



# United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

United Church of God  
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July 2004

## News At a Glance

### Elder Ordained

Steve Villaescusa was ordained an elder on Pentecost, May 30. He and his wife, Margaret, serve in the Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation.

### Subscriber Letter Breaks Record

The March letter to *Good News* subscribers offering the *Jesus Christ: The Real Story* booklet received 33,107 responses. This tops the previous record of 32,697 for *The Middle East in Prophecy*, offered in June 2003. The most recent letter drew a 20.1 percent response. By comparison, most letters have ranged from 9 to 18 percent. One previous letter sent to a select group of readers received a higher percentage response with 21.4 percent for *Who Is God?* in January 2002.

### Good News Reader Update List Up 10 Percent in June

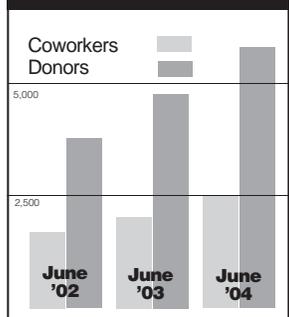
In July 8,829 *Good News* readers received the monthly e-mail letter from the editor and president, Roy Holladay. This is up approximately 10 percent in just the month of June.

Readers are encouraged to sign up on the newly redesigned Web page, www.gnmagazine.org, and in a small item on the back cover of the magazine.

E-mail updates are an inexpensive way to have regular contact with the readers, announce the new issue and offer literature. The July letter offered readers *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

See "News at a Glance," page 2

### United Statistics



## Feast Sermon Video to Feature Philippines

Media and Communications Services operation manager Peter Eddington traveled to the Philippines from June 27 to July 6 to videotape additional material for the Feast of Tabernacles sermon video for 2004.

Joel Meecker and Dave Baker had previously recorded some video during their trip in January and February (see March/April 2004 *United News*, pages 4-5).

The Feast video will have three main sections:

- A message from David Baker, senior pastor for the Philippines.

- A special focus about the brethren and the Church's work in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

- A message from the UCGIA president, Roy Holladay.

### "I Shall Return"

Plans are for the video to revolve around an analogy based on Douglas MacArthur's famous World War II promise to return to the Philippines.

Mr. Baker's 20-minute mini-sermon will use the example of Gen. MacArthur to illustrate Christ's promise to return to the earth to begin the millennial reign of

God's Kingdom. Christians must endure to the end, continuing to do God's work of preaching the gospel and preparing a people, while looking forward with confidence to the return of Christ.

This section likely will be accompanied by video of the island of Corregidor, where the American and Filipino armies made their final stand, and Red Beach, near Tacloban on the island of Leyte, where MacArthur waded ashore on his return.

### Elders, Members Interviewed

Interviews with various elders and

members in the Philippines and other areas of Southeast Asia will help illustrate how Christians continue to fight the good fight in their daily lives. They will also highlight the successes and challenges facing the Church in this area of the world.

### Message From the President

Plans are for Mr. Holladay's segment of the film to be recorded in his office, perhaps with updates on what UCG is doing to accomplish its mission. **UN**

## Summer Camp Season 2004 Begins



Pinecrest, the first United Youth Camp of the summer, includes canoeing and a new water sport involving "the blob" (right). More camps will be featured next issue.

This year 128 campers and 58 volunteer staff members from 20 states and at least three countries gathered near Fredericktown, Missouri, for the annual United Youth Camp at the Pinecrest Camp facility. The camp, from June 10 to 17, was the first of six to be held in the United States this summer.

During orientation Greg Sargent, camp director,

encouraged everyone to concentrate on living in "the Zone" during the week of camp. The Zone is the term used to describe an atmosphere of safety, peace, joy and mutual support and encouragement that prefigures the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Later Mr. Sargent wrote

See "Pinecrest," page 5

## Treasurer Reports Income on Target at Fiscal Year-End

We have concluded another fiscal year, and God's blessings are apparent, as well as the faithfulness of the members of the Church and others who support its work. We express our gratitude to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and to all those who have contributed during the last 12 months.

The total budgeted income for the fiscal year was \$19,000,000. Actual income totaled \$19,071,000 (not counting unrestricted estate donations, which have been earmarked by the Council of Elders for retirement fund purposes).

This represents 0.4 percent more than budgeted. For the last two years combined, the total income (exclusive of estate donations) has been \$37,260,000, which is \$20,000 more than the combined two-year budget of \$37,240,000 (a slight "overage" of 0.05 percent). Some could conclude from this that God has helped us in our projections of income!

On the expenditure side, the total was \$18,607,000, which was 2.1 percent below budget.

The net result is that the Church continues to be in a stable and relatively strong financial position, especially when compared to the case several years ago. As always, we ask for the prayers of the brethren for God's guidance of those with the responsibility for the stewardship of the financial administration of the Church.

Tom Kirkpatrick, Treasurer

## Winter Family Weekend Set for Louisville Dec. 22-25

The eighth annual Winter Family Weekend has been scheduled for Dec. 22 to 25, 2004, in Louisville, Kentucky.

The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, a AAA three-diamond facility, has been booked for housing. The cost is \$30 per room, per night with two double beds or a king-size bed. Suites are also available for \$35 per night. The tax is an additional 15 percent. Those desiring a particular style of room (double beds or king beds or suites) will have their requests filled on a first call, first reservation basis.

Reservations can be made immediately. The toll-free number is (866) 246-2021 and the local number is (502) 491-4830. Simply state that you are with the United Church of God (UCG). The hotel is at 9700 Bluegrass Pkwy.,

Louisville, KY 40299 and on the Web at www.choicehotels.com/tres/hotel/ky119.

The hotel has a large indoor pool, sauna, fitness center, pool tables, video game area, restaurant, room service and on-site conference center that will seat 2,400 people. Free airport shuttle service is also available.

The MidAmerica Sports Center (the contracted sports venue) is within 2 miles of the hotel and offers many basketball and volleyball courts. Additional facilities are being secured for the wide array of activities being planned.

Both the hotel and the sports center are located within 3 miles of approximately 60 restaurants.

The highlight of this weekend will once again be the Sabbath (Dec. 25), including Sabbath services and a wide variety of classes and seminars for all

ages, focusing on Christian living and biblical subjects.

During the entire four-day duration, a host of activities is also being planned and organized for the following groups:

- Families and preteens: A variety of organized games and events.
- Teens: Volleyball and basketball tournaments, dance and other activities.
- Young adults: Volleyball and basketball tournaments, dance and other activities.
- Ambassador/ABC reunion.

"This event has proven to be extremely popular with our youth, young adults and families," said Roy Holladay in his June 30 "President's Letter." "We do hope that many of you will be able to make plans to join us for what will surely be a most memorable, inspiring weekend." **UN**

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## News At a Glance

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### New Vertical Thought Web Site Launched; Vertical Videos Added

Over the past few weeks, the *Vertical Thought* Web site has been updated with a new home and visual design. The VT Web site has been relocated to our new Web server, which will allow for more space, improved reliability and better visitor statistics. The design of the Web site has been enhanced to allow for ease of navigation, usability and to assist with further growth as new material is posted.

"Vertical Videos" are also being developed and placed on the site, including a three-minute video on Sabbath conflicts featuring two ABC students. The latest version of Flash Player and a high-speed Internet connection are needed to view the video at the best quality.

Some new features have also been added to verticalthought.org. You will be able to easily browse through question-and-answer topics, send articles to a friend, print printer-friendly pages, search the Web site, view archived issues and lots more.

Be sure to subscribe to *Vertical News*, the monthly e-mail newsletter that keeps you updated to what's new on the Web site. Currently 947 people have subscribed to the e-mail newsletter.

Let us know what you think by e-mailing [info@verticalthought.org](mailto:info@verticalthought.org).

Aaron Booth

### Pastoral Change Announced

Jim O'Brien is no longer employed by the United Church of God. Mark Winner is now the pastor of the United congregation in Lexington, Kentucky, and Matthew Fenchel is pastoring the Cincinnati North, Ohio, congregation. Please direct any inquiries about time and location of services for these congregations to these men. A list of U.S. congregation contact phone numbers can be found at [www.ugc.org/about/churchusa.htm](http://www.ugc.org/about/churchusa.htm).

### Pentecost Holy Day Offerings Up

Below is the preliminary report from the amounts reported to the home office. It does not include those amounts mailed to the home office by individuals.

Attendance: 12,201  
Offering: \$720,744.45

This represents a 1.6 percent increase in attendance over 2003 when 12,015 attended, and a 4.8 percent increase in the reported offering amount over 2003 when it was \$687,807.13.

See "News at a Glance," page 12

## Good Works Ghana Project Complete; New Projects for Africa

The UCG Good Works Program Ghana Project is now fully funded, Tom Kirkpatrick, program coordinator, announced June 8. "Thanks to everyone for their generous and loving support. Melvin Rhodes, senior pastor for Ghana, will be working with the church in Ghana to carry out the activities made possible by this funding in the near future."

The current projects listed on the Good Works Program Web page ([www.ugc.org/goodworks](http://www.ugc.org/goodworks)) are for Cameroon and Kenya.

### Church Halls in Cameroon

Joel Meeker, pastor for French-speaking areas, submitted the request for a project to build two church halls in Cameroon that was posted May 12. The cost of the project was listed as \$14,000. Below are excerpts from the Web site:

"In several African countries our brethren have difficulty finding suitable halls. This is either because meeting halls simply don't exist, or because the price is too high. In several places we have rented apartments for the use of the Church, but this is relatively expensive in the long run and occasionally presents other difficulties.

"In addition, most African governments expect churches to own their own

buildings, and resist accrediting church organizations that don't have their own building. The governments are usually somewhat repressive and they don't trust organizations that don't have a fixed base because it might be hard to find them if the government wanted to intervene in some way.

"This has caused us long delays in gaining official recognition and in some cases has meant the inability to be legally recognized. This government recognition is necessary for us to operate legally in these countries (have bank accounts, have phone lines or P.O. boxes in the name of the Church). Not being recognized can place our brethren at some risk of being mistaken for belonging to a secretive or illegal entity.

"Two congregations in Cameroon are in need of church buildings... the economic capital of Cameroon, the city of Douala, and the other in the extreme north of the country in the village of Yagoua.

"The purchase of a plot of land in Douala will cost about \$5,000. We estimate the cost of a concrete block building with a metal roof and a restroom to be an additional \$5,000.

"The costs will be less in Yagoua because land prices are much lower. We will need about \$1,000 for a lot and about \$3,000 to construct a small-

er building, which will not need a restroom or have running water.

"So the total need for church buildings in Cameroon is \$14,000. Your fundraising contributions to this project will allow the church better legal status, create a better reputation for our brethren in Cameroon as well as permit them to attend church functions in an adequate facility."

### Good Works Project in Kenya

John Elliott, senior pastor for East Africa, submitted the following project proposal for Kenya with a projected cost of \$7,121. The project would provide "supplies and equipment helpful in preventing malaria, yellow fever and typhoid fever through water purification and mosquito abatement, and emergency foodstuff reserves."

Mr. Elliott wrote: "East Africa is rich in beauty and culture yet lacks some of the basic necessities needed for healthful living. Because of this situation most of our members in the region are helpless in acquiring cooking and drinking water free of typhoid fever or gaining safety from mosquitoes bearing malaria and yellow fever. Consequently, these diseases regularly plague our members there and occasionally take their lives.

"The Got Kachola, Kenya, congregation is hardest hit. They have purchased land and are completing a new hall to meet in. The location is especially suited for a water well to serve the members and nearby village.

"Additionally, low rainfall amounts appear to be continuing the famine of the last two years. Maize (corn) meal is a comforting and filling staple when there is nothing else to eat and many families will rejoice at receiving some, which they otherwise could not afford.

"A big thank you in advance to all who will generously find ways to raise funds to help our brethren."

The Web site describes the purpose of the Good Works Program as follows:

"The Good Works Program is intended to provide an organized way for brethren to help others in the Church who face unusual, emergency situations that could not be anticipated or budgeted for. The intent of the program is to make these situations known to the Church, and to coordinate the distribution of funds that are raised by congregations or groups in fund-raising efforts."

If you are interested in raising funds for these projects, contact Tom Kirkpatrick ([tom\\_kirkpatrick@ugc.org](mailto:tom_kirkpatrick@ugc.org)).

## Members Help Serve Members and Others Through LifeNets

In April LifeNets received a letter from the U.S. Department of the Treasury granting permanent status as a 501 (c) (3) charity. LifeNets had been granted this status during an advanced ruling period in October 1999. This allows the charity to continue to accept donations that can be deducted from an individual's U.S. income taxes.

"To receive this, we have had to prove over several years that we are an organization that has accomplished a true charitable service to others," said Tom Peine, LifeNets board chairman and a UCG

elder in Indiana. "This allows us to help so many members throughout the world.

"UCG members and churches have joined us in our effort to serve," Mr. Peine said. "Their donations and fundraisers inspire us to further find ways to serve not just UCG, but others with their special problems."

"In the last four years, we have provided \$1,800,000 in overseas aid, most of it either benefiting brethren or being used by the brethren to benefit others," said Victor Kubik, founder of LifeNets and a UCG Council member. "We cal-

culate that for every dollar donated, we have provided \$20 in benefits."

Members have helped LifeNets drill wells and build two clinics in Africa to help UCG members there and have helped provide scholarships for further education for many young UCG members in Central and South America.

LifeNets also has an active wheelchair program, matching donated wheelchairs with those who need them in the United States and overseas. "The pediatric variety of wheelchair is especially valuable because they provide for youngsters

who otherwise would not be mobile unless Mom or Dad carried them," Mr. Peine said.

LifeNets is not an official arm of UCG, but is a separate legal entity not controlled by UCG.

"Being an independent charitable organization has allowed us to use resources such as Rotary International," Mr. Peine said. "They recently donated \$44,884 to provide two ambulances for the African clinics. Rotary International is also helping us to support the clinic for the children of Chernobyl." **UN**

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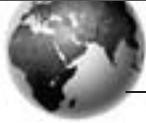
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## News From **Around the World**

### German Bible Study Course Bearing Fruit

The first baptism request from the new German Bible correspondence course was received in April. A couple from Potsdam, Germany (near Berlin), requested baptism counseling after receiving the final four lessons of the course, including lessons on baptism, the true Church and the Holy Days.

So far 20 students have completed all 12 lessons, and 270 others are currently enrolled in the course.

In January 270 subscribers of the *Gute Nachrichten* (German *Good News*) magazine ordered the course.

The German course is sent to subscribers four lessons at a time, and a test is mailed as well. Subscribers who average 80 percent on the three tests receive a certificate of completion.

One of the first subscribers to complete the course wrote:



"Some time ago I ordered your correspondence course and have now taken the tests. My score on test one was 92 percent and on test two it was 88 percent. I sent the third test card in a little later and look forward to receiving my score.

"I have to admit that I did not look up everything on test one,

but tests two and three were more difficult. Because I am interested in history, it was clear to me that there were differences between the original Christianity and today's version. However, your literature has helped me to see even the smaller differences that are also important."

#### Readers Offered *Intern* (German *United News*)

The week of June 10, 115 readers of

the *Gute Nachrichten* magazine were mailed an offer to receive *Intern*, a monthly publication of the Vereinte Kirche Gottes (United Church of God—Germany). *Intern* contains biblical material from *United News* and other sources.

All *Gute Nachrichten* readers who have renewed their subscription and have been on the mailing list four years receive the offer. Previous offers have brought a 22.4 percent response.

#### German Web Site Traffic Doubles

For the seven-month period from November 2003 through May 2004, 12,862 people from 42 countries visited the *Gute Nachrichten* Web site, the main Web site of United Church of God—Germany.

The total number of hits for the seven-month period was 312,334. On average, 60 people visit the *Gute Nachrichten* Web site daily. Traffic on the site has doubled in the last year.

Source: [www.ucog.org](http://www.ucog.org).

### Australian National Council Takes a Long View

The Australian National Council met in Melbourne March 20 and 21.

#### National Office Manager

On the agenda was the matter of finding a replacement for the current Australian office manager, Reg Wright, who plans to retire at the end of 2004. Six applications expressing interest in the position had been received, and the Council decided to interview three. The interviews will take place during the July National Council meeting.

The Council is confident that its timetable of having a replacement on board immediately following the 2004 Feast of Tabernacles will be achieved.

#### Possible Feast Site Changes

At its March meeting, the Pastoral Committee discussed a paper suggest-

ing that two new Feast sites be considered for 2005. Some people are beginning to find it difficult to travel the eight hours or so from Melbourne and Sydney to the present Merimbula site.

Setting up two new sites, one closer to Sydney and one closer to Melbourne might be the answer. A survey to gauge member response was distributed but the returns had not yet been analyzed.

#### Longer-Term View

A preliminary report, incorporating a model projecting a picture of the Church in Australia out to 2014 was considered at the meeting. The Council agreed to review the report and have a more comprehensive discussion in July.

#### No Subsidy for 2004/05

As a result of careful stewardship of

tithe and offerings, sufficient reserves have been accumulated in Australia to enable the Church to operate without a subsidy from the United States in the coming year. The aim of the Australian National Council has always been to become financially independent and, hopefully, be able to assist other needy areas.

#### Council Previews TV Ad

The National Council also previewed a 29-second TV ad to be shown in the Queensland Darling Downs area and in Melbourne. Very good production and broadcasting costs were negotiated by the chairman of the Media and Publishing Committee and it will be interesting to see what impact the ad has.

This report by Bill Eddington is excerpted from *United News Australia*, [www.ucg.org.au/content/una.asp](http://www.ucg.org.au/content/una.asp).

### Canada Does Coast-to-Coast Media Campaign

by David Palmer

With so many people focusing on Jesus Christ as a result of the movie production *The Passion of the Christ*, the Canadian media team wanted to bring the real story, God's truth, to many of those same people.

The question we had to struggle with was not how to do it, but how to do it with a limited budget.

We contacted CS Printmaster, the Kelowna, British Columbia-based company that prints *United News Canada*.

Owner and UCG member Sue

Ranchie assisted in negotiating a special price to print, not just a few thousand, but 1 million brochure cards offering our booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*.

A member of our media team, George Carter, had previously contacted the Ontario firm Transcontinental, a marketing company that delivers millions of advertising brochures all across Canada. They offered to deliver our brochure for an introductory price well below their normal rate.

And so the door was open. What started as a simple discussion around

a conference table in Victoria, British Columbia, had become reality. Like Gideon's army, with God's blessing, we were able to design, print and distribute 1 million brochures in a coast-to-coast campaign advertising our latest booklet. The ad also offers a free subscription to *The Good News* magazine.

One million cards will be mailed to households from the Maritimes to Vancouver Island at a cost of about 2 cents per card.

This article is excerpted from the *May-June 2004 United News Canada* ([www.unitednewsCanada.org](http://www.unitednewsCanada.org)).

### International At a Glance

#### Pastor Meets Interested People in Austria

Paul Kieffer, pastor of German-speaking areas, had meetings in Vienna, Austria, on May 25 and 26 with an Adventist pastor and members of the Adventist church as well as former members of the Worldwide Church of God.

After a four-hour meeting, a couple from the Adventist church indicated a desire to join United Church of God—Germany, which currently has one member in Vienna.

#### Adventist Magazine Seeks to Reprint German *GN* Article

The editors of the Adventist magazine *Sabbatwächter* ("Sabbath watchman"), published by an organization in southern Germany, have requested permission to reprint an article on depression from the January-February issue of the German *Good News* magazine.

The editors wrote: "We feel that the topic of depression is very important and we would appreciate being able to use your magazine as a reference."

#### German Ad Quotes Goethe

Bundes-Verlag, a publisher of Christian magazines and books, has accepted an ad for *Gute Nachrichten* (the German *Good News* magazine), which will appear in a special advertising brochure for the "Jesus-Day" convention of evangelical Christians to be held in Berlin in September.

Using a quote from German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the ad asks the question, "Why are you alive?"

#### Deaconess Ordained in England

Edna Rawsthorne of the Preston, England, congregation was ordained as a deaconess on the Day of Pentecost. After the ceremony there was very moving spontaneous applause, with a combination of both smiles and tears. It was the highlight of a very happy day.

#### U.K. Ministers Meet

A valuable meeting of the U.K. min-

istry took place in Bricket Wood following the Sabbath service June 12. Five of the six ministers were present, with John Ross Schroeder absent due to illness.

Discussions included a review of the speaking schedule, including consideration of the amount of travel required; the ongoing development and training of additional speakers; and plans for small video groups and Bible studies in areas of clustered Church members and interested readers, including suggestions for the format of the meetings.

#### Australia Promotes New Booklet

An Australian *Reader's Digest* ad offering the *Jesus Christ: The Real Story* booklet was published in May, and over 1,000 responses have been received. Also 100,000 reply-paid cards were printed, which members all over Australia have been dropping in letterboxes.

In addition, 100,000 addressed card decks containing a reply-paid card offering the booklet were delivered in the Brisbane area in June. A further 50,000 will go to the Perth area in late August. In July the booklet will be offered in an unaddressed card deck delivered to 105,000 households around Geelong.

Ruth Root

#### UCG-British Isles Reports Circulation

The report for May shows that the total circulation of *The Good News* handled from England was 3,370, which is down from 3,577 at the end of April. During May 91 new subscriptions were added.

Of the total circulation figure, 2,604 are in the United Kingdom, 109 in Sweden, 74 in the Isle of Man, 57 in Ireland, 40 in Germany and 36 in France. The remainder are distributed within a further 30 European countries and Israel.

A total of 106 copies are mailed into the 10 countries that became members of the European Union on May 1. In total, 3,082 subscribers out of the overall total of 3,370 are mailed to addresses in countries of the EU.

During May the British Isles' staff received a total of 590 letters and other responses, including 282 requests for 570 other items of literature.

A total of 3,356 letters were mailed out to subscribers in March 2004 offering the new booklet *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*. There have been 1,022 responses (30 percent).

Also in May, we received 20 new requests for the *Bible Study Course*. Total subscriptions currently stand at 233 (with another 796 having been sent all 12 lessons; 112 of these have returned all 12 test cards).

*United News* subscriptions stand at 368; *World News and Prophecy*, at 435; and *Vertical Thought*, at 99.

# Elder Celebrates Spring Feasts in Southeast Asia

*Elder Don Goodger and his wife, Dawn, celebrated Passover and Unleavened Bread with the brethren in Southeast Asia. Following is Dawn's diary of their visit.*

## by Dawn Goodger

Don and I had been looking forward to keeping Passover and Unleavened Bread with our members in Southeast Asia for some time. We arrived in Singapore late Wednesday evening and, on Thursday, we were met by Rosalind Yong and Anita Ng. It was lovely to see them and catch up on the events of the past two years over dinner in a charming old British colonial building, which is now a club, but was originally the administrative headquarters of this amazing island nation.

It is wonderful how God binds us together with the thread of His Spirit so that no matter where you visit God's people, there is a warm sense of family. For us there was also the pleasant anticipation of spending time with those who have become friends.

## Passover in Malaysia

Jeff Caudle had requested that we take the Passover and keep the Sabbath in Malaysia with a family who recently contacted us. So on Friday we flew to Kuala Lumpur and traveled to the town of Kajang to meet with the Moses family. This was exciting because we had already met Joseph Moses, his wife and family a long time ago at a Feast in Port Dickson. They have been keeping God's Sabbath and Holy Days mostly alone for the last five years.

Another member living there, Wilson Ling (baptized on our last visit to Singapore), was also able to join us, with his wife, Angeline.

Sabbath services were held in a small room owned by Rajan, the husband of Victoria, the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Moses. After Sabbath some of us went to a Halal Indian restaurant. They put down a banana leaf and I thought, what a quaint idea for a place mat, but it turned out to be the dinner plate! The food was excellent and they did relent and give us a spoon.

Mrs. Moses has had a stroke and is unable to walk, so the Passover was celebrated in their home with 10 people in attendance. Afterwards we spent time talking and fellowshiping. They would appreciate your prayers for their health and the difficulties they individually face in keeping God's way in their culture.

## Yongs Host NTBMO

The next morning we flew back to Singapore to keep the Night to Be Much Observed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Yong. Their home is a penthouse on the 27th floor, overlooking the sea with the islands of Indonesia in the distance. Ros provided a beautiful dinner and, as it grew darker, the lights of Singapore were stretched out before us.

It was good to see everyone again, including Samuthiran (Sam) who has been to the Feast of Tabernacles in Noosa, Australia. Dinner conversation was a lively affair catching up with Clarise, Anita, Lily, Lilijan and the other members.

## Holy Day Services

Services for the first Holy Day were also held at the Yongs' home. Joining us were two people we had not met before—Jerlyn Mathiew from Singapore and Lawrence Wong from Johore Baru, across the causeway in Malaysia.

In the morning Don's sermon focused on the relationship between Christ the Redeemer and His redeemed. This was followed by a delicious meal together at a restaurant. The afternoon service, with the sermon entitled "The Word of God Is the Road Map to Peace" was shorter—thankfully—for though the spirit was willing, there was a balmy breeze blowing off the South China Sea.

## Little India

We were able to enjoy the company of our brethren for a couple of days visiting such places as Little India in Singapore. We saw a lot of gold jewelry with the most intricate workmanship and the sari silk was also a work of art. Sam explained that there are many men who come across from India to work in building construction, and they gather in Little India to socialize with others from their villages.

We also saw a Hindu temple where a wall of idols was encrusted with silver. People brought food for offerings. Milk and water were poured over some idols, which then drained outside where people blessed themselves and their children with it. There were many idols. It was also in Little India that we finally ate a curry with no cutlery!

Sentosa Island, only a couple of hundred meters from Singapore is well

worth a visit to see an amazing sound and light show. A monorail takes you around the sights such as military fortifications, a lovely beach area and various other attractions.

## Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand

Our flight left at 8:10 the next morning for Chiang Mai, in northern Thailand.

Our purpose for going there was to meet with Church of God members conducting a school for Karen refugees and others. Unfortunately the holidays had begun and there were few students left at the Legacy Institute run by Leon Sexton. We were met at the airport by Ryan Foster, an American who has worked on the project for the past year after completing the course at ABC.

We had services at the institute with Ryan and were able to meet with some of the students. Young people are taught skills to help them earn a living as well as computer skills, English and Bible classes.

A short distance away there is a small farm where students are involved in organic food production, both for the school's use and for sale. The plan is to eventually move the whole operation to this site. Teachers at the institute are volunteers with just their food and lodging provided.

Leon spends much of his time visiting Church of God brethren throughout Myanmar and the region. He provides physical and spiritual support, and was keeping Passover and Unleavened Bread with some of these people when we visited.

Don conducted services on the last Holy Day through an interpreter, David Mya Maung, a Burmese-Karen who translates articles and biblical subjects for Mr. Sexton into the Karen language for the people in the refugee camps.

Some Karen people who were in Chiang Mai are currently waiting in Bangkok for papers to allow them to migrate to the United States. This will be a great relief for them. We asked David if he was applying for permission to settle elsewhere and he told us, although life is very difficult for his family, he wishes to stay and help teach his people and encourage them to keep the faith.

We spent another couple of days around Chiang Mai. We rode an elephant, rafted down a river on a bamboo raft (no rapids), saw silk being spun from the silkworm thread and viewed amazingly complex wood carvings.

Finally it was time to go home. It is a very special privilege to be able to spend time with God's people in this part of the world.

Remember there is a Feast site this year at Malacca, quite a tourist area in southwestern Malaysia (see [www.ucg.org.au](http://www.ucg.org.au)). Most of the brethren are planning to stay to support the first Feast in their area for quite a while, and they would love your company. If you do plan to keep the Feast there, make sure you take the opportunity to visit Singapore for at least two days. It is a city not to be missed. **UN**

*This article first appeared in United News Australia ([www.ucg.org.au/content/una.asp](http://www.ucg.org.au/content/una.asp)).*

# Canadian National Council Meets in Sussex, New Brunswick

The majority of the Canadian National Council members had never visited the beautiful province of New Brunswick prior to arriving on Wednesday, June 9. They were greeted with what the local residents called the "warmest weather in months." The sunshine, rolling hills and lush greenery set the scene for a relaxed beginning to a new year of meetings.

Though the chairman, Rainer Salomaa, didn't arrive until around midnight, this round of meetings began promptly at 9 Atlantic time on Thursday morning. For all of the men from British Columbia, this was 5 a.m. for their biological clocks. The three new council members were asked to give an "icebreaker" to allow others to get to know them a little better.

David Campbell is originally from Scotland where he and his parents were some of the founding members of the Glasgow congregation of the WCG. The family emigrated to Canada and are members of the UCG-Vancouver congregation. David has had experience on other boards and so should have little trouble catching on to how the Council works.

Dr. Ian Simons, his wife, two daugh-

ters and a son recently immigrated to Canada from South Africa. He was baptized over 30 years ago. Prior to leaving South Africa, he served on the South African UCG Council. Currently he works as a physician in southern Manitoba.

Joseph Sheperd is well known in Canada, having been baptized by Mr. Pinelli over 40 years ago. Though he was born in Alberta, he and his wife settled in Victoria. They first started attending church before the Victoria congregation began and they had to travel to Vancouver for services. He was ordained an elder in 1976. A few years ago he retired from a career working with the British Columbia Department of Health.

Much of Thursday morning and afternoon was taken up with routine matters: ratifying minutes and insights from the recent Council of Elders and General Council of Elders meetings. There were reports from the National Office, the Media Team and Ministerial Services Team.

Due to recent government regulations, our privacy policy had to be updated. After a lot of work and legal advice, the Council was able to formal-

ly approve this policy. All subscribers, donors and members will receive a letter informing them of the policy in the next few weeks.

Friday began with committee reports. The Pastoral/Ethics/Governance Committee made recommendations for a technical amendment to section 12 of the Bylaws. Another issue they looked at was improving the lay member selection process. The committee will be considering this matter further.

The Strategic Planning/Finance Committee discussed the Strategic Plan for the following year. They suggested it would be good to have a five-year plan with the aim of increasing congregational spiritual health, subscribers, members and what will be needed in the way of budget and manpower to do so.

On Sunday morning several members of the Sussex congregation were welcomed as guests to the meeting. For the first part of the meeting, all the unfinished business had to be taken care of. The Council gave approval to have a technical amendment forwarded to the Amendment Committee. Two resolutions were approved having to do with compensation for the Council Secretary and development of a five-year plan.

The Council looked at the possibility of creating a Human Resources Policy Manual. While there are a number of approved policies in place, the Council recognizes that there is a need for improvement. The chairman was asked to follow up on



The Sussex, New Brunswick, congregation hosted the Canadian National Council, with 43 attending services; right, the Council in session (photos by Edwin van Pelt)

this to get more input before any decision is made.

One last proposed amendment to the bylaws was discussed and remanded to the September teleconference when there will be more time to discuss the

matter.

The Ministerial Services Team is planning the first-ever conference for all UCG-Canada elders this coming December and asked those present for agenda ideas.

The chairman invited the guests to ask any questions or make any comments. Judging from the comments given, the practice of the National Council to meet in various church areas continues to be valuable and greatly appreciated. The benefit to members will continue to be considered along with the cost for each meeting.

The next face-to-face council meeting is set to begin on Wednesday evening, Dec. 1, in the Toronto area.

Linda Wasilkoff

# Character Made Philippine Camp the Best Ever

Thirty-two campers and 29 staff members gathered at Eden Nature Park near Davao City in the Philippines from May 16 to 23 for the annual United Youth Camp. The theme of this year's camp was "Character Counts." The camp program was designed to emphasize character—from the way the food was prepared to the awards system.

At the start of camp, each camper was given "The UYC Camper Code." Patterned after the Boy Scout Law, it lists and describes 12 character qualities—being trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. Each of these 12 character traits had a color logo, which were printed on the front and back of the camper's ID tag.

Each camper was assigned to one of four dorms—two boys dorms (1B and 2B) and two girls dorms (1G and 2G). Each dorm of eight campers (plus the counselor and assistant counselor) stayed in two five-man tents and cooked their own food on two-burner gas stoves. In the previous five United Youth Camps, the food was prepared and many of the chores were done by the staff.

Each day began at 5 a.m. with "quiet time," an hour of prayer and Bible study. Then at 6 a.m. campers would get ready and prepare breakfast. Each camper had an assigned duty, such as cooking, washing dishes, cleaning the restrooms, etc. Like a family, the campers and counselors in each dorm ate together, laughed together and worked together. At other times, how-

ever, dorms would invite one another, help each other prepare meals and join forces in cleaning up afterward. Cooperation was evident as the dorms hustled to get ready for the day's activities.

The first activity of each day was Christian Living. For five consecutive mornings, camp director Edmond Macaraeg tackled each of the top five issues facing the teens. He introduced each day's topic using a 15-minute role-play of two parts: the wrong way and the right way. This was followed by 45 minutes of discussion and then a 30-minute lecture from the Bible.



The five topics were on dating outside the faith, peer pressure I (drugs, alcohol and smoking), peer pressure II (lifestyle choices, fashion and music), Sabbath and Holy Day compromise and responsibility. The staff did the first



A group shot of the United Youth Camp 2004 campers and staff in the Philippines on the last day of camp. The banner shows the logos designed to represent the 12 character traits (photo by Susan Igloria). Left: Campers of Dorm 2B prepare to cook their lunch (photo by Serizalnio Dizon)

journalism, paper-card making and public speaking) and sports activities (cycling, in-line skating, riflery, softball, soccer, swimming, table tennis and volleyball). We also had a full day of hiking and outdoor cooking, followed by an obstacle course.

For the evenings we had novelty games, career and personality discovery, a masculinity and femininity seminar, Pam Stenzel's *Sex Has a Price Tag* video and a variety show and dance. On the Sabbath we had Bible study, Bible bowl and Sabbath services.

One unforgettable night was when each camper and staff member exchanged positive and inspiring comments about each other, writing them

on small books of 60 blank pages each. Everyone sat around in a circle and passed the books around as each wrote something about the person whose book was in front of them. Only 90 seconds was given to write on each book, but there was some delay so it took more than three hours to finish!

When the books got back to the owners, there were tears and hugs. Many felt closer, and this lasted until the final day of camp when, amidst the joyful songs and yells, came the tear-filled eyes.

Practically all of the campers and staff would say—and many have said—that this was the *best* camp ever!

Daniel Macaraeg

## Camp Pinecrest in the Zone Again in 2004

"Pinecrest," continued from page 1

to the parents, "We have noticed that campers' attitudes are improving each year. According to the staff, campers entered the Zone very quickly.

"Each year at the end of camp we present the Ozzie Engelbart Award to campers who exhibit outstanding sportsmanship; positive, happy, serving and encouraging attitudes; and a willingness to fully participate in the Zone. So many of your children are nominated that we have a special meeting in order to raise the bar to an extremely high level in order to make the award significant."

The Pinecrest facility is run by the Nazarenes. Fred Yates, the manager, stated in his comments that the site has hosted around 650 camps since he has been there, but that the United Youth Camp is the best of them all. He cited the honesty, cleanliness and good attitudes of the campers and staff, and the excellent organization of the administration as reasons the permanent Pinecrest staff enjoys receiving the UYC program each year.

Campers were divided into five boys' and five girls' dorms, each served by a counselor and co-counselor. Camp activities included canoeing (including

a 16-mile, all-day river trip on Missouri's Black River), journalism, life education (which this year featured a personality and temperament analysis for each camper), rappelling and rock climbing, riflery, a ropes course, softball, speedway and swimming.

The swimming program included two new activities: water polo and an activity revolving around "the blob," a very large floating air chamber anchored on the camp lake. One camper would wait on the top of the lake end of the blob, while another would jump on top of the shore end, thereby catapulting the first camper up into the air and forward over the water for an exciting splashdown.

### The Spiritual Course

Each activity day began with a prayer, asking our Father's blessing on the day's activities. This was followed by a 15-minute compass check presented by the ministerial staff. The purpose of these presentations was to get each day off on the right spiritual course.

This year's Compass Check theme was "lessons from Bible heroes and heroines." Such lessons included the stories of the Good Samaritan, Daniel and his three friends, the little maid of

Israel, Esther, Jonathan, Josiah, Joseph and Abigail.

Each day's activities ended with a one-hour Christian Living session in the evening where smaller groups of campers met with teams of ministers who answered camper questions, while asking a few discussion questions of their own.

During a Friday-evening seminar and during split sermons on the Sabbath, the topic of understanding today's music and media agenda in the light of the Bible was covered by three different ministers, including Larry Greider, national director of the United Youth Camp program.

The weather was again wonderful this year. It rained only in the evening, which allowed virtually all activities to proceed as scheduled. Our Father also granted His protection on the campers and staff. One staff member broke her wrist before camp began, and one camper dislocated a toe. Other than that there were only the usual minor scrapes and bruises that come with active sports.

On the last morning, a special awards ceremony was held to honor campers who completed proficiencies and other achievements during the camp.

Opinions appeared unanimous that this year's Camp Pinecrest was a won-



Camper launches into the lake from "the blob"—new at Pinecrest this year

derful success. Campers and staff are already looking forward to Pinecrest 2005! UN

This article was written by the Pinecrest journalism staff and originally appeared in the camp newspaper.



## From the Word

# The True Shining City Upon the Hill

■ The death of Ronald Reagan reminds us of his vision of America as a “shining city upon a hill.” While America is not living up to that ideal, true Christians are called to be excited and inspired by God’s far more glorious vision for us.

by Mario Seiglie

Recently we have all witnessed the state funeral of an outstanding U.S. president, Ronald Reagan. It was moving to see the leaders in the United States and around the world pay homage to him.

I was impacted by his accomplishments and sayings, especially since so many of them were based on biblical principles.

He had a deep respect for the Bible and once said, “Of the many influences that have shaped the United States into a distinctive nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible.”

On solving the world’s problems, he stated: “Within the covers of the Bible are all the answers for all the problems men face.”

On the Ten Commandments, he humorously remarked: “I have wondered at times what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress.”

On God and morality, he reflected: “Without God, there is no virtue, because there’s no prompting of the conscience. Without God, we’re mired in the material, that flat world that tells us only what the senses perceive. Without God, there is a coarsening of the society. And without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we’re one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under. I’m convinced more than ever that man finds liberation only when he binds himself to God and commits himself to his fellow man. Our liberty springs from and depends upon an abiding faith in God.”

On humility he said, “There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn’t mind who gets the credit.”

On abortion he observed: “I’ve noticed that everyone who is for abortion has already been born.”

### Reagan’s Central Theme: The Shining City Upon a Hill

But it was the central theme of his presidency that most caught my attention, “The shining city upon a hill.” He mentioned: “Standing on the tiny deck

of the *Arabella* in 1630 off the Massachusetts coast, John Winthrop said, ‘We will be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world.’”

“Well,” President Reagan added, “we have not dealt falsely with our God, even if He is temporarily suspended from the classroom.”

As his presidency came to an end, he mused: “The past few days when I’ve been at that window upstairs, I’ve thought a bit of the ‘shining city upon a hill.’ The phrase comes from John Winthrop, who wrote it to describe the America he imagined. What he imagined was important because he was an early Pilgrim, an early freedom man. He journeyed here on what today we’d call a little wooden boat; and like the other Pilgrims, he was looking for a home that would be free.

“I’ve spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don’t know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That’s how I saw it, and see it still.

“And how stands the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was eight years ago. But more than that: After 200 years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she’s still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

“We’ve done our part. And as I walk off into the city streets, a final word to the men and women of the Reagan revolution, the men and women across America who for eight years did the work that brought America back. My friends: We did it. We weren’t just marking time. We made a difference. We made the city stronger, we made the city freer, and we left her in good hands. All in all, not bad, not bad at all.”

Where did the theme of the shining city upon the hill originally come from? It didn’t come from Ronald Reagan or from John Winthrop.

It actually came from the Bible, and specifically, from Jesus Christ Himself. It was He who said in the Sermon on the Mount, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works

and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14).

So you see, Christ was not speaking of America as the city on the hill, but about *His Church* and the Spirit-filled brethren who let their spiritual lights shine upon the world.

Yes, Ronald Reagan was a fine president who clearly enunciated his beliefs and convictions. His optimism was infectious, and many were willing to follow his vision of a strong, decent, productive and freedom-loving America.

He even recognized God’s hand in all of this. He once said, “I believe this blessed land was set apart in a very special way, a country created by men and women who came here not in the search of gold, but in search of God. They would be free people, living under the law with faith in their Maker and their future. I, in my own mind, have always thought of America as a place in the divine scheme of things that was set aside as a promised land.”

Yet as wonderful as Reagan’s America was, it was still a physical and carnal kingdom. America is not even a truly God-based system that takes into account all of His holy laws. As a result, it is rapidly deteriorating morally and spiritually. Thanks to God’s promise to Abraham, the United States has retained some biblical truths and has prospered. But those of us who live in this blessed land must remember it is still a physical and political entity that is flawed and not the true solution to the world’s evils.

### Why Empires Collapse

Do some doubt the decline of the United States and its inability to solve the world’s problems? We should recall historian Edward Gibbon’s five reasons for the collapse of the Roman Empire and see how similar these are to the situation we now see in the United States. They were:

First: A rapid increase of divorce, with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which was the basis of society.

Second: Higher and higher taxes and the spending of money for bread and celebrations.

Third: The mad craze for pleasure, with sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.

Fourth: The building of gigantic armaments, when the real enemy was within—in the decadence of the people.

Fifth: The decay of religion—faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to guide it.

Yes, the handwriting is on the wall for those willing to see it.

### Our Idealism and Excitement

So, how about *our* city on the hill? Do we in the Church have young people armed with spiritual idealism, as

Ronald Reagan was able to muster with his physical ideals? Do we still have young people willing to learn and to get excited about God’s vision for us?

I fondly remember my idealism, born 33 years ago at the age of 17. It was due to a church youth who was so excited about his beliefs that he infused me with them. Certainly Herbert Armstrong had that vision and also filled us with it. I am still excited to talk about my faith and am proud of it. I still feel like a spiritual warrior who continues to fight the spiritual evils that are all around us.

So, are we still excited about proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God, as Ronald Reagan was excited about the revolution he enacted? We should remember the world is not getting any better morally or spiritually. Many of the signs of the end times are around us—although some still remain absent—and we need to be getting the truth out about it.

In this regard, even President Reagan recognized he was witnessing some of the end-time conditions. He once told evangelist Jerry Falwell, “Jerry, we are heading very fast for Armageddon now. I turn back to your prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if we are the generation that is going to see that come about. I don’t know if you have noted any of those prophecies lately, but, believe me, they describe the times we are going through. There were times in the past when we thought the end of the world was coming, but never anything like this . . . Maybe it’s later than we think.”

Do we still want to share the good news and reveal how much is false about traditional Christianity? Do we still want to teach how many blessings would come by honoring *all* of God’s commandments and getting rid of so much religious error? What about the need to reveal to a deceived world what sin truly is? How about explaining what overcoming truly is, and helping to take the veil of deception from the world’s eyes, as revealed in Isaiah 25:7, 42:6-7 and Acts 26:17-18?

Yes, the true shining city is still upon the hill, beckoning us to be a part of that idealism and to help spread that shining light of God’s truth. We need our young people to see and embrace that vision of being part of that city upon the hill and shining its wonderful truths to the world.

President Reagan will be known as a



Reuters

very fine and courageous president who didn’t just go along with the crowd. He valiantly stood up for his biblical convictions that had been mostly taught by his mother. He believed in God, the Bible, decency, courage, individual freedoms and love of country. As a result, he strove to leave the nation and the world in better shape than it was.

Yes, the United States has played an important part in history—mostly for good. But we must remember that when Christ comes back, His Kingdom will be based on the principles of the *biblical* city on the hill as taught by Christ to His Church—the spiritual Mount Zion.

So, why is it so important to be part of God’s Church and work today? I received a note from Howard Davis, producer of the *Tomorrow* TV program that spells it out: “Our object is to proclaim the gospel with credibility. Not with man’s wisdom, but with the logic of God. However, only God will do the calling into the Church. And the only reason God will call people into the Church is to bring them in to help in His work.”

We have an important a job to do, so we all need to be more involved. We need to become excited by our calling, do our part and back what God is doing though all of us. This means always keeping that vision alive and standing in the gap!

As God said in Ezekiel 22:30, “So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found no one.”

Yes, Ronald Reagan stood in the gap in a moment of history and was quite successful, curbing many of the evils in the nation and in the world in his day. But God is still looking for those men and women who will *stand in the spiritual gap* and let their spiritual lights of truth shine forth. It seems there are still too few people, especially among the youth, who want to become part of that true shining city on the hill. Let’s encourage them to catch the vision and help us stand in the gap! **UN**

# Unity in God's Church

■ Unity is important to God. How can we achieve it?

by Larry Salyer

Over the last few years I have found it fascinating to see how the matter of unity is viewed in the Churches of God. Generally speaking, we might say that most organizations, remnants of the mother church of this era, seem to expect absolute dedicated unity within their organization, but don't think much about it across organizational lines. We are doing our thing, they are doing theirs and so be it.

I hasten to say here, from my experience of being part of another group and then joining with United, that most in United, including the ministry and the leadership, do not feel that way. If they did I probably wouldn't be here.

Actually back in the Global Church of God we were approached by a number of United ministers as early as 1997 when we first began to talk about getting a group together to explore the unity of the two groups. I think we may have even been contacted somewhat less formally back in 1995 shortly after United was formed. Other groups have come together, some before and some since the merger of United Church of God and Church of God, a Christian Fellowship.

So the United Church of God has in a sense taken the lead, made an effort to reach out and say, "Hey, if we're all of one mind, if we're all of one spirit, then let's get together and make it more efficient and effective to do God's work." I commend the organization for that.

But some today seem to put pet ideas and doctrines above the real doctrine of unity in God's Church. It is a clear and prominent teaching of Christ and the apostles that God's people should be united, and unity is even used to define true Christianity.

## Government and Unity

Ironically, some feel we cannot be unified because of different opinions about Church government. I say ironically because Worldwide Church of God founder Herbert Armstrong placed a lot of emphasis on Church government. Any of you who were around in those years know that.

What most fail to realize is that Mr. Armstrong was emphasizing and pushing Church government precisely for the purpose of maintaining and preserving unity within the Church. That was his goal and his purpose. He had learned by bitter experience, as you can find easily by reading through his autobiography, that leaving individual congregations sort of loosely federated and under their own local leadership never tended toward unity. Church government, which did not actually mature in the Church for decades, was a means of preserving the unity of the Church.

But sometimes we end up throwing out the baby with the bath water. Because in this case the unity of the Church is the foundational doctrine, and the preservation of that unity in the

Church is what was important and still is. How it is achieved may vary from time to time as we see in various biblical models, but unity is ultimately a very important doctrine in God's Church.

Today United does not have one-man government because we didn't see one man clearly set apart for that role, but we seek to have a Spirit-led collaborative approach. As a person who has participated in both forms of government, and as a person who was for a short time president of another organization, I can tell you that governing by one-man rule is so much easier than governing by collective rule. You know, it's really easy to get things done if everybody says somebody is in charge and whatever he says, that's what we do.

But when you get a collective group of people giving input, it is a very difficult thing to manage. It's a difficult way to produce the goals and the focus that you need to get the job done, because everybody has a perspective. Everybody has a reason for feeling and seeing things the way that he does. And that is very valuable. But it's hard to pull all of that together and make it a meaningful whole.

We are now successfully doing that. And while I would much rather have the easier way in one sense, I respect and appreciate the effort that has gone into making this collaborative system work. And what does it do? It promotes and preserves unity, because we have systems of written documentation and processes of governance that are undergirded by principles that everybody has agreed to. And so it promotes unity, it promotes togetherness, it promotes efficiency and effectiveness.

It puts us in a position to promote unity, to encourage unity, to reach out to others for the sake of unity.

## Fellowship Starts With God

But let's review a few scriptures in order to keep fresh in our minds the importance and even the urgency of promoting unity in the Church of God. Let's start in 1 John 1:3: "That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

The focus of the fellowship is between human beings and God. And the implication here is, if I have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, and you have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, then we automatically have fellowship one with another. God is the conduit, the connection between us.

All those who are of God should also have appreciation and respect and fellowship with one another. But today that simply is not the case. Would anyone say he doesn't know of any Christians in any other organization? I could name a whole bunch of people I consider good Christians who are not in the same physical organization I am in. Those who are true Christians are separated here and there and scattered among various organizations. Most of us would acknowledge that. But what we must also

acknowledge is that if we are all of God, we have not only a responsibility to God in terms of fellowship, but a responsibility to one another.

## Corinthians and Unity

We know 1 Corinthians 1 is a place we often go to talk about unity, or division as the case may be. "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:9). Here is the apostle Paul saying the same thing we just read from the apostle John. We are the called out circle of friends that surround Jesus Christ as our leader.

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together" (verse 10). There are lots of big demands in the Bible. This is one of those very, very big demands—"That you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Do we begin to comprehend how hard this is? Have we even begun to achieve this even within organizations separately, much less across organizational lines? It isn't going to happen—yet—but it is what we want to come to. We want to represent Jesus Christ and His way of life so thoroughly that we are instantly identifiable by what we believe and practice, by what we teach and how we treat one another. We want people to be able to say, "Wow, you must be of them."

Notice verse 11: "There are contentions among you." Then he goes on to describe one example of those contentions, which is that they were all divided because they were following men. What are we divided about? What is it we are not really willing to commit to as something that serves the Body and serves the greater good of the whole of the people of God?

Even if we have differences of judgment and differences of speaking in our private lives, they must be subjected to the greater good of the unity of the Church. Again, one of the things Mr. Armstrong always taught us was to stick to the trunk of the tree. If you go off on branches and leaves that are not attached to the trunk of the tree, you are not filling out the tree. You are planting a different one. So following men here is only one of those things that can take us astray.

## The Unity of the Faith

Ephesians 4 refers to the purpose of the ministry and the functioning within the Church of those whom God has put there.

"He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping [perfecting, KJV] of the saints" (Ephesians 4:11-12). What he is really saying here is God has put a place, a role, an accountability within the Church into which He puts certain people who have the responsibility of doing what He is doing—for Him on His behalf—as God's workmen. And notice

what that purpose is. "For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:12-14).

We are all sheep. Christ is the chief shepherd, but He appoints assistant shepherds here and there to take care of parts of His flock.

And every one of those shepherds knows that sooner or later somebody who is presently very nicely ensconced within the fold is going to jump the fence, and is going to say, "I have discovered new truth." Or, "I have decided that I cannot in good conscience continue to participate in an organization that fails to do this," whatever that thing might be. Now, I do not question the sincerity or the honesty of such individuals in many cases.

They do what they do of a good conscience or an attempt to obey God. But do they do it on their own counsel without the help and advice and counsel of the greater body, God's Church?

We do have to be responsible for our actions and accountable for them. And we all make decisions accordingly day in and day out. But we ought to be very, very cautious not to make them on our own authority with our own counsel without really getting the best counsel and guidance and advice that we can possibly get. People go off to follow their own light, and they end up disappearing.

We can't solve the problem of lack of unity with other organizations, though we do have a responsibility to set the example, to reach out and to be available when they come looking for us. Or to reach out to them as United reached out to us in CGCF years ago.

It is clear that the purpose of the ministry, the physical corporation, the Church itself in some sense, is designed to maintain and preserve the unity of understanding of doctrine, of practice, of example and the capacity to really do God's work. Because we cannot do it individually and separately.

## Christ's Prayer for Us

In John 17:20 Christ said, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word." So Christ was praying for us. "That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us" (verse 21). Again, a very lofty expectation. How much were the Father and Son one? To the point that Christ is described in Hebrews 1:3 as being the exact image or expression of His Father.

"That the world may believe that You sent Me" (verse 21). Now that takes it to a whole new level. There's going to be an example that says these people are so like Jesus Christ, they are so committed to the truth that they have to be of God. The very validity of Christ's authority as the Son of God and the Savior is to some

degree tied to the ultimate fruit of His ministry, part of which is unity among His people. Does that put a little bit of burden on you? I hope it does.

You and I are hardly even on the map as far as the world is concerned. And yet ultimately it sounds like we have got to come to the place where we are recognized as being absolutely of one mind and judgment under the authority of God and as an exact imprint of the mind and thinking of Jesus Christ. They aren't going to say, "Are you a Jehovah's Witness?" They'll say, "Are you part of the Church of God? Do you keep the Sabbath and Holy Days and the commandments? Do you love your fellow man? Do you love God?"

Each of us has a responsibility to deepen our fellowship with the Father and the Son, which will in turn automatically increase and deepen our fellowship one with another. And it will also make us of one mind and judgment with all others who have true fellowship with the Father and the Son. So we are promoting unity by the way that we commit to the truth as God has revealed it to us, letting patience and the fruit of the Spirit help us ascend above our own little judgments, pet doctrines and theories which can separate us from the trunk of the tree and from one another.

As a personal position it seems doubtful to me that Christ is going to continue in the long run to work through competing judgmental groups of Christians who are so focused on their own work that they fail to see the need for unity and promote it with zeal by the way they serve God and the way they hold out that openness and love and care for one another.

I have been through some pretty difficult times in the last 15 years. I have been through what I consider some fairly abusive circumstances. But with God's help I have come to really want total unity with all of those brethren, even those who slap me around a little bit.

I am not saying that that unity and that peace and that one mind and judgment is going to come by us having sort of a "live and let live" attitude. True unity in God's Church is not going to come in some loose federation of organizations any more than it ever came in some loose association of individual congregations way back in the '30s.

God is going to bring all of those who are His children into one mind, one fellowship and the unity of the faith. The responsibility for each of us today is to be able to be used in that way, to be malleable clay in God's hands. We need to accept His guidance and direction to make us what He wants us to be, so that we together produce a much more effective witness and light, not only to the other organizations, but to the world itself.

That unity will come when we individually and collectively achieve fellowship of the mind and heart and attain the goal of one judgment. That will come when we each achieve the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Unity of the faith is important to God. It must be important to each of us throughout the Church of God. **UN**

# Treasure Digest

## Q&A: What Are Spiritual Sacrifices?

The term "spiritual sacrifices" occurs once in Scripture, in 1 Peter 2:5. In this passage, Peter is drawing an analogy based upon the religion of ancient Israel, which revolved around a physical temple and physical sacrifices. He shows his readers that they are the building blocks of a spiritual temple, the Church, and they are to offer spiritual sacrifices and not just sacrificial animals.

So what is a "spiritual sacrifice"? Giving a sacrifice involves permanently giving something that has value to the giver, and therefore involves giving up something that most people would rather keep for themselves. A sacrifice is given by a lesser being (man) to a greater being (God) as a form of submission and worship. Animals given for sacrifice in ancient Israel had to be "without blemish," and were some of the finest animals the farmer owned (Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 1:3).

While no scriptural passage defines the term "spiritual sacrifice," there are several passages that describe this kind of sacrifice. In Romans 12:1, Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

Paul is not saying we literally sacrifice our physical bodies, but that we give our lives to God to use as He sees fit. Many people are willing to "give" God an hour or two a week, but few are willing to completely sacrifice the things they are doing that go contrary to the way of God.

Hebrews 11:4 tells us, "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." It seems the sacrifice was "more excellent" because it was a sacrifice given in faith while Cain's seems to have been a sacrifice given out of duty. In that sense, Abel's sacrifice was "spiritual" because it had a spiritual component of a right heart.

Hebrews 13:15-16 says, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." In this passage we see that such things as being thankful to God, doing good and sharing with others are considered sacrifices that please God. The book of Hebrews draws a number of analogies concerning the sacrificial system of ancient Israel and the lessons for Christians today.

*David M. Johnson, pastor,  
Cape Girardeau and Poplar Bluff, Missouri, and  
Paducah, Kentucky, congregations*

## IOU Can Spell Bondage

Growing up I learned that debt can be a long, long road to financial discomfort and personal anguish. I heartily recommend that you avoid that road! Debt can take away much of the exuberance and joy of life as well as rob you of opportunities.

I have spoken to many young people about the debts they have incurred in getting an education, buying an automobile or going on vacation. They pay and pay and pay. It breaks my heart sometimes when I see the chains that they have willingly put on through mismanagement and overspending.

Bond servants were people who received the bare necessities of life from their employer, while the employer made all the profit from their work

for a period of time. I find little difference in that condition and the one so many people slide into when their debts and the interest on their debts sap any income except for the bare necessities of life.

God has plenty to say about handling our finances. Romans 13:8 states that we should owe no man anything, but to love one another. That extends beyond money, but we will focus on money for this article. Nehemiah 5:1-7 spells out the lament of people who had mortgaged their land and taken loans to live—and were being drowned in usury or interest.

It amazes me to see that credit cards charge in the vicinity of 20 percent interest per year and still people use them to the max.

The Bible makes many statements about charging interest (usury) and about freeing people from their debts (such as the year of release, Deuteronomy 15:9). But handling one's income in a responsible manner is the key to financial success.

Paul seems to have learned a vital lesson of life. He writes in Philippians 4:11, 1 Timothy 6:8 and Hebrews 13:5 that we should learn to be content with what we have.

A great lesson in financing is to only buy things within your budget and save the money needed so you can learn a full payment and have no interest to pay. That allows you to take advantage of sales and bargains that save further dollars. Today, there are those in the finance and sales industries who are highly trained in removing extra dollars from your pocket.

In our local newspaper of Dec. 28, 2003, a large article was written about the credit card crisis in Korea. That problem is not unique to Korea, but we can learn a lesson or two. The article stated that in 1997 the government encouraged the use of credit cards to stimulate the economy. Credit cards were handed out to almost anyone. According to the article, each man, woman and child in Korea has a credit card debt of about \$11,000! Other countries are not far behind.

Those who ensnare and trap the unsuspecting into a life of credit card bondage ought to be stopped.

Credit is not a right; it is a privilege that belongs to those who can show responsibility. All of us ought to be concerned about breaking the chains



that hold so many. Education in financial management and accepting personal responsibility are the keys. God wants to set you free. He has opened the doors, but you have to walk through them. Life can be beautiful outside of the prison of debt.

For more information, read our free booklet, *Managing Your Finances* ([www.ugc.org/booklets](http://www.ugc.org/booklets)).

*Robert Berendt, pastor,  
Edmonton, Alberta, congregation*

## Making New People Feel Welcomed

My husband and I moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, from Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1980. I was not excited at all about the move. I was leaving my friends behind and being forced to make new ones. I was so very shy then, and I missed my Church friends back home.

I still remember the very first time our family attended the Cincinnati North congregation. We gathered up our then three small children and walked in, not knowing what to expect. Here came the friendliest smiling face I ever saw! He held out

his hand to greet us at the door. It was Ed Smith. He not only spoke to my husband and me, but he also spoke to our children.

He made us feel welcomed, and what was more impressive, he knew all our names the next Sabbath! We were important enough to him that he remembered our names. Each and every week he



would come up to talk to us and see how we were doing. Because he took the time to care, it helped ease us into a new environment.

The first impression that a new member can have of your congregation is critical! It could even determine whether he or she will return the next week or

not. Some are just checking things out to see if they would like to come to your congregation or not.

What kind of impression does your congregation give? One of warmth that makes a person want to come back or of coldness and distance? You can have greeters at the door, but is it only the greeters' responsibility to do the greeting? Is that enough?

Here are some suggestions that will help the newcomer want to come back week after week.

1. Make sure you look for new faces. Go up to them and make them feel welcomed.
2. Invite them along for your get-together after church.
3. Don't stop with just the first week; continue week after week going up and saying hello. Remember, they are new and they have no friends there. Become a friend.
4. Take them around to meet other people.
5. Make it a personal responsibility to help them fit in. Tell them of all the available activities going on for them and their children in the Church.
6. Take photos if they do not object and place them in the church bulletin welcoming them to the congregation. Write up a little bio about them for the bulletin. Include things like where they work, their children's names, hobbies and so on.
7. Place yourself in their shoes and understand

what it is like to attend and to not know anyone.

8. Make it a point to remember that person's name. I must admit I am terrible with names, but making the extra effort with new people will make them feel special. Write their name down and think about it during the week.

9. Pray for the new people.

I will always remember the first person who took the time to make me feel welcome and ease my fear. Let's all take the time to care and make those attending for the very first time feel a part of our Church family.

*Janet Treadway  
Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregation*

## This Old Spouse: Making Over Your Mate?

With all the reality TV shows around, it probably won't be long till someone comes up with the ultimate makeover show: *This Old Spouse*. Even before marriage, many people already have a list of habits and characteristics they want to change in their mates.

Problem: It doesn't work.

Maybe after 12 years he'll start picking up his socks or she'll stop nagging, but don't count on it.

The methods we use to try to change our mates are "counterproductive at best," writes Gary Smalley in *The Joy of Committed Love*. Too often we mislabel our mates' differences as problems. He relates the story of Jim who devastated his wife with this outburst: "I'm sick and tired of you taking everything so seriously. You're just too sensitive! If I had known you were this emotional, I probably would never have married you."



Mr. Smalley writes that Jim "fails to understand the basic difference between the natures of men and women. Jim has taken two of his wife's greatest natural strengths, her sensitivity and intuitive awareness of life, and labeled them weaknesses" (page 175).

The Bible advises changing ourselves as the only sure way to improve our marriages. What can we do for a marriage makeover? We can write our part of the script using scriptures such as Ephesians 5:21-33, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-11, 1 Corinthians 7:4 and 13:4-8.

## Be Ready to Give an Answer: Why Don't You Believe in Hell?

Most people think of hell as a place of eternal torment for the souls of wicked people. Could a compassionate God really torture people forever? We do not believe this is what the Bible teaches.

**What does happen to the wicked?** The Bible says they die. In one of the most well-known verses in the Bible, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (**John 3:16**). Paul also makes a clear contrast between death and "the gift of God . . . eternal life" (**Romans 6:23**). **Ezekiel 18:4** says, "the soul who sins shall die." The serpent in the Garden of Eden first spread the lie that man would not die—that man had an immortal soul (**Genesis 3:4**). But the Bible shows that "the dead know nothing" (**Ecclesiastes 9:5**) and "sleep in the dust of the earth" (**Daniel 12:2**) to awake in the resurrection.

**So what is hell?** The Bible uses four words that have been translated hell. "Sheol" (Hebrew) and "hades" (Greek) both refer to the grave where righteous people like Job, David, Hezekiah and even Christ knew they would go to death (**Job 14:13**; **Psalms 88:3**; **Isaiah 38:10**; **Acts 2:27, 31**). "Tartarus" (Greek) is only used once in the Bible, about where fallen angels are restrained (2 Peter 2:4). "Gehenna" was a word based on a vile garbage dump outside Jerusalem where trash and the bodies of criminals were burned up. Christ used the word to refer to what **Revelation 20:10, 14-15** calls "the lake of fire," which brings "the second death"—permanent, eternal death.

God does not want anyone to end up in the lake of fire and will make sure everyone has a full chance for repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**). We pray that few will make the choice to reject that wonderful future God has to offer.

**For More Information** and for explanations of some often misunderstood scriptures, see our free booklets, *What Happens After Death?* and *Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?* ([www.ugc.org/booklets](http://www.ugc.org/booklets)).



## Local Church Updates

### North Carolina Congregations Have Youth Service Day

The Charlotte, Asheboro and Raleigh, North Carolina, congregations recently celebrated "Youth Service Day." Young people from preschool through college in each of the three congregations served in such areas as greeting brethren, helping setup the sound system, hall set up, passing out songbooks, opening and closing prayers, preparing the lectern, special music, piano accompaniment and setting up of refreshments.



T.J. Powers setting up the audio system in Charlotte, North Carolina, for Youth Service Day. Above right, Calum Powers passing out songbooks in Charlotte (photos by Marti Springer)

Past and present youth projects were recognized to update the congregations of activities the young people have participated in to prepare to be future servants and leaders in God's Church.

Special sermonettes and sermons aimed at the youth were presented. In his sermon, David Mills, pastor of each of the three church areas, reminded the young people that "God's Way Works!"  
*Marti Springer*

### Silver Ambassadors Enjoy Food, Flora and Fellowship

Twenty-five Silver Ambassadors from the Beloit and Wisconsin Dells,



Beloit and Wisconsin Dells Silver Ambassadors enjoy Rotary Gardens

Wisconsin, congregations spent the early afternoon of Sunday, May 16, enjoying lunch, companionship, some discussion, and a guided tour of the impressive Janesville, Wisconsin, Rotary Gardens.

After the tasty sandwich buffet, a short give-and-take discussion and topics session added to the atmosphere of genial fellowship. The short meeting began with an inspirational poetry recitation of "Sometime" by Mary Haukland. Richard Harrar led everyone in some enjoyable topics.

Pastor Steve Nutzman then explained that the third day of the Genesis creation exemplified God's desire to provide incomparable and uplifting surroundings for His beloved sixth day of creation masterwork.

To complete the day, the seniors were escorted on an informative guided tour of the beautiful Rotary Gardens which include a Japanese garden and a rose garden. Some participants completed their enjoyable visit in the tempting gift shop.

*Juanita Holman*

### Garden Grove Teen Earns Girl Scout Gold Award

Sydney Clark of the Garden Grove, California, congregation, 17,



Sydney Clark earns Girl Scout Gold Award June 6 (photo by Kurtis Clark)

earned the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting. She received the award June 6.

As part of the award, she earned recognitions in leadership, community service and career development.

Sydney also completed a five-month service project, which was a science fair workshop for elementary school English-language learners.

*Krista Clark*

### Rena Locke, 100 Years Young!

Rena Locke was honored May 21 in Cloverdale, California, by members of the Oakland-Santa Rosa, California, congregation for her 100th birthday. She was presented with her favorite chocolate cake and 100 red roses.

Rena enjoyed the many cards and gifts, responding with a big smile to each and every one. Rena always likes



Bonnie Kish congratulates Rena Locke as she turns 100

to speak her mind. But that day, she decided she better not. Instead she said, "Let's eat more cake." She chuckled and all in attendance laughed along wholeheartedly!

*Melody Malizia and Bonnie Kish*

### Accounting Graduate Honored

Tarah Kirkpatrick was honored as the outstanding graduating student in accounting by the University of Cincinnati at its spring commencement exercises on June 13. She graduated from the university summa cum laude (with an overall grade point average of 4.0 throughout her college career).

Upon graduation, Tarah will immediately begin work on her master's of science in accountancy from the same university.

In the middle of her college career,



Tarah Kirkpatrick

she attended Ambassador Bible Center, graduating in the class of 2002.

Tarah intends to pursue a career in public accounting upon completion of her master's degree. She lives with her parents and two sisters in Milford, Ohio, and attends the Cincinnati East congregation.



Right, Victor Kubik speaks in St. John's. Above, Blanche Smith shows Beverly and Victor Kubik around Signal Hill



### Newfoundland Welcomes Council Member

On May 29 and 30, 21 members of UCG-Canada and guests in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador gathered in St. John's for Sabbath and Pentecost services. This was a much-anticipated weekend because we were privileged to have Victor and Beverly Kubik present.

Mr. Kubik is a member of the Council of Elders of United. He also is chairman of the Media and Communications Committee and president of LifeNets, as well as pastoring the congregations of Terre Haute and Lafayette, Indiana.

Mr. Kubik gave the main messages on both days. On Sabbath Mr. Kubik reminded us that Pentecost was officially the ninth anniversary of the United Church of God.

He also spoke on the qualities and characteristics of a Christian, expounding the beatitudes in Matthew 5 and helping us get a better grasp of the profound teachings of Jesus and what our Father expects of us as His called-out ones.

After a break for tea and snacks, we reassembled for a slide presentation of some of the brethren in Latin America and the work of LifeNets in that area. It was good to see brethren who seem to have less of material possessions than many of us have, yet who have a joy and a radiance that shows they really are the children of God.

On the Day of Pentecost brethren arrived early, which allowed time for conversations with the Kubiks. During the service Mr. Kubik updated us on Church events in East Africa. He then continued with another inspiring message about the qualities that God expects us to develop and the wondrous power of the Holy Spirit given to the Church and to each one of us individually.

After a potluck meal Bruce Moss, who had provided special music, shared more of his own spiritual compositions with the group. Mr. Kubik videotaped the music especially to share with brethren he visits abroad. He felt that they would be truly appreciative.

The sentiments expressed by the

brethren confirmed that it was truly a wonderfully uplifting, inspiring weekend. The fellowship was fabulous and all were left with a new appreciation for what we do have.

The Newfoundland congregation is a small group scattered throughout the province. Being situated as we are, on the far eastern edge of the North American continent, it is easy to feel isolated and far removed. So when we receive special visits from other ministers, it reminds and reassures us that we are a part of something much bigger. We find that most encouraging.

Mr. and Mrs. Kubik were in St. John's for the 2002 Feast of Tabernacles, and knew that they would return to what Mr. Kubik says is a truly remarkable place on the earth.

For anyone who would like a taste of our remarkable land and its people, there is room for about 30 more people for the 2004 Feast of Tabernacles.

To view some photos of the Kubik's Newfoundland experience, go to [www.kubik.org/nl2004](http://www.kubik.org/nl2004).

*Dorothy and Ellsworth Stanley/  
David Smith*

### Young Adults' and Singles' Christian Leadership Conference Set

A Christian Leadership Conference for singles and young adults (including married couples) is being planned for Aug. 20 to 22 on the shores of beautiful Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

We are renting a retreat facility that allows more activities and fellowship. Planned activities include interactive Bible studies, seminars for singles and young adults, Sabbath services, a service project, games, a bonfire, canoeing, boating or a high/low ropes course. The facilities are air-conditioned.

Cost is \$120 per person (cost includes all meals and lodging). There is an additional \$25 fee for those who wish to participate in the high/low ropes course. Registration forms and details are available at [www.ucgstp.org/conference](http://www.ucgstp.org/conference).

You must preregister for this event to save a space. If you are unable to download a registration form, please contact Gary or Gale Black at [gblack66@earthlink.net](mailto:gblack66@earthlink.net) or at (651) 769-8802.

*Gary and Gale Black*

### ABC Chorale Performs for Cincinnati North

The Cincinnati North, Ohio, congregation had the pleasure of having special music performed by the Ambassador Bible Center (ABC) chorale on

the Sabbath of June 26. Instead of the normal sermonette, the ABC chorale performed several selections for the congregation under the direction of Ken Shoemaker. The songs performed, like "Thanks Be to Thee" and "The Holy City," certainly were enjoyable and inspiring.

After the 30 minutes of special music, Matthew Fenchel, pastor of the

Cincinnati North congregation, gave a sermon titled "The Joy of the LORD Is Your Strength." Mr. Fenchel gave us points on how we can have joy even in a very negative and difficult world.

Following services the Cincinnati North congregation provided a potluck meal for the ABC chorale. The congregation wanted to show their appreciation to the ABC students for their hard work and outstanding performance.

Thanks go to Julie O'Brien, Dawn Steele and their helpers for organizing the potluck activity. It capped off an enjoyable afternoon of inspiration and fellowship for the congregation and ABC guests. Approximately 100 people attended this special Sabbath.

Janet Treadway



The Ambassador Bible Center chorale performs a sermonette of songs for the Cincinnati North congregation June 26 (photo by Janet Treadway)

## Women's Weekend Stresses Confidence

On June 11, 81 women came to the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania to attend a Women's Enrichment Weekend, "Confident Christian Women," hosted by the ladies of the Pittsburgh congregation.

The weekend began with an interactive Bible study led by Don Henson, pastor of the Pittsburgh and Meadville, Pennsylvania, and Wheeling, West Virginia, congregations, to set the tone for learning about confidence. After the study, the ladies enjoyed some lively fellowship time enhanced by a bountiful array of delectable hors d'oeuvres.

Sabbath morning the regional pastor, Lyle Welty, inspired us with "How Christ Valued Women." After services, breakout groups discussed his sermon.

In the afternoon, Janel Johnson from Mansfield, Ohio, opened our eyes to the dangers of a fairy tale approach to confidence and contrasted that to God's approach. B.J. Thomas couldn't attend, but in copies of her presentation she encouraged us to have a positive outlook on life. Janet Treadway from Cincinnati East, Ohio, shared her past with us, then used a crumpled \$20 bill to teach us that we retain our value even if we've been through rough times. Gary Antion, director of ABC, presented a thought-provoking seminar on the value of having high (but realistic and God-based) self-esteem.

Then we had a blast from the past! The hall was transformed into a 1950s soda fountain shop replete with jukebox, root beer floats and vintage candies. Women played jacks, jumped rope and had hula-hoop contests. They rock 'n' rolled for all they were worth and had plain old-fashioned fun!

Sunday morning, Yvonne Brandt from Columbus, Ohio, ended the retreat with a unique exercise using rocks to teach us to evaluate our talents



Beautiful smiles were everywhere at the Women's Enrichment Weekend (photo by Don Henson)

honestly and to not hesitate to use them when they fit the need. The ladies loved being together and expressed enthusiastic appreciation for the entire event.

Ramie Henson

## Letters

### Ready to Give an Answer?

"Be Ready to Give an Answer" has really been of much help to me! I can just imagine how it would help new members if this little shaded window could appear in every *United News*, repeated all the time, covering a different doctrine each time? I have made a collection of those I could trace and it makes for some wonderful personal study.

I gain a lot of satisfaction knowing I will be ready with an answer. How about it?

South Africa

Thank you very much for your input. We welcome other suggestions about whether to continue this section, and, if we do, what subjects to cover in future issues.

### First Impressions

Thank you for the articles you have run in "Treasure Digest" about "First Impressions" and for giving me the opportunity of sharing some ideas and thoughts on the subject.

We as a Church pray for growth and for former brethren. When brethren walk through the door, do we act out our prayers? Those of us who are filled [spiritually], do we know what it's like to be hungry? We can either build a bridge or destroy a whole city.

I have heard of an incident where a former brother came to a funeral on the understanding that friendship would be extended by both sides. But this individual was attacked verbally by two or three United brethren.

These brethren thought that because of former friendships, they were helping the individual. However this individual was still hurting with the words months later. What they did not know is that the person was going through such severe trials with family, finances, health and wanting to keep the Sabbath. Here was the opportunity to be a brother again.

Unfortunately the whole Church gets painted with the same brush when we make such mistakes.

The receptionist is the first impression that a new customer gets of a whole company. Likewise each of us represent the whole Church. A hug, saying "So nice to see you!" and prayer can do such wonders.

One of the things former brethren dread is the interrogatory questions when they walk through the door. Leave the counseling to the minister. Be warm, friendly, welcoming, encouraging and accepting of others. When people are ready to talk, they will. If they don't, that's OK too.

Just be there for them. We don't have to know all the details. Be patient and understanding—fight off the urge to correct every sentence. Use tact and wisdom. Meet the brethren half way or more, if you can, as this is part of welcoming.

By the second and third week, why not send an encouraging note or welcoming card or flowers?

Another man walked through the doors of United just before Passover 2003. This man later said that the first day back he was hanging his head and did not know what to expect, but he was welcomed and felt truly home. Brethren just hugged him, no questions asked. Before the end of the year he had died and is awaiting his change.

We do not know who will be walking through the door or how long they are here to stay. But we do know God is waiting to welcome us into His family!

Patti Naidoo  
South Africa

### Seeing God's Plans Happening

Please put me on your mailing list. I would like to receive the *World News and Prophecy* publication. I feel that these times we're living in are those prophesied by John. I am deep in the

study of these times written in the New and Old Testaments. I do get some Christian news on the TV, but not enough . . .

It is truly amazing and wonderful to see God's plans happening. I found out about your organization through a friend . . . Any literature you send me will be shared with friends, family, neighbors and strangers when the opportunity arises. I will try to send you some money to at least cover postage costs. My finances are spread very thin as I'm not working right now. Keep me in your prayers as I will you.

Indiana

### Seeing the Truth for the First Time

I thank God for your work, and for giving me the understanding to see the truth for the first time! I would like to give out booklets, so if you can send me extras, that would be wonderful. May we be diligent in our efforts to share the good news of the coming King and His Kingdom.

Minnesota

### 15-Year-Old Loves GN

Sorry for the sloppy handwriting. I'm only 15 years old. My grandmother let me read her magazines, and I found these things on how to get free books, and I decided to get one. Please send me all the free books that you can. I really love *The Good News* books and stuff. They teach me a lot about God.

Georgia

### Searching for a Church

I have been reading your publications and find myself wanting more. I have ordered your *Bible Study Course* . . . [and] I would also like to receive these other publications . . .

Could you also send me information about the United Church of God

in my area? I have been searching for a church home for some time that worships on the Sabbath instead of Sunday and have not found what I am looking for. It is important that it is Bible based and man's ideas haven't contaminated [its] teachings.

Thank you all so much for supporting me in my spiritual growth!

Idaho

### Reporting the Real News

I enjoy your wonderfully accurate and truthful reporting of the real news. I particularly found your article, "Has the Third World War Already Begun?" quite helpful.

I enclose a check as a token of my appreciation.

I have been a lifelong member of the Roland Park Presbyterian Church in Baltimore. I am asking you to include a fellow member to receive *The Good News*. She will be the third member receiving your wonderful publication.

Maryland

### The Real Story: Makes a Lot of Sense

My sister recently received a booklet that she ordered from your organization entitled, *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*. She was telling me some of the truths in it, and it made a lot of sense. Therefore, I would like to request a copy of this booklet be sent to me. I understand this is free.

New York

### Small Seed Gift

I just received your book *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*. Thank you. Your ministry is a blessing. Please receive this small seed gift. I know God will multiply it so that I can give more.

California

### Reads GN Cover to Cover

I've been reading your *Good News*

magazine for a short time now. I have found it to be well documented and thought-provoking. I can respect a publication that tells it like it is, without the embellishment.

I read it cover to cover whenever I receive it in the mail. My wife and I will be reading it for years to come. Keep up the good work.

Arkansas

### Putting Passages on the Refrigerator

Certain passages really stay in my mind as I read the *Bible Study Course* and I write them on my refrigerator to inspire me every day and remind me how awesome God is!

I am really glad that I visited your Web site on the Bible and God and how one can come to know God . . . who He is and why we are.

What a way to become close to God—the chance is so beyond words that I want to cry! Thank you so deeply!

Internet

### The Real Story Booklet Helped So Much!

I live in Australia and I am 16 years old. A while ago I was becoming spiritually dead and didn't know what to do anymore or if God even existed, till I read one of your booklets named *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*. That really helped so much! So I just wanted to say thanks, you guys are doing a great job!

Australia

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

# Announcements

## Births

Philip and Jennifer (Burky) Dick of the Dallas, Texas, congregation, are thrilled to announce the birth of their first



Emily Dyanne Dick

child, Emily Dyanne Dick. She was born May 13, 2004, weighed 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 19¼ inches long.

Happy family include first-time grandparents Robert and Dyanne Dick of Portland, Oregon, and Richard and Carol Burky of Pasadena, California, and great-grandparents Ray and Norma Dick of Hawkins, Texas, and Betty Hoffman of Phoenix, Arizona.

Thomas and Evaline Matwetwe of the Ogembo, Kenya, congregation are very happy to announce the birth of their first daughter, Ludmila Osebe. She was born on Dec. 10, 2003, weighing 2.9



Ludmila Osebe Matwetwe

kilograms. The proud grandparents are Isaac and Beatrice Gwaro also of the Ogembo congregation. The whole family is thrilled about her arrival.

Leonard and Kathryn Hatter are pleased to announce the blessed arrival of their seventh child, Abigail Kaylen Hatter, on April 8, 2004, during the Days of Unleavened Bread! Abby weighed 8 pounds 6 ounces and was 19¼ inches



Abigail Kaylen Hatter

long. She is also welcomed by siblings Lora, Daniel, David, Sarah, Michael and Ruth. The Hatters attend the Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation.

Eric and Dorothy (Allwine) Schmidt of Chicago, Illinois, along with big sister Amanda, are excited to announce the birth of Alexis Michelle Schmidt. Alexis was born Dec. 28, 2003. She was 7 pounds 5 ounces and 19½ inches long. Her grandparents are Gail and Karen Allwine of the Spokane, Washington, congregation



Alexis Michelle Schmidt

and Richard and Patricia Schmidt of Columbia, Missouri.

Brit and Julie Railston of New York, New York, are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Josephine Kate Railston. Josie was born on Jan. 25, 2004, weighing 9 pounds 14 ounces and measuring 21 inches long. Grandparents are Sandra and Errol Wade of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Rick and Dorothy Railston of Yakima, Washington; and Annette Gooch of Santa Rosa, Califor-



Josephine Kate Railston

nia. Emira and Ella Erickson of Minneapolis are happy to welcome a new plaything, sorry, cousin, into the family.

## Engagements

Randy D'Alessandro, pastor of the



Randy D'Alessandro and Mary Snyder

Ann Arbor and Detroit, Michigan, congregations, and Mary Snyder of Batavia, Ohio, are pleased to announce their engagement. Plans are being made for an Aug. 1, 2004, wedding.

Charlie and Lanae Waldrup of the Houston North, Texas, congregation are



David Dullum and Breanna Waldrup

pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Breanna Gail, to David Andrew Dullum, son of Gary and Faith Dullum of the Houston North congregation. The couple currently attends the Austin, Texas, congregation. A wedding is being planned for Jan. 2, 2005, in Houston.

Dennis and Kathy Lausted are pleased to announce the engagement of



Andy Wagner and Lisa Lausted

their daughter, Lisa Lausted, to Andy Wagner, son of John and Teri Wagner of Menomonie, Wisconsin. A July wedding is planned in Menomonie.

Duane and Pat Hofmeister of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, have great



Tracy Hofmeister and Peter Burchard

pleasure in announcing the engagement of their daughter Tracy to Peter Burchard, son of Tom and Anne Burchard of

Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. The date for the wedding is to be determined.

## Weddings

David Wayne Sullins and Tammy Jean Blair were united in marriage on April 18, 2004. Dave Myers, pastor of the Akron, Ohio, congregation, officiated at the ceremony, with family and friends attending.

David and Tammy met at the Feast



Tammy and David Sullins

in Gatlinburg in 2002. The couple plan to make their home in Atwater, Ohio.

## Anniversaries

Wilmer and Geraldine (Gerry) Beyers of the Kalamazoo, Michigan, congregation celebrated their 74th wedding anniversary May 31, 2004. He will be 92 in July and she is 91.

## Obituaries

Van B. Lisman, well known to many former Ambassador College students and employees, passed away May 16, 2004, at the age of 82. He was a long-



Van B. Lisman

time member of God's Church, baptized in 1962.

Van was born Aug. 17, 1921, in San Pedro, California. He attended the University of California at Berkeley, School of Optometry and served in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Upon discharge from the Navy, he joined his father, Hal, in his optometric practice in San Pedro. He also worked one day a week on the Pasadena Ambassador College campus helping

students and others with their optical needs during the 1960s on through the early '80s. Van retired in 1984.

Van was dedicated to his family and through many years of illness he maintained comfort through his unwavering faith in God and His way.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Hal and Mabel Lisman, and by his grandson Erik Lisman. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Dorothy; son Gary Lisman and his wife, Margi, of Oregon City, Oregon; son Lee Lisman and his wife, Pat, of Brush Prairie, Washington; son Ray Lisman, also of Oregon City; and daughter Linda, wife of Walt Moffitt, of Folsom, California; plus his sister Loma Clayson, formerly of Pasadena and now living with her daughter in Arlington, Texas; as well as nine grandchildren and several cousins, nieces and nephews.

Dorothy (Dot) Walker, beloved mother, grandmother, sister and friend, died June 5, 2004, after a long illness and pneumonia. She attended the



Dorothy Walker

Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation and was a baptized member of God's Church since 1976.

She is survived by her two sons, Alvin (and Brenda) Walker and Terry (and Betty) Walker; three sisters; two granddaughters, Kimberly Preston and Jamie Walker; and one great-grandson, Andrew Preston.

Services were held June 8 in Lexington, North Carolina, among family and friends.

Edith "Carlene" Robertson, 58, of Salem, Oregon, died March 11, 2004, after suffering a massive stroke.

Carlene was baptized in January 1994 and attended the United Church of God congregation in Salem. She was a gentle, loving person. Carlene is survived by a large family, including her husband, one daughter, two sons, her mother, four sisters, two brothers and eight grandchildren.

Judy Kay Markley, 59, of Corvallis, Oregon, died May 4, 2004, from complications following heart surgery. Judy was baptized in April 1964 and attended the United Church of God congregation in Salem, Oregon. She is survived by her husband of 18 years, Joe Markley; by a daughter, Darla Buhlig; and by two grandsons, six brothers and two sisters.

A graveside service was conducted on May 11 in Tonganoxie, Kansas, by Greg Sargent.

## News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

Once the offerings mailed by individuals are processed, the actual figure should exceed \$735,000.

Gerald Seelig

## U.S. Mail Received Up 43 Percent

In the first six months of 2004, a total of 264,961 letters, cards and Internet responses were received at the home office. This is a 43 percent increase over the same period last year. Of this total, Internet responses showed the biggest gain, up 152 percent to 77,065. Cards requesting *The Good News* or booklets were up 25 percent to 146,375.

The number of pieces of literature mailed out (not including the regular subscriptions to the *GN*, *UN* and *WNP*) was up 34 percent to 256,641.

From January through June, 98 people were baptized, 348 became coworkers and 986 became donors in the United States.

## June PC Reported

June was our fifth-straight month of 100-plus Personal Correspondence letters, with 108 answered through the mail. Another 106 messages were answered by the e-mail team.

**Good News:** A reader responded to the recent article on the story of Christ, arguing that Paul changed the Sabbath and taught that grace ended the law. Three disagreed with the article on what Christ looked like. And a reader chastised us for publishing an article by a woman.

**Africa:** One particularly sad letter came from a mother in Eritrea, who said that she and her disabled husband are able to feed their children only one meal a day. Of course, it's impossible to tell how genuine these requests are, but they nonetheless tug at the heartstrings. Two readers asked where Africa is mentioned in Bible prophecy; a third asked if Africa



## What's New on the Web?

### On [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org)

#### ■ Compass Check

See video of home office weekly meeting. [www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice/compasscheck.htm](http://www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice/compasscheck.htm)

#### ■ UCG Commentary on This Week's News

Weekly commentaries by UCG written on world news and trends, from a biblical perspective. Read these and more: "Same-Sex Marriage Threatens Civilization" "The Day After Tomorrow Movie" "Ronald Reagan Remembered" "What Have We Learned?"

[www.ucg.org/commentary/](http://www.ucg.org/commentary/)

#### ■ Current World News & Trends

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

[www.ucg.org/worldnews/](http://www.ucg.org/worldnews/)

#### ■ E-mail Updates and UCG eNews

Receive e-mail updates relevant to UCG

members and weekly HTML newsletters with [ucg.org](http://ucg.org) updates. Sign up today! [www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm](http://www.ucg.org/contact/updates.htm)

### On [vcmagazine.org](http://vcmagazine.org)

■ The July *Virtual Christian Magazine* includes "Avoiding Financial Black Holes," "Life Lessons of a Truck Driver's Family" and more. [vcmagazine.org](http://vcmagazine.org)

### On [verticalthought.org](http://verticalthought.org)

■ The July-September online issue of *Vertical Thought* has articles on staying Christian at college, sexual myths, what God's Kingdom means for you, baptism, goal setting and more. [verticalthought.org](http://verticalthought.org)

### Other Helpful Links

■ **Youth** and young adults' Web site.

[www.ucgyouth.org](http://www.ucgyouth.org)

■ **Singles'** Web site for singles in the Church.

[www.ucgsingles.org](http://www.ucgsingles.org)

■ **Good News Bible Reading Program.** [www.ucg.org/brp](http://www.ucg.org/brp)

■ **Good News Web site.** [www.gnsmagazine.org](http://www.gnsmagazine.org)

■ **Anchor:** A message of hope for those struggling with homosexuality. [www.anchorhelp.com](http://www.anchorhelp.com)

■ **Good News/Tomorrow TV station listings.** [www.ucg.org/multimedia/gntv.htm](http://www.ucg.org/multimedia/gntv.htm)

■ **Good Works Program.** [www.ucg.org/goodworks/](http://www.ucg.org/goodworks/)

■ **UCG News pages** with Council meeting reports, letters, Home Office Updates, etc. [www.ucg.org/about/council](http://www.ucg.org/about/council) [www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice](http://www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice)

If you have any questions or comments, please contact: [webmaster@ucg.org](mailto:webmaster@ucg.org)

will ever enjoy the prosperity that people in the West routinely enjoy. An articulate young person who is deaf just graduated from high school and asked us to recommend an American university; and this one wasn't looking for financial assistance from us. Another letter had many questions about ancestral curses; ancestor worship is common in African religion. A zealous Nigerian subscriber asked permission to reprint entire articles in local newspapers to spread the word.

**Scripture questions** such as: Colossians 2:16: Does this do away with the Holy Days? 1 Corinthians 4:15: Does this justify using "father" as a title for the clergy? Galatians 4:8-10: Does this condemn Sabbath-keeping? 1 Peter 3:19: How did Christ preach to spirits in prison? Explain the difference between Revelation's heads and horns and those in Daniel's prophecy.

**Personal counsel:** A soon-to-be-released inmate asked how to deal with conflicts over the Sabbath. He explained that if he is ordered to work on the Sabbath and refuses to do so, he could go

back to jail for the rest of his life. A mother asked how to talk with her children about the suicide of a man who worked with the youth in their (Protestant) church.

**UCG:** Almost every month we have questions about United in comparison to other groups. We also had two ask how to become members, and a reader wanted to know if we follow the teachings of Herbert W. Armstrong.

Cecil Maranville

## TV and Radio Initial Source for 30,000 Literature Requests

In an effort to better analyze the information in the Church's subscription files and provide encouragement to the many volunteers involved in the Church's media efforts, three new reports were produced at the end of May.

These reports show the total number of literature requests from people who

first came onto the Church's file from *Tomorrow TV*, *Good News TV* and *Good News* radio—sorted by UCG congregation zip codes. The stats go back to 1998 for *Tomorrow TV*, 1999 for *GNTV* and the year 2000 for *GN* radio.

The totals for each program since the above dates are as follows:

- *Tomorrow TV* program 14,652
- *GNTV* program 1,661
- *GN* radio program 15,048

For example, the radio program results show that 1,910 literature requests have been received from listeners in the Indianapolis, Indiana, area who first came onto our file as a result of the *Good News* radio program.

Also 468 literature requests have been received from readers in the Chicago, Illinois, area who first came onto our file as a result of the *GNTV* program.

For those who first came onto our file as a result of the *Tomorrow TV* program, 3,080 literature requests were from the Portland, Oregon, area and another 867 requests have come from viewers in the Greensboro, North Carolina, area.

Peter Eddington

## Attention Seniors Attending the Dells Feast Site

The Wisconsin Dells Feast site plans to honor couples wedded 50 years or more at the senior luncheon. If you have been married 50 or more years, please send a copy of your wedding photo or one from the same year, your current photo, plus a short biography.

In addition, do you sing, dance, play an instrument or have another talent you would like to share with your peers at the luncheon? Please send a performance cassette tape along with an introduction. Performances should not exceed five minutes in duration.

Photos, bios and performance tapes should be mailed no later than Aug. 15 to: Norm and Donna Myers, 416 Union St., Stevens Point, WI 54481. For more information call (715) 344-0635 or e-mail [Norm\\_Myers@ucg.org](mailto:Norm_Myers@ucg.org). Photos and tapes will be returned at the luncheon.

Norm Myers

## ABC Sampler Set for Aug. 16-20 in Cincinnati

Have you ever wished you could attend Ambassador so you could receive the biblical instruction offered there? Perhaps time and cost were a factor. Now you may experience a taste of the Ambassador Bible Center program and see why the ABC students are so enthusiastic about the school.

Ambassador Bible Center announced the fourth ABC Sampler seminar, to be held at the ABC Lecture Hall in the home office building just east of Cincinnati, Ohio. The dates will be Aug. 16 to 20 and will feature portions of some of the actual class material by Gary Antion and Ralph Levy. Mr. Antion will bring instruction from the book of James and Comparative Religion ("Religion in General" and "Catholicism"). Dr. Levy will present "Top-

ics in the Book of Exodus" and "The Work of Ezra and Nehemiah."

The tuition is just \$50 per person, due on or before the first day of classes. Students will be responsible for their own housing and meals. There is reasonable lodging in the vicinity.

Those interested in attending the Sampler are asked to please send a letter of intent to hold a seat in the class. The address is Ambassador Bible Center, P.O. Box 54992, Cincinnati, OH 45254-0992. The phone number is (513) 576-9796. The e-mail address is [Gary\\_Antion@ucg.org](mailto:Gary_Antion@ucg.org).

We look forward to spending one week studying and expounding the Bible with you this summer.

Gary Antion/Ralph Levy



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