



United Church of God
P.O. Box 541027,
Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027
(513) 576-9796

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News At a Glance

Thompson Added to MS Team

Richard Thompson, pastor of the Orlando, Ocala and Jacksonville, Florida, congregations, joined the Ministerial Services Team again at the request of Jim Franks, Ministerial Services operation manager. Mr. Thompson previously served on the original Ministerial Services Team in 1995.

Mr. Thompson replaces Dennis Luker, who stepped down from the team effective July 1. "This will leave Denny with only two jobs—church pastor and regional pastor!" Mr. Franks said. "I sincerely want to thank Denny and LeeAnn Luker for their contribution to the Ministerial Services Team for the past several years."

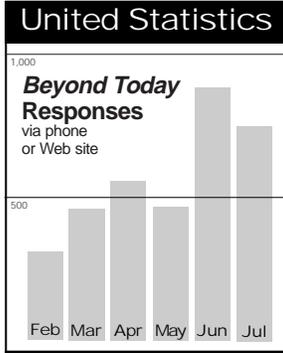
The team now consists of David Register (Education Program director), Doug Horchak (overall coordinator for Festival planning), Mr. Thompson and Mr. Franks, the team manager. According to the job description for the team, "The president is also involved in all major decisions and attends meetings as he is able."

Education Task Force Meets

The Education Advisory Task Force met in the Los Angeles, California, area on Saturday evening, June 24, and Sunday, June 25, for a discussion about the Church's education programs. The task force is made up of elders and members who have experience and background in education and several of our current education programs (see list of task force members in the June issue, page 4).

The purpose of the meeting was to brainstorm ideas and suggestions for the overall structure of the education area

See "News at a Glance," page 2



Middle East Sparks Interest in Literature

As the minds of people around the world focused on the fighting in the Middle East, millions of computer users came across ads offering literature that could help them make sense of the confusing and dangerous situation.

From July 1 to 20, more than 7 million searchers looking for information about the crisis in the Middle East had a link to an ad for *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* appear on their computer screens. For several days this was occurring at the pace of more than a million impressions a day! Of these, 32,000 clicked on the link to find more infor-

mation, and 2,200 ordered the booklet.

This spike of interest—like earlier spikes related to Easter (see "Google and Yahoo Advertising Peak Around 'Easter,'" May *United News*), *The Da Vinci Code* movie and the Indian Ocean tsunami—is just the most visible part of a major keyword advertising effort. The Church pays to have related booklet ads linked to hundreds of specific keywords through the Google and Yahoo search engines. These ads also appear alongside related news items.

This also contributed to the number of daily visitors doubling at gnmagazine.org



Article on *Time* Web site with UCG link

in late July. "Our booklet ads have also appeared within the *Time* magazine and

Washington Post Web sites," said Aaron Booth, Internet managing editor. "On this booklet ad Web page, individuals can view a short ad clip from the *Beyond Today* TV program, and download or request the free booklet."

At the Compass Check July 24, Clyde Kilough stated this keyword advertising program is "very cost-effective," coming out to about 10 cents per click or about \$1.90 per response.

"We have a tool now that we never had before" to reach interested people with God's truth, said Mr. Kilough. "Pray that God will open their minds." UN

"The Zone" Alive and Well at Summer Camp



Climbing the wall at Camp Woodmen, studying at Camp Pinecrest and golfing instruction at Woodmen by Larry W. Greider, UYC National Director

Excursions into "the Zone" have been reported at several United Youth Camps (UYC) this summer. Hundreds of teens have entered the safety and encouragement of the Zone—a type of the world tomorrow, today.

Paul Luecke remarked that the Teton Challenge Camp was "the best camp ever" and said that limiting the size has made the effect even better.

Four of our camps are being visited by the American Camp Association this summer. The ACA visitors at Hye Sierra remarked on the quality of our organization, preparedness and quality volunteer staff. Both visitors were camp owner/operators and well versed in running camps. Other camps to be visited include Camp Carter, Camp Davidson and Camp Heritage. With camps still in progress, please pray for God's protection and continued blessing.

See reports on the first three camps on page 4. UN

Feast Sermon Video Taping Done in Australia and New Zealand

Clay Thornton (senior video producer) and Peter Eddington (Media and Communications Services operation manager) traveled to Australia and New Zealand June 13 through 26 to record material for this year's Feast of Tabernacles sermon video to be titled *Life Anew in a New Land*.

The 2006 Feast sermon video will have three main sections. These will include a special focus about the brethren and the work in Australia and New Zealand, a Feast sermon message from Australian minister Stephen Clark and a message from President Clyde Kilough on the major accomplishments of the past year and our goals for the future—looking forward to God's Kingdom: "a life anew in a new land."

The sermon portion by Mr. Clark will draw an analogy between the coming of the new civilization of God to this earth and the new civilization that the early Australians forged as they sought freedom in a new land. Cities visited included Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland.

Peter Eddington

Clark Named Associate Senior Pastor for Ghana

Tom Clark, 43, pastor of the Liberal, Salina and Wichita, Kansas, congregations, accompanied Melvin Rhodes to the West African nation of Ghana in May.

"Tom traveled around Ghana with me and enjoyed the experience immensely," said Mr. Rhodes, who serves as senior pastor for Ghana; pastor of Lansing, Michigan; and senior writer for Church publications. "The Ghanaian members also greatly appreciated Tom."

Effective July 1, Mr. Clark was named associate senior pastor for Ghana, in addition to his other responsibilities. He will now travel to Ghana twice a year, allowing Mr. Rhodes to make two visits instead of four each year.

"It also means we can alternate visits during the more important times of



Richard Dua (the office manager for Ghana) and Tom Clark at Lake Volta

the year, the Days of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Tabernacles and the Ghana Summer Camp," said Mr. Rhodes.

Associate Senior Pastors

Three areas in Africa are served by senior pastors from the United States.

At the African conference last September at the home office, it was decided that each of these areas should also have an associate senior pastor.

"We have known for some time that these men can easily wear themselves out traveling to these remote areas four times a year," said Jim Franks, Ministerial Services operation manager. "We have slowly been adding associate pastors to take some of the pressure off the need for them to travel so extensively."

"Two years ago we assigned Mark Mickelson as the associate to the senior pastor in Nigeria [Fred Kellers] . . . Now we need to work on finding help for John Elliott in East Africa," Mr. Franks said.

"We truly appreciate all of these men and their wives for the tireless example of dedication they are setting," Mr. Franks said. UN

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- Camps: Pinecrest, Hye Sierra, Woodmen
- Special section: Authors and Musicians
- From the Word: Etiquette at Sabbath Services, Women and Teen Girls, Pregnancy, the Millennium and more
- Treasure Digest: Children's Corner, Acid Tongue, 10¢ Ice Cream, more
- Local Church Updates
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News At a Glance

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and outcomes for our education programs.

We made considerable progress in formulating recommendations that will be presented to the president and the operation manager of Ministerial Services. After review and editing, recommendations will be brought forward in a proposal to the Council of Elders at their August meeting.

David Register

List of Top 12 Booklets Released

A total of 4.2 million copies of UCG's 32 booklets have been printed since United began in 1995. To keep up with the growing demand, 17 titles (totaling 670,000 copies) were reprinted in the 2005-2006 fiscal year, an increase of 8 percent over the previous year (620,000 copies) and an increase of 52 percent over the year before (440,000). (In the 2004-2005 fiscal year we reprinted 22 titles.)

- The top 12 titles printed to date are:
- *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* (231,000).
 - *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* (200,000).
 - *What Happens After Death?* (195,000).
 - *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* (190,000).
 - *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* (174,000).
 - *Jesus Christ: The Real Story* (170,000).
 - *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* (170,000).
 - *What Is Your Destiny?* (165,000).
 - *The Ten Commandments* (160,000).
 - *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* (150,000).
 - *Heaven and Hell* (150,000).
 - *Holidays or Holy Days* (150,000).
- Peter Eddington

11 Percent of Bible Study Course Grads Become Donors

Last fiscal year 135,000 copies of the *Bible Study Course* were reprinted, for a total of 1.18 million copies of all lessons printed so far.

An interesting note about *Bible Study Course* graduates: 11 percent of them are either coworkers or donors right now, and 95 percent of them have ordered other pieces of literature beyond *The Good News* and the *BSC*. In contrast, only 2.8 percent of UCG's entire subscriber base are coworkers or donors. Therefore, it seems that *BSC* readers are four times more likely to make a donation.

Peter Eddington

See "News at a Glance," page 16

Council Member Profile: Les McCullough

Leslie McCullough was born in Nebraska and grew up in Oregon. He and his wife, Marion, were married in 1952, and shortly thereafter he began a management-training program with S.H. Kress, a variety store. He later switched to a similar program with Sears, but left that job, too, because of the Sabbath.

In 1956 Mr. McCullough applied for Ambassador College and was turned down for lack of funds. He reapplied early in 1957 and, as he puts it, he "initiated a campaign to be sure of acceptance" the second time. He was accepted, and the McCulloughs moved to California.

Mr. McCullough applied for a job on campus and was hired for 20 hours a week as a purchasing agent for the college. He recalls that being a time of struggle, with paychecks sometimes being held for several weeks at a time because of insufficient income for the Church.

From 1959 until 1965, Mr. McCullough worked as assistant to Garner Ted Armstrong. During this time he was asked to prepare a news summary for use on the broadcast. That summary later became the "News Report" that was

finally headed by Gene Hogberg. The idea was a precursor of the *World News and Prophecy* of today.

Mr. McCullough was ordained an elder in 1962, and in January 1965 he was moved to Big Sandy, Texas, to serve as deputy chancellor of Ambassador College there.

One challenge in Big Sandy was the efficient use of the building space. At the time the redwood building was acting as the kitchen and dining hall. Searching for solutions to that problem, he and Garner Ted Armstrong joined together in sketching preliminary ideas to copy Pasadena's dining hall in a much less grand way by building it in the "metal building," as it was called. They later drew the plans for the library in the redwood building.

The McCulloughs remained at the college until March 1973, when they moved back to Pasadena and he began working as vice president of the international area. One of the projects he dealt with was building an office in Australia. At the time, Australia had a printing operation in Sydney. Housing was dreadfully expensive in that area, as was office space. Once again collaborating

with Garner Ted Armstrong, they came up with the idea of buying property at the Gold Coast just south of Brisbane. An office was designed and built, along with providing backing for those who wished to buy a home in that area.

In June 1978 Mr. McCullough was transferred to Canada, where he served as regional director. After only 2½ years in Canada, they moved to pastor the Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregation in November 1980.

In July 1982 Herbert W. Armstrong called and asked Mr. McCullough to return to the college in Big Sandy to once again be deputy chancellor. This lasted until shortly after Mr. Armstrong's death, when Mr. McCullough was told he was going to South Africa to be the regional director.

In May 1990 he was transferred again, this time to the United Kingdom, where he became regional director for Britain, Scandinavia and English-speaking upper Africa. The McCulloughs remained there until August 1995.

Mr. McCullough recalls, "Being overseas, we heard little about the problems or the ultimate plans which resulted in the establishment of the United



Marion and Les McCullough

Church of God." He adds: "When I was finally pushed to teach [the new doctrines], I had to tell Pasadena that there was no way in which I could or would do that. The result was retirement and a move back to Texas. Loss of retirement came upon Pasadena's hearing I had been attending United" and the GCE.

In the spring of 1997 he was appointed to the UCG Council of Elders, which was shortly followed by being asked to serve as the president for United. During the four-year stay in Cincinnati, he helped choose the site of the present office and oversaw the building of the home office. In the summer of 2002, his term as president expired. The McCulloughs once again returned to Big Sandy, where they presently live. UN

FORWARD!

"Hastening the Coming of the Day of God"—How?

by Mike Bennett



To secular eyes, Christians who believe the end times are nigh are equivalent to Iran's "alarming" President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's belief that the mahdi will return in the next two years, "ushering in a bloody cataclysmic confrontation with the non-Muslim world." Editor-in-Chief William Falk of *The Week* magazine expressed fear and loathing about evan-

gelicals like Bill McCartney, cofounder of Promise Keepers, who launched a "Billion Souls Initiative." "Our whole purpose is to hasten the End Times," Mr. McCartney is quoted as saying (July 14, 2006, page 5).

The Church of God, like 40 percent of the American public, believes the end times are near, but that doesn't mean we are looking forward to the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. As Amos says, "Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!" (Amos 5:18).

We in no way try to fan the flames of conflict or bring about the prophecies in any physical or political way. We strive to live the way of peace, not delight in coming cataclysm or in unbelievers becoming "toast."

What we truly look forward to is the coming of the Prince of Peace to save mankind from self-destruction.

What can we do to "hasten" that day? Daily we fervently pray "Your Kingdom come." Daily we strive to fulfill our mission, preaching the good news of Jesus Christ, the coming King in God's Kingdom, in all the world and making disciples of those God leads to respond.

And what did Peter say to do to hasten the day of God? "You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming" (2 Peter 3:11-12, NIV). Christ said He is coming quickly, and we echo John's cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). It is truly good news! UN

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AUGCA Council of Elders: Aaron Dean, Robert Dick (chairman), Bill Eddington, Jim Franks, Clyde Kilough, Victor Kubik, Les McCullough, Joel Meeker, Richard Pinelli, Larry Salyer, Richard Thompson, Leon Walker

Address changes: POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

International addresses:

AFRICA & ASIA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: info@ucg.org

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BRITISH ISLES: United Church of God—British Isles, P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 E-mail: info@ucg.ca

CARIBBEAN: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: info@ucg.org

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda): United Church of

God, Kenya, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. E-mail: kenya@ucg.org

Fiji: United Church of God, P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva, Fiji.

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Eglise de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France.

GERMANY: Vereinigte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637 E-mail: info@gutenachrichten.org

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 035 4523573. E-mail: info@labuonanotizia.org

MALAWI: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. E-mail: malawi@ucg.org

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius. E-mail: mauritius@ucg.org

THE NETHERLANDS: United Church of God Holland, P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands.

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President: Clyde Kilough

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SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland only): United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205, South Africa. Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694.

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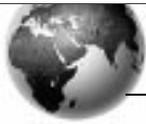
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News From **Around the World**

First Leadership Workshop Held in Southeast Asia

David Baker and Jeff Caudle (senior pastors serving Southeast Asia, New Zealand and South Pacific) requested that Ministerial Services send representatives of the Leadership Workshops and Ministerial Development Program to conduct seminars and workshops for the Church leadership in the areas of the world they supervise.

Beginning on July 17, leaders from Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines, plus the pastors, elders and wives, met for three days of seminars and workshops in Davao, Philippines. Thirty-eight men and wives attended the sessions.

Mr. Baker and Mr. Caudle gave presentations on developments in their regions, and Richard Pinelli, coordinator of the Ministerial Development Program; Lyle Welty, regional pastor



Jeff Caudle, pastor of New Zealand and several Asian areas, gives a presentation at the Asian conference July 18 in Davao City, Philippines (photo by Joel Meeker)

and pastor of Cincinnati East, Ohio; and Joel Meeker, regional coordinator of the French-speaking areas, presented the seminars.

Here is a partial list of the 19 topics

covered: the foundation of leadership and manpower development, Ministerial Code of Ethics, requirements for an elder in good standing, the role of minister's wives, premarital and baptismal counseling, the history of UCG, working with your pastor, developing wisdom and judgment, developing a steadfast spirit, your role in developing the character of God, developing effective sermonettes, split sermons and sermons, conducting Church ceremonies and developing spiritual effectiveness.

"We were very impressed with their desire and eagerness to learn. The men and wives were very focused on the material, and they participated enthusiastically," Mr. Pinelli said.

This was the first of a number of international seminars and workshops planned for the next few years. UN

Zimbabwe: Steady Growth Despite Economic Crisis

by Mike Mukarati

Distribution of *The Good News* magazine and other Church literature from within Zimbabwe began in February 2000 after our pastor, André van Belkum, asked if my wife, Primrose, and I would be willing to take up the task, and we gladly agreed. Previously, literature was being posted to subscribers in Zimbabwe from South Africa.

At that time the country was in the early stages of a political and economic crisis that has progressively worsened until now when the annual rate of inflation is in excess of 1,000 percent—the highest in the world.

For eight months, from February to October 2000, all mail processing was done by hand. We were mailing out 40 *GNs* per issue and about 25 booklets per month.

In October 2000, Mr. and Mrs. Darris McNeely visited Zimbabwe and brought us a computer kindly donated by the congregation they pastor. This sig-

nificantly transformed our operations so that by November 2001, we were mailing out 500 *GNs* per issue. By July 2004, 1,600 *GNs* were being mailed out per issue with about 300 booklets per month being sent out.

Meeting the Challenge of Skyrocketing Costs

Unfortunately, however, beginning with the September/October 2004 issue, we were for the first time unable to send out *The Good News* to our mail subscribers because of sudden, massive increases in postage costs—700 percent over a period of four months. Except for a few copies that were mailed to members and coworkers, the bulk of that issue was distributed by delivery to universities, hospitals, doctors' offices, pharmacies and a few business offices.

This effort seemed to bear fruit as we received scores of requests for booklets from people who had collected the *GN* from these places. We continued with this method of distribution until Febru-

ary 2005, with Harris Hlazo and me making deliveries in the capital city of Harare and two other smaller towns, while Stephen Tshabalala covered the second largest city of Bulawayo.

In March 2005 we reached an agreement with Kingstons Bookstores, a leading bookstore and magazine distribution chain, to distribute the *GN* through their branches in 14 cities and towns throughout the country for a nominal fee.

Currently, a total of 2,000 copies of the *GN* are distributed per issue, with about 300 booklets and 50 *Bible Study Course* lessons mailed out per month.

We receive about 13 requests for literature per day via the Internet. Those asking for *The Good News* are advised that they can collect their free copy of the magazine from their nearest Kingstons branch, while requests for other literature are processed and the literature sent out by post.

Many are writing in to express their gratitude for having the biblical truth clearly explained to them. UN

Minister Visits Members in Suriname

by Kingsley Mather

The work of the Church in Suriname (a country in northern South America that was formerly called Dutch Guiana) used to be administered by the Dutch office in Europe.

About two years ago, Siegfried H. Hynes contacted the United Church of God home office. He had worked with Seventh-day Adventist congregations in Suriname for a number of years. He came into contact with the Church of God in the 1970s and was trained by an elder of the Church in Guyana.

Kingsley Mather communicated with Mr. Hynes and finally flew into Suriname on Sunday, March 19, to meet

with him. Mr. Hynes speaks Dutch, but also has a good command of the English language.

Mr. Mather met with two of the three members who remained faithful to the truth—Mr. Hynes and Ingrid Virginia Ryker; the third member is Marius Gunther, an Amerindian of Erowarte. Mr. Hynes has continued to work with Amerindians in the area, encouraging them and sharing the truth with interested persons.

Stan Braumuller, a native of Suriname who lives in Orlando, Florida, and his wife, Barbara, had visited Mr. Hynes in

2005. They met a number of persons who expressed interest in UCG literature, and their names were sent to the office in the Netherlands so that they could receive literature in the Dutch language.

The Caribbean region has provided a DVD player, and sermon DVDs will be sent to Mr. Hynes from the Trinidad congregation. The Caribbean region is also providing funds so that he can take a course in word processing and other computer skills to enable him to communicate with the Caribbean pastors. UN

This article first appeared in the June 2006 Caribbean newsletter.



Ingrid Virginia Ryker and Siegfried Hynes in Suriname

International News At a Glance

Canada Reports Income and Subscription Growth

In Canada, income for the first three months of the fiscal year is ahead of budget, while Holy Day offerings are close to what was budgeted.

The Canadian office has added well over 2,000 new subscribers to *The Good News* magazine since January. Over 400 subscribers were added as a result of letters sent to those in our database who had received literature in the past but were not subscribing to the *GN*. Another program added nearly 170 subscribers. These were people who had not responded to the two subscription renewal letters that were sent nearly two years ago. They responded to a recent letter that was sent to all those who let their *GN* subscription lapse. Another large number of new subscribers came as a result of the Internet and various keyword campaigns.

In early July the Canadian office hit a new milestone in Internet and e-mail literature and subscription requests. We received more requests so far this year than we did in all of 2004. We're now closing in on the record of 5,116 requests that we received last year.

All the incoming mail is resulting in a lot of outgoing mail. In the first six months of 2006, we averaged 15,724 items per month being mailed out. Those items include magazines, periodicals, booklets, letters, CDs and DVDs. (From January 1999 to the end of June 2006, we sent out 833,250 items).

Edwin van Pelt

Beyond Today Spreading Across Canada

The *Beyond Today* television program brought in 111 responses in Canada as of July 6. Ninety-four of the responses were from new people requesting a *GN* subscription. Another 30 responses came from the *Beyond Today* Web site (www.beyondtoday.tv).

As the Christian Channel adds more and more digital cable and satellite television providers, we hope to see the number of responses increase. The program can currently be seen on Vision TV across Canada and on Rogers Digital Cable TV channel 396 in southern Ontario, Star Choice Satellite TV channel 399 in all regions, Telus 158 in British Columbia and Alberta and MTS TV 21 in Winnipeg. New providers across Canada are being added monthly.

Edwin van Pelt

Baptism on St. Kitts

Kingsley Mather's visit to the island of St. Kitts Jan. 13 to 21 was very eventful for that small congregation. A young lady, Samantha Smitten, was baptized.

There have been members of the Church of God on the tiny island for many decades, but regular Sabbath services were not held in St. Kitts until UCG



St. Kitts congregation

began. The regular attendance is 8, but this, out of a population of around 40,000, might be the largest per capita attendance of any country in the world. Three people have started to attend services recently. Two of the men have requested baptism counseling.

This article first appeared in the June 2006 Caribbean newsletter.

Fund-Raiser Helps Armenian Member Attend Feast

Only nine days after being established, a special fund-raiser reached its goal to provide \$600 for airfare for United Church of God member Mnazak Poghasjan to attend this year's Feast of Tabernacles in Schluchsee, Germany.

Mr. Poghasjan is the only member of the Church in Armenia. He speaks fluent German, and his monthly salary is equivalent to about 40 euros (\$50). Without additional help, he would never be able to attend a UCG Feast site.

This article first appeared on the www.ucg.org Web site.

Meekers' Round-the-World Trip Blog

Joel Meeker, Council member and pastor who serves brethren in French-speaking countries, and his family are recording their round-the-world trip to visit members on an Internet blog (www.ucg.org/multimedia/blog.htm).

"I save my airline miles and every few years we have enough to take our daughters, Fiona and Tatiana, with us as my wife, Marjolaine, and I travel to visit members of our church in other countries," wrote Mr. Meeker on the first blog.

The itinerary includes transiting through London and Ghana, visits in Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.

Pinecrest Completes 11th Successful Season

Pinecrest Camp completed another successful year in "the Zone"—an atmosphere modeled after the Kingdom of God.

Our United Youth Camp mission is to expand on what our parents are doing at home by giving our children an educational and active experience in a wholesome atmosphere that builds godly values among their peers. Sixty-two staff members served 124 campers for eight days in order to bring about that goal.

God blessed us with excellent weather. Rain only came during the Sabbath and during a lunch hour. Two activities were delayed; none were postponed.

Several weeks before camp began, the Pinecrest ministry brainstormed ideas that would be most beneficial for our campers. Our children face challenges at the end of this age that the Bible defines as perilous times. Therefore we decided on a theme centered on 1

Corinthians 15:33, "Bad company corrupts good character" (NIV).

The content of every message addressed the corruption that stems from wrong influences or the edification that results from good company.

The topics given at morning compass checks, seminars and sermons included the following: "A Friend or Just Bad Company?"; "Survival of the Fittest—Darwin, Hitler and the Holocaust"; "Company With God"; "Good Company Enhances Good Character"; "Access to God"; "TV and Movie Guide"; "Music—Good or Bad?"; "The *Da Vinci Code* and Your Life"; "Your Clothes—The Company You Keep?"; and "I Will Survive."

Our Leadership Class challenged our youth to be committed to the right standards in life and to have the courage to stand up for their beliefs. Our youth were reminded that God has a tremendous

reward for us and our children, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).



Pinecrest campers work together, learn archery and gather together for a group photo

Year after year our campers have been a light to the Nazarene camp staff

where we lease our facilities. Fred Yates, the camp manager, told our campers that he "could see Christ living in them." When talking to our assistant director, Tom Clark, Mr. Yates commented on how nearly every organization that comes to use this camp is unbalanced in some manner. Parts of their program may be good, but others have real problems. He stat-

ed that United Youth Camps set the standard against which all other organizations that use this camp are measured.

Another adult volunteer who is not a



part of UCG said our campers, staff and program are the best he's ever seen. He was impressed by the level of organization, the courtesy of our campers and staff and the way we care for the facilities and each other.

What a wonderful testimony that Christ is working, not only in our members, but also in our children!

Greg Sargent

Campers at Hye Sierra Get Grounded

When the campers got grounded at Hye Sierra this year, it wasn't a punishment. It was because they were having fun, building strong friendships and learning how to build their faith on a solid foundation!

The camp theme this year was "Get Grounded! Five Things You NEED to Know." Each day at camp during "Compass Check," before a full day of activities, campers were introduced to a vital truth that they must be firmly convicted of in order to stand fast against the storms and trials of life without losing faith. Christian Living classes in the evening gave campers a chance to explore these five truths in more depth. The five truths were:

- How and Why You Must Know God Exists (despite what your science teacher says).
- The Bible Is the True and Reliable Word of God (despite what the *Da Vinci Code* says!).

- What Does God Promise Me?
- What Does God Ask of Me?
- You Are Not in This Alone.

Camp director James Capo gave a sermon on the Sabbath at the end of camp showing how these "Five Things You Need to Know" are like the five smooth stones David selected before his battle with Goliath, and if we are solidly grounded in these truths, we can stand against any "giant" that can threaten our faith.

Fun-Filled Activities

Campers and staff came from the United States, Canada and Mexico and participated in such popular activities as kayaking, rock climbing, archery, dance, basketball, volleyball, speedway, crafts, fishing, team building, an "Amazing Race" challenge course and hiking among the giant sequoia trees in the Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks.

The Sabbath evening banquet and dance concluded an outstanding week of fun.

A new challenge for the kayakers was to learn the "Eskimo roll," where they are able to right the kayak from an upside down position in the water. Many campers came close, but Byron Norrod was the camper who finally succeeded in accomplishing this difficult skill. Micah Preston came out the champion archer, scoring a total of 39 out of 40 possible points in the archery shoot-out, winning a bow and set of arrows.

Two of the dorms went on an overnight hike in the Jennie Lakes Wilderness, crossing snowfields and camping beside a scenic mountain lake at 9,000-foot elevation in some of the most beautiful backcountry in the High Sierras.

Through it all, God's Spirit of love, unity and peace was evident as we truly

came to live in "the Zone." We were blessed with near-perfect weather, safety and an abundance of fun—God's way!



Kayaking and rock climbing at Hye Sierra (photos by Kim Springer and Michal Lisa Capo)

ACA Visit

This was our year for the American Camp Association representatives to visit Hye Sierra, one of four of our camp programs to be visited this year as



part of the process for maintaining our status as an ACA-accredited camp. ACA is concerned with health and safety standards in all aspects of the camp

program. After a thorough review, we were glad to receive high marks in all areas evaluated.

We had a great time at Hye Sierra this year, with many experienced campers and staff members commenting that this was the "best camp ever!" We thank God for blessing us with such a good camp, and we're looking forward to next year.

James Capo

Woodmen Campers, Staff Bid Farewell to "Sweet Home Alabama"

Camp Woodmen plunged into "the Zone" with both feet Sunday, July 2, kicking off its final year at the northern Alabama facilities. Fifty-six staff members and 124 campers from 17 different states joined together for a week of "immersion education," as they spent every hour of the next week learning God's way of life by complete immersion into it.

Each day began with Christian Living to start out on the right foot. Those giving the classes presented God's Holy Day plan in order, covering one festival each day of camp. Meanwhile, the staff received training through a series of leadership classes.

Activities included high and low ropes, archery, speedway, swimming, riflery, softball, basketball, volleyball, golf and outdoor living. Many of the activities, like low ropes and speedway,

were designed to emphasize the necessity of teamwork.

Outdoor living brought a new challenge, "The Amazing Woodmen Survival Race," in which campers ran around campus gathering clues based on compass coordinates, and used survival skills such as pitching a tent, tying various knots and starting a fire with no matches or lighter.

Special activities were planned for evenings. Monday night, Bruce Gore called a lively square dance and led campers through the basics. Tuesday night brought dorm-building activities ranging from physical competitions to math games, Bible Baseball and Name That Tune.

Dorms competed in the Novelty Olympics Wednesday evening, ending the night with an exciting race in which the female staff members fed male staff members orange juice out



Basketball action and Dorm 2G posing for a dorm photo (photos by David and Denise Dobson and Jerry Rehor)



of a bottle to earn points for their teams. Campers versus staff activities occurred Thursday night, with challenges in softball, volleyball, basketball and archery/riflery.

The Friday night Bible study was formatted in a way that was new to Woodmen: Situations and real-life problems were posed to campers, who were then given time to find biblical answers.

If anyone disagreed with the group's answer, they could challenge that statement, and debate continued until a general agreement on the solution was reached.

The week's activities concluded with Saturday night's traditional dance. Mark Winner, who served as disc jockey, lamented that it would be the last time "Sweet Home Alabama" was played at the Alabama campsite.

Final farewells took place the morning of Sunday, July 9. Hugs and addresses were exchanged as campers left as ambassadors for "the Zone."

Campers came away with many fond memories of Camp Woodmen, Alabama, and have high hopes for the new program next year as their journey continues at Camp Woodmen in Georgia.

Karen Sutherland and Melissa Fergen

Celebrating Published Authors and Musicians

Renée Avilés

Congregation: Toronto, Ontario
Books: *The Tutti-Frutti Tree*, etc.

About the Books: Over the past few years Mrs. Avilés has published several books, all but one in French. The first and most important one was *The Tutti-Frutti Tree*. It came to be when she decided to invent a game to teach her two young daughters about the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the game was to draw a parallel between real fruits and their characteristics and the spiritual fruits produced in us by the Holy Spirit. A story was written to explain those similarities and she created a tree poster with reusable fruit stickers for her daughters to "see" their daily crop. She also offered a free French and Spanish translation of her story with a purchase.

Not long after, she was given the opportunity to write for a Quebec publisher of school material for French-immersion schools across Canada and penned *L'amour sans frontières* (Love Without Frontiers), based on an interview with a real mom who adopted 19 handicapped children; *Karell, une fille pas comme les autres* (Karell, a Girl Unlike Others), the biography of



Renée Avilés

a young girl who persevered and succeeded in spite of her cerebral palsy; and *Petites mains, grand cœur* (Small Hands, Big Heart), a fictitious story telling how young children have the potential to make a difference in other people's lives in spite of their young age.

Afterwards, Mrs. Avilés participated in two novel contests targeting teenagers who disliked reading. This is how *L'inconnu* (The Stranger) and *L'affaire portefeuilles* (The Case of the Found Wallets) came into existence. Later, she was invited by the same publisher to write different pieces as writing style models requested by the Ministry of Education of Ontario for the Franco-phone schools of Ontario. One of her stories was a letter on friendship mentioning the true story of a member who fell into a bonfire as a baby. Recently, she was invited to write a bilingual French-English novel for teenagers.

About the Author: Mrs. Avilés was baptized in 1982 and has taught Sabbath school over the years. She is always interested in hearing others' stories and anecdotes, as she may just use them in her next book.

More Information: raviles@coce.ca.

June Derrick Barrett

Congregation: Fort Smith, Arkansas

Book: *Will I Ever See Jim Again?* (2005).

About the Book: "I like to read. But most fiction stories are immoral and have killing and using God's name in vain. I wanted a story that introduces the truth and honors God. So I wrote this book.

"Jim is killed. His wife believes he is burning in hell. The book shows where Jim is. This book honors God; it has adventure, romance, problems, triumphs and miracles. It has a new way of looking at the inspirational love story."

About the Author: Mrs. Barrett was baptized in June 1964 on a baptizing tour. She and her husband, Vendor, raise a few cows and garden. She plays the part of Minnie Pearl in the fun show.

Member Comments: "I am now reading your book—it is great! I am really enjoying it. I'm sure I will read it more than once."

More Information: juneb46@ar-digit.net.

Andrea Boise

Congregation: Cincinnati East, Ohio
Book: *Symphony of Time* (2003).

About the Book: "*Symphony of Time* is made up of over 50 poems and pictures that capture the rhythm of life, from sorrow to joy, love and happiness. It's what I'd call an inspirational memory book of feelings. I started writing poetry to capture the essence of what I was feeling. When I wrote something that really connected with what others were feeling, it was inspiring. I almost scrapped the whole book, but a friend gave me the encouragement to go on.

"I had 20 poems written already. Thirty of the poems were written within two weeks, after a publisher had taken a look at the others."

About the Author: Mrs. Boise was baptized April 15, 2000, and serves at church by giving special music.

Her parents and youngest brother live in Freedom, Ohio, where she was born. She married Reuben Boise in August 2005. A second book is on its way. Some of her hobbies include hiking, knitting, quilting, dancing, violin and harp. She is a licensed massage therapist and a master herbologist.

More Information: lifeispoetryb4u@hotmail.com.



June Barrett



Andrea Boise

Richard Burkard

Congregation: Columbus, Georgia
CD: *One God, Many Moods* (2003).

About the CD: "Several people in my congregation had heard me sing special music, and suggested I make an album. The title can refer to the many ways in which God expresses Himself to us, or how we can approach Him."

About the Musician: Mr. Burkard was baptized in 1984. He sings special music and leads songs in the congregation. His hobbies include running, blogging and developing a new sport called Power Frisbee.

Member Comments: "Thank you for all you do sharing God's love with others" (Renton, Washington).

"My only complaint about the CD was that . . . there aren't enough songs on it" (Mauk, Georgia).

More Information: You can click on the music link at <http://RichardBurkard.blogspot.com>.



Richard Burkard

Michael Caputo

Congregation: Toronto, Ontario
Book: *God Seen Through the Eyes of the Greatest Minds*

About the Book: *God Seen Through the Eyes of the Greatest Minds* finds its origins in a TV interview of the president of the American Atheists Association. At the conclusion of the interview, the man asserted dogmatically that "No intelligent person would ever believe in God." Mr. Caputo decided to explore the validity of his statement by digging through the works and private correspondence of the greatest minds of the past and found that in reality the opposite was true. The book won the "Angel Award" from Excellence in Media and the "Silver Medallion" from ECPA. The lie propagated by the leading atheist inspired a work that has brought thousands to see that intelligence is not synonymous with atheism or agnosticism and that in reality the greatest scientists, philosophers, writers, poets, musicians and artists of the past held a firm belief in God.

About the Author: Michael Caputo was baptized in 1972, after which he attended Ambassador College. He graduated from Canadian universities with a



Michael Caputo

specialization in counseling. For several years he worked in the mental health field, after which he served full time in the ministry both in Italy and Canada. Because of health and family reasons, Michael returned to Toronto and joined the field of education. He presently teaches at both the high school and college level and is an elder in the Toronto congregation. He is married to Leonilda and is father to Anthony, Julie and Victor.

Everett Corbin

Congregation: Murfreesboro, Tennessee

CD: *The Oxford Touch* (2002).

About the CD: This was the rerelease of an album Mr. Corbin produced in 1980, *America's Unknown Superstar*, with traditional country music singer Vernon Oxford. The songs are getting more airplay on international radio than they did originally. One song, a gospel-Christian tune "I Love to Sing" remained on a European chart for more seven months.

Soon Vernon Oxford will record still more of Mr. Corbin's songs, leading off with a song of tragedy, "The Last Days of New Orleans," which tells that "man is destined for disaster when building on sand, leaving God out of the picture entirely."

About the Musician: Mr. Corbin was editor of a Nashville, Tennessee, suburban weekly, *The Donelson News Diary*. His outlook on life changed drastically in 1969 when he was baptized into the Church of God.

More Information: countrymusic1@juno.com



Everett Corbin

Gary and Elizabeth Densmore

Congregation: Kittery, Maine
CD: *The Dedication* by Ivory and Fox (2002).

About the CD: "The *Dedication* CD is the first album we've recorded out of 12 recording projects we have purposed for the future. It is an easy listening album highlighting the standards. It was dedicated to each of our parents for their love and the support they had given so generously throughout the years to our music and fine arts' profession.

"We enjoy the rainbow of sounds in the color of music because our parents gave us a versatile appreciation for the beauty in the variety of different musical styles!"

About the Musicians: Gary and Elizabeth Densmore are professional

musicians with Elizabeth providing the vocals and Gary arranging, producing and playing piano and keyboards to give a four- to eight-piece band sound as the duo Ivory and Fox.

Gary was baptized in August 1977 and Elizabeth has been a coworker with the Church for 12 years. Gary attended Berklee School of Music in 1964, graduated from Champlain College in 1969 and Plymouth State in 1971. He has played throughout New England professionally as a soloist and bandleader, as well as serving the Church for nearly 30 years as a piano accompanist, children's choir director and soloist, including performing original compositions at the Feast.

Elizabeth was born and raised in Cork, Ireland, and has performed in Ireland, Holland and the Isle of Jersey. She has served as a special music soloist and ensemble singer for the Church, as well as providing musical entertainment at the Feast.

Member Comments: "Gary makes those ivory keys talk, and you feel it when he sits down at the keyboard. He puts his whole personality into his music. Add this with Elizabeth's beautiful mezzo-soprano voice and you have one powerful duo sound."

More Information: ivoryandfox@comcast.net.

Kathy Foster

Congregation: Salem, Oregon
Book: *Teach Your Students to Read in Sound Bytes* (2000, 2002, 2004).

About the Book: *Teach Your Students to Read in Sound Bytes* is a 300-page phonetic reading program that allows students to begin reading after learning only five letters of the alphabet. Students are taught letters and the sounds they represent, words using those sounds, then read a story using the sounds and words they just learned. Each new story builds on previous knowledge and adds a little more. The book is being used to teach struggling readers in several Salem schools (including elementary, middle and high school).

About the Author: Kathy Foster has been a reading tutor for many years. The book was developed after one of her



Elizabeth and Gary Densmore



Kathy Foster

children had difficulty learning to read with the whole language method taught in school.

She was baptized in March 1972, is married, has four children (two of whom are teachers), teaches Sabbath Bible classes and teaches at Camp Davidson's preteen camp.

Member Comments: "I think (as a parent trying to teach a child to read) it is the easiest instruction book for a parent. It was easy for me to follow and teach, and I found the kids liked the format too—they didn't get confused or overwhelmed... both of the boys are on grade level now."

John Fox

Congregation: Salt Lake City, Utah
Book: *Business Ethics—A Call to Action!*

About the Book: After being encouraged by industry peers, John Fox wrote a training manual titled *Business Ethics—A Call to Action!* It was approved in August 2003 by the State of Utah for its continuing education program. This led to certification by the IICRC as an ethics instructor. As a result, Mr. Fox now writes a monthly column for ASCR, in addition to contributing to BSCAI and other venues on topics related to ethics in marketing management.

About the Author: Mr. Fox is a marketing coach. He was baptized on Trumpets in 1977. Married to Lynn, he has two children, one grandchild and another on the way. He enjoys history and music.

When asked why he writes, he replied, "To share true principles. Members and so many others have encouraged me both face-to-face and via e-mail because they find what I say helpful. So I keep at it and am grateful for the opportunities. I am just a pen."

Larry Carlton Graybeal

Congregation: Hickory, North Carolina

CD: *Conestoga View* (2005).

About the CD: "On June 2, 2004, my beloved mother, Kathleen, passed away after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Several months later, words to what

became a song in her memory came flooding into my mind. The song is about my observations of her and the staff at a nursing home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, named Conestoga View."

About the Composer: Mr. Graybeal and his wife, Patricia, were baptized in July of 1990. Their son, Brian, and his wife, Denice, have three children, Aubrey, Camille and Brian Jr. Their daughter, Aimee, has a daughter, Kaila.

More Information: larrygraybeal@boone.net.

Rod Hall

Congregation: Spokane, Washington

Books: *Are We Living in the End Time?* (2000) and *7 Strategies of Success* (2000).

About the Books: "Applying the experience and skills gained in my tenure as a television news anchor and station general manager, I was able to fulfill a dream by authoring two books *Are We Living in the End Time?* and *7 Strategies of Success*."



Rod Hall

"After over 40 years of analyzing world news and trends in the light of Bible prophecy, it was fascinating to go back and take a fresh, in-depth look at current geopolitical trends and explore secular experts and history in 17 key prophetic areas.

"The book evolved from over a year of extensive research for a possible United publication. However, the material gathered proved to be much too extensive for a booklet and was eventually published with 324 pages.

"*7 Strategies of Success* analyzes with an underlying biblical perspective keys that make some people more successful than others. It utilizes hundreds of quotes and many examples of the great and near-great of our times.

"Researching the books and helping promote them proved to be the most enjoyable part of the process. Fielding questions from many live call-in radio programs across America for a period of two years was a rewarding experience.

About the Author: Mr. Hall was baptized in October 1968. After attending Ambassador College, he worked 11 years at Ambassador Television Production helping produce *The World Tomorrow* program. He has been in the television broadcast industry for over 35 years working at 13 network television stations in news, sales and management. He is currently general manager for KQUP RTN24 in Spokane.

More Information: totalmarketing@comcast.net.

Janet McGuire Hendershot

Congregation: Ocala, Florida
Book: *Backyard Burial* (2006).

About the Book: "*Backyard Burial* is a mystery novel with no sex and no profanity. Matrina McCoy, a security agent, is a 9/11 widow who moves to Sarasota, Florida, with her two children to begin life anew. She meets John Fleming, an investigator and widower who is raising three children on his own. An acquaintance of John's from his church is found dead in his backyard. John also thwarts a would-be bomber at Disney World, and afterwards receives threatening letters. Are the bomb threat and the murder connected? John is arrested for the murder, and Matrina has to find

the real killer before harm comes to John and his children.

"I wrote this book to portray Matrina as the epitome of a loved one from 9/11 who rallies and goes on with life."

About the

Author: Mrs. Hendershot was baptized in March 1969 in Chicago, Illinois. She and her husband, Ivan, who was also baptized in 1969, have been married for 49 years and have five children. She maintains the congregation's tape library and types sermon transcripts for the deaf and hard-of-hearing Web page.

More Information: janetmcguirehendershot.com.

Stephen Hervey

Congregation: Williamsburg, Virginia

Book: *Hymns to the Highest: Biblical Poetry* (2004).

About the

Book: "My book contains inspirational poetry and songs that are edifying and can be helpful in learning about

God's Word. One of the Scriptures that prompted me to write this book was Colossians 3:16. One of my main reasons for writing my book was to share God's truth with others through poetry, which is also a biblical principle, since much of what is written in the Bible is poetry. The book is divided into four sections containing spiritual songs, poems of encouragement, poems of edification and spiritual romantic poems (which also have been used at weddings).

"I would describe my style of poetry as didactic in God's Word and filled with rhythm, rhyme and romance. The primary subject addressed throughout the book is love. It advocates and expounds on love at a time when it's prophesied that the love of many shall wax cold. The poems also cover a variety of other biblical subjects with titles like "The World to Come," "When Christ Returns," "Babylon," "God's Kingdom," "The Holy Calling," "Call Upon His Name," "The Bread" and "Reconciliation;" to name a few. One of the more popular poems in the book is a spiritual romantic poem titled "Now," which is my wife's favorite poem.

"I have at times used my poetry in giving sermonettes and sermons. Each poem concludes with a Bible verse that relates to the poem."

Marcus E. Omer

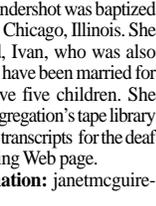
Congregation: Henderson, Kentucky

Book: *Of Sunshine and Clouds* (2005).

About the Book: "Over the years, I noticed my mind being filled with stories and thoughts on life itself. I wanted to get these thoughts down on paper, and



Janet McGuire Hendershot



Stephen Hervey



Stephen Hervey

I found the simplest form was poetry. As the number of poems grew, I wanted to have them in book form so I could pass on my thoughts and feelings to those that follow.

"In the summer of 2005 I published *Of Sunshine and Clouds*. It is a book of poetry in mostly traditional form. I have tried to reflect the ups and downs that are sure to come in this life; of the happy days and the cloudy days, but always with a hope for the future. The poetry has a wide variety of subjects—from inspirational to humorous; from nostalgia to love poems; and from poems on what's wrong with our society today to the hope we have in looking forward to that wonderful world tomorrow."

About the Author: "My family started listening to Herbert W. Armstrong in 1950 when I was 14 years old. My mother was baptized by Dr. Hoeh in the summer of 1952. I was not baptized until March 1977. I, along with my wife, have been active in the Church for years and in UCG since 1995."

Rachel Quast

Congregation: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Book: *Journey From the Storm Within: 9 Steps to Eating Disorder Recovery* (2003).

About the Book: "My primary motivation for writing this book was due to my experiences with anorexia, bulimia and compulsive overeating. Since God blessed me with recovery and gave me the willingness to share it with others, I had to write it. It almost felt like God was driving me, and not writing it wasn't an option. I also came to see that the resources for those suffering from these conditions are very limited. Step programs are especially difficult to find or are ineffective. Eating disorders are baffling and complex and, thus, demand their own model of recovery from someone who has lived through them and studied them. The book has nine steps that guide a person through recovery. It includes a brief biography, personal journal entries, descriptions of each step, over 60 activities a person can work through to process each step and biblical scriptures to support each step.

About the

Author: Miss Quast is the founder and president of an organization called SHED (Self-Healing through EDucation). The organization deals with the prevention and intervention of eating disorders and accomplishes these goals through presentations, support groups and one-on-one counseling. In December of 2006, she will have her master's degree in counseling. She enjoys weight lifting, dancing, writing, her job and



Rachel Quast

traveling. She was baptized in August of 2000.

More Information: www.9shed.com.

Linda Register

Congregation: Cincinnati East, Ohio
Book: *Frankie's Fork: Children's Table Manners in Rhyme* (2006).

About the Book: "*Frankie's Fork* is a color illustrated book about children's table manners. The main characters are my daughter, Francesca, and her Siamese cat, Sinatra. While raising my daughter, I noticed that manners and etiquette were falling by the wayside as both parents went to work and strained to get the basics of keeping the household done. There was no time to consistently teach manners. We often went to restaurants and found it difficult to enjoy ourselves because kids weren't trained on basic manners at the table. I decided to write the book about five years ago and just now finished it. I wrote it in rhyme so that it would be easy to teach and remember. I also illustrated the book."

About the Author: Mrs. Register was raised in the Church of God. The activity she enjoys most in the Church is participating in the camp program with the youth. She enjoys reading, writing, drawing, cooking, beading and traveling with her family. She has worked most of her adult life as a marketing communicator. Her family has recently relocated to the Cincinnati area and she intends to look for work again—and will probably write another book in her spare time!

Emogene Simpson and Ralph Mayer

Congregation: Little Falls, Minnesota

Book: *Up the Crick* (2005).

About the Book: "Our book is a historical novel about the depression of the 1920s and one family's attempt to cope with the situation."

Authors: Emogene Simpson was baptized with her husband, Leo, in 1982. She has authored seven books in her 90 years but *Up the Crick* is the first to be published. She's had a lifelong fascination with literature and spends much of her time in Bible study and reading. Her family consists of three children, 10 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

Ralph Mayer is retired and he and his wife, Joyce, were baptized in 1970. He serves as a deacon in the Little Falls congregation and frequently travels to



Ralph Mayer and Emogene Simpson

See "Authors," page 9



From the Word

Etiquette at Sabbath Services

■ God's weekly Sabbath service is a holy convocation. Our behavior as we meet before Him on the Sabbath is important for us as God's people to understand . . .

by Doug Horchak

For years, we have had a legacy within the Church of God of striving to provide the best location and environment for our brethren to meet for Sabbath services. Often, that was limited due to cost and availability. As a result, there were times the conditions weren't that great.

Many of us in the Church of God have stories about the many different locations we have worshipped in—from beautiful auditoriums and meeting halls, to Quonset huts, restaurant lounges and roller-skating rinks!

In addition, people have come from very different religious backgrounds—all having different expectations of what our worship or Sabbath services should be like.

Given those variables, let us consider a couple of simple, but important questions: What does God expect of the environment and atmosphere where He is worshipped, and what aspects of our personal conduct and etiquette at Sabbath services should never change, no matter where we worship God?

The Holy Convocation

We find the earliest reference in Scripture to the issue of a holy meeting in Leviticus 23, a chapter we commonly turn to for instruction about God's annual Holy Days. This chapter addresses all of the holy convocations of God, including the weekly Sabbath.

God told Moses, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings'" (Leviticus 23:2-3).

To understand further, let's focus on two Hebrew words that God inspired to be used to describe these special occasions. These are the same two words used throughout this chapter, referring not only to the annual Holy Days, but the weekly Sabbath:

The Hebrew word translated *convocation* in many translations, is *miqra'* (mik-raw), "something called out, that is, a public meeting (the act, the persons, or the place); also a rehearsal:—assembly, calling, convocation, reading" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*).

Here we see that God is instructing Israel to meet publicly—a special calling or assembly on the Sabbath day.

While God's people had already been taught about the issue of holy time and the importance of not working on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11), we see in this instruction in Leviticus that the Sabbath was to include a special assembly of the people of God, together to *rehearse* elements of God's plan.

God also says it is to be a "holy" convocation or meeting. God used the Hebrew word *godesh* (ko'-desh), which means a "sacred, consecrated, or hallowed thing" (*Genesis Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, 1979).

So, we learn that God told Israel in Leviticus 23 that they were to not only meet on this very special day (the Sabbath) that had been sanctified, but to also have a meeting that itself is *holy and special* on that day!

In the Presence of God

One of the first examples of coming into the presence of God was recorded in Exodus 3. This is where Moses encountered the burning bush of God (Exodus 3:1-5). As this was in the actual presence of God, Moses was asked to remove his shoes. God said, "The place where you stand is holy ground." Here we find God using the same word for holy (*kodesh*) that is used in Leviticus 23. With these examples, we begin to see that when we are in the presence of God, it is a very special thing, indeed!

Today in the Church of God, we view our services on the Sabbath day as a holy convocation. It is a special, sanctified meeting that requires something special of us, our behavior and our approach. We believe that at such convocations, we are in the presence of God, as we ask for the presence or "attendance" by God during the opening prayer of our services!

Even during the time of Christ, when the presence of God among men was typified by the temple in Jerusalem, we find Jesus showing great disappointment at the misbehavior of people in this house of God. This was displayed in the account of Jesus overthrowing tables of salesmen and money changers in the courtyard of the temple.

Christ was upset because they had made this very special "house of prayer" a virtual den of thieves (Matthew 21:12-13; John 2:14-16). Clearly, the Messiah was very displeased with this activity in the temple, as it represented disrespect for the very presence of God Himself.

Today, our practice of attending Sabbath services is based on the principles and traditions from the past. Both the temple convocations in Israel and early synagogue Sabbath meetings that were used by the first-century congregations of God's people have given us a pattern to consider in our worship of God.

Today in the Church, we need to maintain that same sense of respect and appreciation when we come before God as a collective body. We can all benefit

by reminders of reasonable expectations of etiquette (and respect) as we come before God on our special convocations on the Sabbath around the world (see sidebar).

How God Views Our Convocation

There are some very interesting and revealing principles that we can glean from a letter that Paul wrote to his close "son" in the faith and fellow minister—Timothy. In that letter, we find Paul talking about behavior in the congregation.

In 1 Timothy 3, Paul talks about the qualifications for an ordained overseer of God's people. In verses 4 and 5 he compares one's oversight of his family to his oversight and care for the Church: "One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Timothy 3:4-5).

We see here that Paul implies submission to godly authority by all of us as a part of the Church. He continues discussing our example and later in the

chapter tells Timothy, "These things do I write to you . . . that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:14-15).

It is enlightening that Paul refers to the Church as "the house of God," then comments on how we ought to behave ourselves within the Church. He made the same reference that Christ made to the temple (house of God), with a clear expectation of our reverence shown by our behavior!

We Are Not Alone

We live in a time when many of the congregations of God are very small, indeed. We should always appreciate the great privilege it is to meet together with God's people on the Sabbath! Whether with a group of six or seven or a crowd of 200 or more, it is a blessing we should never take for granted.

We should also remember that when we do meet and when we do ask for the presence of God at such meetings—we are not alone. We read some very inspiring words from the apostle John that

reveal this encouraging truth. "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" (1 John 1:3).

Knowing that our Heavenly Father and His Son are fellowshiping with us on the Sabbath should be an exciting fact that both affects the importance we place on being at services on the Sabbath and our behavior while there.

In the end, we know that some of God's people have no choice but to meet in very humble surroundings. Other congregations may meet in large groups in wonderful halls with padded chairs and the comfort of air conditioning!

Whatever our meeting location, we should never forget that the true quality of our meeting to learn and worship God is based more on our hearts, as we show God honor and respect by what we are doing—and why we are there. UN

Doug Horchak is a member of the Ministerial Services Team, overall coordinator for Festival planning and pastor of the Dallas and Sherman, Texas, congregations.

Etiquette for Sabbath Services

While our culture has changed and our meeting places have varied since the early Church almost 2,000 years ago, some principles of respect and honor have not. Following are some guidelines, based on biblical principles of courtesy and respect, that we should all consider as we attend our weekly Sabbath services:

Be on Time: While a few brethren will occasionally be late for varied, legitimate reasons, coming into services after they begin by *design* shows a measure of disrespect to both God and others. It can be a real distraction to others, the speakers and, most importantly, it sends a message to God.

Being in the Hall During Hymns: We should all value the fact that singing praises to God as a collective body is the *actual beginning* of our services honoring and worshiping God. As many of the Psalms and other references in the New Testament show, we are thanking God through our hymns on the Sabbath (Ephesians 5:19-20). We should give priority to being in our seats before congregational hymns begin.

Loitering During Services: While there may be reasons for a few people being out of the Church hall while services are going on, such as parents comforting small children, those needing to use the restroom and possibly Church personnel (ushers or security), it is inappropriate for members to be fellowshiping and visiting while services are being conducted. There is plenty of time for that before and after services.

Noise During Services: In the hall when services are being conducted, attendees should not be talking and visiting. If communication is needed, a written note or low whisper should be used so as not to disrupt services or distract others.

Children in Services: Children are a great blessing to each congregation. We should all appreciate that. However, parents should focus on the need to train their children to sit or be occupied *quietly* during the Sabbath services. Admittedly, it does take work, effort and patience. If a child is fussing or being noisy, as parents we should remove the child from the hall, then tend to his or her needs.

Many congregations are able to provide extra space and reserved seating in a section of the meeting hall as a service to parents. Some even provide a mothers' or parents' room so as to tend to the needs of a small baby without disrupting services. (For more on what parents can do, see the article "Our Children and Sabbath Services," November 2005 *United News*.)

Congregation's Response: On the other hand, as parents of small children are working with and putting forth the effort to instruct their children—training them to enjoy Sabbath services in a quiet manner—we, the congregation, should show patience and support for them. It's a two-way street.

Cell Phones: Sabbath services are not the place for active cell phones. At the very least, phones should be put on silent or vibrate. If answering a phone is a necessity, one should quickly but quietly leave the main hall, then answer the call. This expectation of proper etiquette is known by many who attend meetings in the business world. How much more should we respect coming before God on the Sabbath!

Computer/Video Games: Whether to allow any video games at Sabbath services is a personal choice for parents (since some games are very small, educational and totally quiet). However, many are not quiet, and can be distracting if used during a Sabbath service. A principle all parents should consider is this—if a child is old enough to play a video game, he or she is likely old enough to begin to be taught and learn from the Sabbath service.

Our General Conversation: What is our conversation before and after services? Is it befitting the Sabbath and this special convocation of God with His people? That is a question we should *all* ask ourselves. God is encouraged and impressed when we converse with each other as God's people. Malachi 3:16 says, "Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name." We can be assured that *what* God hears us talking about is an important factor.

Clothing: What kind of clothing is appropriate for an appearance before God? An article on this is planned for next issue.

Heart-to-Heart Talk With Women and Teen Girls

■ This article is a follow-up to the previous articles, "Good Sex, Bad Sex" and "Heart-to-Heart Talk With Men and Teen Boys." References to "women" include teenage girls and references to "men" include teenage boys.

by Don Hooser

Being married and serving with my wife for over 40 years has helped me understand many things better. Plus Elsie and I have read many books on marriage, morality and modesty. And now she has been of great help to me in writing this article.

Most of the women in God's Church are wonderful examples of faith, character and conduct. Coming among godly women who dress and act with modesty, femininity and good taste is like arriving at a refreshing oasis. They have "the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Peter 3:4).

God's design of our minds and bodies is "very good" (Genesis 1:31)! Consider God's wondrous design and purpose in making women lovely and men to be magnetically attracted to that loveliness!

It's interesting that the Bible mentions the attractiveness of several women, including Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Abigail, Bathsheba and Esther. So good looks can be an asset for which to thank God and your parents! Or they can be a temptation to vanity as with the "exceedingly beautiful" woman who represented Jerusalem but, God said, "trusted in [her] own beauty" (Ezekiel 16:13, 15).

Outward beauty can be a blessing, but the benefits can be spoiled. "As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion" (Proverbs 11:22).

Chaste feminine character as described in Proverbs 31:10-31 is the greatest beauty. "Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised" (verse 30).

What Is Modesty?

"Modesty" has several meanings that relate to and overlap each other. It can mean humility, moderation or not calling attention to oneself. And when referring to appearance, clothing and actions, modesty also means not being sexually suggestive, erotic or too revealing. In this article, modesty includes all of these meanings.

What is considered modest depends in part on the culture and times in which one lives. It's wise to dress in styles consistent with one's culture, but make very modest choices within that range of styles. Above all, our goal should be to seek God's approval—to dress and act according to His will (Luke 22:42). How would Jesus advise us? To answer this, we must look at many scriptures.

The apostles Paul and Peter both

emphasized that women—especially "women professing godliness"—should dress "in modest apparel," and that their primary concern should be to adorn themselves with good works and righteous character! It's good to read 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:1-6 in different translations.

God has always been concerned about modesty. While Adam and Eve used flimsy leaves to cover their privates, God made them tunics to cover their bodies (Genesis 3:7, 21). Public nakedness is associated with shame throughout the Bible (Revelation 3:18).

"The LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). But how we *voluntarily choose to appear* reflects what is in our hearts! People naturally judge us by what they see, and God certainly judges our choices of clothing, makeup, etc. This is so fundamentally important that the Bible often uses clothing to symbolize good or bad spiritual character.

We have a responsibility to be lights to the world! (Matthew 5:14). What kind of first impression is an immodestly dressed Church member making as a representative of Christ and His Church?

God Made Us Different!

God made men to be more visual, with a sex drive that responds immediately to sight and suggestion. Women usually respond more slowly and to romance, relationships and touch. But Satan tempts us to misuse that knowledge for manipulation. Men give intimacy in hopes of getting sex, and women give sex in hopes of getting intimacy and a relationship. Both actions are sinful and foolish.

Never give sex thinking you will win a guy's love! More likely, after the man uses you, he will discard you as a toy that he is bored and disgusted with, as in the true story of Amnon and Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-15). Put the highest value on your body and sexuality. No man should have access to them until he has patiently courted you, won your love and married you.

To appreciate the magnetic power of feminine allure, consider King David and Bathsheba. The Bible holds David responsible for the adultery (2 Samuel 11:1-4). But Bathsheba may have been partly to blame for not making sure her bathing was hidden from anyone's view. Her exposure so ignited David's lust that he jeopardized his reputation and reign.

Some women understand the allure of their sexuality very well and flaunt it to light fires in men. The motive might be money or the power to tantalize, tease, control and manipulate men. Some halfway understand it and are just trying to be popular or to attract boyfriends. But looking and acting "sexy" will not bring you respect, self-respect or the best kind of husband, if any.

And many females are quite naive, not understanding the powerful effects they have by the way they dress and act. It's easy to send unintended signals. For example, if your body is not for sale, you shouldn't appear to be advertising it. What you might think of as "cute"

may look like a sexual come-on to a man. Generally, the more skin a man sees, the more he thinks sex, not respect or love.

Virtually every man between the ages of 12 and 112 who has a normal set of male hormones responds to any female immodesty, overt sensuality or suggestiveness! The response may be lust and sexual arousal. What he sees he wants to touch. But he may have another negative response, such as embarrassment, a compulsive curiosity to see more or annoyance at the distraction. If the man is trying to obey God, he may lament or resent the visual temptation that has provoked a mental battle within him. A man often has mixed feelings, being turned on and turned off at the same time.

Also, women are often dismayed at other women for tempting their husbands, boyfriends, sons, etc., or for setting a bad example for their daughters.

So we see, when you dress or act immodestly, you will likely tempt a brother or future brother in Christ to sin, sometimes starting a domino effect, as Christ warned about in Matthew 5:27-30. Paul said, "Resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way" (Romans 14:13; see also Matthew 18:6; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:31-33). Jesus also said, "Temptation to do wrong is inevitable, but how terrible it will be for the person who does the tempting" (Matthew 18:7, New Living Translation).

And please remember that when we come before God in a worship service, our clothing should be especially modest and not distracting!

Wise and Unwise Decisions

There is a difference between dressing attractively and dressing to attract. Many women wear clothing that is too low, too high, too tight and/or too transparent. Much of it is way too formfitting, defining every curve exactly. Often clothing, body jewelry and tattoos draw attention to body parts, like printed words across one's breasts or bottom.

We suggest the "sit-down test." Sit in a chair in front of a mirror, see if the hem of your skirt still reaches your knees, and look in the mirror to see what others can see under your skirt. Then lean over to see if you can see down your blouse. Godly character is shown by not compromising even in small ways. "[She] who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10).

Be aware that women's fashions change frequently to maintain sexual excitement and sales. For example, once the public is thoroughly accustomed to seeing bare midriffs, fashion designers will cover the belly and expose another part.

Total nudity is less erotic than sexy packaging. A woman in skimpy or tight clothes is more exciting and mysterious because she is tantalizing and teasing to a man in a way similar to a striptease show. His appetite is stimulated to see and imagine more.

The peekaboo effect is also erotic. Advertisers know that a split-second sexy image can have as great an impact

as a longer scene. Likewise, high slits in skirts are like flashing lights—now you see thigh, now you don't. Also sheer clothes, loose blouses when a woman leans forward and sleeveless tops with loose armholes offer titillating peeks of skin and underwear.

Many psychological factors are involved in how one's dress and appearance affect others, not just the amount of skin showing. A short skirt is more provocative than shorts of the same length because of the obvious possibility of seeing up the skirt. A top with straps is less provocative than a strapless top. Décolletage without showing cleavage is not nearly as erotic as seeing the same neckline with cleavage showing. Outerwear that looks like underwear is risqué.

Modesty involves more than clothing. Your demeanor—the way you talk and walk, your body language, your type of flirtation and teasing—all must be modest and pleasing to God.

Keep in mind that it's wrong to do anything with the motive of looking seductive or that has a seductive effect on others. Examples of women using clothing, jewelry and makeup to be seductive are in 2 Kings 9:30; Jeremiah 4:30; Ezekiel 23:40; Hosea 2:13; Proverbs 6:25; and 7:10.

Wanting to "fit in" with hot new fashions is tempting, but Paul warned "do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). Don't choose fashion models as role models! To maintain god-

ly values and good judgment, we do well to avoid many TV programs, movies, magazines and romance novels that are riddled with promiscuity and soft porn! Above all, we must be much more concerned about what God thinks of us than what people think. Please see "What in the World Is Going On?"

In many stores it can be difficult to find garments that are modest, feminine and becoming. But pleasing God is worth whatever effort and sacrifices it takes! A woman can be modest with classic styles that are always in fashion.

"Glorify God in your body and in your spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:20). How? First, by saving sex, seductiveness and sensuality for marriage. Second, by not putting your body on public exhibition, but keeping your secrets until your wedding night, when your lovely body will begin to *enrapture* that one special man! (Proverbs 5:19).

At the same time, make sure that the number one love of your life is God through Jesus Christ. The Bible is His love letter to you. Lavish your love on Him. Your Prince will be coming soon. Be ready for Him.

It's extremely important that parents teach their children about sex and modesty. The next article in this series will focus on that subject, and will include a list of recommended books that tie in with all four articles in this series. We also recommend our excellent booklet *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*. UN

What in the World Is Going On?

We are in a culture war fueled by lust and greed. Christian civilization is reverting to heathen nakedness and lewdness. Today, everywhere one looks, there are images of scantily-clad women—to get our attention and money. "Sex sells," so merchandising becomes a type of prostitution. Notice that "greed" is associated with "sexual immorality" and "impurity" (Ephesians 5:3, New Living Translation).

Society puts extreme emphasis on outward appearance, including looking "sexy" and thin, to make people unhappy with their looks in order to sell them stuff—clothing, cosmetics, jewelry, beauty salons, diets, plastic surgery, etc.! True values and modesty will preserve your money, dignity, contentment and your physical and spiritual health.

As immorality and immodesty gradually get worse, everyone is tempted to accept new definitions of "normal." As necklines plunge, so do our standards of acceptance. What we see today was not so long ago considered "indecent exposure." Often trends get started in a subculture and work their way up into mainstream fashion. Amazingly, the garb and makeup of prostitutes have often inspired new fads!

Then there's swimwear. Bikinis cover less than underwear! The patches of cloth draw more attention to the erotic zones of the body than total nudity would. And skintight suits leave almost nothing to the imagination. The beach is a voyeur's paradise. And daring new fashions in swimwear have typically led to similar revealing fashions in street wear.

Prophecies of the end time foretell shameless immorality and immodesty (Jude 3-16; Jeremiah 23:9-14). People will be "loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts" (2 Timothy 3:6). They will "allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness" (2 Peter 2:13-19). God warns that He will administer fitting punishments, using enemies who will humiliate Israelite captives by parading them naked (Isaiah 3:9, 16-26; Ezekiel 16:37-39; 23:28-29). But God has called all of us to "come out" of this world to be God's "sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

When women are promiscuous, they often suffer more consequences than the men, including pregnancy and greater disease complications, heartache and depression. When a woman gets a sexually transmitted disease (STD), she often is made incapable of ever having a child. So don't let the world lead you down destructive paths! Guard your precious body and heart!

If you have made big mistakes, remember that God is quick to forgive anyone who sincerely repents. We will be saved by God's grace. The Bible likens a sinner to a naked person, whom God lovingly covers and clothes with His grace and righteousness (Isaiah 61:10; Psalm 32:1; Revelation 3:18; 16:15; 19:8).

Preparing for Pregnancy: Participating in a Miracle

by Nancy Capo

It may be the most godlike thing you have a chance to do. You get to bring a human life into the world. Nausea, vomiting, varicose veins and hemorrhoids aside, being pregnant can bring a man and a woman face-to-face with a miracle.

When God created the land, sea, sun, moon, plants and animals, He declared it "good." But when He finished creating man in His own image, male and female, and told them to be fruitful and multiply, He declared His work "very good."

Humans are pretty special. Our ability to carry our children and give birth gives us a glimpse of the incredible purpose God is working out on earth. (And you thought you were just having a baby!)

Your child is on loan to you, entrusted to your care, for you to nourish toward his or her ultimate goal of eternal life as a king and priest of God. This understanding gives real meaning to the phrase "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." So what are you doing to prepare to be this child's parent?

Spiritual Preparation

Before conception is an ideal time for both the mother and father to devote some extra attention to prayer and fasting, to make sure your spiritual house is in order. If you are already pregnant, it is not generally wise for a woman to fast, but you could set aside some special prayer time individually and as a couple to ask God to help you be your child's spiritual teacher and to lead you to the people and resources you need to be the best parents possible.

We don't usually think of pregnancy as a time that influences our children's spiritual growth, but the more spiritually prepared and grounded you are now, the better. And what impact could praying out loud or singing songs of praise to



God have on your growing baby?

Boris Brott, conductor of the Hamilton (Ontario) Philharmonic Symphony, stated, "As a young man, I was mystified by this unusual ability I had—to play certain pieces sight unseen. I'd be conducting a score for the first time and, suddenly the cello line would jump out at me . . . One day, I mentioned this to my mother who is a professional cellist . . . when she heard what the pieces were, the mystery quickly solved itself. All the scores I knew sight unseen were ones she had played while she was pregnant with me" (*Secret Life of the Unborn Child*, Thomas Verry, MD, 1981, pp. 22-23).

Perhaps your prayers and songs could plant a seed that will help your child feel familiar and natural in having a relationship with God. We know that at least one baby in biblical history recognized and responded to the influence of God's Holy Spirit. Elizabeth exclaimed that the baby in her womb leaped for joy when she heard the voice of Mary who was pregnant with the Son of God (Luke 1:41-44).

A spiritually healthy mother, demonstrating the fruits of peace and joy, also experiences positive physical response in her body, producing a healthy environment for the growing baby.

Mom and Dad—and the Two Shall Be One

After spiritual guidance, the next best gift you can give your child is a strong marriage. After the baby comes, a mother's attention is naturally devoted to caring for the baby. Dads can feel neglected. Moms can feel overwhelmed and unsupported. If there have been any stress fractures in your marriage, having a baby will not heal them; it will only exaggerate them.

Now is the time to draw even closer together, to heal any wounds and extend forgiveness to each other. The strongest families have parents who are inseparably united and reach out to embrace their children together. These are marriage skills you will use your entire life. It is essential that you, your spouse and God become the threefold cord of Ecclesiastes 4:12.

Ready, Set, Push!

There are many birth options available to pregnant parents. The best resources in your community are often the independent childbirth educators. They know the scoop on doctors, midwives, doulas, hospitals, birth centers and home births. They are eager to answer your questions about birth methods and can also direct you to the best pregnancy exercise classes, as well as provide prenatal nutrition information. And of course, their classes are designed to prepare you and your spouse for the big day.

Once you decide, based on your personal research, what type of birth location and caregiver is right for you, interview potential caregivers like crazy. One of the biggest mistakes pregnant parents make is choosing a doctor who practices standard obstetric management of birth (which includes induction of labor, routine epidural and 29.1 percent cesarean rate), thinking they will get him or her to act like a midwife during the birth.

Where midwifery is the model of care, and doctors are reserved for only high-risk pregnancies, C-sections are reduced to 5 to 10 percent, while reducing risks and improving outcomes for both moms and babies.

Not all midwives or doctors practice the same way, however. It's worth your time to meet as many as you can with a list of questions in hand and ask for references from previous clients.

A pregnant woman's attention naturally focuses on the day her baby is born, just like God's attention is on His children and the day we enter into eternal life with Him. God has entrusted women with a very special representation of His labor of love for us.

Many women describe birth itself as a profound spiritual event that pulls them to a complete trust and dependence on God. It can be the hardest thing a woman does, yet one of the most empowering.

The mind-set a woman brings to birth can make all the difference in her birth experience.

Remember what God said about His crowning creation: "Behold, it was very good." God didn't goof when He created the female body and the birth process. That becomes abundantly clear when you learn how each detail of labor actually benefits the mom and baby. Educate yourself to replace fear, dread and negativity with a spirit of love, joy, trust, acceptance and confidence. Love got the baby in there; love will get the baby out. UN

Nancy Capo is a certified childbirth educator and doula since 1984 with the Bradley Method of Natural Childbirth, and has worked as a midwifery apprentice. Nancy is married to James Capo, pastor of the Tucson and Sierra Vista, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas, congregations. They have three children, all born at home.

Pregnancy Resources

Childbirth Classes:

The Bradley Method: www.bradleybirth.com, 1-800-4-A-BIRTH.

International Childbirth Education Association (ICEA): www.icea.org.

Find a Doula:

Doulas of North America (DONA): www.dona.org.

Find a Midwife:

American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM): www.midwife.org.

MidwifeInfo: www.midwifeinfo.com.

Research Sites:

International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN): www.ican-online.org.

Childbirth.Org: www.childbirth.org.

Midwifery Today: www.midwiferytoday.com.

Gentle Birth Midwife Archives: www.gentlebirth.org/archives/.

Waterbirth International: www.waterbirth.org.

Books:

The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth, by Henci Goer.

Ina May's Guide to Childbirth, by Ina May Gaskin.

The Birth Book, by Dr. William Sears.

Gentle Birth Choices, by Barbara Harper and Suzanne Arms.

Hearts and Hands, by Elizabeth Davis.

Husband-Coached Childbirth, by Dr. Robert Bradley.

Natural Childbirth the Bradley Way, by Susan McCutcheon.

"Authors," continued from page 6

serve in Duluth, Minnesota, Fargo, North Dakota, and Winnipeg, Manitoba. He cowrote *Up the Crick* and has another book of humor essays to be published soon, as well as two other historical novels in progress. He and Joyce have been married for 41 years and have three children and six grandchildren.

More Information: otralph@wcta.net.

Blanche Smith

Congregation: St. John's, Newfoundland

Book: *Digger Donald* (2005).

About the Book: The book is about a digger (power shovel) that travels into the country for the first time. All the machines and animals that Digger Donald meets make up the story.

"Before going to Perth, Australia, to visit my daughter, son-in-law and little grandson, Conrad, I didn't have any idea that I would write a children's book. But during my brief visit, I became totally immersed in the world of little Conrad.

I was intrigued by his fascination for all types of equipment.

"When I returned home, all the things he said and did were written indelibly in my heart. I wanted to write it all down to recapture our time together. With the help of my husband and my daughter

Carmel, I made a little laminated book and sent it to Conrad. Some of my family and friends saw a copy of the book and suggested that I try to have it published."

About the Author and

Illustrator:

Blanche Smith was baptized March 19, 1977, and is the wife of Newfoundland elder David Smith. Their daughter Carmel Smith illustrated the book. She graduated from Concordia University in Montreal with a degree in studio arts. She lives in Nova Scotia on an organic farm with a menagerie of animals.



Blanche Smith

Eric Snow

Congregation: Ann Arbor, Michigan
Book: *A Zeal for God Not According to Knowledge: A Refutation of Judaism's Arguments Against Christianity* (2005).

About the Book: "This 664-page book is a systematic critique of the arguments Jews make against belief in the New Testament and in Jesus as the Savior and Messiah. It deals with such issues as the alleged influence of pagan religion and gnosticism on first-century Christianity, the historical and other objective evidence favoring the New Testament's reliability, the messianic texts of the Old Testament and whether they were fulfilled in Jesus, the Jewish versus Christian views of how people are saved and whether or not Jesus is God.

"The need to intellectually rebut the . . . book *Mystery Babylon and the Ten Tribes in the End Time* was the original reason for my research on this issue. I later reworked that research, by putting in various specific Jews' arguments in place of his in the book, and did additional research."

About the Author: Mr. Snow is 40 years old, never married and works as an office facilities coordinator in Southfield, Michigan, near Detroit. He has also worked part time for Davenport University as an instructor. He was baptized in August of 1987 and during the Days of Unleavened Bread in 1995 joined a congregation that eventually became part of the UCG. He serves as the church librarian, does lost-and-found duty and gives sermonettes about once or twice every two months. He has also had a number of letters to the editor published in newspapers in Michigan.

Randy Vild

Congregation: Los Angeles, California

CD: *The World to Come* (2004).

About the CD: "While listening to the secular Christian music explosion in 1999, I noticed that the majority of songs were either about praising God or demonstrating how wonderful the life of a Christian is. It was very difficult to find a song about the true gospel of God's future Kingdom. I dedicated the next

five years to writing 15 songs that I believe preach the gospel of the Kingdom through music.

"A Web site was created with free MP3 downloads, and five videos were also produced. Since the album's release there have been over 75,000 downloads, and it is the No. 5 Christian album on C/NETS <http://www.download.com>."

About the Composer: Mr. Vild was baptized in 1986 and is the owner of a video/audio company called <http://vild-productions.com>.

"I very much enjoy reading the Bible and sharpening iron with fellow brethren. I have a beautiful wife who lives for the Kingdom and am proud to be the father to three lovely children. I'm currently working on an orchestration album due out in August."

Member Comments: "It was only now (after arriving home) that I listened to all 15 tracks on your CD. They were absolutely fantastic! The music and lyrics are excellent and very creative. I am joyful that God has given you (and your helpers) such great musical gifts."

More Information: <http://theworld-tocome.org>.

Our Role in the Millennium

■ What is our part in the restoration of all things?

by Tim Groves

Every day we pray more earnestly, "Your Kingdom come!" We look forward to the time when Satan's rule will stop and Christ's rule will begin. When Christ returns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16), we shall rule with Him as kings and priests (Revelation 1:6; 5:9-10; 20:6).

All of those who were called and chosen by the Father will rule with Christ at this time. The sufferings during this life will fade in memory as we shall be joint heirs with Him (Romans 8:16-18). But what exactly will we be doing during this time? What is our role in the Millennium?

Kingdom Given to the Saints

We are told in Daniel 7:22, 27 that when Christ returns, the Kingdom will be given to the saints. Revelation 3:21 says that the saints will share Christ's throne. This includes having specific offices of authority and making judgments (Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2). Jerusalem will become the capital of the earth (Jeremiah 3:17), and God's government will spread from there.

Christ said that the saints will rule over cities (Luke 19:17-19). He specifically stated that David will be king of Israel (Jeremiah 30:9), and the apostles will be over the individual tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29-30). Christ will appoint the saints as rulers over the entire earth (Revelation 2:26-27; Psalm 149:5-9). Man's self-rule will cease, and there will no longer be human governments (Daniel 2:44; 7:27; Revelation 11:15).

The saints' joint rulership with Christ helps us understand our role in the Millennium. When we read the things that Christ will do in the Millennium, we can put our names with His! As Isaiah 32:1 says, "Behold, a king [Christ] will reign in righteousness, and princes [the saints] will rule with justice."

So let's look at events in the Millennium, and see what God has in store for us.

The Restoration of Israel

One of the first things Christ will do is bring Israel back from captivity. At this time Israel will be scattered all over the earth (Isaiah 11:11-12). In Jeremiah 16:14-16 God says He will send for many "fishermen" and "hunters" to seek out and find all of His people and bring them back. Whether this is a literal reference to the saints gathering the Israelites or merely a metaphor, the saints will still play a large role in this gathering of Israel. How?

This second exodus is to dwarf the first exodus. Moses led perhaps 2 million Israelites from Egypt. The number in this second exodus will far exceed that number.

God says in Isaiah 6:11-13 and Amos 5:3 that only a tenth of Israel will be left when Christ returns. A rough estimate of the population of the modern day Israelite nations is half a billion. A tenth of that is 50 million, which indeed dwarfs 2 million! No wonder people will no longer mention the first exodus (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

So who will lead these millions of people back to Jerusalem? Christ is to gather them, and who is reigning with Christ at this time? The saints! Perhaps we will help lead the Israelites back to their homeland. Being delivered from their captivity, they will be overwhelmed with emotion and will be eager to return to God (Jeremiah 31:7-9; 50:4-5).

Once the Israelites have been gathered, their education will begin. God will remove the spiritual blindness and give them His Holy Spirit, and they will be taught the way of peace (Isaiah 25:7; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Jeremiah 33:6).

The saints will be their teachers. As priests, we will teach knowledge (Malachi 2:7). We will teach them the difference between right and wrong, between the clean and unclean (Ezekiel 44:23). Teaching will be a big part of our job in the Millennium.

Throughout our physical lives we have learned by experience that God's way works. We will pull from our well of experiences and knowledge of God to help these people. We will be there helping them one-on-one, encouraging them to do what is right (Isaiah 30:20-21). God says that He will send shepherds to Israel to teach them according to His heart and feed

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The Conversion of the Other Nations

Israel will become the model nation for the world. Throughout the first several decades of the Millennium, the other nations will begin to look up to Israel. They will see the blessings of living God's way and want to learn it themselves.

Zechariah 8:23 paints a vivid picture of these people: "In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'"

So where have these people heard about God? Isaiah 11:9 tells us that the whole earth will have knowledge about God. That knowledge will come through the saints! We will be sent all over the earth teaching God's ways.

Some nations will not obey at first. Many will not trust Christ. After all, the False Prophet said he was God, and look at the corruption and devastation that followed! As kings, we will

not "twist their arms" to force them into submission. Rather, they will reap the consequences of their choices.

God tells us that He will send drought and plagues to those who do not keep the Feast (Zechariah 14:16-19). The saints will teach the blessings for obeying God, and the curses for disobeying God. We will use the power entrusted to us to lead these people to God, not drag them.

Some will start obeying God only to save themselves. They will not want to be plagued! But as they start applying God's ways in their lives, they will begin to see the benefits of His ways. So instead of obeying because they "have to," they will learn to obey because they "want to." We will be there encouraging them along the way.

Dealing With Evil in the Millennium

As a whole, the nations will see the blessings of obeying God. However, evil will exist during the Millennium, especially during the early years. Although Satan will be removed, his ingrained influence will still be present, especially during the first few generations in the Millennium. So how is Christ—and His assistants, the saints—going to deal with evil?

It is important to note that although God's Holy Spirit will be available to all mankind, repentance is still a requirement to have it (Acts 2:38). God will not give His Spirit to just anyone. Some will not want to repent. What will happen to them? How will we deal with this in our areas of juris-

diction?

A rebellion is prophesied early into the Millennium in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. This rebellion is to consist of a huge number of people who want to conquer Israel. These armies do not want Christ and the saints ruling over them, but want to plunder the wealth God provides to those who are obeying Him.

Both Christ and the saints will be aware of what is happening in the thoughts of these people. Yes, people will still have free moral agency, and they can still choose to do evil. God will allow this insurrection to occur. Why?

Notice the thoughts of these people in Ezekiel 38:11-12, "You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'—to take plunder and to take booty." They think they can easily overtake "defenseless" Israel with their large army and many weapons.

God ultimately annihilates this army as an example to all in the Millennium. God says this will teach all



Being delivered from their captivity, they will be overwhelmed with emotion and will be eager to return to God . . .

nations that He is in charge, and teach Israel to trust in Him (Ezekiel 38:23; 39:7).

So where do the saints fit in this picture? Remember, human nature is still around. Many will be afraid of the coming army. Who will be there encouraging them to, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD!" (like Moses did in Exodus 14:13)? We will! Notice Isaiah 35:4, "Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with recompense of God; He will come and save you.'" This verse is in the context of the Millennium.

So great is this example, that the weapons of this army will burn for seven years, and it will take seven months to bury the dead! No doubt it took several months or years to organize this rebellion, but it will be stopped in an instant.

Speaking of the Millennium, Isaiah 11:9 says that no one will hurt nor destroy in God's holy mountain.

When someone begins doing wrong things, the saints will get involved. Notice Isaiah 30:21, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."

As God spoke to Cain when he began to choose the wrong path (Genesis 4:6-7), we will encourage people to do what is right when they are going astray. But unlike Cain, those evil plans will not be able to be carried out against someone who is living God's way. Most likely angels will be there to prevent acts that can hurt or destroy.

After several generations, the way of peace will become the norm. Children will be born into peace. People will grow up knowing only God's ways and not learning war (Isaiah 2:1-4). Fear from others will not exist (Micah 4:4; Zechariah 8:4-5). Many generations will only hear and read about times of war and violence. They won't know what it is like to live in a world full of pain and sorrow.

Yes, most of the Millennium will be a time of unprecedented peace. But, unfortunately, evil will once again show its ugly face at the end of the thousand years.

A Time of Warning

During the latter part of the Millennium, we will warn the people about Satan's release. Probably all during the

thousand years we will have taught about his influence on mankind, and its bad effects. Now, during the last generations—with urgency—we will warn of his coming deception.

Who better than the saints know about Satan's weapons and tactics? We know all too well his methods. And we will warn the people. Yet free moral agency will still exist, and many will fall for Satan's deception (Revelation 20:7-9).

The rest will not fall for Satan's tactics and will remain faithful. During the Millennium it seems likely multiple billions of people will be converted and finally changed to spirit like us. We will have completed the work given to us as kings and priests during the Millennium, and look forward to our new assignments helping the Father and Christ bring even more sons and daughters to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

An Awesome Opportunity

The news today is full of war and violence. We have been called to be part of a time that will be full of peace and tranquility. In the world today some 40,000 people die every day from starvation. In the world tomorrow food will be in such abundance that the plowman will overtake the reaper (Amos 9:13).

Today we are a privileged few who have been called by God to understand His purpose for us. But beyond today, all people will know God (Jeremiah 31:34).

Yes, God has called us to be part of the solution. The Father has hand-picked each one of us to play an active role in the conversion of billions of people. No matter how insignificant we may feel now, God has called you and me to have an important role in the Millennium.

As Paul said, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God . . . Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:18-19, 21).

Yes, the world is waiting on us. Now, more than ever, let's pray—"Your Kingdom come!" UN

Tim Groves is from the Jefferson, Georgia, congregation.

Treasure Digest

Acid on the Tongue?

James tells us the tongue is “an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8). Ever noticed that people often resort to shouting when they are confused, lost or frustrated? The more upset and out of control they get, the more they shout. (Funny how that has never solved any problems.)

The worst outbursts I have encountered have usually come at a moment of high emotions, when self-control is at its lowest ebb. Words tumble out of our mouths and often these words have the ability to hurt. A converted person must not allow himself or herself to lose control. James 3 makes that abundantly clear.

What are some of the comments you have heard that drip with acid? What are some of the second meanings that you know are intended by the sarcastic tone of voice or choice of words directed toward you?

Have you ever intentionally or unintentionally allowed acid to drip from your tongue? It can even be a defense mechanism. Often the more we really deserve criticism, the more defensive we will be—and, therefore, the more biting our response.

Then there’s sarcasm—“a bitter sneer; a satirical remark in scorn or contempt.” We have all heard compliments that were not compliments at all, haven’t we?

I love the last chapter of the book of Proverbs that speaks about the virtuous wife who has a value far greater than that of rubies. Proverbs 31:26 states: “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.” These words indicate understanding, knowledge, compassion and a bent toward being kind

and considerate all of the time. That’s the antidote to the poisons of the acid-drenched tongue.

*Robert Berendt
Pastor, Edmonton, Alberta, congregation*

Our “Lewis and Clark” Expedition

Recently the United States has been commemorating the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition (May 1804 to September 1806). In this journey of exploration, commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark along with others set out to examine the western part of North America including parts of the Louisiana Purchase.



In 1803 the fledgling United States—a country for less than 30 years—had just purchased the massive area covered by the Louisiana Purchase. Although the Native Americans who lived in this territory were quite familiar with it, the U.S. government—headquartered on the Atlantic Coast—was not. In order to gather more information about the area, Lewis and Clark (and associates) set out on their expedition of discovery, which took over two years.

In planning their trip, which was undertaken well before accurate maps of the area were available, they sought the expertise of knowledgeable people, which is a sound biblical principle (Proverbs 11:14; 24:6; 15:22).

Lewis and Clark both had previous “wilder-ness” experience under their belts. Clark had mapmaking skills. Lewis, during the summer of 1803, studied plant and animal classifying. In 1804, they hired Toussaint Charbonneau and his Shoshone wife, Sacagawea, who could act as interpreters and guides.

A parallel to Lewis and Clark’s expedition is the Christian’s journey with God. When we first “discovered” the truth, it was a vast unknown territory of awesome heights and lush, green val-

leys that beckoned to us constantly. Our Bible study time was never enough. Hours sped by and there was still so much more to learn.

As the years flew by, more of the big picture became clear and many fascinating details came to light as more and more of the genius of the mind of God came to light. I suspect that God designed His Word to benefit every age—child, teen, adult and elderly—providing a lifelong learning experience.

For instance, when I was in my teens and 20s, I clearly remember the verse about the glory of young men being their strength. Now I am rediscovering that that was only half of the verse. The rest of Proverbs 20:29 dealt with the elderly. Lately I’ve been amazed at the hundreds of scriptures that deal with growing old, guidance and encouragement for the aged and the infirm and exhortation to endure to the end.

Just as Sacagawea guided the Lewis and Clark expedition, it has begun to sink in to my mind that we all need a guide to help us navigate our “uncharted” areas of Scripture. Does God give us a guide? Yes, when we ask Him for it,

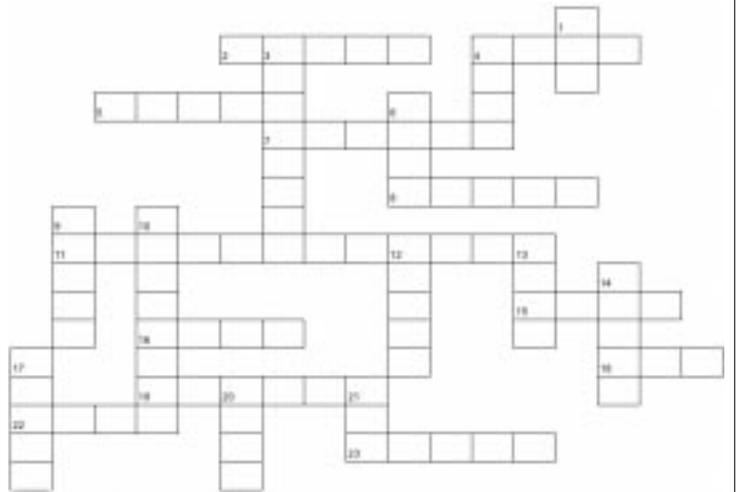
thankfully He does—the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

I think it’s interesting to note that Lewis and Clark documented their expedition well with journals, illustrations, maps, etc. As I am getting older, I am finding it helpful to write down the topics and scriptures of my Bible studies. Recently, I was about to start on an intriguing “new” topic of study. Only it was one that I’d already done a few years ago! It was disappointing to find out that that “canyon” had already been checked out, but the review of that knowledge in my “journal” naturally led into exploring other related topics, which were, likewise, “gold mines” of more information.

The Lewis and Clark expedition broke new ground by discovering a wealth of information about the western parts of North America. They employed the best guides they could find. In our journeys of discovery of Scripture, likewise, it is best to have a knowledgeable guide. Who knows the Holy Bible better than God?

*Joe Bellefeuille
Fargo, North Dakota, congregation*

Children’s Corner “In the Beginning” Genesis Crossword



Across

- This faithful forefather had his name changed by God when God promised him many offspring (Gen. 17).
- A son of Jacob and Leah, his descendants later became a holy priesthood (Gen. 35:23; Deut. 18:1).
- A crafty relative of Rebekah, he tricked his nephew into marrying his older daughter instead of the younger (Gen. 28:2; 29:15-30).
- This dreamy son of Jacob later became second in command in Egypt, saving his family from famine (Gen. 37, 41-45).
- A maidservant to Sarah, she bore Abraham’s first son, Ishmael (Gen. 16).
- This beautiful paradise was the home of the first man and woman on the earth (three words) (Gen. 2:8).
- This man ate forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6-12).
- Jacob laid this on a pillow made of stone when he dreamed of a famous ladder (Gen. 28:11).
- This large object made from gopherwood saved Noah’s family from a worldwide flood (Gen. 6:14).
- This wife of Jacob stole some of her father’s idols and hid them in her camel’s saddle (Gen. 31:34).
- These grass-eating animals were in the first of Pharaoh’s dreams about the coming famine (Gen. 41:1-4).
- The building of this object in Babel led to the creation of many languages (Gen. 11:1-9).

Down

- After listening to a serpent, this woman ate from a forbidden tree (Gen. 3:1-6).
- The youngest son of Jacob; the Egyptian governor’s (Joseph’s) silver cup was in his grain bag (Gen. 44).
- This “delicate”-eyed mother of six boys was in a constant battle with her sister for their husband’s affections (Gen. 29:17, 31-35; 30:14-20).
- We can trace the genealogy of Jesus Christ to this third son of Adam (Gen. 4:25; Luke 3:23-38).
- It is in this country that the family of Jacob resides when the book of Genesis ends (Gen. 50:22-26).
- The ____ of Joseph threw him in a pit and sold him to Ismaelites for 20 shekels of silver (Gen. 37:22-28).
- This father of Methuselah walked with God (Gen. 5:21-22).
- This just man received instructions from God that would save his family from the Flood (Gen. 6:9, 13-22).
- This old woman laughed upon receiving news of her upcoming pregnancy (Gen. 18:12-15).
- This man wrestled all night, ending only when he received God’s blessing (Gen. 32:22-30).
- It is from this famous man’s lips that we hear the saying, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9).
- This man’s wife turned to salt after looking back at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:12-26).

—puzzle by Lisa McKinney

Turning the Hearts . . . The 10¢ Ice Cream Cone: Making Memories

While visiting at the hospital with my ailing 97-year-old father, I brought a smile to his face while reminiscing about the 10-cent ice cream cone he used to buy our family. When I was a child of 8, my dad, my mom, my older brother and I would all get into our 1940 Chevrolet and drive about 20 miles to the only Dairy Queen in the vicinity. At that time, the drive took about 40 minutes. We all enjoyed the soft ice cream as we returned to our home.

It is amazing to realize the positive memory that incident created in my heart as a child. My dad smiled and remembered that 10-cent cone as well. We also may create wonderful memories in the hearts of our children by simply doing acts of kindness for or sharing experiences with our children.

My daughters “tease” me about the time when I wanted to create a “memory” with them. We wanted to do something special at the Feast in Johnson City, Tennessee. So, we drove to the location of Davy Crockett’s birthplace. The cabin was closed, and we spent all of a few minutes looking from the outside. We drove away and my wife and I took the girls shopping, which they enjoyed more than the excursion. However, 23 years later, both daughters still remember the event with fondness. We created a memory together that still brings smiles.

Outings, new experiences, new places, small acts of kindness, verbal expressions of love and appreciation—all will help our children remember their youth positively. This will help them feel well-grounded and established in life by giving a positive connection with the past.

Creating positive memories with our families will help our family members bond. Sharing special events with our loved ones is something we all appreciate and need for successful families.

The biblical principle of remembering is found in Psalm 77:11-12. “I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds.”

When God has done good deeds for us, He creates memories with us too. His deeds on our behalf help us to positively remember Him and to strengthen our relationship with Him.

Remembering those special memories with our families will put a smile on our faces and in our hearts.

Gary E. Antion



Running With Weights or Wings?

Being around the Church some 43 years of my 51 years of life, I can recall many a sermon and many an analogy about the scripture Paul was inspired to write in a letter to Corinth. He stated colorfully in 1 Corinthians 9:24: "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it."

One of the keys to winning the spiritual race is that we have to cope with failure. Yes, winning and failing can go together, depending on how we deal with the failing. The point is that we have to get back up. After the "face-plant" that we all do, this pastor included, we can't lie in the dirt, wallowing in guilt or shame. We will be disqualified for quitting.

Even kings, the good kings, trip and fall. King David did big-time, yet he recovered. He enjoyed many good years after his fiasco. Though he also faced the painful consequences of his sin with Bathsheba, in the end, David made a beautiful comeback. He was like a runner who was sprinting, leaving everyone else in his dust—who then crashed. Some would just admit defeat, but not David. He got up and made it across the finish line.

Another point we must embrace is that if we want to run at God's pace, if we want to run fast,

we have to run light. Would you run a 10K race wearing a backpack of clutter, a pack full of stuff, just because you are used to the stuff or clutter? I don't think so.

As you run the race of life, you need to periodically ask yourself about the different things you are doing—the things that have become a part of your life over time—are they weights or wings? Will they speed you on your way, or will they slow you down? Are they increasing your spiritual appetite or diminishing it? Are they making you stronger or weaker?

Can you have the courage to look in the mirror to see that some activity is slowing you down, diminishing your thirst for God or making you run slower? Then get rid of it. Jettison those things that slow you down or even pull you back, and run as lightly as you can.

If you listen to the apostle Paul, whose supreme coach was Jesus Christ, and you make a commitment to follow Christ, like David, you can get back in the race and make a beautiful finish! Yes, you can!

Stuart Segall

Pastor, Crescent City and Eureka, California, congregations

For the Time of Our Lives

Time—it's one of the limits of our present, physical existence (Ecclesiastes 3:18-20). How do

we relate to its three divisions of past, present and future?

Past events have transpired but still greatly affect us. It can be beneficial to reflect on the positives of the past (finding the right mate, launching a successful career, etc.), but not to the extent of negating where we are in life today. Longing for "the good old days" just isn't a good idea (Ecclesiastes 7:10).

Conversely, what about problems we've had to deal with? Take personal suffering, as an example. Jesus Christ Himself learned from it (Hebrews 5:8), as should we (1 Peter 5:10). Is it not those very trials that lead us to rely on God more (1 Peter 1:3-9)?

How about the future? There's no question that it takes planning (Luke 14:28-32). But as we know, our plans don't always come to fruition—our company downsizes and we're out of a job, we're hit with a serious illness, etc. Regardless, God doesn't want us to live in fear of what might happen tomorrow (Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 8:28).

Yesterday's gone, tomorrow's not here yet—so what about today? The apostle Paul reminds us just how precious the present is (Ephesians 5:15-16). But we have so many things demanding our attention. Which is the most important (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)?

Working overtime tonight might add to our bank account, but perhaps those hours could be of greater value if they were invested in encouraging our son at his soccer game. Perhaps we might bypass the latest reality TV program to begin an exercise program.

As in any matter, it takes God's wisdom to find the right answer (Ecclesiastes 2:26). With His guidance we can know what to do and the best time to do it (Ecclesiastes 8:5).

And no matter what we do, it should all relate to the ultimate goal (Philippians 3:13-14). There is a Latin saying, *carpe diem*, which translates, "seize the day." As we look to and obey God, we can more confidently do just that, realizing it's all we really have.

Nicolas Nick

Dayton, Ohio, congregation

More Lessons From My Spanish Vineyard

After a heavy pre-Unleavened Bread pruning (discussed in "Lessons From My Small Vineyard, June *United News*, page 11), what do vines do for the rest of the year?

It seems that by the time Pentecost comes around, some are in full leaf, which is nice, but the runners (false vines) have come right back again in full force. This means another round of pruning, which if done quickly, can be left to rot back into the soil as fertilizer. However, when not removed quickly, they harden into wood, which must be collected and burned (John 15:6).

Each vine again needs focused attention from the husbandman to put it back on the best track to produce fruit, and this is the time when the true condition of the vine shows. Some are strong and lush, despite no water, with grapes already forming.

Others can barely push out a few branches and leaves, and some now only have runners coming from the base—the rest of the vine looks dead. These don't get dug out—perhaps next year they may just come around . . . Some are only runners; the vines have broken off. These can be dug out.

Working on oneself is much harder than all this.

God makes us aware of our problem areas through His Word, and He gives us time, endurance, patience and faith, while we keep going over and over these areas, slowly pruning out, taking stock and very imperceptibly developing fruit.

We, like the green grapes waiting to ripen, sit in the hot, dry, tiring heat of this world, inexorably moving toward the harvest. The harvest is coming to my vineyard, and we know by God's Word that it's coming to His Church.

Wendy Cullf
Spain

The Dings Will Fade Away!

Do you ever feel that your weaknesses, faults and mistakes are just glaring for all to see? Well, I experienced that with a lot of loud dings!

It was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life. After years of being out of school, I decided to take some college courses at the young age of 40! Some of the classes that I decided to take were in the computer field.

When I started the computer classes, I knew nothing

about computers. The only mouse I knew about was the small, beady-eyed creature that I would never consider holding in my hand. So here I was, in college for the first time, told to hold on to the mouse and learn all I could about PowerPoint, Word, Excel and Access. This was all jammed into that one short semester!

After a few short weeks, it was time for my first exam. This was unlike any other test I had ever taken. On a written test, if you do not know the answer to a question, then only you and the professor know. But not with this computer exam! During this exam, every time I made a mistake, the computer would ding, and ding loudly! The whole class heard it!

It was a vicious cycle! The more the computer dinged to announce to the whole class, "she got it wrong again," the more stressed I became. And the more stressed I became, the more wrong answers I chose, and, of course, the more dings I heard!

I felt every eye was staring at me, and I was so afraid to look up to see if the professor was glaring at me—for I heard no one else's computer dinging. I wanted so badly to just get up and run out of that class, never to return.

I did not give in to my strong impulse to run out, but I realized then and there that all those dings meant I had some serious work to do to learn the computer. I stayed with it, and I studied harder so my computer would not ding. In the end, I passed that class!

Our Christian lives can sometimes seem like we are in that class taking a not-so-silent exam. Sometimes our flaws and sins are obvious to everyone. It can be very humbling.

"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11).

We will be uncomfortable for a moment, as I was in that class, as our flaws are exposed, but if we do not run but simply humble ourselves in the Master's hands and lay all those sins and flaws at God's feet, He will help us. Through endurance and God's help, we will master all those dings and flaws.

Janet Treadway

Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregation

Question and Answer: Doesn't Acts 15 Do Away With the Law?

Acts 15 discusses a ministerial conference in Jerusalem. The first verse clearly spells out the issue at the heart of the controversy. Some Christians of Jewish descent troubled non-Jewish Christians with the assertion, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." There are actually two parts to the assertion: the claim that God required circumcision for all male Christians, and the implication that practicing circumcision would earn salvation.

Of course, this would mean adult circumcision, which God required of Israel only once (Joshua 5:1-3). Acts 15:10 acknowledges how difficult this would be.

After convening with members and elders, the leaders of the Church at Jerusalem issued a formal statement, showing the errors in this reasoning (verses 23-29). Because some continued to debate whether God required circumcision for many years, the New Testament often repeats the indisputable fact that physical deeds can never earn salvation. Circumcision was the identifying mark of one who was subject to the covenant that God made with Abraham (Genesis 17:1-14). The Jews viewed it as a formal and binding requirement on all the people of God. Followed for many generations, the Jews viewed circumcision as a virtual badge of godly citizenship; and therefore, it was difficult for them to consider it no longer essential.

Paul added clarity later by explaining that it was indeed essential, but that "circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter" (Romans 2:29). He was referring, of course, to the cutting off of human nature and the conversion of the mind. God actually revealed this fuller spiritual understanding of the circumcision covenant through the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 4:4), but the unconverted Israelites missed its meaning.

Modern readers of Acts 15 often overlook the background or purpose of the conference in Jerusalem, perhaps because the question of circumcision doesn't concern most people today. However, some people today attempt to read an antilaw message into verses 24-29. But the ministry did not convene a conference at Jerusalem to discuss the law.

A little common sense shows the fallacy of any attempt to force the idea that these verses end the law of God. If anyone says that verses 24-29, especially verses 28-29, show that the early Church didn't believe God binds the Christian to any laws other than those stated, he must also accept the logical extension—the early Church taught that God permits swearing, idolatry, dishonoring of parents, murder, adultery, stealing and lying! Of course, that is absurd, but it illustrates the point. The Jerusalem Church leaders were not abrogating these laws, and neither did they invalidate the Sabbath law (the only one of the Ten Commandments objected to by modern Christians).

So, the Church leaders stated that God did not require male Christians to undergo circumcision for salvation. The issues specifically noted in verses 28-29 related to problems common to the gentile population from which God was calling people to Christianity. The ministry pointedly reminded them of the need to withdraw from those unacceptable practices—not that such change would earn them salvation. God requires obedience of Christians, but it earns nothing. Salvation is a gift.

The Jerusalem Church leaders were not abrogating any of the Scriptures. Our booklet, *The Ten Commandments*, explains in clear language that the Ten Commandments are applicable and necessary in everyday Christian living. In addition, a follower of Jesus is to study all the Scriptures, as He clearly stated, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).



Local Church Updates

ABC Car Wash Raises Funds

Ambassador Bible Center students gathered together for a charity car wash fund-raiser on Sunday, June 25.

Things started off slowly, with the



ABC students wash cars

volunteers providing most of the cars in the mostly cloudy morning time. As the day went on and the sun started to shine, however, business picked up with local residents lining up and kindly offering much-appreciated donations to the cause.

In total, \$318 was donated, thanks to the generosity of those in the community, the hard work of the ABC volunteers and most of all God's bountiful blessings.

Nick Bizic

This article first appeared in ABC Times.

Garden Grove Preteens Sponsor Sabbath in the Park

O'Neill Regional Park in Orange County, California, was the beautiful setting for a very special Sabbath service. On May 27, 2006, for the second year, the preteens of the Garden Grove,



Mario Seigle speaks to the children with the aid of his laptop; inset: the youths around the table read their fruits of the Spirit script while the rest of the group intently listens (photos by Jim Fraser)

California, congregation sponsored a Sabbath in the park for families, teens and those young at heart.

Under the big blue sky our group of 65 were led in hymns by Dylan Bates

(age 11). Jesse Lopez and our pastor, Mario Seigle, both brought messages catering specifically to the young.

About 15 of the children participated in a script reading about the fruits of the Spirit in which they described what each fruit meant in kids' terminology.

Following the service the group had a lunch of barbecued hamburgers and picnic potluck contributed by all. Everyone continued to enjoy the relaxing Sabbath fellowship during the cool, summery day in the midst of God's creation.

Sherie Lopez

New Jersey Teen Receives Presidential Award

Sarah Williams, a 14-year-old who attends the Central New Jersey con-



Sarah Williams and a picture of her award

gregation with her parents Angela and Larry Williams, received the following certificate signed by U.S. President George Bush:

"Congratulations on receiving the 2006 Presidential Award... Since 1983, this award has recognized students whose outstanding efforts have helped them develop their skills and improve their academic performance... Mrs. Bush and I send our best wishes."

East Texas Young Adults Host Ladies Tea to Honor "Women of Character"

The young adults of the East Texas congregation hosted a ladies' tea on Sunday, May 21, celebrating and honoring the women in the congregation as "Women of Character." More than 60 women and girls attended the event, ranging in age from 5 to 83.

The young adults created a beautiful indoor garden atmosphere, complete with a large cascading water fountain, green, lush plants and ferns and fresh flowers on each table.

As the beautifully attired guests arrived, each was warmly greeted and

escorted to her table by one of the young adults, who served as her hostess throughout the tea. Some women completed their apparel for the day with long gloves and vintage hats, which added a special touch to the celebration.

After the tea was served by the hostesses, the women at each table discussed various aspects of how godly character pours out of our lives, just as we pour tea out of our teapots. Each guest had a special vellum scroll at her place setting describing a unique aspect of Christ's character that should be pouring out of our lives.

Following the inspiring discussion, the guests celebrated with a beautiful buffet of hors d'oeuvres, including turkey croissant and cucumber tea sandwiches, fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables and a wide variety of tea cookies.

Immediately after the snacks, the women were treated to a slide show recognizing many women of character. The slide show honored each woman in attendance. The women

had been asked to share their favorite photo of themselves and a quote from a woman who had inspired them.

Following a group photo and more socializing, everyone was treated to a favor bag filled with special candles, tea bags and jewelry. The young adults were thrilled to honor the ladies of our congregation in such a special way and help them realize how much we value their contribution to all of our lives.



East Texas ladies of all ages enjoy tea May 21 (photo by Jim Moody)

Laura Moody

Campout and Services Enjoyed in Wyoming Mountains

Brethren from Wyoming and Idaho felt very blessed to enjoy camping and Sabbath services at a beautiful campsite near Granite Hot Springs, Wyoming, June 16 to 18. Lonnie and Debbie Pierce went the evening before others arrived to find a suitably private campsite. They selected a perfect spot in a peaceful mountain valley. It was alongside a rushing stream and just below the hill where Lonnie shot his moose last fall.

Some members came for the Sabbath only. They were offered sandwiches by Carol Foy upon their arrival. Services

were led by Wilbur Berg, pastor of the Jackson, Wyoming, congregation, who spoke on "Which Way—God's or Cain's?" Hymns sung a cappella sounded especially beautiful and meaningful in the awesome mountain setting.

After services, a delicious meal was shared. As is tradition for area potlucks, everyone contributed something special, with the menu coordinated by Sue Berg. A main attraction was roasting hot dogs on sticks over an open fire. Ed Foy had green willow branches ready to skewer hot dogs, while Lonnie Pierce served up two choices of moose chili—"hot" or "just beans and tomato sauce."



Brethren pose in front of the Gros Ventre Range in Wyoming after services (photo by Wil Berg)

Appetites were quickly satisfied and fellowship continued well into the evening. The Foy's grandchildren, Emily and Luke Hahn, enjoyed playing quiet games in their camper. Finally, those staying only the day began to reluctantly say their good-byes and head home, but not before agreeing to make this an annual event. Weather and temperatures were perfect, while mosquitoes, flies and bees were nowhere to be seen.

Those who camped overnight also enjoyed frosty mornings, fishing, swimming in the nearby hot springs, more campfire cooking and relaxing together even longer in the glorious setting of God's creation.

Sue Berg

Storm Can't Dampen Spirits at Tampa Bay Family Weekend

Tropical Storm Alberto dampened the weather, but not the spirits, at the annual Tampa Bay Family Weekend, June 10 and 11.

On the Sabbath, 266 brethren gathered for services in Largo, Florida, where David Myers, pastor of the Akron and Youngstown, Ohio, congregations, was the guest speaker. After a potluck meal provided by the St. Petersburg and Tampa congregations, Mr. Myers also delivered a thought-provoking Bible study comparing Satan's methods of

attack to those of the world's most deadly snakes.

After sundown, brethren kicked up their spurs at a Western-themed dance.

On Sunday, high surf and cool breezes encouraged warm fellowship among the 153 people who enjoyed the cookout and beach party at Fort De Soto Park. Brief showers forced the cancellation of the traditional sand sculpture contest, so the competition is expected to be twice as fierce next year!

Kristin Yarbrough

College Graduate Honored as Outstanding Senior

Elizabeth A. Cannon graduated May 5 with a bachelor of arts in English with a minor in history from the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, Florida Atlantic University. Elizabeth graduated with Highest Honors, Summa Cum

Laude and received the honor of the "Outstanding Senior." She also received the "Distinguished Thesis Award."

She is currently teaching second grade at the Colegio Boston in San Antonio Aguas, Guatemala and studying advanced Spanish in Antigua, Guatemala at the Ixchel School.

She has applied to attend ABC in January 2007 before she goes on to London, England, for her masters degree in international history at the London School of Economics.



Canton Honors Three Graduates

Recently members of the Canton, Ohio, congregation honored three young graduates with a reception after services.



Canton, Ohio, honors graduates Carley Kovatch, Tim Ickes and Emily Troyer

Carley Kovatch earned a bachelor of science degree in early childhood edu-

See "Local," page 15

Announcements

Births

Joel and Suzanne (Oliver) Borton are excited to announce the birth of their second daughter, Tessa Elaine, who was born on her due date of July 27, 2005, weighing 7 pounds 6 ounces and mea-



Tessa Elaine Borton

suring 19.5 inches long. Her big sister, Sophia, was thrilled to finally meet her. Tessa loves playing hide-and-seek with her big sister. Her grandparents are Robert Borton of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Jerry and Diane Oliver of Spokane, Washington.

Ezekiel and Grace Alimi were delivered of a baby boy on Feb. 5, 2006, weighing 6 pounds 10 ounces and mea-



Joseph Oluwatobi Olugbenga Alimi

suring 21 inches long. He is the sixth child of the family and his name is Joseph Oluwatobi Olugbenga Alimi. The Alimis attend the United Church of God in Lagos, Nigeria.

Ahmed and Blessing Gbadamosi of the Lagos, Nigeria, congregation were delivered of a healthy baby boy May 23, 2006, weighing 3.8 kilograms. His name is Samuel Bioluwatife (as God desires)



Samuel Bioluwatife Ayomide Marvelous Iyinola Idunayomi Gbadamosi

Ayomide (my joy arrived) Marvelous Iyinola (praiseworthy blessing) Idunayomi (the sweetness of my joy) Gbadamosi.

He is the first son and the third child in the family. His sisters, Blessing and Precious, are happy to have a baby brother in the family (more so the parents)!

Tracy and Valerie Davidson of the Birmingham, Alabama, congregation are thrilled to announce the birth of Sarah Anne. Sarah was born on March 2, 2006. She weighed 9 pounds and was 22 inches long. "Princess" Sarah receives many kisses each day from her



Sarah Anne Davidson

two adoring brothers and the whole family is so pleased to finally have a girl!

Engagements

Amy Hooser and Don Wuerfel of Dallas, Texas, are pleased to announce their engagement to be married. Amy is the daughter of Don and Elsie Hooser of the Sedro-Woolley, Washington, congregation. Don is the son of Simon and Eugenia Wuerfel of the Grand Rapids, Michigan, congregation. The couple



Amy Hooser and Don Wuerfel

became engaged on May 7, 2006, and are planning an August 20, 2006, wedding in Dallas, Texas.

Weddings

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth A. Graham II are thrilled to announce the marriage of their daughter Nicole Kristen Graham to Kelly Christopher Gard, son of Mr. Marvin O. Gard and Mrs. Kimberly A. Gard on Sunday, May 28, 2006. Family and friends from across the country gathered at the home of longtime friends Jack and Berna Long in Elwood, Illinois, to celebrate the event. Seventy people were present on this joyous occasion, enduring 95-degree heat to see the happy couple say their vows.

Lauren Graham, sister of the bride, was the maid of honor, and Andrew Edinborough was the best man. Ken Graham, father of the bride, officiated. Other dear friends representing the cou-



Nicole and Kelly Gard

ple were Alison Leonard, Sarah Gard, Jacqueline Carr, John Hart, Nathan Wineinger and Kyle Wineinger.

Currently the couple is attending ABC in Cincinnati, Ohio. Following ABC graduation in August, Nicole and Kelly will return to Los Alamos, New Mexico, where they will continue their college educations at the University of New Mexico, and Kelly will continue his job at the National Lab in Los Alamos.

Jackie, Brian, Jeff and Chris Wilhelm are happy to announce the marriage of



Samuel and Sondra Hines

their daughter/sister, Sondra Michelle Wilhelm to Samuel Lee Hines on May 13, 2006.

Sondra and her three bridesmaids came down by horse and carriage. Candace Darrow was the maid of honor and Wade Reagan was the best man. Sondra's three brothers gave her away. Close to 200 friends and family came to the celebration.

Mr. and Mrs. Jerry S. Girard of San Antonio, Texas, are happy to announce the wedding of their daughter, Dallas Leigh Girard, to Brett A. Efimov, son of Ted and Sylvia Efimov of Chicago, Illinois. The ceremony took place on a hot, sunny, Texas Sunday, July 2, 2006, in downtown Dallas, and was performed by Robert Fahey, pastor of the Chicago congregation.

LuAnne Warren (sister of the bride) was matron of honor, Mary Pat Pro-



Dallas and Brett Efimov

ctor (sister) was bridesmaid, Mara Efimov (niece) was a junior bridesmaid and Melissa Proctor was the flower girl. Drew Efimov was best man, Bryan Efimov was groomsmen, Matthew Warren was a junior groomsmen and Christopher Proctor was ring bearer.

The bride was very honored to have her father be able to walk her down the aisle after he suffered a large stroke three months earlier. The couple was also beautifully serenaded by Jessica and Roxanne Efimov (from the Brisbane, Australia, congregation) singing "From This Moment." The couple will be attending the Chicago congrega-

Anniversaries

Richard and Dorene Eckman, of the Anchorage, Alaska, congregation, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on June 18, 2006. Richard serves the Alaskan congregations as an elder (with Dorene right there by his side!) and has done so for nearly 30 years.

The Eckmans have two daughters, Wendy Eckman-Jewell and fiance Scott



Richard and Dorene Eckman

Englehardt, of Atlanta, Georgia, and Mandy Jennings and husband Scott from the Gold Coast, Australia. The Eckmans also have four grandchildren: Aaron, Austin, Ashlee and Anthea Jennings.

Due to distance, the Eckmans were unable to be with their children for this occasion, however, a beautiful gemstone globe was given to them to remind them that even though, as a family, they are spread across the

globe, they are still very near and dear to each other.

Obituaries

Sasha Marin Talbott was stillborn at 35 weeks to Kristine (Williams) and Kirk Talbott in Laguna Beach, California, on Feb. 16, 2006. She weighed 3 pounds 4 ounces and measured 17 inches long.

A memorial service was held on June 24, 2006, in Orange, California, with about 70 family and friends in attendance.

The Talbott family attends the Garden Grove, California, congregation.

Sasha is survived by her family members in United: brother Addison (3 3/4 years old) and sister Zoë (2 years old), grandma Jean Talbott of Texas, grandparents Richard and Marty Scholz of Massachusetts and aunt Karen and cousin Nadia Esseghaier of Texas.

The Talbotts sincerely thank everyone for all of their prayers, cards, e-mails, calls, flowers and meals during this difficult time.

Irene Reis Penney, 63, of St. John's, Newfoundland, died June 29, after a valiant struggle with cancer. She had not been able to attend services since Passover 2005, but she was on a phone hook-up for Sabbath services until she was hospitalized during the



Irene Reis Penney

last two weeks of her life. Even on the last Sabbath she was alive and in the hospital, when someone went to visit, she wanted to know what the sermon was about and the main points of the sermon.

She never wavered in her faith and she now awaits the future that a loving God has prepared for all who love His way.

The funeral was officiated by David Smith, elder of the Newfoundland congregation.

Her daughter, Alicia, appreciates the prayers and concern of the Church. Irene also had a sister, Norma Benson, who is a member. She is also survived by a brother, David, and several nieces and nephews and many friends.

Wilma Greely, a member of God's Church for many years, died three days after suffering a stroke on March 1, 2006. She attended the Phoenix East, Arizona, congregation and leaves



Wilma Greely

behind her two children and grandchildren.

She lived a full life and spent much of her time visiting and worrying over others. Fifteen minutes before the stroke, Wilma had said in conversation that she was ready to go. She was a friend to all and the official giver of hugs. No one ever visited the congregation without meeting her—she made a point of it. She was a lively, loving and active member

of the Church right up until the end.

Her shining face at the door each Sabbath is missed by everyone.

Samuel M. Tucker Jr. of Mineral Wells, West Virginia, died June 5, 2006, of breathing complications.

He was a longtime active member of God's Church since 1967. He was a Korean War veteran.

Surviving are two older sisters and an older brother, Robert, who is a longtime member of God's Church.



Samuel M. Tucker Jr.

Doris Walker Pate, a longtime member of the Phoenix East, Arizona, congregation, died on June 19, 2006, after enduring many health difficulties in these past few years. A memorial service was held there on June 24.

Doris was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, the second child and only girl of



Doris Walker Pate

three. She moved to Globe, Arizona, in 1950 and there, for the first time, heard Herbert Armstrong on the radio broadcast from Juarez, Mexico. She and her

cousin George were baptized in 1959 in Canyon Lake near Phoenix, and she was one of the first members in the Phoenix area back in 1962.

Doris continually thought of others first and was passionate for keeping God's truth. The Feast was her joy, and she enjoyed collecting Feast pictures more than any other type of photos. She, for a small person, was known for her "mighty hug," and her friends look forward to receiving another from her when they see her in the Kingdom.



Abigail Nworgu

Box 2189, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.

Abigail Nworgu, 7, died on June 16, 2006. She was sick for eight months with typhoid, malaria and a cough. Abigail was born on June 23, 1998, and would have been 8 years old if she had lived one more week. She is survived by her parents, Coleman and Stella Nworgu, and by two sisters, Ruth and Lilly. The Nworgu family attends the United Church of God congregation in Owerri, Nigeria. Cards can be sent to Coleman and Stella Nworgu, c/o United Church of God,

Announcements: Members are welcome to submit announcements of the births, engagements, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.) and obituaries in their families. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned. Most items are 50 to 100 words and should not exceed 250 words. Please **e-mail (preferred) or give them to your local pastor** to forward to *United News*.

"Local," continued from page 13

cation, and Tim Ickes and Emily Troyer each earned a high school diploma. Tim will attend West Liberty College in West Virginia, while Emily plans to study to become a high school French teacher after completing ABC classes.

Shirley Topovski

ABC and Home Office Ladies Share Books and Bagels Brunch

On Wednesday, May 24, 40 ladies, representing the ABC class, home office staff and the wives of some of the home office staff, gathered together to encourage one another in their reading endeavors. Attendees enjoyed eating bagels, various spreads and an abundance of fruit. Each lady was also given a bookmark quoting Hebrews 10:23-25 (compliments of ABC student Amanda Weitzel) and a blank sheet of paper to write down the titles, authors and descriptions of books that interested her.

The morning started with a prayer, eating and a short talk from ABC stu-

dent Audry Bauer about remembering who gives wisdom and understanding (Job 38:36) and what standards to think of when choosing a book to read (Philippians 4:8).

Then, each woman had the opportunity to share a description of a book (excluding the Bible) that has had a positive impact on her life. The descriptions included what the book was about, why and how it impacted her life and why she thought others would benefit from reading it.

The subjects of the books were across the spectrum. They ranged from Christian books about roles women play to children's books that remind us of the simplicity of our youth.

Audry Bauer

Houston North Holds Christian Women's Workshop

April 15 approximately 50 women of all ages from the Houston North, Texas, congregation came together to bond, encourage each other and learn about God's Word. The first meeting covered

the topic of prayer. Participants were asked to read the first 15 chapters in *The Power of a Praying Woman*, by Stormie Omartian, prior to the meeting.

The facilitators, Tammie Smith and Sandy Sarin, organized the day's agenda and created questions for large group and small group discussion.

After the opening prayer, Judy Servidio spoke about the purpose of the workshop and the outcome we hope to achieve. Then, because this was the first meeting, the facilitators discussed their role. Next we heard from Mrs. Treybig who shared some lessons she'd learned about guarding our minds, asking God for direction and the importance of teaching our children to pray.

The next part of the meeting was a large group discussion. We talked about the different names we use when we talk to God and about miracles in our lives.

We were then asked to move from our "safe" group and find a place at another table according to our age. This gave us a good mixture of ages at each table to delve into the book for small group discussion. Each group chose three questions out of seven to answer and then we came back together as a large group to discuss our answers.

A survey was given at the end of the

meeting for input as to what each person wanted out of the workshops and what she wished to accomplish in the subsequent meeting.

Laurie Curry

Seventh Brother Earns Eagle Scout Award

On July 2, Justin M. Brunick, the seventh and youngest son of Edward and Claudia Brunick, received his Eagle



James, Jonathan, Jason, Justin, Jerod, Joshua and Joel Brunick

Scout award, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts. Justin, who attends the Watertown, South Dakota, congregation, joins his six older brothers in attaining this honor.

The requirements to become an Eagle

Scout include earning at least 21 merit badges, assuming positions of leadership in the troop and a service project.

The Brunick Eagle projects were varied. James and Joel helped develop a wildlife sanctuary. Jason planted saplings for shoreline stabilization. Jonathan helped with flood relief preparations. Joshua built set storage for the Town Players. Jerod sanded, primed and painted soccer goals.

Justin repaired and painted benches, picnic tables and the flag pole at Jensen Park in front of the Senior Citizens' Center in Watertown.

Local Church Updates: If your congregation's news and events are rarely covered in *United News*, why not check with your pastor and write something for him to send in? We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photographs with captions. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned. Include the author's and photographer's names and your phone number. Please double-check the spelling of names. Please **e-mail (preferred) or give the material to your local pastor** to forward to *United News*.

Letters

Thanks for Personal Correspondence Answers

Thank you so much. Your insight is very appreciated. We are going to attend our first UCG Sabbath service at the Los Angeles location with Larry Greider. He is great, and we are so excited to finally get plugged into our new church family and fellowship with other Christian families that are like minded.

California

Preacher: "Your Books Are the Best I Have Found"

I have some friends that I would like

to give some of your magazines and booklets to. How do I get 10 copies of *The Ten Commandments*? I know you said they were free, but I will be glad to send a donation for the books.

(I am a United Methodist preacher. I keep Torah, kosher, Shabbat and teach Torah to the folks [who] still don't know about the truth of YHVH's Word about the true Sabbath, but I am telling them. Your books are the best I have found. . .)

Tennessee

Donation From India

I have read four or five of your book-

lets, and I have even asked questions that have been answered satisfyingly.

I praise the Almighty God for the amazing publications, free of cost. I pray that He will shower His blessings on the members of the Church, as well as on those who unselfishly donate money.

If I were to send money to your ministry as a donation, how would I send it?

India

Thanks From Vietnam

I am very thankful for your sending booklets for me. May God bless you all!

They help me to know clearly what

God wants to teach me in my own life. He always tells me how to live well, and I am sure that others also do it well.

I would like you to send me the book called *This Is the United Church of God*.

Vietnam

Under Deep Agony

I am writing from Nigeria to express my profound gratitude for the beautiful book *What Happens After Death?* received this morning in my mailbox. Thanks a lot for this wonderful gift which has come to brighten my day.

The fact is that I lost my beautiful

wife, Patience, six months ago, and since then I have been under deep agony and sorrows. Hence I searched the Internet for something that could console me.

Please pray for me and my family. Nigeria

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.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

E-mail Updates Show Significant Growth

As of June 2006 there were 15,407 subscribers to the weekly www.ucg.org Web site updates, a 44 percent increase over a year ago! This service provides users with the latest new items on the Church Web site. In addition, there are 8,682 people receiving UCG Member updates (a 13 percent increase), which gives members updates of Church news and other important developments.

Of interest to teens and young adults is the *Vertical Thought* magazine e-mail update that alerts them to new material posted at www.verticalthought.org. There are 1,903 current subscribers to this service (a 40 percent increase over a year ago).

Another exciting development is the number of *Good News* readers who are now signed up to receive the monthly "GN Reader e-Letter." At present there are 19,850—a very encouraging 59 percent increase. Samples of what *GN* readers have been getting can be seen at www.gnmagazine.org/gnupdate.

The latest e-news program is titled "This Is the Way" and goes to 3,176 readers—a 76 percent increase over a year ago. You can view samples of past items at www.thisistheway.org.

Peter Eddington

Free Braille Bibles Available

The Braille Bible Foundation provides KJV and NKJV Braille Bibles to blind and visually-impaired people anywhere in the world at no cost. The NKJV edition is a hard-covered 20-volume set. Other versions are also available in Braille, and the foundation can put people in contact with those who publish these other versions. Other languages

besides English are available also.

More information is available by writing the Braille Bible Foundation at P.O. Box 948307, Maitland, FL 32794-8307, U.S.A. or calling (407) 834-3628.

Federal Court Rules in Favor of Sabbath-Keeper

A U.S. federal district court in Fayetteville, Arkansas, ruled for a Seventh-day Adventist who sought accommodation for his Sabbath-keeping beliefs. The worker was awarded \$311,166.75 in lost wages and punitive damages. It is believed to be one of the few such cases in which punitive damages—designed to "reform or deter the defendant," as one definition puts it—have been awarded to a Sabbath-keeper.

Todd Sturgill, age 41 and a resident of Springdale, Arkansas, was a 19-year driver for United Parcel Service when he joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in May of 2004. In July of that year, Sturgill asked his employer for accommodation on Friday evenings during the upcoming holiday delivery season. After three months, Sturgill was told he would receive no accommodation.

Though Sturgill was happy to perform his job, his conviction about observing the biblical Sabbath on the seventh day of the week would not allow him to perform work during that time.

Despite these roadblocks, Sturgill was able to make arrangements with his coworkers to adjust his schedule and keep the Sabbath until Friday, Dec. 17, 2004. On that day, despite repeated requests for assistance and accommodation, managers at the firm took no steps to enable Sturgill to complete his work before sundown, and he returned to the UPS center with roughly 35 undelivered parcels, and then went home. He was fired the following Monday for what UPS called "job abandonment."

Mark A. Kellner/Adventist News Network

Dwight Armstrong Hymns Unleashed

"Worldwide Church of God officials



What's New on the Web?

■ Sabbath School Lessons

Check out the preteen Sabbath instruction program for teachers of those in kindergarten to fifth grade at www.ucg.org/youth/ss/level1/.

■ Sermon Audio and Video Listing

New sermons are posted online every Thursday. Watch with Windows Media Player or listen to MP3 files at

www.ucg.org/sermons/.

■ Beyond Today Programs

Is the *Beyond Today* TV program airing on your local cable-access station? If not, then watch or download past programs at www.beyondtoday.tv/programs/archive/.

■ UCG Commentary

"What's Behind the Middle East Conflict?"
"Needed: Leaders for the World to Come!"
"Immigration Issues and the

Bible"

"Are You Saying 'No' to Internet Pornography?"

www.ucg.org/commentary/

Featured Link

■ UCG News pages with Council

meeting reports, letters, Home Office Updates, etc.

www.ucg.org/about/council

www.ucg.org/about/homeoffice

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

announced on June 26, 2006, that it is placing all Dwight Armstrong composed hymns to which it owns the copyright into the public domain. Effective immediately, any person or group who wishes to copy or use these hymns may do so without receiving permission from the Church" (www.wcg.org).

Vertical Thought Article Quoted

The Traditional Values Coalition Web site quoted Mario Seigle's article from the latest *Vertical Thought* magazine, including a link to the article on the *Vertical Thought* Web site.

Under the headline "The Fish That Shoots Down Evolution," traditional-values.org said July 6, "In a recent commentary on evolution by United Church of God Pastor Mario Seigle, he points out that the archerfish is so uniquely designed that it could not have evolved with slight modifications." A summary and a quote from the *Vertical Thought* article followed.

The Web site explains that "Traditional Values Coalition is an interdenominational public policy organization speaking on behalf of over 43,000 churches."

Ski Weekend Set for Feb. 16-19, 2007

The Salt Lake City, Utah, congregation will be hosting its annual Ski Weekend Feb. 16 to 19, 2007 (Presidents' Day weekend).

Advance planning is underway to secure hotel accommodations and line up the guest speaker and seminar presenters. The Salt Lake City congregation invites members to start making plans now to join their brethren from around the country for this fun-filled family weekend. Activities and venues will be available for skiers and non-skiers of all ages and abilities, at bargain prices.

Details to be announced in future issues. For more information, contact Larry Salyer at (801) 495-0412 or larry_salyer@ucg.org.

Calendar of Events

Aug. 4-9: Council of Elders meetings, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Aug. 5-6: Denver, Colorado, 50th Anniversary (larry_neff@ucg.org).

Aug. 6: Ocoee white-water rafting trip, hosted by Cleveland, Tennessee, congregation. For more info, contact

Allen Dance at (423) 855-0868 or at allendance@hotmail.com.

Aug. 13: ABC graduation, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Aug. 21-25: ABC Continuing Education Seminars, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Aug. 31-Sept. 4: Leadership Workshop, Cincinnati, Ohio

Sept. 1-4: Young Adults Christian Living Conference, Williams Bay, Wisconsin, \$125. Contact: Gale Black, gale-black@earthlink.net or (651) 769-8802; www.ucgstp.org/conference.

Sept. 3: Second Annual UCG Houston Music Festival.

Sept. 9-10: ABC Continuing Education Seminars, Denver, Colorado.

Oct. 28-29: ABC Continuing Education Seminars, Atlanta, Georgia.

Nov. 4-5: ABC Continuing Education Seminars, Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas.

Nov. 11-12: ABC Continuing Education Seminars, Calgary, Alberta.

Nov. 18: Milwaukee 50th Anniversary (see article July issue, page 16).

Nov. 18-19: ABC Continuing Education Seminars, Morton, Illinois.

Dec. 22-26: Winter Family Weekend, Louisville, Kentucky.

Feb. 16 to 19, 2007: Presidents' Day Ski Weekend, Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact Larry Salyer at (801) 495-0412 or larry_salyer@ucg.org.

Please send calendar items to mike_bennett@ucg.org.

13 Couples Invited to Fifth Leadership Workshop

Ministerial Services has invited 13 men and their wives from local congregations in the United States, Canada and South Africa to the fifth Leadership Workshop. The seminar will run from Aug. 31 to Sept. 4 (Labor Day weekend) at the home office in Milford, Ohio.

The invitees are: Bill and Joanna Bradford, Chicago, Illinois; Dempsey* and Susan Bruton, Williamsburg, Virginia; Kevin and Debbie Call, Portsmouth, Ohio; Grant and Kim Chick, Durban, South Africa; Frank and Sue Dunkle, Columbus, Ohio; Joe and Brenda Greene, La Crosse, Wisconsin; Barry and Sandy Korthuis, Seattle, Washington; Scott and Peggy Moss, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Rob and Jennifer Poffenroth, Calgary, Alberta; Chris and Katharine Rowland, Lafayette, Indiana; Gary* and June Steeves, Sussex,

New Brunswick; Lloyd* and Helen Teetaert, Regina, Saskatchewan; and Don* and Donna Turgeon, Lafayette, Indiana (*elder).

There will be five days of classes covering topics such as: teaching as we have been taught; relevancy in speaking; developing sermonettes, split sermons and sermons; working with your pastor; history and overview of UCG's governing documents; the importance of sound doctrine; appreciating differences—understanding yourself and others; a women's section on how to be all things to all people without losing yourself; Church ceremonies; the heart of a servant; developing wisdom and judgment; working with the next generation; preparing effective messages; research and the Internet; the importance of discernment; and answering doctrinal hot topics.



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