



News At a Glance

Treasurer Reports Encouraging Income

With only two months left in the fiscal year, it appears that we will have between a 2 and 3 percent increase in income over last year.

The last three months of mail income have been encouraging. It is trending higher than the year-to-date average, with increases of 9.39 percent in February, 8.78 percent in March and 7.7 percent in April.

The preliminary figure for the U.S. offering on the First Day of Unleavened Bread is a record \$814,947.59. This is a 1.8 percent increase over the previous year. The attendance was up 1.5 percent at 13,374. Once all individually mailed offerings are processed, the figure should reach \$830,000. The Last Day of Unleavened Bread offering was \$792,388 with an attendance of 12,113. Five congregations could not meet because of blizzard conditions. Individually mailed offerings should bring this to \$815,000.

Jason Lovelady

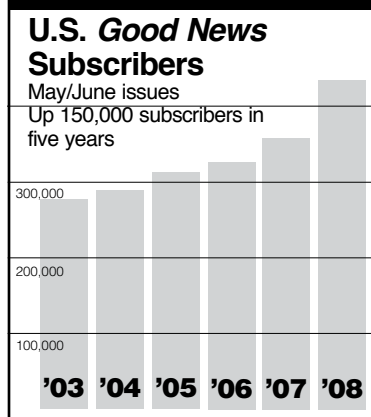
Online Advertising Booms

From Jan. 1 to March 27, our online advertising responses have shown some significant growth. In particular, two booklet promotions have been very successful: *Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?* and *Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*.

Interest in our keywords about Easter really generated some responses for the *Holidays or Holy Days* booklet. We had 33.7 million impressions of our ads, 97,295 clicks and 2,677 conversions (successful booklet/GN subscriptions). Most of these results were gleaned in just the last two weeks of March. It appears that

See "News at a Glance," page 2

United Statistics



GCE Considers New Strategic Plan; Ballots May 18

The General Conference of Elders will ballot Sunday, May 18, on the new Strategic Plan developed by the Council of Elders through a series of special meetings this year. The ballot will also include the Operation Plan and budget developed by the administration and approved by the Council.

"It has been a dizzying six months going from concept to completion," said Council Chairman Robert Dick. He explained how the new plans flow "in a logical manner from vision and mission to strategic action steps... We expect they will be the first step in becoming more

efficient, productive and accountable—all qualities we believe are important to the God we serve."

\$24.5 Million Proposed Budget

The proposed budget for 2008-2009 is \$24.5 million, "a modest percentage increase over the current year's likely total income," said Treasurer Jason Lovelady. While lower than the \$25 million budgeted for 2007-2008, it still projects increases in actual amounts for both years.

The proposed budget includes \$550,000 for financing and construction

costs, funds for hiring additional media staff for the increased strategic focus on the Web, funding to hire three new field ministers, increased international subsidies to allow growth and offset the decline in the U.S. dollar and a 5 percent cost of living adjustment for U.S. personnel effective Jan. 1, 2009. (It has been three years since employees received an adjustment.)

Other ballot items include five proposed amendments to the bylaws, a resolution to rescind last year's approval to relocate the home office and four Council positions. The U.S. nominees on the ballot for three Council positions are Aaron Dean, Jim

Franks, Doug Horchak, Darris McNeely, Larry Salyer and Robin Webber. The international nominees are Paul Kieffer and Leon Walker.

Annual Meeting

As of April 27, 137 elders and 98 wives had registered to attend the GCE meetings at the Kings Island Resort north of Cincinnati, Ohio. Besides the business meeting on May 18, there will be workshops on Monday covering subjects such as strategic planning, "The Spiritually Mature Congregation," "Pitfalls to Godly Wisdom" and "Planning for Loss." **UN**

Team Discusses Future Pastoral Training



March session of the current pastoral training program includes the wives (photo by Michelle de Campos)

April 1 to 3 a task force met to work on a plan for replacing the aging pastoral ministry, which the Council had identified as the top strategic issue.

"We discussed two plans for training pastors—one for the short term (one to three years while awaiting the construction of facilities) and one for the long term (once we have an actual training/education center)," wrote Jim Franks, Ministerial Services operation manager. He said the meetings were productive and that the results would be presented to President Clyde Kilough and then to the Council at their May meetings.

"We covered a great deal of territory, going over the past history of our pastoral training program and all the leadership training efforts both in the U.S. and the international areas," said Richard Pinelli, who coordinates ministerial development. "We dealt with the current training efforts, pastoral candidate profiles, pastoral training desired outcomes, concerns with developing pastoral training and proposed training processes and components."

The task force included Mr. Franks, Mr. Pinelli, Doug Horchak, David Register, Richard Thompson, Ken Giese, Larry Greider, Lyle Welty and Larry Salyer. **UN**

Lovelady Named New Treasurer

At its March meeting, the Council of Elders unanimously approved Jason Lovelady as the treasurer and financial operation manager, effective March 31. Mr. Lovelady has been employed by United since January 2005 and has 17 years of accounting and financial management experience. (For more details, see the profile on page 2.)

March 18 Chairman Robert Dick and President Clyde Kilough wrote: "Mr. Lovelady is well-qualified to step into this role... [We] offer our deepest gratitude to Dr. Kirkpatrick for his years of service."

The letter explained that in November 2007, Tom Kirkpatrick notified the Council that he planned to resign from the treasurer and financial operation manager positions. Dr. Kirkpatrick wrote to the Council: "It has been an honor and privilege serving as treasurer and financial operation manager for UCGIA for (nearly) the last 10 years. I hope on balance that my contribution has been positive."

Mr. Dick and Mr. Kilough thanked Dr. Kirkpatrick for "the tremendous contribution" he has made to the Church.

"Dr. Kirkpatrick plans to remain in Cincinnati for the next few months to help with the transition of responsibilities to Mr. Lovelady. During that time we will also be discussing various options with him for his future service" to United. **UN**

Alan Colmes Interviews GN Writer About Easter

by Jerold Aust

God blessed the Church with another opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Following the December 2007 interview, when Alan Colmes interviewed me about Christmas, the senior producer of the Alan Colmes radio show indicated they might want to interview me again about Easter.

He said they really enjoyed the first interview and "When Easter gets closer, notify us." After the March/April *Good News* was posted online at gnmagazine.org, I sent him the link. Within two hours he e-mailed me and said that Alan Colmes was very interested in interviewing me again, this time on "Would Jesus Christ keep Easter?"

I prepared for the interview, but I still had no idea the questions he would ask.

Friday evening, March 14, as the Alan Colmes show started and the interview time got closer, I noticed that he was focused on the subject of controversial comments made by Barack Obama's minister. The interview began with this topic. Mr. Colmes wanted me to comment on how unfair it was to label Senator Obama with his minister's inflammatory words. Finally I offered the concept of "guilt by association," which he accepted and we moved on to the topic of Easter and a variety of related biblical subjects.

As one person said, "You had to cover everything from the presidential election to the removal of Satan."

Mr. Colmes was cordial and respectful; I appreciated his approach. He allowed me to mention the gnmagazine.org Web site at least two times,

as did he. Since my approach to Easter could be viewed as negative, I wanted to present some positive information about Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. I'm grateful he allowed this.

Internet reports show that this interview helped the Church receive good attention; people were motivated to request or download the Easter article and other significant Easter material from the gnmagazine.org Web site. I was also asked to place the gnmagazine.org link on my personal jwaust.com home page. Peter Eddington said that we had an unusual number of requests about Easter after the interview.

The 18-minute interview can be heard at members.ucg.org.

Finally, I want to thank the brethren for their prayers and support. **UN**

Inside:

- 2 Profile: Jason Lovelady; Forward! Love Begets Love
- 3 Around the World: Guyana, New Zealand, Canada, Southern Africa, Asia, more
- 6 Appreciating Volunteers
- 8 Preteen Camps
- 9 From the Word: Will of Iron; Master Waterblaster; Making Prayer a Priority
- 11 Treasure Digest: Benefits of Baptism; Restoration; Children's Corner; more
- 12 Local Church Updates
- 14 Announcements

News At a Glance

Continued from page 1

this may be the largest number of online booklet requests of a single title for a two-week period for us ever.

The *Marriage and Family* booklet has also generated a lot of interest so far this year. We had 256.3 million impressions of our ads (almost eight times that of our *Holidays or Holy Days* ads!), 137,021 clicks and 2,494 conversions.

To view these ads online, go to www.gnmagazine.org/family and www.gnmagazine.org/easter.

Through March 27, we have had 29,951 booklet/*GN* requests from all our ads at Google and Yahoo advertising. For the last two calendar years, March 2006 through March 2008, we've had 170,956 online advertising conversions. These are in addition to the thousands of requests we received from people simply searching the Internet—for which we pay nothing in advertising costs.

The Internet is certainly a very viable tool in promoting the good news of God's Kingdom. Please continue to pray for our success in this arena, among others.

Peter Eddington

New Elders Announced

On Jan. 26, Kossi Fiaboé was ordained an elder. He serves in the Lome and Mome Hagou, Togo, congregations.

On March 3, the Council approved the credentialing of Charles Haughee as an elder. He and his wife, Kaye, are serving in the Tampa, Florida, congregation.

On March 8, Edward Dowd was ordained. He and his wife, RaeAnn, serve in the Phoenix, Arizona, East congregation.

On March 22, Anthony (Tony) Levy was ordained. He and his wife, Brenda, serve in the Johannesburg, South Africa, congregation.

On April 19, Bill Bradford was ordained. He and his wife, Joanna, serve in the Chicago, Illinois, congregation.

On April 20, Antonio Thiongo Ndung'u was ordained. As the first minister in East Africa, he and his wife, Christine, serve congregations throughout Kenya. He serves full-time as office manager and treasurer.

On April 20, Jerrison Shachoongo was ordained. He and his wife, Nice, are serving congregations throughout Zambia.

WNP Seminars Attract Many Guests

Two daylong *World News and Prophecy* seminars were held April 5 and 6 in Vancouver and Penticton, British Columbia.

April 5 was a special Sabbath for the Vancouver congregation. With visiting brethren from Vancouver Island and Sedro Woolley, Washington, as well as some first-time visitors, the attendance was 112.

Invitation letters were sent to a large

See "News at a Glance," page 16

Profile: New Treasurer Jason Lovelady

Jason Lovelady became treasurer and financial operation manager for UCGIA on March 31 (see "Lovelady Named New Treasurer," page 1).

Both he and his wife, Wendy, grew up in the Church of God. His parents were baptized in 1967, and his wife's grandparents started attending the Church in the 1950s.

He is the oldest of four—two sisters, Karen and Melody, and one brother, David. His mom (Mary Lovelady, a deaconess) and brother and his family attend in Springfield, Missouri.

Before moving to Cincinnati to work in the home office in January 2005, the Loveladys attended United congregations in Springfield, as well as Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee.

"The Church has always had the biggest influence on my life—as a child, participating in the various youth programs and sporting events, later attending Ambassador College, and then working for the Church in the Caribbean Regional Office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida," he said.

Mr. Lovelady worked from 1991 to 1995 in the Caribbean Regional Office. During that time he became the accounting manager for the Caribbean Region and was responsible for all the accounting functions within the region.

He has a wide range of industry experience working for companies in the retail, manufacturing and service sectors. Over the past 17 years, he has gained professional experience in such areas as consolidations, financial statements, international accounting, budgeting, audit coordination and cash management.

In addition, he has considerable experience in strategic planning, systems design and development, and project management. He has also worked closely with both information systems and human resources departments and at different points in his career has managed both areas.

His subsequent job experiences are highlighted by a position as the retail accounting manager for Bass Pro Shops and a position as a plant control-

ler at Menasha Packaging Corporation.

This eventually led him to a post with Calsonic Kansei of North America, a tier-one auto supplier. His accounting work there included preparing consolidated financial statements and management reports for Calsonic Kansei's 10 North American companies with \$1.5 billion in annual sales, coordinating and assisting external auditors and tax preparers with annual audit and semiannual reviews, and overseeing multistate and multicompany payrolls for over 2,000 employees. In addition, he was a member of Calsonic Kansei's global SAP project team as project manager for the financial and controlling software modules for North America.

"When I resigned from WCG in 1995, I thought that my time of working for the Church had most likely come to an end," Mr. Lovelady said. "While my career was going well and I was able to serve the local churches that I attended in a number of different ways, I consistently prayed for another opportunity to directly work for the Church.



Wendy and Jason Lovelady

"I feel especially blessed that God answered my prayers, and I am grateful to Dr. Kirkpatrick for giving me that opportunity. I have appreciated the opportunity to have served the Church in the capacity that I have over the last three years. And I am grateful to Mr. Kilough and the Council of Elders for giving me an opportunity to serve the Church in an even greater way as the treasurer in the years ahead." **UN**

If you would like to recommend a member to be featured in the "Profiles" section, e-mail mike_bennett@ucg.org.

FORWARD! Love Begets Love

by Clyde Kilough



On the table at the back of the church hall were the cards the pastor had reminded everyone to stop and sign. They were truly beautiful—obviously hand-made, designed specifically for individuals who had requested prayer for their sicknesses.

We all hear announcements and see the home office updates asking for prayers for the sick, and it is a tribute to the members of the Church how you pour out overwhelming support for those so afflicted.

But this display was different. The computer-generated artwork was striking, but each one also had the individual's name embedded in the text, along with references to their ailments, and a thoughtful, scripturally-based message. Someone

put a lot of personal effort into this project.

I found the lady who produced these cards, complimented her on them, and she told me her story.

As a young mother, not too long before, she had suffered through two severe bouts of meningitis. Through the darkness of her sickness the scores of cards and letters from around the world kept her spirits up when her own strength faltered.

Once recovered, having empathy as you only can having walked in those shoes, she determined to do something in like manner. But how? She prayed about it, thought long and hard about her skills and capacity and limitations, and finally knew. After hearing her idea, her pastor was delighted to supply her with a color printer and committed to quickly sending all prayer requests he received.

"I then pray about each one," she said, "write a note and include a scripture," and then design a special card. After being signed by the Church members, off it goes somewhere around the world, destined for the hands and hearts of someone in a deep trial.

As inspiring as it was to see someone, motivated by compassion, use her talents to turn her own trials into an avenue for helping others, another event a few minutes later impressed another lesson of how such love has extra, perhaps unintended, benefits.

I noticed a little boy at the table, intent on signing all the cards laid out. Wandering over, I watched him carefully spell his name in his second-grade style printing, and asked, "So, why are you signing these?" Without looking up, very sincerely he said, "Because it makes sick people feel better."

What a great lesson, I thought. This lady's act of love is helping both the sick and others in the congregation as well. Not only is it raising everyone's awareness and compassion levels, it is also even training little children in the way they should go.

It was a little reminder of an age-old lesson of why love is so powerful: Love begets love.

And nothing else helps us move forward like love.

What can you do to beget such love in others?

See what others are doing in the section on volunteers, starting on page 6. **UN**

May 2008
Vol. 14, No. 4



United News
News of the United Church of God, an International Association

United News (ISSN 1088-8020) is published monthly except April and October by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2008 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 1487167.

Editor: Peter W. Eddington Managing editor: Mike Bennett Copy editor: Becky Bennett
UCGIA Council of Elders: Robert Berendt, Aaron Dean, Robert Dick (chairman), Bill Eddington, Jim Franks, Roy Holladay, Clyde Kilough, Victor Kubik, 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

BENELUX countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg): P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands.

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

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

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

GERMANY: Vereinte 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: mauritiuss@ucg.org

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Shortland St., Auckland 1140, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

NIGERIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 01-8113644. E-mail: nigeria@ucg.org

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63) 82 224-4444 Cell/Text: (+63) 918-904-4444

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 3535, 111 74, Stockholm, Sweden. E-mail: sverige@ucg.org

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.

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 2617, Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples.

President: Clyde Kilough

Doctrinal reviewers: Roy Demarest, Bill Jahns, Arthur Suckling, Chuck Zimmerman

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

Subscriptions: *United News* is sent automatically to members of the United Church of God and is free to all who request it. Your subscription is provided by the generous, voluntary contributions of members of the United Church of God, an International Association, and their coworkers. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible. To request a subscription, write to *United News*, United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or to one of the international addresses below.

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. Phone: (02) 226076. E-mail: zambia@ucg.org

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 928, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe. Phone: 011716273 E-mail: zimbabwe@ucg.org

Internet access on your computer:

The United Church of God, an International Association, has a home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. The address <http://www.ucg.org> gives you access to general information and news about the Church, issues of *The Good News* and *United News*, as well as our booklets. The address <http://www.ucg.ca> accesses the Church's Canadian Web site, <http://www.ucg.org.au> the Australian Web site, <http://www.labuonanotizia.org> the Italian Web site, <http://www.goodnews.org.uk> the British Isles Web site, <http://www.ucg.ph> the Philippines Web site, <http://www.ucgeastafrica.org> the Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda site and <http://www.ucg-rsa.org> the Southern Africa Web site.



News From **Around the World**

Caribbean Pastors Spend Week in Guyana

by Kingsley Mather and Arnold Hampton

March 4, Arnold Hampton and Kingsley Mather began a weeklong trip to the South American English-speaking country of Guyana. In the past there was a vibrant congregation of the Church of God in the capital city, Georgetown. During our early visits to the country from around 2000 until 2007, none of the former members and associates that we met had any interest in UCG. We continued to hope that one day God would raise up a group in the capital. To this end each time we visited, letters were sent to *GoodNews* subscribers inviting them to meet us at our hotel.

This year the invitation letter was sent to 235 *GoodNews* subscribers. This number includes our members and associates who

live in several villages in the interior of the country. March 5, Mr. Hampton took a call from one subscriber who indicated that she would come to the hotel around 3 p.m. Since we did not get any other calls, we sat and chatted after breakfast. We were pleasantly surprised when we went to the elevator to go to our rooms that several subscribers were waiting in the lobby.

That day was extremely exciting. We ended up talking with 12 people. Some were subscribers and others came with friends and relatives. At one point during the meeting we divided into two groups. Mr. Hampton talked with one group and Mr. Mather talked with the other. We decided to test the water to see if there was any interest in attending a monthly Bible study in Georgetown.

Most of the group responded in the affir-

mative. We don't expect that all will attend, but are hoping to have the first Bible study in Georgetown the first Sabbath of May. Since we can't visit on a regular basis, two deacons, Osmond Douglas from Barbados and Maxwell Victor from Dominica, will alternate and DVD sermons from the home office will be used. Clyde Chinian, a longtime member who lives in Brazil, is visiting Georgetown to locate a venue for the monthly study.

Please be praying that God will bless our effort. Perhaps another mustard seed is about to spring up in the Caribbean region.

During this trip the lawyer that we commissioned to prepare to have the Church incorporated gave us the certificate show-

See "Guyana," page 5

New Zealand Literature Now Handled in Australia

by Jeff Caudle

Fulfillment of literature requests for New Zealand and most South Pacific island nations shifted from Auckland to the Australian National Office in Brisbane in late 2007.

In recent years, UCG-New Zealand volunteers have sent out more than 15,000 pieces of literature per year within New Zealand and the South Pacific. Also, *The GoodNews* is printed in Australia and shipped in bulk to our Auckland mailing house for distribution in New Zealand and regionally. We will continue the Auckland mailing house operation for *The GoodNews*, but all other fulfillment will now be processed and mailed from Australia.

The decision to shift the fulfillment

work to Australia was made after consultation with Bill Eddington, Clyde Kilough and office staff in Australia and Cincinnati. Australia was able to handle New Zealand's workload with its existing staff and technical resources. Under the new arrangement, UCG-New Zealand reimburses Australia for postage and other fulfillment costs. We're very grateful to our Australian friends for their generosity and willingness to help their Kiwi neighbors.

The changeover has gone very smoothly, and we've had steady growth. The *GoodNews* list for New Zealand and the South Pacific (excluding Fiji and Tonga) has doubled to about 3,500 subscribers in the past year. According to David Sandland in the Australian National Office, we're adding about

130 new subscribers per month. About 90 percent of our current growth arises from Internet requests. We hope to reach 4,500 subscribers by the end of 2008, even after a planned mid-year renewal program.

Fijian literature fulfillment is handled by deacon Emori Tolo from his home in the capital, Suva. More than 600 subscribers receive *The GoodNews* in Fiji; and the list is growing rapidly, primarily by word of mouth and Internet ad responses. Heamasi Ta'ufo'u, the pastor in Tonga, distributes literature to a small group of subscribers and brethren from his home on the main island of Tongatapu.

Thanks very much for your prayers and support for the Church in this part of the Southern Hemisphere. **UN**

Canadian National Conference and Council Meet

by Linda Wasilkoff

The Canadian National Conference had its annual teleconference, followed by a short National Council teleconference, on Sunday, March 9.

A record number of National Conference members were online for the teleconference—20 out of a potential of 25.

Director of Operations Anthony Wasilkoff referred to articles from the *Toronto Sun*, *Time* magazine and even *National Geographic* that have apocalyptic themes. The gospel message is not one-dimensional. Mr. Wasilkoff referred to Colossians 1:4-23, which talks about the gospel message that is also a message of hope. Our message to the world should be a warning but one that also has hope for a better future. He said we plan to run another ad in *Reader's Digest* that will extend some hope to people in a troubled time. It should come out in late April.

The Media Team has been working to get the *Beyond Today* television program on better viewing times. The problem that we run into is the "Canadian content" rules.

Internet requests are now averaging about 28 per day.

Ministerial Services has started getting a police background check on every individual who works with youth in the Church.

There are programs under development and some being implemented to train and upgrade our leadership. We recognize a need for additional elders and pastors across Canada. There will be an all-Canada ministerial conference held this November in Toronto. We anticipate having Jim Franks join us for that.

Treasurer Edwin van Pelt read a portion of the auditor's report showing that UCG-Canada is in good financial health.

There was a significant increase in our database this year with over 10,000 new names added. That gives a net increase of about 3,600. We now have 148 subscribers to the *Bonnes Nouvelles* (French *GN*).

Outgoing mail is increasing. We issued about 10 percent more donation receipts this year than last year.

In his address, Chairman Rainer Salomaa drew a parallel between where we are today and the time of the rebuilding of the temple. We need to heed what God

instructed the Israelites at that time: Be strong, do not fear and work!

Then the ballot results were read. The Canadian Strategic Plan, Operation Plan and Budget were all ratified. The individuals selected to start a three-year term on the National Council are Larry DeLong, Graemme Marshall and Patrick Read.

National Council Meeting

After discussion, the new council member, Patrick Read, was assigned to the Governance/Ethics/Pastoral Committee.

The Amendment Committee had an upcoming vacancy. The Canadian Council discussed the possible candidates and determined that Dr. Dennis Barney Kerrigan would be asked to fill the vacancy.

Some time was allotted to a discussion regarding how Canada can assist some other country in preaching the gospel. This has been a desire since our inception but must be done within governmental and Church guidelines. More research will be needed before any action can be taken.

This was Dennis Horlick's last meeting as a council member. Gratitude for his service was expressed. **UN**

International News At a Glance

Elders Visit Ethiopia and Kenya

On April 9, new elder Ed Dowd and senior pastor John Elliott traveled to East Africa for Passover and Unleavened Bread. One objective of the trip was to meet with interested *Bible Study Course* graduates in Ethiopia. *The GoodNews* is read by over 500 there and over 100 have graduated from the *BSC*.

Five new people attended. They were quite knowledgeable of Scripture and showed appreciation for our literature.

Afterward the elders journeyed to Kenya and visited congregations each day. They traveled through most of the places where recent tribal clashes killed some 1,500. Calm has returned to Kenya, and its citizens are busy again with the daily challenges of life there.

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread they ordained UCG's first-ever minister in East Africa, Antonio Thiong'o Ndung'u. The leaders reported that the brethren in all our congregations are stable and growing spiritually. Six people were baptized during the trip, and it concluded with a leadership conference in Migori. Photos and a daily blog of the trip can be viewed at <http://inyurl.com/4rj7l2>.

John Elliott

Open House Sabbath Held in Montreal

April 5 was a full Sabbath activity in Montreal, Quebec, as Joel Meeker presented a French sermon in the morning and then an English video of the French areas of UCG that he coordinates.

His French sermon focused on our Passover preparation and our need to recommit to God's calling without leaving "options" open. He explained that our present evil age has little commitment to anything. People "keep their options open," even within God's Church. He mentioned the example of the Spanish explorer Cortez, who deliberately burned his ships after landing in Mexico, so there could be no turning back. We have a need to fully commit ourselves to God's calling and be busy with that responsibility. Marjolaine Meeker translated the sermon into English.

In the afternoon Mr. Meeker presented a question-and-answer period about the African work, and then narrated an English video highlighting areas of Africa, along with their privations compared to our affluent first-world lifestyle. He concluded with an invitation to the Feast in France.

Of the 57 in attendance, 17 adults and children were from other Church of God affiliations. Kevin Ford from Toronto, Ontario, played the piano for hymns as well as presenting a special music piece by Chopin. Sandwiches were served at the lunch break with an afternoon tea at the end

of the day. Many stayed to fellowship for an hour or more afterwards.

Another public lecture for Montreal is planned for next spring.

Graemme Marshall

French Circulation Doubling; Pastor Visiting Europe and Africa

Through Internet advertising and our French-language Web site, we continue to add subscribers to *Bonnes Nouvelles* (French *GN*). We are on track to double our modest circulation by the end of this fiscal year, going from 1,200 to 2,400, almost all of which will be direct subscribers.

In March the third lesson of the *Bible Study Course* in French was printed and has been sent to our member list.

We are receiving more and more mail, both electronic and airmail, from around the world. In March, for example, we received several queries from Muslim Algeria, including from a man who is very interested in our magazine and has serious questions about the difference between the Christianity of the Bible and Islam.

French pastor Joel Meeker is currently on a one-month trip that included France, Belgium and Switzerland for the Spring Holy Days, followed by visits to two countries in Africa. He is again meeting with the leaders of the group that has contacted us from Burundi, then going to Rwanda where Dr. Greg Swartz will spend two weeks giving free dental care to the Rwandan brethren, while also giving demonstrations and training in the latest techniques to local dentists. Tom Kirkpatrick, who has administered the Good Works program since its inception, will join them for several days to advise on this project and assist in the effort to gain government recognition for the Church, as well as give a sermon to the Rwandan brethren on the Sabbath.

Joel Meeker

British Isles National Council Meets

The National Council of United Church of God—British Isles met March 9.

Jan Schroeder gave a circulation report for January and highlighted the higher than normal response to the renewal letters sent out during February. There has been a significant number of new donors.

Treasurer Barbara Fenney's financial report highlighted that general income is slightly ahead of budget and expenditure is largely following the budget. If trends continue, there may be scope for some advertising this year. An early draft of the budget for 2008-2009 was presented.

In presenting the Media and Internet Committee's report, Peter Hawkins proposed planning an advertisement. After discussion, the National Council agreed to this proposal and suggested that it be in the style of an "advertorial" that might address the topic of Britons' loss of identity.

Church in Southern Africa Experiences Encouraging Increases

by Neil Becker

The work of the United Church of God in South Africa showed encouraging increases in most areas for the financial and tax year ending Feb. 29, 2008.

Good News Distribution

The *Good News* magazine subscription list stands at 15,500 subscribers, a 36 percent increase over the previous year.

In addition, we also mail 1,600 copies to Zimbabwe, 930 copies to Zambia and 450 copies to Malawi.

The *Good News* was printed in the United States until 2006 when the printing was switched to Australia.

Due to numerous and increasing difficulties and delays in getting the magazine through South African Customs over the years, we received approval from the home office to print the magazine in South Africa. It has been printed by CTP Printers in Cape Town since May 2007.

Media Efforts

Over the last 10 years we have tried most of the available methods in offering the South African public a free subscription to the *GN* magazine, i.e., advertising in major magazines, including *Reader's Digest*, as well as counter displays and post office mail drops. *Reader's Digest* had been our most successful avenue in the past, with up to 3,937 responses per advertisement.

But since the advent of major Internet search

engines like Google and Yahoo, the South African National Council has settled on that direction as our main option. For 2007 we averaged 1,334 new GN subscriptions per month, an increase of 34 percent over the average per month for 2006. The cost per response has come down from 16 rand (US\$2) using *Reader's Digest* to 10.60 rand (US\$1.30) through Google Adwords.

It is interesting to note that since March 2006, South African Internet surfers searching the Web using one of our 325 keywords in their search have viewed a staggering +12 million times a description of our Web site offering *The Good News* magazine and inviting them to click through to view the actual ad.

Thus far, 54,208 people have actually clicked through (0.44 percent). Of those, 16,088 people (29.68 percent) have actually completed the application form and submitted it electronically to us. Those 16,088 subscription requests have cost 170,497.51 rand (US\$24,356).

We are indeed very grateful for this type of advertising that has enabled us, with such a small staff, to reach with such comparative ease and cost-effectiveness into so many South African homes with the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

Bible Study Course

Requests for the 12-lesson course continue to rise. The figures are as follows:

Lessons Completed	First 4	First 8	All 12
October 2001	126	14	168
December 2007	3,937	402	551

Mailing of Literature

The number of booklets mailed out has risen appreciably over the years. In 2000 the South African office mailed out 6,592 booklets. In 2007 we mailed out 29,068.

In 2001 we mailed out 6,968 individual envelopes. In 2007 that figure had risen to 19,081.

By using the Internet rather than magazine advertising as our main means of reaching the public, the number of incoming individual envelopes has decreased dramatically. This has given our small office staff a big breather, as dealing with large volumes of incoming e-mails is obviously much easier to deal with than physical mail.

Finance

The 2007/08 financial year ending Feb. 29 has been a very good year for South Africa. The best ever, in fact! Expenditures were slightly over budget by 1.7 percent, but income showed a surplus of 15.6 percent above budget.

The amount received from donors was 66.4 percent above budget, Holy Day offerings were 13.5 percent above budget and first tithe ended 27.1 percent above budget. This has enabled us to place a record amount on the 2008/09 budget for media efforts and postage.

Consequently we have decided to increase, from six to 12, the number of *GN* magazines a subscriber receives before we send a renewal notice. This will have the effect of increasing quite rapidly the number of active *GN* subscribers from the present 15,500 to 20,000 or even 25,000 in the next 12 months.

We are hoping that giving readers the opportunity to receive the *GN* for two years instead of one will result ultimately in more requests for ministerial visits than we receive at present.

Sabbath Attendance

In 2007 the average and highest attendance on the Sabbath was as follows:

	South Africa	Malawi	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Average	201	90	264	24
Highest	273	118	348	32

Congregations and Elders

There are four congregations in South Africa: Johannesburg, Durban, East London and Cape Town. In 2000 181 attended the only Feast site in South Africa. In 2007 there were 293 at two sites.

In Malawi there are congregations in Blantyre and Lilongwe, and one Feast site on the shore of Lake Malawi.

There are five congregations in Zambia and two in Zimbabwe, with one Feast site in each country.

At present there are eight elders serving the congregations in South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The work of the United Church of God in Southern Africa continues to grow in effectiveness, and we are praying that God will guide us in wisely using the record amount provided in the 2008/09 budget to reach many more people with His end-time witness. **UN**

Neil Becker is secretary/treasurer of the United Church of God, Southern Africa.

Zimbabwe Members Cope Under Adverse Conditions

by André van Belkum

From Feb. 17 to 23 I visited members and other individuals interested in the teachings of the United Church of God in Zimbabwe. Mike and Primrose Mukarati, who supervise our office in Zimbabwe, accompanied me throughout the trip.

After arriving in the capital, Harare, we traveled to the town of Kariba where we have a number of members. I stayed at the Mukaratis' home, which overlooks Lake Kariba, one of the largest man-made lakes in the world. There we held a Bible study and also baptized Sikhathela Sawona. Incidentally, Mike Mukarati works for Lake Croc, which is the largest crocodile farm in the world.

The next day we departed for Bulawayo, located in the southwestern area of the country. Along the way we stopped off to visit various members and other interested people. One such person was Marshall Takaindisa, who teaches English at a high school in an outlying area.

It is so encouraging to observe to what extent our literature, the truth of God we teach, helps and encourages people.

In his letter requesting a visit, Marshall wrote: "Thank you for the first four lessons in the 12-lesson *Bible Study Course*. They have really been helpful, especially 'Why Does God Allow Suffering?' I am physically disabled [he has muscular dystrophy, and is in a wheelchair] and that course helped me to reconcile the concept of a loving God with suffering.

"I had always had questions on how a

loving God could allow so much misery and suffering in the world. Your books have helped me in my growth as a Christian, especially the way you explain the fundamental teachings of the Bible, and



Group photo of brethren in the city of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

have been very impressed by your faithfulness to God's Word."

We spent a number of profitable hours in discussion with Marshall.

Our literature is making a huge difference in the lives of many people.

Our journey ended in Bulawayo, where we held a Bible study the afternoon of Friday, Feb. 22, at the home of Stephen and Vetina Tshabalala, long-standing members who have faithfully served over many years. On the Sabbath we held a service with 19 people in attendance. I returned to South Africa later that afternoon.

Life for the average Zimbabwean has become full of hardships and daily challenges. The rate of inflation rose to 100,580 percent in January this year, and economists predict that the rate of inflation will continue to increase in the months ahead. The highest denomination is a 10 million dollar note, which will hardly buy a loaf of bread.

Food prices have been among the highest contributors to inflation. The price of bread increased by 100 percent in the week I was there. Food stores stock very few, if any, basic food items such as bread, milk, cheese, cooking oil, sugar, meat, cheese and so on.

However, because of their firm beliefs

in the teachings of the Church about what the Bible says regarding the future Kingdom of God, our members are rooted in and focused on the good news of a better world tomorrow. Yes, they are struggling and facing hardships now, but there is hope beyond the present situation. The sermon tapes and literature from the Church are

there as a constant reminder of a better life for all.

I witnessed this hope, this desire, this anticipation among our members in sharp contrast to others I spoke to who were not privileged to have this knowledge. The members in Zimbabwe appreciate your prayers for them. **UN**

Church Representative Visits Outlying Zimbabweans

by Steven Tshabalala

We have just returned from visiting members and other interested people in Gokwe, about 310 kilometers or 190 miles north of the city of Bulawayo. This turned out to be one of the most difficult trips I have undertaken.

My wife, Vetina, and I departed from Bulawayo on April 4. The bus was scheduled to leave at 6 a.m., but ultimately left over seven hours late. The roads were in shocking condition. Our first mishap occurred about 150 kilometers from Bulawayo when the prop shaft broke. The driver and a passenger devised ingenious methods to keep the bus moving for a while, but eventually it was beyond repair.

We were considering our options, when in the distance we noticed another bus approaching. The driver kindly allowed us to climb aboard, and once again, off we went. However the driver turned out to be reckless and drove too fast. Three times he knocked down signposts, and at one point was prevented by a concrete slab from tumbling over the side of a bridge.

We kept praying as we journeyed on, and finally arrived at the home of our two members, Mr. and Mrs. Gorondo.

Instead of arriving at 6 p.m., we arrived at 2 p.m. the following day.

The Gorondos are well and send greetings to other members. Upon our arrival, there were 33 people gathered at their home in anticipation of a Bible study. I covered the subjects of repentance and baptism, based on notes from the leadership seminar conducted by Richard Pinelli and Lyle Welty in South Africa last November. After the Bible study, we enjoyed lunch, then had another study about discernment, again from the seminar notes.

A number of those present requested counseling, and this continued until well into the night. These people arrived with their own food and blankets and were willing to wait until we arrived. They all patiently waited for their turn.

For two nights they slept outside in the open to make sure that they would hear the Word of God preached to them.

We were humbled by a woman, Gertrude Gorondo, whose husband died some time ago. She is blind, has five children and completed her high school career at the School for the Blind. She surprised me with her knowledge of the truth, and her interest in the Church. She correctly answered questions about the truths we

teach, including repentance and baptism. A total of 15 people were counseled.

On the return journey we hired an ox-drawn cart in order to reach the departure point for the bus. After traveling about 30 kilometers the cart hit a deep ditch in the road and overturned. I landed on my right shoulder, and felt a sharp pain down my arm and into my neck. My wife was fortunate as she landed on bags of maize that were being transported in the cart. My arm was aching; and as we journeyed on, we continued to pray fervently that our Father would protect us.

[Afterward he had his shoulder X-rayed. Fortunately there was only one fractured bone, and he is making good progress.]

By the way, a hailstorm destroyed most of the maize crop, but they will reap good crops of groundnuts and sweet potatoes.

These people face many problems, especially as Zimbabwe finds itself in the grips of a severe economic depression, with inflation the highest in the world. Please pray that God will protect us during this time of crisis.

Please also pray that God will open the understanding of the Gokwe people, and show them more fully the way to everlasting life in the Kingdom of God. **UN**

Senior Pastor Visits Members Throughout Asia

by David Baker

On Jan. 9 I embarked on a 3 ½ week trip to visit members in various parts of Asia. After traveling for approximately 24 hours I arrived in Bangkok, Thailand, at 12:30 a.m. on Jan. 11. After a few hours of much-needed sleep I enjoyed lunch with our member, Fil Olimpo. Fil is a magazine editor for several publications in Bangkok. Originally from the Philippines, Fil has lived with his family in Thailand for several years.

India

Shortly after lunch I returned to the airport for a flight to Hyderabad, India. After several hours of delay, my flight arrived in Hyderabad at 1 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 12. After a few hours of sleep I had the pleasure of conducting a Sabbath service with our members, Dr. Ali and her two daughters, Arjumand and Nagis. Dr. Ali is a longtime member of the Church (baptized in 1960 at Bricket Wood, England). She has set a wonderful example of faithfulness.

On Sunday, I traveled to Chirala to

privilege of visiting most of the members in their homes. There is also a small group meeting in Sampath Nagar, which is located approximately 30 minutes by car. Mr. Samuel has spent a few years visiting this group traveling by bicycle. I was very impressed with the sincerity and humble attitude of the members of the Church of God. I look forward to returning for a future visit.

On Tuesday afternoon, Jan. 15, I traveled to Calcutta to visit and baptize Tarun Ghosh. Mr. Ghosh has been corresponding and counseling for baptism since September 2005. After completing our counseling on Wednesday, I had the privilege of baptizing Mr. Ghosh in the Hooghly River.

The Hooghly is one of the distributaries of the Ganges and is considered sacred to Hindus, and its water is considered holy. Hindu

enjoyed a light lunch and toured some of the streets of Calcutta—a city governed by the Communist Party and known for its congestion, overpopulation (approximately 15 million) and pollution. But the city is also known as the City of Joy and is described as a city of love and warmth, sorrow and despair, dreams and hopes, poverty and squalor, grandeur and glory. Mr. Ghosh is certainly a beautiful light in this city.



Jan. 17 I traveled to Delhi and spent an enjoyable evening visiting with Mathew George, a *Good News* subscriber. Friday I traveled to Moradabad, a city located approximately 100 miles (four hours by car) east of Delhi. Moradabad is predominantly Muslim. Nestled in one of the neighborhoods of the city is the home of Robinson Yusuf and his family. The Yusuf family has been a part of the Church dating back to the 1980s. The family operates an English medium school in their neighborhood.

We were joined on the Sabbath by Mr. Dalchand, a longtime member of the Church from the village of Milak Qazi. After a very enjoyable Sabbath service and delicious lunch of north Indian food, I departed with Mr. Dalchand to his village. After the visit I continued my journey to Agra, a five-hour drive by car.

Jan. 20 I spent the day in Agra with member George Samuel. I spent the morning with George and his wife, Shobha, counseling her for baptism. In the afternoon we held a Bible study at Mr. Samuel's home with a group that meets with him on the Sabbath.

On Monday, I returned to Delhi by car and flew to Pune, a city with a population of approximately 5 million located about 100 miles east of Mumbai (Bombay). I had the pleasure of spending the evening with our members Prakash and Sara Mandora and their little daughter Osin.

Tuesday I flew to Bangalore to visit

a couple of *Good News* subscribers and Wednesday traveled to Madurai, located in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Simon Daniel is a member who lives in Madurai, and I enjoyed spending Thursday with him discussing future possibilities for the work in India. Mr. Daniel is a lecturer in English literature at American College.

Sri Lanka

Friday I flew to Sri Lanka and enjoyed a wonderful Sri Lankan dinner of chicken curry and hoppers (like bowl-shaped pancakes) with our members. On the Sabbath we gathered for services and fellowship at the church hall in Mt. Lavinia near Colombo.

Please remember our Sri Lankan members in your prayers. Sri Lanka has been suffering from armed conflict with the Tamil Tigers since 1983. The recent flare-up with the conflict has had a devastating effect on the local economy. The rate of inflation is approximately 17 percent while the wages of the average worker have not increased. Also, as the national armed forces are pushing the terrorists from their strongholds, the terrorists are retaliating by hitting softer targets within the country.

On the Sabbath of Feb. 23, while our members were attending Sabbath services, a bomb was discovered on a bus



Members in Sri Lanka

in Mt. Lavinia. The passengers were evacuated before the bomb exploded, but 18 bystanders were injured during the explosion.

Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia

On Monday, I returned to Thailand and spent a few days with Fil Olimpo and then continued on to Singapore. I had the opportunity of spending the

Sabbath with our brethren in Singapore. The congregation is pastored by Jeff Caudle from New Zealand. Mr. Caudle has asked that whenever possible, as I transit through Asia, I visit the members in his area. It is always a pleasure to spend time with our Singaporean brethren; I have had the privilege of meeting some of them as early as 1981.

On Sunday, Feb. 3, I accompanied two of our members, Samuthiran and Clement Lim, to visit our members living in Batam, Indonesia, Edward and



Batam, Indonesia: Mr. Baker with Samuthiran, Edward Simanjuntak, Clement Lim, Lilik and Bellinda

Lilik Simanjuntak and their daughter, Bellinda. We left early Sunday morning and took a fast ferry across the Singapore Strait for approximately 12 miles to the island of Batam.

Edward runs a private school teaching English. He showed us his classroom adjacent to his home and related how

God had blessed him with many students. Lilik served us some delicious Indonesian food and we relished the opportunity spent together. Unfortunately the few hours that were allotted for the trip passed quickly and we had to return to Singapore for the evening. By 4 a.m. the following morning it was time to depart for the airport and return home.

Getting to know our brethren in Asia is a wonderful opportunity. I realize that it is impossible for many of our readers to personally meet and fellowship with our scattered brethren, so I hope this and similar articles will provide an insight into some of their lives and environment.

Please remember to pray for them and their circumstances as they pray for you. I send you warm greetings from your brethren in Asia! **UN**



The Church of God in Chirala, India; Tarun Ghosh after his baptism in Calcutta, India; the home of Mr. Dalchand (left of photo) in the village of Milak Qazi, India

meet G.P. Samuel and members of a group known as the Church of God that he established in 1982. I first met Mr. Samuel in March 2005 and during the course of several meetings he requested that I visit his area and meet members of the Church of God. Their stated beliefs are very similar to those of UCG. In fact, they have requested to be a part of UCG. Most of the members of this group are a part of Mr. Samuel's extended family.

I was able to spend a couple of days fellowshiping with them and had the

belief holds that bathing in the river causes the forgiveness of sins and helps one attain salvation. Most Hindu homes will contain a vial of water from the Ganges. People travel from distant places to immerse the ashes of their kin in the waters of the river; in fact one can view funeral pyres located at various spots along the river. So as Mr. Ghosh and I approached the river for the baptism, individuals taking ceremonial baths or washing their clothes paid little to no attention to our actions. (In East Africa I have often witnessed as many as 50 curious bystanders watch a baptism before continuing their journey along a road paralleling a river or stream.)

After the baptism Mr. Ghosh and I

continued south to the village of Aishalton where he and some of the members live. Sabbath, March 8, Gary Atkinson, his family and the brethren from Aishalton arrived for Sabbath services. We expected around 20 but again were surprised that we had an attendance of 48. We gave split sermons and updates on the work in the region. Following services the ladies served a potluck meal.

After lunch four associates wanted to discuss baptism, so we divided into two

groups and began baptism counseling. We will send them the *Bible Study Course* and some other literature to study in preparation for our next visit.

March 10 we were planning to travel back to Georgetown. After breakfast we were informed that a gentleman was waiting to see us. He had attended another Sabbath-keeping group in South Rupununi but now wanted to associate with UCG. He is the leader of a group of 24 adults and children who keep the

Sabbath. He indicated that about 10 of the group were baptized. They have a church building and want to associate with us, hoping for guidance, literature, sermon tapes and assistance with used clothing.

We decided Gary Atkinson and Clyde Chinian would visit the group and send a report to us. Please keep our brethren and the work in Guyana and the rest of the Caribbean region in your prayers. **UN**

"Guyana," continued from page 3

ing that we are now recognized by the government of Guyana. This will make it possible for a bank account to be opened in the name of the Church.

Next Stop, Lethem, Rupununi

We flew to Lethem March 7 to visit with the brethren in the South Rupununi area of Guyana. When we arrived at the airport, Gary Atkinson, the Church's representa-



Appreciating Volunteers

■ Literally thousands of members and supporters volunteer their time and talents to help in nearly every aspect of the work of the United Church of God. On these pages we celebrate some of that service that helps United in the mission of preaching the gospel and preparing a people.

United Youth Corps Volunteers Serve Around the World

In 2006 and 2007 volunteers from the United Youth Corps program served on seven international projects: two each in Ghana and Nigeria (West Africa), two in Kenya (East Africa) and a teaching project in Amman, Jordan.

Mark Mirigian, Zach Smith, Kirsten Korthuis, Michal Lisa Capo, Laura Beth Childers and Francesca Nixon served as counselors and staff at the six-day Unit-

In addition to serving as activity staff, many of these young adults from the United States helped in other ways at camp, volunteering to assist with food preparation and teaching hygiene classes, for example.

While mentioning these United Youth Corps volunteers, I would be remiss in not mentioning the many brethren from each of these African nations who volunteer their time to assist as counselors and activity staff and help with food preparation and other duties. Working together with these brethren in their native country has given our United Youth Corps volunteers a great experience of "giving" in a part of the world and in a culture that they have never known.

In addition to these 22 volunteers who have served in various countries in Africa at our youth camps, two United Youth Corps volunteers were chosen to assist as teachers at the Amman Bacculaureate School in Amman, Jordan. Matthew and Mary Ann Bates have been in Jordan since one week after their wedding teaching many Jordanian youth at this well-known private school.

As reported previously in an article by Matthew and Mary Ann (February 2008 *United News*), they have been able to learn much about the Arab cul-

Members Participate in *Beyond Today* and *Good News* Media Programs

One hundred forty-four enthusiastic members in 32 states have volunteered to serve as *Beyond Today* sponsors. *Beyond Today* can be seen on 178 cable-access television channels that air the programs 274 times a week.

Also, a dozen brethren are monitoring *Beyond Today* radio programs in several U.S. cities. Each week our faithful monitors carefully listen to determine if the correct program is being aired and that it is not preempted. They also confirm that our programs start on time, are not interrupted and end without being cut off.

Nearly 22,000 listener and viewer responses have been recorded since *Beyond Today* audio and video programs began airing in December 2005.

Additionally, over 175 dedicated brethren and congregations are participating in the *Good News* subscription brochure program. Members distributed 58,000 brochures on 1,050 displays in 2007. Brochure distribution has been a cost-effective means of introducing new readers to *The Good News* magazine and our booklets. Brochures cost just 5 cents each to print. Subscriber response has reached an excellent 2.6 percent, so it's only \$1.36 per response.

Below are comments from several participants in these member media involvement programs. If you would like to participate, please contact John LaBissoniere at (888) 369-9940 toll free or john_labissoniere@ucg.org.

Barbara Lee, Minneapolis, Minnesota: "I had wondered for a while how I could be more directly involved in the preaching of the gospel. One day in a smaller group setting, our pastor mentioned the idea of checking to see if our local cable station would air the *Beyond Today* program. I didn't commit myself to anything at that point, but decided to 'check it out' and see what I had to do."

"It took me a few phone calls to find out where the station was located and what needed to be done. It was not complicated, so I decided to commit to being a sponsor.

"Being a sponsor has motivated me to include *Beyond Today* in my prayers much more than before, for God to use the program to help those He is working with find His truth. In addition to this, it was exciting to have two short articles about *Beyond Today* published in our community paper. As a result of one of them, our pastor got a phone call! I look forward to someday meeting someone who heard God's truth through the *Beyond Today* program."

Daniel Rich, Raleigh, North Carolina: "I have been so blessed to have the opportunity to sponsor the *Beyond Today* program in the Wake County area. It makes me feel as though I am contributing to the preaching of the gospel. We can

do nothing on our own—God allows us to scatter the seed and He gives the increase. I am so thankful He has given me, as small as it may be in the grand scheme of things, this opportunity to scatter. No work is more rewarding!

"On one occasion, as I was loading my program at the station, the station manager happened to be watching the program as I was loading it. She pointed out to me that some of our program violated station rules (i.e.: offering free literature, advertising a toll-free number, etc.).

"I was very embarrassed and began apologizing profusely. I was unaware of these rules. I stated to her that I would have to stop airing the program. I explained to her that we are Christians and would not knowingly break any of their rules.

"She immediately changed her stance and began to persuade me to change my mind and continue to air the program. She stated, 'Your program is so well done and this is the kind of quality programming we want more of' and 'our rules and regulations haven't been updated in many years—maybe it's time to update them.'

"She persuaded me to continue to air the show. She now greets me with a big smile and warm hello when we cross paths. It seems God wanted His program to air."

Michael Waters, Oakland, California: "I have been involved in the Church television program since 1999 and have formed a strong bond with Channel 26 in El Cerrito, especially with Sheryl, one of the managers there. It has been very gratifying, and I would strongly advise others to get involved in the work."

Daniel Diaz, Del Rio, Texas: "When we started playing the program, the cable company lent us a key to the room where we have to play the program and be responsible for the good handling of the equipment. Every Sunday at 9 a.m. I play the program and my wife, Delia, does every Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Kathleen Botka, Newark, New Jersey: "I feel like I'm making a difference because *Beyond Today* here in the Essex County area in New Jersey may be reaching someone and that makes my heart full. Also, the thought that someone might pick up a brochure in the doctor's office or the pharmacy and receive some timely infor-

mation also encourages me to keep doing what I can to plant seeds along with the Church to do His will."

Angela Payne, Queens, New York: "I've been involved with the *Beyond Today* cable-access television program as a sponsor for sometime now. It's with great pleasure that I do it. It's good to know that you are personally and actively involved in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ in one way or another.

"I often visit the television station to drop off and pick up programs. On many occasions I've taken my granddaughter so she, too, can see how God's work is being preached. Often times someone who is also dropping off or picking up tapes would engage me in a conversation about what our program is about. It's then, with great enthusiasm, that I explain what the program is all about.

"I do pray that God will continue to use this medium to call His people. I remembered that it was through the television program with Mr. Armstrong that God called me."

Lois Royce, Eugene, Oregon: "I am honored to have a small part in getting God's message to others. Because I do social work for a living, I know there are a lot of hurting and confused people out there who desperately need hope for the future. The *Beyond Today* television program and *The Good News* do just that.

"For those of you who are caught up in this fast-paced, hectic world, you may think it takes a lot of time to distribute brochures, *Good News* magazines or drop off TV tapes on a tight schedule. But it really doesn't. I just drop them off before or after my job.

"I attend the Eugene congregation, and we are one of the few areas still distributing *Good News* magazines on display stands. People are reading the copies on a regular basis and tell us how much they appreciate them. We also have a new family attending church who picked up a *Good News* magazine in a restaurant, and looked us up on the Internet. I know that some people may read the articles for years before making life changes, and we are helping to sow the 'seed' now for the 'harvest' that God is calling. It is very exciting and rewarding to be a part of that!"

John LaBissoniere



Kenya camp staff, December 2007

ed Church of God teen youth camp in Kumasi, Ghana, in August of 2006.

In 2007, Rob Oswald, Joshua Lee, Corbin Rose, Arielle Falardeau and Amber Epperson also volunteered to serve at the youth camp in Ghana.

They paid their entire airfare to Africa, a trip that requires almost three days of travel each way from North America! Campers came from all over Ghana and had a variety of activities including football (soccer), volleyball, team challenge, ultimate Frisbee and Bible class.

Greg Peoples served as activity staff along with Oludare Akinbo in Nigeria in 2006. Cody and Roberta Kitts and Emily Sandilands served at the youth camp in Nigeria in 2007.

Christina Davis and Jamie Franks served as activity staff at the youth camp at Lake Naivasha in Kenya in December of 2006. Elizabeth Isaac, Jennifer Pennington, Rebecca Horchak, Jeremy Hongerfoot and Matthew Kireilis also served as activity staff at the youth camp at Lake Naivasha in the Rift Valley of Kenya in December of 2007.

ture and have also been able to build bridges with the administrators of the school, the families of the students and with those of the royal family in Jordan! While Matthew and Mary Ann do get a stipend to pay for their rent and food, they are in the process of happily giving 11 months of their early life together as husband and wife to being an example of humility and service on behalf of the Church.

The time that these young people have volunteered and their willingness to pay much if not all of their travel expenses to these remote parts of the world is a blessing to the Church, to the brethren and even to others not in God's Church in many ways.

The United Youth Corps will continue to strive to provide meaningful service opportunities for young adults in the United Church of God in the months and years ahead. In 2008 we have projects planned in the Philippines, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana and Jordan/Israel. For more information, log on to the United Youth Corps Web site at www.ucgyouth-corps.org.

Doug Horchak

Retired Member Helps Seniors Stay Active

Barbara Scheper, 71, of the Oshkosh, Wisconsin, congregation pastored by Dan Dowd has found great pleasure in volunteering as a PACE instructor for some of the senior residents of the Homme Home in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, three mornings per week. As an Arthritic Association certified PACE instructor in aquatics and land exercises, she has led classes in the past few years at the Waupaca Senior Center and the King's Veteran Home as an activity therapist.

She studied aquatics and exercise classes at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point while earning her degree in gerontology in 1998.

The seniors especially enjoy the endurance chair dancing and imaginary visual relaxation therapy as well as the ROM exercises to retain their ability of important movements as they age.

"I find that giving in this way is a very good way to spend some of my own retirement time," said Barbara Scheper.

Serving at Camp Can Be Most Rewarding!

One of the most rewarding ways to give of yourself is to work at a United Youth Camp. That is what many realize after spending a week in "the Zone" working with teens to help them grow in faith and vision.

This year's theme of "A Bridge to the Future" makes the connection between training now at camp and the new world government to be ushered in by Christ.

Every year we get hundreds of applications from volunteers to staff one of our seven camps in the United States. Without this talented pool of dedicated volunteers, we could not offer such a first-class ACA accredited program that teens can attend throughout their high school years.

Here are some staff comments:

"Camp made me realize how much I love being around God's people and how much I want to do all I can to live His way and serve His people for the rest of my life. It was one of the things that made me want to move towards baptism" (Northwest).

"It's always wonderful working with God's young people, helping them overcome and watching them begin to understand more of the big picture and forming new friendships and fostering more zeal for God's way" (Northwest).

"It was awesome. I'm pumped for the Kingdom of God" (Winter Camp).

"Camp had an amazing impact on me. I've never learned so much (while still having a great time) in such a short amount of time. Spiritually, it really clicked this year" (Winter Camp).

"Wow. It convinced me that God's way is far superior. I've been teaching for 9+ years and have never seen such an outstanding group of young people. The values of putting others first definitely come out" (Heritage).

Many thanks to all those who unselfishly give up their vacation time to do good work with tomorrow's leaders. If you would like to join our team, go to members.ucg.org and fill out an application form. This might indeed be some of the most rewarding time you ever give away.

Larry Greider

Ministerial Services Thanks Members

"Every week thousands of brethren serve behind the scenes to make Sabbath services a place where we can all meet and be taught God's truths," said Jim Franks, Ministerial Services operation manager. "We wanted to express our deep gratitude for the wonderful spirit of service you have shown in setting up the halls, the sound systems, providing music, caring for our widows and widowers, preparing for socials and doing all the things that make the local congregation a pleasant place for learning and fellowshiping.

"Sometimes we don't always hear a 'well done' as we quietly go about taking care of these needs, but God appreciates all you do on His behalf," Mr. Franks said. "Ministerial Services and all our pastors and elders thank you so much for your time and effort."

All the activities of the local congregations—from Sabbath services to socials—contribute to developing us as a people prepared for God.

Many congregations have 30 or more responsibilities necessary to help the congregation run smoothly. This can be quite challenging in congregations with less than 30 people, but in the larger congregations, the number of responsibilities and people needed grows as well.

Here are just a few of the tasks handled by unsung heroes in the congregations: announcement brochures, bulletin board, cards for the sick, flowers, greeters, "Local Church Updates" reports and photos for *United News*, meals for the sick and shut-ins, mothers' room, piano players, providing rides, Sabbath school teachers, sermonettes, set up and take down, social committees, song leaders, sound crew, special music, tape library, teen activities, teen Bible studies and ushers.

Members Help Reach World

Church member volunteers perform a vital service for the home office each year. Each issue we mail approximately 16,000 *Good News* magazines to international

subscribers in areas of the world not served by other international offices (mainly the Caribbean and much of Africa). The volunteers insert these magazines into envelopes, seal and bag them for mailing.

In addition, they also prepare for mailing about 4,000 copies of *World News and Prophecy* and 575 of *United News* for international subscribers, as well as 1,500 Spanish *Buenas Noticias* magazines for subscribers in the United States.

The number of *Good News* magazines mailed from the home office has been reduced from 24,000 to 16,000 due to the transfer of 8,000 magazines to the Philippine office.

The Philippine office had been maintaining their own file of subscribers, but the magazines were actually mailed from the home office. Beginning with the March/April 2006 issue, the Philippine office began mailing their subscribers' issues in the Philippines. In addition, the Philippines also mails most of the Asian magazines.

Approximately 820 hours of labor are donated by these members each year, which is a substantial donation. Several members have commented that since they have retired, this is one way they can make a financial contribution to the Church.

At least once a year the teenagers from the surrounding church areas try to come to serve the subscribers and give our regular volunteers a break.

We owe a big thank you to Linda Saar, who coordinates the work parties, and to all the volunteers from Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, Ohio, and Louisville, Kentucky.

Connie Seelig

Local Web Sites Help Preach Gospel

Type "United Church of God" into any search engine, and you'll not only see a link for the Church's main Web site but links to numerous UCG congregations throughout the United States and the world. At last count, there were over 140 U.S. congregations and over 25 international areas that have some type of Web presence reaching around the world.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of hours have been devoted to these local Web sites in creating, developing and maintaining the informative content. Many of the local Web sites are administrated and maintained by only one individual, while others have a team of volunteers.

The local Web sites not only provide a service to the congregation but also provide a virtual footprint in the online world for those who might be searching for God's truth. Those looking would be directed back to the Church's other Web sites for more information, to request literature or to view the *Beyond Today* program.

Some of the largest and smallest congregations around the world have developed Web sites to keep the brethren informed of local information and provide a way for interested individuals to make contact with the Church. Many of the first-time visitors who request *The Good News* or listen to an online sermon first came in contact with the Church via a local Web site.

For all who have contributed in this area, Media and Communications Services appreciates your willingness to serve in preaching the gospel. If you have a local

congregation Web site that is not listed at www.ucg.org, or if you would like to help develop one for your congregation, please contact Aaron Booth (aaron_booth@ucg.org) for more information.

Aaron Booth

Good Works Fund-Raisers Provide Nearly \$340,000

In the autumn of 2003, by action of the Council of Elders, the United Church of God established the Good Works Program. This program was set up to act as a channel for the compassion of brethren in the Church. We do not generally encourage direct cash offerings to the program (since those funds are needed for the budgeted expenditures of the Church in carrying out its commission). Instead, the program was created to receive the monies that brethren are able to generate through local fund-raising efforts.

Jesus said, "Take care not to do your good works before men, to be seen by them" (Matthew 6:1, Bible in Basic English).

We have hundreds of brethren in the United Church of God who obey this command of Jesus, and who do their "good works" (also translated "alms"—acts of compassion and giving) quietly, anonymously, without fanfare, motivated by compassion and a desire to help meet the needs of others in the Church, especially in areas of the world not as blessed with the abundance of God's physical blessings. They have given to the Church's Good Works Program, through volunteer fund-raising efforts.

In these four and a half years since the inception of the program, nearly \$340,000 has been contributed to the program through these dedicated fund-raisers. As a result, brethren have been able to help with nearly 35 projects that have benefited others in the Church in countries all around the world—in Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America (where some suffered significant loss from Hurricane Katrina).

Brethren in these areas have been helped with emergency food and other disaster relief, the construction of church halls (when before they were often meeting on

the Sabbath in the open air, subject to the whims of the weather), self-sufficiency project seed monies and other projects.

Hundreds of brethren have been involved in all sorts of fund-raisers, including production of a cookbook, car washes, penny rolls, benefit concerts, bake sales and many more. On behalf of those who have been helped, thanks to all who have volunteered and helped in this way—the "give way"—the way that Jesus said was more blessed!

Tom Kirkpatrick

Volunteers Create Online Magazine

Virtual Christian Magazine or *VCM* (www.vcmagazine.org) has been a UCG online magazine for almost 10 years now and has always run as a volunteer publication. Also on staff are Church employees who fit *VCM* into their busy schedules.

Staff members and writers communicate and produce the magazine by e-mail. The process usually begins with volunteer graphics and managing editor Lorelei Nettles. Articles are then edited by volunteer editors Gayle Hoefker, Jada Howell, Patrick Kansa, David Meidinger, Suzanne Morgan, Amy Stephens and Debbie Werner. Employee Mike Bennett also helps.

The process continues with reviewers Jack Elliott, Eric Evans, Don Henson and Don Hooser. All are elders, and the last three are currently employed as pastors. They identify any doctrinal problems.

Adding the finishing touches to the articles is Church employee Becky Bennett, who proofreads them and then sends them off to webmaster Chris Rowland. Chris is the final cog in the *VCM* machine.

VCM encourages other members to volunteer as well by sending in their articles. Subject matter revolves around what's relevant in your life: family, children, marriage, values, strengths, weaknesses, spiritual gifts, relationships, friendships, health, sickness, depression, stories of faith, etc. Please send submissions to Lorelei Nettles at ucg_vcm@cox.net or through the feedback link at vcmagazine.org.

Lorelei Nettles

See "Volunteers," page 8

Serving Even in the Midst of Mourning

Need a ride? Feeling down? Just need a listening ear? I would like to tell you about an unsung heroine! This enthusiastic lady's daily goal is actively seeking what she can do for not just Church members, but everyone!

She's a teacher's aide at a large public high school in Highland Park, Illinois. This single mother quietly serves her work family, her own family and most certainly her Church family. She initiates many fun activities—whether it be providing transport to a women's conference or a church social. You name it, she's ready to give as she craves God's way of life.

She has been through many serious trials in her life, including the tragic loss of her beloved son. But even in the midst of mourning, she still reached out to others, continuing to give others encouragement.

Despite living far from church, she gets there early, seeing what she can do to help set up the hall. She cooks for others and even brings it to them!

She is humble, never seeking the limelight, but certainly is one of God's unsung heroines. Who am I talking about? Well, it's Sonia González, and may God bless her for her continued service to God, His people and all those who have the pleasure of knowing her. She brightens the dark with her warm smile. We in the Milwaukee congregation are blessed to have her in our fellowship!

Leone Burns



Northern Arizona Women Serve Families of Premies

The UCG-Northern Arizona women's group, Ladies in Learning and Service, recently reached out to the community in a service project. The ladies, from teens to seniors, donated time, finances, sewing ability and creativity to help the project "Angel Kisses."

This organization helps families of premature babies. Families of premies are in need of specific sizes of blankets, caps, nightgowns, booties and burying blankets. Time, finances and availability often prevent these families from obtaining these items.

The ladies each contributed in a unique way and their efforts brought them together for a common benefit. They made and donated 78 quilts, 68 receiving blankets, 80 gel pillowcases, 132 crocheted caps, 42 flannel caps, 16 nightgowns, 15 matching hats/booties, three matching crocheted sweaters/hats/booties and five fancy burying blankets. The items were donated to Children's Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona.

Helen Braman



Northern Arizona women who contributed to the Angel Kisses project (photo by Helen Braman)

Preteen Camps—Bridging a Critical Time

■ Support your preteens through the camp experience.

by David Myers

Research has increasingly shown the importance of setting a solid foundation for our children during their preteen years. By working with our preteens, we can better prepare them for the changes ahead during adolescence.

Our United preteen camps are one way that parents and grandparents can reinforce God's way in a very practical, fun manner during these critical preteen years. Camp is a place of fun and enjoyment for sure, but also a place of spiritual education and reinforcement.

In many areas of the United States, preteen camps have been organized to help our young people become more settled in God's way of life and become excited about it! Give your children additional spiritual grounding by having them learn and play with peers in the Church at camp. They'll be led by loving adults and teen helpers who will teach God's way and set an example for them.

Each of our preteen camps offers different and unique activities and events, but some of the things you might find include Christian Living classes, swimming, kickball, softball, leatherworks, arts and crafts, hayrides, music, dance, skits, plays, novelty Olympics, scavenger hunts, fishing, hiking and much more.

Listed here are the eight preteen camps currently organized for this summer. If you would like more information on sending your child to camp or would like to serve in one of the many needed volunteer staff positions, please contact the staff listed here.

The information below is also available at the members' Web site located at <http://members.ucg.org/youthcamps/preteen/>.

Texas: Houston Regional Preteen Camp

Camp High Pockets, Montgomery, Texas

Camp Dates: June 15 to 18, 2008

Age Range: 7 to 12

Contact Information: Elisa Hees, 1413 Axleridge Dr., Conroe, TX 77384; (936) 321-8134; E-mail: a-especialties@charter.net

Application Deadline: May 15

Local Web Site Address: <http://members.ucg-houston.org/preteen-camp/>

Description: The Houston congregations are pleased to sponsor a preteen camp featuring activities such as swimming, arts and crafts, sports, Christian

education, fishing and canoeing, etc. This year we will be meeting at a brand-new facility. Again the campers will have the opportunity to showcase their talents and share them with their fellow campers at our annual talent show.

Pennsylvania: Lewistown Preteen Camp

Camp Kiwanis, 3111 Route 287 Hwy., Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania

Camp Dates: June 22 to 25, 2008

Age Range: 5 to 12

Contact Information: Renita Brummett, 115 Lake Rd., Beavertown, PA 17813; (570) 837-0134; E-mail: renita@ethanjacobscott.com

Application Deadline: May 31

Web: www.ucgnet.org/lewistown

Description: The Lewistown Preteen Camp gives our children the opportunity to get closer to nature and God. Our campers will enjoy the beautiful location of the camp, along a scenic trout stream, with the convenience of cabins, showers, main lodge, swimming pool and sports fields. Many families have come to the camp together to enjoy the relaxing atmosphere that comes with the outdoors and fellowship with others of the same belief. Parents are more than welcome to come, even if they have children that are not of camper age, with the understanding that they would be responsible for them.

Each year we have a camp theme. This year's morning lessons will be about the story of Solomon. The last evening of camp the children perform a play complete with costumes and songs written just for the play. Throughout the day the children have crafts, sports, nature class and swimming.

Oklahoma: Camp Osage Hills

Osage Hills State Park, HC 73, Box 84, Pawhuska, Oklahoma

Camp Dates: June 29 to July 3, 2008

Age Range: 6 to 12

Contact Information: Thomas Clark, P.O. Box 12322, Wichita, KS 67277; (316) 773-3917; E-mail: thomas_clark@ucg.org

Application Deadline: May 15

Description: The park is located about 14 miles west of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, about an hour north of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and two hours from either Joplin, Missouri, or Wichita, Kansas. The park includes a crystal clear river flowing over the natural rock base, a man-made fishing lake, swimming pool and recreational facilities. Deer and wild turkeys are all over the park and are seen on a daily basis.

Camp Osage Hills offers a fully staffed

three-day resident camp program. The campers are grouped by ages into domes staffed with both a counselor and assistant counselor. Activities include swimming, fishing, canoeing, field games, arts and crafts and daily Christian Living classes.

We also provide one off-camp trip to Woolarock, the expansive former estate of oilman Frank Phillips. This trip includes a drive through a game preserve with both native and African game animals, a 19th-century "Mountain Man" camp staffed by men in period costumes, a petting zoo and a large museum featuring Western art, artifacts and cultural history of Native Americans and Western American history.

We encourage parents and grandparents to apply to work on staff, as well as teens and young adults with a desire to serve the youth in the Church.

Indiana: Camp UCanDo (Day Camp)

United Church of God, 850 N. Bluff Rd., Greenwood, Indiana

Camp Dates: July 8 to 10, 2008, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Age Range: 5 to 12

Contact Information: Diana White, 324 Wales Ct., Greenwood, IN 46142; (317) 884-3416; E-mail: bdkjwhite@hotmail.com

Application Deadline: May 25

Web: www.ucgindy.org

Description: Our activities include arts and crafts, Christian Living, photography, nature, home economics, science, outdoor games, water day, team building and sign language. Download your camper and/or staff application from our local Web site. Because this is a day camp, camper families must arrange their own housing in the area. Check out our Web site for information on nearby camping facilities and hotel information or contact the director for suggestions.

Tennessee: Camp Tomahawk

Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park, Eva, Tennessee

Camp Dates: July 20 to 23, 2008

Age Range: 6 to 12

Contact Information: Michael Fooshe, 1286 Walnut Grove Rd., Dickson, TN 37055; (615) 740-7915; E-mail: threemom@juno.com

Application Deadline: May 15

Web: www.ucgoutreach.com

Description: Located on beautiful Kentucky Lake, Camp Tomahawk offers many exciting activities including Christian Living, swimming with lazy river ride, athletics/sports, arts and crafts, park ranger programs and much more. We also take

pride in our themed dinners (dress in your favorite themed outfit to match the daily theme) and sample some of the tastiest camp food ever!

The camp is a multiple-day, resident camp. Campers will stay in the air-conditioned group lodge with several selected counselors, while the remaining staff are housed in the beautiful park cabins exactly 1 mile from the group lodge. Each lodge and cabin has attached bathrooms.

Camp Tomahawk is divided into two age categories for activity purposes, ages 6 to 8 and ages 9 to 12. Because space at Camp Tomahawk is very limited for both staff and campers, we may not be able to accept all applicants. Please apply early, as special consideration will be given to those who possess specific skills that are needed at camp. Please visit our Web site for additional information.

Minnesota: Camp Ironwood Springs (North Central Regional Preteen Camp)

Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch, Rt. 1, Stewartville, Minnesota

Camp Dates: July 20 to 23, 2008

Age Range: 6 to 12

Contact Information: Steve and Kathe Myers, 25897 655th St., Kasson, MN 55944; (507) 634-6363; E-mail: steve_myers@ucg.org

Application Deadline: June 26

Web: www.ucgcalm.org/camp.htm

Description: Camp Ironwood Springs takes place in a spectacular outdoor setting in southeastern Minnesota. The camp is about 90 miles south of the Twin Cities, and just 15 miles west of Rochester, Minnesota, off I-90.

Ironwood Springs offers a variety of children's activities including Christian Living, horseback riding, crafts, field games, court games, swimming, hiking/exploring, obstacle courses, music, wagon rides, camp fires, sing-alongs and novelty Olympics.

The girls' and boys' domes are located in the main lodge and are air-conditioned. Each dorm will be grouped by age and will have an adult counselor and cocounselor staying with the campers. The show-ers are also located in the main lodge so campers will not have to walk to an outside bathroom.

Ohio: Great Lakes Region Preteen Camp

Camp Buckeye, 10055 Camp Road NW, Beach City, Ohio

Camp Dates: July 27 to July 30, 2008

Age Range: 6 to 12

Contact Information: Gary and Peggy



Summers (assistant directors), 6215 Bay-side St. NW, Canton, OH 44718; (330) 499-4736; E-mail: p_summers@ameritech.net

Application Deadline: June 15 (discount if received before June 1)

Web: www.ucgakron.org

Description: Since United's inception, the preteen camp in Ohio has been serving our Church families! Camp Buckeye activities this year will include swimming, fishing, leatherworks, arts and crafts, field games, a walk in a waterfall, campfires and games (and maybe even a visit from the governor of Cal-ee-form-ee-ah!).

Be sure to download your application packet today at www.ucgakron.org. It contains all the information and applications you need for camp. We would also like to remind the teens and adults that we cannot run camp without your volunteer service. Staff application packets are also available from the Web site listed above. Staff positions will be limited, so be sure to get your application in early!

Oregon: Northwest Preteen Camp

24075 E Arrah Wanna Blvd., Welches, Oregon

Camp Dates: Aug. 3 to 6, 2008

Age Range: 6 to 11

Contact Information: John Cafourek, 720 Van Buren Dr., Salem, OR 97304; (503) 587-7053; E-mail: john_cafourek@ucg.org

Application Deadline: June 1

Web: www.salembanyucg.org

Description: Nestled in the foothills of majestic Mt. Hood, the Northwest Camp is located at Camp Arrah Wanna, on 132 acres of majestic forests, the Salmon River and some of Oregon's most beautiful land.

Past preteen camp themes have been "God Is There and God Is There for You," "Character Counts," "Challenge Yourself," "Bee All You Can Bee," "FROG" (fully rely on God) and "Love Bears All Things." Activities include Christian Living classes, archery, swimming, tubing down the Salmon River (lifeguard included), zip line challenge course, low ropes course, arts and crafts, campfire (singing), dance (limbo), hiking, talent/variety show (you bring the talent) and miniature golf. **UN**

"Volunteers," continued from page 7

Preteen Camp Volunteers Serve Well, Save Bundles

In the summer of 2007, United preteen camps served over 450 children ages 6 through 12. Again this summer there will be eight United preteen camps (see above).

Each of these camps is staffed by dedicated volunteers who willingly take time

off from work and away from other activities to serve our children. The volunteer camp directors spend countless hours leading up to camp to make sure all details are covered. Applications, health forms, transportation forms, waivers, etc., are all needed to insure a safe and secure environment for the children. In this way we strive to give each child a millennial experience.

In 2007, we had 371 volunteer staff members serving at our preteen camps. If we had to pay each of them minimum wage for their service, it would cost over

\$186,000! Many thanks to our volunteers who save the Church a great deal of money but, more importantly, provide such enthusiastic and loving care for our children!

David Myers

Crew Records Literature for Blind

Volunteers in the Akron, Ohio, area continue to read the materials printed by

the United Church of God for the visually impaired, and are now converting older recordings to MP3 format on CDs.

An entire booklet is now on a single CD instead of being on several tapes. Not only do the CDs take less space, but each booklet or periodical is now tracked by chapters and sidebars, making it easier for users to find what they are looking for. The material and postage savings is quite significant.

The readers read the materials in a controlled environment to avoid background

noise or interference. The technician uses Adobe Audition-3 software, a mixer board, a computer, an equalizer and a wireless microphone for recording. The technician is also responsible to listen to the reader for quality control.

The crew has been active with this project since 1996. Those presently involved with the reading program are Maria Jones, Dale Harman, Erik Jones, Joe Szymkowiak, Nick Pavlik, Dave Ritter and Don Pavlik.

Don Pavlik



From the Word

Will of Iron: Building Flexibility, Strength and Endurance

■ We can have God as our spiritual personal trainer!

by Pam Redline

I have had the pleasure of being a personal trainer for over 15 years. During this time, I have worked with many different personalities and have come across all shapes and sizes and varying states of health and wellness. One thing has become apparent to me over the years, however, and it has become my motto, "If you want to have buns of steel, you must have a will of iron."

What does this have to do with Church, God and spiritual growth? We all use our life experiences as the window to our perspective on the world. Since my background is motivating people to permanently change their lifestyle in order to gain a greater level of health and well being, I have come to see my spiritual walk as one of having God as my personal trainer.

The goal of any good personal trainer is to help his or her client achieve permanent lifestyle changes. This always involves making changes in habits, which always includes a paradigm change in diet, exercise and personal perspective. God wants the same from us—our surrender of stagnating bad habits in exchange for life-changing good habits.

God Stretches Us

The start of any good exercise program includes a top-to-bottom stretching program to warm the body up, prepare for a workout and increase blood and oxygen flow to the muscles and the brain. To jump into any workout without this can lead to injuries such as torn muscles. When done properly, stretching increases flexibility and the ability to move more fluidly through an exercise routine without injury.

God stretches us. He does not take us through anything He has not first prepared us for. Instead, He prepares us for our spiritual workout by giving us His Word for study, to warm up our minds and hearts to His perspective. This precious tool will stretch us when we read it, study it and apply it to our lives. This stretching will prepare us for whatever workout God has in mind. Whether it be a smaller issue or a sore trial, we need to prepare for that spiritual exercise by daily stretching (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Spiritual Strength Training

The second aspect of a good training program includes weight or resistance training. This should be done on a regular basis in order for results to be seen, that of increased muscle size and definition. The objective is to strengthen bone, muscle, and connective tissue so the body can be stronger in order to deal with any injuries that may be encountered. An example of this is falling on ice or being in a car acci-



dent. The stronger the body is, the greater the ability to withstand any impact. The desired result is to prevent or reduce any long-lasting injury.

God strengthens us as well. He provides the strength we need every day of our life. As life puts obstacles in our path that we may stumble over, or a slippery spot where there is potential for a fall, God gives us the strength to recognize the problem and steer away from it. He also gives us the spiritual muscle we need to recover from an injury if we do fall or slip.

The key is that we have to exercise that spiritual muscle daily. The spiritual muscle we all have is our will. We exercise our will by choosing to dig into God's Word every day. It takes strength to set aside the cares of the world, stop our daily activities and take time to study God's Word. When we apply this strength, our will is surrendered to God's will. He can then give us the strongest spiritual body possible, making it much easier to withstand the blows and impacts of the world (Psalm 27:1-3).

Building Endurance

Endurance or cardiovascular training is the third component of a good exercise program. This portion includes daily exercise specifically designed to increase the capacity of the circulatory system by working the heart and lungs. The goal with an endurance program is to build stamina, or endurance, and increase circulation to the heart, lungs and brain.

Circulation is the key to healing. When a muscle or other body part is hurt or injured, good circulation will quickly provide the necessary nutrients to help heal that region. Good circulation also brightens our vision, increases mental alertness and releases endorphins that increase pain tolerance and provide more energy to get through each day with decreased fatigue. This portion of the exercise program provides the greatest sense of well being.

God builds our endurance by trying us. We can sit in church services week after week, but we will never know the strength of our commitment if we are not tested and tried. How will we ever know what kind of stamina we have? It may be too late to get in shape when a severe trial is upon us. As with exercise, just reading about it doesn't accomplish any change. The knowledge and information must be applied.

Iron Will

God is prepared, 24/7, to help us build

flexibility, strength and endurance. He has made a commitment to us, just as a trainer is committed to helping his or her clients, by providing them with the right tools to succeed. But one other element is needed for them to succeed. They need a strong will.

Experience has taught me that every client has a different level of commitment. The failing point for those who quit their program before success is their will. They do not have the willpower to see the program through to the end. Getting into shape is not entertainment. It is not always fun. Changing one's lifestyle is a mind/body/spirit commitment. That cannot come from the trainer, only from the clients themselves.

God can only give us the tools for success. It is our choice to pick them up and put them to use. Clients need to have an iron will to overcome their old habits and make way for new ones so the life change they desire will come to fruition.

It is the same with us. We must totally sweep away all else, focus on the goal of total spiritual wellness and pray for a will of iron that we will not veer off the track, that we will not become distracted by anything, but keep our focus on the end result (Philippians 1:27-30).

We all need flexibility, strength and endurance to run that "good race" (2 Timothy 4:7). **UN**

Pam Redline is a member of the Bismarck, North Dakota, congregation.

© 2008 Design Pics

The Master Waterblaster

by Ken Reid

Tom is a cheerful neighbor. He always has a friendly wave, an encouraging comment. What really impresses me about Tom is that he keeps his property so neat and tidy, keeping the hedge trimmed, the grass cut, all balanced by an array of colorful flowers. He is always looking to improve wherever he can.

One day a friend told Tom his concrete path looked black with mildew. He was annoyed he hadn't noticed it himself. Somehow the mildew had just crept up on him over a period of time. Now that he was aware of it, the dirty path suddenly detracted from the rest of the property.

There are different ways to clean a concrete path of mildew, but because Tom wanted a quick result, he decided to use a waterblaster. Another neighbor offered to lend Tom the machine. So, starting at one end, Tom methodically water blasted his path, working at the same angle throughout to get a uniform finish.

When Tom reached the other end, he looked back to admire his work. The path looked much cleaner but not as spotless as his fastidious mind had hoped. When he knelt down for a closer inspection, Tom saw the problem. Because he had water blasted from only one direction, at the

same angle, some mildew had remained untouched because it was shielded by the stones and the pitholes in the concrete. Tom realized the answer. He water blasted the path again, this time in the opposite direction and varying the angle so as to dislodge the remaining mildew and flush it out. So after all his hard work Tom was able to enjoy the reward.

When Sin Is Like Mildew

Sin has much in common with mildew. We humans provide the ideal ground for sin to develop (Mark 7:21-23). Sin thrives in the fertile ground of lawlessness, hidden in the depth of our character, shielded from our view by events in our lives we deem to be more important, or just as likely, shielded by denial (Matthew 13:19-22; 1 Corinthians 3:18). The sin becomes glossed over. To reach these sins and dislodge them takes something to get under the radar, approaching from a different angle.

God is the One to see the angle to come from, depending on the sin, depending on the person. During this cleansing process, we may wonder what on earth is happening to us (1 Peter 4:12). Yet we know God will do whatever it takes to dislodge the sin as it resides in its own comfort zone.

Job is a good example. He believed he was right with God. But God could see

where Job couldn't see. Deep within his character there was a sin that needed to be rooted out. After heavy trials, with critical comment from his friends, God flushed sin to the surface and brought Job face to face with reality (Job 42:5-6).

Without God's Spirit actively working with us, we are not prompted to work at removing sin. We will not even know it is there. Even then, there are sins hiding in the deep recesses of our character that only come into play during a weak moment, or when we are under extreme pressure. But they are no match against God.

Using His Spirit and joining forces with a trial that is tailor-made for that particular sin, God can dislodge it and flush it to the surface. It may take some time for the trial to be put in place and to be applied at just the right angle, at just the right time. Only when the sin is dislodged from its hiding place can God reveal to us how our sin looks like to Him. When the sin is brought to our attention, it ought to generate a sense of shame and sorrow, twin stimulants for motivation to allow change to take place (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).

Motivation and Help to Change

When Tom's friend pointed out the mildew on his path, a little shame prompted



Tom to clean it up. Shame, sorrow, guilt—call it what you will, all are tools at God's disposal to persuade a redirection and to propagate growth (Isaiah 30:22; Psalm 83:16).

As sins are exposed and God renews the heart and enlightens the mind, we know this is accompanied by some pain (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Corinthians 4:16). The body wants to hold on to sin (Romans 7:21-25). Yet suffering times are growing times (James 1:2-4). And while God cares about our physical and emotional well-being, He is more concerned about our spiritual future (1 Peter 5:10). He is always close to call on for support when we need Him because He is the author of this success story (Psalm 34:18-19; Matthew 11:28-30).

Every exposure of sin is a sign God is molding godly character within us, and He will do everything necessary to bring that about. Not only does God encourage us to

cooperate at removing sin, He studies our attitude when we realize a particular sin is part of who we are. God needs to know the mind of the heart when it is placed under pressure.

As God works with us to uncover sin, inevitably others may be involved in this process because God is working with them too. This will require us to work together to give support and to resolve the problem (1 John 3:16). And when we overcome there is great joy in heaven (Luke 15:10).

When Tom finished water blasting, his path looked spotless. Yet more than that, it seemed to radiate a positive aroma over the entire property. Now Tom's house, the garden and, yes, even the neighbors, all feel the benefit of the clean up. Thanks, Tom, for being so passionate. You're a good neighbor! **UN**

Ken Reid is a member in Auckland, New Zealand.

Making Prayer a Priority

■ Being too busy and other barriers can trip up our prayer life. What can we do to better take advantage of this priceless privilege of communicating with our Creator?

by Joy Porter

As I begin to pray, I let out a sigh. It feels good to do this, I think. I try to remember the last time I prayed.

Yesterday? No, I was busy getting the house ready for company. The day before? No, my husband was home and we were rushing around trying to get house projects done.

Finally, I come to the conclusion that it has been four days since I've gotten to my quiet time with God. Four days!

How did this happen? I think. Well, you've been really busy, I think. But wait a minute! Too busy to pray? What is going on?

Too Busy

I grew up in the Church, and my parents set a wonderful example of daily prayer and Bible study. It has always been something that I knew I should be doing. But growing up, through high school and college, I never got into the habit. I was always "too busy." But deep down I always knew I needed to improve in this area!

Even when I got married, I thought things would improve because I would have my husband there guiding me. But the truth is, your spiritual life remains your responsibility even after marriage.

After the birth of our child, I began to realize that soon my actions would be my child's textbook on how to love God. And I didn't think I was doing a very good job. I have always loved God and wanted to please Him, but my devotion has always been in "spurts," with periods where I would stay connected to God and periods where I would not do very well at all.

Since I have begun to really focus on making prayer time a habit, I have learned a lot. I would like to share with you some of the ideas that have helped me.

All or Nothing

One thing that I have realized is that I am an "all or nothing" kind of person. Okay, I'll say it, I can be a perfectionist. I like to be successful at what I do. So when I fail at something, it embarrasses me and I want to avoid even thinking about it!

I realized this was what was happening in my prayer life. I would pray consistently for a while, but when I got off track, I would feel ashamed and embarrassed. I think I didn't want to apologize to God! (This was illogical because He already knew exactly what was going on.) So instead of praying again as soon as possible, I would just avoid God and avoid prayer for long periods of time, all the while feeling

more and more guilty!

Would that I had realized that God was never waiting to "punish" me for not praying. He just wanted a relationship with me. And if I missed a day of talking to Him, it didn't mean He would never want me again. He just wanted me to come back, repent and talk to Him again. Perhaps some of you have had similar experiences. A conscious realization of what I was doing has helped me immensely to overcome this barrier in my prayer life.

The Only Way to Bear Fruit

The second idea that has really changed my perspective on prayer was John 15:5. Here Jesus says: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; *apart from me you can do nothing*" (New International Version, emphasis added throughout).

Jesus tells us to remain in Him. What does this mean? It reminds me of how it felt when I first met my husband. He was on my mind constantly and we were in constant communication. Even though we lived several states away from one another, it was as if he was with me throughout the day because my mind seemed to dwell on him! We remained in each other's hearts even though we were physically separated.

In order to remain in Christ and have Him remain in us, we must also stay in constant communication with Him. This is only accomplished through regular prayer and Bible study.

In the second part of the verse Jesus says that when we remain in Him, we will bear fruit, but if not we can do nothing. For a task-driven person such as me, that was a wake-up call. I realized that even though I could be checking things off on my list faster if I skipped prayer and Bible study, the truth was I wasn't really accomplishing anything worthwhile. I wasn't bearing fruit and all of the results of my hard work often seemed hollow.

There did not seem to be satisfaction in getting things done and, worst of all, my relationships with others were often filled with problems. I was also taking an entirely self-focused approach. Instead of trusting God that I would be able to accomplish what needed to be done, I was thinking in physical terms and relying completely on myself to finish the things on my list.

The Bible says that we are to put God first in our lives and He will give us everything we need (Matthew 6:33). This includes putting our commitment to spending daily time with God as our top priority even during busy and difficult times in our lives. It is a step of faith to take an hour to pray and do Bible study when you have 24 hours of work to accomplish in 12 hours! But the amazing thing is that when you do it, things in your life start to work together in what can only be called miraculous ways.

Even if you don't complete everything on your list, you are still at peace because you have kept your priorities in order and realize that in the end, it's

your relationship with God that will outlast your daily to-do list.

My Prayer Plan

After I began to understand these concepts I realized that a daily prayer time was a necessity. This is much harder to do than it sounds. For me, I had to develop a specific prayer plan that was tailored for my personality.

The most vital key to changing our habits in this area is asking God for help in our prayer lives. If you admit that you have a problem and you show God through determined effort that you are willing to strive to improve, the results can be amazing. Making physical changes to your prayer atmosphere can also make a difference.

It's important to evaluate your prayer life to see what areas need improvement and then make the necessary changes. Based on my past experiences I knew that praying silently in my bedroom led to nothing but daydreaming and sleepiness. While it is the quintessential picture of prayer to see someone kneeling by his or her bed, it just did not work for me. So I made a radical move to take my prayer time to the kitchen table (with its hard wooden chairs!) during a part of the day when I could be alone.

I also began to write down my prayers in a journal, forcing myself to be specific with my thoughts and feelings instead of making generalizations. Writing down my prayers helps me immensely to focus on what I am talking to God about. In the past, I would pray for a bit and then start daydreaming and completely lose my focus. For some people, simply praying out loud may be the trick that keeps their prayers focused.

I also put together a "prayer basket" that I keep in a place that I see regularly. Just seeing it is a physical reminder of my commitment to prayer. In it, I keep my Bible, my prayer notebook, any church materials I have been studying as well as cards and stamps if I need to send someone a card. I also keep a second notebook in which I list the people I am praying for as well as their needs in pencil. This makes it easy to add to or change the needs by erasing.

Take some time to think about how you can improve your prayer environment. Be creative in finding a solution to your limitations. Sometimes we have to be hard on ourselves in order to make the necessary changes. Trust me, this is an area that's worth it!

An Appointment With God

Once you have developed a specific prayer plan, the hard part begins—sticking to it! We need to pray and study the Bible every single day. We need to make a commitment to God to put Him first in our lives each and every day. This is a very hard thing to do.

They say that a new habit takes six weeks to solidify, but sometimes I think it can take longer! I struggle with this and I want to admit that to you because there may be other people out there who are struggling as well. It's



© 2008 Design Pics

okay because we can struggle together and maybe we can help each other out. Try to think of some things that you can do to help you stay on track with your prayer time.

For me, it helps to think of my prayer time as an actual appointment with God. This includes having a specific time and place to meet Him. Oh, how hard this can be sometimes, when I have a million things to do...to just stop and take an hour to do prayer and Bible study. The only way I could get myself to do this at first was to absolutely force myself. I would even sit still in a chair for a few minutes just breathing deeply to try to get my mind to stop reviewing my to-do list over and over! However, after several weeks of this difficult experience, I began to actually look forward to my prayer time each day, and it was not so hard to stop thinking about my to-do list.

Your prayer time could be at any point during the day when you have uninterrupted time. I have heard of all kinds of times and ways to pray. What is important is that you are consistently spending time in respectful communication with God.

I also have found that disruptions to my normal daily schedule tend to throw me off track. This can include things like having houseguests, going on a trip or having an illness in the family. I have found that writing out a plan of when and where I am going to pray in advance of situations like this helps me.

I can't stress enough how important God's help is in this area. In looking back over my written prayers from the past year, I notice that so many of them are prayers for God to help me to be consistent in prayer and to grow closer to Him. He is helping me, but I think he also wants me to make a strong effort so that my relationship with Him will be of value to me.

Embarrassed to Talk About Prayer?

One final thought about prayer is that we don't need to be embarrassed of prayer. God tells us to do our prayer in a solitary manner and to not try to "show off" by praying. I think sometimes this has led me to feel embarrassed to even mention praying with other people in the Church. For a long time, I was too embarrassed to tell my husband that I wanted to go and pray on a day when we were both home. Sometimes I wouldn't pray at all, because of this embarrassed feeling.

While we do need to guard against trying to look "superspiritual," we also need to realize that God comes first.

Husbands and wives will need to discuss making time for prayer in a frank and honest manner, as will roommates or anyone who lives together in close quarters with other people. This can be hard, but it's necessary. Ask God for the strength and the right words to express your needs without seeming like you are trying to show off. We should support one another as we each strive in humility to have a healthy relationship with God.

As I have worked on this area of my life, the results have been tremendous. It has been hard work, work that I still have to push myself to accomplish. But I truly feel like I am beginning to grow spiritually. I thank God for helping me to get this far, and I realize that without the gift of His Holy Spirit I would probably never even want to try and certainly would have never been able to get this far.

If you have trouble staying committed to your prayer time with God, please know that you are not alone! God wants to talk with you and He knows what you are going through, whether it is a lack of time or other limiting factors on your prayer life. However, He expects you to make the changes necessary to get in touch with Him and *remain* in Him! He will help you, but you must discipline yourself to overcome any prayer barriers you may have. And every time we miss a day, we must repent and start as soon as possible to get back into the prayer habit.

No Excuse

Now is the time to stop making excuses. I personally am quite acquainted with all of those excuses. Sometimes we may even think that God understands when we cut corners in our prayer and Bible study because of all of the pressures and stresses that make our lives busier than they should be. But the truth is, God doesn't understand when we don't put Him first. This is because even though He knows how hard our circumstances are—He also has unlimited power to help us through them.

If you commit to a daily prayer time with God, He will help you to get everything else done. Believe it and make a commitment to daily prayer today! **UN**

How do you make time for prayer? What has been your biggest prayer barrier and how have you overcome it? Send your ideas to United News for possible inclusion in a future article.

Joy Porter is a member of the Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation and an Ambassador Bible Center graduate.

Treasure Digest

Do We Put Off Baptism Because We Fear the Future?

Years ago, a man came to me and said that he wanted to be baptized. He knew he was a sinner. He knew he needed God's grace, forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. But something was hindering him from going forward. He told me: "I want to be baptized, but how do I know that I will endure to the end? I don't know what the following years will bring in my life. How do I know that I will be as committed to Jesus Christ then as I am now?"

None of us knows all the details as to what the future will bring. But should we put off baptism indefinitely because we cannot predict what we will face in the future?

The answer deals with the matter of faith, the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). At baptism we are asked this question: "Have you repented of your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?" Then, the minister states in part: "As a result of your repentance... and your acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, your Lord and Master, your High Priest and soon coming King, I now baptize you..."

To understand what our spiritual future holds for us is to understand Jesus' role as High Priest. As our

High Priest, Jesus daily intervenes for us. He started the process of intervention at our calling, and He will continue this until the last day of our lives (Philippians 1:6).

Yes, we study repentance, obedience and counting the cost as we consider baptism. We strive to obey God's laws. But do we also realize how big a role faith in our High Priest must play? We are given this life-lasting promise: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

Like Paul, we know that we are "carnal, sold under sin." We know that we are wretched and wonder who will save us from this body of death. And the answer: "I thank God—through Jesus Christ" (Romans 7:14, 24-25).

Our High Priest is both the author and the finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Jesus is the great High Priest who will give us mercy, grace and help in our time of need, no matter what our spiritual plight is even after baptism (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Yes, Jesus Christ will stand by us to the very end.

Vince Szymkowiak

Pastor, Rolla and St. Louis, Missouri, and Fairview Heights, Illinois, congregations

Benefits of Baptism

The awesome gift of the Holy Spirit is the greatest gift a human being can receive in this life! Just think—God is willing to share His very own Spirit!

Becoming baptized doesn't make life more difficult. It brings about the greatest possible help for dealing with all of life's problems! You are no longer alone. You are no longer relying on puny

human strength. God is with you and in you 24/7!

Notice the sequence in Matthew 28. Verse 19 says to make disciples and baptize them. After that (verse 20), "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." So it's a mistake to think that a great amount of knowledge is needed before baptism.

However, one does need basic understanding, which forms the foundation for his or her faith and repentance, the two primary conditions for baptism. According to Mark 16:15-16, "he who believes" the gospel is ready for baptism.

When tempted to procrastinate about being baptized, think of the example of the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26-39. As soon as he understood the gospel and the grace made available by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, he eagerly asked, "What hinders me from being baptized?"

Don Hooser

Pastor, Sedro-Woolley, Washington, congregation

The Beauty of Restoration

I rarely schedule time to watch television, but one of my greatest media indulgences is to watch one of the Hallmark Hall of Fame movies. I appreciate the moving and typically moral messages that are behind these films, as well as the fact that you can cry during the entirety of the show, and then during all of the touching commercials in between.

One aspect of a recent movie has stayed with me, and that was the concept of restoration.

The main character picked out an antique box that she hoped to have restored. The outside of the box was faded due to age and handling, so it had lost its original sheen. It had old, yellowed music and newspaper clippings inside the lid that were tattered and torn. While some may have seen the box as aged and worthless, she saw the potential to make it beautiful once again.

Artists who restore old artifacts have to have both vision and investment in the pieces with which they work. They must ascertain a piece's value and character, and then devote their time and efforts to bringing

it along to something as beautiful, or possibly more beautiful than before.

This takes a real investment of self going into each piece. The finished product was, in fact, quite beautiful after the artist restored it through steadfast precision and great attention to detail.

No matter what we've been through in the past months, years or even our lifetime, God allows us a personal restoration each year, called the Passover. Our personal trials, failures and stumbling blocks are evident to Him, just like the imperfections of the unrestored box are to the human eye. A broken latch, scratched interior and faded appearance speak to the box's imperfections in much the same way that we bring our spiritual and human inadequacies before God each Passover.

And just like the artist, God has a deep, personal investment of Himself in each of us as we seek renewal. Restoration is about working with the flaws a piece has, while accentuating the strength and character of the piece, and then incorporating them all into a pleasing finished product.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, Paul writes: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (New International Version throughout).

What a blessing it is to have a Father who will not abandon us even when our glory may not yet be totally evident. He has given us the extraordinary gift of repentance and forgiveness through Christ's loving sacrifice, which we humbly partake of each Passover. We are all works in progress, and fortunately, God is not finished with us yet. "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" (1 Peter 5:10).

Sharon VanSchuyver

Houston North, Texas, congregation

Turning the Hearts . . . "Thou Shalt Not Narc"

"Thou shalt not narc" is a commandment that has been diligently kept by young people. Depending on where and when you were in school, the act of reporting someone to the authorities has been called many things: tattling, ratting on, betraying, snitching, squealing or being an informer.

No one wanted to be known as a tattletale unless he or she was the teacher's pet. Older individuals are often affected by this "commandment" as well.

In truth we should not "narc," but we should "remark." Let me explain what I mean. More difficulty may arise if matters are not handled properly.

First, consider this example. The names have been changed, but the situation is real. Two girlfriends, Mary and Liz, noticed that Jane was losing weight. Jane made excuses when it came time to have dinner together. If she did come to dinner or ate with them, she soon visited the washroom. On several occasions, it was noticed that Jane had been throwing up and that her body was becoming emaciated.

Mary and Liz did not know what to do. They sought advice. They were counseled not to "narc" on their friend Jane, but to "remark" to her that they were concerned. They advised Jane to get help and that they would go with her to the counselor. They were afraid that Jane would reject their advice and then reject them as friends. They also realized that Jane's behavior was such that she was hurting herself badly and needed help.

They confronted Jane gently, and Jane agreed after some resistance to seek help. All three came to my office and, as Jane tearfully related to me what was going on with her eating disorder, her friends sat beside her with tears in their eyes. I reminded all of them of the wonderful friendship that they had. Mary and Liz were willing to risk a wonderful friendship to help their friend. They all shed a few more tears and they and I were able to help Jane on the road to recovery from the dreaded eating disorder.

They did not "narc" on their friend, but they did "remark" that they noticed a behavior that was not good for her. They then helped her to get help and accompanied their friend for comfort and support.

If you saw your friend getting ready to ride a sled over a cliff, would you reach out to tell him or her, "Don't do it"? Or would you merely stand by and watch the person hurt him or herself? We don't like difficult, touchy situations, however, when we encounter such situations, we must appropriately deal with them. That is brotherly love.

So, if you see your friends or brothers in the faith hurting themselves by behaviors that are unhealthy or sinful, don't "narc" or "tattle" on them, but go to them in humility and help them get help. Don't just ask them to get help. Offer to go with them. Give them a deadline to make up their minds. If they are unwilling, then you must seek help for them or figuratively watch them slide right over the cliff to destruction.

The apostle Paul wrote to the churches in the region of Galatia and said, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). Jesus' half-brother James wrote this: "Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

So, the next time you learn of friends or brothers or sisters in trouble, don't "narc" or "tattle," but do help them by "remarking" to them about their situation and then helping them to get the help they need!

"Thou shalt not narc" but "thou shalt love your brothers and sisters" enough to help them out of their difficulties!

Gary E. Antion



Children's Corner Children Bring Honor to Parents

Match these biblical parents with their children.

THE PARENTS

- Mary and stepfather Joseph
- David and Bathsheba
- Isaac and Rebekah
- Jacob and Rachel
- Noah and his wife
- Adam and Eve
- Zebedee and his wife
- Nun and his wife
- Eunice and her husband
- Elkanah and Hannah
- Solomon and Naamah
- Zacharias and Elizabeth
- Saul and Ahinoam
- Abraham and Sarah

THEIR CHILDREN

- Jacob (Genesis 25:20-26)
- Joseph and Benjamin (Genesis 30:1, 22-24; 35:24)
- Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-2)
- Solomon (2 Samuel 12:24)
- Samuel (1 Samuel 1:1-2, 20)
- James and John (Matthew 4:21)
- Joshua (Joshua 1:1)
- Jesus (Matthew 1:18-21; Luke 2:40-43)
- Shem, Ham and Japheth (Genesis 7:13)
- Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5; Acts 16:1)
- Jonathan (1 Samuel 14:49-50)
- Isaac (Genesis 17:17-19)
- Rehoboam (1 Kings 11:43; 14:21)
- John the Baptist (Luke 1:5, 13)

John McClain, Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation

Answers: 1-H; 2-D; 3-A; 4-B; 5-I; 6-C; 7-F; 8-G; 9-J; 10-E; 11-M; 12-N; 13-K; 14-L



Local Church Updates

Dubois-Jackson Has First Annual Wyoming Winter Weekend

Winters can be long and cold in Wyoming, but locals know how to keep warm. The Dubois-Jackson congregation enjoyed its first annual Wyoming Winter Weekend Jan. 19-20 in the home of Carl and Mary Carmichael. The Carmichaels are longtime elder and deaconess, and have hosted many get-togethers for brethren over the years.

The sermon Sabbath afternoon was given by area pastor, Wil Berg, on God's spiritual temple and the importance of increasing our spiritual fruits.

After services, the ladies helped set up the buffet. Dinner featured Mrs. Carmichael's giant, homemade taco shells and famous "Texas" taco filling. Others brought avocados, tomatoes, onions, olives, lettuce, picante and sour cream toppings, Mexican beer and the ingredients to make Jack Werts' (Salt Lake City, Utah, member) special recipe for margaritas.

While enjoying dinner, guests asked and answered table topic questions prepared by Sue Berg such as "How does a peacemaker make peace?" and "What do you appreciate most about God's Church?"

After dinner and amidst laughter, intense concentration and occasional ribbing, participants played games for several hours. First, there was a brain-teaser guessing game facilitated by Debbie Pierce, then a Bible search, Dictionary (a variation of Balderdash), Scrabble and Mexican dominos. By midnight, a few were ready to "count bighorn sheep," but most stayed up to watch a movie.

The next morning, everyone gathered for scrambled eggs, homemade sausage, wholegrain pancakes, fruit topping, maple syrup, fruit salad, juice, tea and coffee. Before heading home, participants enjoyed one last round of Mexican dominos and requested a Wyoming Winter Weekend again next year.

Susan Berg

Durban Holds Family Outing

A day outing was arranged for the Durban, South Africa, congregation on Monday, Dec. 17, at Watervale Lodge. The lodge is being managed by Mark and Babette Naude and is located at Inchanga, midway between Durban and Pietermaritzburg in Kwa Zulu Natal. Unfortunately the weather was not the best. It was quite cold for mid-December (late spring in the southern hemisphere) with some mist and light rain. But there was still quite a good turnout and a very pleasant day was enjoyed by both young and "old."

Grant and Kim Chick traveled from Port Shepstone to spend some time



The weather clears for braai (barbecue) time during the Durban family outing Dec. 17

with the brethren, their last opportunity before leaving for Australia, and the Nhlabathi family traveled from Empangeni.

The youth were able to play pool while the adults spent time just relaxing, chatting and enjoying the pleasant surroundings. At midday the weather cleared sufficiently for us to braai (barbecue) our meat. Mark Naude had very kindly provided the braai packs at a very reasonable price.

As always, the time seemed to pass by so quickly, and all too soon it was time to say our goodbyes and head home.

Neville Smith

Durban Youth Enjoy Camp Watervale and Canopy Tour

On hearing that we would be having a "camp," we could hardly contain our excitement. The youth in the Durban, South Africa, area all had high expectations for the weekend as all the other camps we had attended had been of a high standard. Well, this one did not disappoint!

We arrived at Watervale Lodge on Saturday morning, Jan. 12, and began on a relaxed note, but most importantly, with God. Altogether we had nine youths present. We had an interactive Bible study focusing on the challenges that we, as youth in the Church, face in the "world," and the solutions to those problems and challenges. The Speech Club that afternoon was impromptu, and we were encouraged to give our



Durban youth zips through the trees

thoughts and expectations regarding our future roles as husbands, wives and parents.

The evening was spent playing pool, swimming and just enjoying time together. It was a perfect end to the day as we laughed, chatted and enjoyed a good braai (barbecue) for dinner.

The next day we left early in the morning for Karkloof where the main activity was held. This was a "canopy tour," a very long set of steel cables that are stretched between platforms. Our guides harnessed us to the cable and made sure that we safely covered all eight stages from platform to platform.

The cables were suspended high above the valley, through the trees and bush, and one stretch was over 170 meters between platforms. After a couple of "shaky" starts, we got "the hang of it" (well most of us did). I think we were really brave!

It was an enjoyable activity, and it gave us a sense of achievement, especially those who are afraid of heights. Nobody backed out; everyone heeded all the encouragement and completed the course.

While up in the air, if your eyes weren't closed from fear, you could take in the beautiful scenery all around. But the most beautiful experience gained from the weekend camp was the friendship and time spent together as campers. It was something beautiful that we can treasure all of our lives.

Nontobeko Duma

Austin, Minnesota, Hosts Annual Winter Youth Social

On Feb. 16, the Austin, Minnesota, congregation held its yearly event at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Rochester, Minnesota.

Services began at 2:30 with a rousing song service followed by opening prayer by James Myers. The sermonette on "Making Wise Choices" was given by Joe Greene. Prisca Myers and Katlyn Whynaucht beautified the service with two duets: "Great Is Your Mercy for Me" and "You're Worthy of Praise."

Steve Myers' PowerPoint sermon admonished us to make sure to stay within the guidelines of God's way and beware of the New Age movement, which is totally against God's teachings. The closing prayer was given by Alex Riess.

A catered meal of sloppy joes, hot dogs and salads was topped off with pies and other desserts made by our ladies.

The theme selected for this year was the '50s, and some chose to dress accordingly. There was a photo booth where formal pictures were taken by Kelley Schreiber. We were blessed with a lot of snow for the snow tubing and snowmobile and horse-drawn sleigh rides.

Then, with Joe Greene as deejay, a



Irma and Jim Faulkner at the sock hop at Ironwood Springs, Minnesota (photo by Kelley Schreiber)

sock hop followed with the tiny tots joining in along with the oldest of the elderly. We even had a visit by Elvis (Dave Schreiber) singing "Blue Suede Shoes."

Brethren from our three sister churches—Mankato, Minnesota; La Crosse, Wisconsin; and Cedar Rapids, Iowa—joined us as well as visitors from Eau Claire and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin; and St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

We are looking forward to next year with eager anticipation.

Norma Nelson

Northern Ohio Fund-Raiser Draws 500

On Feb. 16, 500 people, mostly from the Great Lakes region, attended the third annual Wooster Regional Family Day in Wooster, Ohio. This event, hosted by the Canton congregation, included a fund-raiser for the Good Works program, and this year's selected project was to help fund a facility for the Zambian brethren to hold the Feast of Tabernacles and summer camps.

Those in attendance heard seminars for adults, young adults and teens that concentrated on the weekend's theme of family life. Guest speaker Joel Meeker, coordinator of the Church in French-speaking areas, gave a brief PowerPoint presentation about our African brethren, and then gave a sermon about age-appropriate responsibilities within God's Church.

Evening activities included a fantastic chili dinner, a cake walk, a family dance, a bluegrass jam session, activities for kids and preteens, plenty of basketball and volleyball for all ages and a country store. Many volunteers from the region made this year's event a big success. Finishing off the weekend was an all-night sleepover/lock-in

and a Sunday morning breakfast.

Total donations raised for the Good Works project were \$2,322.

Sara Hawk

Cambridge Honors Seniors With '50s-Themed Social

On March 1, 2008, the Cambridge, Ohio, congregation journeyed back to the 1950s for their annual Seniors' Dinner and Social. After services everyone enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner. Seated at the head table, the seniors were served homemade root beer floats by the C&C (Columbus and Cambridge) "soda jerks" for dessert.

After sundown a craft exhibit was set up for everyone to display his or her special abilities. A wide variety of talent filled the hallway display tables including Lego creations, a poetry display, photography, paintings, knitted and crocheted items, quilts, wood crafts, a family tree book, a handmade bow, a high-performance motor and many other items.

The evening concluded with a variety show that was packed full of enjoyable entertainment. Singing,



Cambridge and Columbus, Ohio's, soda jerks (from left: Gage Coleman, Dalton Parrish, A.J. Feiock, Josh Coleman and Mark Miller); inset, Josh Coleman serves the seniors

dancing, joke telling, a game show and various other acts kept everyone smiling. Everyone left that evening full of food, friendship and fun!

Lacie Feiock

Savannah Bible Study Started

On Sunday, Feb. 23, 15 people from the Savannah, Georgia, area met for our first United Church of God-sponsored Bible study. The study was conducted by Roy Demarest, pastor of the Orlando and Jacksonville, Florida, congregations. The study was followed by a meal and the opportunity to fellowship.

Most of the people present have been unable to attend services in Jacksonville regularly because of the great distance they must travel. They do try to get together each Sabbath and watch a video sermon from the home office in Cincinnati. All who attended seemed

very appreciative for the opportunity to meet together without having to travel several hours.

Plans are to hold studies four times a year in the area.

Frances Lipscomb

Grand Junction Enjoys Sledding/Tubing Weekend

A great sledding hill and 78 brethren made for an inspiring and fun-filled Presidents' Day weekend in Grand Junction, Colorado. The local congregation, usually about 25 people strong, hosted brethren from their sister church in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Colorado Front Range.

Sabbath services featured split sermons by Tim Heine and Jon Pinelli. Following services the brethren feasted to their hearts' content on a sumptuous potluck. A game night with fun for all ages rounded out the evening's activities.

On Sunday morning the young and old(er), armed with sleds and inner tubes, hit the slopes of the sledding hill on the Grand Mesa. The chilly temperatures and overcast skies were offset by the exciting inner tube races, tasty hot-dog lunch and lots of hot chocolate.



Grand Junction and guests go tubing Feb. 17

After sledding for most of the day, the brethren made their way back to the church building for a delicious chili dinner prepared by the Grand Junction brethren. Everyone came away with great memories.

Carol Foy

Tampa Bay Has Gender Appreciation Weekend

The Tampa Bay, Florida, congregations put Titus 2:1-8 into practice, combining education, fun and community service on Jan. 19 and 20.

Pastor David Treybig kicked off the "Gender Appreciation" weekend with a sermon titled "Vive la Différence," which discussed the complementary, biblically-defined roles of men and women.

After services, the young, unmarried women left for the Treybig's house for a meal and sleepover. In keeping with the evening's theme, "Becoming God's Jewels" from Malachi 3:17, the women discussed resisting the world's ungodly pressures and made a bracelet to help remember the event.

Across town, rough weather forced the men and boys to bring their planned dinner and campout indoors.

After making their own dinner, they discussed the challenges of being a godly man in an ungodly world. Making the best of their indoor campout, the men then watched a movie, *Facing the Giants*, which reinforced concepts discussed earlier in the evening.

The groups came together on Sunday for a work party to wax the floors and paint the exterior of the St. Petersburg church hall. The building's lessor, who supplied the material, was amazed by the outstanding turnout. Besides strengthening this relationship, the weekend's activities united the Tampa Bay brethren and reinforced biblical roles in the minds of our young members.

Kristin Yarbrough

Los Angeles Women's Club Explores Art

Fifteen ladies and one preteen of the Los Angeles, California, Women's Club gathered for a delightful artistic activity Sunday, Jan. 27. Lyda Castro supplied each participant with a pencil drawing of a pear on a piece of white cotton cloth. She also handed out fabric paints and brushes. She then demonstrated how to correctly apply and blend colors in order to create a small painting of a perfectly shaped yellow pear with branches and leaves.

Several of the ladies were pleasantly surprised that they actually had the talent to successfully complete this small project. Lyda explained that she had taught many beginning classes of fabric painting, but has never before experienced such skill in new pupils.

The activity produced not only the feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment in each participant, but also provided an excellent opportunity to fellowship and bond with one another in Christian camaraderie and friendship.

Marion Snyder

11-Year-Old Gives His First Speech

Gabriel (Gabe) Helwig, 11, gave his first speech in Family Christian Club in the Fairview Heights, Illinois, congregation on Feb. 2. He is the youngest speaker we've had in many years.

Gabe's speech was titled "The Future for Creation." He showed some very creative animal pictures he had made on the computer and talked about how awesome the Creator is.

When asked if he was nervous, he said, "I was a little nervous at first, but when I got up there I was okay. I enjoyed it a lot and plan on doing it as much as I can."

What made Gabe decide to give a speech? "My dad kinda talked me into it."

Gabe is the son of Chuck and Liz Helwig. His siblings are Maddie, Noah and Ava. The family attends the Fairview Heights congregation.

Gabe is homeschooled and is in the sixth grade. He enjoys engineering and constructing buildings with Legos. He



Gabe Helwig shows his creative animal pictures during speech Feb. 2

is a creative young man, and we look forward to hearing his next speech.

Marla Osborne

Phoenix Northwest Parents Learn About the Middle Years

The Phoenix, Arizona, Northwest congregation just completed Growing Kids God's Way—the Middle Years. This series is a follow up to the original Growing Kids God's Way.

In the middle years series parents of 8- to 12-year-olds learned how the roles of authority begin to change and discussed moral maturity, dealing with peer pressure and changes due to physical growth and adolescence. Communication is also stressed, along with how to grow closer as a family. The series goes on to explain how discipline changes as the child grows.

The six-week course ended with courtship and dating while bringing the children into their teen years toward adulthood.

The pastor of Phoenix Northwest, Randy Schreiber, facilitated 15 adults participating in the course as they learned how to better parent their collective 25 children. They grew closer as a group and encouraged each other as they begin and continue parenting through the middle years.

Kristie Rocheleau

L.A. Young Adults Auction Cakes for Charity

Shortly after sunset on the Sabbath of March 1, a generous Los Angeles, California, post-potluck crowd took part in a cake auction hosted by the L.A. young adults group to benefit the Good Works Program. With the cre-



Robert Lyons auctions cakes for the Good Works Program

ative and delectable baked goods from the young adults and their supporters, the congregation had many mouth-watering options on which to bid.

Following a reminder that all of the

funds raised from the cake purchases were going directly to fund upcoming Good Works projects, our enthusiastic auctioneer Robert Lyons went to work to get the crowd inspired for cake buying!

The reward of getting to eat the purchased cakes was rivaled only by the entertainment value of watching the brethren in action! Highlights of the night included bidding wars that ensued among friends, and discovering the contents of the "Mystery Cake" boxes, which were a huge hit.

Meredith Black

Phoenix East Has a Busy Winter

The Phoenix, Arizona, East congregation had many opportunities to gather together with those of like mind of all ages through the winter months.

In November, the seniors and teens enjoyed an IMAX feature film on dinosaurs. December's cooling temperatures brought on thoughts of winter and spurred a preteen ice-skating trip and a teen ski weekend.

Dec. 22 the congregation presented a vocal variety show, which included a meal during intermission. Singers varied in age, with the children's choir's youngest singer being only 3 years old. Love songs, musical hits and hymns rang through the room, and there was even a special guest star—Elvis!

January brought another ski trip, but this time a day trip for the preteens and their families. Dinner and a movie were the feature events for February. Later in the month, the preteens and their families hiked through the flowering desert to Wind Cave.

On the Sabbath of March 8, Phoenix East hosted a UCG Focused Education



Vocal variety show in Phoenix East includes children's choir and Elvis (photos by Terri Hoffman)

seminar on "Breaking Free of Harmful Behaviors" with guest speakers John Cafourek and Melvin Rhodes. Topics included "Dealing With Abuse," "Understanding Addictive Behaviors" and "Same-Gender Addiction."

The congregation ended the month with a chili potluck dinner on March 29 that afforded lots of fellowship.

Lorelei Nettles

Sherman Youth Honor Seniors

Senior citizens from the Sherman, Texas, congregation were honored with special music and a luncheon on the Sabbath of March 22. As they

arrived at services, the seniors were presented with a corsage.

Special music was presented by the young people under the direction of Amber Brock, singing a piece titled "You're Worthy of My Praise." Our oldest senior, Mrs. Cressman, turned 90 that weekend and was awarded a dozen red roses by the pastor.

After services, seniors were escorted across the street by their young waiters and waitresses to their tables at the specially prepared dining hall. Upon arrival, the waiters and waitresses took drink and salad orders for each senior. After the salad, each senior was served a classic Texan meal—a generous portion of beef brisket, scalloped potatoes, green beans and a roll.



Sherman young people give special music (photo by David Adam)

After clearing tables, the youth then served desserts consisting of homemade chocolate cake, a variety of cheesecakes and fruit.

During dessert, the seniors and youth played "Mystery Senior." This game began with preparations a week before when each young person asked a senior specific questions. At the luncheon those answers were read aloud, and the other youths and seniors had a chance to name the "Mystery Senior" and win a prize.

Everyone seemed to enjoy getting to know each other better this way. And many were surprised by the young people's knowledge of the seniors' identities.

To close the luncheon, the youngest children presented each senior with a pair of decorated gardening gloves with their handprints. On each finger was noted a way in which they, as children, could serve: praying, obeying God, kind words and helping.

The youth enjoyed serving and pleasing the seniors. And even though the seniors were the ones being honored, the young people received many words of appreciation fitly spoken by the seniors.

Youth participants were Rhianna, D.J. and Zac Cartwright; Mara and Annica Efimov; Gray and Kate Ledbetter; Kaela and Cooper Pierce; Moira Cooksey; Dalton and Michaela Baughman; and Brayden, Jessie, Justin, Makenna and Wylie Brock.

Amy Pierce

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*.

Announcements

Births

Robert and Amber Teitgen of the Worcester, Massachusetts, congregation are extremely overjoyed to announce the



James David Teitgen

birth of their first child James David. He was born on his Uncle David's birthday, Aug. 24, 2007, weighed exactly 9 pounds and measured exactly 21 inches long.

He is the third grandchild of his grampa, Herb Teitgen (arriving only 12 days after his cousin Joy Erickson), and the sixth grandchild of his nana, Elaine Tucker. He has three great-grandparents—Ivan and Edna Robinson and Harry Thompson—and many aunts and uncles and great-aunts and uncles. His love for life is already evident through his beaming smiles and sparkling eyes, which bring even more happiness to his mommy and daddy every day!

Tom and Carla (Teitgen) Erickson of the Fargo, North Dakota, congregation are happy to announce the birth of their second child, Joy Anne Erickson.



Joy Anne Erickson

She was born on Aug. 12, 2007, and weighed 7 pounds 2 ounces and was 18½ inches long.

Big brother Eric (4) enjoys playing with his new sister. Proud grandfather Herb Teitgen is the pastor of the Fargo congregation.

Joel and Kristin Brunick of the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, congregation would like to announce the birth of their son, Josiah James, who was born on Dec. 30, 2007.

Josiah joined two sisters, Jaden (7) and Kaylee (5), and one brother, Kade (2), who have enjoyed him from the start. Proud grandparents are (the late Edward Brunick and) Claudia Brunick of the Watertown, South Dakota, congregation



Josiah James Brunick

and Robert and Alane Ameson of Hayti, South Dakota.

Eric and Tara Tissue of the Kalamazoo, Michigan, congregation would like to introduce you to their second child, a boy, Bo Grant. Bo was born one month early on Feb. 6, 2008, weighing 6 pounds 7 ounces and measuring 20 inches long.



Bo Grant Tissue

He's doing great and his big sister, Hollyanne, is thrilled with him.

Excited big sisters Lily and Lauren want to announce the birth of their brother Lance Dakota Francis Sheets. He was born April 25, 2007, weighing 7 pounds 8 ounces and measuring 20 inches long. Proud parents Joan (Hoffahrt) and Dennis Sheets are thrilled to have girls and now a boy. The family attends the Beloit, Wisconsin, con-



Lance Dakota Francis Sheets

gregation with Grandma Irene Hoffahrt. Grandparents Kurt and Fran Schuster attend the Wisconsin Dells congregation. Lance was their 13th grandchild.

Joe and Kelly (Good) Diamond of the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation are excited to announce the birth of their second child, Logan Blake. He was born on Feb. 5, 2008, weighing 7 pounds and measuring 20 inches long.

Maternal grandparents are Dan and Peggy Good of the Greensboro, North

Carolina, congregation. Paternal grandparents are Edith Diamond of the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation and the late



Logan Blake Diamond

Bert Diamond. Big brother Ethan is so excited to have a little brother!

Engagements

Harold and Louise Pennington of Marysville, Ohio, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Jennifer Lillian Pennington, to Micah Donovan Disman, son of Ron and Grace Disman of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Randall Stiver, pastor of the Columbus, Ohio, congrega-



Micah Disman and Jennifer Pennington

tion, will be performing the ceremony. An Aug. 3 wedding is planned.

Weddings

Nick and Sylvia Bratnick of the Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation along with Frank and Lynn Tino are happy to announce the marriage of their children, Jessica Bratnick and Ryan Tino.



Jessica and Ryan Tino

They were married on Oct. 28, 2007, at Lake Point Hall in Charlotte. Jessica's

sister, April Bratnick, served as maid of honor. Ryan Mayo, longtime friend of the groom, served as best man. The wedding was performed outside in a beautiful lakefront setting by David Mills, pastor of the Charlotte congregation. Jessica and Ryan attend the Charlotte congregation.

Shannon Guy and Eddie Foster exchanged their marriage vows at the Holiday Inn Metroplex in Girard, Ohio, on July 15, 2007. Shannon is the daughter of James and Carla Guy, members of the Youngstown, Ohio, congregation, and Eddie's parents are John and Susan Foster, who pastor the congregations in Princeton and Charlestown, West Virginia, and Roanoke, Virginia. The groom's father performed the wedding.

Jennifer Foster served as matron of honor and the bridesmaids were Kamie Stoner, Lily Guy, Jennifer Heesch, Sarah Dean, Jamie Franks, Tracy Nance, Lena Van Ausdler and Amy Foster.

The groom's brother, Tim Foster, served



Shannon and Eddie Foster

as best man, and the groomsmen were Matt Earles, Nick Bizic, Kevin Troyer, Andrew Tranquada, Jonathan Stoner and Jimmy Guy.

Ring bearers Alec Nance and James Guy III came down the aisle with Alec pulling James and flower girl Reagan Hall in a beautifully decorated wagon. Autumn Nance also served as a flower girl.

The couple is now living in Middletown, Ohio, and attends the Dayton, Ohio, congregation.

Anniversaries

John and Jackie Ward of the Paddock Wood (Tonbridge, Kent, United Kingdom) congregation celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 15, 2008. John and Jackie live in Hailsham, East Sussex. They have three children and 12 grandchildren. They celebrated their big day with a family gathering.

On Jan. 5, 2008, Dale and Donna Black were honored with a tea given by their Church family and their son and his family in recognition of their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married Jan. 3, 1958.

During their 41 years as members of God's Church, they have attended congregations in Belleville, Mt. Vernon and Rockford, Illinois. Residing near Rockford for the past 20 years, they presently serve in the Beloit, Wisconsin, UCG. Dale was ordained a deacon in 1976.

They kept their first Feast in Big Sandy, Texas, in 1967.

They are the parents of two sons, Bruce Dale (deceased) and Brian David



Donna and Dale Black

(and wife Charisse). They have two granddaughters, Kurstin and Courtney, and one great-grandson, Corbin.

Obituaries

Jeanette Giroux, 73, of Independence, Oregon, died Nov. 16, 2007, following a battle with cancer. She was a longtime member of the congregation in Salem, Oregon. Baptized nearly 50 years ago, in August of 1958, she served as a faithful member of the Church for many years.

Jeanette was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on Dec. 1, 1933. She was fifth in birth order in a family of 10 children. The family relocated a number of times while she was growing up, moving from Texas to Arizona and then to California before finally settling in Oregon.

Jeanette married following graduation from high school. She and her husband of 55 years, Elmer Giroux, never had any children. However, Jeanette had a special love for children, so she



Jeanette Giroux

assisted as a teacher's aide for a number of years. Cooking, quilting and painting were some of her other interests. She sold over 200 works of art, and her paintings were often included in art shows.

Jeanette Giroux is survived by her husband and by two brothers and two sisters. A memorial service was conducted by pastor John Cafourek after services in Salem on Dec. 1.

Gladys Ann Stiglich, 66, of Waynesville, North Carolina, died at Haywood Regional Medical Center on Feb. 23, 2008, following a brief illness.

She was born on Dec. 13, 1941, to the late Fred Inman and Dovie Massie Inman in Haywood County. She worked faithfully for many years as a geriatric nurse caring for many sick people. She loved her family and especially her grandbaby Chad Logan Millican.

She is survived by her son, Charles Millican III of Georgia; two sisters, Effie Moore and Virginia Roper, both of Waynesville; and her grandchild, Chad Logan Millican.

She had been married for one year to Leon Stiglich who preceded her in death last year. She was unable to attend local services but received sermon CDs.

Pearl Alma Gaumer, age 88, of Canton, Ohio, died Feb. 15, 2008, in her



Pearl Alma Gaumer

home from natural causes. Mrs. Gaumer was still enjoying her independent apartment living, driving her car to services each week, and she hadn't been to a doctor in the last six years of her life.

She was a homemaker and a loving mother, and was an active member of the Church of God for over 47 years. A true servant of God during all her years in the Church, she devoted loving attention to making sure the church hall was ready for services, attending to flowers, cleaning, painting and decorating, and never seeking credit for herself. She was one of the pioneer members of the newly formed Akron, Ohio, congregation back in 1959, and was baptized in 1960. She will be greatly missed.

Mrs. Gaumer was born June 30, 1919, in Portage County, Ohio, in the town of Suffield, the fifth of eight children. She is survived by one brother, two sisters and one son—Roger Gaumer, of the UCG East Texas congregation.

A memorial service was held Feb. 21.

A mother laughs our laughs, sheds our tears, returns our love, fears our fears. She lives our joys, cares our cares and all our hopes and dreams she shares. Our mother, Monteen Gilder Poirier, 86, of Daytona Beach, Florida, died Feb. 9, 2008.

She is survived and missed by Robert Poirier, Dianne Seab, Betty Rockwell and Tammy Johnson; her grandchildren Robert George Poirier IV, Michelle Poirier, Kelly Tetric, Kerry Seab, Cherie Elebash, Jon Turner, David Johnson, Melissa Johnson and Lisa Johnson; her sons-in-law Bob Rockwell and John Johnson; her sister, Frances Harrellson; and several



Monteen Gilder Poirier

great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her son, Robert George Poirier III. She was the daughter of the late Harvey and Florence Gilder.

She was a member of the United Church of God in Orlando, Florida. She loved her family and the brethren. She lived a long and wonderful life and had many friends.

Janis Darlene Usselman, a member of the Redlands, California, congregation, died Jan. 28, 2008, at the age of 57. She had been suffering for years from various illnesses, but her death was due to complications from cancer.



Janis Darlene Usselman

Janis was baptized on Oct. 2, 2006, and was the beloved wife to her husband Darvin Usselman. They have no children.

She was buried in the Riverside National Cemetery with services conducted by her pastor Robin Webber. Her headstone reads, "She walked with God."

Janis was a loving person who loved the Sabbath and fellowshiping with the brethren. She eagerly looked forward to keeping the Holy Days and the Feast of Tabernacles. She will be greatly missed by her husband and family. Mr. Usselman awaits that joyous reunion at the time of resurrection.

Mr. Usselman appreciates all of the prayers and cards for Janis and himself during this very trying time and the comfort from God that will always be treasured. If anyone would like to write to Mr. Usselman, his address is 9426 Tamarisk, Space #62, Hesperia, CA 92345.

Virgie Maye Johnson was born May 10, 1924, in Cassville, Missouri, and died Feb. 10, 2008, in Loveland, Ohio, at the age of 83.



Virgie Maye Johnson

She was the youngest daughter of Thomas E. Welborn and Elsie P. Welborn. Though the family lived in a number of locations across the United States, they always considered Poplar Bluff, Missouri as their home. Virgie attended high school in Poplar Bluff and had many friends who still live in the

area. On Sept. 3, 1949, she married Carl William Johnson, a native of St. Louis, Missouri, and they remained inseparable until his death on Aug. 9, 2000, shortly before their 51st anniversary.

She and her husband were baptized in St. Louis in April of 1965, and she was a faithful member of the United Church of God since its inception. She and her husband served in the local congregations as deacon and deaconess. Because of failing health, she moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2006 to be near her son and his wife, but her heart remained in Poplar Bluff, and she tried to maintain a close contact with her many friends in that area. Her bright sense of humor and friendliness will be missed by those who knew and loved her.

She was also preceded in death by her parents, a half-brother Thomas Welborn Jr. and three sisters—Golda Overfield of Grand Junction, Colorado; Thelma Derryberry of Summersville, Missouri; and Pauline Johnson of St. Charles, Missouri.

Survivors include her son and daughter-in-law, David and Becky Johnson of Batavia, Ohio, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. David works at the home office and is an instructor at Ambassador Bible Center.

The funeral service was conducted on Feb. 15 in Poplar Bluff by local pastor Rick Beam, and she was buried beside her husband and parents at Walton Chapel cemetery, just west of town.

Erling Madsen, age 93, died March 2, 2008, at his home in Enterprise, Alabama,



Erling Madsen

surrounded by his loved ones. Mr. Madsen was a member of the Church of God since 1989 and attended services in Geneva, Alabama. He was born Feb. 14, 1915, in Duluth, Minnesota, to Hans and Catherine Madsen, immigrants from Denmark. He spent his childhood in Duluth and later settled in San Antonio, Texas, before joining the U.S. Army.

Mr. Madsen's career spanned 54 years, during which he served in the Army, the Marines and the U.S. Defense Mapping Agency. He fought in World War II and traveled around the world. He worked for several years surveying and mapping the terrain of the Middle East. He retired from the Defense Mapping Agency in 1974 and spent over 20 years living in Laurel Hill, Florida. There, he and his wife, Vara Lee, were the owners of Madsen Crafters, a ceramics shop.

Mr. Madsen's hobbies included gardening, beekeeping, winemaking, carpentry, sculpting and woodcarving. He also had a deep affection for animals, especially dogs and horses, and a love of music. Mr. Madsen set us all a sterling example of how one should care for his spouse, especially during her final years.

Mr. Madsen was married for 49 years to

Vara Lee McClure who died in November of 2003, also a member in Geneva. He is survived by his sons, Richard and Owen, and his daughter and son-in-law, Margaret and Bill Tyner. He is the grandfather of Melanie Szucs, Ashley Tyner and Katy Holmes. He has three great-granddaughters, Lauren, Emily and Maren Szucs; and two grandsons-in-law, Jeff and Steven Holmes.

A memorial service took place March 5, 2008.

Louise Jacobs Wheeler, age 89, of the Yuma, Arizona, congregation, died Feb.



Louise Jacobs Wheeler

22, 2008, of congestive heart failure. She was a member of God's Church since 1960. She and her first husband, James Jacobs, lived in Shelbina, Missouri, until his death 1986. In 1991 she married Everett Wheeler and they moved to Yuma where they have lived in retirement.

The congregation has loved and appreciated the Wheelers, and we now miss Louise. A memorial service was held Feb. 24 with elder Randy Love officiating.

Marie M. Wann, 88, of Fanshawe, Oklahoma, died March 15, 2008, in Poteau, Oklahoma. She was born near Fanshawe in 1919. Marie married Harold Wann in 1938. They were married 61 years before Harold preceded her in death in 1999.

Marie loved her family with a great love, but her greatest love in life was for God and His Church. She heard Herbert Armstrong in 1945. She began an intensive study of the Bible to confirm what she was hearing. There were no churches near enough to attend in those early years and finances did not allow her to travel to Big Sandy, Texas. Each year in spring and fall, she would get out the map and trace the road to Big Sandy with a great longing to be there.

Each Sabbath, during those years, she and her two sisters would spend the Sabbath together on her farm with their children. They would study the Bible together and would instruct their children regarding what they were learning.



Marie M. Wann

Marie was baptized in late winter of 1962. She traveled to Chandler, Oklahoma, four hours away, to keep the Passover that first year. After this, she finally was able to travel to Big Sandy, Texas, six hours away, for the spring and fall Holy Days until 1966 when a local church was established in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Marie drove for one hour each way in order to attend church. She greatly rejoiced over her ability to attend on a regular basis. For the next 42+ years she rarely ever missed church or Bible study. She loved to get to church early and stay late, if possible. She loved to greet and hug the brethren—all were very precious to her.

In 1995, she made the move to the United Church of God in order to continue to hear and practice the things she had proven from the Bible those many years ago. This precious truth of God truly was a "pearl of great price" to her.

Marie was always curious to see if she could do the things she saw being done. As a result, she plumbed a bathroom; built rooms onto her home; upholstered furniture; made clothing for herself and her family; crocheted; made multiple quilts; made large gardens and preserved the produce; became a child-care provider for many children in the community, worked for In-Home Health and so many other things too numerous to mention.

Marie is survived by two daughters and sons-in-laws, Andrea and Roger West of Fort Smith and Sandra and Charleston Williams of Smyrna, Tennessee; three sons and two daughters-in-law, Jim and Nancy Wann of Monroe, Oklahoma, Bob Wann of Big Sandy, Texas, and Jeff and Pattie Wann of Mounds, Oklahoma. She was preceded in death by one grandchild and is survived by 15 grandchildren. She is also survived by 26 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted March 18 by Roger West. She awaits the resurrection in the family cemetery in Summerfield, Oklahoma.

Bessie Miller, 91, of West Salem, Illinois, died Jan. 12, 2008. She was a longtime member of the Church, having attended in Evansville, Indiana; Mt. Vernon and Salem, Illinois; and Henderson, Kentucky.

Survivors include three sons, Ed (Joyce) Miller of West Salem, Tom (Nancy) Miller of Evansville and Don (Karen) Miller of Browns, Illinois; two daughters, Judy (Chuck) Baker of West Salem and Karla Miller of Bells, Tennessee; three brothers, Bob (Mae) Lomas of Olney, Illinois, Bill (Diane) Lomas of West Salem and Bernie (Joan) Lomas of Olney; 10 grandchildren; several great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Fred. Funeral services were held Jan. 15.

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*.

News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

number of individuals on the UCG-Canada subscriber list, and a number of those were able to attend, including one couple who drove over six hours each way.

Darris McNeely, *WNP* managing editor and *Beyond Today* television presenter, and Robin Webber, a *WNP* senior editor, presented the seminar.

The morning Sabbath service began with Mr. McNeely's presentation "The Purpose of Prophecy." The second presentation "A Heart Towards Prophecy" was given by Robin Webber. The afternoon seminar sessions included the topics "The Coming King of the South," "Mark of the Beast," and "Wars of Religion: An Ancient Scourge Reborn."

With powerful messages, great food and fellowship among members of three congregations and guests, some likened it to a feast day.

Mr. McNeely and Mr. Webber also presented four 50-minute *WNP* seminar sessions to 57 eager people in Penticton on Sunday, April 6. Attendees came from as far away as Calgary, Alberta.

Seventeen new people came, either responding to advertisements placed in Merritt, Princeton and Osoyoos, British Columbia, and Omak, Washington, newspapers, or a letter to the *GN* mailing list.

An exhaustive literature table provided *Good News* magazines and booklets in French, Spanish and German, as well as English. Fastest disappearing booklets were *God's Holy Day Plan*, *The New Covenant: Does It Abolish God's Law* and, interestingly, all German literature disappeared too!

Audience comments included: "Amazing information," "I never thought of it that way before" and it "has always been right in front of me!"

David Palmer and James Ludvigson

Sri Lanka Site Picked

The Sri Lankan Feast site will be at the Induruwa Beach Resort in Bentota, about 40 miles south of the capital city, Colombo. International guests will arrive at the

Colombo International Airport and can hire a taxi to the site for about \$50 to \$60. The trip normally takes two to three hours, depending on the time of day and traffic.

Feastgoers will enjoy an abundance of delicious food featuring Sri Lankan curries and international fare. Most dinners will feature a live band playing Western and Sri Lankan music. Photos of the hotel can be viewed at www.villaoceanhotels.com. The rates for full board are: single—\$45; double—\$52; and triple—\$78.

For additional information and reservations, please contact David Baker by e-mail at david_baker@ucg.org or call (585) 624-5166.

David Baker

St. Lucia Feast Full

The St. Lucia Feast site has reached capacity and is closed to further transfers.

Arnold Hampton

Eugene Prepares for 75th

The UCG congregation in Eugene, Oregon, is beginning preparations for the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the first congregation back in October of 1933. The anniversary celebration is being planned for the Sabbath of Sept. 27. Tours of historical sites in the area will be available on Sunday.

Special guests for the occasion will be UCG President Clyde Kilough and his wife, Dee. The Kiloughs will also be staying for the Feast of Trumpets on Sept. 30.

John Cafourek

Houston Music Festival to Be Aug. 31

The Fourth Annual UCG Houston Music Festival will be held Sunday, Aug. 31, 2008, Labor Day weekend, at 20737 Broze Rd., Humble, Texas. Performances will begin approximately 10 a.m. Sunday morning. Last year approximately 250 people, including 43 musicians, enjoyed a full day of rock, folk, country and blues music while visiting and relaxing.

Out of town musicians can use stage equipment provided by local musicians,

Members' Web Site.

Be sure to check out the

Members' Web site (members.ucg.org) where you can view *About Our Father's Business* videos, see upcoming events or listen to archived Sabbath services.



2008 Camp Video.

including a drum set, amplifiers, keyboards, congas, bongos, timbales, microphones and monitors.

Musicians interested in participating in the Houston Music Festival 2008 should contact David Buchanan at the new e-mail address, BuchananEnvironmental@embarqmail.com (please use "Subject: Houston Music Festival" to avoid deletion of your correspondence), or by telephone at (281) 852-2438.

Song lists and set length must be submitted no later than July 15. To avoid redundancy, songs will be approved on a first-come, first-served basis. Musicians must be members or attending one of the Sabbath-keeping churches of God (exceptions will be made for nonmember musicians in a backup role). All musicians must conform to Church standards for dress, grooming and conduct. As always, we ask musicians to be careful to select music that is appropriate for a church activity.

For attendees who must avoid the sun, several canopies will be erected, but most will bring a chair or blanket and sit on the lawn. Local brethren will bring extra lawn chairs for visitors.

Our concessions stand will sell food, drinks and snacks to cover expenses. Music Festival entry is free; however, donations will be accepted and funds in excess of expenses will be donated to the United Church of God.

Hotel accommodations may be found in Humble, approximately five minutes from the church building. There will be no rain-out. In the event of rain, music will be

What's New on the Web?

Watch or download the 2008 United Youth Camp video "A Bridge to the Future" at members.ucg.org/youthcamps/.

UCG Commentary.

"Easter, Seder or Neither?" "Of Rice, Men and God" "Does God Have Any Real Interest in Jerusalem?" www.ucg.org/commentary

About Our Father's Business.

See recent updates on the Church in

Peru, Zambia, Mexico, Italy and French-speaking areas. members.ucg.org/fathersbusiness

Featured Link

Vertical Thought Web Site

includes the magazine, new content weekly, Q&As and much more! verticalthought.org



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

performed in the building auditorium.

David Buchanan

Wheeling Plans Family Music Festival Weekend

The Wheeling, West Virginia, congregation is planning a weekend of music, family fun and fellowship for July 10 to 13 at Sally Buffalo Park near Cadiz, Ohio. As in previous festivals there will be a special emphasis on bluegrass, but country, folk and pop musicians and music-lovers are welcome too. Jam sessions, parking lot pickin' and an entertainment program will highlight activities on Thursday night, Friday and Sunday.

A "reception" is scheduled Friday at 7 p.m.—snacks and refreshments will be provided as we settle in for the Sabbath. On July 12 there will be Sabbath services, a potluck-style lunch and Bible studies for various age groups. Saturday night will feature an extended jam-session and sing-along with lots of great food. Based on interest and available talent, we hope to wrap up the weekend with a "big show" on Sunday, featuring performances by all those who want to join in.

Tent and RV camping are available at the park, and there are a few motels in the vicinity. Weather isn't a factor—if it rains, we can head into the barn to continue the activities.

For planning purposes, we ask that you register if you're going to attend all or part of the weekend. Registration forms are available online at www.ucgnet.org/wheeling/bluegrass. You can request a form and/or get further information (including details on housing and camping) by contacting Bob Miller at (740) 968-3106 or Keith Wilson at (724) 228-2186.

Don Henson

Calendar of Events

May 18-19: GCE annual meeting.

May 21-22: Council of Elders' meeting, Mason, Ohio.

June 21: Pittsburgh 50th, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (www.ucgnet.org/pittsburgh/50).

July 10-13: Family Music Festival Weekend, near Cadiz, Ohio (www.ucgnet.org/wheeling/bluegrass; see article, this page).

July 17-20: Third Teen/Young Adult weekend sponsored by the Garden Grove, California, congregation (Luky2binhb@yahoo.com, Ehsjock14@yahoo.com or (714) 378-6143).

Aug. 31: Houston Music Festival (see article, this page).

Aug. 29-Sept. 1: Singles/Couples Labor Day Weekend, Kansas City, Missouri (www.kc2008transformation.com). See article, March/April, page 16.

Aug. 12-14: Council of Elders' meeting, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Sept. 27: Eugene 75th, Eugene, Oregon (see article, this page).

Attention Graduating Seniors and Parents!

Congratulations! We would like to feature the 2008 high school graduates in a special section of the July *United News*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by June 16, 2008.

1. Graduate's Name
2. Parents' Names
3. Congregation and Pastor's Name
4. High School Accomplishments
5. Church Activities/Hobbies/Interests (tell a little bit about yourself)
6. Plans After Graduation
7. Additional Comments (favorite quote, favorite scripture, motto, advice, etc. Please identify which it is, so we don't think your advice is your motto, etc.)

Also include your phone number or e-mail address to use to confirm spellings, etc. (They will not be printed.)

Please send with a recent photo (conforming with biblical standards of dress and hair length) of the graduate by June 16.

By e-mail to: Mike_Bennett@ucg.org.

By mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.

We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length; 250-word maximum length. Thanks!



United News
News of the United Church of God, an International Association

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