



United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

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September/October 2003

News At a Glance

GN Staff Member Speaks to Young People at Foreign Press Association

John Ross Schroeder, writer-researcher for *The Good News* magazine and contributing editor to *World News & Prophecy*, recently accepted an invitation as an American journalist to speak to 30 young people (ages 18 to 21) from the United States, Britain, Germany, France and Russia at the Foreign Press Association in London. The subject was: "The Atlantic Connection—Mutual Affection or Mutual Embarrassment?" The occasion on the afternoon of Aug. 6 was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in London and British Airways.

The subject of the 15-minute speech was of such great interest to this young audience (all of whom spoke good English) that a 90-minute question-and-answer session immediately followed. At least 20 of the 30 in attendance asked questions, some several times.

In answer to such questions as "Who will be the next superpower?" the speaker wound up giving a geopolitical gospel about coming events in Central Europe. He was really impressed by the fact that these young people from the West had an obvious open-mindedness concerning geopolitics that have a biblical undergirding. The chairman introduced Mr. Schroeder as a representative of *The Good News* magazine.

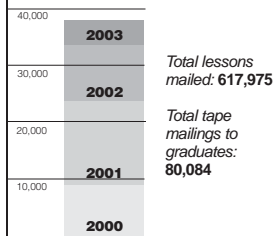
Elder Credentialed

Larry Bradford was credentialed at the August Council of Elders meetings. He and his wife, Beth, serve in the Colorado Springs, Colorado, congregation.

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United Statistics

Bible Study Course Graduates, Cumulative



Good Works Program Being Launched

by Roy Holladay

The generosity and love of God's people is inspiring to see. Many brethren are moved to want to help in material and financial ways when they become aware of needs and privations suffered by others in the faith.

The United Church of God has recently inaugurated a "Good Works Program," approved by the Council of Elders Aug. 14, to help coordinate the many expressions of that love and desire to share and help. The purpose of this article is to explain the way the

program will be administered. Tom Kirkpatrick has been appointed to coordinate the program. Questions can be directed to his attention.

What the Church Has Already Been Doing and Will Continue to Do

As background, it is important to understand that for years the Church has included considerations of member assistance in the course of establishing its annual budgets. Those responsible for coordinating the budgets in the various areas where mem-

bers live (both internationally and in the United States) include requests for assistance to the brethren in the budgets that they submit to the home office. These are then considered by the Council of Elders, and finally by the General Conference of Elders. A fairly substantial amount of money has been budgeted and expended for years in various types of help—keeping the festivals, emergency personal assistance, etc.

Also, as a part of the budget process, we estimate donations that will be received each year for the "Intern-

ational Fund" and the "Assistance Fund." The end result of this is that most of the pressing needs of our brethren in all areas of the world have been met through budgeted allocations.

We very much appreciate the ongoing donations to the "Assistance Fund" and the "International Fund." We anticipate that these donations will continue, and have budgeted accordingly. For those inclined to give donations to the "International Fund," we request that

See "Good Works," page 10

Fourth ABC Class Graduates



Recessional: Kathleen Giza, Cindy (Gore) Harper, Heather Guerin; right, award winners (flanked by presenters Roy Holladay and Clyde Kilough): Natalie and Craig McQueen, Linda Saar, Joshua Stevens and Cindy Harper

by Janet Treadway

Parents, family and friends came from all over to take part in the graduation ceremony for the Ambassador Bible Center class of 2003. The activities began Sabbath, Aug. 9, with the ABC baccalaureate sermon given by President Roy Holladay.

Mr. Holladay talked about the "Reality of God," pointing out that you can't cheat reality. He gave the example of how many pilots, such as John Kennedy Jr., would be alive today if they had trusted their plane's instruments instead of their feelings. "Reality is that your feelings cannot be

See "ABC," page 15

Council Sets Cash Reserve Policy, Approves Supplemental Hymnal and Much More

The Council of Elders approved a policy establishing the Church's intent to maintain a minimum of 10 weeks cash reserve, approved the printing of a supplemental hymnal with 65 hymns, approved a good works program (see above) and much more at its meetings Aug. 8 to 14. After committee meetings Aug. 6 and 7, the Council spent most of Aug. 8 and 11 in executive session.

It is the practice of the Council to review its Code of Ethics at the first meeting of each fiscal year. Robert Dick, chair of the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee, read the code in its entirety. On Aug. 12, the Council's first action was to confirm committee assignments for Tony Wasilkoff. By unanimous consent Mr. Wasilkoff was assigned to the Media and Communications, Strategic Planning and Finance and Doctrine committees.

It is a Council requirement for the president and operations managers to provide an annual report at the end of each fiscal year. The president gave an overview of home office efforts and the operation managers reported on the

See "Council," page 2

44 Attend Second Annual Leadership Workshop

by Richard Pinelli

Ministerial Services hosted its second annual Leadership Workshop on the weekend of Aug. 28 to Sept. 1 for 44 invited guests from the local congregations all over the United States, Jamaica and Australia. The program was developed as a leadership seminar. The men and their wives had the opportunity in the five days to receive over 30 hours of instruction, interaction, testing and Q&A on topics such as:

- Role of the home office.
- Teaching as we have been taught.
- Finances and local congregations.
- Appreciating differences: understanding yourself and others.
- UCG congregational structure.
- Working with your pastor.
- Working with youth.



Back row: Nick and Sarah Slaughter, Lorinda and Jim Springer, Deborah and Rick Shabi, Mike Lewis, Leanne and David Holladay, Carol and Barry Dubkowski, Mark and Cheryl Whynaucht, Silvia and Joseph Slevin; second row: Bryan and Rhonda Waddle, Michael and Nancy Fike, Phil and Marlys Sandilands, Tim and Maryse Pebworth, Beth and Neil Hart, Jolinda and David Schreiber; in front of stage: Bill Palmer, Jon and Debbie Pinelli, Shaun and Rachel Venish, Dan and Roxanne Dowd, Paul and Sandra Fisher, Craig and Natalie McQueen, Matt and Diana Zollner, Tim and Miranda Home, Lynn and Casie Leiby (photo by Janet Treadway)

- Selecting and developing preaching material.
- Leadership in the Church.
- The heart of a leader.

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News At a Glance

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Congregations Get in Touch With Local Subscribers

Around 35 U.S. pastors are currently involved in writing letters to the *Good News* subscribers in their areas. "We're encouraging ministers to write once or twice a year to *Good News* readers in their areas who have been on file for at least two years," said Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager. Mr. Eddington provides copyediting for the letters and the home office also provides the addresses.

A recent report from Dave Mills highlights the benefits of the program:

"In July, we mailed 1,175 letters to *Good News* subscribers in the Ashboro, Charlotte and Raleigh [North Carolina] church areas, offering them a tape or to come to hear the sermon 'The Church Jesus Built.'"

"To date I have received 108 requests for the sermon tape, and seven people came to hear the sermon in person. That's a combined total of 115—a 9.8 percent response. I also received several phone calls expressing interest in the Church. One person has returned to additional services in the Raleigh area."

"Overall, I feel good about the watering of the seed. It establishes contact with our subscribers in this area, informs them of a minister in their area and that a local congregation is near to them. As God provides the increase, I believe we will see fruit down the road."

"This is the third summer we have made sermon tape offers. I hope we will be able to continue to do so in the years ahead."

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efforts in their respective areas. See page 3 for details of the report from the president and page 15 for the media report.

Report From the Treasurer

Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick provided the Council with a detailed, full-year report summarizing the Church's financial status at the end of the 2002-2003 fiscal year. The budget for the year was

\$18,240,000. Income was slightly under budget at \$18,188,000. However, expenditures were under budget allowing the reserves to grow by \$432,000, helping the Church approach the goal of a minimum of 10 weeks.

Expenses for the Council of Elders, home office, Feast of Tabernacles, assistance funds and Ministerial Services were all under budget. The annual General Conference of Elders meeting expense came in right at the budgeted amount.

Assistance for international areas was slightly over budget due to unanticipated needs. Public proclamation was over budget due to growth of the audiotape program that is a follow-on to the *Bible Study Course*. And insurance and health care were over budget due to the number of claims.

Report From Ministerial Services

Richard Pinelli described the overall

condition of the Church as stable, with slow but steady growth. Last year there were 200 baptisms, of which 50 to 55 were new contacts who were not previously associated with the Church of God. In addition there were 1,277 contacts with members of other Sabbath-keeping groups. These typically visit a congregation but don't attend consistently.

Average Sabbath attendance was 11,200. Average Holy Day attendance last year was 13,200. For the last few

Council Discusses Policy on Applause for Special Music at the Feast

At the Council of Elders meeting Aug. 14, Jim Franks moderated a discussion on the subject of applause for special music at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Church's current policy dates to 1996. Based on that policy, each year an announcement is printed in the Festival brochures reminding the brethren that applause is inappropriate for sermons, sermons or special music, with the exception of the children's choir. It is appropriate on occasion to applaud for special announcements (healings, dramatic developments in the work, etc.)

Mr. Franks commented that correspondence he has received from members on this subject was evenly divided between those in favor of and those opposed to applause for special music at the Feast. He surveyed the Church pastors and of the 45 who responded, 29 felt applause for special music was inappropriate (therefore keeping the policy as is), 12 were in favor of removing the policy and four had no opinion. Mr. Franks read comments from members and pastors on both sides of the question.

Ministers and members who were in favor of applause said that it shows the congregation's appreciation for the message of the music and is a way of joining the performer in praising God. They didn't feel the applause was based on the entertainment value of the performance. They stated there is no scripture that says it is wrong to applaud and that denying it squelches the joy and inspiration it is intended to express.

Those not in favor felt that it is inappropriate due to the nature of our services. Some mentioned that in our Western culture, applause is considered appropriate for entertainment, but not for worship. A number of musicians and singers wrote to the Council stating that they offer the music to God, not for the purpose of being applauded, and that applause would make them feel uncomfortable.

Several said that they felt it would be better to show our appreciation individually and personally to the musicians after services, rather than through applause. Experience shows that one difficulty with allowing applause is that a performance that isn't quite as uplifting or stirring generates "polite applause," which is embarrassing to the performer and the audience because it indicates that the effort was below par. Without meaning to, it becomes a rating system, which can be painful to sensitive musicians, and can be distracting from the worshipful purpose of special music.

Besides these comments, a special task force has just completed a paper on the subject of music in the Bible. This paper focuses on the use of music in the Bible. In its conclusion there is a recommendation that we emphasize the worship aspect of music and not the entertainment aspect when preparing music for our services. Music can be used for both—worship and entertainment—and the Bible contains examples of both. But the two types are not the

same, nor should they be viewed in the same light.

The Council discussed the subject during one of its sessions. Here are a few of the comments:

Aaron Dean commented that we don't know exactly how the early New Testament Church conducted its services. We can't turn to scripture to absolutely prove whether or not applause is appropriate. When Christ returns He can let us know exactly what He wants. In the meantime, the Church has to make the best decision it can and while some will be disappointed regardless of the decision, we appreciate the members' cooperation.

Clyde Kilough stated that his opinion is that we should not have applause for the special music because the service is for worshiping God, not for entertainment. He emphasized that the Council needs to acknowledge that there are different ways to look at the matter and explain the policy decision it makes.

Tony Wasilkoff reminded the Council that not too long ago the Church allowed applause for special music and it turned into kind of a rating system; light applause was more embarrassing than none at all.

Richard Thompson said that special music performers have told him when applause was allowed, they were almost tempted to choose music that was more likely to elicit applause as opposed to a solemn piece of music that might be meaningful but not as emotionally stirring. Those special music

performers who had spoken to him said they appreciated the no-applause policy.

Mr. Kubik commented that music performed in our services needs to be truly worshipful and appropriate, even if it wouldn't necessarily evoke applause. Music sung in the temple was very carefully chosen from the psalms and totally focused on God.

Mr. Franks polled the Council to determine how the Council felt about the current policy. The Council as a whole felt the current policy was appropriate and chose not to make a change.

The following statement was written to be printed in the Festival brochures:

"The United Church of God, an International Association, requests that you not applaud for sermons, sermons or special music during the Feast. One exception to this request continues to be the performance of the children's choir. In general it can be shown that the Bible makes a distinction between music for worship and music for celebrating and entertaining. There is no biblical statement prohibiting applause, but since special music is a part of our service worshiping God, we request that you refrain from applauding and offer any encouragement or appreciation to the individuals on a personal level."

"A number of musicians and singers have stated a preference for no applause, wishing only to contribute to our worship of God. To those who feel this way, it can be embarrassing to receive applause for their efforts."

Web Remains Cost-Effective Tool to Reach New People

Requests for *The Good News* and other literature during the 2002-2003 fiscal year totaled 52,665 through our Web sites (an increase of 9 percent over last year). The average request is for four pieces of literature, so this represents approximately 210,000 booklets and magazines leaving our mail room to go to these Internet users. These are in addition to requests received by regular mail!

Our advertising using *Overture.com* is still working very well. We receive new subscribers for around \$1.75 each, and these are usually people who have browsed our Web site and understand the type of literature they will receive. *Overture.com* is also partnering with most other

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President: Roy Holladay

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years there has been a steady annual increase of about 2 to 7 percent.

Cecil Maranville answers approximately 100 letters each month (in addition to the Internet personal correspondence team). Approximately 35 percent of Mr. Maranville's correspondence is with prisoners.

Aug. 13's meeting focused on the efforts of several Council committees.

Media and Communications

Victor Kubik, chair of the Media and Communications Committee, gave the Council a status report on the newly-formed evangelism task force, which is under the direction of Doug Horchak. The task force was formed to undertake a thorough biblical study of the subject of evangelism and how it applies to the Church and its mission.

Next Peter Eddington sought Council approval of the "Broadcast Television Media Strategy" requested by the Council in May. Mr. Eddington listed several

strategies for the development of a home office-produced broadcast television program, which would include building a video production studio in space available in the home office.

In addition to a 30-minute television program, the facility could also be used to produce shorter clips and commentaries. The proposal includes a Web site with material continuously streaming, including full programs, specific topics from archives, one- to two-minute commentary segments, commercials, etc.

The Council suggested several edits to the "Broadcast Television Media Strategy" and unanimously passed a resolution approving its implementation "dependent upon funds available and priorities of Church programs from year to year." The resolution does not include a specific schedule, basing progress toward television programming on availability of budget.

Mr. Eddington then presented a five-year strategy to take *The Good News* to

a print run of one million copies per issue. He was not seeking Council approval of the plan, but wanted them to know what the department would like to accomplish and what it would take to get there. He emphasized that the five-year strategy is aggressive and would require aggressive funding. He also mentioned that even if it takes seven or eight years to accomplish, it would be a worthy goal to push the circulation to that level.

Education and Ministerial Services

Richard Thompson, chair of the Education and Ministerial Services Committee, introduced to the Council a newly written policy statement titled "Sexual Misconduct Policy and Youth Protection Guidelines." The policy is a formal statement of what has been the Church's policy and practice on this subject. Mr. Thompson emphasized that it is very important that the field ministry become familiar with state laws regulating what

is required if they suspect or become aware of sexual abuse.

Due to the importance of this subject, Mr. Thompson asked that Council members review the policy statement and said that there will be further discussions on the subject at the December meetings. He also suggested that Council members e-mail any questions or concerns to Church attorney, Larry Darden.

Doctrine

Jim Franks, chair of the Doctrine Committee, led the Council through the final review of three study papers and reviewed the status of upcoming papers.

Mr. Franks pointed out that in 1995-1996, when United was first formed, a ministerial survey indicated the need for study papers on 20 subjects. Two of those original study paper subjects were among those reviewed today ("Tithing" and "The Resurrections"). The last of those original 20 doctrinal subjects ("The Nature of God and Christ")

should be ready for Council review at the December meetings, along with three other papers ("Music in the Bible," "The Role of Women in the Bible" and "Voting and Running for Political Office").

Other study papers under consideration are on the topics of the Hebrew calendar, focusing on the postponements, and a paper on the subject of sacred names. In addition, the Prophecy Advisory Committee is working on a number of papers they hope to present to the Doctrine Committee in the near future.

The Council had already received and reviewed the three papers presented in today's meeting. Mr. Franks walked the Council through a final review of papers titled "Balloting" (which deals with the issue of voting within the Church) and "Tithing." The Council unanimously approved both papers. He also briefly reviewed a paper titled "The Resurrec-

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President Gives Council 2002-2003 Year-End Review

UCGIA President Roy Holladay provided an overview of home office operations and accomplishments to the Council Aug. 12.

Budget

- Remained within expense budget for the 2002-2003 fiscal year. In fact, expenditures were \$432,000 less than income, which means we added that amount to our operational reserves.
- Initiated discussion with the Council on the level of reserves to be maintained, and how to use excess funds.

Christ-Centered Servant Leadership

- As mandated by the Council, promoted CSL through regular instruction and discussion within the home office. This was done until the Council decided to do a review of CSL. Since that time, active promotion of CSL has been on hold.

Personnel

- Hired Aaron Booth as managing editor of our Web sites.
- Hired Clay Thornton as video producer and editor.
- Assigned Matthew Fenchel to coordinate the human resource responsibilities that are not covered by others.
- In cooperation with the ministry in the Philippines, assigned David Baker as senior pastor.
- Assigned John Elliott as senior pastor for Kenya.
- Worked with Clyde Kilough on the resolution of the difficulties in the United Kingdom. Peter Hawkins transferred to England.
- Hired Kambani Banda to serve in Zambia.
- Hired Larry Perkins to sub for Ralph Innis in the mailing operation.
- Hired Barb Antion (prisoner mail) and Mary Pinelli (Ministerial Services) to work on call.
- Hired Clarisa de Campos to answer the Internet mail.
- Reclassified three employees who were classified as part-time and on call,

yet had been working full-time. This affects their health benefits, time off, Feast time, 403(b) and other benefits.

Home Office

- Instituted regular meetings with the management team.
- Instituted Monday morning "Compass Check" session with a prayer for the work of the week.
- Asked that managers receive monthly financial reports of their operations to better manage expenditures.
- Completed purchase of adjacent property.
- Mailed letters to those newly baptized and those who officially want to be members of United.
- Program for pastoral renewal and excellence was turned down by the Lilly Foundation. It is still our recommendation that many of the recommended points of the program be instituted.
- The Philippines came under the home office jurisdiction at their request.
- Developed employee evaluation process.
- Inserting envelopes with booklet request mailed from the home office.
- Sending e-mail messages to GN subscribers on the Internet.
- Upgrades to the home office: names on doors, blinds on office doors, flag pole, irrigation system, cable TV news.
- Planned for good works program to help brethren, especially in emergency situations.
- Visited the Canadian National Council meeting.
- Plan a visit to Germany in September.
- Plan to attend the Feast in England this year.

ABC

- 41 students finished the program this year—a very talented class.

Human Resources

- Created a restricted Web site for employees to access a wide variety of employment documents—health insur-

ance, life insurance, 403(b) plan, human resource manual, safety, etc. This is something we have never had before.

- Created documents and a timetable to establish an assessment process for home office employees. This is something we have not had before.
- Established a working document to begin a procedures manual. This is something we have never had, except for a few job functions.

Public Proclamation

- Upgraded our Avid video editing system, saving about \$40,000 over the regular price.
- Established guidelines and procedures for local congregations to more widely use the *Tomorrow* and *Good News* cable-access TV programs in their areas.
- Overhauled our Web site, giving it a fresh, up-to-standard, up-to-date appearance.
- GN Web site will be developed to go more to the general public. It is in the process of being redesigned. Our main Web page has a definite church Web page look. This will be more for the general public—more of a first-contact Web page.
- Moving *Youth United* from a Web-only magazine for young people to a printed magazine. New name: *Vertical Thought*.

Initial ideas and concepts for commercial television have been developed by Peter Eddington, including convergence of TV and the Internet.

- Total incoming mail from all sources was 368,229, an 8 percent decrease over the 2001-2002 fiscal year.
- *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* was offered to 200,000 of our U.S. GN subscribers. We have distributed 50,000 copies to our subscribers, members and international areas.
- A total of 7,518 responses have been added through *Good News* radio.
- Our *Good News* print run has dropped from 517,423 to 460,167—an 11 percent decrease. This decrease was

primarily due to low renewals on our waiting room program copies.

- As of July 30, we have 4,693 donors and 2,096 coworkers on file.
- Placed most of the mail processing staff under fulfillment—under the media area. This is traditionally where this function has been located. (It was under the financial area before.)
- The French GN has been revised. Two issues have been published so far.
- Peter Eddington is now in a much better position to carry out his responsibilities as the operation manager of media. There were nine employees of the media department in Arcadia, but only Peter came to Cincinnati. He was doing the jobs now done by Mike Bennett, Clarissa de Campos, Michelle de Campos, Aaron Booth and Clay Thornton. Peter will now be able to concentrate more on vision, the future, evaluation, programs, etc.

Ministerial Services

- Added Dennis Luker to the Ministerial Services team.
- First pastoral leadership conference was held in August 2002 to begin training and evaluating potential future elders and pastors. There were 17 couples in attendance.
- Instituted the retirement task force to make proposals on a wide range of retirement issues. Its work should be completed before the Feast. Plan to report on this in December.
- Began a program of sermons and outlines to address vital topics of need to the Church. The first one was on modesty. The next one will be about Sabbath observance.
- We plan to create a Festival planning team that will function in a similar way to the national camp team. This Festival team will be composed of Festival coordinators, Charles Melear and a few others. They will have meetings and coordinate their efforts to make the Feast as effective as possible, and to help their efforts be as efficient as possible.
- The Ministerial Education Task

Force began producing articles for the *Ministerial Quarterly* in the fall of 2002. Its initial emphasis was on counseling and speaking. It will continue to produce material on a regular basis for MQ to help improve the effectiveness of the ministry.

- Steve Myers has coordinated the development of an official hymnal supplement.
- Developed a personal aircraft use policy.
- Field ministers hired during the past fiscal year: Joe Horchak, Andy Burnett, Gary McConaughy, Chris Moen and Gary Black.
- Field ministers who retired during the past fiscal year: Richard Duncan, Robert Jones, George Meeker and Al Mischnick. Jim Jenkins died Feb. 4.

- Number of baptisms during past fiscal year: 200.
- Number of new visits during this past fiscal year: 762 brand-new contacts through literature; 1,277 Sabbatarians contacted us (most only curious).

As of August 1, 2003:

• Total number of employed ministerial (U.S. field and home office):	119
Average Age:	55.3
Median Age:	55
Ministers Aged 70+:	2
Ministers Aged 60-69:	35
Ministers Aged 50-59:	58
Ministers Aged 40-49:	21
Ministers Aged 30-39:	3

LifeNets

Through discussion with the Council, have clarified questions regarding our working with LifeNets and how that cooperation is to continue in the future.

Spanish Region

The baptism figures for the Spanish region through June:

Argentina	4
Chile	4
Costa Rica	1
El Salvador	6
Guatemala	3
Mexico	12
Peru	2
TOTAL	32



News From **Around the World**

Members Experience Joy and Challenges in Malaysia

by Florante Siopan

The recent trip we made to Sabah (a part of the country of Malaysia on the island of Borneo) to attend to the spiritual needs of our brethren there gave us mixed emotions of joy and challenges. We started our trip from Bacolod in the Philippines early in the morning of July 15 to catch the boat from Dumaguete to Zamboanga. We arrived Dumaguete at about 10 a.m.

We bought our tickets and waited three hours for the boat to take us to Zamboanga. Leaving Dumaguete at 1 p.m., we reached Zamboanga the following morning without hitches. But the boat that was supposed to leave for Sabah in the afternoon had been rescheduled to the next day, so we were forced to spend another day in Zamboanga.

The following day, July 17—after our passport was approved for travel by the immigration office—we sailed for Sandakan, Sabah. We reached the port of Sandakan the following day. After another processing of passports by Malaysian immigration, we journeyed to Semporna, a 335-kilometer (about 200-mile) land trip. We reached Semporna—the place where most of our brethren live—at 6 p.m., July 18, after four days of travel. We then made a stop at the home of Ruperta Beto, which is along the highway about two kilometers from the town.

We were met by Mrs. Beto,

Artemio Bernal and Mercy Chu, the wife of Chu Von Cheok, a Chinese gentleman who is a prospective member. After formal greetings, we settled down to discuss a lot of things—from the present status of the Church, the home office, Council of Elders, the brethren in the Philippines and the remaining Feast days of God, including the Feast of Tabernacles this year.

The brethren asked if we could come back for the Feast of Trumpets or Atonement, but the subject of coming to the Feast of Tabernacles in the Philippines took more time in our discussion. After our dinner hosted by the Beto family, Hope Beto, one of the sons of Ruperta Beto, brought us to a hotel in the town.

The following day (Sabbath), our service was attended by 18 people including children. A number of people were not able to come on account of distance and other unknown reasons. In the morning, I gave the message in Cebuano, a dialect that all can understand. The title was, "They Choose to Follow Their Idols."

Blessing the Children

Before and after our eating together that Sabbath, I noticed two of the small children trying to get my attention by always getting close to me, sometimes wanting to sit on my lap, distracting our discussions. I remembered the Bible incident

where Jesus blessed the children who were trying to stay close to Him (Mark 10:13-16). I then opened the subject of the blessing of children and asked the parents if their children had already been blessed. They answered "no."

In the afternoon, before our Bible study, we held the ceremony of the blessing of children. This ceremony is new to the brethren in Sabah as this was not done in their former church. They asked me to conduct the ceremony after I thoroughly explained this practice of the Church of God that was started by Jesus Christ, quoting the scriptures. There were five children, ages four months to four years old, who were blessed.

Travel Restrictions and the Feast

Sabah is a Muslim area and Islam is their established religion. Although there are some small and scattered Christian churches, the great majority of the population belongs to Islam. Filipinos in Sabah experience difficulties living in this country. They cannot be given citizenship status as they are not born in the land, nor have they embraced Islam as their religion.

Even the children who are born to parents that are not natives of the land cannot be given legal status as citizens. Filipinos who work in Sabah can travel freely if the company they work for gives them travel papers approved by the authori-

ties. Others are not able to travel freely.

Our brethren and their families are no exception to this problem. They don't enjoy the freedom we have in the Philippines. We have been discussing possible travel to the Philippines to attend the Feast of Tabernacles this year. There are about a dozen who are seriously planning to come to the Feast. They are excited to experience how the Feast is to be observed. But for now, I cannot say how this plan will come about for all of them. I just encouraged them to do the best

they can to get their papers, and to pray more, asking our loving God to intervene on their behalf.

This is the challenge we are facing, and we put our trust in the One who works miracles for His people. I am asking the brethren to pray for our brethren in Sabah. I believe our collective heartfelt prayers will avail much, because it pleases God to see His people asking for His help on behalf of others.

This article appeared in the August issue of United News Philippines (www.ucg.org.ph/unp).



Davao, Philippines, Church members participate in one of the three combined Spokesman-Graduate clubs started after the Feast of Tabernacles last year. "There seems to be happy and significant growth in the abilities and performance of the men attending club," said Edmond Macaraeg, pastor and club director (photo by Charles Philip Macaraeg)

Australia Sets 2003/2004 Budget

After considering a number of initiatives proposed by its committees and the National Office, the Australian National Council settled on an amended budget requiring a \$45,000 (Australian) deficit for the 2003-2004 financial year. The deficit will be funded from the accumulated surplus as of June 30, 2003.

The Council is confident the budget reflects wise stewardship of its financial resources but will keep a close watch on the position as the year unfolds, although the Church is in a sound financial position. It has been pointed out that the cost of mailing *The Good News* and other publications to subscribers is an ever-increasing cost. In the coming year, \$194,000 (23 percent) will be spent in this area.

Some of the more significant action items for the year are:

- Increase *Good News* distribution to 25,500.
- Develop a pilot program for long weekend seminars.

- Develop a series of sermon and Bible study outlines to assist local elders.
- Conduct a Christian Leadership Camp and a Summer Camp.
- Continue with the program of Women's Focus Weekends.
- Develop an outreach program for scattered church youth.
- Complete the Risk Management Plan for UCG-Australia.
- Develop a Disaster Recovery Plan.
- Review church insurances to achieve lower costs.
- Upgrade the computer systems in the National Office.
- Implement a multiyear budget model.

If the objectives of the plan can be achieved, the Church will be strengthened

and well placed to achieve God's objectives—to preach the gospel and care for those He calls!

Bill Eddington

Successful Letter Box Drop in Brisbane

Sunday, July 27, the Brisbane, Australia, congregation conducted a letter box drop in the Cleveland/Thornside area of East Brisbane.

Twenty-four enthusiastic brethren delivered 3,600 letter box cards over a three-hour period. Those participating varied from the young to the young at heart, and everyone enjoyed the fellowship and beautiful sunny day. Mr. Bradford began the activity with a prayer asking God to bless the efforts of this activity and open the hearts and minds of those whom He wanted to respond to this very special offer.

We concluded the activity with a barbecue and a game of touch football!

David Barton

Australian Shows What One Man Can Do

Dennis Freeman, a member in Brisbane, Australia, recently decided to make a difference in the town of Rosewood where he lives. By talking to his pastor, Bill Bradford, and members of the Australian Media and Publishing Committee, he made himself familiar with the more effective programs the Media Committee was promoting. With some courage and a lot of determination, Dennis then set out to preach the gospel in Rosewood. He has placed:

- A *Good News* stand at Rosewood Railway Station.
- A cardholder display at McDonald's in the shopping center.
- A *Good News* display at the Rosewood Community Centre, including the United States and Britain booklet.
- A *Good News* display and United States and Britain booklet in the Rosewood High School Library.
- A cardholder display at IGA Foodtown in Rosewood.
- A *Good News* display and United States and Britain booklet in a canteen.
- A one-day cardholder display on a busy visitors' day.

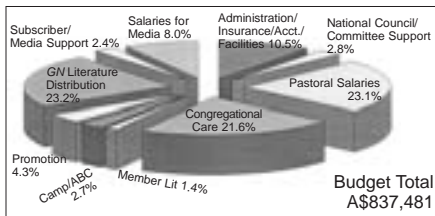
• A card display at the Rosewood Newsagency.

• A cardholder and *Good News* placed in two doctors' surgeries in Rosewood.

Dennis says, "Placing magazines, booklets and cardholders is not easy, but it needs to be done. When people are approached, they seem to have two main fears—that you want money or you will intrude in their lives. I believe we should all try—there's nothing to lose. It's quite an achievement to make the material available to the public so that they will pick it up and read it without feeling pressured. Remember that God the Father does the calling and to be tactful and humble wherever you go."

He said that people in the Rosewood area have never seen a *Good News* magazine before and that the main religious influence in this area is the Catholic Church. As a result of Dennis's efforts we are now receiving letter box cards from the Rosewood area and have also had people call and write in who have told us they have picked up a card or seen the *GN* in the Rosewood area!

Ruth Root



International At a Glance

Elder Ordained in England

John Ross Schroeder was ordained on

Aug. 23 in Watford, England, where the Bricket Wood congregation was meeting for Sabbath services. Gerhard Marx, Frank Jarvis and Peter Hawkins joined visiting member of the Council of Elders, Doug Horchak, at the front of the hall for the ordination prayer.



John Ross Schroeder

Mr. Schroeder is a senior writer for the publications of United Church of God, and regularly speaks in the congregations around Britain. His wife, Jan, among other things oversees the *Good News* mailing list and data entry and reporting of financial information.

Doug and Tanya Horchak were traveling home from the Ghana summer camp where they attended with one of their daughters, Becky, and friend, Emily Quant.

Peter Hawkins

British Isles Gives Circulation Report

The monthly circulation report produced by Jan Schroeder for July 2003 shows that the total circulation of *The Good News* in England had decreased to 2,500 (from 2,881 the previous month) by the end of July. (During the first part of August some 40 or 50 of those lost have returned the renewal and are now restored as subscribers.) This decrease was anticipated and is due to the effects of the ongoing renewal program. Advertising projects to be undertaken in the next few weeks in both *Reader's Digest* and the Information Service's *Selections* magazine are expected to result in a net increase in subscribers.

Of the total circulation figure, 1,791 are in the United Kingdom, 110 are in the Isle of Man and 102 are in Sweden. The remainder are distributed within a further 35 European countries and Israel.

During July we received 447 requests for 611 items of other literature and an additional 235 requests for the *Bible Study Course*. This demand has resulted in a noticeable increase in the work required of the volunteers in the Eccleston office! Most of these requests arose from the recent semiannual letter to all subscribers.

Total subscriptions to the *Bible Study Course* stand at 332 (with another 711 already having completed all 12 lessons); *United News* subscriptions stand at 228; and *World News & Prophecy*, at 334.

During July, 10 new donors and five new coworkers were added to the file. Through July, UCG-British Isles had

received a total of 327 donations in the mail.

Philippine Mailings Grow

According to the July *United News Philippines*, *Good News* magazine mailings in the Philippines increased 38 percent. With the bulk copies sent to congregations for distribution added in, total circulation grew by 50 percent.

The *Bible Study Course* has more than doubled. Internet requests have more than tripled and mail received has almost tripled. The largest growth category is mail sent, an 844 percent increase.

Australian Youth Getting Chat Room

United News Australia reported that the opportunities for young people in the Church to use Internet technology to keep in contact, despite being spread over a wide area, was recognized by the Youth and Media and Publishing committees of the Australian National Council some time ago. Input from both committees resulted in a recommendation to set up a youth chat room and forum on the Australian Web site, which was approved by the council in July.

"It might take a little while to develop this initiative to the point of introduction," said the article. The plan is that young people will be able to chat online on designated Friday evenings. The forum will allow for a more leisurely discussion of topics raised.

Access to the forum and chat room will be by password and restricted to those who have registered and agreed to a code of conduct and the supervision of a moderator.

Australian Positions Announced

At the Australian National Council meeting in July, Bill Eddington and Don Goodger were reelected to the positions of chairman and vice chairman. Bill Bradford was elected chairman of the Pastoral Committee.

United News Australia also reported that Reg Wright, Australian national office manager, intends to retire at the end of 2004 when he will be 70 years of age. The plan is to have the new nation-



Reg and Joan Wright

office manager start shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles in 2004. Mr. Wright would overlap with his replacement through the end of 2004.

U.K. Conducts GN Mailing Test

Peter Hawkins, CEO of the United Church of God-British Isles, has been testing a number of changes in mailing out *The Good News* and the *British and European Supplement*. Special letters designed to facilitate rapid reader response were incorporated into the mailing process from a mailing company in Kingston-on-Thames. This was done during the posting of the July/August issue. They were all mailed with the magazine and the supplement. Each subscriber received a response envelope addressed to *The Good News* as well.

One notice to those not in a renewal

cycle gives "Some More Good News," and encourages the reader to respond on the form letter itself. In the first few days we received 23 responses with almost all requesting at least one free booklet.

Also a number of "last chance" renewal letters were mailed to a group of subscribers who previously had shown little interest in renewing their magazine. To date we have received a very surprising 38 responses with several requesting booklets and/or the *Bible Study Course*. In past years our response has been almost nil from this particular category of subscribers. Most just dropped off the mailing list.

Some of the forms included a place for a reader to recommend a gift subscription for a friend or relative. So far, we have received 14 responses suggesting a potential new subscriber.

Response to the recent supplement article, "*The Good News Responds to Your Correspondence*," has been encouraging. A number of readers have requested booklets recommended in that article.

Overall response to the recent semi-annual letter sent to the entire mailing list is now over 600. This is an excellent response of over 20 percent.

John Ross Schroeder

Pastor Retires in England

Gerhard Marx officially retired from being the pastor of the Bricket Wood congregation of the United Church of God-British Isles on July 5.

The current congregation started June 20, 1998, with six in attendance at Gerhard and Diana Marx's home. The next month it began meeting in a hall that used to be part of Imperial School at Bricket Wood, adjacent to the former Ambassador College campus. The average attendance is now around 25 weekly, with close to 40 on Holy Days. This is even after a new congregation was created in Tonbridge, south of London, which now averages 20 in attendance.

The new pastor, Peter Hawkins, pre-

sented Mr. and Mrs. Marx with gifts from the Bricket Wood and Tonbridge congregations, and a card signed by the membership. In a letter in the Aug. 2 bulletin of the Bricket Wood congregation, Mr. and Mrs. Marx wished Peter and Sonja Hawkins best wishes in their new responsibility serving the congregation. They also mentioned how much they had appreciated witnessing the loyalty to God's Church expressed by the brethren over the years.

Mr. Marx will continue speaking in different congregations but a little less



Diana and Gerhard Marx with Peter Hawkins

often. He will coordinate the development of new meetings in the southwestern part of England with Frank Jarvis, pastor of the Gloucester and Preston congregations. UN

German Textbook to Quote From German GN

In August UCG-Germany received notice from the Schroedel-Verlag (publishing house) that they will be using a quote from the November-December 2000 issue of the German *Good News* magazine in a high school textbook.

German law permits the republishing of short quotes for nonprofit use like in school textbooks, provided that the original authors are informed, and a minor fee is paid to use the material. No permission has to be granted, since this

usage is specifically permitted by German copyright law.

The article in question was one written by Jesmina Allaoua and Paul Kieffer specifically for the German version (UCG-Germany occasionally generates its own articles when there is no appropriate article from the English *GN* available, Mr. Kieffer said). The title of the article was "The Search for Peace: The UN Millennium 2000 Summit."

The quote reflects on 55 years of the UN. The textbook contrasts it with a

quote from the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a respected daily published in Munich, with its commentary from 1995 after 50 years of the UN. The students are asked to compare the two assessments and then give their opinion.

"For us to be compared with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* is quite some recognition!" Mr. Kieffer said.

The textbook will be used in high school education and is called *Mensch und Politik*, roughly "People and Politics." UN

Two Booklets Printed in Estonian

The Gospel of the Kingdom and Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest have been translated into Estonian and 1,000 copies of each have been printed with beautiful color covers, reported Victor Kubik, a Council of Elders member who has helped coordinate the Church's work in Eastern Europe.

Members in the Baltic nation of Estonia, between Finland and Russia, helped translate and proofread the booklets. Scott Ashley, managing editor of *The Good News* and

booklets, prepared the layouts, which were printed by Sabbatarians in the Ukraine and then shipped to a member in Estonia who will mail them out.

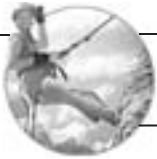
The booklets will be advertised on radio. Radio ads have previously advertised *The Good News* in English, and we currently have 100 readers of *The Good News* in Estonia.

All 12 lessons of the *Bible Study Course* have also been translated into Estonian, and so far eight lessons have been printed. We have 40 people taking the *Bible Study Course* in their native Estonian language at this time. Johnnie Lambert,



an elder in Elmira, New York, coordinates this project.

Also, there are five reprint articles translated into Estonian. Literature has also been translated into other Eastern European languages, including four lessons of the *Bible Study Course* translated into Russian. They can be found at www.ucg.org/lilibrary/easteuropean. UN



United Youth Camps

Camp Davidson: Following God in the Real World

From Aug. 3 to 10, 115 campers and 50 staff attended Camp Davidson on Suttle Lake in central Oregon. United's camp enjoyed the variety of facilities in the beautiful mountain setting. A fantastic staff team—including seven first-time staff members who were campers last year—set a challenging and high standard. Campers responded well and



Emily Hirst and Abigail Woicik get ready to ride the tube. David Karlik negotiates a difficult section of the high challenge course (photos by Tina Slocum and Tammy Kelly)

were motivated not only to have fun, but to excel.

Every day began with a 45-minute Christian Living class. This year's theme was "Following God in the Real World." The Northwest ministry had prepared an outline, which was sent to everyone prior to camp. Classes focused on the good and bad of the world, our words and dress, prophecy, our responsibility to the world (military

service) and the Sabbath. On the last topic, Rex Sexton (pastor in Washington and water-skiing director) moderated a panel of older teens who described their experiences in maintaining their beliefs despite the pressures of school, sports, music and peers.

Campers enjoyed a wide range of activities, including a 10-element low ropes course, a seven-element high-ropes course, waterskiing, mountain biking, kayaking and a half-day hike in the Cascade wilderness. The new kayaks purchased by the national program gave every camper the opportunity to learn this exciting sport. In addition, three zip-lines—including one that started at 60 feet high—were very popular activities. Basketball, flag football, arts and crafts, archery, swimming, camp improvement, volleyball, ultimate Frisbee and

"Excellence in Living" rounded out the activities.

The evenings offered additional opportunities for fellowship and participation in the activities. Each evening at camp concluded with a lively campfire, followed by a "bedside chat" for each dorm with its dorm parents.

On the Sabbath, the campers enjoyed some extra rest, Bible discussions with their dorm parents, Sabbath services and a special banquet. Saturday

evening ended with a final dance. Campers were able to take home their own copy of "The Davidson Days," the camp newspaper.

Staff and campers again "let their light shine." The camp managers were very impressed with the respect and courtesy of campers and the caring dedication of the staff. Joe Horn, site program director, stated: "Your group motivates my staff. You remind us truly what camp is all about."

Camp Davidson was truly blessed this year with a high level of cooperation, respect, focus, unity and camaraderie. The staff showed godly, selfless leadership in creating an educational and fun experience for all participants. Next year everyone is looking forward to using the new \$1 million sports complex, complete with indoor climbing walls, skateboard park and basketball court.

Matthew Fenchel

Davidson Wilderness Session: Rim and Raft

After the main session of Camp Davidson, an extended Wilderness Session was offered to the older campers for the third straight year. The schedule for this year changed to include a moderate one-day hike, and then a full day of white-water rafting on the Upper McKenzie River.

After the main session ended on Sunday, everyone drove to the base camp at Three Creeks Lake in the heart of the Sisters Wilderness Region. Tents and the camp kitchen were set up. While the conditions were much more primitive than regular camp (no electricity or running water), the tents were comfortable and the cooking of Berk Weis was five-star! Everyone was divided up into teams to take care of cooking, cleaning and camp maintenance. The clear evenings provided a great view of the stars. Kayaks were brought for free-time enjoyment.

On Monday, we hiked the Tam McArthur Rim, a 9-mile round-trip up to an elevation of almost 8,000 feet. Although not overly high in altitude,

the rim afforded a fantastic view of numerous peaks in the Cascade range. It also provided a view of a nearly 1,500-foot drop straight down! For some, though, the highlight of the hike was the chance to have a snowball



Campers view their camp on Three Creeks Lake from Tam McArthur Rim

fight and to do some modified sledding in a nearby snowfield.

On Tuesday, everyone enjoyed a full-day rafting trip down the Upper McKenzie River, one of the most active and enjoyable rivers in the region. The trip provided delightful

views of the surrounding mountains and forests, as well as wildlife like deer, osprey and heron. There were numerous good-natured water battles between the four rafts, and most everyone had a chance to take an "involuntary" swim in the cold water.

Wednesday was a "down day" to give everyone a chance to rest, relax and fellowship. Many of the campers and staff took the opportunity to explore a major lava flow about 40 minutes away. Others enjoyed the beautiful day on the lake.

Why a wilderness session? One reason is to see God's awe-inspiring power and beauty direct and up-close. Another is to build bonds, friendships and team unity in a way that is simply not possible in more traditional settings. Yet a third reason is to challenge oneself beyond a person's comfort level—developing courage, perseverance and stamina. These goals were met and exceeded, and everyone is looking forward to participating next year.

Matthew Fenchel

Camp Heritage 2003: Continuing the Heritage

A week of superb weather greeted campers and staff at Camp Heritage during the week of Aug. 10 to 17. What had been an unusually wet summer cleared off to produce clear skies and mild temperatures. One Boy Scout employee at the reservation commented, "You folks must be walking on the right side."

A two-track program was continued this year, which divided the campers into Challenge and Adventure groups. The older campers (ages 15 to 18) comprised a Challenge program that included distinct activities geared to challenge them spiritually, mentally and physically.

A theme this year was "Building on Our Heritage." Christian Living classes focused on examples of individuals and teachings that make up our Christian heritage. We are working to rebuild the walls of faith within the work of God. Just as Nehemiah rallied the Jews

to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem, our educational program seeks to build a core of people to carry on with the work of God into the next generation.

To build on this theme, a life-skills class was again taught by Janel Johnson and Pam Myers. This year they issued passports to each camper complete with a current picture. The passport represented their entrance into the "embassy of the Zone," with their citizenship identified (Ephesians 2:19) and the date of expiration as a lifelong commitment. As responsible bearers of a passport issued from "the Zone," each camper agreed to believe in the value of a strong conscience and to act right.

A white-water rafting trip on the



Youghiogheny River provided part of the physical challenge. Class 3 rapids provided plenty of thrills and spills for 116 campers and staff during a day on this river.

Other water sports at Heritage this year included water polo and sailing.



From left: Jerry Rehor teaches fundamentals of sailing; water polo; mountain boarding, a relatively new sport, was an option this year at Heritage (photos by Darris McNeely)

Orienteering, softball, volleyball, basketball, tennis, riflery and archery were again offered on the activity side of the program.

Mountain boarding, a relatively new sport, was an option this year at Heritage. The boards are oversized skate boards with larger tires and hand brakes. Participants wear protective

gear and “skate” down a hillside. Those who participated really enjoyed the activity.

On Friday evening the Challenge and Adventure groups held separate campfire programs that included a question-and-answer format Bible study. The themes of the life-skills classes were reviewed for the purpose

of getting feedback from campers about the emphasis on modesty and appropriate behavior. Young people face many challenges to their faith in today’s world. Sessions like these help shape and mold their understanding of biblical truth. The foundation laid by parents in the home is therefore strengthened.

This year Heritage was pleased to have two visitors from Belgium. Jako and Renee Kasper received scholarships from UCG Germany to travel and attend Heritage. Jako worked on the soccer staff while Renee was a camper.

Thanks to the Volunteers

It is important to once again

acknowledge the contribution of the volunteer staff who work at Heritage and all other UCG youth camps. Their unselfish commitment to the program makes it all possible. They are the true servant leaders of today’s Church. They provide inspiring examples and models for the campers to follow.

Darris McNeely

British Isles Camp Very Enjoyable Despite Extreme Heat and a Day Without Water

UCG-British Isles’ weeklong summer camp for teenagers and young adults took place between Aug. 3 and 10. Thirteen of the Church’s young adults and teenagers, plus a young man from the United States who is currently working in Dublin, attended the activity. Eight other adults made up the total of 22 who gathered together at The Held bunkhouse just outside the town of Brecon in South Wales.

The setting, looking across to the mountains of the Brecon Beacons National Park, was immensely inspiring. The weather was perfect, although plenty of sunscreen was used when anyone ventured outside! Visitors brought the attendance at the Sabbath service to 32; this was too many for the indoor common room, so the group had an outdoor service in the shade of two large oak trees.

One of the activities was a trip to a coal-mining museum called The Big Pit, where everyone was provided with safety helmet, lamp and respi-



British Isles’ campers pose for group shot; Michael Ellams helps launch a boat (photos by Peter and Sonja Hawkins)



rator before descending 90 meters (about 300 feet) in a lift for a tour of the old mine workings.

Other activities included cycling, sailing, canoeing or rowing on a local lake, walks in the adjacent woods, as well as games and sports on a “slightly” sloping field belonging to the bunkhouse. One proposed excursion to the summit of the nearby mountain known as Pen y Fan was canceled due to the very hot weather.

An unexpected challenge was the loss of the water supply for most of Thursday due to a burst pipe down in the town. In the extreme heat—it was the hottest spell of weather since 1976—the staff was concerned about campers becoming dehydrated. We were grateful for the help of a neighboring farmer who rigged up a hosepipe to give us access to some of his spring-fed water, as well as a delivery of bottled water courtesy of Welsh Water. By midnight the water supply was restored and life began to return to normal.

Each day there was an open discussion of subjects that had mostly been suggested by the young people themselves prior to camp. Subjects discussed in these forums included mod-

esty; whether God hears (or chooses to hear) everything; dependence, interdependence or independence prior to, leading to and within marriage; the Church as a community; boy/girlfriend relationships; and sex within marriage.

The final forum addressed the place of young people in the Church and their importance to it, concluding with encouragement to the teens and young adults to consider baptism and—when they feel ready—to discuss it with their parents, other Church adults and the ministry.

Following the Sabbath service, campers, staff and visitors enjoyed an outdoor meal with the tables and individual placements specially decorated for the occasion. This was followed by the now-traditional skits or parodies of camp life, contributed by both campers and the adult staff. Also in accordance with tradition, several of the teens stayed up talking late into the night.

All present would agree that we were blessed with a very fine—and enjoyable—activity.

David and Barbara Fenney

Youth Corps Volunteers Serve at Second Youth Camp in Ghana, West Africa

A Vision of the Future was the theme at our second United Youth Camp in Ghana sponsored by United Church of God in West Africa. Council member and Dallas, Texas, pastor Doug and Tanya Horchak, their daughter, a friend and three United Youth Corps volunteers assisted at camp in this West African nation.

Enthusiasm and appreciation expressed by over 100 young people from both Ghana and Nigeria highlighted the camp experience that took place August 15 to 19. Ghanaian minister Maxwell Coffie assisted in organizing the five-day camp that was held on the campus of the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. In addition, the regional pastor for Ghana, Melvin Rhodes, was able to attend and assist at the youth camp this year. Campers stayed in student dormitories and enjoyed three meals of Ghanaian fare (such as joloff rice, fu-fu, cooked plantain, banku and kenke) each day.

The 103 teens and young adults were organized into five teams of about 20 each. These groups of young people were larger than the dorms or teams we typically have at our camps in the United States, and were coed for all the program activities. Five of the Ghanaian Church pastors acted as counselors for the teams (pastors Manu Ofuri, Richard

Dua, Adonijah Blay-Miezah, Benjamin Agyapong and Clement Amoako-Atta). While the vast majority of those attending were teens, a few young adults in their 20s were campers and assisted the counselors on each team.

Oliadare Okinbo accompanied 11 young people from Nigeria to attend the youth camp in Ghana this year. The group from Nigeria traveled by road through the countries of Benin and Togo to attend camp. While the group from Nigeria faced the trial of not being allowed to cross the border from Nigeria into Benin for two days, they finally arrived on the Sabbath to the joy and answered prayers of the rest of the staff and campers. The Nigerian brothers and sisters were warmly welcomed by the Ghanaian youth and ministry, and made a wonderful contribution to camp.

The five program activities offered to the campers were: football (soccer), volleyball, team challenge, personal improvement and Bible class (Christian Living). Three United Youth Corps volunteers (Emily Sandilands of Dallas, Texas; Gareth Simons of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; and Logan Smith of Seattle, Washington) attended the camp and served on the staff. Emily Sandilands assisted Tanya Horchak in the personal improvement class which focused on personal hygiene, grooming and rela-

tionships. Gareth Simons taught the volleyball classes with the Ghanaian youth. Logan Smith assisted Doug Horchak with the team-building challenge class that focused on principles of trust, inclusion and teamwork.

All three Youth Corps staff hosted the Novelty Olympics that were held one evening during the camp. Americans Becky Horchak and Emily Quant attended camp and were able to assist with volleyball. Two other Ghanaian pastors (Frank Arthur and Joseph Baah) taught the football (soccer) class. Pastor Maxwell Azariah Coffie and Doug Horchak taught the Bible classes each day. Melvin Rhodes also assisted at the camp, and was in Ghana to conduct doctrine seminars for the local elders in the congregations.

Once again this year, the home office of the United Church of God subsidized the camp—without which a youth activity of this nature would simply not exist. The Ghanaian pastors gained valuable experience in planning for future camps in Ghana for the youth. In addition,



Left, United Youth Corps volunteers Gareth Simons, Logan Smith and Emily Sandilands; volleyball class; and a group photo of the Ghana camp

expressed to the home office and U.S. brethren by the youth and staff for the generosity shown.

The final night of camp was highlighted by an energized talent show consisting of “skits with a moral” performed by different members of the five camper teams. The goal at the beginning of camp was a Vision of the Future. The opening night of camp, Doug Horchak expressed the goals of building relationships and grasping the hopeful vision of God’s Kingdom that they would experience at camp. As camp came to a close, these goals seemed to be successfully accomplished as campers and staff alike said their good-byes and voiced the strong desire to repeat this unifying experience with both Ghanaian and Nigerian teens next year.

Doug Horchak



From the Word

Creating a Safe Place to Grow (Expanding "the Zone")

■ What makes "the Zone" practiced at United Youth Camps so successful? Can we build this into our families, congregations and community?

by Larry W. Greider

Each summer hundreds of teens and volunteer workers converge on camps across the country to participate in the United Youth Camps (UYC) program. Recently a member wrote a letter to the home office commenting on the environment so palpable at our camps. We call it "the Zone"—a safe place to grow. This member wrote:

"We've heard a lot about 'the Zone' at camp for the past few years, but not about creating this type of safety in the Church. The Zone enables young people at camp to venture out of their comfort zone to learn and grow . . .

"Many Church members have suffered hurts and traumas that make it as hard for them to grow and overcome as it is for fearful kids to try new things. I think that the Church would flourish if we could cultivate an atmosphere of humility and gentleness, where people are encouraged to grow—where they can feel safe to grow—where they won't be afraid of

poisonous, hurtful attacks when they try."

What makes the Zone so successful? Can we build this into our families, congregations and community? Actually, we realize that God is way ahead of us and promises to create this idyllic setting into the fabric of the community of tomorrow. We call it the world tomorrow. We understand that this will be the government that Christ will bring to the earth at His return. In the meantime, there are a few things that we *can* do to create a safe place for children and adults to grow.

Trust

Perhaps the most vital element of the Zone is trust. In the world we seldom trust people we don't know. At a very early age we teach our children to run from strangers, especially if they are offering candy or inviting them to approach. We realize not everyone's motives are pure and right. The litany of perverse crimes perpetrated on innocents is sickening.

To be trustworthy, a person must have the right motive, and parents, ministers and brethren can show that by their willingness to help, teach and serve. When we place our trust in God and His Word, striving to live faithfully by His law, it does promote the environment that helps others to grow. Lies and hypocrisy do just the opposite. David prayed, "But

as for me, I trust in You, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God'" (Psalm 31:14). David also noted, "Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Psalm 40:4).

If we want our children (and brethren) to feel safe, we must give them a sense of our confidence in our foundation—a trust in God. According to our surveys, parents list that the number one goal of the UYC program is, "Building a relationship with God and learning His ways" (70 percent of parents responded this way, similar to what campers and staff also note). If your goals are to build a relationship with God and model that in your life, you are well on your way to a healthy environment that will work wonders in the lives of those around you.

God Offers Choices

In a safe environment people feel more eager to make wise choices. Sadly, negative peer pressure and worldly influences do corrupt good manners (1 Corinthians 15:33). While we are expecting people to avoid the traps of negativity, we should expect people to see the best in others and promote right values.

If you expect that your teens will lie, cheat, steal and be rebellious, many will not disappoint you. On the other hand, if you expect honesty, courtesy, depend-

ability, courage, etc., you might be surprised by their willingness to oblige. We generally want to please those who care about us, and your expectations will more easily be met if you are straightforward and honest.

At camp we don't allow practical jokes or allow teens to "rag" on each other. There is an expectation that we all treat each other with respect and encourage excellence. This can be communicated in any environment.

Choices Have Consequences

Perhaps the single greatest lesson to learn and apply is that there is a cause for every effect. Paul mentioned, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:7-9).

Camp helps teens understand that if you want to be successful, you need to make wise and right decisions. We encourage active participation so young people can learn that God's way works. It is much better to learn the dynamic of cause and effect, when the effects don't ruin lives. This aspect of the Zone can be practiced in families long before our

children reach camp age. Wise King Solomon observed, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Start early to encourage excellence and teach lessons when wrong results occur.

There are many aspects to right government. Building the Zone at home or in a congregation takes commitment to each other. If we want a safe environment in which to grow, we need to build it. That takes cooperation and vision. At camp we have lots of orientation to the goals and mission of the UYC program. Our success is credited to the fine volunteers who are there to give themselves away in selfless service to others.

Perhaps the greatest secret of life is that when we get our minds off ourselves and have outward concern for others, we discover a power from above. God is love! (1 John 4:8). The member whose letter we quoted earlier mentioned humility and gentleness. This resonates from the attitude of those committed to God's calling. Let's all try to create the community where everyone is safe from outside influences and is saturated with a commitment toward godly values that will produce excellence, now and forever. Create a safe zone in your world. **UW**

Larry W. Greider is national camp coordinator and regional pastor of the Central Region. He pastors churches in Collinsville and Salem, Illinois.

Finding the Joy in Christianity

■ Joy is one of the fundamental fruits of following Christ. But, unfortunately, joy is not often immediately associated with Christianity. Where can we find the joy God offers?

by David Baker

Perhaps you have participated in a word association exercise in the past. Someone says a word and you are asked to say the first word that comes to mind. As an example, the person conducting the exercise may say "smile" and perhaps you would answer "happy" or "cheerful." If the person conducting the exercise said "Christian," what words would come to mind? Perhaps you would think of "disciple," "faithful," "obedience," "overcoming," "enduring," etc. All these words are associated with our calling. But how long would it take you to think of the word *joy*?

Joy is one of the fundamental aspects of a true Christian. But, unfortunately, joy is not often immediately associated with Christianity. Oliver Wendell Holmes once remarked, "I might have

entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers." Joy can be described as a strong feeling of pleasure, gladness, cheerfulness or celebration.

Joy is a fruit of God's Spirit and therefore should be a fundamental characteristic of all Christians. It is interesting to note that the Greek word that is translated "joy" (*chara*) and the Greek word that is translated "grace" (*charis*) share the same common root word. As Christians, we experience a great deal of joy through the grace of God. Prior to baptism we were condemned to die for our sins (Romans 3:23; 6:23). But we received a pardon; we received grace from God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, an appropriate response should be gratefulness and joy.

The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13). We are filled with joy through the power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the words used to describe God and His Kingdom is joy. King David wrote, "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures

forevermore" (Psalm 16:11). David indicates that there is fullness of joy in the presence of God, and therefore God's Kingdom will be a kingdom of joy. The apostle Paul echoes this in his letter to the church in Rome: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Christians can be joyful even during times of trial. James wrote to members of God's Church, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1: 2-4). Later James adds, "Blessed is

"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12). During a time of trial, Christians can experience joy by looking beyond the trial or obstacle, realizing that God is in the process of perfecting their faith. Jesus Christ endured the crucifixion and the shame associated with it

by focusing on the joy of being reunited with His Father (Hebrews 12:2).

What are some of the ways that Christians can experience joy? One way is to simply slow down and relish the moment—enjoy the life that God has granted us. We live in such a fast-paced world that we can become quite irritated over the slightest interruption. (Which just occurred with me as my 3-year-old son interrupted my concentration on this article.) As Christians we should slow down and enjoy the journey toward the Kingdom of God. Solomon wrote, "Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works. Let your garments always be white, and

let your head lack no oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:7-9). As Christians we should experience joy in the many blessings that God has given us.

We should rejoice for the preaching

of the gospel. Luke recorded in the book of Acts that the city of Samaria experienced great joy when Philip came to them preaching the gospel (Acts 8:5-8). The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi that he rejoiced for the preaching of the gospel regardless of the motive (Philippians 1:12-18). Christ instructed the Pharisees and scribes through the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son to rejoice when someone repents (Luke 15). The Church continues to preach the gospel to the world and people are continuing to respond to that message and therefore we should rejoice! The apostle Paul informed the members in Philippi that he experienced joy in praying for them (Philippians 1:3-5). We can experience joy as we pray for one another. John wrote that he experienced great joy in hearing that members he knew continued to remain in the truth (3 John 4).

These are just some of the ways that Christians can experience lasting joy. You may have noticed that real joy involves touching the lives of others in a positive way. It's the way of giving, sharing and outflowing concern for others. Joy follows love as a fruit of God's Spirit and the expression of love brings real joy to our lives. **UW**

Let's Meet, Greet, Welcome and Love Everyone

■ Is your congregation cold or welcoming? A spiritual stumbling block or a warm place to grow? You can make a difference!

by Don Hooser

Every one of us in the Church of God can be a one-person welcoming committee at church services and activities—a goodwill ambassador for the Church and for Jesus Christ. Everyone enjoys and benefits from receiving friendly greetings, but it is especially important that some—like visitors, new people, shy people, depressed people, lonely people—receive lots of friendly greetings plus real love.

The Bible places great emphasis on fellowship and giving to others, both of which require spending time with others. Much of this can be done merely by arriving early for services or staying a while afterwards or, preferably, both.

How important is all this? Very! It's a labor of love—part of the give way of life. Over the years, I have heard countless comments about how friendly or unfriendly a congregation is. And often the comment is based on only one visit! The judgment is often based on how many people come up to talk with the visitor.

Admittedly, sometimes the combination of circumstances gives the wrong impression. For example, a visitor may come to a generally friendly congregation, but on that particular Sabbath, hardly anyone talks to the visitor. It makes one think that Satan sometimes influences circumstances so that everyone is busy at something else when a visitor shows up. So let's pray about it and do our best not to let anyone "fall through the cracks!"

Certainly, there are many conditions which can restrict one's fellowshiping. One may have time-consuming congregational duties, health problems, small children to care for, transportation problems or a spouse pressuring the member to return home quickly. God certainly knows these things—just do the best you can.

We're Glad to Have You Here

If you are new to the congregation yourself, don't let that hold you back. Meeting and trying to get to know others is a way you can serve from the very start. If you are shy, I certainly sympathize with those feelings. But pray for help and step out on faith. It means a great deal to have someone say something simple like, "Hi. My name is _____. What is yours? We're glad to have you here." Meeting people will get easier, and you will experience the joy of giving of yourself.

It often is difficult to pull ourselves away from our best friends to get around to others. It's important to nurture our close relationships. But please take time to greet and get to know oth-

ers, some of whom don't yet have close friends in the congregation. In fact, you can say to your good friend, "Let's go say hello to that person." And then the two or three of you can go together to speak to the newer person. Remember what Jesus said, "And if you greet your brethren ["friends" in margin] only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?" (Matthew 5:47).

Besides His disciples whom He was training, with whom did Jesus spend most of His time? With those who needed His help. And we can be Christ-like servants without neglecting our friends.

"Greet Every Saint"

Many scriptures relate to this subject, especially scriptures about love for neighbor. The Greek word *aspazomai* is translated 14 times in the KJV of the New Testament as "greet" and 32 times as "salute." In the NKJV, virtually all 46 places are translated "greet." In most of those places, the writer is exhorting the saints to greet one another. In Philippians 4:21, Paul says, "Greet every saint in Christ Jesus."

Paul and Peter admonished, "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14). For us, these verses mean greet one another in a manner appropriate to our culture, to your relationship and in a manner that is warm and friendly. A verbal greeting with a smile and eye contact is the main thing. In the Church today, we commonly shake hands, and sometimes a hug or a kiss on the cheek is appropriate. Just remember that 46 times we are told to greet one another!

In 3 John 14, John writes, "Greet the friends by name." People really appreciate it when we try to remember and use their names.

Leaders need friends and friendliness too! "Greet all those who lead you, and all the saints" (Hebrews 13:24, margin).

We are exhorted in the New Testament to be hospitable—in fact to be "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2). This doesn't just refer to having people into our homes. Every week we can all be a "reception committee" to make everyone feel welcome, respected and loved. We can help new people and visitors feel "at home" in our church halls and activities and "part of the family."

Hospitality: Love of Strangers

In the New Testament, the Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia*, which literally means "love of strangers" ("strangers" can refer to foreigners but also to visitors and new attendees). Now consider the importance of how we treat "strangers": "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom . . . for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I



Our congregations and we as individuals will be judged by God as to how we care for the "little ones" that God has been calling and working with for a long time to bring them to the point of attending church services.

was a stranger and you took Me in" (Matthew 25:34-35).

Let's focus for a moment on, "I was hungry and you gave Me food." Part of hospitality is offering food and drink to guests, and people who come to our church services are our "guests." A congregation that is able to serve snacks and has occasional potluck meals not only is considered hospitable, but the food goes a long way in promoting and enhancing conviviality and fellowship. There are lots of examples in the Bible about believers "breaking bread" together, and gathering for meals and feasting.

It's extremely important for parents to teach these principles to their children, and to teach their children to be not only respectful but friendly to people of all ages!

Our congregations and we as individuals will be judged by God as to how we care for the "little ones" that God has been calling and working with for a long time to bring them to the point of attending church services. "Whoever receives one little child [literal child or child in the faith] like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin [literally "stumble"], it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:5-6).

Cold Congregation—Spiritual Stumbling Block

The impression—right or wrong—that a congregation is cold has often been a spiritual stumbling block to people.

Consider the following: Some who attend our services have no strong commitment to one particular congregation or even to the United Church of God. Sometimes a UCG member will switch to another UCG congregation nearby because he feels it is friendlier. More serious for UCG is when someone turns to another church organiza-

tion because its congregation is friendlier.

Even more serious is when someone decides churches are not the warm, loving places that they are supposed to be and decides to stay home every Sabbath. Worse still is when someone decides Christians are no more loving than anyone else and decides to reject Christianity and the Bible altogether. All of these things happen. I've heard many examples.

We can fault some of the people in the examples above for being too quick to judge or being weak spiritually. But aren't they correct in looking for a group that has deep love for everyone in the group? Didn't Jesus say, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35)?

"Bestow Greater Honor"

Consider 1 Corinthians 12, a beautiful chapter that compares the Body of Christ with a human body. A major lesson is that every single member of the Body of Christ (and those being called by God to be a part of the Body) is important to God and should be important to all of us.

How do we apply verses 23 and 24, which say, "And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it." Following are some examples.

If a person is new or is visiting, he needs extra attention to get over his nervousness and to feel welcome and at home. He must not feel like he is being treated as an "outsider" in a congregation full of cliques. In fact, it is vital that he soon feel needed.

If a person is sick or having some other major trial, that person needs extra prayers by the brethren. He also needs the comfort and encouragement

of cards, calls, E-mails and sometimes assistance.

If a person is having a temporary financial trial, prayers and encouragement are needed, and sometimes financial or physical gifts or loans. If a person is shy, he or she needs extra attention to draw him out. If a person is lonely, he needs people who want to be true friends. If a person doesn't feel he or she is attractive in looks or personality, make that person feel respected, liked and loved. If a person needs help—help.

Hospitality and love should extend beyond the services. For many people, especially single people, Saturday evenings are often the loneliest times when no one has invited them to go anywhere with them. The uplift of a church service is often partly spoiled when it is followed by a lonely and depressing Saturday evening. We all, and especially our single people, have a wonderful opportunity and responsibility for initiating social plans and then inviting everyone! (I don't mean inviting everyone in one evening necessarily.)

All of the above are examples of how "there should be no schism ["division" in the margin] in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another" (1 Corinthians 12:25). It's wonderful to be in the Body of Christ—to love and be loved.

The next chapter is the Love Chapter, which says, "[If I] have not love, I am nothing."

Pray every week that God will fully use you to reach out to, love and edify others. Let's meet, greet, welcome and love everyone. Let's work at being a loving spiritual brother or sister to everyone within our congregation. And then our Father will be pleased.

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).

"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). **UN**

God's Plan to Make Us—and the Universe—Sin-Free

■ Sin and evil are but a momentary stain on the fabric of eternity. God's plan, as revealed in the Holy Days, shows how sin will ultimately be completely removed.

by Robert Berendt

The book of John begins with a time that he describes as "in the beginning." These three words also are found in the first verse of the Bible (Genesis 1:1). This beginning was a period in which sin and evil simply did not exist. Everything was sin-free.

There is no mention of how long this condition existed, but we could say it was for eternity into the past (though we can't understand what that means). No one was plotting and scheming and no one was jealous or angry. No one was in disagreement and no one felt unjustly treated. Everywhere one looked there was peace and harmony—a true paradise.

Our Creator is constantly praised for the magnitude of His creation. In Psalm 104 we read that the heavens

God knew that we could not overcome the influence of evil on our own. God provided a Savior for mankind, whose sacrifice would provide forgiveness to those who repent as well as making available the awesome gift of the Holy Spirit.

were stretched out like a curtain (verse 2). God in His wisdom made all things (verse 4). In Job 38:4-7 we are told that the angels of God shouted for joy at the creation. What a scene of sin-free utopian conditions!

Ezekiel 28:12-14 describes the generous gifts God lavished upon His angel Lucifer. This glimpse reveals the value God placed on all of His angels. Though little is revealed, we see a scene of sin-free coexistence and productive work, filled with joy, complete unity and the total absence of sin or evil.

Enter Evil

Into paradise, the first signs of rebellion, sin and evil erupted. Ezekiel 28:15-18 points to sin and violence, pride, greed and vanity, which corrupted wisdom and brought forth the wrath of God. It is of interest to contemplate that before this moment, God Himself had not experienced the feeling of regret, sorrow, anger and wrath—but that is another subject.

Verse 16 reveals that God acted to rid His heaven of this evil. He cast Lucifer to the earth along with all who turned to sin and evil among the angels, apparently a third (Revelation 12:4). The fallen angels were not created evil, but their character must have contained the possibility of change. God does not change, but angels could and did. The fallen third would not regain their positions (Jude 6).

The Seeds of Sin Spread

When God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, that beautiful place was also a sin-free location for a short time. This condition did not last long because Satan was allowed to enter the garden. Sin appeared in this little paradise and once again,

God acted. It turns out that God can use the experience of sin and evil in the process of bringing into existence children who would be like Him. They would learn to hate evil (Psalm 97:10; Zechariah 8:17).

In 1 John 3:8 it explains that Satan has been sinning since the beginning, that he causes sin and that Christ's purpose is to erase and destroy sin. Verse 9 clearly states that one who is born of God does not sin—cannot sin. God cannot sin because He is God. Once humans are fully like Him, they

too cannot sin (1 John 3:2, 9). Humans need to be changed through a resurrection to spirit (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

The earth became corrupt before God (Genesis 6:11). God set His hand to slow things down, but the complete removal of corruption, sin and violence has not yet taken place. God does control the speed of events for His good purpose. We do know that the evil angels are restrained (Jude 6), but they are not erased from the scene of mankind's existence. It seems they are not free to wander at will in the universe or in

At this point, all will have been restored—that is, a completely sin-free state will once again exist. God has come full circle with His work. This plan is complete and other plans will fall into place. God states that of the growth of His government there will be no end (Isaiah 9:7).

heaven, but must remain on this earth. Satan does have limited access to God's throne as shown by the first chapter of Job.

God knew that He was doing when He put humans in the domain of the fallen angels. He knew that we could not overcome the influence of evil on our own. God provided a Savior for mankind, whose sacrifice would provide forgiveness to those who repent as well as making available the awesome gift of the Holy Spirit. Along with this came an education process that would lead to humans forming God's holy and righteous character. People would begin to think like God—to think like Christ. These steps in God's plan are represented in His festivals of Passover, Unleavened Bread and Pentecost.

The Instigator Removed

In the process of time, Jesus Christ will return to earth (as pictured by the Feast of Trumpets) and remove Satan and the demons (a time pictured by the Day of Atonement). For about

1,000 years the earth will be freed of the impulse given by these evil beings (Revelation 20:3). Still, all possibility of sin will not be removed. God's plan to develop sons and daughters will continue and that requires free choice, which carries with it the possibility of sin.

Still, a condition of peace and learning will take place on earth, as portrayed through the Feast of Tabernacles. Isaiah 2:3 tells of the law going out from Zion and people learning God's way of living. Perhaps the sin-free condition will only be partial in the beginning, but the earth will no

longer be full of sin and corruption. Humans will still fight emotions, ignorance and will be developing character. If a person plans a sin, it seems a voice will remind him to act according to the teachings of God (Isaiah 30:20-21).

It will be a remarkable world for about 1,000 years—but not perfect. The sin-free conditions that existed before the angels were created will not yet be fully restored. Nevertheless in parts of the Bible like Isaiah 11 this period of time is recorded as a time of peace and happiness. This 1,000 years could be described as paradise.

At the end of the 1,000 years (the Millennium), the peaceful scene will once again be shattered. Sin will again appear in paradise. Satan will be released and allowed to do his work among mankind once again (Revelation 20:7-10). It seems hard to believe that mankind will once again fall prey to the wiles of this evil being, but that will happen. God allows these events and, though He steps in quickly, it is obvious that

God's creation is not yet sin-free. As long as human beings exist, the potential for sin exists and thus sin does exist. The carnal—that is natural, fleshly—mind is enmity against God (Romans 8:7).

God's work goes on as the masses who have never had a chance come up in a second resurrection, pictured by the Last Great Day. God still has work to do to complete the lists of those who receive eternal life (Revelation 20:15). It is God's desire that all men should be saved, but there will be some who will fail and will experience the second death. (For more details about the second resurrection and the meanings of all the Holy Days, read *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*.)

At last the time has come when the power behind rebellion and evil will be restrained for eternity. These evil spirit forces will be cast from God's creation forever (Jude 13). There will be no more humans to save. Fire will purify the earth and God the Father will dwell with man in His New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-4). There are no more fleshly men, only the immortal, sin-free children of God.

Restoration to a Sin-Free State

At this point, all will have been restored—that is, a completely sin-free state will once again exist. God has come full circle with His work. This plan is complete and other plans will fall into place. God states that of the growth of His government there will be no end (Isaiah 9:7).

God has given many signs to prove His involvement. Humans need to yield to His hand. He will make of each one a vessel to His glory and honor. The future is beyond our wildest dreams. It will be ours when we learn to hate sin and strive for a sin-free existence, allowing God to work in our hearts and minds. **UN**

Good Works Program to "Help Coordinate the Many Expressions of Love"

"Good Works," continued from page 1

there be no further restrictions other than to say "International Fund" either on the memo line of their check or an accompanying note. It is best not to further designate the contribution by country, since, as described above, the ongoing needs of those areas have already been budgeted, both in the income and expense budgets.

It is possible that more contributions could be received as designated for a particular country than there are legitimate needs or ways to responsibly spend the monies in that particular country. In such cases, if the donor designates the funds as only to be used for that particular country or region of the

world, the Church is in the position of having funds that it cannot use, thus potentially depriving other areas of those funds.

To repeat, if individuals wish to give or continue giving cash offerings to help finance the efforts to help members (and carry out the ongoing work of the Church), they may contribute to the already-established "Assistance Fund" and/or the "International Fund" (without specifying a particular country or region).

What's New—the Church's "Good Works Program"

The new "Good Works Program" is intended to provide an organized way for brethren to help others in the Church who face unusual, emergency

situations that could not be anticipated or budgeted for. The intent of the program is to make these situations known to the Church, and to coordinate the distribution of funds that are raised by congregations or groups in fund-raising efforts.

We do not ask that tithes and offerings be directed to this program, for the reasons given above. Instead, if congregations or groups within a congregation wish to engage in special fund-raising efforts (for example, car washes, garage sales, candy or fruit sales, etc.), and dedicate some or all of the proceeds of those efforts for one or more special needs that arise and are publicized as "Good Works Projects" by the Church (via the Church's Web site), then those funds should be sent in

a separate check to the home office. The coordinator will see to it that they are then passed along to the appropriate designees. Once sufficient funds for a particular project or need are received and passed along, that project will be removed from the Web site.

To make this program work smoothly, we ask that the following steps be followed by those wishing to help.

1. Read the list of projects on the soon-to-be-established "Good Works Program" page of the Church's Web site. The site address will be www.ucg.org/goodworks.

2. Discuss fund-raising efforts with the local pastor.

3. Engage in the fund-raising efforts, and make it clear that the effort is separate from tithes and offerings.

4. Send a check to the home office (payable to "United Church of God") to the attention of "Tom Kirkpatrick, Coordinator of Good Works Program," indicating the project or projects that the funds were dedicated to. Please indicate in a note that accompanies the check that any surplus funds (over and above the amounts needed to meet the needs of that particular project) can be used to help with other "Good Works Program" projects. Otherwise, the Church will need to return the surplus.

Again, thank you, brethren, for your generosity and desire to help our brethren facing emergency needs. Your assistance in following these procedures will help your aid to reach those in need as quickly and efficiently as possible. **UN**

Treasure Digest

First Impressions

Our Sabbath services are family get-togethers with spiritual lessons for all of us. What can we do to make our guests as well as our brethren feel more welcome each Sabbath? We can help others feel right at home and part of our family!

Yes, first impressions are important, especially when greeting a newcomer to your local congregation!

Here at the Los Angeles, California, congregation, we have a greeter program. As we hand out songbooks and church announcements, we have the pleasure of welcoming all who come in our door, wishing them "Happy Sabbath" with a cheerful smile! Whether they are members or visitors, we want all to feel at home. Strangers or visitors are given an extraspecial welcome and invited to sign our guest book that's close at hand.

Some helpful tips for greeting guests and members:

- A successful day begins at home. Ask God to bless the fellowship for that day and He'll help you do your best when and where needed.
- Let an attitude of humility shine through in all you do. "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself" (Philippians 2:3).
- Help others feel valuable and important with your smile and warm handshake.
- Let your welcome be brief and always be available to help.
- Remember senior citizens since most live alone at home—many of them love a big hug.
- Help everyone feel part of God's one big family!
- Keep reaching out with your heart. When you love others, they'll love you right back.

In our hurried and fast-paced world, things have become more important than people. Let's do the unusual and take time to extend the right hand of fellowship. A smile says: "I love and care about you." Abe Lincoln once said, "A day spent helping no one but yourself is a day wasted."

Therefore, that first impression can count by helping everyone feel at home and welcome, especially the strangers among us. "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Hebrews 13:2).

Sherry Michaud

Los Angeles, California, congregation

"There's the Miracle Lady"

Many medical doctors don't like to mention the intervention of God when it involves the survival of one of their patients. I heard it for the first time when Darlene, my wife, went to see her heart specialist for a follow-up appointment.

Both heart doctors greet her each and every time by saying, "There's the Miracle Lady!"

During the 18 days in the hospital waiting for the right time to place a defibrillator near Darlene's heart to keep it from stopping, Darlene's heart quit five different times.



Darlene and Bill Ennis

The first time her heart stopped, it came back on its own. The second time, the nurses came to get me, as they thought she was deceased. Our pastor, Victor Kubik, came in and gave a quick prayer, and amazingly her heart started beating.

The doctors immediately transferred Darlene to a hospital where they had the necessary equipment to take care of her.

During the next few days, Darlene's heart stopped three more times. She was on a ventilator for a short time with no hope of placing a defibrillator in her, when one of the heart specialists decided that a higher being was watching over Darlene, and that it would be OK to take the chance.

The doctors and the hospital staff were amazed to see Darlene leave the hospital on her own initiative. Darlene still has a weak heart muscle, but God made sure that she still has life.

Thank you doctors, thank you Mr. Kubik and, most of all, thank you God.

Bill Ennis

Lafayette, Indiana, congregation

Quotable Quotes

Debbie Ash of the Houston North, Texas, congregation saw these anonymous quotations on signs and on the Web:

"Help fight truth decay—brush up on God's Word."

"Patience is a virtue that carries a lot of wait!"

"Forbidden fruits create many jams."

"Even a mosquito needs to work before it gets a slap on its back."

Small Kids, Small Car: Tips for a Fun Feast Trip

With three small children, ages 3, 7 and 10, and a very small car, we try to make the trip to the Feast as enjoyable as possible. Below are some of the things we've found that helped make travel easier and more fun for the cutest members of the family. Of course there are many other products and many free fun things as well, but these are ones our children liked:

Best Travel Activity Book Ever! (Rand McNally, \$3.95). This book is full of puzzles, mazes, riddles and much more.

The Most Incredible, Outrageous, Packed-to-the-Gills, Bulging-at-the-Seams Sticker Book You've Ever Seen (editors of Klutz Press, \$10.36). All three kids literally spent every extra minute in the car silently playing with this book.

Imaginetics: License Plate Game (www.cambitos.com, \$7.99). This magnetic toy allows you to look for license plates from different states on the way and put them on the magnetic car board.

Shari Fooshe

Nashville, Tennessee, congregation

From the Proverbs: The Apple of Your Eye

Proverbs is one of the most fascinating books of the Old Testament, and its teachings are even more relevant in today's world than they were when it was written.

One of my favorites, a most thought-provoking proverb, is Proverb 7:2: "Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye" (emphasis added). The term *apple of your eye* is an old one, first used in Scripture in the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:10. Today it evokes images of something we are fond of or love dearly. But in the Hebrew, it had a deeper, richer meaning. *Vine's* has this to say: "The 'apple' is the most precious and most securely guarded part of the eye. It feels

most intensely the least injury; the loss of it is irreparable."

Do we treat God's law as the "most precious and most securely guarded part" of our lives? We should, just as we closely guard our eyes from smoke, dust and foreign objects, and wouldn't dream of putting just any old thing in them, as they feel "most intensely the least injury."

Are we so careful with our beliefs? Do we allow any idle wind of doctrine that comes along to injure the beliefs we hold dear? Our ministers go over the same subjects again and again because they are so easily forgotten, so easily subject to injury through neglect. Jesus Christ, who inspired the Proverbs, echoed this theme in Matthew 13:45-46 when He likened the Kingdom to a "merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." He also cautions us not to "cast [our] pearls before swine" (Matthew 7:6). Why? Because pearls are not indestructible or easily replaced. Why take chances with something so precious?

Also, *Vine's* said "the loss of it is irreparable." That's a disturbing word, *irreparable*. Beyond repair. We lose our eyesight and we are blind ever afterward. Are we as concerned with losing our spiritual eyesight? We should be, for to lose God's law from our hearts is much more permanent than this physical body. Thankfully we have a loving God who "delights in mercy" (Micah 7:18) and who is quick to forgive us, upon repentance, every time we slip or take His laws for granted.

So let's apply Proverbs 7:2 and keep God's law as the "apple of our eye."

Layne Partin

Interconnected Laws

"For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:11).

Does this scripture make sense to you? Do you believe it is true? If so, then you must also believe that the Sabbath commandment (part of the same Ten Commandments) is still binding, for otherwise this scripture has no credibility. Think about it.

Bill Wassner,

Garden Grove, California, congregation

God Is Not Creating a Race of Hermits

God is in the process of building a loving family—not a scattered race of hermits. We were made to have deep, caring friendships with our physical and spiritual family members. God designed us to have the feeling of loneliness as a

warning signal that we are insufficiently connected to our fellow human beings. It's not sinful to feel lonely—but it's meant to motivate us to change, not something that must be sacrifically endured.

We were not made for isolation from human contact, but for deep, intimate relationships (Genesis 2:18).

As Christians, we are to love one another as family (Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 1 John 4:7, 11). Our connectedness to Christ and each other is likened to being various parts of one human body (Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26), and Paul specifically points out that we need each other (1 Corinthians 12:21).

The notion that we should be isolated from human relationships and relate only to God comes from the gnostic notion that the physical universe is evil and that to attain a higher spirituality we have to disconnect from the material world and concentrate purely on God. This idea prevents healing in Christians who desperately need to grow in their ability to relate to others.

Christ lived among us, and suffered as a human being, so that He could experience firsthand what it is like for us. He gained a deeper dimension of compassion for us through this experience (Hebrews 4:15; 5:8). By learning to deeply love others and have compassion for them, we grow in one of God's most important character traits. This is one reason for the existence of the Church (Romans 1:12; 2 Corinthians 1:4).

God does not do everything Himself. He gives us opportunities to participate in what He is doing and to grow in His ways—by working through us (2 Corinthians 7:6).

Learning to love others is part of learning to love God (1 John 4:20).

We were made for deep, satisfying friendships—with God and our fellow human beings.

Jay Turner

San Jose, California, congregation

A Map to Life

The Ten Commandments are a map to life—the right road. Go this way and you won't get lost. No dead ends, no broken bridges or deep gullies, no abrupt steep cliffs.

This is not a grumpy old man saying, "You do it my way or else," but a loving Father telling you the right way, looking out for you. Just as a loving mother holds you tight and kisses away the bumps and scratches, so God is a million times more loving. He has lived forever; He's "been there," so to speak. He doesn't make mistakes as we do. Even our parents, who try to do all things for our good, make mistakes, in love. But our Father God doesn't.

Sometimes there are tests, but we have had tests in school too. Just study a little harder and you'll make A's.

Marie Lison

Collinsville, Illinois, congregation

Be Ready to Give an Answer: Why Do You Go Away for a Week for a "Feast"?

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of seven annual festivals given by God to ancient Israel that were also kept by Jesus Christ, the apostles and the New Testament Church (Leviticus 23:39-43; John 7:1-14; Acts 18:21). Jesus Christ's role is the central theme of God's festivals, which reveal the sequence of events in His plan.

The Bible shows that the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed by all mankind during Christ's 1,000-year reign on earth, which it pictures (Zechariah 14:16-19; Revelation 20:4). Then the many prophecies of an unprecedented time of peace and prosperity will be fulfilled (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-9; 35:1-10).

For More Information: *Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God; God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind; Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?; and Bible Study Course Lesson 12 "God's Festivals: Keys to Humanity's Future."*

God's Plan, Star Trek and You!

■ Science fiction is only a springboard for the ultimate reality God has in store for us. This true story is for children—human children in United as well as all the children of God.

by Joe Sheperd

Most of us know of or have viewed various *Star Trek* adventures. We're familiar with Mr. Spock, Captain Kirk and his successor Captain Picard, and the android Data. "Beam us up, Scotty," is understood around the world. *Star Trek* clubs, with thousands of fans holding annual conventions, abound.

In the real world, man *has* traveled at over 18,000 miles an hour, been on the moon and explored Mars via computer-robot technology. Today, science fiction is very popular. Audiences love movies showing superhumans solving incredible problems in a world where man has achieved intelligence and power to handle almost anything. But, we all know, it's only fiction!

Yet, there is an expression that "truth is stranger than fiction." When it comes to the plan of God for man, truth is indeed "stranger than fiction" to most. To God's people, however, the future that awaits surpasses anything the *Starship Enterprise* crew experienced or accomplished. Let's make a few comparisons and see.

Warp 10 Versus the Speed of Thought

Today, in spite of the tremendous advances in transportation, we spend many hours traveling—even days. From North America to Europe can take 10 to 12 hours. But the *Enterprise* travels at speeds of up to "warp 10." In just a few hours, with a great "whoosh" surpassing light-speed, they reach a distant star.

Now, let's compare this to the speed Christ traveled after His resurrection. "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!'" (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples

were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you'" (John 20:16-17, 19).

Here, Christ traveled to the Father's throne in the third heaven and returned the same day! This is travel at the speed of *thought*. The sons and daughters of God will be able to do this—imagine it! The warp 10 speed of the *Enterprise* would be a mere "snail's pace" in comparison.

"Beam Us Up"

"Beam us up, Scotty," was a frequent command on the *Enterprise*. The *Star Trek* creators imagined a fictional technology that disassembles body molecules, atoms and chromosomes, then transports and reassembles them into the same person, or same matter, in split seconds.

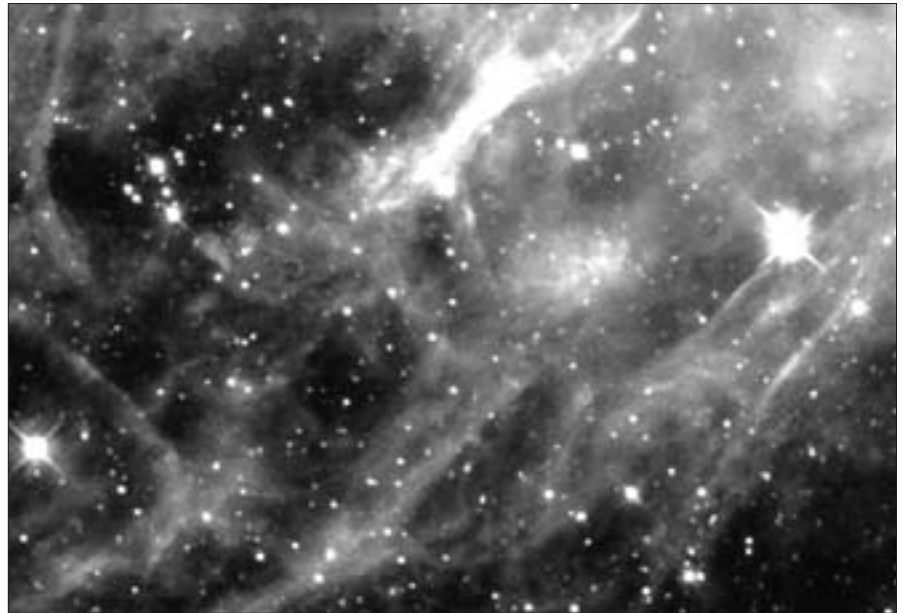
In the Bible, we see the reality. Christ was "beamed away" and back again, right through *solid walls*. He did not need to be dematerialized. He could simply travel right through matter. "Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He *vanished* from their sight . . . Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you'" (Luke 24:30-31, 36, emphasis added throughout). The disciples were terrified by the sudden appearance of Christ in the room, thinking they were seeing a ghost.

Limitless Power

The incredible weapons of the *Enterprise* can stun, kill and *vaporize*. Photon torpedoes can atomize a spaceship as large as an aircraft carrier.

But the reality is even more stunning. When the sixth trumpet blows, announcing the return of Jesus Christ, an army of 200 million will be assembled to resist Christ. Zechariah 14:12 tells us, "And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths." This vast, unprecedented great army . . . gone in seconds; not by a weapon but by *limitless power* used in a limited way.

Just as great a demonstration of God's limitless power is seen in Joshua 10:12-13: "On the day the



Many dream of the ability to "boldly go where no man has gone before." God offers a reality beyond the wildest dreams of science fiction writers (photo © 2003 www.clipart.com)

Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: 'O sun, *stand still* over Gibeon. O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.' So the *sun stood still*, and the *moon stopped*, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies" (NIV).

This power somehow, miraculously, stopped the sun and moon's motion. God's power halted the function of our solar system. That kind of power makes the weapons of the *Enterprise* seem puny indeed.

Beyond Rocket Science

Mr. Spock, and his successor, Data, can solve complex problems quickly. They have computerlike minds with incredible knowledge, data and logic seemingly at their fingertips. Impressive? It surely is. But let's compare this to God's mind.

In Psalm 147:4-5 we read, "He counts the number of the stars; He calls them *all by name*. Great is our Lord and mighty in *power*; His understanding is infinite." Try to imagine this—every star has a name!

God has an orderly universe and knows exactly each heavenly body occupying a limitless space. Let us ask, will His sons and daughters, living forever, not also come to know them?

King David thought about God's vast wisdom and power and he said in Psalm 139:17-18 that God's knowledge, wisdom and power cannot be measured in any human terms. It is a wisdom and power perfectly harmonized with love, mercy, compassion and patience—qualities which humans lack. Remember, God's family is going to be like Him.

Medical Miracles

The doctors of *Star Trek* have been provided with an impressive array of medical miracle-instruments. Just touch one to a nearly expired person, and with a "beep-beep," cells are regenerated, molecules and DNA put right and the patient rises, well again.

But how about this? In Luke 22:50-51 we read, "One of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, 'No more of this!' And he touched the man's ear and healed him" (NIV). A mere touch and he was healed with a whole ear!

Even more amazingly, we see an example where simply saying the words at a distance healed an illness. In Matthew 8:6-8 a centurion asked Jesus, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." Christ offered to go and heal him, but the centurion replied: "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."

Remember Lazarus? He had been dead for four days! The simple words of Christ were, "Lazarus, come forth!" Yes, this was Christ, but we see in Acts 9 that a man like ourselves, filled with God's Spirit, raised Tabitha from the dead. This is a power that creates life. It is God's power, in this case, shown through one of His servants.

While it's very difficult for us to

envision the awesome future God is preparing for His children, He does give us inspiring glimpses that let us see it in part. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Whatever we can envision about our glorious future, it will be immeasurably surpassed by its reality. Try seeing ourselves in this setting: "Those who are wise shall *shine* like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness *like the stars* forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). This was not just hyperbole—Christ Himself confirms in Matthew 13:43: "Then the righteous will shine forth *as the sun* in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Human technology and achievements are indeed impressive. In the voyages of the *Enterprise*, we see the crew use powerful weapons to blast great holes through mountains, travel at awesome speeds into vast space and distant planets, heal terrible diseases and save alien civilizations. As an immortal, glorified, wise and loving son or daughter of God, *you* will be infinitely faster, more intelligent, more powerful, a much better healer, teacher, helper and problem solver than the crew of the *Enterprise*, or mankind's combined science and technology, could ever imagine.

For most of humanity, truth is "stranger than fiction." But our destiny is indeed "to boldly go where no man has gone before" and to do that which no man has even done, as sons and daughters of God in joyous service to Him—*forever!* UN

Joe Sheperd is associate pastor for the Victoria, British Columbia, congregation.

Follow-up to Q&A About Marrying Outside the Faith

Several people responded to the Q&A published in the July 2003 issue of *United News* about United Church of God ministers performing marriages between a believer and an unbeliever. We uphold the teaching of the apostle Paul that we should not be "unequally yoked together" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

It is United's policy that a minister

of UCG should not be performing marriages between a believer and an unbeliever. If a minister believes he has an exception (for example, a young person who has grown up in the Church, but is not yet baptized), he is to discuss the situation with his regional pastor for advice before he officiates at such a wedding. Exceptions are rare, but they do come up.

This policy also prevents an individual from "shopping around," which was another concern of some respondents.

We encourage those interested in this subject to read the full study paper, "Marrying Outside the Faith," which is on our Web site at www.ucg.org/papers.

Cecil Maramville



Local Church Updates

Preteens Enjoy Camp in Oklahoma

This year's preteen camp at Osage State Park in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, was a wonderful experience for over 90 staff members and children who attended. The campers were excited and some were a bit nervous, but that soon passed.

The children ranged in age from 6 to 12 years old. The campers enjoyed fishing, swimming, outdoor games, challenge games, boating, Christian Living classes and a field trip to Woolaroc game preserve and museum.

Carol Blackwell and Andrea West led the kitchen staff. No one left hungry—there was plenty of food to go around. We also sampled the fish caught during the week.

A grease fire started in the rear of the stove, but Mike Blackwell saved the day when he came in with a fire extinguisher and put it out. It was very smoky and extinguisher dust covered the entire kitchen, so the kitchen staff had an extra four hours of fire extinguisher clean up on Wednesday.

After the fire one of the kitchen staff talked with the park ranger. He commented that it was amazing how so many people could work together in such a small space. He said that if it had been him, even with a bunch of his friends trying to do what the staff had done, they would all have ended up fighting. He thought we looked like an assembly line, and he was very impressed with how slick, fast and smoothly the clean up went.

There were two Christian Living classes per



Games at preteen camp in Oklahoma; group photo (photos by Lorelei Nettles)

age level. The first class was on words. Tom Clark said, "They understood lying and taking God's name in vain are wrong, but we discussed gossip, put downs, deceit and disrespect as well. This age group is wonderful to work with. They are filled with wonder and energy, but still have an innocent approach to life."

Aside from a few scraped knees and a few tired staffers, all went well. Everyone came away with a great experience, and new friends who will turn into old pals at next year's camp.

Lorelei Nettles

Gerald Waterhouse Golf Weekend Provides Journey Down Memory Lane

The Memorial Day weekend in South Florida proved to be a journey down memory lane as the West Palm Beach congregation hosted the First Annual Gerald Waterhouse Golf Weekend and Tournament. Visitors from as far away as Houston, Texas, came to share in the fellowship, fun and sport.

The weekend began with a special



Erinn and Mike Moore, Jim Matthews and Samantha Moore won the scramble format tournament as part of the Gerald Waterhouse Golf Weekend May 25

Sabbath service and a taped message from Don Waterhouse (Gerald's brother) speaking about his brother's life, accomplishments and loves. Don Waterhouse, who is still recovering from heart ailments, was unable to personally attend, but did make his brother "come to life" for those who did not have the fortune of knowing him personally.

Local pastor Roy Demarest—a close personal friend and golfing partner of Mr. Waterhouse—spoke in the sermon about the lack of real heroes in today's world. He mentioned the role Mr. Waterhouse had played in being a "real hero" in Church history through his energies, efforts and consistency in his service to God, His people and to the calling of preaching the gospel.

After services, the congregation enjoyed a traditional potluck and a photo display of Mr. Waterhouse's life, which was donated by his brother for this special occasion. We were all able to see the personal side of Mr. Waterhouse, with photos of his life from his youth, marriage, military service,

"world tours" and, yes, golf! There was certainly a great feeling of nostalgia and loss as we discussed the great sacrifice this man made to God's work.

On Sunday, the scene changed to a scrumptious breakfast, and then it was time to continue the fellowship and get ready for a day of golf in 96-degree weather. Members from many local Church of God congregations came to enjoy the food and fun and to discuss their history and memories of Mr. Waterhouse.

We then made our way to the beautiful Winston Trails Country Club in Lake Worth, Florida. Though storm clouds threatened all day long, the tournament went off without a hitch.

Mr. Demarest won the longest drive and closest-to-the-pin contests. His prizes were brand-new Bibles. The team of Mike, Samantha and Erinn Moore and Jim Matthews (who attends with the Living Church of God) won the scramble format tournament with a respectable two over! The day ended with a delicious meal and awards.

We all agreed that it was a weekend that Mr. Waterhouse would have greatly enjoyed. We cannot wait until next year, but more importantly, we cannot wait until we can play a round with Mr. Waterhouse again someday in the world tomorrow.

Mike Moore

Winnipeg Congregation Says Good-bye to Pastor

On June 28, 2003, the Winnipeg, Manitoba (Canada), congregation said a sad farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Paul Luecke. Mr. Luecke pastored the Win-



Winnipeg brethren say good-bye to Paul and Ronda Luecke June 28

nipeg congregation from 1996 to July 2003, and even though he lived eight hours away in Bismarck, North Dakota, he was more than willing to serve the Winnipeg brethren. This was

in addition to pastoring the churches in Bismarck and Fargo.

After the Sabbath service on June 28, Mr. and Mrs. Luecke were presented with a painting by Hubert Theroux, a well-known Canadian artist. Following that, everyone had their last visit with the Luecke family at the barbecue that evening.

The Winnipeg brethren are very thankful to have had Mr. Luecke as their pastor for the past eight years. He is an excellent teacher and we appreciated his calm, positive and patient approach. We wish him and his family all the best in Pennsylvania, where he will pastor the Bethlehem, Harrisburg and Lewistown congregations.

Mariana Simons

Australia Holds Third Christian Leadership Weekend

The enthusiastic young adults in our Church in Australia enjoyed a weekend full of "ahas" over the weekend of July 4 to 6.

Christian Leadership Weekend, in its third successful year, has quickly become a highlight in the young adults' calendars. As Peter Forster stated, "The Annual Leadership Weekend just seems to go from strength to strength, getting better with each year."

This year's seminar was once again held at the crisp, fresh Heathcote Scout Camp, south of Sydney, where 32 young adults joined together with eight staff. This year's speakers included Bill Eddington, Mark Robertson, Bill Bradford and his wife, Jenny, and Bruce Dean and his wife, Jeanette. Kevin and Anne Sasse provided us with delicious food to go along with the wonderful spir-



Christian Leadership Weekend held south of Sydney, Australia

itual food provided by the speakers. This year's theme was maturity. We should always be seeking spiritual maturity.

Felicia Stokes, from Melbourne, summed up the weekend when she returned: "Leadership weekend was awesome—focused on maturity, the difference between leaders and managers, stages of life maturity (dependence, independence, interdependence) and managing finances and creating a surplus. Very good. Many lessons learned, many things to be applied."

Bruce Dean wrote, "We are encouraging these young men and women to live a life of growing and maturing in the way of God. What is the aim? That 'we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13, NIV). In other words, maturity is to be more like Christ."

"So, again, why do we have these Christian Leadership Weekends? We want to encourage our young people to learn personal leadership skills—to be like Daniel and his friends and be able to stand for what they believe. We hope they can grow to become church leaders and, most importantly, leaders in the Kingdom of God!"

The weekend was topped off with 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 ones. The bridging of the generation gap and being able to spend time fellowshiping and learning together was encouraging for us all.

Rennie Banham commented that the four speakers gave excellent presentations that were obviously well researched and thorough, as well as including a number of real "ahas" for the audience to take home. She added, "I loved catching up with friends and making some new ones. What a great weekend all round!"

Renee Dean

"Recapture Your Love" Marriage Retreat Set for Nov. 15 to 16 in Lakeland, Florida

Are you and your mate in need of a nice weekend getaway? How about going to a place where you can be inspired by God's Word regarding marriage and have some time to spend with your special someone? Could your love life use a little rekindling? Maybe just a little spark? Or perhaps a flamethrower? If so, the Orlando, St. Petersburg and Tampa, Florida, congregations have a special event just for you.

Our congregations cordially invite you to attend "Recapture Your Love"—a marriage retreat, Nov. 15 to 16, in Lakeland, Florida. Ministers Fred Kellers, Chris Moen, Richard Thompson and David Treybig will be presenting key principles that make for a happy marriage.

A special housing rate has been negotiated at the first-class Four Points Sheraton in Lakeland. The room cost (plus tax) is: one or two beds, \$59; junior suite, \$69; and executive suite, \$79. Reservations can be made by calling the facility at (800) 511-5566 by Oct. 15 and identifying yourself as part of the United Church of God Marriage Retreat. A flyer with maps is available on the Tampa Bay Web site at <http://web.tampabay.rr.com/ucgstp/>.

What if you are over age 18, single (or your mate won't come), and want to attend to learn more about marriage? You are welcome, too!

Richard Thompson and David Treybig

Announcements

Births

Sam and Shaleena Dungan of Campbell, Alabama (Laurel, Mis-



Ethan Samuel Dungan

sissippi, congregation), are pleased to announce the birth of their first child. Ethan Samuel Dungan was born on Nov. 24, 2002. He weighed 7 pounds 5 ounces and was 20 inches long. His proud grandparents are Eddie and Marcia Dungan of Campbell and George and Eileen Fuller of Whatley, Alabama.

Aaron and Heidi (Deonier) Boise of Estacada, Oregon, are pleased to



Alisha Leeann Boise with William, Rachael and Caroline

announce the birth of their fourth child, Alisha Leeann. Alisha was born Sept. 10, 2002, and weighed 8 pounds.

Alisha joins siblings William (7), Rachael (6) and Caroline (2). Her happy, loving grandparents are William and Laura Deonier of the Portland East, Oregon, congregation, Keith Boise of the Jefferson, Oregon, congregation, and Chris Boise of the Eugene, Oregon, congregation.

Kevin and Veronica Bennett are pleased to announce the birth of their second child. Avery Dean Bennett was born on April 25,

2003, weighing 8 pounds, 5 ounces. Jacob Bennett, age 4, is pleased to have a new little sister to play with.

Weddings

Dan and Peggy Good of Max Meadows, Virginia, and Bert and Edith Diamond of Floyd, Virginia, are pleased to announce the marriage of their children Kelly Marie Good and Arnold Joseph Diamond. The wedding took place on May 10, 2003, at the Comfort Inn Conference Center in Dublin, Virginia.



Kelly and Joe Diamond

The double-ring ceremony was performed by John Foster.

Kelly and Joe reside in Floyd and attend the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation.

Mr. and Mrs. John R. Tate and Mr. and Mrs. Charles R. Stevens are pleased to announce the union of their children. Joshua Alwyn



Melissa and Joshua Stevens

Stevens and Melissa Nicole Tate were wed on Sunday, June 30, 2002, by Jim Franks at the Houston North, Texas, church hall.

Both Joshua and Melissa completed the Ambassador Bible Center program for the 2003 year.

They will reside in Houston at present and attend the Houston North congregation.

Anniversaries

Ernest and Kathleen Buck were honored on their 40th wedding anniversary, June 28, 2003, by the Eureka, California, congregation.

The first surprise for the Bucks was that their youngest son, Tony, his wife, Julie, and their son, Izaak, who live in Oroville, California, showed up in Eureka for Sabbath services. Julie's parents, Steve and Barbara Werst, who live in Coos Bay, Oregon, and are good friends of the Bucks, were there also.

The second surprise was after services when they were presented with a gift from the congregation, a clock made from rock, which was made by local member Anita Hamill. There was also a well-bloomed money tree that provided them the funds to be able to go out together and enjoy the evening. They were both very surprised and pleased by the whole event.

Mrs. Buck first heard Mr. Armstrong on the radio in 1964 while the local area was suffering a major flood. The subject Mr. Armstrong was talking about was Noah and the Flood. She was baptized in 1965 while pregnant with their second child.

The Bucks have seven children, two sons-in-law and two daughters-



Ernest and Kathleen Buck

in-law: Casey Buck, David and Kandy Goodrich, Eric and Daisy Hynek, Wiley and Deborah Buck, Ruby Williams, Tony and Julie Buck and Lacey Buck. They also have 19 grandchildren (11 boys and eight girls).

The East Texas congregation of the United Church of God honored Don and Peggy Ditto with a reception to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Aug. 9 immediately after Sabbath services at the Gilmer Civic Center.

A large, beautifully decorated cake—one of Julie Wilkins' creations—defined the milestone event. Sarah Baker and Nancy Worthen helped coordinate the activities for this enjoyable occasion.

Frank McCrady, associate pastor, read a brief history of the Dittos' 50 years together.

Having met at age 13, Don Ditto

and Peggy Clemmons, allowing their love to grow, married Aug. 3, 1953, in Dallas. After their marriage, Don served four years with the U.S. Coast Guard, which took the young couple to New York and New Jersey.

Back in Dallas in 1963, the Dittos learned about the Church of God while trying to "save" friends who began attending the Radio Church of God.

After they attended the RCG for a year, both Peggy and Don were baptized. That same year, 1964, they started a metal-sculpture business.

In 1976 the Dittos accomplished one of their life's dreams: to move from the big city and create a better



Don and Peggy Ditto

life in a rural environment in which they could share the products of their talents with others.

They bought a tract of undeveloped wooded land near Winnsboro, in East Texas, and carved out a business park with office and manufacturing facilities, residences and an amusement center and moved their Ditto Group, makers of home-decorating items, from Dallas to the piney woods.

Don and Peggy have been active in the Church over the years. He is a former member of the Board of Regents of Ambassador College, Big Sandy.

The Dittos have six sons, Don Jr., Terry, Preston, James, Clint and Jason, and are further blessed with three granddaughters and seven grandsons.

"We have seen feast and famine, blessings and trials, plenty and little," summed up Mrs. Ditto. "Through it all we have clung to each other and to God. It has worked."

Obituaries

Calvin McClay, a faithful member of God's Church for 47 years, died on June 6, 2003. He was born on April 6, 1933, in Waller, Texas, the third of nine children and lived in the San Diego, California, area

for the last 50 years. He had three children, 19 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Calvin set a local record for perfect attendance. You could find him



Calvin McClay

at every service, Holy Day and social event with his ever-present camera in hand. He captured the history of the San Diego congregation in his pictures. Calvin McClay was a pillar in the congregation and will be greatly missed.

Nancy McCracken, 64, died April 13, 2003, of cancer. Nancy attended the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, congregation, in 1961 and was baptized in November 1962. She was a charter member of the Wheeling, West Virginia, congregation that started in 1965 and was ordained a deaconess in January 1971.

Nancy served as Wheeling's first cheerleading and volleyball coach for over 15 years. She served as an assistant YOU coordinator and assisted the social coordinator and the fund-raising coordinator. In 1995 she helped start the first United Church of God service in Wheeling.

Nancy sent hundreds and hundreds of cards and sermon notes to



Nancy McCracken

the brethren around the world. She was a lady of many talents. Her talents were greatly appreciated and she will be missed by her husband, family, Church family and friends.

She is survived by her husband of 48 years, three sons, two daughters, 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was conducted by Don Henson, pastor of the Pittsburgh, Wheeling and Meadville (Pennsylvania) congregations.

"Council," continued from page 3

tions," which had already been approved by the Council but had gone through a final rewrite prior to its release. Having been approved, all three study papers should be available on the Church's Web site within three to four weeks.

Ethics, Roles and Rules

Robert Dick, chair of the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee sought input from the Council on behalf of Gerald Seelig, who is preparing a proposed amendment to bylaw 8.4.3. Before doing so, Mr. Seelig wanted to be sure that the proposed amendment would not conflict with any amendments the Council might be planning to submit and also asked the Council to consider whether they felt there were any problems or difficulties with the proposed amendment. The amendment specifies how a vacancy on the Council would be filled in the event that there are two or three runners-up from the previous election. The amendment would also require that, in the event a runner-up is not ratified by the General Conference, the nomination and election of an elder to fill the vacancy would take place after the General Conference meeting. The Council made a few minor editing suggestions. Mr. Seelig will submit the amendment to the Amendment Committee.

Supplemental Hymnal

Aug. 14 Steve Myers reported to the Council on the status of the supplemental hymnal. Mr. Myers coordinates the effort of the team, which also includes Dan Anderson, Jim Brandenburg, Mark Graham, David Hoover and Janel Johnson. They sorted through more than 500 hymns, many of which are original compositions submitted by Church members, to arrive at the 65 that will be included in the hymnal. Recognizing that there are many sensitivities and expectations regarding hymn selection, the committee established a set of criteria by which each potential selection was judged, including: God's inspiration, text considerations, musical quality, musical accuracy and suitability.

The supplemental hymnal will include nine additional hymns written by Dwight Armstrong, 33 hymns which are in the public domain, 19 new compositions (written by eight United Church of God members) and four hymns for which the Church will have to pay royalties.

The Council reviewed a mock-up of the supplement. It will be the same page

size and have the same binding as the current hymnal, but with a different colored cover. In order to help pianists and song leaders prepare, efforts will be made to provide them with a copy of the hymnal and a computer-generated accompaniment CD before the Feast.

By resolution, the Council unani-

mously approved the printing of the supplemental hymnal.

Cash Reserves Policy

Mr. Dean presented the Council with a proposed resolution written by Dr. Kirkpatrick to establish the Church's cash reserve policy. As decided earlier

in the week that the Council, the resolution states that the Church will manage the financial affairs of the Church with the intent to maintain "a minimum of 10 weeks cash reserves (cash and near cash balances, exclusive of amounts designated by the Council for retirement), i.e., 19.23% of the operating budget of that

year . . ." The resolution also describes options the Council would have if there were a budget surplus for a fiscal year. The resolution passed unanimously.

Full reports of the Council meetings are available on the Web at www.ucg.org/about/council/updates.htm.
Don Henson

Preaching the Gospel: Media and Communications Services Report to the Council

Peter Eddington reported that much was accomplished in fiscal year 2002-2003. Almost all the efforts and projects met expectations, though some key areas are not keeping pace with previous years' results.

Mail

- Total incoming mail from all sources was 368,229 pieces, an 8 percent decrease over 2001-2002, due to decreased promotional advertising because of budgetary limitations.
- 309,919 individual pieces of literature were mailed from the home office. In addition, millions of pieces are mailed directly from various printers.
- There is a steady number of new *Good News* subscription requests from the Internet, brochure program, newsstand program, TV programs and *Good News* radio.

Booklets

- *This Is the United Church of God* was introduced in September/October 2002.
- In June 2003 *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* was sent to the printer, giving the Church a total of 30 titles in print.
- A total of 450,000 booklets were printed in 2002-2003, including the reprint of 11 titles.
- Since United began, the Church has printed 2.65 million booklets.

Bible Study Course

- 190,000 copies of the *Bible Study Course* were reprinted from September 2002 through July 2003. A total of 954,112 total copies of the lessons have been printed.
- As of June 30 there are 10,239 enrolled in the course.
- There is a 33 percent response rate to the offer of a 12-month tape program to BSC graduates. We anticipate 3,000 to 3,500 readers will respond in the coming year. There were 2,653 active participants as of June 30.
- As of July 30, graduates of this sec-

ond program have responded at a rate of 33.5 percent to four further options: A subscription to *World News and Prophecy*; sermon tapes from the congregation nearest them; to be contacted by a pastor; and/or to receive contact information for the United pastor and congregation nearest them.

Good News Radio

- The program has generated a total of 7,518 responses. Some are attending Sabbath services as a result of learning about the Church through the program.
- The best weekend so far was March 30, with 135 callers responding to a program titled "The Spirit World." There were 99 calls on May 11 in response to the program, "Death, Then What?"

Good News Magazine

- The print run went from 517,423 to 460,167 (a decrease of 11 percent). The decrease is due primarily to low renewals of waiting rooms. At present efforts are underway to raise the circulation back to 500,000.
- In the long run, reader demographics will be healthier. Having more individual subscribers will provide a better opportunity to reach out to those who may be interested in becoming involved in the work of the Church.

GN Print Promotions

- Plans for 2003-2004 are for 3.7 million cards (a 43 percent decrease compared to two years ago) to be mailed with an estimated 27,650 responses at \$1.95 each. (See also, "Card Packs," page 16.)

Internet

- On average about 4,500 visited ucg.org per day in July for a total of some 140,000. By comparison, in 1998 the site averaged 300 visits per day. (See, "Web Remains Cost-Effective Tool to Reach New People," page 2.)
- The redesigned ucg.org has been active for more than five months and

still is receiving positive feedback.

- The average time spent at the Web site is eight to nine minutes.
- Two new features, "Current World News and Trends" and "UCG Commentary" are gaining increased traffic.
- Redesign of the *Good News* Web site should be complete a month or so after the Feast.
- A new site, verticalthought.org is in its early stages of development.
- 935 doctrinal messages were answered by the Personal Correspondence E-mail team, an increase of 33 percent over the previous year.
- The E-mail team includes 23 pastors who volunteer for one- or two-month shifts.
- 5,545 subscribe to the "ucg.org E-news Weekly Updates" (a 52 percent increase over last year).
- 3,065 subscribe to the "UCG Member Updates" (a 398 percent increase).
- 958 subscribe to "Youth United Updates" (a 32 percent increase).
- 49 subscribe to the "Good News Reader Monthly E-mail Updates" (a new letter from the president).

Members, Donors, Coworkers

- By the end of the 2002-2003 fiscal year, the total number of members, associated and youth increased from 16,000 to 16,500.
- So far this calendar year there have been about 125 baptisms, slightly off last year's figure of 150.
- The number of coworkers and donors has risen to 2,096 and 4,963 respectively.

Cable-Access Television

- TV continues to provide subscribers at a favorable cost per response. For example, *Tomorrow* (produced in Portland, Oregon) generates about 325 responses per month—typically averaging two calls per showing. *The Good News* television program (produced in Beloit, Wisconsin) added a Chicago-

area cable-access station that generated 25 calls the first telecast.

Subscriber Development

- In June, a subscriber development letter was sent to 200,000 *Good News* subscribers offering *The Middle East in Prophecy*. So far 27,000 have requested the booklet (14 percent response rate).
- There is a plan to send four subscriber development letters in the upcoming fiscal year—one will offer the *Bible Study Course* and each of the others will offer one of our booklets.

World News and Prophecy

- This publication has seen a 23 percent subscription increase in the last year.
- The goal for this year is to increase nonmember subscriptions from 8,000 to 12,000.

United News

- Since many who receive this publication do not attend our Sabbath services, a recent renewal letter was sent that reduced the mailing list by 15 percent.

First-Contact Literature

- Mr. Eddington provided mock-ups of three first-contact pamphlets: *Getting Out of Debt, Was Christ Born on Christmas?* and two different layouts of a brochure titled *Sex Outside of Marriage—What's the Big Deal?*



- These are low-cost, short, easy-to-read mini-booklets on topics of interest for first-time readers. They may be distributed at newsstands, supermarket displays or college campus bookstores.
- Development will continue based on input from the Council.

"ABC," continued from page 1

trusted," Mr. Holladay said. "This is why we must constantly be looking at our instruments—the Scriptures . . . The true reality is God and the spirit dimension." Mr. Holladay gave points on how to stay in the reality of God and what to do if you veer off course.

Mr. Holladay acknowledged that ABC is only a springboard to their Christian life, reminding the students that "to whom much is given, much is required." He encouraged the students to keep the reality of the spiritual constantly in front of them.

Sunday, Aug. 10, the students enjoyed a brunch, then returned to the home office building for the graduation ceremony. Daniel Harper, the student representative, delivered the first speech and presented Mr. Antion with a surprise gift of appreciation from the students for his countless hours and devotion to the students. This was followed by "God Be With You" performed by the ABC Choral, and "A Holy Day Song," composed by student Craig McQueen and sung by seven students.

Mr. Antion gave the graduation address, "Use It or Lose It." Mr. Antion recounted their journey through the

Scriptures and classes, while noting their sacrifices. He concluded by encouraging them to use the precious knowledge they have received. "If knowledge is not used, it is of no value," Mr. Antion said. The class was reminded of the Mission Statement of ABC and encouraged to live up to those ideals. Mr. Antion ended with a quote from a professor from Yale who said that a "knowledge of the Bible was worth more than a college education."

The ceremony ended with award presentations. The Ambassador Award of Excellence was given to Craig and Natalie McQueen, the first married

couple to receive a shared award, and Linda Saar. The Council of Elders Service Award went to Cindy (Gore) Harper and Joshua Stevens.

After the ceremony, refreshments and many hugs and tears, the students were off to different paths.

Here are a few of the student comments about ABC that were published in the last 2003 *ABC Times*:

"I want to thank the Church and God's ministers for letting me be a part of ABC," said Terry Shipman.

"As I was getting ready this morning I was thinking about all the reasons I love ABC. One of the greatest things

that puts a smile on my face and gets me out of bed is knowing that I will be lifted up by God's Word and all of your loving and sincere words to me and each other," said Lori Holladay.

"I came to ABC fully expecting an awesome experience, but it far exceeded my expectations. I have learned more in this short period than I could have learned in years of study on my own. I have also had more fun than I dreamed possible. As we now draw to the end, it is dawning on me that my greatest challenge will be to put this newfound knowledge into action," said Suzanne Lavaty. **UN**

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

major search engines, and so our key-word listings appear in many places.

In addition, we receive thousands of new GN subscribers each year at no cost. These are people who sign up for the GN after finding our Web site on their own.

Every time someone fills out an online literature request, we ask him or her two questions. Here are the results for July 2003. Only 2 percent of respondents are Church members. Also, notice the effect a referral from a friend has.

How did you find out about the United Church of God?

Response	Percentage
Banner Ad	28%
From a friend/family member	25%
From this Web page	15%
From a UCG publication	11%
From an advertisement	8%
From a publication in a waiting room	3%
I am a member of UCG	2%
From a previous affiliation with the Church	1%
From Good News radio program	1%

How did you find this URL?

Response	Percentage
Banner Ad	28%
From The Good News magazine	27%
From a friend/family member	19%
Surfing the World Wide Web	11%
From an advertisement	7%
From another UCG publication	4%
I am a member of UCG	2%
From a publication in a waiting room	1%
From Good News radio program	1%

The Internet is proving to be a valuable and cost-effective tool. Please continue to pray that our development and success in this media will grow and become even more fruitful.

Peter Edington

Good News Radio Response Analyzed

In the first three years of broadcasting the GN radio program, 7,611 responses



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:

"Thou Shalt Not Show the Ten Commandments"
"Mr. Berlusconi and the Two Souls of Europe"
"God Bless America!—But Why Should He?"

"Saddam, Hitler and Stalin: Beyond Satan's Slaves"

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 September *Virtual Christian Magazine* includes "Can God Forgive Me?", "Who's Minding Your Grandchildren?", "My Days at Preteen Camp" and more.

vcmagazine.org

On youthmagazine.org

■ The July-September *Youth United* has articles on friendship, "The Most Powerful Friend," "Making Peace," "News for Youth," Q&As and more.

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

were received. This is an average of 49 per program. The best response weekend was March 30 with 135 callers inquiring about "The Spirit World."

Also, programs dealing with the after-life continue to draw a good response. All five programs dealing with death, heaven and hell rank in the top 20 programs (out of 59 total programs recorded).

Broadcasts related to prophecy are also doing well. Of the 12 programs dealing fully or partially with this subject, eight rank in the top 20.

John LaBissoniere

Florida Station Airs GN Radio

The 50,000-watt, news/talk radio station WFLA 540 AM in Orlando, Florida, began airing the *Good News* radio program at 6:30 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 31. WFLA has a large listening area that covers much of central Florida. The station features talk show hosts Rush Limbaugh and Dr. Laura Schlesinger in its daily lineup.

Our program is promoted throughout the week using 30-second spot ads. Also,

a 15-second tag is aired at the conclusion of each program to encourage listeners to tune in regularly.

The Orlando metropolitan area, with a population exceeding 1.14 million, is considered a large media market, ranked 39th out of 276 Arbitron markets. The central Florida area is a top international tourist destination.

John LaBissoniere

Fourth ABC Sampler Largest Yet

There were 41 students at this year's Cincinnati Sampler Aug. 18 to 22, the largest group in the four years ABC has been conducting samplers. They ranged from age 16 to those who are grandparents. Roy Holladay, Ralph Levy and Gary Antion each taught two classes per day for a total of 30 hours of instruction.

The summer students came from Washington, Florida, Georgia, Wisconsin, Illinois, North Carolina, New York and Ohio. Several are regulars in the sampler program.

"Since each year different segments of ABC classes are covered, eventually,

say in 20 years or so, those who keep coming may complete the entire ABC program!" said Mr. Antion. "They are all to be congratulated for their diligence and for their love of God's Word. This year's class has expressed their gratitude for the program and even suggested having another in December, if possible."

Now 27 students have been accepted into next year's regular ABC program. The final date for receiving applications for 2004 is Dec. 19, 2003, and orientation is scheduled for Jan. 4, 2004.

Card Packs Bring in 37,815 Subscribers

For the past several years, the United Church of God has used "card pack" print promotions as an efficient, low-cost means to reach literally millions of potential *Good News* subscribers. With this advertising method, our insert cards cost less than 2 cents each.

During the 2002-2003 budget year, card packs were again the foundation of our print advertising efforts. We mailed a total of 5,750,000 *Good News* cards to households in the United States.

A total of 37,815 new subscribers have been added to the files at a cost of \$2.21 per response (CPR). As cards continue to come in, we are inching toward our original 2002-2003 goal of 39,500 subscriptions at \$2.13 CPR.

John LaBissoniere

Vertical Thought to Be Mailed Soon

Vertical Thought magazine is scheduled to be mailed out the last week in September and hopefully young people will receive it before the Feast.

If a U.S. Church youth or young adult (aged 12 to 22) has not received his or her copy by the end of October, it is possible that he or she is not on the Church's address file. Those young people can write to the home office and let us know the following: parents' names, your name, address and birth date. It is important to include the birth date so that the subscription is properly calculated. We plan to renew subscribers at age 22. Print runs do not allow us to offer it to older adults at this time.

Connie Seelig

"Leadership," continued from page 1

- Developing wisdom and judgment.
- Principles of research.
- Principles of counseling.
- Role of deacons and elders.
- Relevance in speaking.
- Media development and evangelism.
- History and overview of UCG documents.

The above topics were presented by a variety of speakers from the home office and numerous pastors from the field ministry. The purpose of the program in passing the baton of truth to others in the United Church of God is threefold:

1. The development of local leadership.
2. The development of leadership toward possible ordination.



Matt and Diana Zollner fellowship with Glen Hollon at Sabbath services Aug. 30

3. The development of elders to become pastors in the future.

Your prayers for the ongoing success of this program toward future leadership development is greatly appreciated. **UN**

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