; to perform other duties that most have at our youth camps and Feast sites; and to meet the spiritual needs for growth within the local congregation through effective delegation, organization and member development programs and initiatives.

Self-Assessment and Annual Appraisal

In addition to clearly defining these

expectations, more than two years ago the United Church of God began to develop a means by which our pastors could regularly assess their worth and value to the brethren they serve in an effort to assist them in their personal growth and development goals. Many scriptures speak about the need for us to grow in our service to God by examining our progress and the fruits of our labors. For example, "But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Galatians 6:4).

In late 1999 our pastors were all given the opportunity to personally assess their effectiveness by completing a self-assessment. This year, in 2001, each of the U.S. pastors will be completing a self-assessment of their ministry with input from their wives.

In addition, later in the year all of our pastors will be having a more formal annual appraisal discussion with their Regional Pastors in which the pastor's performance and fulfillment of their responsibilities as outlined in the "Pastoral Job Description" will be addressed. United Church of God plans to make this appraisal process an annual occurrence for all of our pastors.

Member Input

In addition to our pastors getting constructive input from their peers and from the management of the Church, we also recognize that the members in the congregations

that pastor can have valuable input that can assist the pastor to more effectively serve the membership. Many pastors have requested such input from their congregations via surveys and questionnaires from their local membership that address such things as sermon and Bible study topics and local programs for member development, etc. The United Church of God plans to develop a more standardized means for this kind of helpful input in the months ahead.

As ministers and pastors, it is understood that we all have differing strengths and abilities. The apostle Paul fully acknowledged the various gifts, strengths and abilities of those who serve the Church in his comments to the Church in 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11. Our desire as pastors is to build upon our strengths in serving the people and work of God, all the while striving to improve and grow in areas of our ministry that enable all of us to more effectively teach, encourage and strengthen the people of God in the congregations we are privileged to serve.

In the end, all of us as brethren are striving for the same goal—becoming more like Jesus Christ and looking forward to serving with Him for all eternity in the Kingdom of God. *UN*

Doug Horchak is a member of the Ministerial Services team and pastor of the Dallas North and Sherman, Texas, congregations. He coordinated the Ministerial Review task force.

CGCF/UCGIA Hold Frank and Open Discussions

The Executive Council of the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship (CGCF), and the Council of Elders of the United Church of God, an *International Association* (UCGIA), met together March 12, 2001, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to further the discussions that have been underway for some time. It was like a reunion for many ministers and wives who hadn't seen each other for some time.

Task forces of the two groups had met in August and November last year. After those meetings both organizations felt that it would be helpful to expand the discussions beyond the task force level. Consequently, it was agreed that a combined meeting of the two councils would take place in March.

Meetings between the two councils began with an executive session in the morning. Other non-council ministers of the two organizations as well as wives attended in the afternoon. The combined meeting, with more than 50 in attendance, was chaired by Roy Holladay, chairman of the UCGIA Council.

The discussions included frank and open examination of questions about doc-



CGCF and UCGIA meet together March 12. Left, CGCF President Larry Salyer and his wife, Judy; below, Margaret Adair of CGCF with Reba Walker; right, lawyers Norbert Link of CGCF and Larry Darden



trinal topics. As mentioned after previous meetings, there is clear agreement on most doctrinal topics. However, the terminology used in some doctrinal statements raised questions that needed to be addressed. The face-to-

face meeting enabled both organizations to explain their understanding of these doctrinal issues and the use of certain expressions. Further discussions between representatives of CGCF and UCGIA can address remaining questions.

CGCF ministers continued with ministerial meetings Tuesday and Wednesday. They joined the UCGIA Council and home office staff for a tour of their offices and refreshments on



Tuesday afternoon. CGCF President Larry Salyer also addressed

the UCGIA Council on Thursday to express appreciation for the opportunity to get together with their Council and ministry.

The meetings and other social occasions made a good start on building relationships and addressing rumors and other misunderstandings between the two fellowships. Ministers from both groups applauded the openness and friendliness of the meetings. *UN*

“URGENCY,” (Continued from page 1) reported last year, and will be taking turns every two years. Reports from all areas were given at the international meetings May 3 (see below).

Media and Communications

Peter Eddington gave a report on Media and Communications Services, highlighting the rapidly growing demand for literature and the extensive efforts to water and care for the seeds of the gospel that are being planted.

For example, the *Good News* print run is up to 362,871 for May-June, a 31 percent increase over last year.

The *Bible Study Course* is currently going to 4,850 non-member households, and there are already 4,100 “graduates” who have been offered audiotapes. This brand-new program has generated a 37 percent response!

The Church has now printed 1.4 million booklets, with 500,000 printed in 2000 and 198,000 to date in 2001.

Mr. Eddington also described the subscriber development program—the array of materials designed to help build a relationship with those who receive our literature.

Mr. Eddington mentioned that the Internet continues to be a cost-effective way to reach people. The Church’s Web site has had visitors and literature requests from more than 100 countries. There were over 21,000 visitors in April alone.

He mentioned various means for local congregations to be involved, such as the brochure program and the programs Darris McNeely and Robin Webber pioneered.

The goals include reaching a circulation of 425,000 by June 2002.

Chairman’s Address

In the afternoon, the approval of the minutes and balloting were followed by the chairman’s address. Roy Holladay expressed appreciation for the job done by his predecessor, Robert Dick, who served for over five years as chairman of the Council and General Conference. Comparing God’s creation of the human body and its various systems, Mr. Holladay read from Romans 12:4–5, which stresses our mutual dependence on each other. This was how we were organized in the United Church of God from the start. We are mutually dependent on each other and mutu-



Carmelo Anastasi gives a spirited presentation about God’s work in Italy at the GCE meeting May 6 (photo by Victor Kubik)

ally accountable to each other, with overlapping supervisory capacities. Ultimately, Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. In the past year, the Council of Elders has increasingly turned to the General Conference and Church members to help forward the work of the

Church. Administration and Council work together. National councils cooperate with each other and with the Council and administration in the United States. Servant leadership is a principle we all want to see used ever more effectively.

Treasurer’s Address

Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick gave a brief overview of the Church’s financial standing. The budget

for the 12 months ending June 30, 2001, was set at \$15.7 million; income is expected to actually be \$16.6 million.

Allowing for a more modest growth in the coming year (4 percent instead of 7 percent from ordinary income, excluding special offerings), the budget submitted to the GCE was pegged at \$17 million.

President’s Address

President Les McCullough spoke of the needs of the international areas, and the urgency in many of those regions. Needed all around the world are more laborers for the harvest—especially younger ones.

International Meetings Cover a Lot of Territory

International elders discussed a wide variety of subjects in meetings May 3 and 4 in Cincinnati before the GCE. Council chairman Roy Holladay moderated the open sharing of ideas and questions.

Topics included the pressing need for additional laborers in the international areas, including the need for training programs and for additional Feast speakers at many sites. Ministerial Services in the United States has made available four different training programs, and these have been adapted in various areas, such as the Caribbean Leadership Training program. The ministers also discussed ideas for funding scholarships for international students to attend ABC after the U.S. government allows the granting of student visas. Gary Antion, ABC coordinator, mentioned that ABC had received a donation of \$5,000 for a scholarship fund, and other scholarship ideas were discussed.

Limited resources in Australia and the Philippines raised the discussion of how the Church can serve the Asian area, and the broader question of how to set priorities in reaching different areas of the world. Several ministers mentioned that waiting for God to provide local leadership has often worked well, and discussions on the specifics of each area continue.

International Reports

Each area reported on the preaching of the gospel in their area.

Leon Walker reported that the circulation in Latin America is 15,000, and Larry Roybal from Mexico mentioned that it tends to grow by personal contact, so they are running short of magazines, and have to stagger mailings—some may receive it only every other issue. Mr. Walker also told about a sit-

uation in Cuba. Though there are no promotions there, a group of 40 to 50 say they are keeping the Sabbath and want a visit! Mr. Roybal will go on a Mexican passport, as American travel is still restricted.

Ed Macaraeg reported that the *Good News* circulation in the Philippines is 3,000 without much promotion, so they could easily become swamped. Literature is being offered on the Internet in various Philippine dialects, translated by a member in Canada.

Good News distribution is 9,400 in Australia in spite of a resistance to new churches, especially those linked to the United States. Reg Wright pointed out that we are building credibility over the long term, and plan to increase circulation to 12,000 by the end of fiscal 2001-2002.

New Zealand is still getting responses from a *Reader’s Digest* ad three years ago, and has received two recent visit requests. This is especially exciting since there are only 45 to 50 in the Church in the whole country, said Jeff Caudle.

South Africa’s *GN* list has grown from 2,000 to 6,000 in a year, with the goal of 10,000 within two years, said Peter Hawkins.

Canada has 11,642 subscribers and is planning to put a *GN* card in a value-pack type mailing to 200,000 households in August, said Anthony Wasilkoff.

Alfred Riehle reported on the translation efforts in Germany, with 11 booklets completed, three in the review process and four more being translated. Members are active in helping review translations.

David Fenney said that since July 2000 circulation has grown nearly 300 percent in the 31 countries receiving the *GN* from the United Kingdom. Currently 4,900 go to Britain and 2,800 go to other coun-

tries, which makes for expensive postage.

Joel Meeker reported on French translation efforts, which include six booklets with two more in the final stages of translation. In all of French-speaking Europe, there are only 25 to 30 members, so with the limited base, booklets are considered more important than producing a magazine. Work on the *Bible Study Course* will begin shortly.

Carmelo Anastasi told about five new baptisms in Italy, all a result of the editorial efforts. The subscription list has doubled to 4,000 in the last year.

Victor Kubik and Henrikas Klovas reported on a Web site being developed to serve the Baltic area with literature in Lithuanian, Russian, Latvian, Estonian, Serbian and, hopefully, Polish.

Circulation in the Caribbean region has increased from 3,220 to 5,775, said Kingsley Mather. Future plans include testing ads in Barbados and perhaps the Bahamas, with hopes to advertise in Bermuda and Jamaica soon.

The elders also discussed ways to adapt editorial and promotional efforts produced in the United States for their areas. May 3 they met with the Media and Communications group for a presentation on promotional and subscriber development efforts that might be adapted internationally.

The elders also discussed ways to adapt the U.S. ministerial performance review process; relationships with other religious organizations; how to involve national councils in the nomination process for international members of the Council of Elders; community involvement; the relationship between national councils and the Council of Elders; and the process the Council uses to select and reaffirm the president. *UN*

Media Meetings Focus on Gospel Message

Media and Communications Services staff members and many elders who write and edit material for the Church’s publications met May 4 before the GCE.

The items discussed included editorial content and direction; *Good News* plans for the next two years; and a discussion about radio, television and the Internet.

The meetings focused on how to reach readers with the urgent warning and hope of the gospel, based on statements by the Council. Stronger issues of the *Good News* magazine are planned, including the current May-June issue.

A combined meeting of this group and the international elders was held for two hours to view the vast array of promotional and subscriber development efforts currently being used in the United States. John LaBissoniere and Scott Ashley illustrated the discussion with PowerPoint presentations and a multitude of samples.

These efforts are a major part of the harvest analogy addressed in presentations at the GCE. Subscriber development helps provide the water and fertilizer to help the seeds of the gospel grow and bear fruit. *UN*

“Preaching the gospel; preparing a people” is not just our logo, it is always our responsibility. “Will I be ready,” he asked each to ponder, “when Jesus Christ knocks?” If we are “so doing” when He does, the answer will be “blessed is that servant...” We must preach, prepare...and be blessed.

God has blessed the work of the United Church of God in the past year. We have tried to be “so doing.” Three years ago, 80,000 people were receiving *The Good News*. The last print run was over 360,000.

New donors and coworkers are being added each month—that is truly exciting, said Mr. McCullough. They are beginning to have a part in doing God’s work.

Remnant Church of God and CGCF

Joel Meeker, Jim Franks and Melvin Rhodes next talked about the progress of talks with the Remnant Church of God. Seven United pastors have now visited Remnant elders and members over the past four years: Mike Blackwell, Arnold Hampton, Doug Horchak and Fred Kellers, in addition to the three presenters. All are in agreement that these people are our spiritual brothers and sisters.

The presenters said Remnant is really the result of “seed” scattered 25 years ago and that they consider Herbert W. Armstrong their “father in the faith.”

Mr. Meeker spoke of their desire to dissolve the Remnant Church of God association in June 2001. Their plan is to immediately reform as the United Church of God Ghana, and organize a national council with oversight provided by the United Church of God, *an International Association*. The challenges these nearly 1,500 devoted people face are daunting (per capita income is about \$30 a month), but their faith is forward-looking.

Mr. Holladay spoke next in his capacity as chairman of the three-man task force which has met with the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship (CGCF). (See page 3 for information on the March meetings.)

The core issue, articulated by many brethren in both fellowships, is, “If we believe and teach the same things, is there any biblical justification for us to remain separate?” The ministry of CGCF has given its Executive Council (comparable to the Council of Elders in UCG) authority to move ahead in exploring closer contact. Most doctrinal concerns explored to date have turned out to be largely a matter of wording, not doctrinal differences. While some concerns may remain among the elders of the CGCF, most wish to move forward. Recent joint services in Alaska, Massachusetts and Texas have been cause for encouragement in both fellowships.

“A Sense of Urgency”

Examples from the history of ancient Israel prove that people will do almost anything to survive physically, said Richard Thompson in the keynote address. But he asked all to realize deeply our responsibility before God to survive *spiritually* in order to serve Him and those He calls.

How urgent is God about His work? How urgent is Jesus Christ? How urgent were Peter, John, Paul and so many others in that long list of our spiritual examples? And how urgent are we? Is that urgency mainly tied to the idea that Christ will return very soon?

If it is, the New Testament record must guide us to deeper understanding, Mr. Thompson emphasized. There came a time when those early pioneers of the faith realized that Christ was not going to return in their lifetimes. While He may well yet come back in ours, “no one knows the day or the hour.” What drove those servants on when the sense of urgency was not due to expecting Christ’s return momentarily? What compelled them then?

“Being urgent is as much about eternal

character as it is about time,” Mr. Thompson said. He forged on to show that the actual timing of Christ’s return, in one sense, has nothing to do with the urgency of our efforts to do God’s work. Near the end of his life, Paul told Timothy to continue in the job of the ministry, no matter what time might do (see 2 Timothy, especially chapter 4).

The urgency in our lives and ministry must be present no matter what the timing of Christ’s return may be. The gospel needs to be preached, and a people need to be prepared. We have the prophecies of God’s Word to warn us about what is happening in our world with its declining morals.

The Bride of Christ must be prepared.

facing the Church. There was also a seminar on “Dealing With the Net Generation,” presented by Julie Zutz, a UCG member who attends the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, congregation.

Monday, May 7, Victor Kubik gave a presentation on the “Harvest Analogy in Doing the Work.” This was followed by a discussion of ways in which the home office and the ministry can partner in effective programs to spread the truth of God, led by Darris McNeely and Robin Webber. Bill Bradford addressed the subject of “Urgency of Preparing the Bride of Christ,” and newly selected Council member Clyde Kilough presented “Why We Need to Promote and



ABC Choir performs at Sabbath services May 6 to about 600 in Cincinnati, with about 6,000 more members listening in by telephone hook-up and cybercast (photo by Victor Kubik)

“Doing the work” may mean reaching the masses, but it also means helping one person to change his or her life.

“We have the truth of God,” Mr. Thompson concluded. “We are not mighty. But we started with a little. And we have a great job to do.”

And Lots More

After-dinner seminars were provided on Saturday and Sunday evenings. Both evenings the Council of Elders scheduled a discussion with GCE members about issues

Practice Christ-Centered Servant Leadership.” These sessions were followed by the attendees breaking up into six smaller groups for discussion.

The GCE ended with presentations by Don Ward on “Urgency of the Times” and Les McCullough with “Where Do We Go From Here? Emphasis on a Warning Message.”

Full reports on the GCE, as well as the Council of Elders meetings in March and May, can be found on the Web at www.ucg.org/a/council/council.htm. *UN*

Coordinators Prepare for 2001 Feast

by Larry J. Walker

Festival coordinators of U.S. and Canadian sites for the 2001 Feast of Tabernacles attended a day-long meeting Friday, May 4, before the GCE. Ministerial Services operation manager Richard Pinelli outlined a festival team concept that will maximize input and involvement of all Festival coordinators in making decisions and planning the Feast. Conference coordinator Charles Melear announced plans for Festival coordinators to attend the annual meeting of the Religious Conference Management Association in February 2002.

David Evans, assistant to the Ministerial Services operation manager, covered guidelines regarding pre-Feast meetings for speakers and songleaders. Steve Myers explained how music coordi-

nators are selected and handed out copies of the *Festival Music Coordinators Manual*.

Many other administrative details were discussed, including site budgets, start time for services, seniors’ activities, activity brochure contents, taping of services, the process for determining speaking schedules and use of electronic devices for Festival messages.

Larry Walker offered suggestions on ways to take advantage of the unique opportunity to use Festival sites to preach the gospel. Since the Feast theme of offering a foretaste of the coming Kingdom of God on earth is also at the heart and core of the gospel message, our observance of the Feast is preaching the gospel in word and deed to the communities where we keep the Feast.

Both Mr. Pinelli and Mr. Melear were pleased with the meetings and felt much had been accomplished. *UN*

Ballot Results

ITEM	#YES	#NO	PASSED
1. 2001-2002 Strategic Plan	284	5	Yes
2. 2001-2002 Operation Plan	271	13	Yes
3. 2001-2002 Budget	267	19	Yes
4. Amendment to Fundamental Beliefs 2.1.18 (Tithing) would have required 304 to pass	226	61	No
5. Amendment to Article 1 of the Constitution (Mission Statement)	148	130	No
6. Amendment to Section 8.2.1 of the Bylaws (Office of the Chairman of the Council)	241	30	Yes
7. Amendment to Section 8.7.5 of the Bylaws (Quorum)	256	17	Yes
8. Provisional Manner of Approving Official Relationships With Other Religious Organizations	252	27	Yes

The text of approved amendments will be on the Web at www.ucg.org/amendments.

International News...

Pastor Visits Brethren in Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya

by Joel Meeker

My first African trip of the new millennium took me to Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya with plane changes in several additional countries.

Ghana

The first stop was Ghana where I arrived January 22 after 26 hours of travel. I spent the night at a hotel near the airport. The next morning I traveled north by car on the four-hour trip to Kumasi, where I was to meet the pastors of the Remnant Church of God. I went straight to the house United has rented on the outskirts of Kumasi.

It was a pleasure to see our friends from Remnant once again. They were all waiting at the house, ready for our meetings to begin. It was good to see the house again after having stayed there for five weeks last summer. It is used for the lodging of UCG elders when in Kumasi, and also serves as an office for the Remnant elders in the Kumasi area. The water wasn't working and the electricity went off and on periodically—just like old times!

We had meetings on Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning. I updated the men on my recent report to the United Church of God's Council of Elders, and on the plan we're proposing for 2001, in our efforts to bring them to the point where we can officially submit their names to the Council of Elders and request that they become elders of the United Church of God.

On my laptop computer, I showed them the PowerPoint presentation I had made to our Council, which outlines our view of the present situation and our proposed plan. It is



Remnant Church of God pastors and their wives in Kumasi, Ghana

our hope that at some point this year, the Remnant Church of God will cease to exist as an organization. We would register an association of the United Church of God and have a UCG elder act as interim administrator during the transition period. The United Church of God—Ghana would then be subject to our Constitution and our Rules of Association as are other associations of the Church.

The pastors asked questions about some details of what we have proposed to be sure they understood the salient points. They felt very positive about it, and were eager to discuss the plan with their executive board and the membership of their congregations, so that everyone is fully appraised of plans and progress. We also discussed some points about the organization of the Passover service, and other questions related to the way we organize our church services. They were also very happy to hear that Jim Franks and Melvin Rhodes plan to come to Ghana during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

We closed the meetings in the afternoon of Wednesday, so that I could make the drive back to Accra with a taxi driver who is a member of the Church in Kumasi. He offered a special price to make the trip, about the equivalent of \$30, barely more than covering his expenses. This was a very generous offer in a country where the economic situation is so desperate. We had an enjoyable discussion on the trip. He was a long-time member, and had been keeping the weekly Sabbath for decades, but it was only after contact with United that his congregation had learned about the annual Sabbaths. "The Feast of Tabernacles is a wonderful time—I'm so happy we have learned about it!" he said at one point.

On to Nigeria

I was up at 4:30 on Thursday morning to get my 7 a.m. flight to Lagos, Nigeria. Formalities went smoothly both in Ghana and in Nigeria. I was met at the airport by Dr. and Mrs. Akin-Ogundeji and Mr. Oguntayo. It was very good to see them again. At my hotel we had a brief meeting to bring me up to date on the situation of the congregations in Lagos and Benin City, and to discuss our plans for the next two days, as well

as some other Church business. Our brethren in Nigeria were very encouraged by the Feast of Tabernacles and the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Dale Schurter who spent the Feast with them.

Friday we drove out to see the new hall in which the Church meets in Lagos. We have been able to rent this hall full time for about the same cost as renting the previous hall just on the Sabbath day. The new "hall"

is actually an apartment with a large living room which can comfortably hold 40 people for services. The bedrooms are used for storing Church equipment and literature, and occasionally to temporarily put up local members who are between lodgings. The apartment is



Mrs. Alimi and her daughter, Comfort, and other children at the Church hall in Lagos, Nigeria

located on the fourth and top floor of the building, which allows for any breeze to pass through the rooms. This is much appreciated in the 32 degree Celsius (90 Fahrenheit), high-humidity weather common in Lagos. The hall needed a coat of paint, but by local standards was quite adequate for the local congregation.

From the hall we drove another 30 minutes out to the 2000 Feast of Tabernacles site by the international fairgrounds and exposition center. We plan to use this site again for the Feast in 2001. The staff members on duty were delighted to see our members again, because our brethren in Nigeria had set an excellent example during the Feast last year. We had a look at the air-conditioned meeting hall, and at the various kinds of lodgings they have available, and had some initial discussions about logistical arrangements.

Then we headed back to my hotel so as to be in before nightfall. There has been improvement in the overall situation in Nigeria since the installation of a democratically elected government, but it is still not very safe to be out after dark, even in a vehicle.

Sabbath morning Dr. Akin-Ogundeji came to the hotel at 10 to briefly go over some documents he had prepared to assist with our planning for the coming year. We were at the hall by 11:30. Services began at 12. In place of a sermonette, I gave a news update about the work of the Church, and then a sermon about preparing for the Spring Holy Days.

Following services we had a break and a

snack, a locally prepared meat pie and a soda, which was a real treat for the children. Then we had a wide-ranging Q&A Bible study which lasted an hour and a half. Friends and acquaintances of members who knew a minister of the Church was coming to Lagos had also asked to come, so in addition to questions about marriage and prophecy, there were more basic questions. "What does the Bible teach about praying to the 'saints'?" and "What does the Bible teach about reincarnation?" were two of many.

After the Bible study we had another break, and said good-bye to the ladies and children. Nine of the men stayed for a Spokesman Club meeting. It was the first time I had directed a club in several years, and everyone had an encouraging time. The table topics covered the political situation in Nigeria and Christian-living topics. There were three speeches and evaluations. The men all did very well, even those quite new to the Church. I was impressed and encouraged to see everyone's dedication to the truth of God and their desire to learn and grow

in their Christianity. Since we didn't have any real cups for best speaker, most improved speaker and best evaluator, I handed out imaginary "air cups" to the award winners, which added some laughter to the applause.

By the time the club meeting ended, it was time for me to change and head to the airport. My flight didn't leave until midnight, but I needed to be at the airport before dark, since the road leading to the airport is a preferred hunting ground of bandits. I checked in about 6:30 p.m. and waited in the departure lounge until my flight left. There are very few flights going between West and East Africa, so in taking such routes one is at the mercy of sometimes strange flight schedules. My next destination was Tanzania, but to get there from Nigeria, I had to change planes in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and then have additional stops in Nairobi, Kenya, and Entebbe, Uganda. After a few hours of sleep on the plane we landed in Addis.

Shortly after our arrival we were informed that we would be taken into the city for breakfast. The waiting passengers were directed to immigration where officials took our passports and gave us plastic cards bearing numbers that matched those of other cards paper clipped to our passports. These plastic cards represented transit visas, and allowed us to leave the airport. Ethiopian Airlines buses drove us a few miles into the city. On arrival in the city center we passed under a faded sign spanning the road. I could make out "workers of the world," then the lettering faded out completely. It was an interesting souvenir of the Cold War days.

Ethiopian music, a mix of Arab and African influences, was being played over loud speakers in many places through the city.

The temperature was surprisingly cold. Addis Ababa, I learned, is the highest capital city in Africa, and the third highest in the world. The temperature must have been in the 5 to 10 degrees Celsius (40 to 50 Fahrenheit) range. We were taken to the Ghion hotel, scene of a bloody terrorist attack some years back, and fed a breakfast of rice, various salted breads, fish in a red sauce and tea or coffee. As we ate, I chatted with an Indian couple on their way from Madagascar to visit family in India.

Then we all boarded the buses again for the drive back to the airport. The airport scene was quite chaotic. There were several hundred people waiting in line to turn in their transit cards and retrieve their passports. There was much jostling and nervousness as various flight times approached. I had started out in the middle of one line, but by the time all the maneuvering was done, I ended up being one of the last ones to get my passport.

When I arrived at the desk and handed the official my card, he began looking through stacks of passports. It quickly became clear he couldn't find my passport. The numbered card had apparently been jostled out of its paper clip. I said a silent prayer for help. "What is your nationality?" the man finally asked. When I told him I was American, he said, "Oh, yes." He only had one American passport, so he remembered where it was, even though it no longer had a number. I had just enough time to reach the departure lounge by boarding time, silently saying "thank you" on the way there.

The Ethiopian Airlines flight to Dar es Salaam made stops in Nairobi and Entebbe, so the trip would take most of the day. The Nairobi airport I know well, but I was a bit curious about the Entebbe airport. This was the place where Idi Amin, then ruler of Uganda, had allowed terrorists to hold hostage a planeload of Israelis, until they were rescued in a daring raid by Israeli special forces. It's a very small airport, and looked exactly like the pictures I remembered in a book I'd read about the rescue.

Finally in Tanzania

I finally arrived in Dar es Salaam as the light was fading, 20 hours or so after arriving in the Lagos airport to begin the trip. Dar es Salaam means "haven of peace" in Kiswahili. I'm not sure it completely lives up to its name, but I was certainly happy to arrive.

The next morning I was able to contact the law firm with which I was to meet to discuss registering UCG with the state. This is required for us to legally operate as a church in Tanzania. Since we now have several groups amounting to 100 people or so meeting in the west of the country, we needed to abide by the laws of the land. The firm had been notified of my visit by Larry Darden, the Church's legal counsel in the U.S. I was

given an appointment for that afternoon. The meeting went well, and it appears that the registration process should go smoothly in Tanzania.

Kenya

I arrived without incident in Nairobi on Thursday, and made preparations for the long trip I would make to the Lake Victoria region of western Kenya. As usual I had arranged for Martin to be my driver and we started out Friday morning for the drive to the village of Rongo. Driving through the Rift Valley I saw that there had been some rain, but not yet enough to declare the drought over. We drove past small herds of zebra, occasional gazelles and several troupes of baboons. In the distance, in the soda lakes of the valley, I could see huge flocks of flamingoes creating a pink patchwork on the water.

Sabbath morning we drove out at 8 for the hour and a half trip to Ndhiwa, a small village where a small congregation meets for services. We started services with two hymns in the local language and one in English. I spoke on a topic about which several people had asked: the organization of the Church in the New Testament, and how UCG applied the principles derived from New Testament examples. After a brief break, we had a Q&A Bible study for an additional two hours. This was my first time to visit the group in Ndhiwa and I was encouraged by their knowledge of the Scriptures and the good questions they asked. Following the study,



Part of the Ndhiwa, Kenya, congregation

we went to the home of a member for lunch. The meal consisted of ugali (a mash made of beans, corn and cassava), greens and a real luxury: some beef, washed down with hot Kenyan tea.

After the meal we walked over to a local clinic sponsored by several Protestant churches in the UK. It is the local custom for any visiting clergy to stop there briefly. During the visit, I was asked to pray for some of the patients. A nurse was ill with severe stomach pains, a man was in advanced stages of tuberculosis and a woman had boils all over her torso. We said a brief prayer for each of them and before I left the staff asked for a general prayer for the health and protection of the whole team, which I was happy to do. Before leaving the Church members, I anointed a young girl who had a severe case of dysentery. Then we said our good-byes and took to the road.

We drove two hours to Migori where the

local congregation was waiting for a Bible study. We had another Q&A Bible study for an hour or so, and I met briefly with the



The Migori, Kenya, advisory council: John Owak, Musa Nyaira, David Owak, Phileman Owak

members of the congregational council. Since it was fairly late by that time, we agreed to meet again the next morning. I stayed at a local hotel where I had stayed several times before. To my delight, both the electricity and running water were working, unlike my previous two visits. Over dinner I discussed local church affairs with several men from the local congregation and Joash Okinyi, who had traveled up from Tanzania to represent the members there.

The next morning we met again for breakfast and continued our discussions on how we can best serve the members in these remote areas. After breakfast, I met again with the congregational council from Migori and I believe we were all encouraged by our fellowship and the plans we were able to make.

First Contact

As we were preparing to begin the long trip back to the Rift Valley, I was informed that there was a small Adventist group near Migori, which had been reading the *Good News*, and had asked if I would come by before leaving. I thought it would be a visit of an hour or so. It ended up being nearly six hours of questions and answers, with occasional pauses for tea and a meal.

The group of a dozen people asked questions about (among other things) the state of the earth during the Millennium, the three different resurrections, the doctrine of the trinity, the annual Holy Days and Colossians 2:16. They also had some more typically African questions: the Church position on polygamy, for example.

I felt very positive about the visit and the questions. We shall see how these people come along. Toward the close of our discussion, one of the men said through an interpreter: "It seems up until now we have been taught some things 'upside down.'" The recognized leader of the group summed up their feelings when he said as we parted: "We are happy with the answers you have shown us. We would like to be part of the United

Church of God." This was only a first contact, and it's too soon to say if this little group will continue to move toward UCG, but this first visit was a very pleasant surprise.

As Martin and I started back north again, a hard rain began. A car driving much too quickly passed us on the rain-slick road, forcing us to slow down. Just a few minutes later we came upon the same car, which had been involved in a head-on collision. A crowd had gathered, and several people were pulling accident victims out of the cars and laying them out on the pavement. A policeman waved us to pass, which we were only just able to do because of the jumble of wreckage blocking most of both lanes. This sobering sight made me very thankful we had slowed down, and most of all for our heavenly Father's protection as we travel.

The next morning we drove out to see Joseph Kihara on his remote family farm in the Rift Valley. They had had some rain, but not yet enough, so the farmers in the region are still hoping for more. Over a lunch of rice, beans and corn, we talked about news of the



Joseph Kihara with his father and stepmother on their farm near Njiro, Kenya

Church and of subscribers to the *Good News* who live in the area.

Joseph showed me the plants starting to come up in one of his fields. There is some hope that the drought may be ending, but even at best they will not have an edible crop for some months. The region still depends on food distributed by the UN and by other aid organizations. I left some additional help for Joseph to be sure there would be sufficient food for him and his parents to last until the Spring Holy Days. We also arranged for him to be able to buy some wine to take the Passover in his home. Obtaining wine at the appropriate time is something that must be planned in advance, since it is not a commonly consumed beverage here. The drive back to Nairobi passed without incident.

During the next two days, and on the day of my departure for home, I had very pleasant visits with our brethren living in the Nairobi area: Mr. and Mrs. Antonio Nthungu and their daughter, Cathrine; Mr. and Mrs. Benson Thuo and their children, Richard and Mercy; and Mr. and Mrs. David Gichuru and their children, Benjamin, Emily and Rahab. Other children from each family were away at school. Our brethren in the area are prospering spiritually, but the economic situation continues to worsen. No employment is certain to continue for long at this time, so these three families would appreciate the prayers of their brethren that God would continue to provide them with their daily bread.

I spent the Spring Holy Days with our brethren in Cameroon and Benin, which is another story for another issue. *UN*

To Bulawayo and Back: Pastor Visits Scattered Brethren

by André van Belkum

On the morning of February 25 a member who attends the Johannesburg, South Africa, congregation, Steve Serfontein, and I departed from Johannesburg by road on a journey to Zimbabwe that would cover a distance of about 2,484 miles (4,000 kilometers). Steve owns a sturdy 4-by-4 vehicle which is ideally suited for some of the rough roads and heavy rains we encountered. One of our goals was to visit with each one of our members in their homes, and this we were able to accomplish.

The first leg of the trip was from Johannesburg to Mutare, a distance of about 820 miles (1,330 kilometers). There we stayed with members Mike and Primrose Mukarati and their two children, Tinashe and Vimbai. They run a small office in their spare time for the Church. The circulation of *The Good News* is about 100, and they handle requests for booklets and other administrative responsibilities, such as sending out the reports from the home office and Les McCullough's "President's Letter." Letter answering is handled by Peter Hawkins from Cape Town, South Africa.

Recently one of our congregations in the United States donated a computer, which means that they now have the facility to capture data, and keep in contact with us in South Africa and the home office. This must be one of the most remote offices of the Church in the world.

While there we met with a farmer, Edison Gutu, who had received a copy of the *GN* from a friend. He is already observing the Sabbath, and asked numerous questions, including the significance of the Holy Days and how they are observed. When he is able to attend, he will join with the Mukarati family on the Sabbath, and view the sermon tapes sent so faithfully by our home office.

Visits in Harare

From Mutare we traveled to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, where we were warmly welcomed by Roy and Gill Heathcote. Roy is recovering from a serious operation, and expressed his gratitude

for the prayers on his behalf. Until the establishment of the office in Mutare, the Heathcotes stepped into the breach and kept the United Church of God in Zimbabwe alive and active. They were well supported by a dedicated group of members scattered throughout the country.

While in Harare we also visited with the Ross family. Mrs. Ross was baptized in 1964, and has been a dedicated member over the years. Prayers are requested for her husband, Paul, who is experiencing demanding



Left, Mike and Primrose Mukarati in the Church office in Mutare, Zimbabwe, with computer donated by a U.S. congregation. Above, Mr. Mukarati, Edison Gutu and André van Belkum outside the Mukarati's house in Mutare

health problems.

Then we had a most encouraging visit with Harris Hlazo and his wife Lizzie. I have

known the family for over 30 years, but recent events in the Church resulted in a loss of contact. Happily the relationship has been cemented once again, and Harris will be attending with United in the future.

To Kadoma and KweKwe

It was hard for Steve and I to say farewell to our members there, but other members were waiting in various points along the route. From Harare we journeyed to the small town of Kadoma where we spent a number of hours with Mrs. Chichaya, who is a widow and lives on a small farm in the area. She grows maize, vegetables and fruit. Despite a few health difficulties she is doing well. By the way, she is the mother-in-law of our elder who serves in Zambia, Kambani Banda.

From Kadoma we went to KweKwe

where we met with Tienie and Elsie Nel. By this time the rain was pelting down, and the streets of the town had been turned into streams. We were relieved to find the Nels waiting patiently at the local post office, where we had arranged to meet. Water had splashed onto the distributor of the Nels' pickup, and it refused to budge. He insisted we continue on to their home, while he would sort out the problem. The Nels stay on what can only be described as a typical Zimbabwe farm deep in the African bush. With the rain still coming down in buckets, Steve had to convert to his four-wheel drive in order to negotiate the slippery ground, and ford streams swirling across the road. But at the same time it was a lot of fun! About an hour after we arrived, Mr. Nel turned up, wet through, but his pickup was in working order again.

One of the first things we noticed when we walked into their lounge area, was the rows and rows of video sermon tapes from the home office. Elsie referred to them as her "lifeline" and constant source of inspiration and encouragement. She has listened to them many times over. She has an uplifting environment to observe the Sabbath, but not without its dangers. Recently she walked to a rocky outcrop near their home, and encountered a black mamba which rose up, and "stood" looking down at her within easy biting range. One of the most deadly and fierce snakes in the world, it allowed her to back away slowly. Needless to say she now has a different area for Sabbath meditation.

We spent the evening there, and left the next morning after also meeting with her daughter and husband who had come to see us.

All the Way to Bulawayo

There was more heavy rain all along the way to Bulawayo. There we met with member Stephen Tshabala and his wife, Vetina, and also another couple, Levas and Siphewe Ncube, who are keen to become a part of the Church. Discussions were fruitful and



Group in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, gathers after Bible study March 3

rewarding. On the Sabbath we all met together, that is, all seven of us, including Ruramai Mukarati, the daughter of Mike and Primrose from Mutare, who is studying in Bulawayo. This was the first Sabbath meeting in Bulawayo since a split occurred about two years ago. Again, it was tough saying good-bye to people you feel so close to even though we were together for only two days.

From Bulawayo we returned to Johannesburg, and arrived feeling that we had accomplished what we had set out to do. The trip went smoothly, and we had spent quality time with our members in Zimbabwe, a country that is experiencing many painful hardships at this time. *uv*



Theresa Chickaya with her son (left) and grandson (behind) and Steve Serfontein. Below, Mr. van Belkum with Gill and Roy Heathcote



Caribbean Region: 14 Baptized, Four New Churches, New Contact in Trinidad

by Kingsley Mather

The work in the Caribbean region continues to move forward as more brethren seek fellowship with United.

Arnold Hampton and I made a two-week trip to Guyana, Brazil and Trinidad in February. God blessed the trip with success.

This year we decided to go in two separate directions for part of the trip in order to visit more people.

North Rupununi, Guyana

Mr. Hampton boarded a 6:30 a.m. flight from Georgetown, Guyana, to Annai, North Rupununi, on the Sabbath, February 3. He was accompanied by Clyde Chinian, our local contact in the area. Mr. Hampton and I had visited the area in May 2000 and promised to return to conduct baptism counseling for a number of people who had first made contact with the Church in 1984. It was a hectic two days of intensive baptism counseling and question-and-answer sessions.

On Sunday, February 4, Mr. Hampton and the group traveled several miles to a stream where four elated individuals were baptized. They were the firstfruits of the Wowatta Village, North Rupununi. The group was anxious to meet regularly, so Mr. Hampton established a congregation and the group will meet in a building that is owned by Judith Karaen Moses and her husband Kelvin Edgar Moses. The Church will provide assistance so the building can be ready for the Feast.

Long Creek, East Bank, Demerara, Guyana

Meanwhile I remained in Georgetown and traveled to a village about one and a half hours away by car. Sabbath, February 3, I visited a family that we had contacted in May 2000. When I arrived, the group was listening to a cassette sermon from the home office. The children provided special music



The group in Long Creek, Guyana; above, the Long Creek children sing at services

and the group was extremely excited that United Church of God thought enough about them to send a minister to visit them. There was a question-and-answer period and two full days of baptism counseling. The subject of repentance was covered on Sabbath and the meaning of baptism and related topics were covered on Sunday.

Then Sunday afternoon I baptized Lloyed Joseph Dexter and Yvonne Jean Dexter into the family of God. There were smiles and great joy since the Dexters had been waiting for over 10 years to be baptized. There is considerable interest in *The Good News* by a number of people in the Long Creek area. We expect that this group will flourish as God calls others to the Body of Christ in Long

Creek, Linden Highway, East Bank, Demerara, Guyana, South America.

South Rupununi

Mr. Hampton and Mr. Chinian met me in Lethem, Central Rupununi, on Tuesday, February 6. We purchased food, fuel, water and other supplies for the 100-mile journey to visit interested people in Southern Rupununi.

We had hoped to travel to the southern part of the area last May, but because it was the rainy season the journey had to be canceled. We boarded a Land Rover for the rugged (an understatement) journey to three villages (Awaruwaunawa, Ashalton and Palm Springs) in South Rupununi. We left Lethem around 1 p.m. but encountered several difficulties. The vehicle got three flat tires. Then it got stuck in the mud and it took about an hour to get out. Then the vehicle developed mechanical problems and began to spew oil. We were able to patch up the vehicle and it sputtered to a large ranch in Dadanawa where we were forced to stop for the night. We had to negotiate with the manager of the ranch to rent another vehicle for the 50-mile trip to the three Amerindian villages.

Wednesday, February 7, we got an early start on the trip south. The second vehicle



also had problems. It did not have any brakes and the alternator was not working so it was not charging the battery.

We arrived at the first village around mid-day.

The congregation in Awaruwaunawa has been meeting for a number of years. They were associated with another group of the Church of God, but they were abandoned a few years ago. There are about 20 to 30 adults and children. They had been expecting us on the Sabbath, February 3, so most of the members were on their farms. We were able to meet the leader of the group, Lauris Alfred, who was made a deacon, his son and another couple, Mr. and Mrs. Eustace Rodrigues, who are leaders in the community. The meeting lasted about an hour and a half. They informed us that the group had decided that they wanted to be a part of United Church of God. They were aware of the work of UCG and were impressed with the concern that the Church is

showing for God's people around the world.

Mr. Alfred mentioned several problems that they had. Since they are not part of the Catholic Church, they are having difficulties getting marriages performed. He has applied to the government of Guyana for a license to be a Marriage Officer and is hoping that it would be approved. A number of people also wanted to counsel for baptism so we will have to return to this village or have the interested candidates meet us in another village on our next trip to Guyana.

The members are dedicated to the truth and want to be a part of a larger work. They have a Church building, but it is in need of repair, so we will arrange to help them make the necessary repairs so that they can continue to worship in comfort. We also provided a cassette player so that they can play cassette sermon tapes and hymns for services on the Sabbath.

We left for the village of Ashalton, hoping to arrive before sundown. If we hadn't, we would have had to sleep in the back of the truck since the truck's electrical system was not working. Thankfully we arrived in Ashalton just before sunset and found a guesthouse to spend the night. It was comfortable, but did not have electricity. There were two couples who wanted to counsel that evening. One family had been members of the Church of God for a number of years and the other couple was keeping the Sabbath and kept the Feast with the group at Awaruwaunawa for the first time in 2000. We talked with them for about an hour by candlelight then had dinner and retired for the night.

The next morning we had an interesting talk with the housekeeper during breakfast. She had heard the discussion with the two couples the previous evening and had wanted to come and join the conversation, but was afraid. She had a lot of questions about the Church and work and asked to be added to the *Good News* mailing list. Shortly after breakfast we boarded the truck for the third and final village on this part of the trip.

Three couples and some of their children from Ashalton joined the party for the trip to Palm Springs, South Rupununi. The truck arrived at the home of John Atkinson later that morning. Mr. Hampton took a group who had questions and I took the other group for baptism counseling. At the end of the counselings one person was baptized. Mr. Atkinson, a former school teacher, was baptized in a stream on his property the afternoon of Thursday, February 8. It was a moving ceremony and Mr. Atkinson, who had long waited for this moment,

beamed with delight. We returned to his home and the family provided lunch, then we set out for the trip back to Dadanawa by way of Ashalton.

We arrived in Dadanawa around sunset and were pleased to learn that the vehicle we had left there had been patched up for the return trip to Lethem. The management of Dadanawa Ranch prepared dinner, so we ate and began the 50-mile journey back to Lethem around 8 p.m. We finally arrived at our guesthouse at around 1 a.m. Friday, February 9.

Moscou, Brazil

Mr. Hampton, Mr. Chinian and I left the



Mr. and Mrs. Eustace Rodrigues, Ryan Alfred and Laurus Alfred, deacon, outside the church building in Awaruwaunawa, Guyana

hotel at mid-morning for the short boat trip from Guyana to Brazil. The water was shallow in part of the river; and we saw several people walking from the Brazil to the Guyana side. Then we took a cab to the Federal (the equivalent of

an immigration department) in Bonfin to officially enter the country. Things appeared to be moving smoothly. Bahamians do not need a visa to visit Brazil, so my passport was stamped quickly; so was Mr. Chinian's. Then Mr. Hampton's time came and we realized that we had a major problem. The officials refused to allow him to enter the country. There was a mix up with his paperwork, so he had to return to Guyana and go home.

This was a big disappointment for all of us, as we thought that we had covered all bases, but it reminded us that there is a devil and he will do all he can to frustrate the work of God. Sometimes God allows him to carry out his wicked schemes, probably to see how we will deal with it.



Group baptized in Moscou, Brazil

We got back into the cab and Mr. Chinian and I were dropped at the bus terminal and Mr. Hampton went back to take a ferry back to Lethem, Guyana.

The bus trip from Bonfin to Boa Vista (See "CARIBBEAN," page 10)

Church Growing, Public Lectures Planned for “Southern Cone”

by Mario Seiglie

“But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for

Due to limited funds, we only have two full-time men to serve this extensive geographical area that is larger than the continental United States. This calls for creative



Brethren attending the Feast of Tabernacles 2000 in Maitencillo, Chile

you yourselves are taught by God to love one another” (1 Thessalonians 4:9).

Having brotherly love for those are far away is not easy. We generally think about those who directly concern us—our family, church, community, state and country. Yet God expects us to extend that brotherly love to those beyond our borders, for we are a worldwide spiritual family. That is why it is well put that the United Church of God is an International Association.

How can we pray effectively for the brethren around the world if we hardly know they exist? It is with this purpose that the *United News* carries news of the state and needs of the congregations around the globe.

I have the honor of serving the congregations in southern South America, an area called the Southern Cone. We have four congregations and eight video groups in this region. The weekly attendance in Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil totals 450.

management and, thankfully, we have the help of two local elders, five deacons and numerous brethren who serve as coordinators throughout the area. This gives many brethren the opportunity to grow in service toward God and His Church.

Of the four congregations, Santiago, Chile, has the largest attendance with 250. Temuco, Chile, has an attendance of 35; La Paz, Bolivia, 24; and Buenos Aires, Argentina, 18. There are also eight smaller video groups that meet every Sabbath.

The biggest problems for the brethren in the area are economic. The average income for a family in the area is less than \$500 a month. Unemployment is high, and there is still a great deal of poverty. To make ends meet, some brethren only eat twice a day and have tea with bread at night.

Despite the economic problems, families usually are quite solid, since everyone has to chip in to get by. All too often, where

there is much wealth, families tend to become more independent and less patient and tolerant of each other. In Latin America, children usually stay in the home more time, and form tighter bonds with their parents. This helps us in the Church to work with the entire family, instead of having them more dispersed.

In this area, we average 20 baptisms per year. Slowly, attendance is growing, and thanks to the increased circulation of the Spanish *Good News*, in June of this year we will invite readers to public lectures in Chile. We do ask for your prayers that God will bless this lecture series, and that He will continue to call those He wants in His Church.

Most of the brethren in the area meet together once a year, at the Feast in Maitencillo, Chile. This is a beach resort that is a two-hour drive from Santiago, the capital. There generally are 470 brethren in attendance, and we greatly welcome visitors from around the world. Translation in English is available for services, and the Feast has a very warm, family atmosphere.

We hope some can make it and get to know our wonderful brethren from this Southern Cone area. In this way, it will be easier to remember them and their needs in our prayers, and we can better fulfill God's commandment to extend our brotherly love around the world. *UN*

Aid Received in El Salvador



The Zaldana family of El Salvador live on the side of a volcano and lost their homes in the earthquakes. On the Sabbath they walk a long distance to the bus for Church. They are wearing clothes from the LifeNets container sent in February

After devastating earthquakes that destroyed several members' homes in El Salvador, UCG members and congregations responded by sending thousands of dollars in financial aid. Herbert Cisneros, pastor in El

Salvador, expressed appreciation for this, and for the LifeNets container for Guatemala which the brethren there sent on.

“We are thankful to God and to the opportune involvement of members and nonmem-

bers who made possible the granting of the exemption” by the president allowing the container into El Salvador, said Mr. Cisneros. “This exemption has not been granted even to many lawyers and judges...” *UN*

“CARIBBEAN,” (Continued from page 9)

was uneventful. We arrived a few hours before sunset. We stopped at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Yose Valdisio Correia Junior, the daughter and son-in-law of a member of the Moscou, Brazil, congregation. The family was very hospitable, serving us lunch while we waited for the husband to arrive home. He took us to a currency exchange and arranged for transportation to Moscou. Mr. Chinian and I arrived at the home of Geraldo De Souza about 9 p.m. Friday evening. The family was in bed, but the host got up and helped us set up our hammocks and prepare for bed.

The congregation was expecting us earlier in the day, but since we did not arrive before sunset they were not aware that we were there. The host left early for services so that he could inform them that we had arrived. Sabbath, February 10, was a hectic day with 49 gathered for the 9:30 a.m. service. Robert Mateus de Silva, the leader of the group, gave the sermonette and I gave the sermon. Ten children were blessed after ser-

vices, then the group had lunch. I conducted baptism counseling until just before sunset. The counseling continued at 7:45 a.m. the following day. The group and individual counselings finished in the early afternoon and seven candidates gathered at a peaceful stream for the baptism.

Our host, Geraldo De Souza, took us by taxi to his daughter and son-in-law's home in Boa Vista. They gave us a tour of the city and then stopped at a local restaurant for dinner. Mr. Valdisio informed me that his home is always open whenever I visit the country.

We left for Lethem, Guyana, at 11 a.m., Monday, February 12. That evening I visited a Church family who is living in Lethem. Two grandchildren were blessed, and this ended the Guyana and Brazil part of the trip.

Establishing a Contact in Trinidad

The Church of God in Trinidad was one of the largest congregations during the latter years of Herbert W. Armstrong. While we have had good responses from ads that

have been placed in newspapers in Trinidad, we did not have a contact person in the Port of Spain area. Mr. Hampton had baptized one gentleman in the south of the island, but we did not have any contact in the city.

I visited Trinidad February 14 to 16 and met a young man who has been affiliated with the Church of God from an early age. Dorian Fredericks was born in Guyana and moved to Trinidad several years ago. He worked for a local company for a short time, then started his own business, the Literacy Improvement Center. The school is dedicated to inspiring people to greater achievements. God has blessed the business and he has a hundred students.

I wrote him in early January 2001 informing him that I would be visiting Trinidad in February. We met on Thursday, February 15, and discussed the work of the United Church of God. Mr. Fredericks offered to assist the work in Trinidad in any way he can. He will begin to establish *Good*

News outlets on the island. He is also looking into obtaining a local post office box so that the people of Trinidad and Tobago will have a local address to request literature from the Church.

He has offered his school premises as a place where interested persons can meet for Sabbath services. This is a breakthrough that we have been looking for in Trinidad, and we look forward to establishing regular services in Port of Spain, Trinidad, later this year.

I also placed ads for *The Good News* and the booklet *What Is Your Destiny?* in February and March. This will be followed by ads for *The Good News* and *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* in April and May. Through mid April we had received 281 responses from the ads, increasing our list in Trinidad by 29 percent.

The work in the Caribbean region is moving along. We had two baptisms in the region in 2000. So far this year we have had 14 baptisms in the month of February! God is blessing the work in the region! *UN*

UCG—British Isles Planting Seeds in Sweden

by John A. Jewell

In the three years since the work in the United Kingdom was restructured we have been greatly blessed by the Eternal in that we have seen great progress in the preaching of the gospel. Our mailing list for *The Good News* has climbed from around 400 to over 7,000. Of that number more than 2,000 are in Sweden. How has this come about?

In the United Kingdom we feel a deep sense of responsibility for western and northwestern Europe. Several years ago it seemed to us that all preaching of the gospel, in Scandinavia especially, had come to an end. Yet, as we would understand it, this is a very important part of the lost 10 tribes of Israel today. Historically, the Scandinavian area has been a responsibility of the United Kingdom. What then were we to do?

Advertising in Sweden

We had advertised in the U.K. editions of *Reader's Digest* and had found a very warm and welcoming response from the staff. We have now had two advertisements in the Swedish edition, with the second appearing in March.

But the response was not as high as we felt it should be given the responsibility to preach the gospel as effectively as possible. We had been using another company in Britain that produced an increase to our mailing list of over 1,500. We had contracted to use them again this March. So we talked to them and asked if they had associated companies in other areas. Indeed they did, in nearly every country of Europe.

Since Sweden has the greatest population of the Scandinavian nations and is also the most strategically located, we contracted with the Swedish company for a several-week-long advertising project. This has produced well over 2,000 replies. A number of years ago the Church had a list of around 15,000 for the four Scandinavian nations. We felt that this more than 2,000 was a good start along the way to hopefully getting back to where God's Church had once been, and maybe even further.

After a couple of years we hope that it might be possible to have public campaigns in Sweden. We would invite those on the mailing list, who we hope will provide a core of attendees, and we might also advertise to possibly attract a few more to the meetings.

We did have a few problems, however, the major ones being the cost of postage and also the fact that a U.K. address might discourage some in Sweden from responding.

Trip to Sweden

We were able to make some necessary contacts during a trip to Sweden February 22



Above, the Jewells with executives of the government agency responsible for church registration in Sweden

through 27. I was there to perform the wedding of one of our two members in Sweden, Kira Engholm. Now that Kira has become Kira Spenser by marrying Paul Spenser from the Isle of Man, there is only one member left in Sweden, Solweig Hammar.

During the trip we secured a mail box in Stockholm, with the number 144. And the

postal area of the office where our mailbox is maintained is, believe it or not, 111!

We talked to the government department concerned with church registration, and the executives were most helpful and encouraging. They told us how it is only recently that the Swedish government has relaxed the laws concerning religious organizations. Until

From left (seated), Solweig Hammar, UCG member who lives in Stockholm, Kira (Engholm) Spenser, Paul Spenser, Mrs. Engholm, mother of the bride. Standing, Tina and John Jewell. Below, the wedding



then, only the Lutheran church was able to obtain tax relief. Now it is open to all religious organizations, but registration, as in the U.K., is a requirement.

We are now moving ahead with registration. Hopefully the United Church of God—Sweden will be a legal reality before the end of this year.

Though we have just one member, there is nevertheless a light shining in Sweden today. With the dedicated preaching of the gospel, who knows how many the Father will add to the Church to take a part with all of us in the furthering of the gospel before the return of Jesus Christ.

As we are able, we are looking at the possibility of carrying out a similar advertising project in Denmark, hopefully in September. Nothing is certain, but what is certain is that God does listen to the fervent prayers of His people.

Please pray with us that this work will be done effectively in the British

Isles, Scandinavia, the nations of western and northwestern Europe and the Middle East. Pray that the Father will send more laborers to help with those fields that are "already white for harvest." There is a great work to be done. Let us be about our Father's business, not just in Sweden, but in the whole world. UN

German Semiannual Letter Draws 47 Percent Response

UCG-Germany mailed its first semiannual letter in early December to 474 subscribers who have renewed their subscription to the *Gute Nachrichten* magazine. The new booklet, *Biblical Prophecy: A Look at Your Future?* was offered, and 223 responses were received to the offer, a 47 percent response rate.

UCG-Germany's 11th booklet, *Living Faith*, was printed in February.

Three other booklets have now been translated and are in various stages of editorial review: *What Is the Church?*, *Making Life Work* and *Heaven or Hell*.

The first two lessons of the German-language *Bible Study Course* should be printed during the first half of the year.

Year 2000 Statistics

For the year 2000, total income increased by 9.4 percent over 1999. Regular donation income was 11.5 percent higher than in 1999, and the Holy Day offerings increased by 4.2 percent over the previous year.

During the year 2000 UCG-Germany received a total of 3,239 pieces of "mail." Of

the total, 366 requests were received by fax and another 170 requests came in as e-mails. All other requests were normal mail received at UCG-Germany's post office box in Bonn. The mail total for 2000 was the highest yearly total so far.

Church News

The city of Dormagen, located between Cologne and Düsseldorf, has granted UCG-Germany exemption from paying hall rent for Sabbath and Holy Day hall rentals. UCG-Germany applied for the exemption as a registered, tax-exempt religious organization. The exemption takes effect on March 1 and will save UCG-Germany more than US\$2,000 annually.

The first session of the Family Club in the German-language area was held in the Dormagen congregation on Sabbath morning, February 17. In addition to the table topics, three speeches were given. Following the meeting a light lunch was served prior to the regular Sabbath

service. Members generally were very enthusiastic about the club.

Advertising Plans

At its December meeting, the UCG-

Germany national council approved advertising plans for the first half of 2001. The small space "half full" ad is being repeated in the health magazine *reform rundschau* during the months February through April.

In addition, an ad was approved for *Eltern* (Parents) magazine as part of UCG-Germany's strategy to attract younger readers for the *Gute Nachrichten* magazine. The ad will run in the May issue of *Eltern* and will offer a subscription to the *GN* along

with a free reprint entitled "Marriage & Family," a collection of articles on these topics that have been published in the *GN*.

This information first appeared in UCG-Germany Update 014.



Media Efforts Bring Encouraging Results in Australia

February was the busiest and most encouraging month yet for media efforts in Australia. Not only did the most effective ad to date appear in *Reader's Digest*, but members dropped 100,000 cards in letter boxes around Australia at about the same time. In addition, two congregations, Melbourne West, Victoria, and Devonport, Tasmania, reinforced the mailbox drop in their areas with advertisements in local publications.

To date over 1,100 responses to the *Reader's Digest* ad have been received and the responses from the postcard drop are coming in at a rate higher than expected. As a result of this tremendous effort, the goal for

this financial year of 8,500 subscribers to *The Good News* magazine has already been reached four months ahead of time.

Media Lecture

While all this was happening, a media lecture took place in Melbourne on the evening of February 24. Roy Hickford, general manager of marketing services for Pacific Magazines and Printing in Melbourne, gave an hour and a half presentation to the members of the National Council and Media Committee, as well as to those who wished to attend from the combined Victorian congregations. A member of the Media Committee commented that a similar

presentation in the industry would have cost much more than the Church could afford.

The purpose of the lecture was to alert the audience to the factors to be considered when advertising in Australia, and help them become more familiar with the socio-economic and cultural situations. These considerations affect the subjects the Media and Publishing Committee might consider advertising, as well as the advertising vehicle.

In a question-and-answer session conducted by Mr. Hickford after the lecture, several questions were asked as to how to attract the youth in Australia to the gospel message. Reg Wright made the comment that we have

the ideas and means to preach the gospel in a very effective way. All we need is to continue to trust God to provide.

Waiting Room Program

Callers for the waiting room program have also forged ahead, breaking new records for the number of waiting rooms called every month. As a result of their diligence, *The Good News* magazine is now being placed in over 2,600 medical waiting rooms throughout Australia.

Along with coordinator Chris Mathews, our present callers do a wonderful job. They are: Anne Burchard, Lyn Carnochan, Helen Hambleton, Sue

Australian Youth Enjoy Summer Camp at Camp Mac

"I am grateful to all United Church of God members—to the ministry for focusing on the positive, for being non-judgmental and for showing every person respect and value. Keep up the good work. Thanks very much."

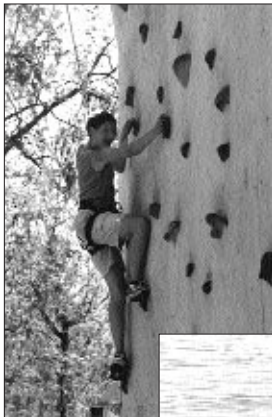
"To all the camp staff: Thank you for all the efforts, encouragement and everything you did for us. I really appreciated it. This is one camp I will never forget."

We received many comments like this from the campers who attended the sixth United Youth Camp in Australia. This year we had 75 campers attend from all the eastern states of Australia as well as five campers from New Zealand and one from Tonga. The camp is designed for young people from 11 years up to 25. The older campers act as older brothers and sisters to the younger campers and also take on responsibilities as dorm leaders and activity team leaders and help us with the overall supervision of the camp. We only have a small base of 12 full-time staff that includes our cooking staff and four other members who helped out on special occasions.

Camp this year was held at Camp Mac on the banks of Lake Macquarie about two hours north of Sydney. Lake Macquarie is the largest salt water lake in Australia. This year we had very hot weather as the Sydney basin had one of its hottest summers in nearly 20 years. The water activities were most popular during the warm days.

One of the highlights this year was our sailing program taught by Don and Dawn Goodger from Melbourne. Each group had three sessions of sailing covering either an entire morning or afternoon. The last session was a full regatta and the camp caretaker was astounded at how well the campers had done with no previous experience.

Also on the lake we had canoeing with Brisbane member Mark Robertson.



Penny McQueen climbing the wall; Julie-Ann Watts abseiling; Tammy Lehmann, Jessica Archer and Robert Murray in the canoe; and Sally Hambleton sailing (photos by Gary Michelson)

After teaching strokes and survival techniques, the campers all went on a full-day canoe trip to an island on the lake. Again they applied their skills well and were able to paddle through some tough conditions

in very fine style. Each activity team also went to the beach for a day of surfing, sand castle making and snorkeling with Ken and Ruth Murray from Toowoomba.

Mark Robertson gave a talk to the older campers on "how to improve your chances of getting a job." Mr. Robertson employs around 60 people in his computer company and presented his lecture on what an employer looks for in a job application and interview. All the older campers commented on how much they appreciated his

talk as he gave them information and a perspective they had not learned at school or university.

Each age group (11 to 14, 15 to 17 and 18 years and over) had a practical session on public speaking in a type of speaking club. After table topics presented by the camp director, the older groups were given eight minutes in teams to prepare a speech. Then one camper from each team would present their speech. This was followed by a speech banquet where we had speeches presented by a girl and a boy from each age group. Considering they only had one or two days to prepare, they did an outstanding job.

Other activities included archery (66 percent hit the bull's eye), oz-tag football, swimming, dance instruction, bead craft, rock climbing, abseiling (rappelling) and

morning challenges for those able to get out of bed that early.

One of the key scriptures we like to remind the youth of is found in Ecclesiastes 11:9. "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment."

As this is the basis for camp, we begin each day with a Christian Living class. We divided the campers into the three age groups. The ministers give their subject to each age group over three days tailoring their presentation to the age level of the group.

This year we began the camp with a Sabbath and concluded it with a Sabbath. Each Friday night we had an interactive Bible study where our subjects included "respect" and "life's goal." The Sabbath began with a question-and-answer session where the ministry of Ken Murray, Don Goodger, Barry Williams and Bruce Dean asked the campers a question and then the campers asked the ministry a question. The questions they asked the ministers were varied and quite involved. Services on both Sabbaths were organized by the campers and they performed every duty of the service except for the sermon. Paul McQueen and Daniel Collette from Melbourne gave the sermonettes and gave great messages.

Finally here is one of many comments received from parents of a camper: "We would like to express our gratitude to you for making camp such a wonderful experience for our children. They all just loved all the experiences they had and being among so many young people at once was a real treat. We appreciate how much hard work goes into making camp such a success. Please be assured all that hard work has made a very valuable and lasting impression in the lives of our children."

Bruce Dean, camp director

Kenavan, Lyn Marshall, Judy Nelson, Ray Urquart and Sue Williams.

Personalized Newsstands

The concept of personalized newsstands has been tested in Sydney and in the Melbourne East congregation. The idea is that a member finds an outlet for a newsstand, gets permission to place the stand and stocks the stand. In Morwell, Victoria, Maria Broekstra has been stocking a stand for some time. Maria has also tested booklets on the stand along with *The Good News* magazine. Surprisingly the booklets were taken more often than the magazine, probably because they were on a particular topic of interest to the reader. The idea of personalized newsstands has proven very effective and will be one of the programs recommended to congregations by the Media Committee in the coming financial year. As well as stocking her newsstand, Maria and the other ladies living in the area have dropped over 10,000 householder cards. Maria says, "I pray every day that in the near future we will have a church here again in Morwell."

Plastic Wrap for *The Good News*

During the past five years *The Good News* has been mailed with the aid of volunteer labor from the National Office. In preparation of the Operational Plan for the next financial year, the Media and Publishing chairman recently rigorously reviewed our postage costs for the coming year and made several cost-effective adjustments. The chairman of the Media and Publishing Committee and the National Office manager also met with representatives from Australia Post and a Gold Coast mailing house that had submitted the most competitive quote to plastic wrap and mail *The Good News*.

After consideration, it was decided that from July 1, 2001, *The Good News* will be plastic wrapped and mailed from this mailing house. The Church will be immediately entitled to postage discounts for different levels of presorting and, as the subscriber list increases, further discounts in certain larger postcode groupings will become available. This decision will also facilitate a concentrated subscriber development program for the

list by enabling the Media and Publishing Committee to insert A4-sized advertising.

Audiotape Offer Tested

The regional pastor for South East Queensland, Graemme Marshall, reports that at the last General Conference of Elders in Cincinnati he heard of an audiotape offer being conducted in several congregations. He contacted Indianapolis, Indiana, pastor Darris McNeely about the program in his area. Armed with his guidelines, experience and records of his encouraging responses, Mr. Marshall decided to test the program in Australia. He had already produced several short audiotapes for a Christian radio station in Warwick which aired the tapes a couple of times but then declined further tapes, as did Radio Reema, another Christian broadcaster, when they discovered we were not mainstream in our beliefs.

Working in conjunction with the National Office which provided an approved letter with selected subscriber address labels, local members insert copies of the letter into labeled envelopes and mail them. Those who

responded were then sent the audiotapes by the church team. The first tape sent was on the subject of crime.

At the time of writing a 13 percent response rate has been received from Queensland and the Northern Territory. Similar encouraging results were received from letters sent to Western and South Australia. In February Mr. Marshall offered a tape entitled, "Why Upset Weather?" to *Good News* readers in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. To date there has been a 16.1 percent response from Queensland and responses are now beginning to come in from the other states.

The object of the program is to offer something different, to encourage *Good News* readers to identify more with God's Church and perhaps to become coworkers. Mr. Marshall mentioned that he hoped to be able to determine if there are pockets of interested people who may respond to the offer of a public Bible lecture.

Ruth Root on behalf of the Australian National Council

Ghana: A Reality Check for American Visitors

by Melvin Rhodes

It was Chuck Stevens who first said it. I asked Chuck, a 54-year-old long-time member of the Houston, Texas, congregation, why he was returning to Ghana for a second visit, one year after the first. "I come here for a reality check," was his response.

I thought about that a great deal during a 10-day visit to Ghana in April with Jim Franks and Chuck. We were joined later by Joel Meeker who had been visiting in French-speaking African countries. This was the first time I had been back to Ghana since leaving with my family in 1990, following a 12-year association with Ghana. We lived in the country from 1978 to 1983 and again from 1988 to 1990. The last 10 years have not been easy ones for people in the Churches of God. Ten days in Ghana was a much-needed reality check for me, too. A visit to this poverty-stricken corner of West Africa is a "miracle cure" for Western visitors!

The Remnant Church of God is a group of people who go back to the 1970s. Four of the men who now pastor congregations were reading Church literature back in 1974. They were excited by the new knowledge and understanding they were gaining through the writings of Herbert Armstrong and other Church publications and wanted to share it with others. They could read English, but many in Ghana, including most outside of the major urban centers, could not. So they went into the villages and began preaching the Word of God in Twi, Ghana's most widely spoken native language. Today there are 13 pastors serving approximately 1,300 people in congregations scattered throughout Ghana.

These 1,300 people now want to be a part of the United Church of God, *an International Association*. Some years ago

they decided they wanted to be a part of something bigger than themselves, realizing that there were others beyond Ghana who were also sincerely trying to follow God. They approached the Church at the worst time, when doctrinal changes were turning people away from God's truth. Some years later they tried again, only to find further division in the Church. But still they persisted.

When United Church of God ministers reestablished contact with them a couple of years ago, it was clear that there were some differences between Remnant and United. Realizing the necessity that we all "speak the same thing" (1 Corinthians 1:10), ministers of United have been visiting Ghana on a regular basis and sharing our understanding of the Scriptures with them.

What we have all found is an incredible, uplifting and spiritually edifying excitement at hearing the Word of God expounded. As the pastors learned of the importance of the Holy Days, they shared their new knowledge with all their members. Attendance at the Feast of Tabernacles has been increasing each year, reaching 75 percent of all members last year. This year it is expected that everybody attending weekly Sabbath services will be at the Feast. This is quite an accomplishment in a country where the average income is only \$30 per month and where halls and accommodations are difficult to come by.

The enthusiasm with which new understanding is received is infectious. After the last few years of spiritual confusion, division and frequent disappointment at the loss of many who have decided to travel a different spiritual journey, visiting Ghana is truly a reality check, a reminder of the "simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3) and of God's plan of salvation. There has been no

division here over issues of government or because of picky doctrinal disputes.

Their excitement helps every visitor to recapture his "first love" (Revelation 2:4). The members in Ghana receive the Word with the attitude Jesus Christ encouraged—"as a little child" (Mark 10:15).

This does not mean that they accept everything without question. I wasn't the only visiting American pastor to find their questions quite challenging and thought-provoking, giving us all an opportunity to explore the Scriptures together and "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). But, like the Bereans, after studying together, sometimes into the early hours, they readily accepted the Word of God and were willing to make the necessary changes in their personal lives and in the organization of their congregations (Acts 17:10-12).

The Ghanaians will certainly benefit from being a part of United. But Americans will benefit, too. During the last few years I have found disturbing trends within the Churches of God, which reflect trends in our society. One is parochialism, defined in my dictionary as "narrow, provincial, limited"—a limited vision which doesn't see beyond the local congregation. This has encouraged the development of local independent churches that no longer feel any need to go into all the world. It was Jesus Christ who told us to do that, to preach the gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; 24:14).

I well remember one rather angry individual about to leave the Church over some disagreement with "headquarters" proclaiming, "I don't care about the rest of the world. All I care about is the three or four friends I've got here in this congregation." A reality check in the form of a visit to Ghana would



Melvin Rhodes and Azariah Maxwell Coffie
(photo by Jim Franks)

have been just the antidote for such sentiments—how can any Christian come away feeling no brotherly love for those thousands of miles away who need our help? Why would anybody not want to fellowship with others of the same mind around the world?

No visitor could possibly come away without a fervent desire to remain connected to God's people in Ghana.

There's another trend, too, which has had a negative effect upon the Church. It is the increasing materialism of our age. It is affecting God's people profoundly and is a major threat to our way of life. Many who fellowshiped with us 10 years ago are now busily worshipping the almighty dollar, too busy making money to observe God's Sabbath and Holy Days. Some still with us have a more lukewarm approach as they get increasingly caught up in this world.

Again, a visit to Ghana makes you realize the futility of it all—that true happiness does not come from a big bank balance, but through a close relationship with our great God and caring relationships with each other.

It is my fervent hope and prayer that the members of the Remnant Church of God will become full participants in the work of United. I look forward to encouraging as many as possible to visit the people in Ghana, to take that same reality check that so inspired Chuck to return for a second visit. *UV*

The Beautiful Process of Becoming a Saint

The greatest transformation can be summed up in three major phases, which are portrayed by the first four festivals of God—Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Trumpets.

by Don Hooser

A full-service car wash is quite a step-by-step process. A typical car wash sequence includes (after paying the cashier): vacuuming, prepping to remove bugs and mud, spraying with soapy water, scrubbing with automatic brushes, rinsing, air-drying with fans, towel-drying the remaining water and cleaning ash trays, mats, mirrors and windows.

God's plan for mankind is not a one-time quick fix, but a step-by-step process as well—not to wash cars, but to spiritually cleanse people. And it is much, much more than that. It is a total miraculous transformation of lowly humans to become perfect glorified sons of God in the Kingdom of God!

We've heard various transformation tales, like a frog to a prince or a Cinderella to a princess. And in God's creation, there are countless transformations, like a caterpillar to a butterfly and a tiny zygote (embryo) to a beautiful baby.

But the greatest transformation of all is the metamorphosis of a human being from mortal and carnal to immortal and spiritual, from weak and sinful to powerful and holy; in short, from sinner to saint. It is a complex process, but simple in overall design. The more we understand this process, the more we are inspired by the awesome beauty of it.

This transformation can be summed up in three major phases, which are portrayed by the first four festivals of God.

This process can be described with words that may be a little unclear at first, including the words *saint*, *holy*, *sanctified*, *justified* and *saved*. These words were not invented by theologians—they are in the Bible where they are used many times.

A clear understanding is necessary in order to know how to answer some important questions, such as: *Are you sanctified? Are you a saint? Are you saved?* How would you answer?

Let's begin with some brief definitions.

Justify: To make just or righteous.

Holy: Sacred; set apart, separated, or consecrated to God; separated from sin.

Saint: One who is holy; a holy one.

Sanctify: To set apart for a sacred purpose, to dedicate to sacred use, consecrate; to make holy.

In the biblical Hebrew and Greek, the words translated *holy*, *saint* and *sanctify* are

from the same root words. Space does not permit giving the Hebrew and Greek words with their variants and shades of meaning, but the English words translate the meanings closely enough for our understanding.

To help understand the word *holy*, one can substitute the words *of God*. Holy Scriptures are the Scriptures of God; holy calling is the calling of God, etc. So a saint or holy one is a person of God—one God has chosen to belong to Him, represent Him and serve Him.

Most of us have heard people say, "I'm no saint," meaning "I'm certainly not perfect." Is a saint perfect? What is a *saint*? One dictionary definition is basically correct: "Any baptized believer in Christ." The New Testament in many places calls all true Christians *saints*. And the context often relates sins of those saints, so they clearly weren't perfect.

Names That Sound Too Good

But the words *saint* and *holy one* sound like someone perfect, or practically perfect, don't they? Let's pause and reflect for a moment! Doesn't it just seem that God is describing us, His people (with so many flaws and failings!), with words that are too honorable, too complimentary, too sublime? It certainly seems we don't deserve to be called *saints*. Or to be considered *saved*.

One benefit of such noble names is that they give us a lot to live up to. As a wise and loving Father, God uses positive incentives to inspire and motivate us.

Part of the explanation is that God is willing to name us *what we will become*—to give us the honor now of being called what we are destined to be. God called Abraham the father of many nations long before it became true. Paul explained that God "calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Romans 4:17).

Because of God's power to transform and preserve us, He has faith in our ultimate success. He calls us winners long before we have crossed the finish line. It truly is a great honor for God to call us *saints*, *holy ones*, *sons of God*, etc. We are very aware that we should honor God, but we tend to forget how much God honors us.

One benefit of such noble names is that they give us a lot to live up to. As a wise and loving Father, God uses positive incentives to inspire and motivate us.

Now consider God's plan of salvation. To fulfill God's purpose in "bringing many sons to glory" (Hebrews 2:10), He calls and chooses them, leads them to faith and repentance, forgives their sins, gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit, which empowers them to overcome sins, grow spiritually, become effective servants of God and to be faithful to God to the end of their lives. Then they are changed or resurrected to be glorified spirit beings in the Kingdom of God.

That step-by-step plan and process can be summed up as "sanctification"—the making of a saint. A major reason for our having a deep understanding of God's plan of salvation is that we observe God's annual festivals. The first four festivals emphasize God's plan for individuals, and the last four emphasize how that plan will be extended to the whole world. (The Feast of Trumpets is the middle festival that is in both categories.)

Following are the three major steps or phases of sanctification and salvation. (For the sake of simplicity, the use of the masculine gender, *he*, *him*, *son of God*, etc., refers, of course, to both males and females.)

Passover and Phase One

When God calls and chooses a person, He has initiated the process of sanctification, a process ultimately intended to transform that person into a glorified Son of God.

When a person who has been called by God comes to have understanding, faith and repentance, and then commits his life to Jesus Christ and is baptized, he receives the forgiveness of every sin he has ever committed. And immediately afterwards, when he experiences the laying on of hands, God gives him the precious gift of the Holy Spirit.

When one receives God's forgiveness and the Holy Spirit, he is sanctified (set apart and consecrated by God for a holy life and purpose). The washing away of the guilt of all past sin makes him holy, and the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit makes him holy.

According to the Bible and God's point of view, he was moved immediately from the category of *sinner* to the category of *saint*, from the category of the *unjust* to the *just*, from *unrighteous* to *righteous*, from *spiritual gentile* to *spiritual Israelite*, from *being of the world* to *being of God*, regardless of how spiritually strong or weak he still is, regardless of how many bad habits he still has, etc. He now is "in Christ."

This is the legal sanctification; it moves the person from the legal status of being "under the law" to being "under grace" (Romans 6:14–15). For example, when a criminal is pardoned, his life suddenly changes from being a *felon* to a free *citizen*. And it is the relationship sanctification; it changes the person from being a *stranger and foreigner* to a *son of God* (Ephesians 2:19).

In 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, Paul mentions various sinful lifestyles. And then in verse 11, he says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." The words *washed*, *sanctified* and *justified* overlap in their meanings, but note that they are in the past tense. In other words, the members of the Church were already in those categories.

Although many of the members were still very "carnal" (1 Corinthians 3:1, 5:1–2), Paul addressed them all as "saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

Jude's epistle is addressed "to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ" (Jude 1). "Sanctified" is past tense; it occurred in the past as a one-time event.

This first phase in the sanctification process coincides with being "*saved*," past tense. In the New Testament, *saved* sometimes refers to having received forgiveness of one's sins. Jesus told a repentant woman, "Your faith has saved you" (Luke 7:50). After baptism, a person is no longer doomed to the death penalty. He has been saved from death row.

Also notice how "saved" is used in these verses: "we were saved" (Romans 8:24), "by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:5, 8), and "an antitype which now saves us—baptism" (1 Peter 3:21).

Phase one of sanctification (and saving) was made possible by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. The blotting out of each person's sins occurs when Christ's sacrifice is applied to him personally at the moment of his baptism. Therefore phase one is largely summed up in the meaning and observance of the Passover.

Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Phase Two

We tend to connect the Passover with the Days of Unleavened Bread, partly because they occur back-to-back on the calendar, and partly because they both are illustrated by the story of the Exodus from Egypt. But there seems to be a closer connection in meaning between the Days of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, as we shall see.

Once we become saints, we can't stop there. We don't "have it made." Phase number two is progressive sanctification—the lifelong spiritual purification and growth that must take place after baptism. It is the ongoing conversion of our minds and hearts and behavior, the building of godly character.

Phase two requires remaining in the state of sanctification or holiness that went into effect at baptism. We remain holy by receiving ongoing forgiveness from God each time we succumb to temptations to sin.

"If we [we baptized believers] confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

In phase two, God commands that we use that position of holiness as a foundation to build a holy life. While speaking to believers who had been made holy at baptism, Paul said, "Pursue...holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

Now the close connection between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost should be clear. They both focus on our transformation. The former teaches us the changes that must be made; the latter teaches us that God offers the power of the Holy Spirit to make those changes possible.

It's as if God is saying, "I have freed you from slavery. Now you must use your opportunity—you must walk out of Egypt and keep walking toward the promised land."

The Days of Unleavened Bread teach us that we are to grow spiritually in our attitudes and behavior—to "purge out the old leaven...of malice and wickedness" (sin) and put "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (God's righteousness) into our lives (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

In verse 7, Paul says to "purge out the old leaven," but he also says "you truly are unleavened." Is this a contradiction? Paul may mean that they should purge out the spiritual leaven since they already are "unleavened" physically—they had de-leavened their homes. But another meaning may be that they should purge out the spiritual leaven (second type of sanctification, cleansing and overcoming) "since you truly are unleavened" (first type of sanctification, having received forgiveness and the Holy Spirit).

Using again the analogy of an imprisoned felon who is pardoned, once his legal status is changed, he must learn to change his old habits, learn to live by the laws of the land and become a productive citizen.

The Bible's use of *sanctification* and *holiness* in this sense puts strong emphasis on becoming clean, pure and morally chaste. "Therefore...let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1). This involves resisting Satan and fleeing from the temptations and evil influences of the profane world around us. Each must

"keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

A wonderful benefit of God's laws of clean and unclean animals is that they are a constant reminder of our calling to holiness and spiritual cleanness. "You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate [or sanctify] yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:43-44).

Needed: the Power That Makes It Possible

God's people soon discover that good intentions and resolutions don't lead to much success. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). We need help—lots of help!

Faithful obedience to God is humanly impossible, "but with God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Enter God's Spirit. That's the answer. Jesus promised His disciples that they would be "endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). It is because of the power of God's Spirit that Paul could say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

The Israelites on their own could not escape from Egypt and remain alive, much less thrive. God brought them out by a series of stupendous miracles, and He sustained them in the wilderness by constant miracles. Likewise, it takes even greater miracles from God to liberate us—to bring us to repentance and conversion and to keep us growing spiritually. We must zealously work at overcoming, and put our trust in God to bring success.

Now the close connection between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost should be clear. They both focus on our transformation. The former teaches us the changes that must be made; the latter teaches us that God offers the power of the Holy Spirit to make those changes possible. Pentecost reminds us that we must rely on Jesus Christ and not ourselves. Even the counting of days from one festival to the other implies a close connection.

The Bible likens the calling of the Church in this age to the spring barley harvest in Judea, which began during the Days of Unleavened Bread and ended approximately at Pentecost. So both festivals and the time in between them coincided with the spring harvest. The Jewish custom of reading the book of Ruth on Pentecost is quite fitting. Its setting is the barley harvest in Judea, and its rich symbolism fits both the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.

Since true spiritual growth begins at the time of baptism, we can say that phase two is only possible for those who have experienced phase one. Only those who are sanctified can be sanctified!

Hebrews 10:10 uses the word "sanctified" (past tense) to refer to the first phase of sanctification, and then verse 14 speaks of "those who are being sanctified" (present

progressive tense) to refer to the second phase of sanctification. See also Hebrews 2:10-11.

In 1 Peter 2:9, Peter speaks of God's people as "a holy nation." But in chapter 1 and verse 15, he said "you also be [increasingly become] holy in all your conduct."

Note that "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be [become] *holy* and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27). The Church is the people who have experienced the first phase. Then the Church must be sanctified and cleansed (second phase).

See also 1 John 3:3, 2 Peter 3:9-14, Ephesians 4:1-3 and Hebrews 6:6.

The word *saved* is used in the New Testament in this sense as well. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who *are being saved* [present progressive tense] it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

This use of *saved* refers to the process of salvation, an ongoing spiritual creation of godly character. "Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20), and "we shall be saved by His [Christ's] life" in us (Romans 5:10).

Therefore phase two of sanctification (and saving) is largely summed up in the meaning and observance of the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.

Feast of Trumpets and Phase Three

We learn in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 that it will be at the second coming of Jesus Christ that the saints will receive eternal life. Also, 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 reveals that God's people will be changed at the sound of the last trumpet from a natural body to a spiritual body, from mortal to immortal, from weakness to power, from dishonor to glory!

This is part of the meaning conveyed by the Feast of Trumpets.

After this magnificent change, we will no longer have the corrupt human nature, carnality and inherent sinfulness. Then all of the wonderful labels that God has given us, such as *saints, holy ones, righteous* and *sons of God*, will truly fit us! Reality will match the terminology. We will be completely clean and pure. There will be no contradictions between our names and how we think

and act. What a relief and joy that will be!

This third phase is the ultimate sanctification, the final and permanent phase of sanctification that will bring completion. God will have finished His work of spiritual creation in us. We will have been made fully into the image of God. We will be worthy to be called saints. We will be holy as God is holy.

Jesus Christ said, "Therefore you shall be [become] perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). We will achieve that perfection—at the resurrection!

God is completely committed to the process of transforming us into glorified saints.

The Bible uses the word *saved* in its ultimate sense also—the receiving of eternal salvation. Paul used the word *saved* in that sense when he said "that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5).

Thus we see the three ways that the word *saved* is used in the Bible. We in the Church have been saved, we are being saved and we eagerly long to be saved.

Jesus said, "But he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). We all must endure to the end. If we do, we will be saved in the best sense, the ultimate sense, of the word. We will receive eternal salvation in the Kingdom of God!

How motivated are we to complete God's process of sanctification and saving? May we pray with all our hearts, "Your Kingdom come!" May we yearn for Christ's return and the resurrection. May we "groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption [sonship], the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23).

God is completely committed to the process of transforming us into glorified saints. For this let's thank God, as Paul did: "I thank my God...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:3-6).

God's step-by-step process of making saints is truly a beautiful plan! *UV*

The Process of Sanctification

<i>Step</i>	<i>Festival</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Phase One	Passover	At baptism past sins forgiven through Christ's sacrifice (justified). Moved from "sinner" category to "saint"—saved from penalty of death. Set apart (sanctified) for a holy life and purpose. The starting line.
Phase Two	Unleavened Bread and Pentecost	Lifelong spiritual purification and growth (pursuing holiness) made possible through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Being saved. Running the race.
Phase Three	Trumpets	At return of Christ, saints raised incorruptible, perfectly righteous, holy, glorified. The finish line.

Water From the Well of Life

Pentecost reminds us of the "living water" of God's Holy Spirit that sustains us in these troubled times and strengthens us to do God's work.

by Burk McNair

There is nothing more refreshing for a thirsty and tired traveler than a drink of cold well water. God has provided a special well of life to ultimately refresh the spiritually hungry, tired and thirsty mass of humanity.

"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:37-38).

Pentecost and the Holy Spirit

Jesus told His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit a few days after His departure to the throne of His Father. He told them to wait at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:4-10). Jesus kept His promise on that day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

This particular day was momentous in the history of the New Testament Church and the world. It was the coming of the Holy Spirit that was prophesied to change the whole world. On that Pentecost, God began a powerful work through His Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through suffering, trials, persecution and martyrdom, the Church has continued to take the gospel to all the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Since that first New Testament Pentecost the Spirit of God has moved the hearts of men and women to follow the way of truth. The Spirit of truth guides us into all truth and shows us things to come (John 16:13).

The gift of the Spirit that God so generously poured out upon His people is marvelous. It is through this Spirit that He has set us apart and "sealed" us (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5). Paul said it is by the Spirit in us that we know we are sons of God (Romans 8:16). It is through that Spirit that we receive the laws of God within our minds and within our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Hebrews 8:10). It is by the Spirit of the Living God that we are daily renewed. It is by the Spirit of God that it is possible for us to have the mind of Christ in us (Philippians 2:5).

God has called us in this end time, a time of marvelous wonders and terrible sins. Our lives have been blessed through

this calling, but it is a day-by-day challenge to remain focused on God's plan for us and all of mankind.

Christ said because lawlessness would abound the love of many would grow cold. Paul also described the terrible times we face daily: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Thankfully our loving Father has led us to the living waters to sustain us in these troubled times.

Living Water

When Jesus came to Jacob's well in Samaria, He was thirsty and tired from His journey and asked the gentile woman of Samaria for a drink of water. The well had belonged to Jacob and his family for generations. In Jesus' day it was still prized as a source of cold, life-giving water (John 4:5-10).

As Jesus sat on the well resting, He and this gentile woman discussed the conflicts in the customs of their two peoples. Jesus asked this Samaritan woman to give Him a drink of cold water. She said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?"

What Jesus asked of her was very surprising because the Jewish tradition did not allow a Jew to have such dealings with a gentile. Then Jesus spoke to her concerning "the gift of God" and His power to provide it. He spoke of "living water."

She must have thought He was being presumptuous, and so she asked if He was greater than Jacob whose well this had been.

The living water of which Jesus spoke could only be provided by God. The Samaritan woman had no knowledge of such spiritual things. Jesus said those who drink of that living water would never thirst. In fact, He said, "The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting

life" (emphasis added throughout). Her response was that she wanted a drink of that living water so she would not have to come to draw water ever again. Her thoughts were on eliminating this physical chore from her life. Her thoughts were not of a spiritual nature, but of an earthly concern.

Jesus led the conversation to a higher level. He told her, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24).

When Jesus' disciples returned, they were amazed to find that Jesus had been talking with this woman. They asked Him if He had eaten and He said, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." They were puzzled at this remark and thought He spoke concerning physical bread. He said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:30-34).

Walking in the Spirit

The lessons in this encounter at the well stand out strikingly. First, we should focus on the "gift of God," which is His Holy Spirit—the living water. It is the Spirit that gives us life eternal. Paul

We should "stir up" the wonderful gift of God and rekindle its work in our lives. We must be sound-minded in the way of God and be confident in the power and the love of God which was shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

Secondly, we should set our focus on doing the work of God. The Spirit of God inspires us to have the mind of Christ. As Christ said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.... Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together" (John 4:35-36).

When Christ comes He wants to find the Church faithfully doing His work (Matthew 24:45-47). We must daily draw from the well of living water to spiritually refresh us and give us the power to continue doing His work to the very end for the sake of all mankind.

Let us always remember to follow Christ's admonition and invitation to us to come to the well of the living water where we can draw great spiritual strength and be refreshed with Him and with our Heavenly Father.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

"And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son'" (Revelation 21:6-7).

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.' And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:16-17). UN



specifically defines how we will live if we walk in the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-25).

Real-Life Reconciliation

Mending fences will never be easy, but following these practical steps makes it possible.

by Anthony Wasilkoff

Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone misses the mark. It is the human condition. When we find ourselves having made a significant error or breach of conduct, we need for others to forgive us. In fact, we expect others to forgive us, especially in the Christian community. To reach out for and receive forgiveness is a Christian reality. When others ask us for forgiveness, it is our duty and responsibility to grant it.

On the other hand, if we are the ones seeking forgiveness, what is our responsibility to help bring it to pass? Is there anything we are supposed to do or not do? Reconciliation is a process that requires cooperation from both sides. Through the years it seems our attention has focused on one side of the issue but not so much on the other.

When we have committed an infraction that has eroded a relationship, eventually we go about the task of mending those fences. This can be done in six not-so-easy, but essential and practical steps.

Following the Steps

The first step is to *admit and acknowledge that we have done wrong*. You might call this the “confession component.” In Joshua 7:16–20, an admonition is given to “make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done.” It is a very rare thing indeed for human beings to admit that they have done wrong. It’s rarer still for a person, even a Christian person, to specify what he or she has done wrong. The first inclination of human nature is to deny, deny, deny.

In James 5:14–16 we read of how we are to confess our trespasses one to another. The human proclivity is to hide our trespasses from one another. Sin loves concealment. When caught, most human beings respond by denying that they have done what they have done. Eventually they may be willing to say something like, “If I have done anything wrong, then I....” Reconciliation can never come about under those circumstances. It is vitally necessary to acknowledge our wrong and to take ownership of our errors. We must be able to audibly say, “I have done wrong. I have done wrong in that I have....” and then we specify the wrong we have committed.

Step number two is to *express regret and remorse*. It is possible to acknowledge our sin without actually expressing appropriate regret and remorse. Daniel, howev-

er, set the right example. When he prayed his prayer of repentance, recorded in Daniel 9:1–7, he expressed feelings of “shame of face.” On behalf of himself and his countrymen, he explained how sorry he was—how ashamed he was. If regret and remorse are present and genuine, they will be appropriately and even repeatedly expressed. Romans 6:19–21 refers to “the things of which you are now ashamed.” This connotes how the Christians in the Church of God at Rome deeply regretted their past misconduct and expressed it with visible emotion and acknowledgment.

It’s important for the guilty party (we are all the guilty party from time to time), to say unequivocally, “I am sorry for what I did. I’m really, really sorry. I feel so badly for what happened. At times I even feel ashamed.” Regret and remorse must be expressed in this honest and open manner for reconciliation to come about.

Step number three is to *show how you have already made and will continue to make amends*. Once a person has acknowledged an error or sin and then has gone on to express remorse and regret for that error or sin, then he or she will of necessity follow through with making amends.

If someone has borrowed your vacuum cleaner and in the process of using it has damaged it and then returns it to you, you would hope that the person would acknowledge straight away how it had been damaged while on loan. If your neighbor then followed up his (or her) confession with a statement of remorse—“I’m really sorry I wrecked your Hoover”—you would believe his regret was the real thing if he insisted on repairing it. If he didn’t offer to make it right, you would probably doubt the depth and sincerity of his regret.

Exodus 22:1–5 teaches us about the important principle of making restitution: “He shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.”

When Jesus Christ visited the tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19), the latter was so moved that he promised to demonstrate his repentance by restoring fourfold any funds that he had collected excessively. This would have gone a long way to reconcile him with those citizens that he defrauded through the years. You can be sure that the actions of Zacchaeus would have been the dominant topic of conversation in his part of Jericho for a long time. If someone cheats me and then repays me four times the amount he cheated me of, it is likely my dim view of him will change significantly. I will be far more likely to believe that that person is really trying to turn over a new leaf. Reconciliation cannot come about without appropriate and commensurate restitution.

The fourth step to reconciliation requires us to *show how we will do things differently from now on*. In this step, we reassure the aggrieved party or parties that we have learned some profound lessons and are determined to conduct ourselves differently and have an actual plan by which to do so. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:9–11 that certain temptations or situations have to be avoided by the conscientious Christian.

Suppose a husband has a serious drinking problem. In this step of reconciliation, he would tell his wife and children that he has joined a 12-step program in order to obtain and maintain his sobriety. We can get into trouble all by ourselves, but we require the help of others to get out of it.

Remember that once others have been hurt or injured by our actions, it will take time for them to learn to trust again....
Reconciliation truly is a process and it cannot be rushed or fast forwarded.

Hebrews 4:15–16 talks about the importance of receiving help in time of need. This help certainly must come from God above, but it must also come through human agents and agencies. There are many resources available to a Christian today. Regrettably too many people are too proud to ask for help. Suppose a wife has a serious gambling problem. In this step, she would tell her husband that she has joined a self-help organization, has already attended some meetings and is determined to attend a meeting once or twice a week for a year or more if necessary.

Then Ask for Forgiveness

Step number five: *Ask for forgiveness*. Notice how this step comes later on in the list, not at the beginning. A lot of groundwork has to be laid first. Of course, repentance before God occurs at the beginning. Reconciliation to fellow man takes a bit longer.

In the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 we read about how the prodigal son sought to reconcile with his father by saying, “I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son” (verse 21). What a statement of contrition! Although he desperately wanted to be forgiven, he didn’t

feel worthy to ask for it directly. Admirably, his father granted him forgiveness on the basis of his attitude, what he had been through and what it took for him to come back home.

Genesis 50:14–18 gives us an account of family members pleading their situation by saying, “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin.... Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.”

Forgiveness from our fellow man, even as from God, cannot be demanded. It can only be received. Occasionally guilty parties insist on being forgiven as if it were their right. You may hear something like, “OK. So I made a few mistakes. Well, I’ve repented of them. Now it’s up to you to forgive me.” That is not how forgiveness and reconciliation come about.

Step number six is to *bear sustained fruit*. Those who have been aggrieved need reassurance. This can only be done by bearing sustained fruit and doing so over a period of time thus indicating we have learned our lesson and are becoming a different person.

Matthew 7:16–20 proclaims, “You will know them by their fruits.” This statement is mentioned twice for added emphasis. The only way I can know if an apple tree is a quality tree is by observing the fruit it produces. This takes time. In the autumn of the year, the tree will yield a crop. If the apples are plentiful, tasty and attractive, then I know I’ve got a good quality tree. It may take more than just one growing season for a tree to properly identify itself.

John 15:16 contains the following wonderful decree of Jesus Christ: “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain....” It is our task as Christians to produce visible and tangible fruit of the Christian life. Some folks do bear an array of fruit for a while, but then the crops diminish and disappear entirely. The fruit of a Christian life must be enduring for a lifetime.

Remember that once others have been hurt or injured by our actions, it will take time for them to learn to trust again. They probably want to trust, but it will take time for healing to occur in order for reconciliation to run its course. Reconciliation truly is a process and it cannot be rushed or fast forwarded.

Forgiveness is a hallmark of the Church of God. Forgiveness is something that we all need from our Heavenly Father. Forgiveness is something that we all need from each other. Forgiveness must be sought. Forgiveness must be given. Only then can reconciliation be fully realized. *UV*

Anthony Wasilkoff is the operation manager for Canada.

Where Do You Draw the Line in the Sand?

The high calling of God requires that we learn to be forgivers now in this life, in spite of increasing offenses in this coldhearted world. How?

by James D. Cannon

One of the greatest blessings God has bestowed upon mankind, and specifically upon you and me as members of God's Church, is the

If someone kicks dust in your face, you kick dust right back.

If you criticize my kid, yours is fair game.

Secretly and compassionately forgiving someone from the heart for any offense and then forgetting the misdeed are rarely if ever done because this kind of forgiveness is a godly quality not naturally accomplished in human beings.

However, for converted Christians, real forgiveness of others who have offended or harmed us is necessary in order for God to be able to forgive us of our sins and offenses toward Him during our life of overcoming and growing spiritually.

In the outline for prayer found in Matthew 6, Christ teaches us that in order to be forgiven, we must also be forgiving toward others. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our

rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

We must turn away from the degenerating ways of the society around us, but we must not turn our fellow man away. Christ said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Lines in the Sand

Where do we draw the line in the proverbial sand when it comes to forgiveness?

What deed has someone done to us, our family, our friends or our world that sticks in our craw so we can't forgive?

When we think back about some of the painful occurrences of the recent past in the Church, which ones are we still harboring without forgiveness?

When we hear of sins in others' lives, including the lives of ministers or deacons, which one or ones are we keeping in the file drawer tabbed "unforgiven and forgotten?"

What sin that we hear about in another can we not forgive? Do we keep a "trump card" of a person's past mistakes,

victed by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

"When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more'" (John 8:1-11).

Could Christ write something in the sand about you or me? You bet He could!

We have a lot of growing to do if we intend to be in the Kingdom of God and working with our High Priest Jesus Christ.

How Many Times?

Let's look at another example of just where Christ expects us to grow in forgiveness as an integral facet of our character.

"Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven'" (Matthew 18:21-22). Christ requires an unlimited amount of forgiveness toward those who offend us.

Then Christ gave this parable found in Matthew 18:23-35 as an example illustrating the consequences of being unforgiving. We are all familiar with this parable—the



giveness of sin.

The death penalty that the entirety of mankind has earned as a result of sin has been paid for by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Two scriptures summarize the process for each person. First in John 6:44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Second in Acts 2:38 Peter said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Before God calls a person and places that individual into the Body of Jesus Christ, that person is an enemy of God. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us... when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son..." (Romans 5:8-10).

An essential aspect of God's character is the attitude of forgiveness.

God is merciful, gracious and forgiving. Because God is reproducing Himself through mankind, He expects these same attitudes of mercy, graciousness and forgiveness to grow and develop in us. In fact, God says that He will not forgive us our sins if we are unforgiving toward others.

However, apart from God's intervention in one's life, man rarely forgives others, especially those who are considered enemies. Many plan and seek either an active or passive form of revenge against their real or perceived enemies. Man likes to put down his enemies and those who pose a threat to his success and well being.

debtors... For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:12, 14-15).

God has indeed called us to a high calling—a calling that is impossible to attain by human strength alone. Members of God's family will be forgivers, full of mercy, kindly affectioned to all others, full of love as God is love.

The high calling of God requires that we learn to be forgivers now in this life through living faith in the power of Almighty God working in us through His Holy Spirit. We must not allow ourselves to remain or become hardened, calloused and coldhearted toward anyone, including those we perceive have done us or others wrong.

Our ability to be forgiving toward others will continually grow more and more difficult if we allow ourselves to become hardened because of the sinfulness of our surroundings.

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure

very likely repented of unbeknownst to us, in the back of our minds for future reference?

Let's see what Jesus Christ instructs us regarding harboring an unforgiving attitude toward anyone else.

"But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, and when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?' This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him.

"But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, 'He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.' And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. "Then those who heard it, being con-

account of the forgiven servant persecuting the one who owed him a pittance in comparison. In the conclusion of the parable, Christ warned the unforgiving servant that his attitude was unacceptable. "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" (Matthew 18:32-35).

Through the years, how many have we proverbially grabbed by the throat instead of forgiving? How many have we thrown to the ground, holding their mistakes against them, castigating them or shunning them

Lest We Forget

instead of rushing to their aid to give comfort and support as they come out of their difficulty with a weakness?

We have not been given the ability to read minds and hearts. Christ instructs us not to judge others. "Judge not, that you be not judged.... First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1, 5).

This is not to say that we cannot make a judgment regarding other people's actions as to whether we should follow their example.

This scripture illustrates the point that we must not condemn others openly or in our hearts because what a person does today, especially a converted person, will very likely be repented of by tomorrow. Isn't that the case with the mistakes and sins we commit daily?

"Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:36-37).

How do we become the forgivers God expects us to become?

- Admit to God on our knees that we are not forgiving and that we need His power and strength in us in order to become more forgiving.

- On a daily basis, ask God to forgive us of our sins as we forgive others. Realize that God will not forgive you or me unless we are forgiving. We could stand a good chance of missing out on the Kingdom of God—if we remain unforgiving.

- Realize that God will give us the ability to forgive if we ask Him in prayer to build in us the power to forgive others and then to forget and just let it go.

God teaches us how to forgive in the Sermon on the Mount. If someone smites you on the cheek, turn the other cheek, for example. Obviously Jesus isn't saying invite a mugger back to assault you some more. He is showing how the converted mind acts. Praying for and loving those who spitefully use us is part of how we forgive people. Another part is to not seek revenge, but to be willing to treat the person as if these abuses hadn't occurred.

As we grow up to the forgiving stature of Jesus Christ, our effectiveness as a Church, as ministers, as deacons, as members and as the work of God will increase exponentially—by leaps and bounds—because God will be able to bless us and use us more effectively to His honor and glory. Additionally, our sins will be forgiven daily and we all will be in the Kingdom together serving with Jesus Christ forever.

Always remember Jesus' example when it seems practically impossible to forgive another for whatever reason: "Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). *UN*

James D. Cannon is a deacon in the Youngstown, Ohio, congregation.

Is it because God makes miracles look so easy that we so easily forget them?

by Janna Thomas

God is a miracle-working God. Most of us would probably agree with that statement, especially if we have had any kind of relationship with Him for any length of time. In fact, God is such a worker of miracles that He makes it look easy. If we are not careful, we can read about or even experience miracles without appreciating the magnitude of the events.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance lists five words that are translated as "miracle" or "miracles." The Hebrew word *mopheth*, for example, carries the implication of conspicuousness, as in a token or a sign.

The implication is that God's miracles have a deep significance beyond the fulfillment of their physical purpose. They stand as evidence of Himself and as a sign of His power. I find it an interesting memory aid that the pronunciation of *mopheth* is actually *mo-faith*. God's miracles strengthen and increase our faith. When we remember them.

A Personal Miracle

I was recently reminded of how easily they can be forgotten. I had become embroiled in a problem so complicated I could see no human answer. I was greatly troubled and even fearful. My prayers went out to God and He intervened. His answer provided relief beyond what could be humanly devised. Not only perfect but perfectly timed, He provided a solution to a problem I thought had none.

I was intensely humbled by the realization that God had come through *again*, for *me*, in a matter that was only important to *me*. I was also filled with relief, joy and gratitude.

Words of thankfulness pouring from my mouth, I assured God that I would never forget the mercy He had just shown me. Immediately I realized that I had said these very words many times over the years. I had always meant them. But had I kept them?

I began a quick mental inventory. How many times had God inspired me to such a statement? Seconds later, I had to shamefully acknowledge that the few specific events I could recall were a mere fraction of the total. I had said I would never forget, yet I had forgotten.

Worse still, I now saw that I often allowed myself to fall into pits of despair and hopelessness, limiting God and doubting His intervention. God had never let me down, yet despite His steady, consistent

and unending presence in my life, I seemed always to fear that He would.

Psalm 78 warns of the consequences of failing to believe in God's wonders. Verse 33 says, "Therefore their days He consumed in futility, and their years in fear." How sad. How chillingly similar to much of life in our present age.

Psalm 78 also recapitulates the incredible miracles God performed on behalf of the children of Israel: the parting of the Red Sea, the cloud and the pillar of fire, the water from the rocks and the manna that fed them. Even so, "they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation." So they tested Him in the matter of meat, even though "Men ate angels' food" (Psalm 78:22, 25). In essence, they disdained His powerful miracles.

Verses 10 and 11 say, regarding the children of Ephraim, "They refused to walk in His law, and forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them." Verses 41 and 42 go on to say, "Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power."

They forgot His works, tested Him, limited Him in their minds and did not remember His power. Sound familiar? I was ashamed to admit that it did. Upon introspection, I realized that the same insidious process had been taking place in my life.

I'd allowed myself to be sidelined by one of Satan's spiritual land mines. A seed of doubt, planted in vulnerability and watered by forgetfulness, had sprouted forth the poisonous weed of spiritual inertia. My prayers had become perfunctory and uninspired. Even as I prayed to the Living God, I'd held little expectation of a viable answer. I had forgotten the miracles, the interventions and the tender mercies of God.

Obviously I was no different from ancient Israel. They were physically present for some of the most astounding miracles ever recorded. Yet it seemed as though they had barely crossed the Red Sea before they were building a golden calf (Exodus 32:1-8).

Granted, I had never witnessed those kinds of physical miracles. Yet God had performed their spiritual equivalents in my life, and while I had not built any golden calves, neither had I shown the kind of faith God's miracles warranted. Like the Israelites, I "did not remember His power." It seemed my remembrance was only as good as the latest miracle.

It is important to God that we not forget His signs, His wonders, His evidence. He continually exhorted Israel to remember the miracles of the Exodus, even supplying special blocks of holy time as annual reminders. "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the

house of bondage, for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten" (Exodus 13:3).

He also gave countless admonitions such as the one in Deuteronomy 4:9. "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" (emphasis added throughout).

But they did forget, paving the way for their descent into doubt and idolatry. Psalm 78:61 says that God "delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand." Israel lost everything, including their identity, because they let the remembrance of God's deeds depart from their hearts.

"What Have You Done for Me Lately?"

Around the mid-1980s, there was a catch phrase on everyone's lips, generated by a comedy routine by Eddie Murphy. In the skit, Eddie's imaginary wife remained ungrateful despite all the luxuries he had given her over the years. Her unimpressed response to his laundry list of favors was always the same. "But Eddie, what have you done for me lately?"

I couldn't help making the comparison. How quickly we forget the scope and grandeur of God's intervention in our lives—to the extent that we call Him into question, constantly demanding that He prove Himself again. "Yes, God, but what have You done for me lately?"

The temptation is to feel superior to the Israelites and believe that we would not behave similarly. But if God is only as close as His latest miracle, then we are perilously close to sliding down the same slippery slope.

It is no coincidence that God begins the Ten Commandments with a reminder of who He is, and the miracles He has worked. "And God spoke all these words, saying: 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'" (Exodus 20:1-2, emphasis added).

I intend to reread Psalm 78 often, and appreciate the true scope and grandeur of the miracles recorded there. I want to remember everything. I have started a journal of remembrance and answered prayer, so that they don't slip from my mind like old phone numbers. I can look back upon them in times of doubt and be strengthened.

God's miracles are deserving of praise and remembrance, both past and present. We must make special efforts to insure that we do both. Let us take heed to ourselves, lest we forget the things our eyes have seen. *UN*

Janna Thomas is a member in the Sherman, Texas, congregation.

Local Church Updates...

Dallas North and Sherman Young Adults Have Enthusiastic Kick-Off Meeting

Seventy-five young adults of the Dallas North and Sherman, Texas, congregations met for dinner and an inspiring



Dallas North and Sherman young adults enjoy Mexican buffet dinner and see a PowerPoint presentation that stimulates discussion (photos by Tony Antonacci)

give-and-take of ideas on Friday, March 2, 2001. Doug Horchak, the new pastor of Dallas North and Sherman, along with his wife, Tanya, hosted this get-together to present ideas about the future roles of young adults and to get feedback from them.

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Horchak pointed out needs, goals and future opportunities of the young adults of the Church (in the Dallas-Sherman area and everywhere). That stimulated a positive response and considerable discussion about how the young adults can be of more service to the community, and especially to the local and worldwide work of the Church. Many expressed that they want to serve more.

The evening started at about 6 p.m. with a Mexican buffet dinner, followed by banana splits for dessert. The group was able to use the clubhouse of a downtown Dallas apartment complex at no charge since one of the young adult Church members lives there. Some Church members helped serve, and a baby-sitting service was supplied by teen volunteers. The young adults said they really enjoyed it all—the fellowship, food and stimulating discussion.

The Dallas North congregation has been unique in having so many young adults as members. In fact, the large number has made it difficult to get to know them all on a personal level. Having most of them together at this activity, along with the help of nametags, helped everyone to get better acquainted.

Many who attended said this was a wonderful opportunity to be together and they would like to have more such get-togethers. Everyone was able to hear everyone else's comments and learn how



each person feels about the various subjects. It seems everyone feels blessed to have so many young adults in this area. It was exciting hearing so many verbalizing virtually the same goals. This pleasant evening seemed to strengthen and unify the whole group.

Amy Hooser

UCG Members Support Humanitarian Project in Malawi

Since 1995, UCG members Gladstone and Alice Chonde have operated a private clinic serving the health needs of about 15,000 people in the capital city of Lilongwe, Malawi. Malawi is the third poorest country in the world. The clinic has operated from an old movie theater. There are virtually no medicines, medical equipment or supplies. The Chondes work with almost nothing and often can do no more than diagnose malnutrition-based illnesses.



Loading food, medical equipment and other humanitarian material for container shipped to Malawi in February

On a regular basis the Chondes have received medicines through LifeNets (a charitable organization founded by Council of Elders member Victor Kubik and supported by many UCG members). Recently, we have used a source in Holland where we purchase medicine at about 5 percent of cost and have it flown to Malawi via a special humanitarian service.

In 1998 we sent a 20-ton container with blankets, food and medical supplies for the clinic. Dyanne Dick coordinated the blanket collection in the Northwest. Through UCG elder Lonnie Gjesvold, Bay City Milling donated three tons of flour. Morton Salt donated two tons of salt. Through other agencies, several tons of food were donated. Shipping was paid by the U.S. Department of Defense.

In order for the Chondes to operate at more than the most primitive level, we have helped them in the construction of a new clinic. Construction is coming to completion on the Malakia Birthing Center and Clinic at a cost of just slightly above \$23,000.

So that the clinic could be properly furnished and supplied, we sent another 20-ton container February 26. Brethren from all over the United States helped collect furniture, blankets, sheets, toys, bicycles and many other items. The collection was staged at UCG member Paul Williams' tire warehouse.

Dyanne Dick once again coordinated a massive collection of blankets, sheets and pillows that was seven times as much as they collected two years earlier!

A medical missionary organization and another medical foundation in Indianapolis provided wheelchairs, exam tables, 10 hospital beds and much more. The Minneapolis and St. Paul churches helped pack the container on Friday, February 23.

For very little cost we have been able to truly help our brethren in a practical way and to help equip them to help others and fulfill the lesson of 1 John 3:17-18. To see the entire story of the Malakia Clinic on the Internet, please go to www.lifeness.org/malawi.

Victor Kubik



Phoenix East Has Post-Feast Ladies Luncheon

For the ninth consecutive year, ladies from the Phoenix East, Arizona, congregation enjoyed a post-Feast luncheon November 5, 2000, hosted by long-time members Bill and Maxine Lovett. "A lady in California gave me the idea years ago, and it has been well-received ever since," said Mrs. Lovett.

Attendees shared their individual Feast experiences. Those wishing to participate brought a small, inexpensive gift from the Feast site they attended to be exchanged in a random drawing.

Wanda Fenwick and Tina Carter commented that the luncheons "help promote camaraderie and bonds of unity. Besides, it's fun looking for things at the Feast to give as a gift." Equally important was "how exciting and interesting it was to share every-



Lucille Medley, Maxine Lovett and Wanda Fenwick share Feast memories

one's experience and to learn about the different Feast areas," said Jan Sweeten.

One lady who attended the Feast in Italy explained that she enjoyed learning about the history and culture of ancient Rome as it gave her a "taste of what we read in the Bible." However, what really made the Feast for her was the togetherness the congregation shared on many levels, which she felt was the real spirit of the Feast.

Another described her Feast in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, this way, "As a first-time visitor to the area, I was most impressed by the brethren's warmth and hospitality as they went out of their way to include me in so many of their activities."

Terry Hoffman

"Unlocking Your Potential" Women's Weekend Draws 130

More than 130 women from six states laughed, cried and learned together February 23 through 25 at the "Unlocking Your Potential" women's weekend in Orrville, Ohio.

Four brave men, pastors Dave Myers of Akron and Youngstown, Ohio; Doug

Johnson of Mansfield and Canton, Ohio; Don Henson of Pittsburgh and Meadville, Pennsylvania, and Wheeling, West Virginia; and Gary Antion, of the ABC faculty, led the ladies in thought-provoking Bible studies, seminars and sermons that addressed the daily challenges women face.

Mr. Myers opened the weekend with an interactive Bible study on spiritual gifts, both the ones listed in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and the skills members of the congregation hold today. Women were encouraged not to compare their gifts with others, which often leads to feeling inferior, but rather to use their skills to help others and make the Church a family.

This knowledge was inspir-



Scenes from the "Unlocking Your Potential" women's weekend in Orrville, Ohio, February 23 to 25

and grabbed the dice in an energized bunko tournament. The night formally ended with a dessert bar, but the joy, laughter and conversation escaping from the cabins afterward resembled a middle-school sleep-over.

Anita Purdy of Akron said she enjoyed the bonding between women of all ages that the weekend fostered. Relationships with older women are invaluable but difficult to achieve without bonding and sharing, said Anita, 20.

"The older cannot help the younger, and vice-versa, if there is no communication and no bonding," she said. "This is a great way to break that communication barrier."

The bleary-eyed women geared up for two final workshops Sunday morning. Mr. Johnson kicked off the morning with two books that describe generational traits that display themselves in cycles of history. Members of each generation would need to go back about 80 years to find someone who had the same traits and grew up in a similar world environment, so from this context, communication gaps between the generations are natural. Unless we actively seek each other out, those barriers will persist.

During the last seminar of the weekend, Mr. Henson and his wife, Rannie, urged the group to be realistic in balancing life's challenges. By setting priorities, taking time for one's self, rooting out pride, going with the flow and keeping focused on God's Kingdom, we will be more balanced and less frazzled.

"I think our weekend was a small taste of 'the Zone,'" teens talk about at camp said Judy Henry of Pittsburgh. "If we came home with smiles after only a weekend, just think how wonderful it will be when the whole world will have the knowledge and opportunity we have been blessed with."

Kristin Yarbrough



ships. Understanding and acceptance, keeping promises, clarifying expectations and showing kindness, loyalty, patience and forgiveness are pillars of relationships, he said.

The dutiful kitchen workers waited on the rest of the group at dinner, bringing a selection of main courses to each table. The dining hall was then transformed into a game hall where ladies aged 17 through 70 rolled

Volunteers Type Sermon Transcripts for Deaf

Five Church member volunteers are helping make sermons available to deaf and hard-of-hearing brethren and others interested in transcripts of United sermons.

Currently 33 word-for-word transcripts of sermons are available on the Web at www.ucg.org/deafhh/transcripts.html. This can be accessed from both the Deaf and Hard of Hearing page and the Sermon Videos page of the United Web site. There were 455 visits to the transcripts page in March. The transcripts are also mailed to those in prison who cannot receive audiotapes.

The five volunteers each receive the eight-pack of tapes sent out every two months to shut-ins. One of the volunteers helps coordinate which tapes each will type up so there won't be duplication of effort.

The volunteers basically type word for word, editing out small things like "ummmms." An average transcript is about 14 pages long. Four of the volunteers use transcription machines they purchased themselves. ("It made the job so much easier than a tape player," said one.) The completed transcripts are e-mailed to the home office.

One of the volunteers is Mary Burke from the Minneapolis, Minnesota, congregation. She is a medical transcriptionist and has been helping with the program for three and a half years. She said that typing a sermon makes it stick in her mind more and makes her listen closely.

Another volunteer is Marlene Kerestes from the Eau Claire, Wisconsin, congregation. She was doing transcripts locally before volunteering to help with the program three years ago. Debbie Rand from the Worcester, Massachusetts, congregation, is the newest volunteer. She is the only one using a tape player to transcribe. She volunteered because she wants to help the Church be a resource for others.

The volunteers each transcribe one or two tapes every two months. "It allows us a little leeway in our lives—some pick up the slack when others are busy and life seems to get busier and busier, plus sometimes someone can't do tapes for a period of time because of travel or sickness or other obligations, so having another worker or two would be wonderful," said one volunteer.

Southern California Hosts Youth Weekend

Over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend teens from Southern California and Arizona enjoyed an action-packed weekend with spiritual, recreational and educational activities. January 13, 80 teens met for services with the Los Angeles, California, congregation. Robin Webber's sermon was "Daring to Dream Dreams," and after services there were seminars for teens and parents. David Register hosted interactive seminars for the teens on the importance of education and "How Do You Know When You Have Fallen in Love?" Cecil Maranville con-

ducted an interactive seminar on how to deal with young people up to the time they individually choose to follow God's way.

On Saturday night there was a pizza party and game night with all sorts of novelty Olympic games. On Sunday morning everyone visited the Long Beach Aquarium, then shuttled to the nearby Queen Mary, a world-class cruise ship during the 1930s and '40s. Sunday evening we went bowling at Cal Bowl, the largest bowling facility in California. We had 15 lanes to ourselves.

The next morning everyone headed for Monrovia Canyon Park in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. There we had a pancake breakfast with turkey sausage, fruit and hot chocolate. Then we took a one-mile hike up a beautifully wooded canyon to a 30-foot waterfall. By 1 p.m. we were all done and it was time to head home.

Robin Webber

Children Present Play

The Redlands (Loma Linda), California, congregation met together for the Night to Be Much Observed enjoying a fine catered meal with 81 people attending. The congregation was pleased to host guest pastors and their wives, Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Berg and Mr. and Mrs. Robin Webber.

Following the meal, the congregation was treated to a play by their children, ages 3 to 10. The children, in costumes, acted out the story of Moses and Aaron and the 10 plagues



Children in Redlands, California, act out the story of the Exodus (photo by Jack Kemp)

God sent until Pharaoh let the Israelites leave. The play concluded with a song, the well-known spiritual, "Go Down Moses." The play was written and directed by Diane Clark and Margaret Saarinen directed the music.

Margaret Saarinen

Sedro Woolley Senior Wins \$38,000 Scholarship

Lewis VanAusdle, son of Gary and Nancy VanAusdle of the Sedro Woolley, Washington, congregation, won a \$38,000 scholarship for tuition, books and room and board at the college of his choice. According to an article in the *Skagit Valley Herald* April 23, Lewis has maintained a 3.86 grade point average, and is a member of Natural Helpers, Key Club, Renaissance, Interact, National Honor Society, FBLA, percussion ensemble, men's swim team and the school newspaper. "Lewis is active in his church youth group and with Skagit Gleaners," said the article. "Lewis plans to attend college to study biology and explore career opportunities."

Announcements...

Births

David and Dorrie Baker, who pastor the congregations in Buffalo, Elmira and Syracuse,



Jonathan William-Haynes Baker with big sister Hannah

New York, are happy to announce the birth of their second child, Jonathan William-Haynes Baker, born August 24, 2000.

After two years of praying for a sibling, Hannah is a big sister!

Duane and Lisa (McClain) Phelps of Cincinnati, Ohio, along with big sister Victoria (Tori)



Jennifer Marie Phelps

Anne Phelps, are thrilled to announce the birth of their new daughter, Jennifer Marie Phelps. She was born on February 9, 2001, and weighed 8 pounds 15 ounces and was 19 inches long.

J.D. and Anne Marie (Fleck) Stotts of Trophy Club, Texas, are delighted to announce the birth of their son, Harrison Case. Case was born on July 21, 2000, weighing 6 pounds 15 ounces and measuring 19 inches long. Big sister Brianna is elated to have a little brother. The Stotts' family attends the Fort Worth, Texas, congregation.

Proud grandparents are James and Rose Stotts of Llano, Texas,



Harrison Case Stotts

and Richard and Carol Fleck of Trophy Club.

Michael and Aimee (Fultz) McNally of Cupertino, California,



Ariel Naomi McNally

are happy to announce the release of version 2.0: Ariel Naomi, born peacefully at home on February 26, 2001, with midwifery care. She weighed 8 pounds 8 ounces and was 21 inches long. Now, two darling daughters!

Dennis and Joan (Hoffahrt) Sheets are happy to announce the

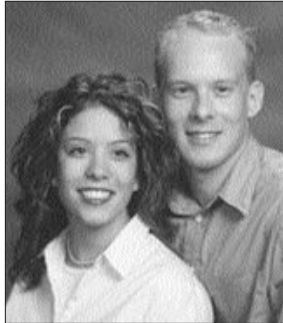


Lily Anna Joelle Sheets

arrival of their daughter, Lily Anna Joelle, on October 30, 2000. She weighed 7 pounds 3 ounces and was 20 inches long. Grandparents are thrilled. First child.

Engagement

Dr. and Mrs. Anthony J. Pacelli and Mr. and Mrs. Charleston



Tina Pacelli and Charles Williams

Williams have the honor of announcing the engagement of their children, Tina Rose and Charles Joseph.

Anthony, Jane and Tina Pacelli are members of United Church of God in Lafayette, Indiana. Charleston and Sandra Williams are members of the United Church of God in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Charles Williams is a member in Seattle, Washington.

A fall wedding is being planned in, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Weddings

Tuula Margit Goertz of Thunder Bay, Ontario, and George Edward Rands of Summerland, British Columbia (formerly of Seattle/Tacoma, Washington) were married in Thunder Bay on December 10, 2000. The ceremony was performed by Toronto pastor, Anthony Wasilkoff. The bride was given in marriage by Edwin Woods, son of the bride, with Shelley Kempainen, daughter of the bride, as matron of honor and Edward Rands, son of the groom, as the



Tuula and George Rands

groomsman. The couple took a short honeymoon in Minnesota and have taken up permanent residence in Summerland, attending the local congregation in Penticton.

Shaun Carnochan and Michelle Brookhouse met on the Night to Be Observed in 1999 and were married in the gardens at Jim and Lyn Carnochan's Sydney, Australia, home on September 24, 2000. They were blessed with beautiful weather for the ceremony, which was set in a blossoming gar-



Shaun and Michelle Carnochan

den surrounded by natural Australian bush. Groomsmen were Jim Villiers, David Bell, Tristan Brookhouse and Omar Afioni. Bridesmaids were Jacqui Afioni, Leanne Wilson, Ruth Easton and Kerrie-anne Hamilton. Shaun and Michelle attend the Homebush, Sydney congregation.

In perfect Australian summer weather, Kim McQueen and Steven Mihalec were united in marriage on January 28. Kim is the elder daughter of Rod and Martha McQueen, and Steven is the only son of Peter and Jackie Mihalec. Vows were



Steven and Kim Mihalec

exchanged in the garden of the bride's parents in Westbury, Tasmania. Kim was attended by her younger sister, Penny, and Rennie

Banham, with Shannon Clark as flower girl. Steven's attendants were best man Toby Goodger and groomsmen Peter Forster and Richard Van Der Meer. The new Mr. and Mrs. Mihalec left the reception for a honeymoon in Tasmania. They live in Melbourne, Australia.

Anniversaries

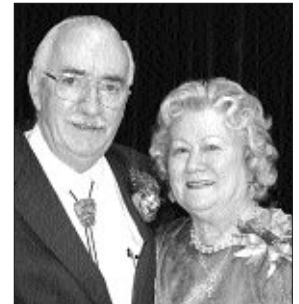
Haynes and Ethel Baker of Crumpler, North Carolina, celebrat-



Ethel and Haynes Baker

ed their 50th wedding anniversary (December 27, 2000) with family and friends after services on December 30 in Hickory, North Carolina. They have three married sons, Jeff, David and Mark, and eight grandchildren.

Earl and Yvonne Travis celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in February. They were married February 16, 1951 in Shawnee, Kansas. They moved to the Houston, Texas, area from Louisiana, Missouri, in 1956. They



Earl and Yvonne Travis

were baptized into God's Church in July of 1964 when there was only one congregation in Houston.

The Houston South congregation held a reception for them after services and presented them with a beautiful crystal bowl. Cake and punch were served.

Earl and Yvonne have three children: Ada Grabowski of Laramie, Wyoming; Carter Travis of

Thorndale, Texas; and Matthew Travis of Tomball, Texas. They have 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Walter and Charlotte Warren had their 50th wedding anniversary December 13, 2000. They attend the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, congregation where Mr. Warren serves as a deacon.

Children, friends and family put on a surprise party for the couple, which had a huge supportive turnout. Their children are Joseph and Donna Warren, John and Darlene Warren, Mark and Daphne Warren, Paul and Teresa Warren, Steven and Terri Warren, Ruth and Bobby Johnson, Daniel and Kendall Warren and Rachel and Michael Mendola.

The Jefferson, Oregon, congregation surprised their pastor and his wife, Richard and Betty Duncan, with a celebration for their 50th wedding anniversary. There was a potluck dinner following services February 3, 2001, followed by an anniversary cake and a presentation. A beautiful handmade friendship quilt, with a square embroidered with the names of each family, was given to the Duncans. Marvin Riddle also made a wooden quilt stand to go with it.

Everyone was invited to step up to the microphone to say a few words, and there was plenty of good-natured humor. The children

all lined up to give the Duncans handmade cards they had been working on for weeks at the children's craft table.

Dale and Pearl Richey celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary March 3, 2001. They are members in the Orlando, Florida, congregation and have been members for 38 years. They have seven children, 15 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Obituaries

Bill Seelig, 72, died April 2, 2001, after a long illness. Mr. Seelig served as deacon in the UCG San Antonio, Texas, congregation and was an inspiration of dedicated service to all ages. He will be especially missed by the "Silver Ambassadors" and the little children who loved him dearly. Bill and his wife, Joyce, were regular fixtures at the Sabbath "coffee bar," serving everyone cookies and drinks.

Mr. Seelig is survived by his wife, Joyce, and five sons, Gerald, Joe, Philip, Timothy and Carlton, as well as two brothers, six granddaughters and two grandsons. He was preceded in death by a son, Michael.

Services were conducted on April 4 at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery by Wayne Cole, Burk McNair and Gary Petty.

Jacquetta (Jackie) Littrell

Hayes, 68, of Barnardsville, North Carolina, died February 15, 2001, after a lengthy battle with cancer. She was a member of the Asheville, North Carolina, congregation. She was a zealous long-time member in the Church, and will be remembered as a very kind and gracious lady.

She is survived by two sons, Bruce Murray and Ronnie Murray, both of Milford, Ohio; two sisters and five brothers; and five grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted February 18, 2001, by Jim Haefele.

Jesse J. Foust, 63, of Bluewell, West Virginia, died January 19, 2001, from complications of a massive heart attack. He was baptized in 1964, and was a member of the Princeton, West Virginia, congregation. He was the audiotape librarian and gave sermons.



Jesse J. Foust

Surviving him are his wife, Anne, of 43 years, and their five children: Catherine Foust of Beckley, West Virginia; Elizabeth O'Quinn and her husband, Robert,

and their two children of Charleston, West Virginia; Joseph Foust and his wife, Melissa, and their three children of Calabash, North Carolina; Timothy Foust and his two children of Springville, Virginia; and Kelly Foust of Roanoke, Virginia.

Jesse Foust was friendly and found time to help others. Many from the community and various Church of God affiliations came to the visitation and funeral. The funeral service was conducted by John Foster.

George Jack Lafferty, 72, of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation, died April 8, 2001, after attending the Holy Day services. He was born in Ohio and served in the Navy as a Seabee.

Mr. Lafferty is survived by two daughters, Kathleen Epperson and Mary Ester Cosico, five sisters, nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Services were held in Norfolk Virginia, by Todd Carey on April 11.

Frank Robert Overton, Sr., 90, of Brandon, Florida, died at home March 22, 2001. He was baptized in 1974 and was an active, faithful member who first attended in Lakeland and then in the Tampa area. Mr. Overton was an inspiration and friend to everyone who knew him. He spent a lot of time in service to the Church, continuing to collect aluminum cans and donating the proceeds to the church activity fund



Frank Robert Overton, Sr.

until about five weeks before he died. He is survived by his wife, Sue; sons, Frank Overton, Jr., and Donald Overton; five grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Don Waterhouse on March 31.

Catherine M. (Stella) Hurst, 62, died in her home in Riverview, Florida, March 22, 2001, after a difficult battle with cancer. Born in Brooklyn, New York, she became a lifetime resident of Florida. She was baptized in 1970 and attended the United Church of God in the Tampa area. She was a loving, gracious wife, mother and homemaker who wished to be "remembered in happiness and thought of with peace."

She is survived by her husband, Don; a son, Deven Hurst; three daughters, Sabrina Hosler, Sandiea Wasserman and Tia Hurst; her parents, Anthony and Josephine Cafaro; a sister, Victoria Bernaldo; a brother, Anthony Cafaro; and nine grandchildren. Services were conducted by Don Waterhouse on March 26.

News at a Glance...

Roenspies Credentialed

David Roenspies was credentialed as an elder in United at the March Council of Elders meetings. He lives in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and serves the Chicago Southwest, Illinois, congregation.

ABC Sampler Planned for August 13-17 in Cincinnati

The Ambassador Bible Center (ABC) faculty is planning to present an ABC sampler in Cincinnati August 13 to 17. This week-long session gives those attending the opportunity to "sample" ABC for one week with classes held each day. The material presented is taken from the lectures at ABC. Each year this program is varied, so students who choose to return this year will have different material presented.

Mini-samplers (weekend events with ABC faculty) are being planned for later in

the year in the Minneapolis, Minnesota; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Los Angeles, California, areas.

Gary Antion

UCG and CGCF Meet Together in Alaska

The United Church of God, an International Association, and the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship, both have small groups meeting in Alaska. Both organizations send a minister to Alaska every four to six weeks to provide for their groups. A request came from both groups to meet together for the spring Holy Days, which they did. For Passover they had 37; for the Night to Be Much Observed, 48; and for the first Holy Day, 35.

"It was a great beginning according to those who were there," wrote Les McCullough in his April 19 President's Letter. "I am pleased things worked out so well. Please continue to pray for God's will to be known in our joint cooperation."

Mail Received Continues to Double

The total mail received in the first four months of 2001 was 103 percent more than the same period last year, for a grand total of 125,084 pieces. For April alone the increase was 123 percent over the previous April.

The biggest increase continues to be in the subscription and literature cards received by the Church requesting *The Good News* or booklets. There were 93,005 cards received in the first four months, 143 percent more than last year.

The January subscriber development letter offering *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* brought in 22,648 cards, a 17 percent response.

A direct mail package mailed in February has brought in 10,527 requests for *The Good News*, 5 percent of the total packages mailed. This compares to a 3 percent response to the direct mail packages mailed last July.

Responses are coming in from seven different card decks mailed from January through April which contained a card offering *The Good News*. So far a total of 7,657 subscription requests have been received.

The brochure program brought in 7,208 cards in the first four months of the year, with 2,916 in April alone. Cards from waiting room copies of the magazine brought in 4,105 subscriptions.

Responses to *Reader's Digest* ads continue to come in, with 1,266 more cards for the most recent ad received this year. This pushes the total for that ad past 27,000 and brings the cost per response down to \$7.13.

Internet responses increased 109 percent in the first four months, to 7,895. The *Good News* radio program brought in 867 calls in that period.

As of the end of April, there were 2,741 donors on file, and 1,173 coworkers. New coworkers are now being offered a subscription to *World News and Prophecy*, along with receiving quarterly letters updating them on news of the work.

News at a Glance...

Employees Pick Up New Ideas at Postal Forum

Connie Seelig, who coordinates mail processing for the Church, and Richard Kennebeck, Information Systems (IS) manager, attended the National Postal Forum in Orlando, Florida, March 26 to 28. Each attended 11 different sessions to take optimum advantage of the classes offered.

"We plan to implement several new things into our operations," said Mrs. Seelig. "We plan to use USPS Planet codes to process our direct mail responses. This would enable us to bypass the data entry or the scanning process. We also plan to

obtain a corporate account for Global Express Mail to take advantage of a 5 percent discount on our shipments to Latin America. We also plan to implement an address standardization process on our Web page responses, which will ensure better addresses for those responses. It was also an excellent opportunity to be updated on the latest rate changes and classification changes."

April 19 Mrs. Seelig, mail clerk Janet Treadway and assistant to the IS manager Paul Wasilkoff also attended the Cincinnati Postal Symposium. They attended 11 classes between them and were also able to see demonstrations on three different addressing machines.

Mailing and shipping costs consume a larger share of the Church's budget than printing costs, so constant effort is required to find the most cost-effective ways to get Church literature to interested readers.

Bible Study Course Graduates Offered Tapes

Audiotapes are now being offered to the first group of subscribers who have completed the 12-lesson *Bible Study Course* program. Audiotapes of *Good News* radio programs and tapes from the *Fundamental Beliefs* series of sermons will be sent initially on a monthly basis. The mailing of the tapes, numbering in the thousands, will be handled by volunteers from the St. Paul, Minnesota, congregation at their meeting hall.

GN Print Run Reaches Goal; 26th Booklet Printed

The print run for the May-June *Good News* was 363,000, an increase of nearly 18,000 over last issue. Over recent months we've been adding well over 1,000 new subscribers every week.

This issue's print run is almost a 5 percent increase over the last issue. The print run is 86,000 copies higher than a year ago, a 31 percent increase. It is an 88 percent increase over two years ago.

These increases have come on top of a renewal program by which we have dropped thousands of subscribers who were no longer interested.

We recently printed 60,000 copies of *The Good News Special Issue* for new subscribers and gift copies. With these recent printings, we have averaged just over the 325,000 average print run we had planned and budgeted for this fiscal year.

Members received a new booklet, *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*, as the expanded edition in the May-June issue. This is one of our most important booklets in showing cause and effect, Satan's role in human affairs and why the world so

desperately needs God's Kingdom. The booklet was written by Noel Hornor, minister in Portland, Oregon, and author of several earlier booklets and articles.

Why Does God Allow Suffering? is the 26th booklet published by the United Church of God. In addition to the 24,000 copies printed for the expanded edition, we are printing 20,000 separate copies to offer to the general public.

With the completion of this booklet, we have printed or reprinted 198,000 booklets in only the first four months of this year. That's more than we printed in the entire years of 1996, 1997 or 1998.

Scott Ashley

Youth Corps Project in Jordan Announced

United Youth Corps volunteers will help staff a summer camp for mentally challenged children in Jordan this summer. The project will run from June 21 to July 15, and combines a two-week service segment in Amman, Jordan with one week of touring in Jordan.

The first two weeks will be spent in the Amman area preparing for and staffing a summer camp sponsored by the YMWA Center for Special Education (the Bunayat Center). Youth Corps participants will act as counselors and activity staff during a camp for mentally-challenged young people. This will be followed by one week of touring. The group will be accompanied by an elder of the United Church of God.

The tour will include Amman; Jerash; Mt. Nebo (where Moses died and was buried after viewing the promised land); Madaba, site of the earliest known mosaic map of the Holy Land; Ajlun and Karak, important Crusader castles; a float in the Dead Sea; visits to Deir Alla, Pella, Gadara and Petra; and snorkeling in the Red Sea at Aqaba.

The cost to the Youth Corps participants will be approximately \$1,500, plus airfare. Airfare should be approximately \$1,000 from the United States. For more details, see www.ucyouth.org/corp.

What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

- Listen to Real Audio files of the *Good News* radio program. A new program, "The Coming European Superpower" airs May 19 and 20. For the new radio log for May 13 through August 6, see: <http://www.ucg.org/radio>
- Listen to a streaming video or audio sermon titled "Overcoming Pride" by Jim Franks. <http://www.ucg.org/RealAud>
- Find three new sermon transcripts: "What You Should Know About Prophecy" by Ken Martin, "Sex in the World Tomorrow" by David Johnson and "Laying on of Hands" by David Myers. <http://www.ucg.org/deafhh/transcripts.html>
- The May 2001 issue of *El Comunicado* is available in HTML format and the booklet *Usted Puede Entender La Profecia Biblica (You Can Understand Bible Prophecy)* is available in PDF (348K) format. http://www.ucg.org/html/espa_ol.shtml

On ucyouth.org

- United Youth Camp and United Youth Corps information and applications, including new Youth Corps project in Jordan. <http://ucyouth.org>

On youthmagazine.org

- The spring issue of *Youth United* e-magazine has articles on: Your Greatest Asset, Why Don't You Celebrate Easter?, Choosing Your Friends, Rise Above Peer Pressure, Planning for Life, Baptism—A Greater Adventure Than Skydiving, Do You Know Your Dad?, The Value of Student-Teacher Relationships and Ask Youth Q&As. <http://youthmagazine.org>

On vcmagazine.org

- The April/May *Virtual Christian Magazine* has articles on: Are We Missing God's Message?, The Suitcase, Money Problems, Trial by Tile, Becoming "All Weather" Christians, A Child's Worth and The Big Cover Up. <http://vcmagazine.org>

Other Helpful Links

- <http://gnmagazine.org> (*Good News* Web site. Sign up for e-mail notification!)
- <http://www.ucg.org/a/locale/multimedia.htm> (Check out the local multimedia efforts by United congregations: *Tomorrow* television by Portland, Oregon; *Good News* television by Beloit, Wisconsin; *World News and Prophecy* radio by Donald Ward; and *The World Tomorrow* on MANX radio on the Isle of Man.)
- <http://www.ucg.org/a/news/news.htm> (News page with Council of Elders meeting reports, President's Letters, Home Office Updates, etc.)

If you have any questions or comments, please contact: webmaster@ucg.org

United News

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