

New Beginnings™

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, *an International Association*

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Guns or Butter?

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The next issue of *New Beginnings* is scheduled to be published on Monday, March 16, 1998.

It will include reports on the general conference of elders in Louisville, Kentucky, and provide Feast of Tabernacles site descriptions for this year.

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by Robert Dick

Choices are an inherent part of life—for individuals, for organizations, and for entire nations. Some choices are easy, others not; but the most difficult choices are those between two necessities.

In pre-World War II Germany, Hermann Goering, in a 1935 radio broadcast, asked a question that later gave rise to an expression describing the hard choice a people face in wartime: Which will it be—guns or butter?

In 1939, when war broke out in Europe, many nations were faced with that question. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the United States entered the war and the U.S. too, had to make that choice. Like so many in Europe had done, we chose guns. American factories retooled to produce war matériel, and U.S. citizens gave up butter.

What does this have to do with us? The answer is simple. During our short history, the United Church of God as a body has had to face choices that are sometimes quite difficult. I would like to speak plainly to all of you about one of the hard choices we have faced and will continue to face for the foreseeable future. It is the choice between feeding the flock God has provided (John 21:15-17) and preaching the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20) to the world in the manner many or most desire. Many do not understand the guns-or-butter nature of the choices we face at this still-early stage in our development.

The Necessity for a Congregational Base

The United Church of God came into

existence because several thousand people made a choice—a choice to stay together—to preserve our doctrines, our congregational ties and our sense of brotherhood. As individuals many of us could have left earlier, but we didn't wish to fragment.

Were there options? Absolutely. We could have gone to other groups that already existed, or we could have split into hundreds of small community groups, sitting at home reading or listening to taped messages. This was not who we chose to be, or what we felt God intended for us.

We made a choice to stick together doctrinally and congregationally. We also expressed our desire to preach the gospel to the world, and embedded both of these scriptural mandates in our mission statement. None of this has changed.

In declaring our intent to hold together congregations and to preach the gospel to the world, we created two goals that would require us to determine priorities. As we look at these priorities, I hope we are all willing to learn from our own history.

In April 1942 Herbert W Armstrong made his first trip to Hollywood to record a *World Tomorrow* broadcast. Between April 1942 and March 1947 Mr. Armstrong would commute to Los Angeles to take advantage of Hollywood's state-of-the-art broadcast facilities. His mission was to preach the gospel to the world. Many of us know the story well.

How many of us remember with the same clarity that he started Ambassador College within seven months of arriving in Pasadena because he understood that all the work of preaching the gospel was wasted effort unless he had a trained ministry to care for those God called? In his short span of experience, Mr. Armstrong

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From the Council...

New Beginnings

February 9, 1998

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More Communication From the Council

by Roy Holladay

With one voice, the ministry and membership seem to be crying out for more communication from the Council of Elders. It is only natural that the church be interested in what the Council is doing at its meetings. Given this need, we will begin providing our brethren with more comprehensive communication from the Council, including this medium, *New Beginnings*.

The Council, as the governing body of the church, is recognizing this need more and more. For example, in our lat-

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est Council meetings (January 14–22, 1998), the topic of communication from the Council to the church was discussed. Richard Pinelli, operation manager of Ministerial Services, indicated to us that this situation really needs to be addressed. We agree.

Because of the requests that we communicate more openly and comprehensively, the following suggestions were presented for Council discussion and approval.

- **Video reports**

A suggestion was made to have a video report summary from various Council members after each

meeting. This is not a taping of the actual sessions, but summary reports from various Council members relating to business items discussed and resolved, and any future plans on those subjects. The video tapes would then be sent to all congregations, giving an informal update on the ongoing work of the Council as it relates to the church's progress.

- **Member letters**

A monthly member letter could be sent from the Council detailing the news of the work and its relation to the church.

- **A quarterly newsletter**

This newsletter would contain in-depth articles from Council members. It would also have a question and answer section, news of the work and other pertinent, newsworthy updates from the Council.

- **Articles in *New Beginnings***

In our desire to honor the many requests from ministers and members to get to know the Council members better, Council members would write more often for this established in-house medium.

- **Council Web page**

The development of a Council Web page was discussed. This vehicle could be used to give weekly updates of Council activities.

- **Travel to congregations**

Since the Council has not had a travel budget allowing them the opportunity to personally visit local congregations, it was suggested and discussed by the Council to allocate a travel budget of \$1,200 per Council member per year for this purpose. This would allow each Council member to speak at least three to four times a year in various local congregations.

We hope this new communications program from the Council will help bridge the gap and help fill the needs of our brethren around the world. We would appreciate receiving additional suggestions from you on this topic. *NB*

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Internet access on your computer:

The United Church of God, an *International Association*, has a home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. The address <http://www.ugc.org> gives you access to general information and news about the Church, issues of *The Good News* and *New Beginnings*, as well as our booklets. The address <http://www.ugc.ca> accesses the Church's Canadian Web site, <http://www.ugc-us.org.au> the Church's Australian Web site, and <http://www.ugc.org.za> the Church's Southern Africa Web site.

“BUTTER” (Continued from page 1)

learned quickly that bodies of believers left unattended broke into factions and gradually disappeared.

Mr. Armstrong saw clearly that preaching a gospel message to the world without a structure in place to care for those called by God was an exercise in futility. The critical question is, do we understand this?

How many of us have read about and considered the choices he faced? On pages 139–140 in Volume 2 of his autobiography, Mr. Armstrong wrote, “As the work was growing, the need of additional trained help was becoming more and more apparent. Up to this time I had been holding nightly evangelistic campaigns in various towns and cities in Oregon and Washington.

“Nearly always there had been enough converts to organize a small church group. But there was no minister to pastor the little flock. *Not one of them lasted longer than six months.* I had to realize that sheep cannot endure without a shepherd” (emphasis mine). We face the same dilemma. We may be living 50 years later, but the issues have not changed.

The history of the fledgling Radio Church of God is not our only teacher. The comments that follow are not intended to demean anyone, they are cited because they are instructional to us, the members of the United Church of God.

The first significant work to spring from the Worldwide Church of God was the Church of God, International. Over a span of 20 years, the most recognized personality since Herbert W Armstrong preached coast-to-coast on weekly television. The viewing public was provided both face and name recognition, but no local congregational base to nurture those brought along by the TV messages and literature. The result? A church that saw a steady stream of members flowing through it, but which never grew beyond 6,000 in membership at its zenith.

The ministries that have sprung from the Worldwide Church of God since that time have been faced with similar choices. The few groups who could afford to make use of the media could not at the same time afford to provide the level of ministerial care they would wish for the congregational bodies created by their evangelistic effort.

The Differences in Our Circumstances

I have described above the critical parallels between the United Church of God and those groups who preexisted us, most importantly, our parent church. There are also some critical differences—differences that affect our ability, at this early stage of our existence, to do the same kind of work we became accustomed to seeing in the 60s, 70s and 80s.

Mr. Armstrong had the luxury of growing slowly, naturally. In the formative days of the Radio Church of God, congregations were not started until the number of people in an area had reached 50 or more. The reason was economics. Herbert W Armstrong, *after nearly 30 years* of preaching in person, through the printed word and over radio, cared for a church that was *only a fifth the size of the United Church of God when it began.* By the time the Radio Church of God reached 3,000 members, Ambassador College had been training potential ministers for 10 years. *The Radio Church of God had years to lay a foundation for growth.*

We didn’t have that luxury when we began nearly three years ago. Across the nation and around the world people gathered in groups of all sizes—from a dozen or less in some places to over a hundred in many other places. We attempted to give personal care to as many of these congregational bodies as possible. We have had to choose how to spend the modest income we have been receiving. We chose to care for the congregations. It was not a light choice. It was a choice that history tells us is the right choice. At the time it was, and still is, a guns-or-butter choice.

Where to From Here— What About Now?

Many feel, now that we are nearly three years into our development, it is time to shift our priority and concentrate more effort on preaching the gospel. Consider something for a moment. To date, the United Church of God has preached the gospel through two stable media—the *Good News* with supporting booklets, and the advertising of *Reader’s Digest*. We began in the fall of 1995 with an original print run of 15,000 copies of *The Good News*, all in English. Today, just over two years later, we are printing over 80,000

Good News magazines. Ten thousand of these are in Spanish, Italian, French and German. These tools have provided us with gradual, sustainable growth.

We have produced six booklets in the last two years—four have been translated into Spanish, German and Dutch, and two have been translated into French. We have two new booklets finished and ready to print, and over six additional booklets that could be brought to production within this year if it fits within our growth plans. As you know, we are also developing the Bible Study Course. For these efforts we budgeted \$2.1 million for 1997/1998.

In a budget proposed for 1998/1999 the Council of Elders looked at adding money to the media budget with the understanding that any substantial additions would have to come about through manpower reductions. Some of this reduction would have to come from men currently serving congregational needs. Do you see how quickly we come to a guns-or-butter decision?

I believe most members of the United Church of God do not realize we currently cannot do any substantial television work without reducing some of our small congregations to unpastored video- or audio-tape groups, or combining them, when possible, with other congregations. This goes against United’s founding principles, and against the historic wisdom that Mr. Armstrong saw in the earliest days of starting churches in western Oregon and Washington: groups without pastors gradually disintegrate.

The Council of Elders has wrestled with this issue for the better part of two years. We have not been willing to reduce multiple small congregations to unpastored video groups, and compromise the care for other congregations, for the sake of a modest electronic-media presence at this time. This is a guns-or-butter choice.

When World War II broke out, citizens of many nations accepted rationing and shortages, and most supported the need to do without, because they understood why. We hope you will stand with us for the present as we move forward using the proven tools of the *Good News* magazine, booklets, and advertising in the *Reader’s Digest*. We all desire to do a greater work, but we must move forward prudently, heeding the lessons learned from those who have gone before us. NB

United Youth Camps...

U.K. and Canadian Summer Camp Applications Now Available

It's time to apply for summer camp! To apply, write, call or e-mail the camp director for an application. Camps need older high school and college students as well as adults to help on staff. Serving at camp is an excellent way to help build the United Church of God. The impact is immediate and the rewards are great. If you are interested in serving on the staff, please contact the camp director for a staff application.

Don't delay. Ask for an application right away. *NB*

Why Summer Camps?

Children who forge friendships early in life more successfully endure the trials of teenage and adulthood.

by Bill Jacobs

Why would parents send their child to a United Church of God summer camp? Is camp just a place where young people have fun for a week?

While all of us in the United camps program hope every young person who comes to camp has a great deal of fun, fun is not our main objective. We seek the fulfillment of more serious objectives. Most parents long deeply to see their children grow into a relationship with God. So, also, do the staff members of our camp program. We have the spiritual development of our young people sharply focused in our minds.

We know that God has placed parents bearing the Holy Spirit in the optimum position for spiritual influence. No organization can take the place of parents in the spiritual nurturance of children.

However, as children mature, they need to begin preparing for their adult spiritual life with God (a life outside the home of their childhood). Children in and approaching teenage need interaction with converted adults and with peers, besides parents, to test, practice and strengthen the values they learn at home and church. Until a person personally commits to God's ways, those ways are not a person's own. Summer camp is one place where spiritual skills may be practiced outside the home and reinforced.

Experiencing God's Way

At our staff training sessions we use a concept called "the zone" to teach staff members what we believe God

wants to accomplish in the lives of our young people. Camp is a safe zone where our young people can receive and express respect, honor, care and support.

We liken this zone to the Millennium, when God is going to provide these needs for all humanity. Just as it will be easier to be a Christian in the Millennium, it is also easier to be a Christian at camp, where we want to encourage our young people to learn and apply God's ways among their peers. Every year we receive letters from young people who have experienced living this way. It encourages and inspires them. Living God's way helps them move toward a commitment.

Consider another value. Parents of teens are well aware of their desire for social activity and friendship. This urgent desire is a God-created part of their human development. Young people need to learn how to relate to the ministry, friends and mentors.

It goes farther than simple human development, however. A large religious denomination undertook a ten-year study of their membership's faith development. They were surprised to learn that when their children began forging deep friendships from about the fifth grade, they tended to endure successfully the trials of teenage and young adulthood, to become dedicated members of their church. Camp provides an excellent opportunity for this aspect of spiritual maturation.

Wise parents foster the social development of their child, understanding the deeper spiritual overtones. When my children were teens, my wife and I desperately hoped they would find support and friendship not only from other church teens, but also from some of the adults and ministers in our church.

They did at camp. Those of us on the United camps' staff hope and pray the same for your child this summer at the regional camp of your child's choice. *NB*

McGillvary Creek Youth Camp Coleman, Alberta, Canada

Dates: Campers arrive Sunday, August 16, and depart Sunday, August 23.

Fees: Campers, \$80 for the first teen in any one family, \$60 for the second teen of the same family and \$40 for the third teen. We want to continue to keep costs low and help those who may have more than one teen attending.

Housing: Six-person cabins.

Applications: Anthony Wasilkoff, acting camp director, 259 Silverview Way NW, Calgary, Alberta T3B 3K4. Phone (403) 247-0210, e-mail: anthony_wasilkoff@ucg.org

Description: UCG teens from across Canada will have the wonderful opportunity to experience real wilderness living and yet have all the necessary comforts. The McGillvary Creek Youth Camp was designed to be used by up to 42 campers. There are small cabins each housing six teens, and there are large trailers that provide a kitchen and eating place, a meeting hall, and showers and bathrooms.

We can experience real wilderness living and yet have all the necessary comforts.

The various groups that sponsor camps for youth have stocked the camp with equipment that allows for a variety of challenging activities.

The McGillvary Camp is located at the foot of magnificent Crowsnest Mountain in the Canadian Rockies, very near the U.S. border and just a little north of Glacier and Waterton National Parks. It is a few miles up a dusty backroad just to the north of the town of Coleman which is located along the Alberta/British Columbia border.

Our first UCG campout was held in 1996. Thirty teens attended and ten adults made sure that everything ran smoothly. Activities, thoroughly enjoyed by all,

included hiking, white water canoeing, mountain bike trailriding, mountain climbing, archery, swimming in mountain lakes, riflery, obstacle courses, horseshoes, classes in Christian living, volleyball and evening campfires. Meals were great and teens could play cards or other games. There was plenty of time for making friends and spending time with other teenagers.

In 1997 we added an excursion to the town swimming pool, volleyball at the local high school gymnasium and an evening of live theater.

The weather in 1997 was perfect and this area of Alberta is known for good summer weather, warm evenings and cool nights. The surrounding area is mountainous and heavily wooded. The camp is in the wilderness, although the town of Coleman is only five miles away! The teens from 1997, including the U.S. visitors, all said they would like to return for another memorable session.

Coniston Water Coniston, United Kingdom

Dates: Campers arrive Friday, July 31, and depart Sunday, August 9. This will allow six days of activities and two Sabbaths to be spent together, an arrangement which was much appreciated last year.

Age Range: Age 11 through 18.

Fees: Fifty-five English pounds for both campers and staff.

Housing: Canvas tenting.

Applications: Application forms will be bulk mailed to all congregations in the U.K. All other enquiries and requests for either camper or staff application forms should be sent to John Meakin, Camp Director, 8 Pennys Meade, Ilton, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9HH, United Kingdom. He can be contacted directly by telephone at +44 (0) 1460 54240. If you are calling from outside the U.K. you will need the "44" but not the "0." Mr. Meakin's e-mail address is John_Meakin@compuserve.com

Description: The United Church of God in Britain will hold its third summer camp for teens this year at Coniston Hall Camp site, on the west bank of Coniston Water in the English Lake District.

The Lake District is of outstanding natural beauty, and Coniston affords us an excellent site with access to the activ-

ities and facilities we need. Cooperation from local personnel has been excellent and we anticipate a camp broadly similar to last year.

Our summer camp is truly a "camp" and is held under canvas, as it has been for many years. We have use of some private, sheltered glades in a wooded area one field from the water's edge. We use rented canvas, with the focal point being a large, floored marquee where meals, lectures, dances, singalongs, activities and Sabbath services take place. This fosters a genuine pioneering atmosphere in which we must

*Temporary facilities
foster a genuine
pioneering atmosphere.*

cope with the vagaries of weather and temporary facilities. Nevertheless, we have access to electrical power, running water, hot showers, a fine kitchen serving excellent food, and toilet and laundry facilities. We have private access to the lake for water activities and a large private field for our various ball sports.

Activities this year will include sailing/sailboarding, canoeing, hiking/hill-walking, soccer, volleyball, netball, leatherwork, initiative training, dance instruction, social skills training, education class and speech club. There will be a number of singalongs, a dance and a formal banquet. We will have a busy, action-packed, enjoyable week—all taking place in a godly environment where we strive to live and demonstrate God's way in action.

The spirit in our previous camps here has been excellent and we have been successful in fostering a family atmosphere in which proper Christian relationships can blossom. We are eager to improve on these already high standards.

All successful applicants will receive a letter of confirmation and an information packet. They will need to provide their own transport to and from camp, although we attempt to provide as much help and coordination as we can. In particular, those coming from outside the United Kingdom should contact Mr. Meakin to discuss details of travel arrangements and other needs. *NB*

More Than Just Warming a Seat

Marci made me remember the value of service.

Several years ago, I was on a late-night flight about to depart from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Los Angeles. It was a full flight. I was exhausted and thankful that I had an aisle seat, leaving a welcome bit of room to stretch.

As we prepared to depart, I was delighted to find that the center seat next to me was still open (the only empty seat on the entire plane). As the flight attendant moved to close the door, I uttered a short and desperate prayer asking God to let her shut the door before the seat could be filled.

Just before the door closed, a younger teen-age girl with a thick mop of brown curly hair scurried aboard. She was juggling a suitcase, a collapsible luggage trolley, a salad and a large soda. She rambled down the aisle and stopped in front of me to eye that one last empty seat. She smiled at me and said, "Excuse me sir, I think that's my seat."

I dragged myself to my feet and stepped out in the aisle to let her in. She didn't know what to do with her things (she hadn't been on a plane before), so I put them up in the overhead bin for her. After I sat down, she seemed quite curious about everything on the plane, and deluged me with questions.

I could see that sleep was not going to be a part of my life anytime soon, so I began asking her a few questions of my own.

Her name was Marci. She was with her church's youth pastor, his wife, and eight other teens from their congregation. She was going to Mexico City for ten days to promote their church in an evangelistic effort.

"How did you get to go on this trip, Marci?" I asked.

"Well last year, I was praying about it and it seemed the thing I should do," she said.

"You've been planning this for a long time, then. Where did the money come from?"

"My parents gave me some. And I wrote letters to my relatives and other people in my congregation. They helped a lot. But mostly, I sold candy bars and fruit to raise the 1,000 dollars I needed."

"Wow," I thought to myself. "Our kids are selling candy and fruit to play basketball, and Marci is doing it to serve her church."

How did this happen? Was Marci some sort of anomaly? No, there were eight other kids on the same plane with her. *Marci came from a congregation that valued service.*

The adults in Marci's life (her pastor, her parents, her relatives, her parents' friends) all valued Marci's service—so much so that they were willing to donate their money to help her. They knew that her involvement would help bond her to her church. While she was helping others, she would find a sense of belonging and dedication.

As she invested herself in her church, she would begin to see herself as an integral and valued part of her church. She would find commitment through service.

Currently, the UCGIA seeks to define itself. What kind of church will we be? Our bylaws state that we value service. How will that statement be translated into our hearts? Will we be a church full of people who value service enough to actively encourage it? Will we build a tradition, a culture of service in our congregations? Will we support others in their service because we see the value of it? How will we pass these values on to the next generation?

Funding Summer Camp

We have many young people who would love to help build their church and who have the energy and time to do so, but often not the money. We will have many of them at camp this

summer working on our staff. Because we have upgraded our facilities, our costs are rising. We have had to begin charging high-school staff for their room and board at summer camp.

If you could help one of them go to camp this summer, you would be helping a young person use their gifts to help others. And you would be helping to create a church culture that values youth, service and involvement.

We have no central fund for this purpose, and no equitable system to disburse funds. How can you help someone learn to serve at camp? You could seek out some of the people in your congregation who want to go to camp, either as campers or staff, and personally support them with your money—like Marci's people did for her.

If you don't have enough money to provide all that is needed, you might enlist other adults to help you. Why is this the best way? Because *it builds a relationship*. It's important that our young people see the faces and feel the support of caring adults. It helps them know that what they are doing is important. It instills value in service.

United's camps receive a generous subsidy from the home office, yet we have had to raise our tuition at most camps this year. While the tuition fees are within reach of most families, a number of children won't be able to attend because of the higher fees.

Here, then, is an opportunity. With just a little help from concerned adults, things could change for those who lack money for full tuition.

If *you* went to camp as a child, you know how much good it can do. Our children are a gift from God. We need to take good care of them. We need to make ways for them to serve, so they can enjoy the commitment that comes from service. Marci's people made ways, so can you. It is a gift that will last forever.

Bill Jacobs

Home Office Relocation Update...

Cincinnati Relocation by September! Council of Elders Sets Date

At its January conference in Monrovia, the Council of Elders firmed up plans for the home office to relocate to Cincinnati, Ohio, by September 1, 1998.

The resolution, as reported by Council reporter Clyde Kilough, was worded:

Whereas the General Conference of Elders approved the move of the home office to Cincinnati, Ohio, during the March 1997 General Conference of Elders meetings held in Louisville, Kentucky, and

Whereas the Council of Elders has reviewed the cost of the move to Cincinnati and believes that sufficient monies will be available to facilitate a move in the 1998 calendar year,

Now therefore it is hereby resolved that the move of the home office to Cincinnati transpire by September 1, 1998, and

It is further resolved that a task force, under the direction of the Home Office Location Committee, composed of home office employees, Council members, ministers and members of the Cincinnati area, be established to help coordinate the move to Cincinnati, Ohio.

It is further resolved that the Home Office Location Committee, members of the home office staff, ministers and members in the Cincinnati congregations, locate facilities in the Cincinnati area by March 1, 1998, for Council consideration.

This resolution has set the pace, and planning for the move must begin in earnest.

Dee Kilough, wife of regional pastor Clyde Kilough, gave a presentation on how to make the move as efficiently as possible. Dee, as project coordinator for a hospital, recently helped to plan and move the entire hospital complete with patients, furniture, equipment and staff.

She also presented a study tailored to our office moving needs, which was prepared and donated by a moving consultant. We are very grateful for this generous gift.

The Council of Elders is planning to

Dee Kilough, a hospital project coordinator, presented a study tailored to our moving needs, which was prepared and donated by a moving consultant.

view the possible sites in Cincinnati after the meetings of the General Conference of Elders in early March, then, with appropriate input, will make the final decision. The various other steps necessary to move may then be taken.

The move to Cincinnati is expected to save about \$116,000 in the first year, according to the Location Committee study done for the Council

and General Conference of Elders. The home office staff will personally benefit from the move as the cost of living is lower in Ohio.

The study and other information approved by the Council of Elders was sent to the elders on February 3, 1997, to assist them in the selection process. The study was based on the cost of living and of leasing office space there as compared to the Los Angeles area.

We of the Home Office Location Committee feel that many congregations and brethren will be excited about the move and will show their support through fund-raisers, special donations and helping with the actual move. This will offset any unexpected additional costs.

Volunteers from some church areas have already offered to drive the moving vans and help pack and unpack equipment. There is also an offer of "Hands Across America" by various congregations to house the home office staff on their way to Cincinnati. These gestures of support have been a source of encouragement to the Committee and the Council.

So, the Council will fulfill the decision of the General Conference and complete the move of the home office to Cincinnati by September of this year.

We welcome your prayers for the move to be successful as well as for those not moving, that their transition to other employment may be blessed.

*Gary Antion
for the Home Office Location Committee*

Financing the Relocation Effort

Finances available for the move are projected to be as follows: \$50,000 from funds already set apart in the 1997/1998 budget; \$50,000 to be set apart in the 1998/1999 budget; \$83,000 already accumulated in restricted donations from members (this figure has already risen above the \$65,000 reported by the Council on January 19); \$30,000 already set aside in local church pledges; and a \$150,000 interest-free loan guaranteed by three church members. This brings the total funds available so far to \$363,000.

Around The World...

• *Alan Tattersall, who returned from Africa on January 22, submitted the following report on his trip.*

Ghana and Nigeria Visit Encouraging

by Alan Tattersall

After our eventful week when Messrs. Nathan, Hulme and I met with the ministry of the Remnant Church of God, and I went to Hohoe in Eastern Ghana to speak to a group of interested people in that part of the country, the trip settled more into a routine.

I left for Lagos, Nigeria, early on Monday, January 12, where I arrived at the hotel without problem. I was there to discuss the usual pastoral matters, plus the larger ones of church registration and a Feast of Tabernacles site.

The registration process has now been ongoing for many months and it now seems we are about four weeks away from official recognition in Nigeria. This will mean we can open corporate bank accounts and operate officially there.

The main reason for the delay is that although Lagos remains the nerve center of Nigeria, Abuja is the new capital. This means that our attorney has had to make several trips from Lagos to Abuja on our behalf (about 500 miles each way).

Concerning a site for the Feast of Tabernacles, we inspected two places in Benin City (one we quickly rejected because our people wouldn't be able to

cook outside their chalets), one in Owerri (eastern Nigeria), and one just outside Lagos.

Although Benin City is geographically central and would require the least aggregate miles to be traveled by our members, the other two places are much more conducive to the keeping of the Feast. Lagos, predictably, is much more expensive than Owerri. Over the next week or two we will be asking God's guidance on this matter.

A particular complication is that the present military government will hand over to a civilian one on October 1 this year, just a few days before the Feast starts.

A Feast-time Concern

A particular complication is that, officially at least, the present military government will hand over to a civilian one on October 1 this year, just a few days before the Feast starts. Such changes generally cause upset—hence an additional concern for our brethren there.

The brethren meanwhile are largely in good health and spirits, and continue to be greatly encouraged by the outward-

looking international vision of United. They are deeply grateful for the commitment by the Church to these more "difficult" parts of the world.

Selfless Spirit

One day I visited a family of eight. The wife of the family was sick and wanted to be anointed, which I gladly did.

I then learned about their circumstances: the daily grind, including all living in one room, as well as the potential for being attacked by armed marauders—a bullet hole in the ceiling was a souvenir of one such incident. What moved me most, however, was their noticeable concern about the health of a young lady in Arcadia they'd heard was needing prayers.

All aspects of traveling within Nigeria went extremely smoothly (thanks to you all for your prayers).

At the end of the visit I returned to Ghana for just one day, to see a lady who may be willing to rent us a house there at a reasonable price. If this deal comes off, it will mean that one month's rent of the house would equate to the cost of one night's stay in a hotel. Plus, there would be other side benefits such as cheaper phone calls and laundry facilities. The savings to the church over a two-year period (that is the minimum rental period) would be considerable.

Needless to say, the people down there still need our prayers. Just keeping on top of daily life is an enormous challenge for them. *NB*

Elders Visit Cameroon January 12–26

by Joel Meeker

Bernard Andrist and I visited the congregations in Cameroon from January 12 through 26 this year. We were accom-

panied by Mr. Isaac Nolla, our elder in the Cameroon area.

The day after our arrival we gave a news update and held a Bible study for the Douala congregation. One man had traveled five hours to meet with us, showing his strong desire to be part of the people of God.

On Thursday the 15th, we drove four hours north to Bangangté, a possible

Feast of Tabernacles site. We met with a family of eight who were interested in the Church, answering their questions for over an hour. They were concerned about being alone in their beliefs in the region. God provided a solution: Mr. Niemi, a former member of our previous association, had heard we were in town and came to see us, explaining that he was still faithfully observing the Sabbath, but

that he and his wife were alone in Bangangté.

We were all overjoyed to see Mr. Miami's faithfulness rewarded. He was thrilled to find a spiritual home at a time when he thought he'd been abandoned. We arranged to have an audiotape player and regular sermon tapes sent to him, and we put him in touch with the new family.

On Friday we left early for Nkoteng, several hundred kilometers to the east. The last 100 kilometers (63 miles) were on a dirt road which resembled a giant washboard. Conditions were such that we could seldom manage more than 20 miles per hour and often had to slow down to five miles per hour.

All the members in Nkoteng work on the local sugar plantation where the starting pay is about 20 U.S. cents per hour. Because of mismanagement in the past year, the employees were not paid for several months at a time. The situation is improving now, but this past year has been a serious trial for them.

Thirty people were present for services Sabbath morning. In the afternoon

we held a wide-ranging two-hour public question-and-answer session attended by 50 people, including many former readers of the French-language *Plain Truth*.

The next morning we walked through the cane fields to a stream in a breathtaking jungle setting where Mr. Jean Paul Assolo Eyébé and Mr. Isaac Tchioyo were baptized.

That afternoon we met at a small reception with local authorities, including the mayor, letting them know who we are as a Church. It is vitally important in this region to maintain cordial relations with the appropriate authorities.

Before our departure we distributed funds to the members in the congregation to help subsidize the schooling of their children. This much appreciated money was the result of fund raising efforts by UCG congregations in Colorado and the Dakotas.

After a six-hour drive to Yaoundé, 25 members of the capital city congregation received us. After a news update and Bible study we shared a meal and fellowship, which went late into the night.

From Yaoundé we traveled four

hours on dirt roads to Makak, in the southern jungle region. Most of the 15 or so members had traveled many miles (some on foot) in order to meet with us for a Bible study and fellowship.

We examined the possibilities of holding the Feast of Tabernacles in Makak, and paid a courtesy visit to the local authorities with whom the Church has excellent relations. (On Mr. Andrist's first visit to Makak more than 20 years ago he was arrested and held overnight until the authorities could verify his identity and the purpose of his visit.) We were also able to rent a small meeting hall for the congregation.

Tired and covered in red dust, upon our return to Douala we learned that a strike by Cameroon Airline personnel had closed down both major airports in the country. We spent an extra three days in Cameroon until we could get a flight out. This delay had a bright side however as it enabled us to spend the Sabbath with our brethren in Douala.

Our brethren in Cameroon asked that we extend their warmest greetings to their brethren around the world. *NB*

Baptisms and Growth in Spanish-speaking Areas

by Leon Walker

The Spanish region has been growing steadily, with good attendance during the past couple of years.

During 1997 we had 56 baptisms, compared with 44 in 1996. As an indication of how encouraging these figures are, there were 108 baptisms in the United States for the same year.

We have a *Buenas Noticias* (*Good News*) circulation right now of 5,000 and we plan to keep it at that figure during this next year, for budgetary reasons.

The way we've increased our circulation up to this level is through considerable member involvement. The members themselves are the ones who have distributed the magazines in areas where we have churches and congregations.

They take extra copies—5, 10, 15—to the offices of doctors, dentists and lawyers, as well as public waiting rooms, and ask to display them. Of course, most

want to display them because they're free. We've had many, many responses. Some people have begun attending for the first time and two or three have been baptized.

We produce the magazine itself in the United States. The magazine's editor is Don Walls, and one of the translators is

*The members themselves
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Dionisio Velasco. They both live in Texas. We also have others in the Spanish region who assist. This enables us to put the magazine together in a professional, timely fashion. Then we use a localized effort for the distribution and promotion of the magazine. Our central efforts complement the local effort. We've all been

able to work together very nicely in this way, and we wouldn't have been able to have the subscribers we have, at no cost to the church, without this help from our local Spanish-speaking members. A big thank-you to all!

We have 856 baptized members in the region, with an attendance of 1,726, including those in scattered congregations.

We've recently had a ministerial credentialing, Pablos Dimakis, and as of December, 1997, he has been functioning as one of United's ministers in Mexico. He has been a minister for about 18 years, so we would like very much to hire him but at present we don't have the funds.

We also have a newly ordained minister in El Salvador, Jaime Ortiz, a local elder who helps Herbert Cisneros, our pastor in El Salvador. This gives Mr. Cisneros two elders in the area. We have a total of 11 hired ministers and four who are not employed by United.

Please continue to pray for our Spanish brethren, as you do for all of God's people around the globe. *NB*

Announcements...

Births

Grant and Kim (Demont) Chick, of the Durban, South Africa, congregation, are delighted to announce the arrival of their second son, Graham Dalroy, on January 20, 1997. Graham weighed 3.65 kilograms (8 pounds).

Older brother Lawrence and the grandparents are excited about the new addition.

Drs. Stephen and Melissa (Chalmers) Clouthier, of The Woodlands, Texas, are happy to announce the birth of their identical twin sons on June 20, 1997. Harrison Mathew weighed one pound 10 ounces and was 12 inches long. Andrew Stephen weighed one pound 13 ounces and was 12 inches long.

The boys were born at 25 weeks gestation. Andrew died July 1, 1997, of renal and congestive heart failure secondary to a bacterial infection. Harrison was released from the hospital October 15. He now weighs over 11 pounds, his kidneys miraculously healed, his lungs continue to heal and the scarring in his left eye is resolving.

At this point, it does not appear that he will even need glasses. The family would like to thank the brethren from around the world for their prayers, cards and gifts.

David and Danielle Hargrove (Pemberton), of Sydney, Australia, would like to announce the birth of their first child, Jordan David.

David was born August 14, 1997, at 12:31 p.m. He was 20½ inches long and weighed in at 7 pounds 14 ounces.

The proud grandparents are Vernon and DeLee Hargrove of Crown Point, Indiana, and John and Robyn Pemberton of French's Forest (Sydney), New South Wales, Australia.

Lynn and Michelle (Novak) Pate of Alder, Washington, are happy to announce the birth of their son, Luke Xavier, on December 13, 1997, at 2:53 a.m. He weighed 9 pounds 9 ounces and was 22½ inches long.



Luke Xavier Pate

Welcoming him home are brothers David, Geoff, Eric and Zachary, and sister Lauren.

Luke's grandparents are Wally and Elsie Pate of Salem, Oregon, and Steve and Svatava Novak of Agoura, California.

Scott and Sherry (Loudin) Thouvenin of Canton, Ohio, are overjoyed to announce the birth of their first child, Natalie Paige.

She was born on December 11, 1997, weighed exactly 6 pounds and was 18¼ inches long.

The proud grandparents are Oral and Carol (Loudin) Garvin, and Louis and Evelyn Thouvenin, also of Canton, Ohio.



Natalie Paige Thouvenin

40th Anniversary

Leo and Olive Dubreuil, of New Port Richey, Florida, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on January 25, 1998.

The Dubreuils have a daughter and son-in-law, Jo and Marshall Duhaime; a daughter Noreen Haddow; and a son and daughter-in-law Alfred and Pam Dubreuil. There is a collection of grandchildren from Maine, to New York, to California!

Leo and Olive attend in Tampa, Florida.



Leo and Olive Dubreuil

Obituaries

Caroline Hesse Herbert, 74, of Nashville, Illinois, died January 27, 1997, after a short battle with cancer.

Mrs. Herbert was a member of God's church since the early 60s. She worked as a health-care giver and was taking care of others only days before her death. She will long be remembered by those who knew her and loved her, for her selfless giving and serving of others.

The funeral service was conducted by Greg Sargent.

Morris Dee Hillis, 77, of Castleford, Idaho, died Thursday, January 1, 1998, at his residence after a short illness. He was born March 1, 1920,

in Montrose, Colorado, where he spent his early childhood. He spent more than 40 years in the church of God.

Morris is survived by his loving wife of 18 years, Ruth; two daughters, Gail Rands of Bellevue, Washington, and Roxiene Brazil of Pasadena, California; one sister, Loriene Readers of Las Vegas, Nevada; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Funeral services were conducted by Wilbur Berg.

Mildred Judge, 87, who attended the Mt. Vernon, Illinois congregation, died March 12, 1997. She and her husband, Joe, faithfully served for many years in the Harrisburg, Illinois, and Evansville, Indiana congregations. Joe, who preceded Mildred in death, was ordained a deacon in 1963, and he and Mildred had been part of God's church since the early 1950s. It was after the death of Joe that she started attending in Mt. Vernon.

Graveside services were conducted in Albion, Illinois, by Larry Scher. Mildred is survived by three sons and their families.

Help Us Choose a New Name for Our Publication!

During the January Council of Elders meetings in Monrovia, California, Leon Walker broached the need for retitling our newsletter. "The name *New Beginnings* seems to be out of date," he said. "After a while it is certainly no longer 'new' and is no longer 'beginnings.'"

I noted to the Council that this suggestion arose as early as December 1995. If the name of our newsletter is changed, we'll need a short period of time to register the change with the United States Postal service. Paperwork must be filed to ensure that we continue to

receive the periodicals postage rate.

The Council approved a plan to solicit input from the membership in this regard. If you have a suggestion for a new name for our publication, please send it in to us. We'd certainly appreciate your input! Our children and teenagers are encouraged to send in their thoughts also! We'll consider all ideas for further discussion. Please send your suggestions to:

New Beginnings Name Change
P.O. Box 661780
Arcadia, CA 91066-1780

Thanks in advance for your input!

Peter Eddington
Managing editor

Letters From Our Readers...

Prayers important

"I feel that the work that God has given us to do is making progress. I know that many feel that the Church isn't moving fast enough, but God is in charge. He alone knows how fast or slow we are to advance in the work. I'm thankful that you keep us informed as to what is going on in the Church.

"It is encouraging to hear about the other servants of God who have made contact with us. It's not hard to see that God is working through United. I am thankful for the Church and the opportunity to meet and fellowship with like minded servants of our Great God. Our prayers are very important to the work that God has given us to do."

Indiana

Soon to be free from "a dark place"

"I am incarcerated in a California prison, the husband of a United Church of God member and father of five beautiful children.

"I am finally, after four and half long years, leaving the world of prison. It is another world compared to freedom. Drug usage, alcoholism, homosexuality, profanity and blasphemy run rampant. All peoples, cultures and religions are represented here.

"The experiences, the trials and the truths that God has led me through are irreplaceable and have strengthened my faith in Him. It's been painful at times being separated from my wife and children, tearing down the walls of false beliefs, and just being in a dark place, but through it all God has been my strength, my Rock, my salvation and my deliverer.

"I hope to become a member of the United Church of God. It's going to be a long road back. Thank you in advance for your prayers."

California

In good form again

"I am 29 years old and have been a subscriber of the *Plain Truth* and *Good*

News magazines for the past 13 years. I have all my copies of them until recently, when due to funds they were no longer available in my country.

"What a loss, but it so happened I looked through a newspaper and there was a subscription form. Thank God for good news. Thank you once again."

Trinidad, West Indies

Warm Italian greetings

"My heartfelt thanks for answering so readily and in so complete a way. May I request some other publications? And if it is possible I would like to confirm my mother's subscription to *La Buona Notizia* and *I Difensori della Fede* which should be sent in Italian language to our address.

"I wish you a good work and greet you warmly."

Internet, Italy

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

Regional Update...

St. Louis Regional Conference

About fifty elders and wives attended a St. Louis regional ministerial conference held in Branson, Missouri, on Sunday, January 18 and Monday, January 19. The national holiday weekend was favored because more unsalaried elders would be able to attend. Elders stayed in motels that were heavily discounted because of the off season. Elders paid for their own accommodations and most meals.

Doug Horchak, who represented Ministerial Services, covered areas of doctrine and policy recently approved by the Council of Elders. Other topics included the Matthew 18 study paper, conducted by Greg Sargent, which has been an ongoing project of the St. Louis area ministers. The final draft should soon be ready for review by the Doctrine Review Committee. Mr. Sargent also discussed some tips on delegating.

Regional pastor Larry Greider's pre-

sentation was on doing the good work of God, with ideas on how to stay focused on the work of the ministry. Suggestions were made to help more elders participate in the many UCGA committees and projects.

He also gave a presentation based on a tape of a sermonette class, The Art of the Sermonette, with ideas on how to use this in the local areas. Roger West covered interactive Bible study concepts, and Mike Blackwell talked about the power of being positive.

The regional summer camp in Missouri, in which most salaried elders will participate, was also discussed.

On Monday, many stayed over for an informal discussion with Mr. Horchak on the state of the work.

One elder commented

that the spirit and camaraderie were most encouraging. Special thanks to Mike and Carol Blackwell for arranging this conference.

Larry W. Greider



Ministers gather for the St. Louis region ministerial conference; Roger West (inset left), presents his information on interactive Bible studies; Greg Sargent (inset right), discusses the Matthew 18 study paper, a project of the St. Louis region for the Church.