

## ABC Preparing for Jan. 10 Launch

Office space next to the home office is being remodeled, desks are being purchased and instructors Gary Antion and Ralph Levy are in the process of moving to the Cincinnati area. Dozens of details are being worked out for the opening of the Ambassador Bible Center (ABC) on January 10, 2000.

As of October 27, 22 potential ABC students had requested application forms from the home office, and 168 had downloaded the simple two-page form from the Internet. Of these, 11 completed applications had been received.

The first completed applications came October 13 by fax from an Australian couple. Many application requests are from the interna-

tional area. "That does create a bit of a problem," said Les McCullough. "Being a brand new operation, we do not have as yet the necessary approval from the U.S. government for international students to receive a visa to come."

Church attorney Larry Darden said that INS regulations appear to require new institutions like ABC "to be in actual operation for at least two years before they can apply for permission to issue Certificates of Availability for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status (the so-called 'I-20')." Issuance of the I-20 to a prospective student is a prerequisite for INS approval of student visas. Those who wish to attend ABC but live outside the United States are



President Les McCullough and Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick review first two ABC applications received October 13 by fax from Australia

encouraged to consult with local U.S. consulates or embassies in their areas, or other experts in U.S. immigration law, regarding the

availability of other types of visas under which they might be able to come."

### ABC Ad in *Good News*

Nearly 250,000 copies of the November/December *Good News* announce ABC to a much wider pool of potential students. A one-third page ad on page 11 of that issue invites readers to consider enrolling in this "highly concentrated series of classes to thoroughly cover the basic biblical doctrines

and to lead students systematically through all the books of the Bible."

Membership in the United Church of God is not a requirement for enrollment in ABC, but proselytizing is prohibited.

### What Applicants Can Expect

In a teleconference October 20, faculty members and others involved in the ABC launch laid out the admissions process.

(See "ABC," page 2)

## 40 Sites Report Positive Spiritual Feast

"All of the reports on the Feast of Tabernacles are very positive," said President Les McCullough. Looking at the figures for the United States, Canada and Jordan, he said, "Our attendance was up slightly—11,666 as opposed to 11,552 last year. That is a small increase, but it is an increase nevertheless."

Around the world, the number was 16,299 compared to 15,797, an increase of 502 people or 3 percent.

Mr. McCullough said the offerings "were better than last year and somewhat above the projections we made here at the office. Thank you to all of you for your



Noosa Heads, Australia; right, the Philippines

part in prayer as well as the offering." The U.S. attendance was up 5.4 percent and the offering was up

4.9 percent for the Last Great Day.

Reports on the 40 Feast sites begin on page 4. *UN*

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Next issue: January 3, 2000

## Group in Ghana Seeks Closer Ties

Fred Kellers spoke to 300 to 400 members of the Remnant Church of God, a Sabbath-keeping group, in Kumasi, Ghana, on the Feast of Trumpets, September 11. Mr. Kellers was on his way to the Feast in Nigeria and Kenya.

"After contacting the United Church of God and asking for guidance, they have also begun to keep the festivals," said Mr. Kellers. "They were extremely warm and receptive and give every indication

that they intend to continue to keep God's Feasts and to continue to grow in grace and knowledge."

"They have indicated a desire to change the name of their group to the United Church of God," said President Les McCullough. He said that we are not pushing this, but letting it take its course, and that we are planning to send several elders to give seminars.

The Remnant Church of God has about a dozen congregations. *UN*

## Jordanian Contacts Renewed

"The Feast served as a springboard for reinvigorating our historical relationship with Jordan, and resuming efforts to preach the gospel in this part of the world," said Cory Erickson, Feast coordinator for the Jordanian Feast site.

Church representatives visited the centers for the mentally and physically challenged where students served in Ambassador Foundation programs from 1982 to 1996. Official contacts have been made with prominent Jordanians, including: Queen Noor al Hussein, wife of the late King Hussein;

Prince Ra'ad bin Zeid, Lord Chamberlain of King Abdullah, and his wife Princess Majda Ra'ad, patron of the Al Hussein Center for the Physically Handicapped; Princess Sarvath el Hassan, patron of the YMWA Center for Special Education for the Mentally Handicapped; and Adnan Abu Odeh, advisor of King Abdullah.

"The Jordanians mentioned above have warmly embraced the return of the Church of God and have expressed a desire to resume a friendly and cooperative relationship," said Mr. Erickson. *UN*

## GN Promotion Results Reported

Spot ads, brochures and other promotions are being used to reach new readers with *The Good News*.

### U.S. Spot Ads

In September the Church ran a television ad campaign for *The Good News* in Utica, New York; Winston-Salem-Greensboro, North Carolina; and Dallas, Texas. There were 256 subscription requests.

"The campaign introduced the TV viewing audience of family-aged, established people to the free subscription offer," said Galen Morrison, who developed the ads. "The primary specific group we targeted is between 25 and 54. This is the largest group of society's decision makers today. This is not normally the primary religious audi-

ence." *The Good News* was presented to between 1.3 million and 2 million people in this age group. "The responses received were fewer than if the campaign had targeted older audiences. However, those who subscribed were well informed as to the nature and content of the *Good News* magazine," Mr. Morrison said.

The half-hour pilot *Tomorrow* program aired in Utica and Winston-Salem-Greensboro. It aired in four configurations: in conjunction with newspaper ads, with *Good News* TV spots preceding it, with free 10-second promotions and with no promotion. "The program that was preceded by 10-second promotions received an encouraging cost per

(See "PROMOTIONS," page 2)

"ABC," (Continued from page 1)

Potential students can receive an application by calling or writing the home office or by printing the form off the Web (<http://www.ucg.org/abc/abc.html>). Applicants are asked to return completed forms by December 1.

Within a week after an application is received, the applicant will be sent an acknowledgement letter, which will explain the admissions process. This includes a ministerial evaluation for those attending United Church of God, and an interview in person or by phone. The three resident instructors, Mr. McCullough, Mr. Antion and Dr. Levy, plan to go over the applications. Within three weeks applicants will hear if they have been accepted or not. Accepted students will be asked to sign a code of conduct and send in the \$1,500 tuition fee to complete the process before classes start.

If a student needs to leave the program after paying the fee, a standard refund policy has been set: 100 percent in the first week, 75

percent in the second week, 50 percent in the third week and 25 percent in the fourth week. No refund will be available after the fourth week of classes.

Along with the acceptance letter, students should receive a map of the Milford, Ohio, area and some information about how to look for housing in the area. Students will be responsible to provide their own housing, food, transportation and, if needed, part-time job. Currently part-time jobs continue to be plentiful in the Milford area, with some restaurants offering signing bonuses and higher than minimum wage pay.

Students can research some housing and job options through the Internet and by telephone, but the planning group advised that students may want to arrive by January 2, 2000, to complete their housing and job search. An orientation meeting for Sunday, January 9, is being discussed, and classes start January 10. The program will conclude August 4.

A small library is being set up, and some

Bible reference works will also be available on-line. The faculty is hoping to avoid requiring students to buy additional books.

The ABC program will run Monday through Friday during normal business hours. Since many students will need to have their off-hours available for part-time jobs, homework and tests will be de-emphasized. Assignments and study will be completed during the day.

### Investment by the Church

The \$1,500 enrollment fee that students pay provides only a small part of the total costs of the program. Instructor salaries, lease of the teaching facilities and other costs of the program will be absorbed by the Church. "The degree of investment by the Church is well worth the benefits for future generations," Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick said.

Initial estimates placed the net cost of the first year at about a quarter million dollars, but the actual costs will be lower, Dr. Kirkpatrick said. *UN*

an excellent cost per response of \$2.49 per subscriber using this method," said John LaBissoniere, program coordinator.

### Good Neighbor Program

A six-month test of distributing *Good News* brochures through the Good Neighbor program was also completed. About 50,000 brochures were distributed by Snyder Communications on over 500 displays in major U.S. supermarkets and discount stores.

During the test, the home office received 1,082 new subscriptions, for a response of 2.16 percent. "Taking into account the printing, shipping and rental/distribution costs, we have calculated a very good \$6.62 cost per response," said Mr. LaBissoniere.

"Due to the excellent results of this test, it is likely that we will expand this program to hundreds of additional supermarket displays in cities across the United States," he said. *UN*

"PROMOTIONS," (Continued from page 1) response of \$9.32," Mr. Morrison said.

### International Promotions

In the British Isles, Sky TV aired a spot ad in October, and between 40 and 50 responded. Originally scheduled for 80 airings, Sky TV gave an additional 14 bonus airings. "The exposure will be useful to us and also we gain credibility," said John Jewell, chief executive officer for UCG—British Isles. "We received mail responses from Poland, France and Gibraltar. The one from Poland is from a teacher who wants to use our literature to aid the teaching of English to his students! Effectively he will be teaching a number of young people the truth of God."

Full-page ads for *Las Buenas Noticias* are scheduled to appear in the December issue of the Spanish editions of *Reader's Digest* in Central America, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

### Members Distribute Brochures

Members in 31 U.S. church areas placed and restocked brochure holders in businesses in a test of the Brochure Display Program from February to July. Congregations were given equal numbers of two versions of a brochure offering *The Good News*. One version used a business-reply card, and the other required a stamp.

An estimated 21,497 brochures were picked up during the test, and 842 new subscriptions were received. Of these, 540 were business-reply cards and 302 were cards that require a stamp. This is a 5.02 percent response for the business-reply and 2.8 percent for cards needing stamps. Combined response was 3.92 percent, which is considered very good for a "take-one" program.

"Taking into account the costs involved in the test (printing and shipping brochures, purchase and shipping the displays and cost of business-reply mail postage), we calculate

## Q&A: Cremation

**Q.** Is cremation acceptable for Christians?

**A.** Cremation was introduced to the Western world by the Greeks as early as 1000 B.C. Records of how it came to the Greeks are sketchy, but the custom apparently began as a way to deal with soldiers who died in battle. In order to ensure a funeral by family and fellow citizens, corpses of soldiers who died on foreign battlefields were burned. Their ashes were carried to their homeland.

The Romans followed the Greek fashion and cremated their military heroes. The practice of cremation grew in popularity in the general population and eventually became a status symbol in Rome. The practice ceased about A.D. 100 probably due to wood shortages, as well as the lack of encouragement for cremation by Christians (mainly the Roman Catholic Church), although the practice was

not actually considered taboo. Some thought (erroneously, of course) that cremation would interfere with the promised resurrection from the dead.

Cremation was common in Scandinavia, due to a belief that it "freed the spirit from the flesh" (another belief based upon superstition instead of the Bible). After Western Europe converted to Christianity, cremation was rarely done until the 19th century, except for emergencies such as the mass burials of people who died from the plague. In India and Eastern countries, cremation is both an ancient and a desirable means of taking care of the deceased.

Interest in it was revived in Europe and the United States with the publication of *Cremation: The Treatment of the Body after Death* by Sir Henry Thompson, Queen Victoria's surgeon, in 1874. Even then, it was

not ruled as a legal practice in England until 1884. It grew in favor with the religious community as an alternative to disorderly and protracted wakes. For different reasons, primarily relating to sanitation, it also grew in favor with the medical community.

The first crematorium was built in the United States in 1876, but the practice of cremation has been comparatively unpopular. By the 1970s only 8 percent were cremated in the United States, in comparison to Europe where over 50 percent were cremated. In Japan cremation was illegal until 1875, but it is now done nearly 100 percent of the time.

Due in part to a shortage of cemetery space, cremation is becoming more widely done in the United States. Of all the major religions, only the Orthodox Jewish faith forbids it. Resistance from cemetery owners and undertakers has diminished as they have

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# Focus on the Kingdom of God

by Richard Thompson

The 28 weeks between the Last Great Day service and Passover have oftentimes been looked upon as the cold, dark days until the annual Holy Day season begins again. Some say that following the Feast of Tabernacles they suffer through a “post-Feast letdown.” Some brethren admit that they have felt discouragement and despondency following the Feast every year.

This doesn’t have to happen to you.

One of the great lessons of the Bible is God’s encouragement to us to focus on Him and His kingdom. There are some excellent Bible lessons for us to examine that lay a strong framework for resisting the human tendency to let down after an uplifting and profitable experience.

## Old Testament Reminder

The excitement and exuberance of Israel when leaving Egypt would make some think, “This will never end.” But God knew the jubilation was more emotional than spiritual, more temporary than permanent. God exhorted and encouraged the Israelites and their leaders to maintain their focus on Him and on what He had done for them. He had spared their lives, removed them from horrific slavery, restored them to contact with Him and renewed a relationship with His people that had been lost for about 150 years.

God entered into a covenant with Israel to which they agreed. “Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient.’” (Exodus 24:7).

But their intentions were temporary. One of several fatal flaws in the mindset of the Israelites was their lack of desire to actually be in the presence of God. They weren’t tuned in to God and what God wanted for them enough to offset their human desire to return to life as it had been in Egypt. They returned to Egypt by their actions when they resorted to worshipping as they had done for decades. The golden calf incident stands as a grim reminder of what Israel would resort to when not in tune with God’s desire for them. They fell into their old patterns of thinking and sin resulted.

## Today’s Application

Our relationship with God should never be taken for granted. Our responsibility to God should never be neglected.

All too often we, like ancient Israel, fall into old habits. Such as when we fall back into being “too human” by not capitalizing on the strong spiritual influences of such positive experiences as the Feast of Tabernacles.

Christ gave a specific direction for our lives: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry

about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:33–34).

The model prayer includes as a vital part the request for the kingdom of God to come. Of all people, we should never allow the primary goal of our lives, the very reason for our existence, to fade or be neglected.

The several months between the annual Holy Day seasons can be accentuated by a strong renewal to seeking first God’s kingdom in our private and public lives. By daily renewal of seeking to become a part of the family of God—the kingdom of God—we stand a much greater chance of not only spiritual survival, but also avoiding the pitfalls through which our human nature will carry us. Despondency, letdown and discouragement need not be the avenue our lives take after the Feast. We have enjoyed being in the presence of God and Jesus Christ—fellowshipping with God—for eight days. That relationship needs to continue.

## Growth Season

Instead of allowing our human nature to lead us into the doldrums, the Feast of Tabernacles can become a foundation for genuine growth over the next several months. One of the most important steps towards spiritual growth is the daily renewal of seeking first God’s kingdom. How can this be done?

Our focus on the millennial rule of Christ with His family was indeed a strong one during the Feast of Tabernacles. Use the inspiration you received from the sermons and remember the source of that inspiration. God inspires His people as they observe the

annual Holy Day plan. That inspiration is reinforced as God’s people reflect on the meaning of the annual Holy Days. Our experiences during the Feast can serve as ongoing inspiration if we stir up the Holy Spirit when human nature begins to take its spiritual toll.

Remember the messages you heard during the Feast. Check out a sermon tape from your church library for renewal of the inspiration you experienced during the Feast. Study the lessons of the sermons and seek to implement them into your personal life.

Discuss your Feast experiences with other brethren. A community of believers talking about and all seeking the most important goal in human life will strengthen everyone. Your attendance at weekly Sabbath services with other brethren is vital if genuine spiritual growth is to occur.

## Be Specific in Establishing Goals

During the Feast most people heard a particular point that hit home as something to work on. It may have been about family needs, personal struggles or doctrinal difficulties. Focus on working on those specific needs in the overall picture of glorifying God by your daily actions as you strive to become a part of the kingdom of God.

Keep the kingdom of God in your mind from the beginning of the day until you sleep at night. Ask God daily to bless the work of your hands. It is Christ who prepares us for and makes it possible for us to become a part of our Father’s kingdom. By focusing our hearts, minds and actions toward God and His kingdom, spiritual fruit will be produced

and spiritual doldrums will be overcome. Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to carry on with these words: “You were enriched in every thing by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:5–7).

Paul strengthened the resolve of the brethren in Philippi when he wrote to them: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

As Christ leads His Church, He is preparing His brothers and sisters for eternal responsibilities in our Father’s kingdom. “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:2–3).

Ancient Israel feared to be in the presence of God. Their mistakes soon followed. Their capacity to receive the blessings of the covenant ceased because of their disobedience. We cannot afford to repeat their mistakes. Our desire now can and should be continually seeking to be in God’s presence, asking for His help and intervention, as we live to become a part of His kingdom.

Next spring our lives can be examples of genuine spiritual growth. With God’s help and our seeking first His kingdom, that spiritual growth will happen to you. *UN*

## Battling Back From Spiritual Burnout

Recently I found myself in what I call a blue funk. You know you’re off in your relationship with God, but it seems too hard to put it back on track. This feeling causes all kinds of negative thoughts that adversely affect our outlook on life and our future.

I identified my malaise as burnout or apathy. One analogy compares burnout to trudging across a desert and being so spiritually and emotionally parched that there are few reserves to serve and give to others. This time, I didn’t care that I felt burned out. I didn’t seem to have strength to fight those terrible feelings. How could the Father expect me to be spiritually charged all the time? I want to share my experience with you, in hopes of helping others who may be burned out, or headed for burnout on the Christian road of life.

I kept telling myself that this paralyzing condition shouldn’t be happening to a follower of Jesus Christ. After all, we have His Holy Spirit in us and our spiritual tank should not be on empty. This Spirit is life changing. It’s powerful. Then why did I feel the way I did?

I tried not to blame God, but I was angry. I moped around and even prayed for God to pull me out of this dreadful mental state, but He didn’t answer and I didn’t like that. It seemed to be getting worse. I found myself brooding and getting easily distracted from meeting with God through prayer and Bible study. Even though I knew I needed God, I seemed to harbor unfair and unkind thoughts toward Him. It became a vicious cycle. The worse I felt, the less I wanted to sit with God. The less spiritual diet I ingested, the less motivation I had to fight the debilitating thoughts. Satan seemed to be winning. What could I do? Hadn’t I already prayed?

Next, I reached out to my husband, Jim. He and I talked. Jim

questioned the amount of time I had been spending in spiritual pursuits lately. I didn’t like what he was saying, but he was right. Less time with God had taken its toll on my spiritual bedrock. I examined myself. Why was I so upset with God?

I prayed again and went to God’s Word with hope that it would wash my mind. Slowly but surely God, over the next few days, helped me unravel my anger and repent of it. The answers came from a variety of sources: my dear husband’s insight, the Holy Scriptures, prayer and frank discussions with a caring Christian friend. She allowed me to reveal aloud my innermost frustrations and shame. This let me own those angry thoughts and identify them and then face them.

Help also came from a book a friend had given me,

*Women of a Generous Spirit*, by Lois Rabey. I’d like to share some of her points and a few of my own for healing burnout.

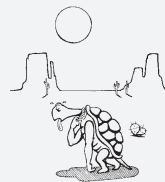
- Meet with God.
- Ask yourself questions about why you’re upset.
- Write down your honest feelings.
- Pray for help to understand the root cause of your feelings.
- Reflect on God’s Word. The Psalms are particularly helpful.

• Give yourself time to receive an answer.  
• “Take one step of obedience” is a point Mrs. Rabey makes. God may reveal the need for you to express a loving act of kindness to others.

After you have come back into a right relationship with God, act on what God’s Spirit prods you to do. Give and share and be thankful.

We live in times that are spiritually and physically challenging. If you’re not taking the time with God that you used to, stop now and make the time. Don’t let anything separate you from the love of God.

*Judy Servidio*



# Feast of Tabernacles 1999 Reports...

## Argentina

### Sierra de la Ventana

This year, the United Church of God held its first Feast of Tabernacles in Argentina. The site was the Silver Golf Hotel and Tourist Complex in Sierra de la Ventana, Buenos Aires province.

The highest attendance was 72. Most were Argentinians, joined by several

Chileans and a few from the United States, Canada and Uruguay. Sermons were brought by Mario Seiglie, pastor of the churches in Chile and Argentina, and Ralph Levy, an elder from Dallas North, and soon to be an instructor at the Ambassador Bible Center.

Activities included dances, a bus tour of Sierra de la Ventana and surrounding areas, a children's party, movie evenings, an evening of Bible questions, a soccer game, a bike ride, a family tea and a traditional Argentinian *parillada* (barbecue). Three delicious meals a day were provided; the country is famous for its excellent beef and other dishes.

Mr. Seiglie was interviewed by a presenter from a local radio station which ran a news item describing the Feast of Tabernacles.

In spite of at times very cold weather, the warm spirit of this Feast left us all with fond memories and close friendships which developed among a group of this size.

The hardest part was saying good-bye, or *ciao*, as the Argentinians say. The small number of members in Argentina are scattered, with no resident pastor, so lots of *abrazos* (hugs) and *besitos* (the traditional kisses on the cheek) were exchanged, along with a few *lagrimas* (tears).

Ralph D. Levy

## Australia

### Frederick Henry Bay, Hobart, Tasmania

Sixty happy people observed an exciting Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day in warm spring weather at the Pines Resort on Frederick Henry Bay, Tasmania.

Council of Elders member Dennis Luker and his wife, LeeAnn, were with us for the first part of the Feast. Also visiting were local pastor and Australian National Council members Barry Williams and his wife, Sue, from Melbourne, and Graemme Marshall and his wife, Lynn, from Brisbane. Other Feastgoers came from the United States, New Zealand and mainland Australian states.

Messages emphasized the prophetic nature of unfolding world events, and our responsibility to prepare for our assigned position in the world tomorrow.

One highlight of the Feast was a bus trip to the old penal settlement of Port Arthur whose sad history is preserved in many old buildings in the area.

Lunch was eaten in the meeting hall on the Last Great Day, and following Mr. Marshall's sermon on living water everyone assembled for fellowship and Feast cake!

Garry Barber

## Merimbula, New South Wales

Highlighted by a maximum attendance of 182 on the Last Great Day and sermons and sermonettes focusing on the almost unbelievable future offered by God to all humanity, the Feast at Merimbula more than met the expectations of those who attended.

Council of Elders member Dennis Luker spent three days with us and a number from other Church of God fellowships also spent all or part of the festival with United.

Organized activities concentrated on the younger ones and included a lakeside picnic; an afternoon of bowling, miniature golf and video games; a visit to Magic Mountain amusement park for teenagers; and a cruise on beautiful Two Fold Bay. One of the big advantages of Merimbula is its size, with the excellent facility used for services, accommodation, shopping, restaurants and tourist attractions all very close at hand—most within walking distance. As a consequence Feastgoers are able to spend much time together, not just during the formal services.

The Merimbula site was notable for its relaxed and peaceful atmosphere and the friendly interaction of all who attended. Coffee and tea before and after services encouraged people to "come early and stay late" for conversation and fellowship.

Bill Eddington

## Noosa Heads, Queensland

For the fifth year, Noosa, on Australia's Sunshine Coast, hosted more than 300 happy brethren for the Feast. The spiritual food was refreshing and the fellowship, food and fun provided a wonderfully relaxing and restful Feast. The occasional rain did not dampen any of the festival activities, but provided an enjoyable change to the warmer weather.

Outstanding features of the area are the natural environment and the number of great restaurants.

There are also many reasonably priced accommodations.

Some of the physical highlights of the Feast included a formal dance, indoor rock climbing, a family sausage sizzle, a pool party for teens and young adults and plenty of beach and shopping. Several overseas visitors joined with brethren from many different parts of Australia, including Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Luker from the United States.

The festival messages and the fellowship left the brethren feeling uplifted and spiritually and physically recharged.

Allan Hambleton

## Perth, Western Australia

Perth may be an isolated city and may have been the smallest Feast site, but the 12 brethren attending God's Feast here experienced eight days of spiritual nourishment and oneness in a happy family atmosphere.

Although Perth experienced unseasonable cool and rainy weather, the fellowship was warm. Also we were blessed with a warm sunny day for the Feast picnic held in beautiful Kings Park.

The Cocos Room at the Bel Eyre Motel provided the perfect venue with a lovely restaurant where everyone enjoyed Holy Day meals between services. Visits to services by old friends from another Church of God added to the warm family atmosphere.

Making the Perth Feast a success was the presence of Tom and Anne Burchard from Toowoomba, Queensland. Mr. Burchard, who is an elder, made it a truly spiritual Feast by preaching seven sermons and treating the brethren to special music. Mrs. Burchard brightened the Feast with beautiful flowers.

Another highlight was a visit by a member from Singapore. Perth brethren took every opportunity to get to know her and to share their different cultures and experiences.

Peter Davidson

## Feast of Tabernacles 1999 Attendance Figures

Argentina .....	72
<b>Australia</b>	
Hobart, Tasmania .....	60
Merimbula, New South Wales .....	182
Noosa Heads, Queensland .....	321
Perth, Western Australia .....	12
<b>British Isles</b> .....	152
<b>Cameroon</b> .....	38
<b>Canada</b>	
Kelowna, British Columbia .....	537
Mont-Orford, Quebec .....	258
<b>Caribbean</b>	
Barbados .....	188
Jamaica .....	22
<b>Chile</b> .....	481
<b>Colombia</b> .....	43
<b>Estonia</b> .....	54
<b>France</b> .....	160
<b>Germany</b> .....	181
<b>Guatemala</b> .....	628
<b>Italy</b> .....	223
<b>Jordan</b> .....	86
<b>Kenya</b> .....	24
<b>Mexico</b> .....	413
<b>New Zealand</b> .....	72
<b>Nigeria</b> .....	41
<b>Peru</b> .....	174
<b>Philippines</b> .....	270
<b>South Africa</b> .....	172
<b>Tonga</b> .....	21
<b>United States</b>	
Bend, Oregon .....	1,164
Branson, Missouri .....	1,168
Corpus Christi, Texas .....	750
Escondido, California .....	1,085
Estes Park, Colorado .....	952
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania .....	1,208
Jekyll Island, Georgia .....	1,457
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii .....	423
Louisville, Kentucky .....	685
Orlando, Florida .....	940
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin .....	980
<b>Zambia</b> .....	76
<b>Zimbabwe</b> .....	21
<b>Shut-ins</b> who received Feast sermon tapes from home office .....	505
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	16,299
<b>Feast Cybercast</b> (est.) .....	300

Note: Highest daily attendance figures. Actual registration at most sites was higher due to daily absenteeism. Cybercast listeners include some shut-ins counted above, so are not added into the total.



Feasting in Australia, from left: rehearsing for special music in Merimbula; ministers meet with Dennis and LeeAnn Luker in Tasmania; below, the brethren who attended the Feast in Perth



## British Isles

### Conwy, North Wales

For the second year, brethren assembled in the Civic Hall, Conwy, to worship God at His Feast of Tabernacles. The highest attendance was 152 with just over half from the United Kingdom and Isle of Man, the balance being international visitors from the United States, Australia, Sweden and South Africa. Despite bracing autumnal weather, replete with excessive amounts of rain, the Feast was positive, uplifting and peaceful.

Festival messages followed the theme set on the opening night: "the world to come, of which we speak" from Hebrews 2:5, with the choir and soloists on piano, harp and violin performing festival music.

Many were able to listen to *The World Tomorrow*, the Church's Tuesday evening broadcast from Manx Radio on the Isle of Man, and were greeted by the station announcer prior to the week's topic, "Beings from Outer Space."

Coach tours explored beautiful Snowdonia; the Annual General Meeting of the United Church of God—British Isles was held; and a baptism took place.

A final unforgettable highlight was the spontaneous warmth and emotion of a group of people on the front row linking arms during the final hymn and closing prayer. The Feast ended in tearful joy, renewed commitment and recognition of our Father's wonderful calling.

*David McDermott and David Fenney*

Douala. Local members exchanged lodgings during the time of the Feast in order to live in "temporary dwellings." The Douala brethren also lodged members attending from other parts of the country. One full day of rain brought some refreshing relief from the region's hot and very humid weather.

On Family Day everyone journeyed several hours north by bush taxi for an excursion to the base of Mt. Cameroon, an active volcano. There were several family activities, including some horseback riding. It was a very enjoyable outing for people of all ages. Moïse Mabout summed up the Feast by saying: "peace, joy and happiness were there to meet us. We thank God for His blessings and the brethren who helped us have this wonderful Feast."

*Moïse Mabout and Joel Meeker*

## Canada

### Kelowna, British Columbia

Crisp fall weather greeted 537 Feastgoers in Kelowna, in the beautiful Okanagan Valley, halfway between Vancouver and Calgary. Something special and unique happened at the Feast this year. The public was invited to attend a special service entitled "The Old and New Covenants" presented by Mark Mickelson, pastor of the Spokane and Kennewick, Washington, congregations. Mr. Mickelson presented the framework of how the covenants were steps God has been taking to fulfill His plan of salvation. We had no



*Some of the Feastgoers at Douala, Cameroon*

## Cameroon

### Douala

This year 38 people attended the Feast in Douala, Cameroon, a country located in Central Africa. Attendees came from several different areas of the country, including the towns of Bangangté and Ndom. Several traveled more than 500 miles in bush taxis over three days from the town of Yagoua in the nation's northern desert region.

Feast sermon tapes in French had arrived before the Feast, since it was not possible for an elder to attend the site this year. Plans are for an elder to attend the Feast next year. Services were held in the Church hall in

way of tracking how many came from the public, but some members did report talking to new people who came. Visitors included a minister and his wife.

Richard Kmodras was the choir director and his wife, Jana (Yana), played violin for much of the special music. The Kmodras fled the former Czechoslovakia 12 years ago when it was under communist rule.

Festival activities included a seniors' luncheon, a boat cruise, a wine train excursion, a family dance, a family day activity, a staff reception, laser bowling for the teens, a singles' hike, festival youth lessons, an interactive teen study, a ministerial dinner and a young adults' presentation. Also, there was a special youth day when the young people



*Canada (clockwise from below):  
Mont-Orford variety show and  
festival choir; Kelowna senior  
citizens' luncheon, special music  
and children's choir*

helped with auditorium responsibilities, song leading and announcements, as well as opening and closing prayers.

*Jean Jantzen and Rainer Salomaa*

### Mont-Orford, Quebec

Attending the Feast in Mont Orford, Quebec, is like having a taste of Europe without the expense. The continental cuisine is extraordinary! This year's festival messages were also equally filling and interesting.

With a high attendance of 258, this Feast site enjoyed a warm family feeling in a rural setting. People remarked at how relaxed they felt. Two bus tours were scheduled—one to Montreal and one to Quebec City. One afternoon there was a boat cruise on Lake Memphremagog. This lake is said to have a lake "monster" affectionately known as "Memphre." Nobody in our group reported seeing him.

There were evening seminars for those interested in learning more about prophecy and communication. A special seminar for the young adults was held on Friday night. On Thursday evening a family variety night was held. For about an hour and a half brethren shared their talents of vocal and instrumental ability. This was interspersed with skits and jokes to liven up the evening.

The seniors' luncheon buffet was very enjoyable with Richard Pinelli giving a short talk followed by entertainment provided by Gary and Elizabeth Densmore. Teens were able to tour a copper mine one afternoon and spent another afternoon bowling. The singles enjoyed a wine tour.

The Festival Youth Instruction sessions were well received. One of the children acted as an interpreter for one young French-speaking boy. So the opportunities for service were not limited to adults!

God's people again generously donated to the local food bank. The officials were overwhelmed with the generosity shown.

*Anthony Wasilkoff*

## Caribbean

### St. Philip, Barbabos

The Feast was held in the resort area of Sam Lord's Castle in the parish of St. Philip. The all-inclusive package was very much appreciated. With three buffet-styled meals, snacks available throughout the afternoon and unlimited beverages of your choice, we truly had a foretaste of Isaiah 25 which talks about the Feast of rich food.

The staff of the facility was friendly and warm. The tropical environment was very

relaxing. Monkeys and mongooses could be seen as they peacefully roam the complex.

Our high attendance was 188 as brethren gathered from three Caribbean islands (Dominica, St. Lucia and Barbados), Canada and the United States. The messages given were outstanding from "How to Know You Will Be in the Kingdom!" to an analogy of the Jewish wedding to the Feasts of God. The variety of special music was inspiring with the festival choir, children's choir and solos.

Highlights were the Get-Acquainted evening after the opening night service, special classes for the pre-teens, a night cruise up the West Coast, and an island tour.

*Arnold J. Hampton*

## Ocho Rios, Jamaica

The second Feast as part of United Church of God was held in the resort area of Ocho Rios, Jamaica.

We expected 14 brethren for the Feast, but there was a high attendance of 22. Since it was a small group, services were held in the living room of one of the apartments. Four countries were represented: the United States, Cuba, the Bahamas and Jamaica.

Mr. and Mrs. Neal Kinsey, local elder from Missouri, assisted Kingsley Mather with speaking during the Feast. Mr. Mather spoke on "Why Are We Here?", "What Will Life Be Like in the World Tomorrow?", "I Will Never Leave You nor Forsake You" and "Mission Impossible." Harry Grant of the Jamaica congregation gave several sermonettes, led song services and gave inspiring special music. The special Feast video was also shown during the Feast.

The group held a Jamaica night at which a sumptuous meal of Jamaican foods prepared by the ladies was served. It was a highlight of the Feast. The group also visited Dunn's River Falls. Mr. Mather took eight youngsters to Burger King for a treat that they thoroughly enjoyed.

The three members (Mr. and Mrs. Desmond Gilbert and Mr. Grant) who kept the Feast in Jamaica in 1998 were overjoyed to have others sharing with them this year. Royston Murray, long-time Church member who is working on the U.S. base in Cuba also joined the group for the Feast.

The brethren wish to thank God who led Dale Schurter and the Swords to Plowshares Foundation to provide the generous assistance that made it possible for the Feast to be held in Jamaica.

*Kingsley Mather*

## Chile

### Maitencillo

On the shores of the Pacific Ocean, 481 brethren enjoyed eight days of fine fellowship and weather at the Javiera Carrera Center in Maitencillo, Chile, a two-hour drive from Santiago, the capital.

About 50 visitors from around the world were present, mostly from the United States.

The Feast site was characterized by a

warm family atmosphere and a spirit of service where many participated by helping serve the meals, among other things. Fellowship was enhanced by all eating together in the three dining halls available at the site. "The people of Chile welcomed everyone with a kiss on the cheek, and invitations to the cabins for fellowship abounded," said Irma Ozuna from Irving, Texas. Sermons on servant rulership and the Millennium were given by Leon Walker and Mario Seiglie. Activities included a talent show, several dances attended by all ages, a tea for the elderly, a children's party and plenty of sports. Six people were baptized during the Feast, four from Chile and two from Bolivia.

*Mario Seiglie*

## Colombia

### Cartagena

On the shores of the clear, sparkling Caribbean Sea, in the inviting city of Cartagena, 43 Venezuelan, Salvadoran and Colombian brethren gathered to worship.

In order to attend we had to exert a great deal of effort and face many difficulties. For example, 66-year-old Margot de Moreno traveled for some 20 hours to get from Caracas, Venezuela, to Cartagena. However, a day before the Feast began, social and political trouble between Colombia and Venezuela caused the highway between the two borders to be closed. Despite the fact that no vehicles could pass between the two countries, Mrs. Moreno had the courage to walk the 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) between the borders, even when many younger people would not.

Likewise, despite their difficult financial



Four weddings were performed by Herbert Cisneros (center) at the Feast in Colombia. Right, Conchita Cisneros with Margot de Moreno, who traveled 20 hours to get to the site from Venezuela

situation, the Baron family made the trip to Cartagena with six of their seven children. They live in a house whose roof is made of cardboard. When it rains at night they have to get up and support the cardboard with their hands, sometimes in temperatures near freezing. Even though they live in an area where guerrilla, paramilitary and military groups are constantly fighting, they decided to cultivate their small parcel of land with the hope of being able to sell their crops and have money to attend the Feast. Unfortunately, heavy rains damaged the crops. Despite these cir-



Left, the Estonians plus Henrikas Klovas. Below, disabled children from the Emajõe Kool join Feastgoers on a nature hike. Below left, Victor Kubik translating for Mr. Klovas



## Estonia

### Tartu

cumstances, the Baron family was in Cartagena to keep the Feast.

In addition, when we all reached Cartagena, tired from the long journey, we had to endure repeated delays, waiting in torrential rain for families to be admitted into their apartments. Despite all these setbacks, at 7 o'clock more than 40 people arrived at the hotel for the opening night service. Two people were already in the room. Herbert Cisneros and his wife, Conchita! We were greatly surprised, because as we entered the room Mr. Cisneros identified us all by our first and last names. From that moment, after many hugs, we all felt like one big family, quickly forgetting all the difficulties we had experienced. As Mr. Cisneros told us: "We've had worries and troubles, but tomorrow all

For the third straight year the United Church of God has kept the Feast in Tartu, Estonia. In 1997 the high attendance was 21. It was 42 last year and rose to 54 this year. We had a high attendance of 20 Baltic brethren on one day. Visitors to Tartu came from the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and Lithuania. We had an abundance of speakers, song leaders and special music talent. Simultaneous translation into Estonian from English was done by Margit Kaljas and Mariina Viia. Consecutive translation from Russian into English of Henrikas Klovas' sermonettes was done by Victor Kubik.

Our theme for the Feast was "Christianity is a way of life, now and always" which focused on living responsible, accountable lives no matter where or how isolated we find ourselves in this world.

We held a Public Bible Lecture on the subject of "The Unlearned Lessons of Kosovo." Perceptions of the crisis in the Balkans are different from in the West, yet the solution to peace is the same. Six new people attended, with a Russian young lady studying law at the Tartu University coming to services on the Last Great Day.

During the Feast we baptized Luule Lepik of Tartu.

Three of our Estonian brethren work at a school for developmentally and sight-impaired children in Tartu. On our hiking day to the lake we brought along 13 children who thoroughly enjoyed the outing. Our members contributed to buy outdoor gym equipment and swings for the school.

During the Feast we held an editorial meeting to assess the progress of translating Church literature into Russian, Estonian and Lithuanian. In Estonian we have five articles and two lessons of the *Bible Study Course* translated. In Lithuanian we have one article completed with 11 more needing to be copy-edited. In Russian we have two booklets and 16 articles completed.

will be different. There will be joy, peace and happiness." Mr. Cisneros broadened our vision of God's plans through seven sermons and two three-hour Bible studies.

In addition to other events and activities, during the Feast, there were four marriages. Eight children were blessed and nine individuals were baptized.

*Angelita, Hernando and Claudio Sierra*

*Victor Kubik*

## France

### La Colle-sur-Loup

The French Riviera was the setting for a memorable Feast of Tabernacles for 160 brethren hailing from Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Bright blue skies and temperatures in the 70s and 80s Fahrenheit (22 to 30 degrees Celsius) were the rule.

Services at the Feast were held alternately in French and English, with a simultaneous translation provided. The messages were stimulating and encouraging, pointing to the future establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth. Council of Elders member John Jewell and his wife Tina flew in from Wales for a three-day visit, much to the delight of the brethren in La Colle.

Fellowship flowed like good French wine. Almost all attendees stayed at the all-inclusive "sheepfold" vacation colony ("Canterelle la Bergerie"), and took their meals all together in the reserved dining room which was only a few seconds' walk from the meeting hall. This meant there was much time to enjoy one another's company over three- and four-course meals.

Special activities included a Pétanque tournament, a friendly France-against-the-world football (soccer) match and a multilingual talent show. Coach excursions visited sites of interest in the area, including Nice, the medieval village of Gourdon built high on a mountain peak, the Italian city of San Remo, the Principality of Monaco (including a visit through the palace) and the city of Cannes, including a boat trip to the island of Sainte Marguerite where the man in the iron mask was imprisoned for many years.

Joel Meeker

Sylvia Ulrich, Barbara Lee and Carola Winzer in Schluchsee



## Germany

### Schluchsee

The brethren in Germany kept the Feast in Schluchsee in the beautiful Black Forest, a short distance from the Swiss border. Services were held in the Kursaal, a nice meeting hall in the city hall building. Brethren took advantage of the adjacent

restaurant serving fine traditional German food while enjoying the picturesque view of the lake and the Black Forest.

The 181 people partook of the bountiful spiritual food provided by speakers from Germany, South Africa and the United States. The services were in German with simultaneous translation into English for the guests. The messages included such topics as the importance of God's Feast days in His overall plan, the kingdom of God and what we need to do in order to be there at the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. We enjoyed a wide variety of special music contributed by German brethren as well as guests from overseas.

The welcome evening after the first Holy Day got us off to a good start with champagne and lots of fellowship. The following afternoon there was a bus tour to a local fluoride mine museum and a glass blowing factory. The youth showed us their driving abilities during an afternoon of go-cart driving. The dance was held on Tuesday evening with traditional German music provided by Alois and Franz, the Black Forest duo. The entertaining Talent Show was a hit again as young and old shared a wide variety of talents.

The Feast video was shown on Wednesday, having previously been translated into German. A seminar "How Should One Answer?" was held on Friday afternoon. The Feast ended with a farewell reception for all after the Last Great Day.

Susan Miller

## Guatemala

### Antigua

The brethren from Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica welcomed their brethren from the United States, Mexico and one member from Chile with sunny smiles and warm embraces! The Feast in Central America was once again held in Antigua, the ancient capital of Guatemala. The weather was pleasant in the lower 70s. Though most days were dotted with rain, the showers did not interfere with activities.

Larry Roybal, visiting pastor from Mexico, started the week's worth of sermons off with a sermon on how each day of the Feast represents 143 years of the Millennium, and that every hour is equal to six years. We were encouraged to make every day spiritually profitable. The attendance on the first Holy Day was 628.

In addition to a week filled with inspiring sermonettes and sermons, several activities were provided for many different age groups. Sunday evening, the teens sponsored an evening of entertainment and fun for those attending the Feast alone.

A power outage in the entire city might have put a stop to the Ladies' Breakfast on Monday morning, but plans for the breakfast went on as scheduled and the power returned just as the breakfast was scheduled to start. Everyone attending was able to take home



At the Feast in Sabaudia (Latina), Italy

three small handmade gifts, made by two American women and the Guatemalan Women's Club.

The young people enjoyed the Teen Dance on Monday night. A Ladies' Night was also held again this year. And once again, the very talented Central American brethren demonstrated their talent to a full house. Singing, story telling, various types of dances and instrumentals entertained everyone for over two and a half hours.

The final day of the Feast was begun with the Family Day and Children's Party. It was again held at the beautiful Florencia Park a few miles from Antigua. After services the day before, T-shirts that had been hand-tied by Judie Dullum, attending from the United States, had been passed out to all the children 12 and under. They were asked to wear them to the Family Day so that a picture could be taken.

The children were entertained by games, races and a clown at the party. They were also each blessed to receive a puppet (sewn by one of the young ladies from the United States), a small toy and an ice cream cone. Basketball, volleyball, playground equipment and fellowship kept everyone busy until a hot chicken lunch was served.

Another blessing occurred during the Feast when four new members were baptized. They were officially recognized during services, and given a warm welcome of applause.

After services on the Last Great Day, a Going Away Party was held at Hotel Carmen. Those who were able contributed food. Fellowship, jovial music and eating continued well past the scheduled end of the party, as no one wanted to say good-bye. It was another fantastic Feast in Central America!

Gayle L. Hoefker

## Italy

### Sabaudia (Latina)

There was a very happy Feast for 223 brethren in Sabaudia, Italy! We enjoyed a rich serving of spiritual nourishment at least once daily and five-course gourmet Italian meals twice daily. The offering was especially generous and we have experienced first-

hand the bounty of God's blessings and hope for the future.

This year the main themes for the Feast were faith and unity as brethren from Italy, the United States, Canada, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, England, the Philippines and other countries were fellowshiping together with brotherly love.

The group tours to Rome and Pompeii were very successful and inspiring, and God blessed the weather, giving us blue skies and warm ocean breezes typical to our Mediterranean region. All the brethren stayed at the same hotel and had their meals together in a family atmosphere. The hotel was located right on the beach. Families, children and singles enjoyed a Family Day with several games and much fun. Swimming in the warm ocean was an everyday option.

We had the opportunity to appreciate several talented brethren who enriched the Feast by providing simultaneous translation, special music, the choir and a talent show. Despite language differences, there was one spirit of international cooperation, like one family. Feast photos will be soon shown on our Web site ([www.labuonanotizia.org](http://www.labuonanotizia.org)).

Indeed the Feast in Italy this year was much more than words can express. The brethren's harmonious fellowship was a highlight for the Sabaudia community. Our nostalgic farewell before leaving the site was filled with brotherly hugs and tears.

Carmelo Anastasi

## Jordan

### Amman

The United Church of God held its first-ever Feast of Tabernacles in Amman, Jordan, with 86 people enjoying a very warm reception from the friendly people of this desert kingdom. Feast participants profited from inspiring messages focused on making the future reality of God's kingdom a real and life-changing component of their lives in the present. In addition, the brethren enjoyed five-star accommodations, great food and highly interesting tours. The tour highlight of the Feast was visiting the rose-red Nabataean city of Petra and hiking through the great cliff that leads to the world-famous treasury building. The more energetic Feastgoers

were able to make the additional hike to the monastery, a picturesque building carved out of the colorful rock. Other tours included visiting Jerash (a well-preserved city of the Roman Decapolis), Kerak (an ancient crusader castle), Mount Nebo, the Dead Sea and many other sites.

After the Feast, 42 brethren toured Israel and an additional 10 people visited Egypt. Feast participants commented that they enjoyed the family and close-knit



*Donna Waterhouse rides a camel on the tour of Petra during the Feast in Jordan*

environment of the Feast due to the size of the site. In addition, many appreciated the opportunity to get to know the warm and hospitable Jordanian people. The Feast served as a springboard for reinvigorating our historical relationship with Jordan and resuming efforts to preach the gospel in this part of the world.

*Cory Erickson*

## Kenya

### Nairobi

God blessed His people in Kenya with a lovely and unusual place to stay and keep the Feast: in a Benedictine monastery. The monastery rents out a section for conferences, and it's a lovely location. The elevation is over one mile high and the weather remained cool and pleasant.

Members took an outing to a national park in the Great Rift Valley where they enjoyed the beauty of the wild game of Africa and the smoldering steam from a dormant



*Group photo of the Feastgoers in Nairobi, Kenya*

volcano. It was a small group that met, just 24, but that is four times as many as last year. Several people were enjoying their first Feast. Many consider Kenya the most beautiful country in Africa with the best game parks. Come see for yourself next year.

*Fred Kellers*

## Mexico

### Acapulco

In Acapulco, Mexico, 413 brethren enjoyed eight wonderful days of Christian nourishment and fellowship. The first three were sunny with temperatures around 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit). Then we had four days of tropical rains that cooled down the temperatures but not the spirit of the Feast, which remained joyful and loving.

Our Mexican host brethren (around 240) had the opportunity to fellowship with brethren from the United States (around 150), Guatemala (23) and Chile (2).

The Feast activities included a 2½ hour yacht cruise of beautiful Acapulco Bay; a family picnic at an aquatic recreational center; and a dinner at a restaurant overlooking la Quebrada cliff, with its daring divers who plunged from the cliff into the ocean. Many families enjoyed cake and ice cream afternoons by the swimming pool of hotel Club del Sol and an afternoon family dinner at Caleta Beach. There was also a Mexican Night dinner with a band of mariachis singing beautiful Mexican folklore songs.

The highlight of the Feast were the sermons and sermonettes, all of which proved to be very inspiring and uplifting. The sermonettes covered a wide variety of themes, some of them placing special emphasis on children, young people and our elderly brethren. A group of about 70 children would enjoy the first three songs, opening prayer, sermonette and special music, and then they went to an adjoining hall for special Feast Bible lessons.

Some of the sermon topics were: lessons from the life of Abraham; why should we rejoice at the Feast?; the kingdom of God; called to be fruitful trees; the Church—a school of future teachers and kings; the day of the Lord; preparing to marry Christ; our awesome potential; and the Last Great Day of the last Feast in the physical life of Christ.

Another “moving” highlight was felt when we were listening to a sermon. Around 11:30 a.m. on September 30, all of a sudden there was an earthquake that caused much fear and trembling. However, everybody was asked to remain calm and two or three minutes after the start of the earth tremors that lasted a little more than a minute, the sermon continued and we were able to finish services feeling very thankful that our great God had spared us. Later we learned that it had been 7.4 on the Richter scale with its epicenter in the state of Oaxaca, where it destroyed many homes and killed 20.

In spite of the four stormy days and the earthquake, we had a most wonderful Feast. Our great God made possible the spiritual banquet we received from Him.

*Pablo Dimakis*

## New Zealand

### Taupo

Taupo provided a truly wonderful picture of the Millennium for the 79 brethren gathered for the Feast in this trout Mecca of the world. The warm, sunny early spring weather, together with the many activities and attractions of the area, made this an unforgettable occasion.

Visiting pastors and speakers from the United States and Australia as well as some local speakers provided the messages containing the meaning of God's wonderful plan of salvation.

Special music was provided by the Robertson family from Brisbane, Australia. This family's performance was simply stunning. The quality of music, performed on a range of instruments that included the piano, saxophone, cello and violin, added to make this Feast truly special.

A Feast dinner, attended by more than 100 including guests from another group meeting in the area, was held at de Brett's hotel, famous for its geothermal pools.

*Art Verschoor*

## Nigeria

### Lagos

For almost half of the 41 people gathered to keep God's Feast in Lagos, Nigeria, this was their first Feast of Tabernacles. They are just learning about God's Feasts and the



*Seven people were baptized in Nigeria by Fred Kellers. From left, Moses Imade, B. Clarence Bonnie, Fred Kellers, Emmanuel Ekeng, Casmir Okoko, Janet Alade, Emmanuel Agbachom and Peter Igbinokhuo*

plan of salvation shown through them.

Lovely catered meals were enjoyed between services on the Holy Days as a gift from members in the United States. The Nigerian members were very grateful.

The highlight of the Feast was the baptism of seven people, six of them keeping the Feast for the first time! God's Church in Nigeria is growing.

*Fred Kellers*

## Peru

### Huaraz

What do you find when you attend the Feast in Huaraz, Peru? Lots of smiles and open arms to welcome you. You see, the Peruvian brethren were without visitors for a

long time due to the period of terrorism that afflicted their country. This is why they are honored and thrilled when you visit them and they quickly let you know it. This year, visitors came from Chile, the United States and Canada. For the first time, services were translated simultaneously into English.

The Peruvian brethren come from different parts of Peru, so the Feast of Tabernacles is, in some cases, the only opportunity they have to fellowship with other members. No wonder joy filled the air.

Leon Walker, our director and member of the Council of Elders, and his wife, Reba, were with us for the first half of the Feast. There were sermons that dealt with the wonderful meaning of the Feasts and family relations. We had activities for our teenagers where they got to know each other better. They had a Q&A session and a dance along with some group games. As it has become a tradition here, we had a children's party where the brethren entertained and gave Feast gifts to all of the children and, among other things, the children had to transform an adult into a mummy with toilet paper. We also had family dances, a tour visiting other small towns in the surrounding areas and a lively talent show with colorful folk dances from several areas in Peru.

The fact that Huaraz is located in the Andes, 3,100 meters (about 10,000 feet) above sea level, did not stop anyone, in spite of a few altitude or *soroche* symptoms.

We had a baptism during the Feast and our highest attendance was 174 (we had expected an attendance of 150 at the most).

*Manuel Quijano and Renée Avilés*

## Philippines

### Davao City, Mindanao

With God's blessings, 270 brethren from 12 church areas (and three U.S. guests) shared meals and warm fellowship in what most considered their “best Feast ever” in Davao City. Another unexpected blessing was seven baptisms during the Feast!

This year members from all over the Philippines came to this one combined site. Because of the country's

fragmented geography and the low income level of most of its membership, attending only one national festival site would not be possible were it not for the support of home office and others.

The messages were inspiring and much appreciated, as were the Feast videos. For brethren who could not understand English, a simultaneous translation was made into Cebuano, one of the major local dialects, using FM audio equipment.

Sunny weather and a refreshing sea breeze favored the daytime activities, which included a family sports day; tours to the Philippine Eagle Center and a resort featuring a large collection of orchids and other highly prized tropical flora; and a beach outing/fruit festival where everyone had a chance to sample some of the best tropical fruits, including



Top: tour of Philippine Eagle Center; right, Verlyn Dizon, 6, at Family Sports Day



the durian—the “king of fruits and the fruit for kings.”

Evening activities included brethren bonding together in lively parlor games, a youth-and-senior dinner, a Bible study and open forum, a flower card-making workshop and a talent show and family dance.

After the Feast many shared another sumptuous meal under graceful coconut trees on neighboring Samal (Paradise) Island and enjoyed themselves with their children along white-sand beaches and blue waters. A replica of the world tomorrow?

*Edmond and Daniel Macaraeg*

## South Africa

### Uvongo

The 172 in attendance in Uvongo was higher than anticipated, and a consistently high average was maintained throughout the eight days. Uvongo is a picturesque site in the South Coast region of South Africa. The Feast was characterized by few problems, and things went very smoothly overall. This was largely due to the overall spirit and attitude of cooperation and good will that existed among the Feastgoers.

Activities included a Family Day held at a local farmers’ social club, where members enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship, fun and food. The young peoples’ activity entailed a cruise down a river, followed by an interactive Bible study and a social. The presence of a larger than expected group of friendly and outgoing young people also contributed to

the family atmosphere. It was a joy and a pleasure having them with us. Our senior citizens enjoyed a relaxed meal at the Bistro, a restaurant in the vicinity. As many of them had not seen each other since the last Feast,

there was plenty of excitement and animated conversation throughout the meal.

It was a pleasure to have as our guests from the United States Les and Marion McCullough. Mr. McCullough was regional director for the Southern

Africa region during the late 1980s and early 1990s, so it was an opportunity for many to renew acquaintances and relationships. Their input and presence was appreciated.

Most of the sermons and sermonettes were directed towards conditions that will exist once Christ returns to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. There was also an emphasis on doing our part now so that we can be part of God’s future plan for mankind. As one member commented: “Even though I have been in the Church for over 20 years, I have an even greater understanding and awareness of what God is planning for us in the Church, and for all of mankind.” Some also mentioned how blessed we are to be a part of the firstfruits at this time.

Overall, a wonderfully blessed, happy, inspiring and uplifting Feast!

*André van Belkum*



Les McCullough at the Feast in Uvongo, South Africa. Youth Day boat ride on Umzukuze River



## Tonga

### Mu’a

Greetings from the Feast of Tabernacles at Mu’a, Tonga, in the South Pacific. We had 21 attending on the first Holy Day. We had two members here from Fiji and a visitor from the United States. The weather is very fine and beautiful.

*Tolu Ha’angana*

## United States

### Bend, Oregon

Feastgoers enjoyed ideal fall weather in the millennial setting of Central Oregon. Warm, sunny days with temperatures in the mid-70s to low 80s and cool nights made outdoor activities a delight. The High Desert Museum, a 38-mile dinner train ride and a family chuck wagon dinner show were among the most popular attractions. A family dance was also a big hit, attended by several hundred. About 90 singles enjoyed the Warm Springs Indian “pow wow.”

The spiritual atmosphere was happy, relaxed and positive. Several commented that the sermons here were the best they had heard in years. Holy Day offerings were generous. More than half a ton of food and cash donations totaling over \$3,000 were also collected for the local food bank and energy assistance fund.

Attendance averaged 1,037, after a high of 1,164 on opening day. We also had attendees from other groups, members who do not currently attend any organization and a few people from the community. A Bible study on Galatians was attended by 236.

Illness and injury were notably lacking. All major lost items were located soon after announcements and prayer requests. Even a stolen billfold with all the money intact was located immediately after a relative prayed about it.

*Larry Walker*

### Branson, Missouri

More than 1,200 brethren gathered to rejoice amidst the fall splendor in the beautiful Ozarks at Branson, Missouri. God’s Spirit was evident from the beginning as He answered the opening prayer to inspire and to encourage His people at the Feast. The membership seemed hungry for the spiritual Feast, and were very enthusiastic and responsive. A general theme of remembering our calling and our vision seemed to flow throughout. The Feast film and the short film regarding the Ambassador Bible Center were very enthusiastically received, with many positive comments heard afterward. The general Bible study on Monday night was attended by about half of the people, and the youth Bible study and young adults’ study were also both well attended.

This year marked the first year for the Festival Youth Instruction at Branson and this was warmly received and well attended. Family Day was enjoyed by over 450

brethren who gathered for an afternoon of activities, food and fellowship at Branson, U.S.A. Senior citizens enjoyed an afternoon of dining, entertainment and a sing-along at Mesquite Charleys, while the youth had two activities, one at the Boys’ and Girls’ Club, and a picnic at Lake Taneycomo. Weather throughout the Feast was spectacular.

Brethren seemed to have recaptured some of the approach of bygone years of deeply desiring to “hear the Word,” as attendance remained stable throughout the Feast. Our high attendance was 1,168, and didn’t vary by more than 80 people except for the opening and closing services. Enthusiasm remained high, even though the Branson site had “mandatory aerobic exercises” in coming into the theater from the parking lot, which was on a hillside behind the theater. Brethren returned home full after having a wonderful eight-day reunion of the family of God.

*Michael Blackwell*

### Corpus Christi, Texas

Once again, God blessed us with a wonderful Festival of Tabernacles in Corpus Christi, as 750 people gathered from all over the United States to keep the Feast. I don’t know how it could have been better! The sermons were well prepared, and very inspiring. The messages were “on target” as they focused on our calling and the great plan of God. A central theme of “capturing and maintaining vision” seemed to weave its way through the Feast sermons of 1999. Few of us will soon forget Jim Franks’ sermon on how we must have the faith and vision to be willing to sacrifice our lives for something yet in the future that we cannot now see, or Gary Petty’s Youth Day sermon on being ambassadors for Christ.

God poured out wonderful physical blessings as well. The weather was gorgeous, with temperatures in the 80s and mostly low humidity. The one heavy rain shower came during a morning when services were scheduled for the afternoon. In addition to many exciting local attractions, our activities included a teen dance, beach party, Family Day and hospitality rooms for singles, teens and senior citizens. Our senior citizens enjoyed a wonderful meal as they sat overlooking Corpus Christi Bay while long-time pastor John Bald delivered a message of encouragement.

Over a third of our members stay at one property on Mustang Island which extends into the beautiful Gulf of Mexico. We really feel like one big family.

*Britton M. Taylor*

### Escondido (San Diego), California

Over 1,100 enjoyed the Feast in sunny Escondido. The highlight of the Feast was the outstanding messages. Several members commented that this had been the best Feast for them since the first Feast of United in 1995. Several speakers took advantage of the state-of-the-art auditorium at the California Center of the Arts Escondido by showing videos and slides, and playing sound tracks to enhance their messages.

The special music always seems more inspired during the Feast of Tabernacles. This year in Escondido was no exception. Although the choir was small, their voices melded together beautifully to inspire us all.

Over 200 attended the special Bible study conducted by Roger Foster, long-time minister and writer, on the subject of "End Time Prophecy." The teens and young adults also had special interactive studies with Clyde Kilough and Bill Bradford.

Teens enjoyed a beach party and a fun night at the Family Fun Center. Young adults had an evening get-acquainted beach party and several other impromptu activities, including a daily drop-in refreshment and fellowship area in the auditorium.

Other organized activities included a Hawaiian luau, a dinner-dance cruise on San Diego Harbor, a seniors' luncheon and Family Day at the Vista Water Park.

*Dave Register*

### Estes Park, Colorado

Our first year in Estes Park was a very positive experience. Spirits were high and attendance was up considerably from what was anticipated. Early projections indicated a high attendance of around 500. Pre-registration turned out to be 831, indicating a possible high attendance of about 750. Our actual high was 952, with 6 of the 10 services running over 900. We had to set up an overflow area with TV monitors in the lobby for 100 people.

The area received a snowfall of 7 inches one morning. We were grateful it was on the day we had scheduled afternoon services.

Activities were all very well attended. Family Day at the Lazy B Wranglers attracted over 500 for the meal and Western entertainment.

### Children Enjoy Festival Youth Instruction

Children attending the Feast of Tabernacles at 12 sites were given the opportunity to gather together with others of their age group to learn about the world tomorrow. Two times during the week, children from kindergarten through fifth grade were taught Bible lessons specifically designed for their level of learning. These lessons were developed by Judy Servidio and Linda Knapp, and included lessons about the Ten Commandments, the change in wild animals and the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Most classes included a song, game and a snack.

The 1999 festival lessons were taught by volunteer adult instructors and high school students aided with the instruction. Many classes were filled to capacity, and the children seemed to have enjoyed the spiritual learning experience.

*Bonnie L. Greider*

One of the outstanding features of the Estes Park area is the large number of somewhat domesticated elk. They display little fear of man and can be seen on virtually any street or neighborhood. This time of year is mating season, and any number of brethren saw huge bulls with their "harems." Some Feastgoers heard bulls bugling for hours on end—at night! Truly, their presence lent a millennial atmosphere to the site.

The brethren were very cooperative and responsive, even when there were inconveniences or housing problems to work out. This added to what many said was an outstanding Feast, physically and spiritually.

*Larry Neff*

### Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

The beautiful hills of south central Pennsylvania provided a millennial setting for the brethren in Gettysburg, where our high attendance was 1,208. Another hundred or more joined us through cybercasting—the modern technology enabling shut-ins at home to listen to services live on their computer over the Internet.

Tours of the area surrounding Gettysburg, site of the bloodiest battle of the American Civil War, cemented in our minds the futility of man's way of war and helped us to further yearn for the peace of the kingdom of God.

Sermons inspired us to follow God's marching orders for the Feast, live by faith and not by sight, and grasp the vision of the coming reality of the rule of Christ and the saints on the earth.

Over 400 enjoyed bus tours to Washington, D.C. Sites seen included Arlington National Cemetery, the White House and the Lincoln, Vietnam, Korean and Roosevelt memorials.

God blessed us with beautiful weather (even the rain on Family Day was taken in stride!) and bountiful, generous offerings. Most importantly, He also blessed us with solid spiritual food.

*Dave Myers*

### Jekyll Island, Georgia

Two exciting things happened to us in Jekyll Island this year. First, Hurricane Floyd passed us by so we could have the Feast in Jekyll. The second thing was, we were expecting an attendance of 1,200. But on the first Holy Day we had 1,395 and on the morning of the Last Great Day we had 1,457! After opening night the attendance never dropped below 1,338.

We had a fuller than usual activity schedule this year, including tours of Savannah, Georgia, and the Jacksonville, Florida, Zoo; Senior Citizens' Luncheon; Beach Party; Family Dance; Festival Youth Instruction for the children; and three special Bible studies for young adults, teens and the general audience. These were well attended.

The weather was good overall, rainy for a couple of days. The messages were excellent, pointing us toward the millennial reign of Jesus Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment and our part in them. God's people gave strong offerings. The videos were well received. People obviously were enjoying themselves. We all came away refreshed spiritually. Many commented how quickly the Feast went this year. "Time flies when you're having fun!"

*Bob Jones*

### Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii

Aloha! Feastgoers once again met in Lihue on the island of Kauai in Hawaii. Highest attendance was 423. An atmosphere of excitement and thankfulness pervaded the Feast for the entire duration. The messages from the elders were inspiring, uplifting and mind expanding. All the elders focused on the meaning of the Feast, the soon-coming kingdom of God and His purpose for calling us now.

Our teens enjoyed an afternoon of kayaking on the Wailua River, a teen dance and a Bible study conducted by Jim Chapman. Bill Jahns conducted an evening Bible study for the young adults. Friday evening, the seniors enjoyed a dinner at the Coconut Beach Resort.

Those who attended in Hawaii took opportunity to enjoy a very wide variety of fun-filled activities—from golfing and deep-sea fishing, to snorkeling, scuba diving, helicopter tours and enjoying the beautiful beaches here in paradise.

*Earl Roemer*

### Louisville, Kentucky

Unseasonably warm and sunny (high 80s) weather greeted 685 of our family who enjoyed a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles in the Louisville, Kentucky, area.

Response to the sermons as well as the Feast videos was very positive. "It is so exciting to see us move forward with the Work"

was expressed over and over. The spiritual food was uplifting as was the fellowship. The Holy Day offerings were exceptionally strong this year. Several commented that this was also encouraging to them.

As always the children's choir was a real highlight. The big grins and the hand waving by some in the choir played well with the audience. And the adult choir as well as the various pianists and musicians added a tremendous boost to the Feast.

Over a third of those at the Feast joined in the fun of the family dance. Also, over 250 enjoyed a dinner cruise on the Ohio River on the Star of Louisville. We were the only people on this particular charter and with the sun out and temperatures in the 70s, there were smiles everywhere. Other activities included the Family Day at Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom, teen and family activities at the largest go-kart track in the country and two sessions of "pickin' and grinnin'" as it is known in these parts (playing and listening to guitars, banjos, etc.).

The senior luncheon received rave reviews along with the violin, piano and vocal solos given as entertainment. Many said this was the best they had been to in a long while. Those who attended the teen study, the young adult study and the special Bible study all came back with positive comments. This was also the first year for Louisville to have the Festival Youth Instruction. The feedback from this was also very positive. Virtually all of the elementary school aged children participated.

The real key to this Feast was that everyone seemed excited to be here and share in a vision that is so very important to us all.

*Mark Winner*

### Orlando, Florida

Warm weather and mostly sunny skies greeted the 940 brethren attending the Feast in Orlando. This was the fifth year for United to use this location and it proved to be as popular as ever, especially for families with children. Many families took advantage of their free time by visiting Sea World, Animal Kingdom or one of the Disney parks.

The main focus of the messages this year was the need to be stirred up to finish the Work that God has given us to do, and the need to be looking forward to the coming of the kingdom of God. Several sermons dealt with descriptions of the economy and cities of the Millennium. The addition of special Bible studies for young adults, teens and the general membership added to the spiritual focus of the Feast.

Family Day at "Wet N' Wild" proved to be the most popular activity again this year. Over 450 children, parents and grandparents enjoyed an exciting day at Orlando's most popular water park. Feastgoers had exclusive use of the entire park from 6 to 9 p.m. Many families commented that they hadn't had this much fun in many years.

A spirit of cooperation pervaded the Feast in a remarkable way this year. Complaints were at an all-time low, and God's people seemed genuinely dedicated to



Kindergarteners in Branson learn how the nature of wild animals will change in the world tomorrow. Left, second and third graders in Branson play a game to help learn about God's kingdom



Women's choir and Festival Youth Instruction at Wisconsin Dells

truths as found in the annual Holy Days and for inviting us to observe them each year.

Steve Nutzman

## Zambia

### Mumbwa

This year's Feast in Zambia was held in the Nalubanda area, Mumbwa District, 125 kilometers (77 miles) west of Lusaka. Apren Momba and his wife, Grace, made their small family farm available as a Feast site.

"The majority of our brethren are small-scale farmers who live in a remote area of the country," said André van Belkum, pastor who serves from South Africa. "Since they do not have the funds to travel, the Feast for the last three years was held at a site close to their homes. This enabled them to reach the Feast location by either walking or cycling. None of them own any kind of motor vehicle."

We were fortunate to receive video sermon tapes from our home office, and the content was truly meat in due season. The messages were not only encouraging and uplifting, but made us yearn for the kingdom of God even more. We thank those who were responsible for making them available.

"In order for the group to view the sermon videos, our elder Kambani Banda transported a diesel motor in the back of his personal pick-up van from his home city,

Lusaka, to the Feast site in Nalubanda," said Mr. van Belkum. "Even though the distance is about 125 kilometers, the journey takes four and a half hours as a result of the poor quality of the roads. But everything went well, and each day they had a supply of electricity. One slight hindrance is that the noise of the chugging motor attracted curious onlookers from miles around."

This was truly a feast. The main meals consisted of *nshima* (maize meal), potato chips and rice. This was served with goat, chicken, game meat and vegetables. Breakfast included rice samp, eggs (various styles), bread, tea or cocoa. The portions were Feast size. We felt abundantly blessed.

Accommodation was a challenge. Our "five star hotels" consisted of grass booths with compacted mud floors. Some ingenious families constructed beds from tree stems, and used grass thatch as mattresses. However these inconveniences did not in any way dampen the joyous Feast spirit.

The activities included Youth Day, Family Day and a dance. Members didn't give preference as to which activity was best, but I personally think that fellowship and laughter ranked first. All these activities helped to make the eight days a joyful, festive time.

Attendance averaged 65. We can hardly wait for the next Feast.

Kambani Banda

## Zimbabwe

### Harare

A quiet but spiritually uplifting Feast was had by all in Harare, Zimbabwe, where our attendance fluctuated between 18 and

21 people. Only 11 of the brethren were from Zimbabwe. The rest were visitors from Malawi, Zambia and South Africa. The taped sermons sent by home office and also the two videos on the Work were much appreciated.

Our minister, André van Belkum from South Africa, was able to be with us for three days which was also greatly appreciated. On the Tuesday during the Feast we had a double service so as to make full spiritual use of his presence and had a lunch together at our meeting facility. That night we all met at the camp and caravan park chalets where some of the brethren were staying. It was an opportunity for us all to be together before Mr. van Belkum left for South Africa the next day. Pizza and fridge cake were provided so that



Group photo from the Harare, Zimbabwe, Feast site

we could get on with the serious business of fellowshiping and not worry about food preparation.

Because of the size of the group, there was an excellent spirit of warmth, brotherly love and concern prevalent throughout the eight days. We were like one big, happy family. Most of the members from outlying areas stayed in chalets at the local municipal camping grounds. This provided an ideal opportunity for fellowship, and God further blessed us with lovely warm, sunny weather.

In all, this was truly a most positive and happy Feast.

Gill and Mandy Heathcote

## My First Feast

As I negotiated the myriad and confusing roundabouts into Noosa, Queensland, I looked about me at this new center for hedonism in the Southern Hemisphere where the beautiful people of Australia congregate. "Why would anyone choose a place like this for a Church gathering?" I wondered. I had come from a Sabbath-keeping Baptist background and before that a Presbyterian ethos. Christians were poor, and you go to nature to be close to God, I'd been taught. Wealthy, crowded Noosa didn't seem to fit.

Due to a break up of my previous church over issues which demanded that a stand be made, I had been on the fringe of United Church of God for a year. One generous couple offered the spare room on their unit for the Feast, so I accepted. This was my first Feast, and it was all very strange.

Services were large and long and well-organized, children well-behaved and the

special music wonderful. Such talent used to glorify God! It seems that good music is always present where God's spirit is. A video from "home office" showed us activities from all over the world with others doing the same as we were.

The messages were focused on the world tomorrow. This was new ground for me. I'd known it was all there in Scripture and the future, but had never really thought about it in concrete terms pertaining to me personally. Me in a major leadership role was quite a challenging idea.

Initially I worried: Do people get left out and have to eat on their own? The people were so friendly and loving and knew each other well enough that they could spot a "foreigner" a mile off. They'd ask, "How many Feasts have you been to?" "This is my first." This evoked enthusiasm and interest, and in no time I was contributing to the din of friendliness that filled the place. I found I was included in the plans of the people I was

staying with, but free to do as I chose. We did lunch on the river bank with fish and chips out of paper, coffee for hours in a delightful place with a pool, shared potluck meals at different units. It just happened. When my husband rang and asked how it was going, I told him, "We go to church every morning. Then we party. I love it!" He even came down for the Ball.

One lady was there with a debilitating disease which offered no hope, but the most beautiful smile. She was delighted to be there. She had to be cared for, and while one lady took most of the load, many people just did her lunch or dinner without fuss. No fanfare, no accolades. It just happened.

The Last Great Day rolled around amazingly fast. Good-byes, but no sadness. The most important thing I took with me was a new insight into God and His plan for His world, and a new dimension to Him and His people.

Barbara Eldred

the desire to get on with the Work and be pleasing to God. We look forward with eager anticipation to the fulfillment of what these wonderful days portray.

Roy Demarest

### Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

Spectacular fall foliage greeted 980 attendees from at least 25 states and two Canadian provinces as they attended the Feast of Tabernacles at Wisconsin Dells. Brethren commented how peaceful and encouraging the Feast was to them. Uplifting messages were heard each day and were complemented by outstanding special music.

A well-attended Family Dance provided a special evening for all ages to enjoy. Teens were encouraged to bring canned goods to the Teen Dance as a community service project, and 115 pounds of food were delivered to a local food pantry. A letter of thanks was received from the Central Wisconsin Community Action Council, Inc. commending the youth for their donation to this worthy cause. In part, the letter stated, "It is nice to see our youth getting involved with the fight against hunger and the desire to assist those who are less fortunate than themselves. A big thank you to your parents for teaching you the 'Art of Giving.'"

The Senior Citizens' Luncheon was well received once again this year. Regional pastor Jim Servidio prepared a special evening Bible study using computer graphics to help deliver his topic, "Why Will Christ Offer Us Rulership in His Kingdom?" Both the Family Day activities and the singles' activities were appreciated by those attending. In addition, children from kindergarten through fifth grade were offered Festival Youth Instruction classes several days during the Feast. A special teen Bible study and a Bible study for young adults were given one evening as well.

For the first time at the Dells site, live audio cybercasting of services was offered over the Internet. Over 140 people logged on to hear services from as far away as Europe and Canada.

We are very grateful to God for His

# From the Ministry...

## Outward Appearance: Does God Care?

by Kevin Epps

Have you heard of Spencer Tunik? His name is not a household name, but his photography business has stirred up controversy in cities all over the world. Tunik, who has been arrested several times, is suing New York City for interfering with his right to take photos of nude people in public places.

If he's committed a crime, then how can he sue anyone? After all, isn't public nudity against the law? Yes, it is illegal in New York unless, according to state law, the people are "entertaining or performing in a play, exhibition or show." For instance the filming of a scene for a movie. Therefore, Tunik is suing New York City for arresting him for a crime that allegedly doesn't exist.

### Self-Justification

Above and beyond state laws, a person's life, including his appearance, is governed by far greater principles within God's Word. Unfortunately, human nature has an insatiable appetite to justify itself, even if it has to misuse the Bible to do so. For instance, one might use the following scriptures to justify Tunik's behavior: Genesis 2:25, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed"; John 7:24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment"; and 1 Samuel 16:7, "But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'" In modern day terms we say, "You can't judge a book by its cover."

Most of us, as Christians, understand that the Bible should not be used in this way to justify public nudity. But do the scriptures above give us license to do whatever we desire with how we appear in public? Is it simply "between me and God"? Does God, who is spiritual and invisible to us, care about how we choose to appear at church, work and in the society in general?

### God's Creation

God's creation, excellent in appearance and order, displays that outward appearances are important to God. The creation did not have to look good in order to function efficiently. However, God chose to make it attractive because the breathtaking, awe-some beauty and design of His creation is a reflection of His character. Genesis 1:31 says, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." Thousands of years later, the Eternal Creator

could still be seen through His creation: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

Notice Romans 1:20, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." The creation, in its appearance and function, provides adequate proof of the true Creator.

Consider the creative work of Jesus Christ as a carpenter (Mark 6:3). Do you think He cared how His carpentry work looked outwardly? Based upon the outcome of the universe, it's safe to say His work was also orderly, decent and efficient.

### Appearance of Evil?

It is clear that appearance is important to God. Paul wrote, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22, King James Version). What is the intent of this verse? The New King James Version and New American Standard Bible specify every "form" of evil while the New International Version notes every "kind" of evil.

The intent of this verse covers how we look, which can be a form or kind of evil. Therefore, as Christians, we are to be circumspect about our attire and appearance.

### All Things Are Lawful

Paul emphasized that Christians are supposed to be concerned about the impact of their appearance on others. He wrote, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Corinthians 10:23). How is this so? Because by our appearance we can easily give a wrong impression to another person. Interestingly, a clear conscience doesn't always justify one's appearance (verses 28 and 29).

After establishing the importance of appearances, Paul later appears to contradict himself. "Do you look at things according to the outward appearance?" (2 Corinthians 10:7). The implication is they should not do so. Yet this is not a contradiction. "Outward appearance" here is associated with Paul's "bodily presence" (verse 10), which some Corinthians felt was "weak." In other words, Paul's stature did not command the kind of respect General Patton's did. The stature we were born with is not a reflection of our character, but the appearance we choose does reflect what is in our mind and heart.

### Modest Apparel

What causes us to dress a certain way? Just how do we come to a conclusion about what is appropriate for us to wear or not to wear? The difficulty with the idea of modesty is that it lies in the area of values. A value is something we choose to hold as important to us. A value is an abstraction,

which needs interpreting. We show what we feel is important with our behavior, by what we say and do. So, how do we interpret modesty? Let's see what Paul wrote about modesty.

"In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing" (1 Timothy 2:9). Other translations say: "dress modestly, with decency and propriety" (New International Version); "proper clothing, modestly and discreetly" (New American Standard); "adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel" (Revised Standard Version). We must interpret Paul's advice in the light of God's Word and the society we live in, with an understanding of human nature. This doesn't mean old-fashioned. It means decent, respectful, non-revealing yet fashionable. So it takes some thought how to be fashionable and stylish and yet not be extreme.

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*If we underestimate the impact of our appearance, then we're underestimating a key area of being lights to the world...*

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Verse 9 begins with "in like manner." The previous verse gives instruction to the men regarding public worship. "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (verse 8). Paul mentioned "everywhere" to show that men should pray in all places rather than just in the synagogue or temple. "Lifting up holy hands" in that day reflected a sincere, godly attitude in their public appeal to God. Therefore the significance of "in like manner" is that women, too, are to set a sincere, godly example everywhere, not just at church, with their appearance. Of course, both men and women should wear appropriate attire to church, too, especially when you consider we are coming before God.

The "braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing" had more to do with the degree of these items rather than forbidding them totally. God figuratively dressed His bride in gold and silver and quality clothing (Ezekiel 16:10-14). Unfortunately, these blessings from God became a source of vanity for Old Testament Israel (verses 15 to 19). In general, like the bride God figuratively clothed, one's attire should reflect that which is quality not vanity, godly esteemed not worldly extremes, modern not materialistic.

## The Example of Jesus Christ

The average Jewish male during the time of Christ wore tassels as noted in Numbers 15:38-40. It was the hem or tassels of Christ's garment that the woman touched while seeking to be healed of an ailment she suffered for 12 years (Matthew 9:20-22).

Though the Pharisees wore similar clothing, Christ had a problem with their attire. "They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matthew 23:5). The enlarged borders and/or tassels of their garments reflected their self-righteous attitudes in thinking they kept the law better than everyone else. Since Jesus expressed concern about the outward appearance of the Pharisees, His enemies, how much more concerned is He about the appearance of His Body, the Church? Jesus said the Pharisees were "hypocrites" because their seemingly righteous outward appearance contradicted their inward lack of character (Matthew 23:25-26). Conversely, if one who is converted fails to reflect conversion in his or her outward appearance, is this not another form of hypocrisy? Christ tells us to clean the inside "first" rather than "only."

Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. This sign was necessary because Christ's outward appearance reflected a balance in His society rather than an extreme. Christ could not be detected by special religious garb. He was not old-fashioned or strait-laced. Neither was He flashy, faddish or trendy. Nor did He try to look sexy and provocative.

### Lights to the World

If we underestimate the impact of our appearance, then we're underestimating a key area of being lights to the world "that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Everything we do sends a message to others. What we choose to wear to church services, job interviews, restaurants, the spa, the beach and other public settings does send a message. The difficulty is the message we send might not be the one we want or intend to send. For example, will the latest style be seen by others as attractive or as sexy and provocative?

What we choose to wear should not be driven by "selfish ambition or conceit" (Philippians 2:3-4), but by what is balanced, reasonable and pleasing to God. A Christ-like attitude will strive to "look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." Let's strive to set a godly example "everywhere." *UN*

• Kevin Epps, pastor in New Jersey, New York City, Philadelphia and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, has been recovering since a blood vessel in his brain ruptured September 7. He says: "According to God's mercy, I'm feeling stronger each day. Overall, I'm doing much better now. The brethren's prayers and expressions of concern have been very, very encouraging."

# From the Ministry...

## Thoughts for Thanksgiving

by Joel Meeker

The first Thanksgiving Day I spent outside the United States was quite an experience. I was a 20-year-old Ambassador College student, working as a volunteer teacher in a refugee camp in the golden triangle region of northern Thailand. We were doing our best to prepare Laotian refugees who had fled the communist regime in their country, for the move to the host countries who had agreed to take them in. We taught them English or French, and the rudiments of Western culture they would need to get along in their new homes.

It was a challenge. How do you explain all the comforts and complexities of life in a Western metropolis, things like supermarkets, shopping malls and super-highways, to people who have lived all their lives in remote jungle villages? Many of my students had lived by slash-and-burn farming. They lived in bamboo houses with dirt floors.

While I was teaching, I was also learning. This was my initiation to life in what we optimistically call "developing" countries. The gritty reality of life for the majority of the world's population struck home hard. I learned about the shorter life expectancy people have in such countries; 55 or 60 was old for them. They were more frequently ill, often with diseases we no longer worry about in the West. I discovered how much more difficult it is to earn one's daily bread, and how long hours of labor may not guarantee subsistence to a family. And I saw the suffering of the refugee: family members separated and lost during their escape, or killed by pursuers. There is the loss and disorientation that comes of having to abandon one's home and country with only what can be carried by hand.

### A Thai Thanksgiving

It was in this context that my friend Dave Baker and I, who were the only two English teachers at the Chiang Kham refugee camp, received an invitation for Thanksgiving dinner. An American missionary lady had invited the various aid workers and other missionaries in the area. We were a group of 10 including an Italian doctor, a Swiss dentist and his wife, an aid worker from somewhere down under. We were thrilled to receive the invitation because Dave and I thought we were going to have our usual meal of a bowl of rice with a bit of water buffalo meat for Thanksgiving. But our hostess had managed to find a plump turkey, not common in northern Thailand. She made stuffing,

mashed potatoes and gravy. She prepared a sauce out of a local fruit which tasted like cranberry, and made a pie out of a local squash that tasted just like pumpkin. I was more thankful for that meal in Chiang Kham than I ever had been during Thanksgiving as a child.

Not that I hadn't been thankful before. It's just that I hadn't realized how many blessings I had, until I could compare with people who'd never had most of them. It had never occurred to me that our regular Thanksgiving meal each year would represent a never-in-a-lifetime experience to a big part of the world's population.

### A Short List of Blessings

Since that Thanksgiving spent in the golden triangle, I've visited and sometimes worked in other "developing countries" in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. I'd like to share a short list of physical blessings I took for granted before those travels. These are written from an American point of view, but they are generally true for all the nations that make up what we call the West.

*I never miss a meal unless I choose to.* Like many Americans, I worry more about eating too much than not eating enough. Most people in the world don't eat their fill every day. According to the 1999 World Health Organization report (all of the statistics to follow come from that report), half the children growing up in Guatemala will have their growth stunted by malnutrition. This happens to over 60 percent of the children in Ethiopia. Granted, these countries are on the worst end of the spectrum, but there are many others in Africa, the Americas, Asia and even Europe where malnutrition stunts a substantial percentage of the children.

*I was more thankful for that meal in Chiang Kham than I ever had been during Thanksgiving as a child.*

*I have a generous life expectancy.* As of 1998, a boy born in Haiti had a life expectancy of 51 years. A girl born in Bangladesh has a life expectancy of 58 years. A male Rwandan child will live, on average, to be only 39. This means I'll have 20 or 30 extra years to live compared to many of my counterparts in the world. Barring something unusual, I'll get to watch my children grow all the way up, and have a good chance of meeting my grandchildren, and even of watching them grow up.

*My family receives excellent medical care.* This is not something to be taken for granted as the new millennium dawns.

Though I may sometimes complain about the cost of medical coverage, and the difficulties of getting insurance, my family has access to some of the best medical care in the world. Much of the world has only the most rudimentary of care. Over 10 percent of the children born in Pakistan will die before age 5. The figure reaches a shattering 25 percent of the children born in Afghanistan.

*My children receive free public education.* While our public education system has its problems, even with its flaws we can be



*A Thanksgiving meal represents a never-in-a-lifetime experience to much of the world*

thankful for it. I have friends in Cameroon who can't afford to send all their children to school. At a cost of about \$50 per year, per student, they must choose which of their children they will send, when they can find the money to send any of them. Since most of the people in the country are unemployed, and there is no social security system, they have no guaranteed income. This makes going to school a precarious proposition for most children there. The average man in Cameroon over 25 years of age has three years of schooling. The average woman has 1.7 years.

*I can count on the free and fair election of the nation's leaders.* Most of the countries in the world claim to be democratic, but for many of them this is true in name only. I may not agree with our leaders on everything (I don't), and I may even worry about the fitness of some of them to govern (I do), but I don't have to seriously worry about them fixing elections, or staging a military coup d'état and refusing to leave office. Many countries in Asia and South America, and almost all countries in Africa, live in perpetual fear of just such things. In some regions of the world, domination by the strongest and most ruthless is just standard operating procedure.

*By hard work I can advance in the career of my choice.* I've met many very intelligent, capable people in Asia, Africa and even Europe who have a good education—sometimes graduate degrees—job experience and the willingness to work hard, but who are unemployed or underemployed, or in dead-end jobs, because the economic situation in their country stifles advancement. You remember the old joke about the toy designed to help children learn about life: no matter how you put it

together, it doesn't work. That joke is economic reality in much of the world. People with equivalent education levels and experience, may have a tenth or less of our purchasing power. And if the average American so chooses, he can go back to school (while keeping his current job) and change careers to one he thinks he'll enjoy more. We can advance as far as our ability and drive will take us. That's a luxury most people in the world don't have.

The blessings mentioned above are not things I've earned. I just happen to have been born in the United States. In my experience, we Americans are no smarter than other peoples, but in many, many ways we are more blessed than most. Yes, we work hard, but others in the world work as hard or harder with much less to show for it. We are like children growing up in a wealthy family. Because we've always had certain blessings, we can easily take them for granted. Someone once said: "He who is not grateful for the good things he has would not be happy with what he wishes he had." Something to think about.

Some of our brethren reading this article in parts of the developing world don't now have the blessings I've just listed, probably never will in this life. I hope we all pray for one another regularly, that our Father will fulfill all our needs including the physical, all around the world (Philippians 4:19).

### Spiritual Blessings

But most importantly, wherever we live on this earth, as members of the Church of God we all have blessings that those not called by God can't yet have. These are the most important blessings of all, because they're spiritual in nature.

We have the privilege of knowing God the Father and Jesus Christ (John 6:40-44), knowing God's way of life (Acts 18:25-26) and His purpose for mankind. Our lives have meaning, and an ultimate purpose going far beyond this physical existence. We have the amazing destiny of becoming full-fledged members of the family of God and inheriting all creation (Romans 8:16-23). What wonderful things for which to be thankful! There are no greater blessings than those God is giving to us.

That's a good reason for us to follow the encouragement that the apostle Paul gave the church in Ephesus to be "giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20). Thankfulness is to be a way of life for Christians.

So those of us who live in nations celebrating a Thanksgiving Day should be especially thankful, but not on that day only. Our thanksgiving should go on all year round. After all, our blessings never stop. UN

• A version of this article first appeared in the November VCM, <http://www.vcmagazine.org>.

# Local Church Updates...

## Salt Lake Ski Weekend Set for February 19 to 21

The Salt Lake City, Utah, Ski Weekend will be Presidents' Day weekend, February 19 to 21, 2000. Costs for this annual event are about \$50 a day for ski passes and rentals. Call 801-943-6786 or e-mail [bjahns@ucg.org](mailto:bjahns@ucg.org) or [rachael.jahns@mcworld.com](mailto:rachael.jahns@mcworld.com).

## Cincinnati Family Tournament Set for December 24 to 26

The second annual Cincinnati Family Tournament will feature basketball, volleyball, Bible studies, seminars, Sabbath services and a dance December 24 to 26.

More than 500 people from 20 states participated last year.

Friday begins with basketball and volleyball on five courts under one roof. This will allow guys and girls, men and even young children to play basketball, while volleyball teams for teens and mixed adults are playing in the same building.

Friday evening there will be Bible studies for teens, young adults and families at the

Kings Island Resort. Sabbath morning there will be interactive seminars on subjects ranging from prophecy to marriage relations.

Saturday night will be a dance, and games will conclude Sunday by 2:30 p.m. For information, contact Cincinnati North pastor Jim O'Brien at (513) 755-0040 or by e-mail, [jimobri@aol.com](mailto:jimobri@aol.com).

Jim O'Brien



Three-legged race at Calgary Junior Kids Camp

## Calgary Runs First Junior Kids Camp

On acreage northeast of Calgary, Alberta, two hospitable hosts, Ernie and

Della Von Hollen, helped kick off the first Calgary Junior Kids Camp August 10 and 11.

Although the weather put a damper on a few of the planned activities, it certainly did not stop the children. Activities included a three-legged race, bird feeder construction, lawn bowling (actually carpet bowling because of the rain) and making baskets out of reeds and floating them down a canal carrying little aluminum foil babies (Moses). We also had play time in the sand, tried to find the "manna" by looking for hidden

peanuts and a wiener and marshmallow roast.

Sleeping in tents was an exciting event as well. Chelsey Petersen, Elizabeth Von Hollen and Desiree Emery were still in good spirits even though they had to make their way to the house after being rained out of their tents. The visit from the lizard and spider may have helped them run faster!

Next year's camp is being planned, and we hope to have it on a weekend so parents can join the fun.

Heidi Poffenroth

## Youth Winter Camp '99 Applications Available

The youth Winter Camp will be held from December 26 to 30, 1999, in southern Wisconsin on the shores of Lake Geneva.

Winter Camp attracts youth and volunteers from all over the United States. Scheduled activities include snow football, dance class and a dance, youth leadership training, basketball, volleyball, Christian living, Web page class, a variety of outdoor activities, fun and fellowship.

Visit last year's Winter Camp Web Page at <http://www.wintercamp.org> to get a taste of camp and keep up with breaking news.

Campers and staff can request an

application by writing to the address below, or e-mailing their request to: [s\\_nutzman@ucg.org](mailto:s_nutzman@ucg.org). You may also visit the UCG Web page for an application at: <http://www.ucg.org/youthcamp/camp.html>. Tuition is \$155 per camper (\$60 for staff volunteers) which includes lodging, food and activities. Campers should be between 10 and 18 years old and staff should be over 16. Please send application requests to: Steve Nutzman, 520 Wexford Rd., Janesville, WI 53546, phone (608) 758-9228, fax (608) 758-8885, e-mail: [s\\_nutzman@ucg.org](mailto:s_nutzman@ucg.org).

Steve Nutzman

# Letters...

## Winds of Doctrine

"Hi, [here are] some thoughts after reading the 'Q&A: Tithing' article, featured in the most recent *United News*.

"There definitely are a lot of various 'winds of doctrine' blowing around among God's people. In my attempts to 'check it out' and compare it to my biblical analysis, I'm becoming even more convicted of God's truth than ever before. Well, no wonder, because God's truth contains the same basic principles which my loving parents taught me as I was growing up. I've just been on a long road to 'rediscovering' these principles and the benefits of adhering to them.

"If an individual chooses *not* to tithe, the action not only robs God, but it robs the individual as well. Giving truly is more blessed than receiving. To withhold tithes is to short-change yourself of the joy of giving, along with invaluable lessons of helping those in times of need. There is also an enormous blessing which God returns directly to the giver through second tithe—money to enjoy the Feast of Tabernacles. Without setting this money aside (or, doing so in a haphazard manner), I personally found that the Feast quickly became another financial burden. Sometimes it takes learning the hard way, to really appreciate the blessing behind a biblical guideline."

Internet

## Unable to Attend Feast

"I am writing to thank you for the festival assistance you gave my wife so that she can attend the Feast this year. Because of a spine disease, I am unable to attend the Feast. It was a time I always looked forward to, but I no longer can attend. I will log on to your cyber Feast so I can enjoy the services without being there. We are truly blessed that technology has allowed this to happen. The tapes you sent me are deeply appreciated."

Internet, Ohio

## Cybercasts Eased Feelings of Isolation

"Thanks for accommodating those who were homebound during the Feast. We had eight in attendance on the first High Day and seven on the Last Great Day (due to one member being able to attend the last half of the Feast). All enjoyed the capacity to hear a live message. We listened to sermons from all three sites available, and have also downloaded many sermons for future use. The cybercasts helped us to feel a strong connection with the Feast sites and eased the feelings of isolation. Although it cannot replace attending the Feast, it is a good alternative for those who have no other option.

"On October 3, the day after the Feast ended, my wife went into labor, giving birth to our first child."

Internet, Illinois

## Home Office Updates

"What wonderful, inspiring news about God's Work! There are no words to properly express our thankfulness for all that you do in the home office. We pray for your continued strength and wisdom. May God bless all of you for your dedication and sacrifice. These indeed are exciting times we're living in! May God's Kingdom come soon and we pray we'll all be ready for it. We're looking forward to the day when the statistics show fruits of everyone's efforts in many baptisms. And we believe that day is coming."

Michigan

## Greetings From Singapore!

"We over here in Singapore wish everyone in the United Church of God a very good and uplifting Feast season.

"*The Good News* is getting better and better and we feel very privileged to be able to help support it. May God continue to bless your efforts in getting it and other literature out. Thank you for the tapes and videotapes too. We appreciate them."

Internet, Singapore

## Baptist Hungry for Truth

"I am grateful that someone ordered for me a copy of *The Good News*. I can't put this issue down. I am missionary Baptist—a faithful member of my church—yet these

important issues are not discussed. I am 80 years old and my husband is 92. We do read from God's Word, but we are ignorant of these deep subjects, as I know most Baptists are. I thank you for your concern for people like myself, hungry for the truth. Do send me *Understanding Bible Prophecy*."

Georgia

## Did Your Church Have a Different Name?

"Thank you for your informative Web site. Reading through some of your statements of belief, I couldn't help getting the feeling that I have met you before. Did your church have a different name? You remind me of a church I used to watch on television called the Worldwide Church of God (or something like that), led by a silver-haired fellow named Armstrong. Are you with the same church, or do you share the same heritage/lineage? Now I live in southeast Florida. I was wondering if you had any congregations in the Palm Beach area."

Internet, Florida

*Editor's note:* The letters in this section may be edited for length and clarity.

Comments and suggestions to improve *United News* welcome. Mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or e-mail [mike\\_bennett@ucg.org](mailto:mike_bennett@ucg.org).

# Announcements...

## Births



Alexander Joseph Paclab

Alexander Joseph Paclab of Dayton, Ohio, joined his parents, Hilario and Carolyn, in the hot tub for his first bath on November 12, 1998. He weighed 8 pounds  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce and was 19 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches long. Big brother Gregory, Grandma Leah Oblak, two uncles and an aunt were there to greet him at the birthing center. The family attends the Dayton congregation.



Ethan James Herron

Ethan James Herron of Dayton, Ohio, preceded cousin Alexander's appearance by a day (see above) by making his debut November 11, 1998. Weighing in at 8 pounds  $\frac{1}{4}$  ounce and 20 inches long, he brought immediate joy to his parents, Fred and Mary Ann Herron. Grandma Leah Oblak is Mary Ann's and Carolyn's mother.



Bryan Andrew McClain

Andy and Cynthia McClain of Indianapolis, Indiana, are pleased to announce the birth of

their first child. Bryan Andrew was born on September 1, 1999, at 10:36 a.m. He weighed 9 pounds 4 ounces and was 21 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. Proud grandparents are John and Peg McClain of Joliet, Illinois, and Earle and Joy Reese of Pasadena, California.

Dean, Amy, Dustin and Camryn Sargent of Morrison, Colorado, are happy to announce the birth of their sweetheart, Saylor Lauren. She was born at 12 noon on the Feast of Trumpets, September 11, 1999. She weighed 7 pounds 5 ounces and was 20 inches long.

## Obituaries

Todd Snyder, 33, of Chicago, Illinois, died in a single vehicle accident September 1, 1999. He was born June 15, 1966, in River Falls, Wisconsin, to Norma and Frederick C. Snyder. He grew up in River Falls and Rhinelander, Wisconsin; Chaplin, Connecticut; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and Rochester, Minnesota. He



Todd Snyder

attended Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, and was a part of the New Zealand 1985 bike tour. He was baptized March 13, 1987, in Big Sandy and then attended Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. He spent a year in Jordan working with children with special needs, served as resident assistant his senior year and graduated in 1990. Todd was employed by Ambassador Television from 1990 through 1995. He moved to London, England, and worked as a technician for Creative Technology from 1995 through 1997. He returned to the United States and began working as a computer consultant for Software Spectrum in Chicago, where he was employed until his death.

On July 14, 1991, he married Catherine Brown of Chelmsford,

England, in Rochester. Although they were later divorced, they remained good friends.

Survivors include his mother and stepfather, Norma and Lloyd Nelson, of Rochester; a brother, Brad Snyder, of Oneida, Illinois; a sister, Mary Snyder, of Cincinnati, Ohio; two stepbrothers, Peter and Tadd Nelson, of Rochester; and three stepsisters, Kathy Lausted of Menomonie, Wisconsin, Peggy Moss of Bluffton, Indiana, and Amy Nelson of Stewartville,

Minnesota. He was preceded in death by his father.

The funeral was held September 5 in Rochester with Steve Myers officiating. Todd is buried beside his father in Hastings, Minnesota.

Harvey Yow of Seagrove, North Carolina, died September 26, 1999, at the age of 61. Harvey was baptized in March 1966, and was a longtime member of the Greensboro and Asheboro congregations.

He had suffered from cirrhosis of the liver for several years. Harvey enjoyed playing the banjo, gardening, and being with people, especially brethren in the Church.

He is survived by his wife, Jean; three brothers and three sisters; three children, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Harvey was highly respected in the Seagrove community; several hundred people came to the family reception and funeral services.

## A Tribute to a Saint

On September 25, at her home in Brampton, Ontario, Margaret Cunningham lost her battle with cancer. Her loving husband, Roy, was at her side during her final minutes of life.

The Toronto congregation of United is saddened at the loss of this wonderful lady and one of God's saints. You see, all Christians are called "saints" according to Colossians 1:2! The title especially applies to Margaret Cunningham.

Roy, Marg's husband of 47 years, did not want to notify very many during the Feast of Tabernacles as he did not want to diminish their rejoicing. This was an example of how both he and she thought about others. When I finally spoke with him, he related to me that he wanted to wait until I came back from the Feast for me to do the funeral.

I had baptized Margaret nearly 35 years ago. I also ordained her a deaconess in 1968. She and her husband (he is not a member of the Church) had served together in fulfilling her duties to the congregation. Recently, while she was laid up during her battle with the deadly disease, he brought the necessities for the information table before services and helped set things up. Then he returned home to tend to his ailing wife. After services were over, he returned to pick up the items and take them back to his house. He did this for several weeks before deciding that others could do it! He did not want to take this opportunity from others in the Church.

Last year, Roy helped Margaret and her friend Gwen load a rented minivan with all the material for the Feast of Tabernacles information table. He was there to help his wife do her duties as a deaconess!

He told me that her 35 years with the Church were the best years of her life. He said that it gave Margaret purpose in life and an opportunity to grow as a person. He thanked me profusely for the influence of United on her life in recent years.

At the funeral service, three close friends wrote tributes to this godly saint.

Percival Burrows, an elder with Worldwide Church of God, and a friend of hers for over 30 years wrote: "Probably her greatest contribution to the Church was her flair and efficiency at decorating for Holy Days, weddings, seniors' functions and many social gatherings. Our festive occasions were always meticulously set up with a head table, and all the utensils and decorations set off the place settings in fine array." He continued, "Marg was a very thoughtful person. Whenever anyone was sick or in the hospital, she would be one of the first to have a card in the mail to that person. The card was not just signed by her, but usually a very carefully and thoughtfully worded message was penned on the card. When speaking to a member a couple of days ago, he mentioned that while he did not know Marg very well, when he was in the hospital he received a card from her and another when he arrived home."

An elder in United in Toronto, Mike Caputo, wrote of her: "In my 27 years of Christian living I have known many wonderful and deeply converted Christians. Marg towers at the very top of the list with other spiritual giants I have known and loved. Marg passionately loved God her Father and Christ her Brother. Her life was consumed with the desire to honor and please them in everything she did, in

everything she said, in everything she thought. Being like Christ was the goal she pursued relentlessly day after day. Marg was a deeply sincere Christian. There were no pretenses with Marg. There was no façade. She was thoroughly genuine in everything she did. She served with heart-felt desire. She sacrificed from the heart. Service and sacrifice were her full-time employment. She loved God's people and gave herself, heart and soul, to supporting and encouraging them in any way she could."

Finally, one of her best "girl-friends," Gwen Sheehan, a member with United in Toronto, gave this tribute to her friend: "Our friendship of 24 years was unique! It was not just about enjoying each other's company, but life-giving to the spirit. She was always ready to help and encourage me through the hurting times in my life. We constantly shared each other's sorrows and joys, finding together help from God's Word. I have many happy memories of our serving together on Holy Days and at Church wedding receptions. Knowing 'Maggie C' has made me a better person. She was an example of loving, godly wisdom, and I will forever hold a part of her within me."

Such wonderful tributes describe a lady whose other deeds we will only find out about in the kingdom. We will miss her. Her example of service, love and concern will live on in our memories.

We look forward to again meeting and sharing the kingdom with this saint in her new, glorified, spiritual body as God's own children. Then, we will all be able to say with the apostle Paul, "O death where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?"

Gary E. Antion

# News at a Glance...

## What's New on the Web?

- A new SEARCH function has been added to United's Web site. A link appears in the Utilities menu bar at the left of the main title pages.

<http://www.ucg.org/search/index.html>

- The November issue of *Virtual Christian Magazine* has articles on home schooling, public schools, the end of the world and more.

<http://www.vcmagazine.org>

- Regular updates are posted on our news page.

<http://www.ucg.org/a/news/news.htm>

- The November/December issue of *The Good News* is available in PDF format. The expanded section focusing on tithing is also available.

<http://www.ucg.org/html/literat.shtml>

- See President Les McCullough's post-Feast update including reports from the Feast and continuing plans for the new ABC. Also "The United Church of God: A Work in Progress" and the other video shown at the Feast are available. View them using RealPlayer G2.

<http://www.ucg.org/RealAud/sermons.shtml>

- Information about the winter youth camp in Wisconsin has been posted. Visit for camper and staff information and application forms.

<http://www.ucg.org/youthcamp/camp.html>

- A page dedicated to the new Ambassador Bible Center (ABC) has information, a brochure and an application form.

<http://www.ucg.org/abc/abc.html>

- Archives of the cybercast Feast services from Bend, Oregon, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, can be heard using RealPlayer.

<http://cgca.net/cyberfot99>

*If you have any questions or comments, please contact:*

**webmaster@ucg.org**

## Trial Radio Broadcast Tested

Beginning November 7, the Big Sandy, Texas/Monroe, Louisiana, churches will be sponsoring a trial half-hour radio broadcast titled *World News and Prophecy* with Don Ward as the speaker. Four different stations will be used, with one broadcast on Saturday and the other three on Sunday. "I know these congregations are very pleased to make this effort and would appreciate your prayers," said President Les McCullough.

## Elders Credentialed in the Philippines and Zambia

Rodrigo Florencondia of the Philippines and Kambani Banda of Lusaka, Zambia, were credentialed by the Council of Elders to serve as elders.

Mr. Florencondia assists Ed Macaraeg in serving the church in Davao City, and is the fifth elder in the Philippines. He was head of the Business Office at the Feast, and his wife was dining hall coordinator. "In his 70s he continues to do some bookkeeping for his clients, while his wife bakes cakes on special orders," said Mr. Macaraeg.

Mr. Banda is the only elder in Zambia. "Three years ago Kambani Banda was the only member in Zambia, but now there are 28," said André van Belkum, pastor in South Africa. Mr. Banda organized the Feast site this year in Mumbwa, Zambia, using a diesel generator to show sermon videos. "Since I only visit Zambia twice a year, there was a need for a minister in the region who could care for the members, and handle the affairs of the Church," said Mr. van Belkum.

Mr. Banda and his wife Shirley have two children, Tine and Joseph, who attend an international school in Lusaka. "Tine is the top student, and her recent academic results were so good that she received over 50 letters from universities in the United States inviting her to further her studies at their institutions," said Mr. van Belkum.

For the past 18 years Mr. Banda has worked as an accountant for an international company in Lusaka. He also runs a successful farming enterprise, employing a manager.

## Wasilkoff Named New Operation Manager for Canada

Anthony Wasilkoff was named by the National Council of Canada to replace Gary Antion as operation manager for Canada. Mr. Antion is moving to Cincinnati to help teach at the Ambassador Bible Center. In announcing the decision, Mr. Antion said, "We are very grateful for Mr. Wasilkoff's service in Calgary and know that he and his wife, Linda, will be missed by the Calgary brethren." The new pastor for the Calgary,

Lethbridge and Red Deer, Alberta, churches had not been announced at press time.

"It is our intent to carry on with the foundation already laid by Gary Antion and his wife, Barbara," said Mr. Wasilkoff. "We should especially like to continue with the leadership training program. We will continue to seek more pastors for Canada and increase and develop the subscriber list."

In addition to working three days a week in the office in Toronto, Mr. Wasilkoff will be serving primarily in the Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario, churches. "Occasionally we plan to visit brethren in Ottawa, Montreal and the Maritime provinces."

## New British Council and Chairman Chosen

The United Church of God—British Isles held its second Annual General Meeting in Conwy, North Wales, September 30. A number of business items were discussed: the minutes of the 1998 meeting were approved following amendment; the chief executive officer and retiring chairman, John Jewell, presented a review of the year; the accounts for the year ending June 30, 1999, were accepted; the proposed budget for the year ending June 30, 2000, was accepted in principle; the current draft of the Constitution was adopted and application to the Charities Commission will be made for registration of the Church as a charity; finally, the business plan for the current year was accepted.

Last year the mailing list grew from around 200 to nearly 2,000. The semiannual letter brought in a 30 percent response.

The treasurer, Barbara Fenney, was reappointed. A new national Council of eight people was selected: John Jewell, Gerhard Marx and David Fenney as ministerial executive members; Frank Jarvis of the Gloucester congregation and John Schroeder of the Bricket Wood congregation as executive members; Tina Jewell of the Preston congregation, Will McLoughlin and Jan Schroeder, both of the Bricket Wood congregation, as non-executive members.

The new National Council met briefly following the general meeting and appointed David Fenney as chairman and reappointed

John Jewell as chief executive officer. Appreciation was also expressed to the retiring members of the National Council, Barbara Fenney and Diana Marx.

*David Fenney*

## Camp Directors Meet, New Camp Added

The Camp Directors Conference was held October 24 to 26 in Cincinnati, Ohio. "This year we are preparing for visits to each of our regional summer camps by the American Camping Association to receive accreditation of our program," said Larry Greider, United Youth Camp coordinator.

"Next summer we will add Camp Carter, located outside of Dallas, Texas, making a total of seven United youth summer camps," said Mr. Greider. There are also two winter camps, in Wisconsin and Ohio.

Camp Carter is a YMCA camp that recently raised \$4 million for major improvements and renovation. In addition to standard activities, Camp Carter offers extensive high and low ropes courses, a 60-foot rappelling tower, riflery, skeet shooting and horseback riding. "This will be the first of our summer camps to be able to offer horseback riding," said Ken Treybig who will be camp director.

At the meetings were summer camp directors Bill Bradford, David Dobson, Matthew Fenchel, Paul Luecke, Darris McNeely, Greg Sargent and Ken Treybig; winter camp directors Steve Nutzman and Dave Myers; Mr. Greider, Doug Horchak, Joel Meeker and Dave Treybig.

## Subscribers: Don't Request Bible Study Course

All subscribers to *United News* should automatically receive the *Bible Study Course* lessons offered in the November-December *Good News*. To avoid wasted effort, the Mail Processing area asks subscribers not to request the lessons.

If mates or children who are not presently receiving *United News* would like to receive their own set of lessons, they are welcome to request the course in their own name.

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