



United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

United Church of God
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Vol. 9, No 7

www.ucg.org

August 2003

News At a Glance

Youth United to Become New Printed Magazine: Vertical Thought

This fall *Youth United* E-magazine will transition into a new magazine—*Vertical Thought*, subtitled “a magazine of understanding for tomorrow’s leaders.” “We at *Youth United* are thrilled that after three years of publication online via the Internet, we are now going to become a printed magazine, too,” wrote David Treybig, managing editor, in his introduction to the July *Youth United*.

The magazine will still be available online. “In fact, our online site will continue to post the same articles along with other articles not in the new printed version,” said Mr. Treybig.

“Our new name, *Vertical Thought*, came about via discussions with young people who suggested we find a name that would be meaningful and continue to speak to the source of knowledge (God)—but not limit our audience to teens alone. *Vertical Thought*, or *VT* for short, will continue with the same type of relevant content designed to help the younger generation discover and live

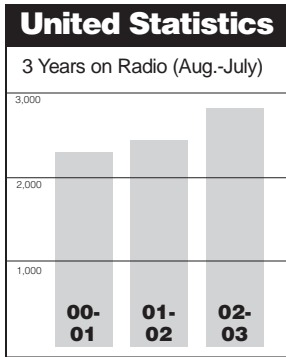


Proposed logo for new magazine to be printed before the Feast

God’s way of life. And as you have probably already suspected, the name *Vertical Thought* means we want to challenge you to think on things that come from above—that is, God,” Mr. Treybig wrote.

The Council of Elders discussed and approved the new name in their June 24

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26,637 Request Mideast Booklet From GN Letter

Through the end of July, 26,637 *Good News* subscribers have responded to an offer for the new booklet, *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*. A subscriber development letter was mailed in June with a reply card offering the booklet, and responses are continuing to come in.

An additional 3,293 requests for the booklet have come through the Internet, other mail or telephone. Also, 9,600 copies were mailed to U.S. members, and about 7,000 were sent to international areas, nearly exhausting the initial printing of 50,000 copies.

“This is the first time we’ve had to

order a booklet reprint in the same month in which it was first printed, but that’s a nice problem to have!” said Scott Ashley, *GN* and booklet managing editor. “I thought because this letter mailed in the summer, when response is somewhat less and many people are gone on vacation, that the response would be lower and slower. But I’ll take this kind of problem any day.

“This is an important booklet that covers a lot of biblical ground, and will really help people understand what’s happening in the Middle East and where it’s leading,” said Mr. Ashley. “Because

the Middle East so constantly grabs the headlines, I don’t doubt that this will be one of our most popular booklets ever. It’s certainly off to a good start.”

Largest Mailing

At 200,000 letters mailed, this was the largest subscriber letter mailing United has done to date. The previous highs were just over 170,000 for letters offering *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* in 2001 and the *Bible Study Course* in 2002.

The total number of U.S. subscribers is approximately 275,000, but due to

budgetary constraints the Church chose to send letters to only 200,000 of them. “From previous testing we’ve determined the segments of our subscriber list that respond best and thus give us the most responses at the lowest cost, so those are the ones who were sent the letter,” said Mr. Ashley.

Cost-Saving Measures

The reply cards were bar-coded before they were mailed so the requester’s name, address and subscrip-

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ABC Completing Busy Year



Back: Suzanne Lavaty, Jonathan Magee, Edward Foster, Aaron Dominguez, Luke Crane, Robert Teitgen, Terry Shipman, Daniel Harper, Taylor Tootle, Mark Holladay, Zachary Moss, Jonathan Reimann, Craig McQueen, Matthew Earles, Joshua Stevens, Jeremiah Reagan, Carol Berry; middle: Clarajane Reynolds, Kristina Hirst, Cindy Gore, Natalie McQueen, Leigha Riley, Lily Miller, Tamara Crow, Kamie Treybig, Lena Disman, Melody Haley, Heather Guerin, Karen Ketterson; seated: Lynda Lee Lynes, Michelle Zollner, Lori Holladay, Michelle Smith, Kimberly Mortier, Kathleen Giza, Melissa Stevens, Shannon Guy, Linda Saar; not pictured: Gary and Jane McConaughy, Wil Young

by Gary E. Antion

The fourth class of Ambassador Bible Center students will graduate on Aug. 10, completing another busy year.

Each ABC class has had its own personality. This year’s class has been one that distinguished itself by being atten-

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Good News TV Gets a New Look

■ Both cable-access programs are looking for members to sponsor them to reach the goal of airing on more than 200 stations.

Over the weekend of July 18 through 20, the *Good News* television program



Darris McNeely and Steve Myers put new *GN* TV set to use (photo by Peter Eddington)

produced by the Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation, received a facelift when several new parts were created for the on-air set. The program airs on cable-access TV stations in various cities across the United States. Several new elements for the set were donated by a

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United Youth Camps Achieve 100 Percent

by Larry Greider

The United Youth Camps (UYC) program, now in its ninth year of providing regional camps, received a perfect score and is expected to be re-credited by the American Camping Association (ACA) this fall.

The ACA certifies camps for three years and then requires another visit. This year four of the eight camps were selected to score our program: the winter program held on the campus of Aurora University near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and the summer programs at Camp Pinecrest in Missouri, Camp Woodmen in Alabama and the Teton Challenger Camp in Wyoming. Each received teams of ACA volunteers to score the over 200 standards in 10 potential categories.



Paul Luecke, Teton Challenger camp director; Larry Greider, UYC national coordinator; Pat Hammond, ACA national director of standards; and Gail Abrams, Colorado Springs area standards chair (photo by Ryan Luecke)

Although the UYC program has multiple sites, we are given one scorecard. If a standard is missed at any camp, then it

is recorded on the national scorecard as

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News At a Glance

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teleconference (for details, see www.ucg.org/about/council/updates.htm).

Young adults and teens, ages 12 to 20, who have a birthdate listed on the Church's address files will receive the magazine automatically. Others may receive a free, two-year subscription to *Vertical Thought* by going to the Web site www.youthmagazine.org or writing to the Church's office in their area.

Readers can also sign up on the Web site to receive E-mail notification when the new issue is posted. As of July 9, 927 people had "subscribed" to the online magazine.

The first issue of *Vertical Thought* is scheduled to be printed before the Feast of Tabernacles.

Cambridge and Boston Mini-Sampler Topics Set

The ABC Mini-Sampler in Cambridge, Ohio, Sept. 6 and 7 will include services and Bible classes Sabbath afternoon, Saturday night and all day Sunday. The instructors will be Ralph Levy and Matthew Fenchel; Dr. Levy will teach "In the Beginning: Topics in Genesis" and Mr. Fenchel will teach "The Book of Acts: the Church Gets Started."

Please contact pastor Joe Horchak at joe_horchak@ucg.org, or 614-774-4663 for details.

The Mini-Sampler in Boston, Massachusetts, Sept. 13 and 14 will include presentations by Don Ward about the great theme and unity of the Bible, principles of exegesis and the nature of God and Christ. Gary Antion will speak about the Baptist religion and building and maintaining a happy marriage.

For location and lodging information, please contact Paul Suckling at paul_suckling@ucg.org or (508) 845-0126.

Other Mini-Samplers are planned for Nov. 15 and 16 in Seattle, Washington, and Jefferson City, Missouri.

Caribbean Web Site Created

The Information Technology department at the home office was recently approached by Kingsley Mather, who coordinates the work in the Caribbean, to help create a Caribbean Web site. Since a design and color scheme had already been chosen, the primary task involved fine-tuning the functionality of the site.

The staff was able to integrate the main Web site's existing online order form and processing system directly into the Caribbean site's design. In

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a missed standard. Some standards are "mandatory," and none of these can be missed to receive accreditation.

Due to the outstanding efforts of our camp directors and their staff, no standards were missed at any camp. This is a most impressive feat! Part of the success of our program is the mindset of seeking excellence and a desire to understand the "spirit" of the law. Camp directors were very aware of the intent of each standard and tried to make sure we were in compliance, knowing that each standard has been tested time and again in the real world and that many of the standards spring from seeking to protect the campers and avoid lawsuits.

Why do we need outside accreditation? The simple answer is to manage our risk while safeguarding the precious lives of our youth.

Greg Sargent, Camp Pinecrest director, said, "Those of us at Pinecrest appreciated knowing we have a program designed to keep our campers safe and a program that more than met this world's standard of excellence. God, through His Spirit, has enriched us not only with physical fulfillment,

but also with the ability to keep the spirit and intent of His laws. We look forward to raising the bar even more in order to enhance a wonderful summer program for our godly-sanctified campers."

Again this year, we had more volunteers than we could use. Currently we have a staff to camper ratio that is well above most programs. To have such fine talent willing to give of their time and resources is a credit to the wonderful young people of the Church.

An interesting tidbit is that the ACA national director of standards, Mary Hammond, decided to fly into Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to visit our Teton Challenger program. Ms. Hammond said that when the local standards person needed extra staff, she called the national office in Martinsville, Indiana. Ms. Hammond asked who was to be visited. Since it was well known that the UYC program had scored very well at the other camps, Ms. Hammond wanted to see our program design for herself. She commented, "It is obvious that you are well prepared and seek excellence."

Three years earlier, Connie Coutelli-er from the ACA national office made a

presentation of our first ACA accreditation certificate. At that time our cumulative score was over 98 percent. She commented that this score would probably

never be broken for scoring at multiple sites. This year the score of 100 percent indicates that our staff is very committed. **UN**

The Benefits of ACA Accreditation

The accreditation of United Youth Camps gives parents peace of mind knowing that our camps are being run according to the highest professional standards and that their children are safe while away from home. Some of the standards mandating these high levels of operation include having a minimum ratio of supervision of one adult staff to eight campers, ages 12 to 14 (or one adult staff to 10 campers, ages 15 to 18), 24 hours of precamp training for every person on staff and certifications for supervisors of water activities and target sports.

In addition to these standards, kitchens must operate in accordance with health practices requiring sterilization of dishes and monitoring food temperatures for both hot and cold foods. Depending upon the activities of a given camp, there may be over 200 standards to meet. Meeting these standards is reassuring for parents and aids the Church in managing risk and obtaining favorable insurance rates.

While having a safe and properly run camp is a worthy goal in itself, the pursuit of accreditation also required us to develop a mission statement for United Youth Camps and to measure our success in accomplishing it. This is perhaps the most important benefit of our pursuit of ACA accreditation.

To be specific, the mission of the United Youth Camps program is to support parents and the Church in teaching youth to develop their potential while learning that God's values are practical ways of living. It is extremely gratifying to the camp team and parents to see surveys showing that an increasing majority of campers list their spiritual development as a primary goal and benefit of camp.—David Treybig

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member, Monte Knutson, including the rear panels and an updated interview desk.

On July 20, Darris McNeely, pastor in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Steve Myers, pastor in Austin, Minnesota, recorded four, half-hour programs on topics that varied from prophecy to life after death. Peter Eddington traveled from Cincinnati for the weekend to give some lighting and technical help as the new look was put into place.

Become a Sponsor!

GN television is now airing on cable-access stations in the Chicago area, and response over the first couple of weekends has been very good. The program airs on approximately 25 cable-access stations in various cities across the country.

If you are interested in sponsoring the program in your town, please contact Steve Nutzman, pastor in Beloit, by E-mail at steve_nutzman@ucg.org or by telephone at (608) 758-9228.

United's other cable-access program, *Tomorrow Television*, is produced in Portland, Oregon. It is also available for sponsorship and it currently airs on over 40 stations. Please contact Howard Davis by E-mail at howard_davis@ucg.org or by telephone at (503) 760-0973 if you would like to sponsor *Tomorrow Television*.

Members are welcome to sponsor either or both programs. The goal is to increase our reach to over 200 stations in the near future if we can get enough member support. Airtime is usually free for cable-access programming. It simply requires a person in the local community to sponsor a program.



Another view of the new set donated for GN TV (photo by Peter Eddington)

For a listing of United's multimedia projects, including its weekly radio program and two TV programs, please visit www.ucg.org/multimedia/ for times and station logs.

Peter Eddington

August 2003
Vol. 9, No. 7



United News
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United News (ISSN 1088-8020) is published monthly except April and October by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Drive, Millford, OH 45150. © 2003 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Millford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 14877167.

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Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

Subscriptions: *United News* is sent automatically to members of the United Church of God and is free to all who request it. Your subscription is provided by the generous, voluntary contributions of members of the United Church of God, an International Association, and their coworkers. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible. To request a subscription, write to *United News*, United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or to one of the international addresses below.

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News From **Around the World**

UCG-Germany Serves Switzerland, Netherlands & Beyond

UCG-Germany sent out an update July 11 covering the period from January 2002 to June 2003, excerpted here.

National Council at Work

In August 2002 UCG-Germany's current national council was selected from the 12 members willing to serve on the council. Those selected were Hermann Göhring, Ernst Herzogenrath, Paul Kieffer, Rolf Marx, Ludwig Queckbörner, Alfred Riehle and Kurt Schmitz. Ludwig Queckbörner, a member of the Darmstadt congregation, was selected for the first time, and the other six council members were selected for another three-year term. Mr. Queckbörner replaced Alfred Nachtsheim, who had served on UCG-Germany's national council since 1996 and declined to serve another term.

At its first meeting, the new council selected Paul Kieffer as its chairman.

At its December 2002 meeting the UCG-Germany national council approved the budget for 2003. The budget includes the expense for renting a small office, which has become necessary with the increased workload. The council also gave its final approval to the "Rules of Association" of the United Church of God, an *International Association*, with the council's comments sent in a letter to the Council of Elders.

At its April 2003 meeting UCG-Germany's national council approved a youth exchange between UCG-Italy and UCG-Germany, authorizing travel expenses to be paid for four Italian young people to visit Germany as part of a UCG European youth activity hosted by UCG-Germany at the end of July (see article below). The council also approved an exchange of visits between the chairmen of UCG-Germany and UCG-Italy. In June UCG-Germany chairman Paul Kieffer visited Carmelo

Anastasi in Bergamo, Italy, and the last week of July Mr. Anastasi was to visit Germany as UCG-Germany's guest. The council also authorized planning for a children's camp in August 2004. In June a suitable location near Bielefeld, Germany, was selected.

Literature Produced, Mailed and Advertised

During the year 2002 UCG-Germany received a total of 3,355 pieces of "mail," an increase of 3.6 percent over 2001. Of the total, 293 were received as requests by fax and another 311 requests came in as E-mails. All other requests were normal mail received at UCG-Germany's post office box in Bonn.

Intern, the German-language *United News*, was offered during 2002 to regular subscribers of *Gute Nachrichten* who have been subscribers for four years, have ordered literature and have also renewed their subscription. By the end of the year, 75 new subscribers had been added to the *Intern* mailing list.

During 2002 UCG-Germany mailed a total of 32,578 pieces of literature. The most requested booklets during the year were *Making Life Work* and *The Bible: Truth or Legend?*

At the end of the year UCG-Germany had 13 booklets and eight *Bible Study Course* lessons in print. UCG-Germany published 236 pages of periodic literature during the year and spent US\$39,000 on printing during 2002.

The May-June 2002 issue of *Gute Nachrichten* included an article on "What Are the Causes of Youth Violence?" This article and the editorial were prepared on short notice following

a massacre at a high school in Erfurt, Germany, at the end of April 2002.

The July-August 2002 issue included an article on the drug ecstasy that was timed for the big "Love Parade" in Berlin, an all-day open-air rave/techno parade/party in July with an attendance estimated at over one million.

The booklet *Keys to Understanding the Bible* was reprinted in late May 2002 after the initial print run was exhausted. This is the third booklet UCG-Germany has reprinted.



Carmelo Anastasi and Paul Kieffer display Italian and German publications they produce while Mr. Kieffer visits the office in Italy. They plan to exchange ministerial visits at least a few times each year.

A semiannual letter was mailed in late August 2002 to 670 subscribers who have renewed their subscriptions to *Gute Nachrichten*. The new booklet *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?* was offered, and 231 responses were received, a 34.5 percent response rate at a cost per response of US\$1.04.

An ad in the November issue of the health magazine *Schrot & Korn (Grist & Grain)* brought 861 requests for *Gute Nachrichten* at a cost per response of US\$6.12. The motif used for the ad was "What happens after death?"

A semiannual letter was mailed the first week of March 2003 to 730 sub-

scribers who have renewed their subscription to *Gute Nachrichten* and who had not yet ordered the booklet *God's Feast Days: The Plan of God for Mankind*. There were 199 responses to the offer, a 27.3 percent response rate at a cost per response of US\$1.46.

Helping in Holland

UCG-Germany provided editorial assistance for UCG-Holland to print the Dutch booklet *The Road to Eternal Life* in December. In addition, UCG-Germany continues to maintain UCG-Holland's mailing list for the *Good News* magazine in the Netherlands.

Web Site Updates

In May UCG-Germany was able to secure the Internet URL www.vkg.org to use for its internal Web site. The domain www.ucg-germany.org continues to be used as well. (Both domain names resolve to the same Web site.)

In addition, in preparation for the new .eu (European Union) domain name extension, scheduled to be available at the end of the year, UCG-Germany reserved the domains www.gute-nachrichten.eu, www.vkg.eu and www.ucg.eu for future use.

In June the redesign of UCG-Germany's main Web site, www.gute-nachrichten.org, was completed. The Web site now features a site search engine for all issues of *Gute Nachrichten* since 1999 and other selected articles.

Work in Switzerland

For the Passover, the First Day of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost services (2002) in Regensdorf, Switzerland (near Zurich), and at a member's home near Lake Constance, UCG-Germany hosted brethren from the French-speaking part of Switzerland who had no convenient service location of their own.

UCG-Germany provided a translation of services for the visitors. On Pentecost 2003, UCG-Germany again hosted French-speaking Swiss brethren.

At the end of February 2003 an ad was placed in two consecutive issues of the Swiss magazine *Schweizerischer Beobachter*. The ad used was the glass motif, "half-full, half-empty," which lent itself to a first ad in a totally new advertising medium. It was UCG-Germany's first ad in Switzerland. The response was less than expected (29 responses), but the contact address used was in Germany, not Switzerland, an important consideration for the Swiss mentality. A second ad is planned for the fall of 2003, using a Swiss return mail address.

In April 2003 the council approved opening a bank account in Switzerland as a convenience to Swiss brethren and donors, who otherwise have to transfer money to a foreign bank account.

2002 and 2003 Statistics

For the year 2002, total income increased by 1.8 percent over 2001. Regular donation income was 0.2 percent less than in 2001, and the Holy Day offerings increased by 7.2 percent over the previous year. Three people were baptized in 2002.

For the fifth consecutive year, UCG-Germany operated without any subsidy from the home office. In 2002 UCG-Germany donated US\$1,700 to help Peruvian brethren affected by natural disasters and US\$940 to an international scholarship fund for ABC.

For the first six months of 2003, total income increased by 2.9 percent over the same period in 2002. Regular donation income was 4.8 percent higher than in the first half year of 2002, and the spring Holy Day offerings (including Pentecost) decreased by 1.4 percent compared to the previous year. **UN**

UCG-Germany Sponsors European Young Adults' Weekend

UCG-Germany sponsored a young adults' weekend from July 25 to 27 for 22 participants from Italy, the Netherlands and Germany. The activity was a UCG first for the Church's youth from different European nations, who had a chance to make new friends and to strengthen ties among UCG's European congregations. The activity was held at a picturesque setting in a nature youth hostel near the city of Kempen in western Germany.

New discount airfares offered by "no-frills" airlines made it possible for UCG-Germany to provide transportation for four young men from Italy. Andrea di Vita and Giovanni Troisi came all the way from Naples and Sicily for the activity! After sightseeing at Cologne's famous cathedral, Luca Anastasi, Stefano di Vita, Andrea and Giovanni were

joined by eight young people from the Netherlands and 10 from Germany. The group enjoyed the lakeside setting and the chance to swim, canoe and chat at a campfire.

On Sabbath morning the young people discussed the subject of tolerance toward others in an interactive Bible study. In the afternoon the group hosted brethren from the Dutch congregation and the Dormagen congregation in Germany. Announcements and the sermonette during services were given by young adults René and Jako Kasper. In his sermon Paul Kieffer, pastor for the Netherlands and the German-speaking areas of Austria, Germany and Switzerland, highlighted the courage of Shadrach, Meschach and Abed-Nego in ancient Babylon. He encouraged the young people to follow their example by being res-

olute and "showing backbone" in an age when one cannot escape the influence of Babylon in modern society.

After services young and old enjoyed getting better acquainted while enjoying

a cake buffet in the afternoon and a barbecue dinner in the evening.

On Sunday the young people went on a sightseeing tour through the city of Kempen,

which dates back to the 12th century. The group visited a castle, windmill and the ancient city wall.

After lunch it was time to say good-bye to new friends. The young people commented on how encouraged they were to spend time with people their age with the same beliefs and hopes.

With airfares cheaper in some cases than a taxi, future visits among the youth of the European congregations will be a highlight to look forward to.

Luca Anastasi, Andrea di Vita, Stefano di Vita and Giovanni Troisi



Young adults from Italy, the Netherlands and Germany host Sabbath services at a youth hostel for brethren from Dormagen, Germany, and the Netherlands; right, around the campfire (photos by Giovanni Troisi)

International News At a Glance

Record Attendance in Canada

The final figures for the Feast of Pentecost in Canada showed a record attendance of 665. That number is 8.5 percent higher than it was last year. So far this year, Holy Day attendance is up 11.7 percent over the previous year. In addition Canada reached its budgeted amount for the Pentecost offering.

To date the Canadian office has recorded 11 baptisms for this calendar year. "We receive reports from church areas coast to coast indicating that brand-new people are beginning to express an interest in the Church and have begun to attend Sabbath services with us," said Tony Wasilkoff, Canadian operation manager in his July 11 report.

Canada Renews Subscribers and Runs Ad in *Alive*

In March, 3,428 *Good News* renewal notices were sent out to subscribers in Canada. By June 20, 1,113 people had responded (32.5 percent). Of those who responded, 929 (83.5 percent) renewed their subscription. A second letter has been sent to those who did not respond.

Recently the Canadian office also sent renewal notices to 5,799 waiting rooms. By June 20, those choosing to renew numbered 137 (19.2 percent of those who responded).

"While we are losing some subscribers because of the renewal programs, we are also gaining new ones through programs like the ad in *Alive* magazine," reported Edwin van Pelt, Canadian office manager. "We've received 475 responses to date from the first ad. The second ad will be appear in the September or October issue of the magazine."

British Isles Reports on Circulation

The monthly circulation report produced by Jan Schroeder for June 2003 shows that the total circulation of *The Good News* mailed from England had increased to 2,881 by the end of June. Thirty requests came from the Internet, and an additional 18 were responses to the insert cards advertising the *GN* in the May issue of *Reader's Digest*.

Of this total circulation figure, 2,071 are in the United Kingdom, 151 in Sweden and 106 in the Isle of Man. The remainder are distributed within a further 35 European countries, plus Israel.

During June the British office received 136 requests for 333 items of other literature and an additional 25 requests for the *Bible Study Course*.

During the first half of 2003, the office received 812 *Good News* subscription requests, 179 *Bible Study Course* requests and 1,166 requests for 2,442 items of other literature.

Losses from cancellations, returns and the ongoing renewal program mean that the overall *GN* list has increased by 338 (an increase of 13 percent over the December 2002 figure).

Total subscriptions to the *Bible Study Course* now stand at 146 (with another 705 already having completed all 12 lessons); *United News* subscriptions stand at 225; and *World News & Prophecy* at 329.

Also during the first half of 2003, 37 new donors and 9 new coworkers were added to the file.

GN Readers Invited to Bible Study in Essex

An invitation to July 19's Bible study in Chelmsford, Essex, England, was sent to 160 *Good News* readers July 11. Ten people gathered for the study titled "Invitation to a Royal Wedding." The following study, scheduled for Aug. 30, is titled "Reclaiming the World."

British Isles Sends Semiannual Letter to GN Readers

A letter offering the United Church of God's newest publication, *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy*, and Lesson One of the *Bible Study Course* was sent to 2,885 readers of *The Good News* in the British Isles, Europe and Israel. The offer was timed to arrive before the July/August issue, the theme of which is "Can You Believe Bible Prophecy?" In the "UCG-British Isles National Announcements" July 19, the British Isles ministry wrote, "We would appreciate your prayers for the success of this material reaching the hearts and minds of the readers."

Two More Baptized in Malawi

On June 22, 2003 two more baptisms were performed in Lilongwe, Malawi.



Mesech Chonde and Ruth Ellia

Ruth Ellia and Mesech Chonde were baptized by Bill Jahns. Fifteen baptisms have been performed in Malawi in the past year.

Members Face Feast Challenges

If it weren't for assistance, many members in Latin America and other developing areas could not afford to attend the Feast of Tabernacles.

In the Third World, "most of our members do not have sufficient second title to pay for their transportation, their accommodation, their meals," said Leon Walker, a member of the Council of Elders who oversees the work of the Church in Spanish-speaking areas.

"It is our desire as the Church to have the membership at the festivals, and we've always done all we can to help as many as we possibly can, which in most years means virtually everyone," he said. Mr. Walker explained that a significant portion of the Festival expenses in Latin America (including assistance for the members) comes from subsidies requested as part of the budget process from the UCGIA home office. Much of this comes from first tithes and offerings. The same is true of a number of the other international areas.

Contributing to Festival Fund

"The Church has tried to do all it can to help the members go to the Feast, not only in Latin America, but in the Philippines, Africa and other parts of the world," Mr. Walker said.

"We do have to use first tithe for part of our Festival expenses, both in this country, as well as the subsidy we send to other countries," Mr. Walker said. He said it would be good to let people know that Festival funds are needed and "ask people to do their part, not beyond their

part. It would be helpful to free up funds we are using now that could go to preach the gospel."

For Latin America, "as far as Festival assistance, that runs into many, many thousands of dollars," Mr. Walker said. "With the Philippines, I think it runs into a few thousand dollars as well."

Mr. Walker encouraged those who have excess second title to send it to the home office (or their national office), labeled "Festival Fund," not to try to send it directly to a country they think needs help. The home office is aware of the needs, as those responsible for each area make their needs known as part of the budget process.

Special Fund-Raisers

However, some congregations and individuals have heard of the needs in particular countries and have decided to give extra donations or have special fund-raisers for that specific area. Mr. Walker mentioned a member who had heard of the challenges members face in affording to go to the Feast in one country. That member made a special donation to the "International Fund" of the home office. Others may occasionally also wish to send special donations, over and above regular tithes and offerings, labeling them "International Fund."

Mr. Walker talked about another member, Belinda McCloud, a 2000 ABC graduate, who has been active in raising funds for international areas. He said she suggested that "Church members could have fund-raising activities,

garage sales, etc., that could be used for efforts like this, perhaps not just for the Festival, but where there are other emergency needs, particularly disasters that may occur in many parts of the world, including the United States.

"Recently we had a member in Chile whose home—and they have their business in their home—was totally destroyed by fire," Mr. Walker said. "Obviously the Church in Chile has done what it can, but our funds are limited there. We have had a few Church members in the United States who have heard of this disaster and have sent funds to help this family, which is very much appreciated.

"The members have always been very generous to help people who are in need—that's the history of the membership of the Church," Mr. Walker said.

Often these kinds of fund-raisers have been organized by those who have seen a need firsthand. "Maybe they go to a Feast, they talk to the members, that's usually how it occurs," Mr. Walker said. "One member went to Central America and learned that cassette tapes are very expensive. He went back and bought a thousand of them, which he shipped to me and I've been taking them down to Latin America in my luggage.

"Any one of us individually can't do much, but collectively we can do a lot," Mr. Walker said.

The home office is making plans to provide a clearinghouse for the needs around the world. **UN**

Philippine Program Produced in Two Languages

An experimental radio broadcast in the Cebuano language called *Ang Maayong Balita sa Kalibutan Ugma* (*The Good News of the World Tomorrow*) was started over a year ago in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, by one of our local leaders who acquired an FM radio station.

Months later, an English and Cebuano broadcast with the same title began to be produced in Davao City as well.

The English broadcast in Davao City began on a 5,000-watt AM station, and aired early on weekend mornings. After six months, God opened the opportuni-

ty to air the program on one of the most reputable FM radio stations in the region, with a power of 10,000 watts. Popularly known as Oldies Radio, the broadcast airs at 9 every Saturday night. Responses have been good.

Edmond Macaraeg

Pastor Visits Brethren in Zimbabwe

On July 18 André van Belkum arrived in Harare for a four-day visit with United Church of God members in Zimbabwe. As reported in the media, Zimbabwe is presently experiencing a certain amount of internal political turmoil, with sporadic clashes between the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, and the government of President Mugabe. Furthermore, the country is grappling with severe food shortages, and thousands are facing starvation unless food-aid organizations send relief soon.

During the time of the visit, the bakers hiked the price of bread from Zim.\$550 to \$1,000 a loaf following a more than 1,000 percent increase in the Grain Marketing Board's selling price of wheat. Presently one U.S. dollar is equivalent to 2,000 Zimbabwe dollars.

Inflation, which reached a record high of 300 percent in May, has pushed up the cost of commodities, making them unaf-

fordable for the majority of people whose salaries have not kept pace with soaring inflation. Fuel is virtually unobtainable, except on the black market where a liter costs about Zim.\$1,500, making traveling difficult for people. It is interesting to see how slowly people travel in order to conserve fuel.

During these challenging and difficult times, our members are coping and their basic needs are being supplied. Attendance at Sabbath service on July 19 totaled 17, with four new people.

Stephen and Vetina Tshabalala and Joseph Ndlovu traveled by rail all the way from Bulawayo, a journey that lasted through Friday evening. There was a delay of four hours after the train hit and killed a person. The service was delayed for two hours while we waited for the train to arrive. Because of the shortage of fuel many commuters use the train. This resulted in some of our members standing for hours, as seating

was not always available. These examples of zeal are an encouragement to all of us in the Church, and it helped me to preach during the service with a little more fervor than usual!

After the services ended, we all gathered at the home of Mike and Primrose Mukaratii for a social. The ladies did a wonderful job of providing a nourishing and tasty meal, and there was a spirit of excitement and hearty conversation as we fellowshiped until early evening. The Mukaratii family, together with Gill Heathcote, handles the administration of the work in Zimbabwe. The *Good News* magazine is distributed to 1,400 people, and the increase in donors and coworkers is a good sign for future growth.

There are numerous challenges for our members in Zimbabwe, but during it all their hope is firmly fixed on the promises God has given His people.

André van Belkum



United Youth Camps

Teens Spend 10 Action-Packed Days in the Tetons

The eighth year of the Teton Challenger Camp is going to be a hard one to beat. The weather was ideal; the staff was the best yet; and most agreed it was the finest group of campers we've ever had.

The 115 campers and staff spent 10 action-packed days and nights together in the mountainous grandeur of the Grand Teton National Park and surrounding areas. Most staff members arrived early to help set up "base camp" in a bare campsite area in the woods. Campers arrived Monday (July 7) and, on Tuesday while the staff had training, campers were taken on field trips to the world-famous Wildlife Art Museum and explored the quaint Western town of Jackson. On Wednesday all campers received intensive training in canoeing and backpacking skills. This was also the day that American Camping Association representatives visited and inspected the camp (see article, page 1).

Thursday began the full program schedule, which cycles through two-day blocks in each major activity area. For two days at a time, a third of the campers were occupied with adventure canoeing on the Snake River. Campers had to "read" the river to navigate it safely. On the river some canoes capsized in strainers or heavy water, but the campers' training kept them safe as they rescued themselves and their canoes.

Another third of the campers were rock climbing at two unique, challenging locations. More campers this year "cleaned" two designated certificate climbing routes—that is, they successfully climbed the rock face completely on their own, even though a safety rope

bald eagles, buffalo, bears and other wildlife.

The only aspects of camp that may have received more rave reviews than the above activities were the camp meals and the food services team that cooked them up each day. A common observation was how one can eat all he or she wants and yet still lose weight! So many calories are burned during the activities that belts often lose a notch or two by the end of camp.

Every night was a Christian Living discussion around the campfire. Eventually each day



was connected to them just in case they slipped). Along the 2 1/2-mile hike up to one of the climbing locations, the Hidden Falls of Cascade Canyon were breathtaking with heavy water thundering down from mountain snowmelt.

At the same time, a final third of the campers spent two days on a backpacking trip into high mountain country. They carried heavy packs containing their sleeping bags, tents, food, water and other gear. After the first day of hiking, many campers slid on snow and threw snowballs. During these activities, some campers saw moose, elk, deer,



Camper Elizabeth Cannon ready to rappell at Blacktail Butte; just completing a canoe run through the Flagg Canyon stretch of the Snake River; canoeing director Doug Horchak congratulates Marty Miller on proficiency achievement in canoeing; rock climbing (photos by Ryan Luecke)



ends with singing a hymn together, and then campers retrieve toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc., from the "bear-proof" trailer. Anything that has a scent must be stored in the trailer. Just before we had arrived at camp, a grizzly bear clawed into someone's ice chest to get to the food inside. By adhering to strict bear control rules, we had no problems with bears again this year.

Look for more pictures of this year's Teton Challenger Camp in a few weeks, at www.cgca.net/tetoncamp/.

Paul Luecke

Downpours Spark Innovation, Closeness at Camp Woodmen

Summing up this year's session at Camp Woodmen, Alabama, camp director David Dobson commended the campers and staff. "It was the best year ever. We had the finest group of campers and the best staff! Not only that, we scored 100 percent during the American Camping Association accreditation visit!"

Despite the torrential downpour on the first full day of camp (due to tropical storm Bill), both campers and staff displayed a positive attitude. Between innovative activities ranging from watersliding on the grassy hills to tug-of-war in the mud, campers took the opportunity to get reacquainted with old friends and meet new ones.

On the second day, some dorms braved the weather by attending Christian Living classes on the porches with ponchos and umbrellas to protect them from the sprays of wind and rain while others participated indoors.

Campers also took advantage of the damp weather to participate in indoor games and to prepare for the Fashion Show. Campus cleanup and kitchen duty provided opportunities to serve and regularly scheduled indoor activities such as manners/etiquette and dance classes went on as usual. Campers learned a popular line dance

as well as the two-step and polka.

The rest of the week, campers took advantage of the sun and warmth to participate in other activities. Staff members from 13 states and South Africa conducted sessions in riflery, ropes course, swimming, volleyball and outdoor living skills. Flag football, as well as a new game, speedaway, provided yet another chance to slide in the mud, proving a challenge to both campers and to the "Miscellaneous Moms'" laundering skills! Rock climbing and rappelling gave the opportunity for campers to practice the "encouragement" they heard about in Christian Living class. Campers boarded vans to yet another new activity—introduction to golf.

Other events during the week included a visit by UCGIA President Roy Holladay on July 3. He was able to view camp activities and stay for the Fashion Show featuring creatively designed outfits made of trash bags, newspapers, paper plates, candy wrappers, and various recycled materials. Thursday evening also featured fireworks by the lake in honor of Independence Day.

The Friday evening Q&A session, followed by the nightly closing hymn, "Wake My Heart," sent campers to

their dorms prior to the nightly visit by ministers and their wives to say good night.

Sabbath services were especially inspiring, with songleading and opening and closing prayers by young staff and campers. The camp choir sang an a cappella rendition of "Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God." Split sermons were given by David Treybig on "Honoring Your Parents"



From above: Tug-of-war was an impromptu alternate activity on a rainy day; dorm 3B playing water basketball; dorm 3G on a rain-soaked volleyball court (photos by Denise Dobson)



and by Eric Evans admonishing campers to put on the "Armor of God" as hockey players put on their uniforms for protection.

The 52 boys did their part

in making sure that as many of the 70 girls as possible enjoyed dancing to "Sweet Home Alabama" and other music on Saturday night. Campers from 18 states and South Africa departed on Sunday morning amid tears, hugs, handshakes and exchanges of IM and E-mail addresses. After all, we need to stay in touch until next time!

Mari Springer

Hye Sierra Campers Encouraged to Rise to the Challenge

Campers from Australia, Mexico and all parts of the United States gathered at Camp Hye Sierra, California, just outside Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, June 27 to July 7 to pioneer our new location and activities program for the Southwest region.

Campers were encouraged to "Rise to the Challenge," not just in the activities they enjoyed at camp, but in building a personal relationship with God as well. Christian Living classes and morning Compass Checks focused on topics such as becoming a friend of God, prayer and on July 4th—America's Independence Day—activities director Randy Stiver read a Christian's "Declaration of Independence From the King of this World." Campers and staff met the challenge, and God's blessing was evident from the spirit of unity and joy that was present all week at camp.

Along with our new location came some new activities. Kayaking was a favorite among the campers. Horseback riding and hiking among the giant sequoias—the world's largest living things—were also popular. The day hike concluded with a short climb to the top of Moro Rock, which offers a spectacular view almost 4,000 feet down into the Kaweah River valley below, while 13 of the older campers went on an overnight hike to the top of 11,204-foot-high Alta Peak.

Other activities included an improved archery venue, wilderness



Left: Two-time Olympic gold medalist Bob Mathias greets campers and signs autographs July 4; above: campers climb to the top of Moro Rock; inset: campers cover their heads with towels as they learn to walk by faith (in their compass!) and not by sight during the wilderness skills class (photos by David Crawford and James Capo)

decalathlon in 1948 when he was just 17 years old, the youngest gold medalist ever in that event. He won gold again in 1952 when he set a new world-record. The book *Fields of Gold* is a story of his Olympic career, and has also been made into a movie. Mr. Mathias went on to become a successful businessman, and served as a member of the U.S. Congress for seven years. He built

skills/orienteering, volleyball, basketball, speedway, dance and crafts.

A highlight of camp came when two-time Olympic gold medalist Bob Mathias spoke to the campers on Friday morning. Mr. Mathias won the

and operated the camp at Hye Sierra. Though the camp has since been purchased by the Armenian Church, he still owns 40 acres adjoining the camp where he was spending the Fourth of July weekend with his family and friends when he generously accepted our invitation to speak to the camp.

The new camp received high marks from the campers, many of whom commented that it was the best camp yet and they are looking forward to next year. Rock climbing will be added as a new activity in 2004.

Campers are especially to be commended for letting their lights shine. Gary Langely, who manages the Armenian Church-owned camp, told camp director James Capo how much he enjoyed our group, and how nice everyone was to work with—campers and staff alike. When told he was just seeing the fruit of

God's Spirit at work, he replied, "Yes—but not every church group uses it!"

James Capo



Campers pose for a group photo at the base of the General Sherman tree—the world's largest living thing; Heather Quick and counselor Kelly Savoie during kayak class (photos by David Crawford and Robert Curry)

Camp Carter: Developing Christian Leaders

Camp Carter 2003 was the best year ever as we were blessed with outstanding staff and 104 wonderful, enthusiastic campers from 10 different states!

In Sunday night's orientation the camp director, Ken Treybig, told the campers and staff that at the end of camp he wanted them to go home different persons. "United Youth Camps are supposed to be a lot of fun—and they are," said Mr. Treybig. "However, if all a teen wants is fun, there are other camps they can attend." This year our theme was "Developing Christian Leaders" and the staff encouraged the spiritual and emotional growth of the campers through challenges and opportunities to test what they were learning.

Each day began with a Compass Check—a short, 12- to 15-minute message designed to help everyone head in the same direction—toward a specific goal. At orientation Mr. Treybig explained that the focus of this year would be on becoming a Christian leader and on Monday, Frank McCrady, program director, covered the principle that godly leaders practice the kind of love God is known for—the outgoing, selfless *agape* love of the New Testament.

On Tuesday Mr. Treybig talked about "The Package" and explored the balance

between what's on the outside and what's inside. God says He looks at the heart instead of the exterior, yet Scripture also tells us godly people care about how they look since God tells us to dress modestly. Godly leaders understand character is vital without ignoring the point that our dress says a lot about what is inside us.

Tom Damour, transportation head, encouraged campers on Wednesday to seek godly wisdom using the example of King Solomon, who had a lot of physical wisdom, but was clueless about what it took to have a right relationship in marriage. Mr. Damour encouraged everyone to read the book of Proverbs, which is filled with instructions that lead to godly wisdom. Thursday's message was given by Andy Burnett, basketball supervisor, who explained that godly leaders understand that what goes into our minds has a huge effect on us, and that we are what we think. Therefore, we need to be very selective about the kinds of images and messages we allow to enter our minds.

On Friday we concluded the Compass Checks with Britton Taylor, softball and waterfront supervisor, who focused on the importance of words. Mr. Taylor explained that "godly leaders do not take God's name in vain—either

through direct use of the names of the Father and Son or through the use of euphemisms. They also avoid inappropriate



communication by avoiding the use of vulgar or other improper words."

Throughout the day, counselors and assistant counselors reminded the campers of the lessons focused on during the Compass Checks. Activity staff also brought out these principles during their activity periods. Lifeskills classes, taught by Gary Petty (also football supervisor), added additional aspects to help campers develop their leadership skills. Mr. Petty helped campers explore values—what really matters in life and what is unimportant or even harmful—and how those values will shape their goals. As Mr. Petty explained, "Life is only meaningful if our goals are consistent with our values."

According to our end-of-camp surveys, Christian Living is the most helpful activity at camp. At the end of each day the discussions opened with comments on the morning's Compass Check and then a panel of ministers fielded questions from the campers. This year's questions showed a mature desire for greater



Scenes from Camp Carter (photos by Angela Quant and Katherine Turner)

spiritual understanding on a wide range of topics. Sometimes the ministers asked the campers questions and they also solicited ideas for UCG's new magazine, *Vertical Thought*—a magazine of understanding for tomorrow's leaders.

Once again we were blessed with an



outstanding staff displaying non-stop service and dedication. Though tired by the end of the week, the staff continued giving their all. This year we also witnessed this same attitude in our campers! There was a real sense of family and the attitudes and cooperation were outstanding. We truly felt the joy of being in "the Zone" and it was also obvious to the YMCA staff as they once again commented on what a wonderful group we are. The head of their food service department even said that when we are here, things are more peaceful and calm among his kitchen staff. What wonderful evidence that Camp Carter is helping develop godly leaders!

Ken Treybig

South African Campers Enjoy the Beach

The 2003 South African Youth Camp was held from June 29 to July 4 at the Glenmore Eco-Centre on the Kwa Zulu Natal South Coast, 170 kilometers (100 miles) south of Durban. A total of 25 campers and three counselors attended the camp, and it was wonderful to have Melinda Waggoner from Oklahoma join us.

The professional staff from the Eco-Centre guided the campers through the various activities offered. Mr. and Mrs. Bill Jahns, pastor and his wife from the Johannesburg congregation, administered the Christian education and Grant Chick, a member from the Durban congregation, was camp director.

The youth and staff were housed in true South African bush camp style, sleeping in permanent tents on raised foundations and eating in the open under a roof around one long table.



The main attraction of the camp was that it was within walking distance of the beach and included many beach-related activities. The activities included sea kayaking, surf rafting, archery, three different types of team-building obstacle courses, mountain biking, snorkeling, abseil-

ing/rappelling, orienteering, conservation education and Christian living classes. After the evening activities, the youth spent time singing and

socializing around the campfire.

Although the end of camp came quickly, plans are already in place for next year, with new and exciting activ-

ities for the youth to experience. We would welcome any prospective campers from overseas to join us.

Grant Chick



De Wet Pieterse launches himself across to the other side; Arnoldt Visser and Matthew Naude ready to go sea kayaking; Ronel Webber abseils down the 38-meter (120-foot) cliff

Catch the Vision: We Can Help Bring "Many Sons to Glory"!

by Roy Holladay

Frequently, while traveling to local congregations, I am asked questions about vision. What is the vision of the United Church of God? Has it changed? How does the membership relate to that vision? Often we talk about the mission of the Church, which is certainly good and right to do. However, it is vital to know and live the vision God has given us, which provides the purpose and motivation for our mission.

It is also important to make the necessary distinction between a vision, a mission and the strategies used to implement them. All three are needed—whether we are discussing the Church, our personal lives, projects we undertake, etc. Spiritually (in our lives personally and in the Church as a whole) the Bible clearly articulates these areas.

Vision has to do with our ultimate goal or objective—where we want to go. Vision is the big picture. What is the big picture we have in front of us? The

fires us with the desire to do the work of God! What greater responsibility can we have than to be used by God to help bring many sons to glory?

The entire chapter of Matthew 6 discusses, in one sense, keeping our vision focused and clear on the Kingdom of God. In verses 1 to 18, Christ says that our actions (charitable deeds, prayer and fasting) should be done with one focused purpose—to serve God—and not divided purposes as a show for other humans. In verses 19 to 24, He warns us about being distracted with material goods to the point of neglecting spiritual salvation. The chapter concludes with the well-known admonition: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (verse 33). The overall theme of this chapter is clear: concentrated focus on God, His righteousness and His Kingdom, and making sure our actions reflect that.

Everything we do in the Church must be serving the fulfillment of that



Roy Holladay, president of UCG/IA

"The vision of the Church derives its inspiration and motivation from God's purpose for humanity: bringing many sons to glory. God's desire is that all be saved and live eternally in His Kingdom and in His family. Assisting in the fulfillment of that vision is the mission of the Church."

Kingdom of God. That vision has not changed since the prophets of old. Our vision statement goes right to that core hope: "The vision of the Church derives its inspiration and motivation from God's purpose for humanity: bringing many sons to glory. God's desire is that all be saved and live eternally in His Kingdom and in His family. Assisting in the fulfillment of that vision is the mission of the Church." Vision should motivate us with excitement, drive and determination. Vision

vision. Many companies and organizations in their strategic planning will use the following guideline: "If it is serving the vision, we will keep doing it. If it is not serving the vision, we won't." Again, our vision is the Kingdom of God, to enter it and to assist God in His work of bringing many sons into it. Our actions must be focused clearly on that.

That brings us to mission. The mission of the Church relates more to the day-by-day work or operations of the Church. The mission statement that

guides United is biblically based. It is the same mission or commission that Jesus Christ gave to the apostles: "The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples." The mission of the Church focuses on proclaiming the gospel, working with those God calls and caring, serving and loving God's family on earth. The mission statement flows directly from the vision statement. It is the execution of the vision and it outlines what must happen to achieve the vision. A few of the scriptures in this regard:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the

age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep'" (John 21:15-17).

Notice that Christ does not set a time limit on this mission. In fact, we need to be found "so doing" at His return.

How we do that mission is where strategies are formulated. How do we preach the gospel? We may have several strategies for accomplishing that mission: radio, TV, videos, the Internet, the *Good News* magazine, booklets and

developed on how we plan to use TV and radio, how many booklets we should have and what topics should be covered, etc.

There are philosophical questions that need to be addressed that drive how we accomplish preaching the gospel. The Council of Elders has addressed those questions, and in 1999 the Council formulated the following guidelines: "Jesus Christ commissioned the Church . . . to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness (Matthew 28:19 and 24:14) . . . Moreover, their messages contained a warning to the listeners that their refusal to repent would result in punishment (Colossians 1:27 and 28). Furthermore, the Old Testament prophets admonished God's servants to stand in the gap and serve as watchmen (Ezekiel 22:30 and 33:1-10)."

The message is to go as a witness and have a warning component also. However, we also realize the need to give hope now. Gospel means "good news"! It gives good news on how to live our lives today and also the hope for the future.

Our vision and our mission from the Bible are clear. Our responsibility in the work God has given us to do is to remain focused and active in the fulfillment of the vision and mission. The vision of the Kingdom and eternal life in the family of God needs to guide us in all that we do. We then seek God's will and direction in the strategies that we use. Let us keep that vision burning

The vision of the Kingdom and eternal life in the family of God needs to guide us in all that we do. We then seek God's will and direction in the strategies that we use.

articles, advertising, local initiatives, public Bible lectures, etc. These categories are also refined—strategies are

brightly in our hearts and humble ourselves before our Father in carrying out the mission of the Kingdom. **UN**



From the Word

Adventures in Feast Travel (What Do You Mean, Pilgrimage?)

■ Traveling to the Feast can teach us many lessons.

by Anthony Wasilkoff

My very first Feast of Tabernacles was observed in 1966 at Blythe Arena in Squaw Valley, a picturesque mountain valley in Northern California. A significant number of readers will similarly recall traveling great distances to Squaw Valley in order to keep the wonderful Festival of Tabernacles with thousands of other earnest believers who were delighted simply to be there.

Those were the days when we had two services a day, every day. The needs were different then. No one felt oppressed or put upon. Many of the meals were communal meals served and eaten cafeteria style. The joy and exuberance was overwhelming. We all dreaded the closing service of the closing day when we would often sing for the concluding hymn, "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." Virtually no one wanted to go home yet.

Through the years I have enjoyed hearing others share their early experiences of keeping the feasts. At one time, we even kept the Spring Feast in much the same way we keep the Feast of Tabernacles. Eventually, an administrative decision was made to only observe Tabernacles en masse. As you

know, the other feasts we celebrate locally.

Pilgrimage Means Travel

The word *feast* comes from the Hebrew word *chag* or *hag*, which refers especially to a "feast, observed by a pilgrimage" (*Vine's*). That is its meaning and application in the very first reference in the Bible. Moses informed Pharaoh: "We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord" (Exodus 10:9). According to *Vine's*, "'hag' usually represents Israel's three annual 'pilgrimage feasts.'"

Part of the adventure associated with keeping the Feast of Tabernacles is the traveling necessary to get to one of the locations where God has placed His name, and to return home. A dictionary definition of the word *pilgrimage* is: "a journey, esp. a long one, made to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion." In the early years, those journeys were much more challenging than they are now. The roads were not as good, the cars were not as new, the financial resources were not as great and Church members were not as experienced as they are now. Traveling to the Feast was a remarkable combination of faith plus works, with far greater emphasis on the former than the latter!

One of the biblical instructions we read that is related to the journey component of the Feast is found in Deuteronomy 14:24-25. "But if the journey is too long for you so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses." Notice how the Bible provides the means for the believer to travel in order to keep the Feast at the designated location.

Challenges of Travel

There was a time in Israel's history when one of its self-seeking kings decided to manipulate public sentiment through demeaning the travel associated with the feast days. In 1 Kings 12:28 we read how Jeroboam told his subjects, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem."

Up until then, it hadn't been too much for the people of Israel to attend the Feast in Jerusalem. However, the power of suggestion can be very, very strong. In order to accommodate their imagined hardship, Jeroboam arranged for more convenient festival locations, namely Dan and Bethel, but they were not where God had placed His name. Oh yes, the other detail, as

you are no doubt aware, was that the feast was delayed by one month!

Occasionally, even today there are a few "complaints" as to why the Feast sites can't be more numerous and hence a little closer to where we happen to live. When God makes that provision by providing the necessary resources and clearly placing His name in a greater number of locations, then the Church is happy to add them, even though it creates more challenges in the organization and scheduling for our thinly spread ministry. We realize the hardships of travel.

I remember the brethren in Newfoundland a few years back making the arduous three-day drive to the nearest Feast site. Still, most of the Newfoundland brethren managed to attend the nearest site in spite of adversity. Thankfully now there is a Feast site right in the capital city of St. John's. And this year we have been able to add a site in Ontario as well.

Staying Home

What are the legitimate reasons for staying home at Feast time? There are only two that come to mind. One is poor health. The other is a lack of adequate funding. Even age is not necessarily a factor of and by itself. There are elderly members who are able to attend the Feast because their health and finances permit. On the other hand, there are younger people who cannot

attend the Feast because either their health or their finances are lacking.

If you aren't able to travel, how can you observe the Feast of Tabernacles at home? These days this can be done by connecting to an actual Feast service through the wonders of live cybercasting. Of course, one has to have a computer to be able to do so. However, the benefits are tremendous. The other way of handling this is to order Feast tapes from your national office well ahead of time.

One member was telling me how she keeps the entire Feast, start to finish, in her own home as if she were attending an actual full-fledged Festival site. She dresses up, puts on a Feast tape, takes notes, responds and rejoices, all in her own home. Some people are able to arrange to get together once or twice during the week with others who may similarly be unable to attend the Feast.

God's Blessing

In whatever way you decide to keep the Feast of Tabernacles this fall, God will bless you abundantly as you step out in faith to obey and please Him. "Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you shall surely rejoice" (Deuteronomy 16:15). **UN**

King David and the Feast of Tabernacles

by Layne Partin

As the Feast approaches, many of God's people face difficulties that challenge their determination to be there. Many times we are beset with work, school, money, mechanical, personal and other problems just before we set out. But invariably it is all worth it when we are finally joyfully streaming to the meeting facility under the full moon for the opening service. As we all know, the Feast is a type of God's Kingdom, and our yearly pilgrimage to it is a type of our lifelong journey to be in God's family.

Have you ever wondered why we have to struggle so much, not only for God's Kingdom, but also at times just to get to the Feast?

The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that the lives and activities, both good and bad, of those in the Old Testament are recorded for us as examples—examples to encourage and inspire us, as well as to warn and admonish us.

The life of King David is one that gives me great inspiration, especially as the Feast approaches. There are many parallels between our daily lives

and the life of this great man of God.

What was the difference between David and all the other kings of Israel and Judah? While a few of them were obedient to God, only David is called a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). Only David will be ruler over the 12 tribes in God's Kingdom (Ezekiel 37:24). The obvious difference is that only David had to struggle for many years before receiving the throne. As so many later kings have proven, power corrupts. Can any of us say that we would not be corrupted by power? Just as David's character and obedience to God were developed greatly by his years of trials and tribulations, so too are ours.

Fighting Saul and Satan

In his youth, David served in King Saul's court. Saul can be a type of Satan. Both Saul and Satan were anointed rulers (Ezekiel 28:14; John 14:30; 1 Samuel 10:1). Both exalted themselves and were guilty of rebellion (1 Samuel 15:23; Ezekiel 28:17) and the laments over their failures are similar (Isaiah 14:12; 2 Samuel 1:19). Before we are called by God, we have served in Satan's court.

Just like David, we each have our own personal Goliaths to slay. There can be no doubt that it was only by God's mercy that David had the courage to face and overcome this giant, and we too only overcome trials and tribulations by God's mercy extended to us.

Flush from this great victory, David could do no wrong. Similarly, when we are first called into the faith, God often gives us great victories to encourage and inspire us and give us faith. Likewise, many times we are at our strongest right after the spiritual refreshing we find at the Feast. But just as Saul began in a jealous rage to try to kill David, so Satan comes after us when we begin to live godly lives, and when we go back into the world after the Feast. That is when our character is really developed.

Never Give Up

In fear for his life and on the run, David fell victim to fear, discouragement and even depression. But David never gave up, and neither must we.

David had two chances to kill Saul and end his persecution (1 Samuel 24 and 26), but instead relied on God. We

are many times presented with chances to end our persecution from Satan by giving up. But we must rely on God to see us through, knowing that He has anointed each of us to be future kings in His Kingdom (Revelation 5:10). And so we strive on through the long, dark months between Tabernacles and Passover, with the weekly Sabbath to strengthen and encourage us.

Hidden Danger

Interestingly, it was when David was king over Israel that he fell victim to the darkest time of his life by giving in to temptation and committing adultery and murder. At times when he was running for his life, David prayed three times a day (Psalm 55:17), but he had drifted far from God at this time.

Some of the greatest trials we face as God's people come when times are prosperous and our trials seem temporarily over. Then we, like David, may not always feel we have the same need to cry out to God for help.

And it is often when we are at the Feast that we forget that Satan too attends the Feast. We get so caught up in all the godly activities surrounding us that we sometimes neglect our per-

sonal prayer and Bible study. We can, if we are not careful, have a more physical Feast than spiritual, resulting in the post-Feast blues and leaving ourselves vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

God is faithful to forgive every sin repented of (1 John 1:9). But if we persist in sin, it separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2) and becomes a threat to our spiritual lives. Then we must, like David, repent wholeheartedly and reestablish our covenant with God if we are to be a man or woman after God's own heart.

We must ask God every day to lead us not into temptation (Matthew 6:8), and in faith ask Him for the wisdom we need to make righteous decisions in our quest for the Feast and the Kingdom.

So, as the Feast approaches, let us think of David's life and example, for we, too, have been anointed to be kings and priests in the coming Kingdom of God.

And we, too, will only take our crowns and thrones after a lifetime of being persecuted by the king of this present evil age if we, like David, remain faithful to the living God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. **UN**

The Test Track of Life

■ Why does a loving, merciful God allow good people to suffer for no apparent reason?

by David J. Sandland

Many people wonder why good, law-abiding brethren, friends and relatives sometimes experience difficulties and problems when they have done nothing wrong and no one has wronged them. Children often wonder why their parents are going through a period of difficulty when all they see are parents who diligently obey God and His commands.

Why does a supposedly loving, caring and merciful God allow such good people to suffer for no apparent reason? This is an age-old question that deserves an answer.

Road Testing

One analogy to consider, to shed light on this perplexing question, is the comparison of a brand new car being produced—say the latest Volkswagen Bug. That new car goes through years of careful design by teams of experts. Millions of dollars are spent in planning, design and endless computer simulations. There's wind tunnel analysis, painstaking model construction and market research of everything down to the paint and interior design.

Yet, when it all comes together—perfectly designed and manufactured—what is the first thing that takes place? What must happen prior to product advertising and release?

It must be thoroughly road tested, using special test tracks and expert drivers in all weather and terrain conditions.

Why? Because there is something wrong with the car? Because all those millions of dollars, research and meticulous manufacture are guaranteed to be a waste of time and effort?

No. The manufacturer must know for sure that their new car does indeed work. And work under all possible road conditions and circumstances.

It looked great in planning.

It looked great on the computer and in simulation.

It looked great in wind-tunnel tests. It looked great in production.

But it still has to be proven and tested in real-life situations.

And that is exactly why our great God tests and proves His children—children one day to be trusted with eternal life. That's a far greater future and responsibility than pieces of metal attached to rotating rubber driving down the road.

The testing is not done to prove there is something wrong, evil or sinful, but simply to test, to make infinitely sure and certain His children will not fail, in the test track of life.

Sometimes problems, tests and challenges do come upon us because we do sin, or others sin against us, or

even because of the evil, sinful world in which we live. However, as we have seen, sometimes the reason—and the only reason—is that God is testing our faith, patience, endurance and trust.

It's not because there is something wrong “that needs fixing,” not because of sin in our life, but simply because He wants to know we will continue to look to Him no matter what.

Test Driving King David

King David even asked God to do just that—to test his faith. Notice Psalm 26:1-2: “Vindicate me, O LORD . . . examine me . . . and prove me; try my mind and my heart.” That's a very courageous request indeed.

The word *vindicate* means to “clear of blame or suspicion . . . establish the existence, merits, or justice of one's courage, conduct, assertion, etc.” (*Australian Oxford Dictionary*).

In verses 3 through 6, David expressed his resolution to remain innocent of any blame and had the confidence and courage to ask God to establish the fact he was indeed without blame. (After, of course, having repented of known sins.)

Also notice in Psalm 17:1-3 that God did indeed “road test” King David. “Let my vindication come from Your presence . . . You have tested my heart . . . You have tried me and have found nothing.” David went through many tests in life, not because of sin, but due to God's intent, plan and desire to test out—to prove—His servant. Just as that car manufacturer had to test out his new car in real life.

Many scriptures show how God tests His people. In 2 Chronicles 32:31 we read where God tested Hezekiah. Why? “To test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.” Words, even actions, are often not enough. God looks right down into our hearts to ensure we will obey Him no matter what circumstances we face. No matter what tests He places before us.

It is of note that in the following verse (verse 32) that the “goodness”

The testing is not done to prove there is something wrong, evil or sinful, but simply to test, to make infinitely sure and certain His children will not fail, in the test track of life.

of Hezekiah is mentioned, showing that the testing he went through was not because of evil or sin.

In Deuteronomy 8:1-2 we read how God tested ancient Israel, to see if they would follow Him in spite of trials—“to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.” Israel pathetically and abysmally failed that test, revealing a stubborn and rebellious heart. They most certainly failed their road test!

However the testing of Israel, of King David and Hezekiah shows us



Just as our carmaker tests his new creation, God likewise continually tests His new creation of a potential eternal, spirit being that He must know will not fail.

how God works. He is intent on testing His people, to see what is in their hearts. Not, on these occasions, to correct for sin, but simply to test. To prove, to vindicate, to “establish the merits or justice of one's courage and conduct.”

Just as our carmaker tests his new creation, God likewise continually tests His new creation of a potential eternal, spirit being that He must know will not fail.

Consider also Jeremiah 11:20 and 17:10.

Without Sin

And we all know how God tested Job, a man known as blameless and without sin (Job 1:1, 8, 22.) Notice also Job 23:10: “But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me.” Job faced perhaps the toughest “road testing” of all and came through that test without sin. Job 42:7 records that Job spoke of God “what is right.” He passed the test!

And remember Job was not being corrected for sin, as many commentators try to imply. True, he had to learn his place in relationship to his God, as we read in Job 38. But not to repent of any specified sin.

In Job 42:6 the word translated “abhor” can mean, “to disappear.” Job, as he was being tested, came to the point of “disappearing” in his own importance in comparison to the Creator God. God, in Job chapter 38, reminds Job that the project of creating the earth itself was a little more complex than anything Job had done. In considering that majestic comparison, Job “disappeared.”

The Ultimate Test

Perhaps the greatest example of all, showing how God tests His children

not for any sin or fault, is found in Genesis 22. Of course this is the account of Abraham where he was instructed to offer up his son, Isaac.

Abraham looked good on the drawing board. Abraham mouthed all the right words.

But would he stand up to the greatest test of his life?

Sin was not in question. Abraham was not being corrected. Genesis 22:12 tells us why he was being tested: “For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” Abraham passed the greatest “road test of life” as he obeyed God unconditionally, in faith, trust and the fullest of confidence.

Consider Hebrews 11:17-19. “By faith Abraham, when he was tested . . . [concluded] that God was able to raise him up.” Abraham believed that even if he had to go ahead and slay his son, God would then “raise him up”—resurrect Isaac back to life. So Abraham was not being merciless, uncaring or sadistic in showing a willingness to slay Isaac. Rather, he passed the ultimate test by trusting God to simply bring Isaac back to life. And symbolically He did: “From which he also received him in a figurative sense.”

Another test passed with flying colors!

In this connection I suggest you also read James 2:21-22. Also read from verse 14 through 20, where James explains that faith, by itself, is not sufficient proof of our standing before God. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?” (James 2:21). Works are the process of being tested and proven.

Another set of Scriptures to consider is 1 Corinthians 3:11-15: “Each one's work will become clear . . . it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work.” Why?

Because (verse 16) there is so much at stake: “You are the temple of God.” God wants to know—must know—that we are worthy of being part of that temple and the residing place of His Spirit. “For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (verse 17). When we catch a fleeting glimpse of that spiritual reality, we can only wonder and be amazed that we are not tested beyond our present level of testing.

No wonder King David begged God to examine him and prove him. How much more should we echo those same thoughts and desires, to be tested as worthy to be part of the temple of God.

More Precious Than Gold

Peter talks of the necessity of trials and testing in the life of a Christian in 1 Peter 1:7: “That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes [or a new car that eventually rusts and decays], though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Abraham, Job, King David, Hezekiah and all our brothers and sisters in Christ mentioned in Hebrews 11 went through that process of having the genuineness of their faith tested. And all have been found to have brought praise, honor and glory to the name of their God.

Do we give God honor as we go through the tests He places before us? Do we also resist pointing the finger as we see our brethren going through trials and tests?

And, again, why does our faith have to be “tested by fire”? Because God “has begotten us again to a living hope . . . to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4).

God speed your progress and travels through the test track of life! **UN**

Time for School Making Sure Your Child Gets off on the Right Foot

■ All parents worry about their children starting school, but Church members have the additional concerns about dealing with society's holidays and getting off for God's Holy Days. What can a parent do to insure their child's success? Here are tips from a Church parent who is also a teacher.

by Marti Springer

A familiar poem comes to mind each year as school begins. It is written to a kindergarten teacher and admonishes the teacher to "take care of my son . . ." Sending a child off to school for the very first time can be scary—sometimes for parents more than the children. How can you as a parent insure that your child gets off on the right foot as the school year begins? As Church members there are several things we can do to help teachers "take care of" our children, while still assuring that our little ones do not have to compromise the religious val-

Practical Advice to Parents

- Before school begins, ask for a conference with your child's teacher. Having *both* parents attend assures the teacher that this is a "family" that supports their children.
- Tell the teacher that you will do everything you can to support him/her during the year. Volunteer to help in the classroom if your schedule permits.
- State your beliefs in a positive, concise manner and give the teacher a list to help him/her to remember what you have discussed. This may consist of a list of "Holidays we *don't* celebrate" on one side of the paper and a column on the other side with "Holidays we *do* celebrate."
- Be sure to tell the teacher that you *are* a Christian (this seems to be important to many of them).
- Tell them that it is not the thing that you object to, but the symbolism often implied to be associated with it. (for example, holly is a plant—not a Christmas plant).
- Remind the teacher that your child may not want to be singled out as different. Upon entering my oldest daughter's kindergarten room prior to Christmas, I was drawn to a beautiful bulletin board full of red poinsettias, surrounding a bright purple-colored poinsettia spotlighted in the center. Of course it



How can you as a parent insure that your child gets off on the right foot as the school year begins?



Don't wait for parent/teacher conferences to meet the teacher.

- Before school begins, ask for a conference with your child's teacher. Having both parents attend assures the teacher that this is a "family" that supports their children.
- Tell the teacher that you will do everything you can to support him/her during the year.

ues that we have tried so hard to instill in them in the preschool years.

Since I am a teacher as well as a parent I can empathize with the teacher who is asked to accommodate a myriad of individual differences, while juggling academic needs and goals set by school districts. In an attempt to alleviate the concerns of my daughters' teachers, without allowing the girls to participate in the many "holiday" activities, I developed several tips, which I have shared with other parents in the past. I hope that by sharing these with others, it will make a successful year for many of our children beginning the school year.

belonged to my daughter!

At a later date I asked the teacher to check with my child before displaying work that may be noticeably different. Some children enjoy the attention and others are embarrassed by it. Fortunately my daughter didn't mind. Please note: This tip can be extremely useful in later years, when teachers may ask your children to explain Passover or Hanukkah, assuming they are Jewish.

- Volunteer and sign up early to help with things such as Thanksgiving Feasts, Field/Olympic Day, Strawberry Festivals or PTA fundraisers not connected with holidays. This shows the school that you want to be involved

with your child, yet allows you to opt out of the many holiday activities.

- Volunteer to put up bulletin boards (a great opportunity for that beautiful "winter" scene in lieu of Christmas).
- Don't assume that your child's teacher will remember to share with other teachers the information you provide. You may especially need to talk to the music and art teachers, since many of their activities revolve around holiday themes.
- Don't forget that as your child advances to the next grade, you need to make each teacher aware of these tips. You may even want to develop a form letter that you share at the beginning of each school year

But What Can My Child Do?

Here is a list of alternate activities that may be useful to share with teachers. (Again, a sheet for the teacher to keep in the plan book would serve as a reminder.)

- Send copies of coloring sheets, paper and pencil games, or dot-to-dot pictures (of pumpkins, leaves, football, fall trees, harvest time, etc.) to do while others are doing Halloween papers.
- During music—send tape recorder and earphones with children's choir songs for the Feast, or with stories to follow along with, for children to listen to while classmates are singing Halloween/Christmas/holiday songs.
- Arrange for your child to visit the library, help the classroom assistant clean up or prepare materials or bulletin boards, or (in higher grades) assist in the office or visit another classroom to read to younger children.
- Allow your child to participate in art activities as much as possible. Below are some alternate activities your child can do sitting beside his/her friends in art/class:

Holiday activity Alternate activity

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Jack O'Lanterns | Scraping out the seeds and spreading them to dry for roasting at home and bringing back to share with the class. |
| Christmas trees | Tree with winter scene. |
| Pinecone ornaments | Pinecone with birdseed for feeding birds. |
| Christmas ornaments | Teddy bears, gingerbread men, mittens, snowmen or snowflakes to hang in their room at home. |
| Stars | A star for the door of their room. |
| Stockings | Crazy socks for Bert and Ernie. |
| Wrapping paper | Designs other than Christmas for all-occasion paper. |
| Valentine cards | Thank you notes to people you love. |
| Easter coloring | Spring and Spring Holy Day cards, lion and lamb, butterfly. |
| Easter basket | Flower basket for Grandma. |

What About the Feast?

The feast days and Holy Days are truly an opportunity for your children to let their light shine. At Feast of Tabernacles time we were always sure to have the girls keep a daily "journal" of what they did. In kindergarten it consisted mostly of pictures, but in later grades, a narrative accompanied each picture. This also gave them something to do during services. Every day start-

ed with "We went to church and . . ." so that teacher knew this wasn't a "vacation."

If you and your family travel to foreign countries, teachers love for parents and/or children to share their pictures, videos, etc. with the class. As children get older, teachers often accept these journals and presentations as alternate makeup for work missed.

Most Important

The most helpful thing that you can do to assure that your child has a great school year is to teach him or her prior to attending school. A child who pays attention, respects authority and always does his/her best is one that no teacher



A child who pays attention, respects authority and always does his/her best is one that no teacher can resist!

can resist! You will find that as your child progresses in school he/she will build a reputation for being the "model student" that all of the teachers wish they had. Without compromising your values, together you and the teacher can be a team to assure your child's success today—on the first day of school—as well as in the future. **UN**

Treasure Digest

The Case Against Darwin

The Case Against Darwin (Why the Evidence Should Be Examined) by James Perloff (published by Refuge Books) is a concise exposé of some of the problems with the theory of evolution. The book has only three chapters and is only 83 pages long. It is, however, well documented with over four pages of references. (It is a condensed version of the author's 321-page *Tornado in a Junkyard: The Relentless Myth of Darwinism*.)

Chapter 1 covers some of the social consequences of the theory of evolution. It has influenced the thinking of society for the past 150 years. Its connection with some of the terrible atrocities of our times is given. Historian Will Durant gives a good overview. As quoted on page 18, he said, "By offering evolution in place of God as a cause of history, Darwin removed the theological basis of the moral code of Christendom. And the moral code that has no fear of God is very shaky. That's the condition we are in."

In chapter 2, Mr. Perloff offers seven evidences against Darwin's theory. He reviews things like mutations, the complexity of the simplest cells and the "irreducible complexity" (page 16) of biochemical systems. The astronomical improbability of the old argument that given enough monkeys, typewriters and time, the works of Shakespeare could be produced is explained.

In the last chapter some supposed evidences used to support the theory are reevaluated. Ideas like Haeckel's embryos (page 53), which I have seen in biology textbooks, have been shown to be fakes. The argument that blood and seawater have the same percentage of salt content is also totally erroneous.

The book was interesting and informative. It was a pleasure to read about some of the wonders of creation without the incessant assertions that everything evolved. The last sentence in the book says, "Science is about the truth, and it neither fears nor suppresses the search for it" (page 76). Unfortunately, too often truth is suppressed if it has any connection to God.



Thomas Seltzer
Elder, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, congregation

Is Life Worth Waiting For?

Modern society allows almost every real or imagined need to be instantly realized. We live in an age of fast food, credit cards and unprecedented access to all kinds of information via the Internet and news media. The message is clear: If you want it, you can have it right NOW (something that definitely appeals to our human nature). If we're not careful, we too can become sucked into the dangerous tendency to expect instant gratification. Indeed, throughout history many Christians have fallen away because they became tired of waiting for Christ's return and the fulfillment of God's promises.

How does the Bible approach the idea of waiting? God has continually shown patience and mercy during His relationship with mankind (1 Peter 3:20). He expects us to follow His example. David, a "man after God's own heart," did just that

(Psalms 27:14; 40:1), and we should too. God in turn provides strength for those who wait on Him (Isaiah 40:31). What kind of attitude should we have while waiting? God wants us to be eagerly anticipating the coming of His Kingdom (Romans 8:23). Those who do this have a place in God's family and eternal life when Christ returns.

The word *waiting* often has the connotation of passivity, but people often feel restless and want to *do* something. Waiting on God is not a passive experience! It is a time to prepare ourselves through prayer, Bible study and fasting. It is a time to serve in the Church and in the community as God builds His character within us. Waiting for God is an active process, and we must do so eagerly and with earnest expectation and trust in the timing of God's coming Kingdom. Eternal life is most definitely worth the wait!

Debbie Werner
Portland West, Oregon, congregation

When Sharing Is Stealing

A lot of people don't realize that when they download music from the Internet, they are breaking a commandment—they are stealing. I used to think downloading music wasn't stealing because someone must have purchased the music in order to make it available on his or her computer, right? Wrong!

First of all, who knows if the person purchased the CD or stole it, but let's say a person does buy a music CD and makes it available to share with thousands of others through peer-to-peer programs through the Internet.

However, what does this do to the artists who made that music CD? Don't just think about the rich musicians (though God doesn't say it's OK to steal from the rich, either). Most people trying to make it in the music business don't make much money, and the current trends of file "sharing" are making it even harder for the new artists and less popular groups. These artists aren't getting your money if you're downloading their music from the Internet. Let's make things clear. It's not some gray area between good and bad. Downloading music without paying is definitely bad.

Let me try to put this in a different manner: Imagine if you could somehow buy an expensive pair of pants, put it inside a machine and get an exact copy of it. Even better, imagine that same machine will send pairs of the pants to all the people who had been planning to go to the store to buy them. It's the exact same thing—people will no longer need to go to the store to purchase them when they can get them from you for free! That store may end up laying off workers or going out of business because of you. It's such a cleverly hidden way of stealing.

Victor Cabrera

Forgive From the Heart

Christ warned us that if we want to be forgiven by God, we must forgive others from the heart. Consider the parable of the servant who was forgiven a great debt, yet wouldn't forgive a fellow servant a small debt.

"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).

The word *forgive* literally means to not require compensation from someone. When we forgive, we release a person from having to pay for an obligation to us. (Only God can forgive the person spir-

itually, upon his or her repentance. Thankfully our God is both just and merciful.) It is relatively easy to decide as an act of will to release a person from paying a debt, but when you've been dealt a huge injury and you will be hurting for years to come, it's hard to completely let go of resentment and revenge. Over the years, I have repeatedly caught myself in denial—I had said the words of forgiveness, and meant them and acted on them—but deep inside I was still hurt and angry. I had not completely let go.

Matters of the heart—the emotions—can't be solved by mental resolve or force of will. Matters of the heart have to be resolved in the heart. The dimension that I had missed was compassion. The more I learned about the people who had offended me, the more I was able to feel compassion for them. That compassion melted away anger and resentment, and enabled me to let go completely.

Jesus showed compassion to those He met. He healed the sick (Matthew 9:35-36), and raised the poor widow's only son (Luke 7:12-14). And on the cross He expressed His compassion in forgiveness: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

We are commanded not only to forgive, but also to extend compassion (1 Peter 3:8; Jude 22; Colossians 3:12). For me, it is the dimension of compassion that makes forgiveness of life's great hurts possible. Before I can forgive from the heart, my heart must be moved to compassion.

Jesus has great compassion for us (Hebrews 2:17; 4:15-16), and we must learn to have that same compassion towards our fellowman. We don't want to come before the judgment seat of Christ and be told, "Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?"

Jay Turner
San Jose, California, congregation

Grandparents/Grandchildren: The Vital Connection

The book *Grandparents/Grandchildren: The Vital Connection* by Arthur Kornhaber, M.D., and Kenneth L. Woodward (published by Transaction

Publishers, 1997) was inspired by 8-year-old Billy who insisted on telling his therapists in session after session about the love he had for his grandparents and how only with them did he find a refuge of love and acceptance, without feeling guilty or sad.

Billy's very revealing drawing is reproduced at the front of the book and is a universal image of the human family. It portrays the family as a pyramid of family connects—children supported by parents who in turn are supported by grandparents.



As a result of in-depth interviews with some 300 children as well as grandparents, it was found that the bond between grandparents and grandchildren is second in emotional power and influence only to that of the parent/child relationship.

There are four factors the authors isolated that are necessary to achieve and maintain vital connections between grandparents and children. The first two factors, time and place, are essential and without them there can be no intimacy. A child spells love, T-I-M-E. In this society of dual career parents, this is even more essential. A great way for grandparents to serve, if they live close by, is to give their grandchildren a second home while Mom and Dad are at work. This is a great way to build emotional bonds from a very early age, and I know from experience that it is well worth the sacrifice.

The third factor is commitment to the family, including a sense of family history where work is for the family, and not the reverse. A great way to promote this is by hanging pictures on the walls of the three generations, including photos of the grandparents holding each grandchild.

Last but not least is personal altruism—understanding the needs of your children and grandchildren and responding with love to them. Reading books like this is a great way to start and fits in with what God would have us do. Another good place to start is by investigating such Web sites as www.grandparenting.org founded by coauthor Arthur Kornhaber who was referred to by Tom Brokaw as "the Dr. Spock of grandparenting." Being a living sacrifice to your beloved grandchildren is enjoyable now and will pay big dividends later.

Marilyn Baley
Houston South, Texas, congregation

Be Ready to Give an Answer: What Is Fasting and Why Do You Do It?

What Is Fasting? *Unger's Bible Dictionary* explains that the word *fast* in the Bible is from the Hebrew word *sum*, meaning "to cover" the mouth, or from the Greek word *neusteio*, meaning "to abstain." For spiritual purposes, it means to go without eating and drinking (Esther 4:16).

The Day of Atonement—also called "the Fast" (Acts 27:9)—is the only fast day commanded by God (Leviticus 23:27), though other national fast days are mentioned in the Bible. Also, personal fasts are clearly expected of Christ's disciples (Matthew 9:14-15).

We encourage those with health problems to consult a qualified medical practitioner before fasting.

Why Do You Fast? The Bible gives examples of God's people occasionally combining fasting with their prayers so as to stir up their zeal and renew their dedication and commitment to Him. King David wrote that he "humbled [him]self with fasting" (Psalm 35:13). Fasting is a means of getting our minds back on the reality that we are not self-sufficient. Fasting helps us realize just how fragile we are and how much we depend on things beyond ourselves.

The Bible records that great men of faith such as Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul and Jesus Himself fasted that they might draw closer to God (Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; Daniel 9:3; 10:2-3; 2 Corinthians 11:27; Matthew 4:2). Jesus knew that His true disciples, once He was no longer there in the flesh with them, at times would need to fast to regain and renew their zeal to serve Him (Mark 2:18-20).

James tells us, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Constant prayer and occasional fasting help us to do this.

We are not to fast to have people feel sorry for us or to think we're pious (Matthew 6:16-18). Isaiah 58 gives both bad and good examples of fasting, contrasting wrong attitudes and actions (verses 3-5) with the right approach of outgoing love (verses 6-10). Daniel and Nehemiah set the example of having a repentant frame of mind (Daniel 9:3-4; Nehemiah 9:1-2).

Fasting also helps us learn the lessons of the Day of Atonement: forgiveness, reconciliation to God and the need to resist Satan and pray for the time of his removal (Revelation 20:1-3), which was portrayed in type by the Azazel goat on Atonement (Leviticus 16:20-22).

Sources: *God's Holy Day Plan* and *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.

ABC Completing a Busy Year

"ABC," continued from page 1

tive in class and by being service oriented. The theme we set for the year was "Growing in Grace and Knowledge." Students were urged to be willing to look at themselves and apply the Scriptures, not just listen to them. We also had some apply the lessons of Practical Christianity regarding dating and marriage. Two couples were engaged!

The class of 2003 had quite a few students with prior collegiate experience and several had degrees already. Despite the intensity of ABC (equivalent to about 66 credit hours or approximately 31 24-hour days of instruction), the class as a whole maintained an attentive attitude throughout the program.

This year's class grew close and shared many extracurricular experiences together. They enjoyed being with each other and doing projects together. They actively took advantage of the opportunity to learn to dance. Now most can do the proper steps to classic ballroom dances such as the waltz, fox-trot and swing.

Once again we were blessed to have many guest and adjunct faculty join the four resident faculty members in lecturing at ABC. The visiting instructors provided variety in style and substance in their presentations while the resident faculty carried the regular class load. Students are now equipped with the knowledge of the Bible and related courses.

There were several who used ABC as an opportunity to grow spiritually to the point of baptism. Four students were baptized from this year's class (along

with three from last year's class who were still in the area). We rejoice in this wonderful step in their lives. Students now depart from ABC with their heads and their notebooks full of the Word of God. They have been encouraged to share what they have learned through their examples of God's way of life.

Speech Club

We had 24 enthusiastic students who met once per month on Sunday evening to attend ABC Speech Club and hone their speaking skills under the direction of some of the resident ABC faculty.

Each club session had a different moderator chosen by the faculty. He or she was responsible for conducting the club that particular week. Moderators led the table topics and introduced the speakers. The director for that evening asked for evaluations from any in

the audience after each speech. All members were urged to write evaluations of each speaker and at the conclusion of the meeting these evaluations were also made available to each speaker. That way, each speaker gets the entire club's perspective on his or her speech.

We had two speech types. One was the heart-to-heart—an expanded ice-breaker about the speaker's life. The second was a sermonette type for the men and a biblical personality for the women.

The students did an excellent job in their participation and preparation. The seven club meetings were extracurricular and seemed to be appreciated by all who attended.

Joy and Sadness

Each January we joyfully welcome each new class. Each August we happily observe their graduation. But it is with sadness that we see them depart. We wish the class of 2003 God's blessing for success in their future! **UN**



Students examine model of Noah's ark brought by guest instructor Bill Jahns; Ralph Levy instructs students in the ABC library (photos by Craig McQueen)

Students Set Example of Service

by Gary E. Antion

The Ambassador Bible Center students served in many capacities this year. They assisted the home office staff with projects that helped get the gospel out to the world and sponsored lunches with the home office staff to get better acquainted.

The students did several projects in the local community and raised

countries further their education. This fund-raiser was done in conjunction with the LifeNets charitable organization founded by Vic Kubik. The event raised over \$2,100 for the scholarship fund, including \$500 for helping international students attend ABC.

According to Mr. Kubik, the fund sends 42 young people to universities, colleges and vocational schools in nine countries.

The ABC Chorale has been excep-



ABC fund-raiser: Michelle Smith and Kimberly Mortier serve dinner; Leigha Riley helps with auction; Mark Holladay, Matt Earles and Jonathan Magee put on a skit (photos by Janet Treadway)



money for needy brethren in developing countries. Dozens of cards were handmade, signed and sent to encourage brethren who were having health and related difficulties.

The grand finale was an Italian dinner, variety show and auction July 13 to raise money to help needy college-age students in developing

tional this year. God has blessed us each year with gifted musicians and great pianists. This year was no exception. The brethren in Indianapolis, Indiana; Lexington, Kentucky; Dayton, Portsmouth and the two Cincinnati, Ohio, congregations enjoyed their Sabbath music presentations (see article, page 13). **UN**

My Tribute to the ABC Class of 2003

by Janet Treadway

It seems like just yesterday when I was taking new ABC students around the home office to show them where they would be spending the next seven months. Now here it is, graduation time. Where have those months gone and, more important, what have I learned from these remarkable students?

I work in the mail room across the hall from where the classes are held, so I am able to hear the classes plus I have the opportunity to interact with the students throughout the day.

I was inspired to write this when one of the students came in today and handed me a card. After I gave her a hug and she left, I opened the card and read it. It brought tears to my eyes. As I placed it on the bulletin board above my desk, I noticed all the other cards around the edge, cards that represented different loving notes from various students throughout this year.

It was not unusual to walk down the hall and have one of the students reach out and give me a hug. When I went to their activities, the students did not make me feel as though I was intruding. They were not embarrassed because of my age but in fact have thanked me for supporting their activities and just being there.

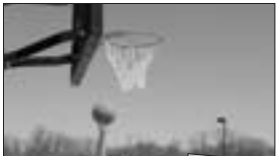
I have great admiration for these young people. Most have sacrificed greatly to be able to attend ABC. After attending class all day, most are off to a job in the evening. Then, if that is not enough, most are involved in service projects, such as visiting the widows, volunteering at the home office and traveling with the ABC choir to sing in congregations throughout the area.

I also observed how they cared and looked out for one another. Many times students would cook some food and share it with the rest of the class. They would share transportation when one of the student's cars was down. I was amazed by how they would rally around

and encourage one another, and how they worked hard together on the many work projects.

When the ABC students of 2003 go their separate ways, and the halls are no longer filled with their youthful laughter, I will miss them very much. I will take down all the memories from my bulletin board and place them in a scrapbook so I can get ready for next year's class of 2004. Even though I will put those cards into a scrapbook, the memories will forever be etched into my heart and mind. I will leave you with this note that I received from the student that inspired me to write this tribute.

"I just want you to know how much we appreciate you. You always encouraged us and made us feel welcome. We are so glad you're here." To the class of 2003 these words go back to you a hundredfold. I am so glad you were here. Give to the world, give to your families and give to your local congregation as much as you have given to me. **UN**



ABC students enjoy many extracurricular activities: Ed Foster goes for a layup; the girls all dressed up for the '50s dance; eating at the Antions



Local Church Updates

Elmira and Syracuse Honor Helen Woodcock

On the Sabbath of June 14, the Elmira and Syracuse, New York, congregations surprised and honored Helen Woodcock with flowers and a cake after services. Helen had turned 95 the previous day. Helen has been a very active member of God's Church since her baptism in 1963.

She was born on June 13, 1908, in



Helen Woodcock, 95, was honored by the Elmira and Syracuse congregations (photo by Dave Baker)

Dundee, New York. Helen had 11 children, 10 boys and a girl (five sons are now deceased). She has 48 grandchildren, 69 great-grandchildren and 5 great-great-grandchildren.

Helen began her working career at age 11 and has held various positions, including working in a vineyard, teaching music, being director of the Jewish Home in Rochester and Syracuse and being a midwife.

Helen first heard God's truth in 1956 while playing Christmas music and decorating a Christmas tree. During her 40 years in God's Church, she has set a wonderful example of service. For many years Helen provided transportation for many members in Upstate New York both to weekly Sabbath services and the annual festivals.

She has made and donated more than 50 wedding cakes for Church members from New York City to Canada. She wrote a book and used all the proceeds to sponsor young people to summer camp. Helen served many years as the kitchen coordinator for church potlucks and socials. During the last five years Helen has hosted and provided all the food at a summer picnic for many of the brethren in Upstate New York. It is her way of thanking the members who help her during the year.

Some of Helen's fondest memories have been attending the Feast of Tabernacles. As to the secret of her longevity, Helen advises, "Follow God's Word, eat the clean foods listed in Leviticus 11, stay away from doctors, do something constructive each day and have an occasional Bloody Mary."

Dick Clouthier

Akron, San Antonio and a Beard Provide Well in Malawi

Last issue (page 4) we reported that Bill Jahns, pastor of the Johannesburg, South Africa, and Malawi congregations, helped place a sign at a well near Balaka that was funded by LifeNets. Here's the rest of the story.

The Frank Edwards Well will serve more than 60 people in Nyanyara, Malawi. The Akron, Ohio, congregation financed the drilling and the San Antonio, Texas, congregation bought the pump. Why is it called the Frank Edwards Well?

When the Northeast Ohio Teen Speech Club hosted their Spaghetti Dinner/Variety Show Dec. 14, 2002, they had an interesting side fundraiser they called the "Shave Frankie for Malawi" fundraiser. Frank Edwards, a member in Akron, agreed to shave off his 25-year-old beard if we could raise \$200 or more for LifeNets. As the brethren went through the dinner line, they could donate to the "Frankie" fund. They ended up raising \$1,331 to shave Frank's beard! And thus, the Frank Edwards Well was



The Frank Edwards Well in Malawi was named for an Akron member who gave his beard as a fundraiser that brought in \$1,331!

named. See the March/April 2003 *United News*, page 21, for more details.

Fort Worth Teens Serve Senior Luncheon to "Vintage Treasures"

On Sabbath, June 14, the Fort Worth, Texas, congregation sponsored a luncheon in honor of its treasured senior members who have received the diploma of life experience. All invitees were vintage 1943 and before, who, "like fine wine, don't get older, just better."

Twenty-two of our seniors (along with four elders and their wives) entered the Renaissance Room of the

local church facility to find tables adorned with white tablecloths and centerpieces of colorful wine bottles and miniature overlaid treasure chests. Jewels and gold foil-wrapped chocolate "coins" overflowed the decorated chests, while clusters of plump red grapes served as appetizers and ambience.

In the back of the room, grapevines cascaded over a wrought iron room divider, veiling the serving table. A homemade keepsake booklet of quotes and scriptures that also contained a menu and original poem was provided at each place setting.



Debbie Whitlark takes an order from pastor Britton Taylor (right) and Ray and Florencia Rodriguez (left). In the background, Angela Quant takes orders from Newton and Becky Baker and Bob and Pat Jones; Jimmy and Maggie Carlisle are behind Angela (photo by Bob and Cathy Joyner)

Attentive waiters/waitresses (our teen group) served a lunch of salad, turkey (smoked, fried or oven-roasted), mashed potatoes, gravy, green bean casserole, biscuits, honey, butter and iced tea or lemonade. Later, cake, punch and coffee were offered. (The teens and their families and the congregation donated most of the food.)

After the 1 p.m. meal, entertainment was provided by Davina Whitlark (piano solo), preteen Ashley West (piano solo), Laura Anderson (flute solo with piano accompaniment), preteen Chantelle West (vocal solo with guitar accompaniment) and Dave West (violin solo with piano accompaniment and vocal solo with guitar accompaniment).

It was then just a short walk down the hall to services at 3 p.m. As they were leaving, many expressed appreciation, mentioning the decorations, food, music, service and how much they enjoyed being honored in this way.

Ellen Reyes

ABC Choir Performs for Cincinnati North

The Cincinnati, Ohio, North congregation had the pleasure of having special music—"a sermonette in song"—performed by the Ambassador Bible Center students on June 7. Instead of

the normal sermonette, the ABC Choir performed several selections for the congregation.

One of the selections was "The Holy Day Song," which was composed by Craig McQueen, an ABC student from Australia. "I wrote it after going home from the Night to Be Much Observed in 1998," Craig said. He explained that he had some general ideas for words and music in his mind, but it suddenly just flowed out. "That had never happened before, and it hasn't happened since," said Craig.

After their performance, Jim O'Brien, pastor of Cincinnati North, asked the students to stand up and introduce themselves, and tell the congregation where they are from. This was followed by a sermon given by one of the ABC students, a new hire into the ministry, Gary McConnaughey. Mr. McConnaughey talked about the use of God's Holy Spirit.

The ABC students spend many hours before and after class practicing before traveling to the various local congregations. It is a sacrifice to be a part of the choir because it requires a lot of work. It is done on their own time, on top of working jobs and attending



ABC Choir performs at Cincinnati North congregation June 7; Craig McQueen accompanies on piano and composed one of the songs (photo by Janet Treadway)

ABC classes full time. And the director, Ken Shoemaker, travels almost an hour from his home to work with the students at the home office. Through his efforts and the sacrifice of the students,

the ABC choir provides a wonderful service to the area congregations.

Following the service the Cincinnati North congregation provided a pizza dinner put together by Jody Lane and all her helpers. The congregation wanted to show their appreciation to the ABC students for their hard work and outstanding performance.

Janet Treadway

Australia Holds Third Christian Leadership Camp

A group of enthusiastic young adults enjoyed the third Australian Christian Leadership Weekend July 4 to 6. The weekend has become a highlight in the young adults' calendars. As Peter Forster from Sydney stated, "The annual leadership weekend just seems to go from strength to strength, getting better with each year."

This year's camp was once again held at the crisp, fresh Heathcote Scout Camp in the South of Sydney. The 32 young adults joined together with eight staff members. This year's speakers included Bill Eddington, Mark Robertson, Bill Bradford and Bruce Dean. Wives Jenny Bradford and Jeanette Dean also assisted with group discussions.

Kevin and Anne Sasse provided delicious food to accompany the wonderful spiritual food provided by the speakers.

This year's theme was maturity. The presentations included:

- The Definition of Maturity.
- The Difference Between Leaders and Managers.
- Stages of Maturity in Life.
- M a n a g i n g Finances.
- Family Life—The Two Sides of Maturity.
- A Framework for Mature Decision Making.

• Life More Abundantly. Felicia Stokes from Melbourne summed up the weekend when she said that the "leadership weekend was awesome. . . . Many lessons learned, many things to be applied."

The weekend was topped off with the renewing of friendships and making of new ones. An encouraging aspect of the weekend was to see the "new" young adults interacting with the older, wiser young adults. The bridging of the generation gap and being able to spend time fellowshiping and learning together was encouraging for everyone.

Rennie Banham said that the talks by the four speakers were excellent, obviously well researched and thorough, with a number of real "ah-ahs" to take home with her. "I loved catching up with friends and making a couple of new ones. What a great weekend all round!"

Renee Dean

Announcements

Births

Tim and Lori Hull of Fort Smith, Arkansas, are thrilled to announce the birth of their second son, Christian Samuel. Christian was born on Feb. 17,



Christian Samuel Hull

2003. He weighed 6 pounds 9 ounces and was 20 inches long. His 15-year-old big brother, Matthew Timothy, is also quite proud of the new addition. Excited and proud maternal grandparents are Annita and Allen White of the Nashville, Tennessee, congregation. Christian is the second grandchild for the equally proud paternal grandparents Martha and Herman Hickinbotham of Thayer, Missouri, and the late Samuel Hull and Betty Hull of Nixa, Missouri.

Peter and Mique McNair of the St. Paul, Minnesota, congregation, joyfully announce the birth of their fourth child, Nolan James. Nolan arrived on Oct. 6, 2002, weighing 10 pounds 6 ounces and was 22 inches long. Meghan (9), Joel (8) and Lauren (5) are



Nolan James McNair

thrilled with their little brother and he seems to think they are special too. The proud grandparents are Carl and Dorothy McNair of San Diego, California, and Michael and Brenda Germano of Cullowhee, North Carolina.

David and Jennifer Morrison of Indianapolis, Indiana, are happy to announce the birth of their daughter Ava Elizabeth. Ava was born on Dec. 31, 2002. She weighed 5 pounds 6 ounces and was 20 inches long. Proud grandparents are Doug and Deena Loveall of Bedford, Indiana, and Galen and Corrine Morrison of Rockford, Illinois. The family had asked for prayers



Ava Elizabeth Morrison

when Ava was diagnosed with spina bifida. She is doing well and brings joy to everyone who meets her. We would like to thank everyone for the many cards and continued prayers for Ava.

Kurt and Sherrill (Dungan) Tannert of Tucson, Arizona, welcomed the birth of their first child, Sarah Elizabeth, on Feb. 1, 2003. Sarah weighed 6 pounds



Sarah Elizabeth Tannert

15 ounces and measured 19 1/2 inches long. She is the first baby to be born to Church members in the Tucson United Church of God congregation that formed in 1995. Grandparents are Eddie and Marcia Dungan of Campbell, Alabama, and Walter and Ann Tannert of Tucson, Arizona. Sweet Sarah is truly a delight.

Scott and Dawn (Baylor) Familetti are pleased to announce the birth of Elizabeth Dawn. She was born on April 30, 2003. She weighed 7 pounds 5 ounces and was 19 1/2 inches long. Big brother Nathan is thrilled with his new sister! Liz is the grandchild of William and Gayle Baylor of the Austin, Min-



Elizabeth Dawn Familetti

nesota, congregation and Joe and Ruth Familetti of the Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, congregation. Everyone is bursting with joy!

Ron and Rhonda (Howe) Smith of Houston, Texas, are very happy to announce the birth of their first child, Kaitlyn Elizabeth, born on Oct. 4,



Kaitlyn Elizabeth Smith

2002. She weighed 7 pounds 1 ounce and was 19 inches long. The proud first-time grandparents are Jim and Joy VanSchuyver of Houston, Texas, and Ron and Brenda Smith of Stockton, California.

Weddings

Mark and Brenda White of Princeton, West Virginia, are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter, Christa Marie White to Daniel Phillip Miller. The wedding took place on May 25,



Daniel and Christa Miller

2003, at Oglebay Park in Wheeling, West Virginia. The ceremony was performed by John Foster, minister of the Princeton, West Virginia, congregation.

The couple resides in Wheeling, West Virginia, where they both will continue their education at West Liberty College.

Walter and Sharon Browning of Vancouver, Washington, are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter Melissa (Lisa) to John Thomas McKinney on Dec. 1, 2002. John is the son of Tom and Wanda McKinney of Vanceburg, Kentucky. The wedding was performed by Gary Antion in Portsmouth, Ohio. The bride's attendants included Sarah Winner, maid of honor; Esther and Cindy McKinney, bridesmaids; Cheryl Chuprinko, bridesmaid; Rachel



Lisa and John McKinney

Rodriguez, bridesmaid; and Kimberly and Laura Hydrick, flower girls. The groom's attendants included Matt McKinney, best man; Brandon Delessandro, groomsmen; Aaron Patterson, groomsmen; Chris Stewart, groomsmen; Mike Drake, groomsmen; and Wesley Call, ring bearer. John and Lisa McKinney reside in Vanceburg, Kentucky, and attend the Portsmouth, Ohio, congregation.

Kay Crump of Texarkana, Texas, and Lonnie Neff of Grand Rapids, Michigan, were united in marriage on June 20, 2003. The ceremony was performed by the groom's brother, James Neff, an



Lonnie and Kay Neff

elder in Texarkana. The couple plans to reside in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond E. Gwin Sr. would like to announce the marriage of their son Raymond Gwin Jr. to Rebecca C. Ankeney on April 5, 2003, with the ceremony performed by Todd Carey,



Rebecca and Raymond Gwin

minister of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation. The wedding party included Andrew Gwin as best man and Bruce Gwin and John Blue as groomsmen. The bride's attendants included Beverly Boyce, Julia Emmons, Elizabeth Hershberger, Chloe Sowell and Courtney Gwin. A reception followed at the Festival House Virginia Beach Oceanfront with the bride's parents, Richard and Ann Ankeney, and approximately 120 others in attendance.

Anniversaries

Carl and Paula Hoffman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Friday, June 6, 2003. On June 7 the Cape Girardeau, Missouri, congregation honored them with a lovely cake and refreshments.

Carl and Paula were married in Lex-



Paula and Carl Hoffman

ington, Kentucky. They have three children—Karen Kirby, Cheryl Howard and Patricia Montgomery—and four grandchildren.

In June of 1965 they were invited to attend services in Evansville, Indiana. A year later, in August 1966, they were privileged to be a part of the new congregation in Cape Girardeau. Carl serves as an elder in the Cape Girardeau congregation.

Obituaries

John Fones died April 19, 2003, at age 79. Born John Cleburn Fones Jr. Dec. 19, 1923, he was a World War II veteran and among the brave Marines who fiercely fought the Japanese, island to island in the Pacific. After the war, he met and then married Goldie on June 4, 1950. They had four children and came into God's Church in 1971. John was an energetic servant of the San Antonio, Texas, congregation, participating musically as a snare drum player whenever possible, directing hymns, acting as timer in speech club and fulfilling the duties of chairman of the Church Social Committee. He leaves his wife, four children, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Clara Harborth, a beloved sister in the San Antonio, Texas, congregation, died May 5, 2003, at the age of 93. Clara, who was born Jan. 19, 1910, in Clairville, Texas, was a longtime member of God's Church, serving for many years in the

Austin congregation before moving to the San Antonio area.

She was known for her generous hospitality and her joyful nature. Her laughter and her gentle, wise counsel often lifted discouragement from the hearts of her Church brethren. Unable to attend church in her latter years due to failing health, she nevertheless served the brethren through vigilant prayers, set-

ting aside her own discomfort in her concern for others.

Clara was preceded in death by her husband of 39 years, Gilbert, and her daughter, Gladiola. She is survived by her son, Alan, his wife, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held for Clara on Sabbath, May 17, attended by her family, friends and her brethren in

Christ from various congregations. Special guest of honor in attendance was Clara's close friend and roommate at the nursing center, Amelia McDaniel, who is 106 years old. Clara's faith remained strong to the end as she looked forward to the second coming of Jesus and the reunion of His saints.

"Kathy" Grace Koger, age 60, a

member of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation, died on July 12, 2003, after a long illness.

She is survived by her husband, Randall, and a sister, Claudine Lewis. A member of God's Church for more than 30 years, she shall be greatly missed by her Church family and many friends.

Thelma M. Davis, a member of the

Nashville, Tennessee, congregation, died June 18, 2003, at home after years of having diabetes. Born Sept. 27, 1928, Thelma was the daughter of Roy and Pearl Jones. She married Dallas S. Davis Oct. 24, 1948. They lived 40 years in the Detroit, Michigan, area and served in God's Church from the early 1970s. Mr.

Tribute: Jacque Roesler

Jacque Roesler, a wonderful lady, influenced so very many in a quiet, kind and personal way.

After her death one lady wrote, "I will always remember Jacque as the gracious hostess who made me feel welcome at my first Passover in 1960. Her hospitality, kindness and the patience she had in answering a 'new-comer's' questions was the example of the ideal Proverbs 31 woman. Through the years I have met many during the Holy Days whom I now can't remember. But Jacque has stayed in my memory over all those years."

Another person wrote, "The testimonials at the funeral services for Jacque were moving and spoke vol-



Jacque Roesler

umes about her and the way she lived. She provided a fine example for other mothers to emulate, as well as to us who suffer difficult physical ailments. She left a high standard for us to live up to."

A younger wife wrote, "I will always remember those days when [we] would visit you and Jacque. We would spend hours talking about so many things, but mostly about God and our faith in Him. Jacque was a lovely, dear lady and I will miss her."

Years ago, when a girl needed a place to live while she worked out some personal difficulties, Jacque said, "Come live with us." And she did for several months.

It was similar with a young man. "Come live with us," Jacque said.

In those early years Jacque hosted two Church of God weddings in her home out of love and care for others.

Jacque received two years of nurses training. Later on she was present or assisted in the home births of a number of babies born to mothers in the Church

of God. Time and space do not permit the telling of her many other sacrifices.

She gave birth to and reared six beautiful children with wisdom, love and compassion. Our children are Sharon Brown, Elyse Dolbec, John Roesler, Dennis Roesler, Becky Sodergren and Shelly Thomas. From those we have 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Jacque and I were baptized in 1943, shortly before we were married. We have attended the Feast of Tabernacles as a family each year since 1953.

Jacque was 80 years old. She bravely endured severe illness for the past 10 years. She died peacefully at home, with family, on June 20, 2003.

Jacque was the wife of Arthur Roesler, a local church elder.

Arthur Roesler



Thelma Davis

Davis retired from General Motors, and then in 1989 they moved back to their home area of Carthage, Tennessee, near Nashville, where they served God's Church as well. Dallas preceded Thelma in death July 2, 1999, after 50 years of marriage. They are both now waiting for the resurrection. A graveside funeral was conducted by Fred Kellers and John Paul Jones.

Letters

Found Us on the Web

Thank you for the wonderful Web site and thank you in advance for sending the literature I have requested.

I started searching the Web for a "Church of God" that kept the laws and statutes, seventh-day Sabbath and the great commission. I have enjoyed the video sermons and online Bible study.

I also have printed other literature from the site. I am now attending the United Church of God in Tulsa.

Internet

I just wanted to take a few moments to share the positive feedback that my husband and I have gotten from UCG. We are going to attend our first Sabbath

service this week, and have been voraciously reading literature you've sent us, which has become extremely important in our quest for truth, renewal of spirit and knowledge.

My husband and I are looking forward to a new beginning, a journey that is sure to be challenging, exciting, fulfilling and, of course, very interesting in

view of the time we are living in.

North Carolina

I found your Web site a short time ago and I ordered some of the booklets that you offer. I am finally finding out all the answers that I have spent a lifetime looking for.

Georgia

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Comments and suggestions to improve *United News* are welcome. Please let us know if you would like your name printed. Mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or E-mail mike_bennett@ucg.org.

Subscriber Development Letter Sets New Records

"Letter," continued from page 1

tion information are entered into the computer just by passing the card under a bar code reader (the same process used in grocery checkout lines). This not only speeds processing of the booklet request to a fraction of a second, but also increases accuracy by eliminating typing mis-

takes. This enables a few workers to process thousands of booklet requests in a short time.

The booklet printer also is doing the large mailings of this booklet to members and requesters, as they can do it faster and at lower cost than we could do it ourselves with our limited home office resources. We also polybagged this

booklet, which in these quantities is much less expensive than envelopes.

Future Subscriber Development Plans

"We would like to do up to three or four subscriber letters each year as funds allow," said Mr. Ashley. One of these letters each year would offer the *Bible Study Course* to those not currently or previously enrolled. The others would offer new booklets as they become available or some of our most popular previous booklets.

Plans for this fiscal year are to publish two new booklets that would be of broad interest to *Good News* subscribers, and to use subscriber development letters to announce them when they are available.

Purpose of Subscriber Development

The primary reason for subscriber development letters is to let readers know about new publications the Church feels would be important to them. Readers might miss a new book-

let when it's mentioned in *The Good News*, so these letters get their attention and make it easy for them to request it.

"To use a biblical analogy, I'd liken *The Good News* to seed spread to further the gospel," said Mr. Ashley. "Our booklets, which cover topics in much greater depth and detail, could be compared to water and fertilizer to help that seed take root and grow. So these letters are designed to further that process and help a person spiritually grow and develop.

"On another level, it helps to keep our name in front of readers more often. Subscribers receive a copy of the magazine only once every other month, so such a letter on *Good News* letterhead and with a *Good News* return address helps keep our name in front of them and reminds them of the basic mes-

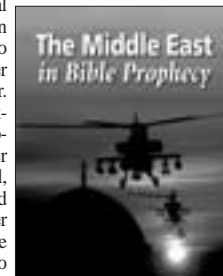
sage of the United Church of God.

"It also helps us build trust, credibility and a relationship with our readers and reminds them that we are dedicated to freely sharing all we produce and to educating people about the Bible.

"One pleasant surprise we discovered in sending such letters is that we typically receive back in donations about half the cost of producing and mailing such letters. We're obviously not sending out the letters to make money—because we don't—but people obviously like what

we send them and quite a few of them send money back before they ever receive the booklet, so that's encouraging.

"Coming to appreciate what they read and seeing the value in sharing it with others is an important initial step in the conversion process and their involvement with the Church," Mr. Ashley said. **UN**



Who the Subscriber Development Letter Was Mailed to:

- Donors and coworkers: 4,314
- Active *Bible Study Course* recipients and *Bible Study Course* "graduates" receiving tapes: 11,486
- Subscribers who have requested booklets at least twice: 37,866
- Subscribers who have requested booklets at least once: 32,716
- Subscribers who have renewed: 15,217
- Subscribers who have received at least one issue of the *Bible Study Course* but no longer actively receive it: 5,207
- Subscribers who receive *United News* or *World News and Prophecy*: 1,352
- Subscribers who have been receiving *The Good News* longer than 1 year: 70,770
- Subscribers who have been receiving *The Good News* less than 1 year: 21,072

We mailed to all of those in the first eight groups, and to hold down costs we omitted about 75,000 subscribers who were in the last category.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

In addition, they were able to import the Bible Reading Program into the Caribbean layout. The utility that generates an image of past *Good News* issues was rewritten in addition to the navigation menu. Both utilities are now more in line with the Church's programming standards.

Because the Caribbean is such a diverse and widespread region, Mr. Mather asked if the site could include maps for each island served. These maps have all been optimized to minimize the amount of time needed to view them in a Web browser.

In an effort to keep the content of the site as current as possible and to lessen the demands on home office staff, Mr. Mather suggested the IT staff train an individual in the Caribbean to manage the Web site's content. Vincent Herbert, a member in the Virgin Islands, has agreed to take on this responsibility.

The Caribbean site offers information on local congregation contacts, Feast of Tabernacles location details, youth camp applications, as well as a literature library summary and order form. The URL for the Caribbean site is www.ucg-caribbean.org.

Paul Wasilkoff

Canada Installs Membership/ Subscription System

The Canadian office recently installed the membership/subscription system suite of products that is used in the U.S. home office. UCIS (United Church Information System), which was designed and developed by UCG staff shortly after United started in 1995, was modified to allow it to run in areas outside the United States. It provides membership tracking, product fulfillment, *Good News* magazine and



What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

■ UCG Commentary on This Week's News

Weekly commentaries by the United Church of God written on world news and trends, from a biblical perspective. Read these recent commentaries and more: "Are You Just an Accident?" "Same-Sex Marriage Is Unbiblical" "Ich Bin ein Berliner; Revisited" "The Supreme Court Decision on Sodomy: Answerable to a Higher Court?"

www.ucg.org/commentary/

■ Current World News & Trends

Browse up-to-date world news events by subject categories!

www.ucg.org/worldnews/

■ E-mail Updates and UCG eNews

Receive E-mail updates relevant to UCG members and weekly HTML newsletters with ucg.org updates. Sign up today!

www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm

On vcmagazine.org

■ The August *Virtual Christian Magazine* includes "Archaeology in Acts, Part 2," "The New Intolerance," "Why Were You Born?" and more.

vcmagazine.org

On youthmagazine.org

■ The July-September *Youth United* has articles on friendship, such as, "The Most Powerful Friend," "Making Peace," "Ending a Friendship," "A Special Friend," careers, "News for Youth" and the ever-popular Q&As.

youthmagazine.org

Other Helpful Links

■ Youth and young adults' Web site.

ucgyouth.org

■ Singles' Web site for singles in the Church.

www.ucgsingles.org

■ Good News Bible Reading Program.

www.ucg.org/brp

■ Good News Web site.

gngmagazine.org

■ UCG News pages with Council meeting reports, letters, Home Office Updates, etc.

www.ucg.org/about/council

www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice

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

Bible Study Course fulfillment, donation tracking and receipting, tape fulfillment, high-speed envelope printing, barcode input and reporting capabilities, among other things.

A subset of the UCIS system is running in the United Kingdom, the Philippines and Australia, and plans are being made to install the system in at least one South American location.

Richard Kennebeck



Jerold Aust and Gary Petty record a GN radio broadcast

Iowa. Our final broadcast on KXEL airs on Aug. 20.

So far we have signed up one replacement station. Beginning July 20, our program began airing on 20,000-watt, news/talk WOOD 1300 AM in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Our show, which airs every Sunday at 7 a.m., immediately follows the popular *Focus on the Family* program by Dr. James Dobson.

Please see our Web site, www.ucg.org/radio for the complete radio log. As always, your prayers for the continued success of our media efforts are much appreciated.

John LaBissoniere

Archaeology Magazine Reprints GN Articles

Bible and Spade, a Christian-oriented magazine published by Associates for Biblical Research that is dedicated to biblical archaeology, requested and was given permission to reprint several *Good News* articles focusing on the accuracy of the biblical record.

For the March-April 2002 issue of *The Good News*, Phoenix East and

Yuma, Arizona, pastor John Elliott interviewed *Bible and Spade* editor Bryant Wood about how archaeological findings at Jericho and other sites confirm the biblical record. When Dr. Wood received his copy of *The Good News* containing the interview, he was

impressed with other articles to the point that he contacted *Good News* managing editor Scott Ashley for permission to reprint them.

As a result, the Summer 2002 issue of *Bible and Spade* reprinted the lead article from that *Good News*, Mr. Ashley's piece "The Bible: Myth or History?" The reprinted article included the strong warning near the end of the article that, due to people's ignorance of what the Bible really teaches, the majority of mankind will be deceived by a great end-time religious system and leader.

In the Spring 2003 issue, *Bible and Spade* ran Mario Seiglie's *Good News* article "The Exodus Controversy" as its lead piece. Mr. Seiglie, a member of the Council of Elders, pastors the Garden Grove, California, and Hawaii congregations and authored the long-running series "The Bible and Archaeology" in *The Good News*.

Also appearing in that issue of *Bible and Spade* was the *Good News* article "Jericho: Does the Evidence Disprove or Prove the Bible?" by *Good News* writer Jerold Aust and Mr. Ashley.

The Associates for Biblical Research Web site, www.Biblearchaeology.org, has a large amount of material on biblical archaeology, much of it written by Dr. Wood.



44 Invited to MCP Leadership Seminar 2003

Ministerial Services announced that the following men and wives have been invited to attend the Ministerial Candidate Program Leadership Seminar Thursday, Aug. 28, through Monday, Sept. 1:

Daniel and Roxanne Dowd, Worcester, Massachusetts; Barry and Carol Dubkowski, Boise, Idaho; Michael and Nancy Fike, St. Petersburg, Florida; Herchial (Paul) and Sandra Fisher, Kingston, Jamaica; Neil and Beth Hart, Salt Lake City, Utah; David and Leanne Holladay, Seattle, Washington.

Tim and Miranda Home, Kingsport, Tennessee; Lynn and Casie Leiby, Chattanooga, Tennessee; Mike Lewis, Boise, Idaho; Craig and Natalie McQueen (ABC 2003/Aus-

tralia); Bill Palmer, Covington, Louisiana; Tim and Maryse Pebworth, San Jose, California.

Jonathan and Debbie Pinelli, Cincinnati East, Ohio; Phil and Marlys Sandilands, Dallas, Texas; David and Jolinda Schreiber, Austin, Minnesota; Rick and Deborah Shabi, Indianapolis, Indiana; Nick and Sarah Slaughter, Austin, Texas; Joseph and Silvia Slevin, San Diego, California.

Jim and Lorinda Springer, Sacramento, California; Shaun and Rachel Venish, Austin, Texas; Bryan and Rhonda Waddle, Houston South, Texas; Mark and Cheryl Whynaucht, St. Paul, Minnesota; and Matt and Diana Zollner, Collinsville, Illinois.

UnitedNews
News of the United Church of God, an International Association

Periodicals Postage Paid
at Milford, Ohio, and at
additional mailing offices