



Leadership Seminars Held in Mexico

by Gabriel Garcia

At the UCG office in Mexico, two special leadership weekends were held: Nov. 16-17, 2024 and Feb. 1-2, 2025.

“Also Me”

The first weekend was themed “Also Me,” based on Proverbs 16:3. The seminars encouraged collaboration among members for both individual and collective edification. We were blessed to have the pastor from Chile and Argentina, Marcelo and Marcela Saavedra, as well as Marco Medina from the area. Also, brethren from Acapulco, Monterrey, Chiapas and Tabasco traveled to attend the seminars.

The weekend began with Sabbath services, where we had a record attendance of 91 people. Our mini-choir and live keyboard accompaniment supported the hymn service led by Moisés Cruz. A special music presentation by the Alvarado children from Chiapas, who have long-awaited the opportunity to share their music live, graced this well-attended service.

The messages, which supported the theme, were delivered first by Mr. Saavedra with his split sermon titled “The Importance of Collaboration” and the second message by Mr. Garcia titled “The Four Commitments.”

During the second message, 10 children moved to a small room for a small Sabbath school class, directed by Sara Cruz, focusing on a fruit of the Holy Spirit: faith. The children were attentive and pleased to be together



Sabbath services on Nov. 16, 2024 had a record attendance of 91 people.



The second weekend picked up where the first left off.

and learn the Word of God.

After this spiritual meal, we began the physical one, with abundant and delicious food in which all the brethren collaborated. After lunch, we prepared to hold the men’s club and the ladies’ club. For the ladies, a cafe was set up just a few meters away from the offices. After enjoying mojitos and berry (without alcohol), chicken nuggets, potato chips and sweet potatoes, over 30 ladies enjoyed presentations and reflected on the commitments in their lives, with examples such as Lois and Eunice.

At the same time, the men’s club was held in the main hall, in its classic hybrid format, with several members who had never participated in person before. It was an exciting session that included an “expressive reading” exercise, allowing participants to practice with the tools learned in the club. In all, five speeches were presented and evaluated by the men. More than 30 men participated in person and 10 connected from Guatemala, Chile and Peru.

The day finished with fellowship, snacks and table tennis. Then our visitors went to the homes of the local brethren who



Seminars and workshops provided opportunities for fellowship and learning.

were generously hosting them.

Sunday’s itinerary included five presentations titled: “God Begins with Your Story” (Saavedra), “Participate with Purpose” (Cruz), “Yes We Can, Yes We Can, Yes We Can” (Medina), “My UCG Purpose” (Delgado) and “Ignition” (Garcia). The master of ceremonies was the young Jair Ventura, who led with joy and characteristic joviality. More than 60 people attended these well-directed talks, which complemented each other and focused on God.

We are grateful to God for such a successful event, and we

are thankful for all who collaborated in every aspect of this weekend.

“I’m a Pillar”

The theme of the second leadership weekend was “I’m a Pillar” (Revelation 3:12). Picking up where the previous weekend left off, we welcomed numerous guests from Guatemala, the United States, and all over Mexico: Acapulco, Veracruz, Chiapas, Tabasco, Monterrey and Toluca.

On the Sabbath, 83 people joyfully gathered to worship

God at the UCG Mexico office. Songleader Carlos Merida (Guatemala) led hymns, accompanied by a foreign mini-choir and piano by Sanchez.

The first message, delivered by Gabriel Garcia, was titled “A Holy Appointment,” analyzing the importance of the holy convocation on God’s Sabbath. The second message titled “Blessed are the Poor in Spirit” was delivered by Israel Robledo, who spoke to us about the humble attitude we must have in the Church. In between the two split sermons, little Gema Alvarado performed hymn number 100, “Seek Ye First.”

In addition to the spiritual food, we enjoyed nutritious physical food prepared by the local members before continuing with the men’s club and ladies’ club sessions.

In one room, 32 ladies played entertaining games and participated in three exhibitions and a workshop, strengthening their bonds with one another. They were reminded to obey and trust in God because He will take care of our battles.

Simultaneously, 25 men, as

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2 Upcoming Events

Women's Enrichment Weekends

Bloom Where You are Planted

Allenspark, Colorado
July 11-13, 2025

"Bloom where you are planted" is more than making the best of your circumstances. It's an invitation to grow, thrive and reflect God's love, no matter where you find yourself. It means to make the best of the circumstances we can find ourselves in, to grow, and to contribute positively regardless of the environment.

You're invited to come join your spiritual sisters for a weekend to be renewed, restored and refreshed!

Location

Highlands Presbyterian
Camp and Retreat Center
1306 Business Highway 7
Allenspark, CO 80510
United States

Contact

Beth Bradford
(720) 989-9618
beth.bradford@comcast.net

Let it Shine

Cleveland, Ohio
Sept. 5-7, 2025

Our theme, "Let it Shine" will focus on how Jesus is the light of the world, and how we can let our lights shine in our homes, church and community.

The location for our weekend is the Comfort Inn Suites, just off I-71 in Brunswick, Ohio. All rooms include either a king or two queens and an L-shaped sleeper sofa. Also, the rooms have a microwave, mini-fridge and coffee maker.

More details will be posted on our website as they become available.

Location

Comfort Inn Suites
1464 Town Center Blvd
Brunswick, OH 44212
United States

Contact

BJ Thomas
(330) 416-4654
bettyj.thomas@gmail.com



Gear Grinder Bike Ride



The Twin Cities United Church of God invites you to join us for our third annual UCG Gear Grinder Class bike ride. The ride will take place on Sunday, Sept. 7, in the beautiful Minnetonka Lakes region of the Twin Cities. Some features of this year's ride include:

A Saturday evening meet and greet BBQ and bonfire.

33- and 63-mile routes.

A family-friendly start and end location with playground and restrooms.

A post-ride lunch available for both riders and their families.

Swag to remember the ride: men's and women's t-shirts and jerseys.

Lots of fun and fellowship!

We hope you'll join us for another weekend of fun and fellowship as we grind our gears in Lake Minnetonka!

Visit the following link for more details and to register: eventcreate.com/e/geargrinder25

Tony Stith

United Youth Camps—International

Camp Dates

British Isles ----- July 30-Aug. 6, 2025

Canada (two locations)

Wildrose ----- July 23-27, 2025

Alberta ----- Aug. 26 - Sept. 1, 2025

Philippines ----- June 8-15, 2025

Though you've likely started thinking about summer camp plans, we'd like to share a reminder that United Youth Camps has several locations around the world in addition to the camps in the U.S. you may be familiar with from the annual camp magazine.

If you're up for an adventure, please consider attending or serving at one of our UYC international locations! This is an excellent way to get to know brethren around the world and build lifelong friendships.

For more information about any of the camps listed here, and to see new camps as they are posted, please visit:

ucg.org/members/uyc/international



Local Church News

Continued from cover page

Leadership Seminars Held in Mexico



The technical team worked hard to provide sound and webcast support.

well as the nine connections (from Peru, Guatemala, Chile and Mexico) connected over table topics, lessons, tongue twisters and a final conference shared by the minister, Moisés Cruz.

After the respective meetings, attendees were able to continue sharing camaraderie in the hall, taking pictures and eating snacks.

On Sunday morning, Moisés Cruz gave a short recap of the previous weekend "Also Me" and introduced the new theme. Manuel Bolio enthusiastically served as master of ceremonies, introducing the first speaker of the day, André Del-

gado with his talk titled "What Personality did God Give You?" Next, Israel Robledo presented his talk "Let's be Efficient Counselors." Gabriel Garcia closed with his presentation "Ostinato in Crescendo," discussing two musical principles that he used as an analogy for the perseverance and growth needed in God's Church.

After a good cup of coffee, Gabriel Guzman delivered his interactive talk "I am a pillar in God's plan," identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in our performance within the Church. The seminar closed with a question-and-answer

session, in which attendees participated, interacting with all four presenters. The Robledos concluded the event by presenting a gift of appreciation to the speakers for the event.

We are thankful to God for the success of these seminar weekends. We also thank the technical team, those who made the hall beautiful with flowers, those who hosted their brothers and sisters, and those who prepared the food. We are grateful for the enthusiastic attendees who traveled up to 17 hours for each of these weekends. We also thank the home office in Cincinnati for their help in financing these events. **UN**

Operation Managers' Updates

Ministerial and Member Services



Moisés and Sara Cruz



Bob and Sandy Orosz



Derek and Denise Strauss



David and Kayla Rains



Stephen and Sarah Bouchette



Jay and Jennifer Ledbetter



Nathan and Jacqueline Ekama



Dan and Roxanne Dowd

On Dec. 21, Moisés Cruz was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Sara, serve the Mexico City, Mexico congregation and serve at the Mexico church office.

On Jan. 4, Bob Orosz was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Sandy, serve the Tampa, Florida congregation.

On Jan. 18, Derek Strauss was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Denise, serve the Fort Worth, Texas congregation.

David Rains was hired in mid-January as a ministerial trainee to serve the congregations in Nashville, Murfrees-

boro and Jackson, Tennessee alongside pastor Gary Petty.

In January, new pastors were appointed after several retirements. Stephen Bouchette was appointed the pastor of the Cleveland, Ohio congregation after the retirement of pastor Greg Thomas, in addition to serving the North Canton, Ohio congregation.

Jay Ledbetter was appointed the pastor of the Houston, Texas congregation after the retirement of pastor Gary Smith, in addition to serving the Waco, Texas congregation. Gary Smith will continue to serve as regional pastor for the South Central

region.

Nathan Ekama was appointed the pastor of the Terre Haute, Indiana congregation after the retirement of pastor Nelson Arnold, in addition to serving the Central Illinois congregation.

Mitch Knapp retired from the employed ministry; he continues to serve as pastor for the congregations in Omaha, Nebraska and Des Moines, Iowa until a replacement is appointed. Dan Dowd has taken over

Mr. Knapp's regional pastor responsibility for the North Central region.

Thank you for your prayers, asking God, the "Lord of the harvest" to send out laborers into His harvest (Luke 10:2). Prayer for God's Spirit and wisdom to guide them in their new roles is certainly needed. Your petitions for these men, their families, and the congregations where they serve are greatly appreciated. **UN**

Steve Myers is the Ministerial and Member Services operation manager for UCG and an elder who serves in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. He can be reached at steve_myers@ucg.org



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Australia



Another eventful and greatly profitable summer camp was held within the peaceful southern highlands of New South Wales in Camp Wombaroo, just shy of a two-hour drive from Sydney. This year, 71 campers attended from all parts of Australia as well as two visiting from Malaysia. Many campers were here for the first time, which was very special as well. For the eight-day duration, 27 eager and willing staff of all ages volunteered, providing a range of support with camp activities, mentoring and food preparation. Among the 27, we were very blessed to welcome a cheery young staff member visiting from England! Throughout the entire camp we experienced great summery weather, lots of sun, minimal rain and the perfect temperature to sleep through the night.

Camp was filled with various enjoyable activities such as speedball, dodgeball and art, as well as the return of music class (first introduced in the 2022 camp); where teams chose a well-known song and changed the lyrics in relation to the camp theme. All campers performed their song as a “band”

on the final day of camp, which was most special. More activities included skit class, speech class, bush skills, tennis/pickleball, team building and our traditional service activity, in which campers worked together to “fight grime, germs and dirt” and maintain a clean camp. Dance class, a camp favorite, was always an activity everyone looked forward to and the opportunity to master new dance skills. A new activity this year was the Swedish log throwing lawn game called Kubb, which campers enjoyed. The main activity for the challenge hike was the Time Trek Tour, where each team was “transported back in time” to retrieve a Bible left in the time of King David. They encountered a number of challenges and battles throughout and used their biblical knowledge and worked together as a team.

The night activities were abundant in participation and all went according to plan. Opening night was filled with lots of excitement, conversation and “get to know you” activities. The game night involved team-based activities such as Four Corners, Rope Pic-

tionary and Guess that Hymn, all of which were enjoyed by the four teams playing for a winning title. We enjoyed a very spirited fireside chat which began as a simple question and answer conversation between campers and staff and then moved on to singing camp favorites together accompanied by a selection of musical instruments and hearty singing voices. The weather was absolutely perfect for this evening too, making it a very picturesque and beautiful setting. We shared a very insightful Thursday Night Discussion on the topic of social media “Influencers”—talking about the messages they might portray to our young people. We discussed using a godly “filter” to sift through social media through the lens of Philippians 4:8 as a helpful tool. To welcome the Sabbath on Friday evening, campers enjoyed choir practice, Bible charades and hymn singing. The Sabbath day was a huge delight, filled with warm weather, fellowship, delicious afternoon tea and a great attendance of many visitors for the church service. We held our traditional Saturday night casual dance filled with many camp favor-

ites and new dances alike. Our speech night consisted of six quality speeches presented by our enthusiastic campers dining among beautifully decorated beach-themed scenery. The much-anticipated skit night was a huge success with eight performances providing much entertainment and laughter. Our final night dance, decorated as a “sock hop night,” was a wonderful way to conclude camp with more camp favorites and to share some final memories together.

The theme of this year’s camp was “Guarding your inheritance” based on the scripture of 2 Timothy 3:14-15 saying, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” A large focus of the Christian living theme was around the story of Esau making the mistake of selling his birthright for a bowl of Jacob’s stew—and how we must seriously value the inheritance of God’s King-

dom and be careful not to repeat the same mistake of giving up this great gift when clouded by physical distractions and trials. The Christian living classes involved discussions based on questions like “What could be your ‘bowl of soup’?” “Who is responsible for guarding your inheritance?” and “Why should we guard our inheritance?”

The last morning of camp was full of bittersweet good-byes to new and old friends. In reflection of this camp, we trust in God’s will and plan as we brace for another year, with the hope that camp will run again for 2025. It was a true delight to see the campers create long-lasting friendships and grow immensely over the eight days shared together. We greatly thank all the brethren who contributed to the success of camp, the integral staff members who organized so much behind the scenes, and of course the campers, without whom camp would not be able to even run. We pray for God’s protection and guidance for the young people of our Church and look forward to seeing them all again soon.

Vicky and Zoe Pierias



Australia



Ghana



Kenya



South Africa

Ghana



Daily Christian living sessions

The 2024 camp in Ghana was a resounding success, bringing together 30 energetic campers (23 females and seven males) from all UCG congregations in Ghana, along with 21 dedicated staff members. The camp's packed schedule catered to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of participants, emphasizing the theme "Stand Strong" to foster resilience, confidence and purpose.

The schedule balanced physical activity, skill-building and spiritual growth. Each day began with low-intensity calisthenics, followed by breakfast, compass check and a range of activities,

including team challenge, computing, beadwork, basketball, archery and baking classes.

Spiritual growth was a key aspect of the camp, with daily Christian living sessions and a church service on the Sabbath. These sessions deepened campers' understanding of their faith and encouraged stronger relationships with God.

The camp featured friendly camper group competitions in some activities, promoting teamwork and camaraderie. Camp concluded with a banquet, awards, cake-cutting and a movie. These events provided opportunities for campers to

unwind, serve one another and forge lasting bonds.

Camp provided a transformative experience for all participants. The carefully planned schedule, dedicated instructors and supportive environment created an unforgettable experience. As campers departed, they took with them valuable lessons, new skills and renewed purpose.

We express gratitude to the instructors, counselors and support staff who worked tirelessly to make this camp a success. Their dedication, enthusiasm and commitment to camper well-being are truly appreciated.

Grace Billey

Kenya



Campers and staff gathered outside their tents

Youth and staff arrived at camp in Ogembo, Kenya on Sunday, Dec. 9, 2024. There were 55 campers and 20 staff members.

We began each morning at 7:30 with breakfast, followed by a Christian living lesson. Some of the topics we discussed were drug abuse, stress management, career choice, separate boy and girl talks, peer pressure and time management. Discussions were followed by arts and crafts and a variety of games. In

addition to spending lunch and dinner together, campers enjoyed a campfire each evening at 9:30.

Activities concluded on Friday evening. During the Sabbath, we shared a church service with the members of the Ogembo congregation. Some people even traveled from the Magenche congregation. After Sabbath lunch, we held a question-and-answer session.

God blessed the camp with wonderful weather, allowing

everyone to fully enjoy all the activities.

Staff and campers left on the morning of Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024 to return home. Camp had been a good and enjoyable experience.

We are very thankful to God who blessed us with a wonderful and successful youth camp. We are also thankful for those who gave financial support and daily prayers for God's blessings.

Mark M. Nyakwara

South Africa



Campers participate in abseiling (rappelling)

Another successful 10-day youth camp on the beautifully scenic Moolmanshoek Game Reserve hosted 26 campers and 12 staff from all parts of South Africa in the province of Free State.

We were blessed with just the right weather throughout camp. Most of the time

was cloudy to shield a hot sun (around 30°C, or 86°F) with some rain (much needed for the area, but always at times that didn't disrupt activities).

We've been tremendously blessed over the last three years to have not only financial assistance from the home office, but also international staff input,

bringing a wealth of experience from which we've been able to draw and learn from. For this camp, while we didn't have Ben Light* as advisory camp director (he was with us for 2022 and 2023), we were fortunate to have Grant** and Kim Chick, from Australia, who brought an equal amount of experience and zeal. We also had two counselors from the United States; Avery Ryan from Alabama and Lisa Johnson from Florida, who also brought ample camp experience to share.

As camp was located on a game reserve, we were able to experience a wonderful variety of activities, including hiking and horse riding through the reserve, abseiling (rappelling), riflery, swimming, craft and newsletter, soccer, volleyball and frisbee.

Balmy evenings were perfect for campfire activities like charades, culture appreciation (we're a country of 12 official languages!), line dancing and

general knowledge quiz night, all enjoyed with a South African favorite, Milo! (A hot chocolate drink.)

Since camp is modeled as much as possible on the home office design, physical activities were well balanced with an abundance of Christian education, with the daily Christian living theme of "Stand Strong," midday Compass Checks, a daily half hour of hymns and music appreciation, and "dorm-parent" discussions ending the days' activities.

While our Friday evening Sabbath meal is already a special occasion with a more formal setting and dress code, it was made even more meaningful with staff serving campers for the evening—a great lesson and talking point in servant leadership.

We held a Sabbath service during camp which we were able to share on Zoom, with a sermonette given by Vivien Botha and a sermon by Grant

Chick. The service was enriched with special music performed by two of our campers—sisters from Kwa-Zulu Natal province. After the service, we were able to enjoy a beautiful walk along the camp's "Seven Stations of Rest," a new addition to camp, which fitted in beautifully with our obedience to God's command to remember the Sabbath.

Plans are already being made for 2025, and we welcome and always appreciate international visitors!

Vivien Botha

Camp Director and UCG Elder, Cape Town, South Africa

* Pastor for Salem, Eugene and Roseburg, Oregon; Assistant Senior Pastor for English-speaking West Africa; and Camp Director for Southwest and Northwest Camps

** Pastor for Western Australia, Singapore and Malaysia, as well as Director of Operations for UCG-Australia

Lexington, Kentucky Congregation Holds Craft and Bible Trivia Night



On Dec. 7, 2024, after a later afternoon Sabbath service and a delicious potluck, the church family got together to

spend some enjoyable time relaxing and learning different crafts. There was a table set up for making bracelets at

which the younger girls and boys made jewelry for themselves and their parents. There was a Lego table and a cro-

cheting table. One 8-year-old girl was teaching a 75-year-old to crochet! The congregation seemed to love how they were able to interact and mix the young with the old and enjoy each other's company!

After completing the crafts portion of the evening, the congregation was divided up into two different teams of mixed ages for a spirited and rousing game of Bible trivia. Each team had to wait until a question was read and then one member of the team would ring a bell to answer the question first. A moderator ran the pro-

jector and placed the questions on the screen at the front of the hall for all to see. One lady read the question and then it was time to see who could ring the bell faster. The quickest responder got to answer the question! There were many challenging questions, and everyone seemed to enjoy the activity. Valuable prizes (jars of home-produced jellies and bags of popcorn) were given to the team who won. The winners even shared some of their gifts with the other team! It was a fun and enjoyable night!

Kerby and Ellen Burton

Columbia, Maryland Chili Cook-off

The Columbia, Maryland congregation had their last chili cook-off seven years ago and it was time to have another one! On Saturday evening, Dec. 14, 2024 participants entered eight pots of chili in the contest. There were sides of rice, corn bread and green salads as well as a table filled with fixings to add to your bowl of chili.

The three categories in the cook-off were "Best Flavor," "Best Overall" and "Most Like Mom's." Three winners were given certificates and awarded prizes.

The evening was filled with fun and meaningful fellowship with shared interests and a delicious chili meal!

Rhonda Diggins



Pastoral Development Program



Ministerial and Member Services held a Pastoral Development Program at the home office Jan. 19-23. We had 11 men and nine of their wives spend 35 hours in intensive instruction and workshop time together.

The inspiring week of in-depth topics provided important material for our newer pastors and ministerial trainees to help further their service to the brethren. Everyone was encouraged and energized by the teamwork and camaraderie built throughout the week by this very fine group of Church leaders. **UN**



British Isles National Council Meeting

Members of the National Council of UCG – British Isles met by Zoom on the evening of Monday Feb. 10, 2025.

The minutes of this meeting will be distributed to the members of the UCG – British Isles Charity once they have been approved by the National Council at its next meeting.

The Council received reports from the chief executive officer and treasurer and discussed progress in planning for the Feast of Tabernacles in 2025 and 2026, the Family Camp in 2025, and an update concerning the Speaking Club. The Council also discussed the need for a five-year strategic plan for UCG – BI, a Church-wide skills audit, and the cur-

rent vacancy for secretary. Further discussion of these topics is necessary.

Under the heading of circulation, it was reported that print copies of the Jan.-Feb. 2025 *Beyond Today* magazine and British Isles Supplement were mailed to 6,562 subscribers. Also reported was that to date in the current 2024-2025 year over 2,700 booklets and study aids have been mailed from the UK Church office, and over 2,000 requests for the magazine and other literature, mostly coming from the Internet, have been received and processed.

The National Council's next meeting will be held on Monday evening, April 28, 2025 by Zoom. **UN**

If your congregation has hosted an activity, such as a potluck, camp-out or anniversary celebration, we'd love to include a short article in *United News*. And don't forget photos—with each article, we try to feature 2-3 pictures of the event so members around the world can feel like they were there to share in the fun and fellowship!

Of course, we'd love to hear about and promote events ahead of time too, so if you have an upcoming calendar item and space for guests, please let us know.

Please send articles and event announcements to: un@ucg.org.

GN

The Good News

Called out of Darkness

God's people have the lifelong goal of leaving behind darkness and the mindset of bondage.

by Ryan Hall

Throughout life, we will all experience moments of uncertainty and times of depression. Unfortunately, the emotions that accompany those feelings hover around us like a dark, dense fog. We may know what we want or need to do, but often, we become too overwhelmed to respond. We allow that feeling of “I can’t” to take hold, and we feel trapped in a prison of darkness.

My late mentor and dear friend, Rick Beam, often discussed the realities of life such as this. One of his shared lessons has been an excellent antidote to the prison sentence of hopelessness we may pronounce upon ourselves. Rick often said, “Where we can’t, God can. God provides for those who can’t.”

I often meditate on those words, especially when preparing for the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Those simple words perfectly capture the incredible sacrifice and effort of what God does for those who cannot do for themselves, those held captive under the grip of sin and death (Romans 5:1-5).

As the Passover (Exodus 12:2-14), Night to Be Much Observed (Exodus 12:40-42) and the Days of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:14-20) approach, they should serve as powerful reminders of God’s active involvement in our lives. This reality is hope; it’s the motivation we need to respond and come out of that dark prison sentence we find ourselves in occasionally.

When I think about Rick’s words and the miracle it took to bring us out of this world, I am reminded of the story of Helen Keller. At the very young age of just 19 months old, little Helen Keller suffered from an illness that left her deaf and blind. Where once an active child ran free, exploring the wonderful world around her, a lonely child sat in complete darkness and silence, separated from the world she once knew. It’s almost impossible to truly comprehend the pain,



Helen Keller (left) with Anne Sullivan vacationing on Cape Cod in July 1888.

the suffering, as well as the fear this young girl must have experienced being trapped within the bounds of her mind. This heartbreaking reality would continue until she was around 6 years old.

Although her early years were bleak, this brave young girl eventually embarked on a journey to emerge from that dark and silent world. That journey was made possible by a beacon of hope: a patient and loving teacher named Anne Sullivan.

That love and patience of Anne Sullivan would prove to be a vital aspect of this journey for both herself and Helen. Salvation from the prison that had enslaved Helen Keller for most of her young life didn’t occur instantly; it was a long and hard-fought battle. But that battle would not overtake her; that battle would define her.

In her memoirs, Helen Keller would later describe that moment when she finally recognized that call to come out of the darkness, a line of communication that would change her life forever. Helen Keller wrote, “Someone was drawing water, and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand, she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers.

Suddenly, I felt a misty consciousness as if something forgotten—a thrill of returning thoughts, and somehow, the mystery of language was revealed to me.”

You see, it was the act of someone’s loving and diligent efforts that resulted in the ability to reach into the darkest of all prisons and break the powers that held this child captive. This breakthrough in Helen Keller’s life came about because someone was willing to reveal themselves to her in a way that others had refused to even attempt or failed to endure the sacrifice required to reach her.

Because of Anne Sullivan’s commitment and sacrificial effort, young Helen Keller experienced an inflection point in her life. This moment began an incredible journey during which Helen would finally be reunited with a world she had lost. This is truly an awe-inspiring story that changed lives, not just for Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan but also for the many lives she touched.

What a powerful example to remind us of the sacrifice made on our behalf so that we, too, could experience an inflection moment, a change that would affect our lives for all eternity. When we consider the meaning and purpose of the upcoming festival season, it becomes clear that without a loving and compassionate Father’s desire to reveal Himself to us and a Lord and Savior willing to do what was necessary to make it all possible, we would remain alone in the dark, with no hope (1 Peter 2:9-10)!

The Passover ceremony draws our attention to the foundation of God’s plan of salvation. Innocent blood was spilled so that we may live. God acted first on our behalf, those held captive without any hope of release. As we commemorate this precious ceremony, we’re reminded of the most incredible display of love that both the Father and Jesus Christ have shown us and all of mankind (John 3:16-17; Romans 5:1-11).

However, being freed from captivity and taking those initial steps are just the beginning. The Night to Be Much Observed and the Days of Unleavened Bread show that we, as the people of God, have a great responsibility to undertake as we embark on the lifelong goal of leaving behind that darkness and the bondage mindset that has imprisoned us. We must now allow what has been revealed to us to become ingrained in who we are.

Thankfully, the Night to be Much Observed encourages us that we are not alone. God is not only providing a way out of this captivity; He’s also leading us and keeping a vigilant watch over us as we depart. In fact, one of the names given for God in the Old Tes-

Continued on page 8

Called out of Darkness
Continued from page 7

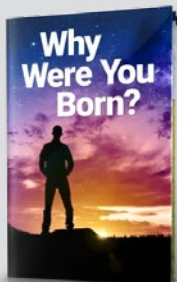
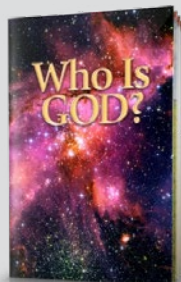
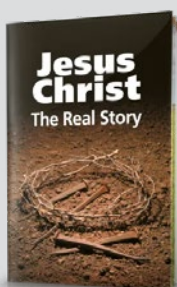
tament is “El Roi,” meaning “You Are the God Who Sees” (Genesis 16:13). What a comfort we have knowing that we serve a God who keeps watch over His creation and especially His people (Job 34:21; 36:7; Psalm 33:18; Proverbs 15:3; 2 Chronicles 16:9).

Consider the instructions for observing the Days of Unleavened Bread. Through simple physical actions, God reveals powerful spiritual lessons to His people. These principles keep us focused on Him as we walk out of the confines of this evil world. He knows how the carnal mind works and how to change our habits and thought patterns effectively.

Removing and avoiding leaven for seven days may seem simple, but the spiritual intent reveals the intricacies of God’s masterful plan of salvation. We’re not just to remove the leavening, which represents sin; we’re replacing it with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, which represents putting Christ into our lives (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). This means that we observe what’s around us and consider what’s influencing us. What a blessing to know that our merciful God has revealed to us the truth and given us His Spirit so that we can have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts that can comprehend what He has prepared for us (1 Corinthians 2:1-16).

As the anticipation of the upcoming festival season awakens our senses, let’s take the time to consider what God has done, is doing and will fulfill in our lives. Yes, it has been a long and hard-fought battle, and our enemy is still attacking. However, because Someone was willing to sacrifice and reach into that prison of darkness, that battle has not overtaken us; that battle is defining us. We’re not without hope; we are a people who have a living hope (1 Peter 1:3-9). **GN**

Recommended Reading



When the United Church of God, *an International Association*, was incorporated in 1995, 20 fundamental beliefs were identified and approved by the elders of the Church to be listed as part of its governing documents. We consider the teaching of these beliefs to be critical to building on the right foundation of a proper reverence for God’s Word, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ (see Isaiah 66:2; Proverbs 1:7; 1 Corinthians 3:11).

The beliefs of the Church are not limited to the original 20 belief statements. *The Fundamental Beliefs* study aid, from which this article is reprinted, is not a comprehensive doctrinal compilation, but rather a broad summary of the Church’s teachings. We urge interested readers to download or request the resources listed at the end of this article for a more detailed explanation of the teaching with thorough scriptural support.

God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

How can we explain the nature of God?

*from Fundamental Beliefs
of the United Church of God*

Fundamental Belief: God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

We believe in one God, the Father, eternally existing, who is a Spirit, a personal Being of supreme intelligence, knowledge, love, justice, power and authority. He, through Jesus Christ, is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. He is the Source of life and the One for whom human life exists. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is the Word and who has eternally existed. We believe that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the divine Son of the living God, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born in human flesh of the virgin Mary. We believe that it is by Him that God created all things, and that without Him was not anything made that was made. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God and of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the power of God and the Spirit of life eternal (2 Timothy 1:7; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:16).

Existence of God

The existence of a Creator God of vast power and intelligence is so obvious from the universe around us that atheism, disbelief in God, is a denial of reality: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20, New International Version). Yet much detail regarding God’s attributes requires further revelation.

We understand that God is spirit (John 4:24), existing in a different realm from that of human beings, who are flesh. “As the heavens are higher than the earth,” so are His ways and thoughts higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9). Our understanding and perception of God, therefore, must be based on God’s revelation to mankind through His written Word, the Bible or Holy Scriptures.

The Bible reveals that God is the Sovereign of the universe, existing supremely above all else. God is eternal, unchanging in character, all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present (Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 57:15; Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Job 42:2; Jeremiah 23:23-24; 32:17; Psalm 147:5; 1 John 3:20; 2 Chronicles 2:6).

Two distinct Beings

Scripture further reveals God as two distinct divine Beings—God the “Father” and Jesus Christ His “Son.” (The Hebraic form of Jesus Christ is Yeshua the Messiah. The title Messiah or Christ—literally meaning “Anointed”—is that of the ruler of the lineage of King David who is prophesied to serve as the chief divine representative in restoring Israel’s glory and reigning in righteousness over the world.)

Both the Old and New Testaments contain references to more than one divine personage (Psalm 110:1, for example, which is quoted in Acts 2:29-36). Again, the New Testament identifies Them as God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Son is also called God (Hebrews 1:8-9).

As Father and Son, the one God is thus the one God family. The distinction between these two Beings existing together as God is implicit from the very beginning of Scripture (Genesis 1:1), where the Hebrew word *Elohim* is used. (*Elohim* is the plural form of the Hebrew word for God, *Eloah*.) There has been communication between these two from the beginning, as seen in the example of Genesis 1:26, where the pronouns Us and Our refer to *Elohim*.

The Old Testament focuses on the God of Israel, who identifies Himself as “I AM” and “the Lord God . . . of Abraham . . . of Isaac, and . . . of Jacob” (Exodus 3:14-15). (The word Lord here is used in place of the Hebrew word spelled *YHWH*, which, like “I AM,” apparently denotes eternal and self-inherent existence.)

In John 8:58, Christ refers to Himself as “I Am.” Thus, the One the Israelites knew as God, who delivered them from Egypt and accompanied them in the wilderness, was later known in the New Testament as Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). The existence of the One whom Christ referred to as “the Father” was not well understood by many before Christ’s coming—though He is sometimes specifically referred to in the Old Testament.

Jesus Christ is called the “Word,” who “was with God” in the beginning and is also identified as “God” (John 1:1-2). All things were created through Him (John 1:3, 10; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-3), and He later became flesh and dwelled among human beings (John 1:14).

While in the flesh, the divine Word was emptied of divine glory and might, being human in the fullest sense—able to be tempted to sin (i.e., disobey God) but never sinning (Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:14, 17; 4:15). As a man, Jesus said that His miracle-work-

ing power came not from Himself but from God the Father (John 5:30; 14:10).

The relationship between the Father and Son

The relationship between the Word and the Father is more clearly defined in the New Testament, where Jesus came in the flesh as the Son of God, acted as the Father's Spokesman (John 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:10) and revealed the Father to His disciples (Matthew 11:25-27).

The Father "gave His only begotten Son" in sacrifice as the "Lamb of God" for the forgiveness of our sins. After that Jesus was exalted by the Father to the glory They shared before the world existed (John 1:29; 3:16; 17:5). (See the chapters in this booklet titled "The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ" and "The Pass-over").

The New Testament emphasizes the unity between the "Father" and "Son," yet makes the distinction between the two clear in numerous scriptures (see, for example, John 20:17; Romans 15:6). As noted above, God "created all things through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:9).

As distinct Beings, the Father and Son each have a glorious spirit body (John 4:24; 1 Corinthians 15:45; Philippians 3:21). These spirit bodies have form and shape, as Moses saw the "form of the Lord" (Numbers 12:8; see Exodus 33:18-23). God as spirit is not visible to human beings (Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17)—unless supernaturally manifested.

Yet when God does appear or show Himself in vision, He has "the appearance of a man" (Ezekiel 1:26), though brilliant and radiant, being "the appearance

The relationship between the Father and the Son demonstrates God's perfect and eternal way of life of love.

of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezekiel 1:28; see also Revelation 1:12-16). Human beings were patterned after the form of God on a physical level (Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 5:1-3).

The relationship between the Father and the Son demonstrates God's perfect and eternal way of life of love—outflowing concern for others. God is the embodiment of love (1 John 4:8, 16). The Father has always loved the Son, and the Son has always loved the Father (John 17:4, 20-26). The harmony between the Father and the Son is a singleness of mind and purpose, which Jesus Christ asked the Father to bring about among His disciples, Himself and the Father (John 17:20-23).

"God," as used in the Bible, can be a reference to either the Father (e.g., Acts 13:33; Galatians 4:6), Jesus Christ the Son (e.g., Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 14) or both (e.g., Romans 8:9), depending on the context of the scriptures.

The Holy Spirit

The power that proceeds from God is called the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2; Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Timothy 1:7). It is through this Spirit that God is present everywhere at once (Psalm 139:7-10).

The Holy Spirit of God is not identified as a third person in a trinity but is presented in Scripture as the power of God, the mind of God and the very essence and life force of God through which the Father begets human beings as His spiritual children. The Holy

Spirit is given to individuals when they genuinely repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38).

That Spirit is also "a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession" (Ephesians 1:14, NIV) at the resurrection of the righteous to eternal life at Jesus Christ's return (1 Thessalonians 4:16). This Spirit makes those who receive it "the children of God" in the family of God, sharing in the divine nature (Romans 8:16, King James Version; 2 Peter 1:4).

A growing Family

Human beings are also called *elohim* or "gods" in Scripture in reference to the ultimate purpose for our creation (Psalm 82:6; John 10:34-36). God is in the process of expanding the divine family beyond the Father and Son. Ephesians 3:14-15 refers to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

Jesus is called "the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). Human beings have the wonderful potential to enter the God family and be transformed into the same kind of beings the Father and Christ now are (Romans 8:14, 19; John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2). (See the chapters in this booklet titled "Humanity" and "God's Purpose for Mankind.")

Names and attributes of God

God wants us to come to know Him so we can have confidence in Him and love Him. He has disclosed much about Himself through the names, titles and descriptions He revealed to those with whom He worked in past ages.

These reveal that God possesses supreme intelligence, power, glory and wisdom (Genesis 14:19, 22; 16:13; Psalm 29:3; 47:2; Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Timothy 1:17; Jude 25); that He embodies all righteousness, perfection and truth (Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Corinthians 13:11); that He possesses heaven and earth (Genesis 14:19, 22; Acts 17:24); that He is immortal (Genesis 21:33; 1 Timothy 1:17) and worthy of all praise (Psalm 18:3; Revelation 4:11).

God is our provider (Genesis 22:14; 1 Timothy 6:13, 17; James 1:5, 17), healer (Exodus 15:26), shield (Genesis 15:1; Psalm 59:11), defense (Psalm 18:2; Psalm 94:22), counselor (Isaiah 28:29), teacher (Psalm 25:4-5, 9; Isaiah 48:17), lawgiver (Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12), judge (Genesis 18:25; Psalm 50:6), strength (Psalm 18:2; 28:7; 59:17) and salvation (Psalm 27:1, 9; 68:20).

He is faithful, merciful, generous, patient, kind, just and compassionate (Exodus 34:5-7; Deuteronomy 7:9). God hears our prayers (Psalm 6:9; 34:17; 65:2), enters into a covenant relationship with us (Deuteronomy 29:12; Daniel 9:4), is a refuge in trouble (Psalm 9:9), gives us knowledge (Psalm 94:10) and desires to give us immortality that we might share eternal life with Him in His family and Kingdom (John 3:16; Luke 12:32).

Jesus Christ, besides being God the Son and our Elder Brother in God's family, is also the living, active Head of the Church of God (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18), its Chief Apostle (Hebrews 3:1) and its Chief Shepherd or Pastor (1 Peter 5:4). He lives within repentant Christian believers through the Holy Spirit as our personal Savior (compare Galatians 2:20; John 14:23; 1 John 3:24). He sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven as our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-15; 6:20), Intercessor (Romans 8:34) and Advocate (1 John 2:1). And we await His return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to rule over all nations and serve as supreme Judge under the Father (Revelation 11:15; 17:14; 19:15-16; John 5:22, 27; 2 Corinthians 5:10). **GN**

Is it Ever Okay to Lie?

Discover the truth the Bible reveals on the topic of lying and deception.

by Robert Curry

"In a survey, 75% of the participants admitted to lying between 0 to 2 times daily" ("Lying Statistics & Facts: How Often Do People Lie?", Cross River Therapy, Steven Zauderer, Aug. 24, 2023).

As the author commented, "That's a lot of lies!" And it makes you wonder if they were telling the truth during the survey! The author noted that according to other research, "about 60% of people 18 and older are incapable of having a conversation without lying once every ten minutes."

This survey found that during communication, "7% of it consisted of lying but only 10% were major lies. 90% of the time, the lies were trivial."

Are lies ever really a trivial matter for a Christian desiring to obey the Bible's instruction about honesty and lying?

Not according to Revelation 22:14-15: "Blessed are those who do His commandments [including the Ninth one], that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city [the New Jerusalem]. But outside are . . . whoever loves and practices a lie." Not overcoming this would cause us to miss out on eternal life in the Kingdom!

Is it ever okay to lie?

Titus 1:2 states the plain simple standard: "God, *who cannot lie*" (emphasis mine throughout). Hebrews 6:18-19 concurs: "So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we . . . can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls" (New Living Translation).

Psalm 24:3-4 plainly states the truth about whether there are any exceptions about lying: "Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? Only those [who] . . . never tell lies" (NLT; see Proverbs 30:8).

Does the Bible give exceptions?

Some sincerely believe that the Bible has accounts of rare circumstances when it might be the mature, loving action for a Christian to choose to lie.

Rahab hid the spies and lied to the king of Jericho. She did know "where they were from" and "where the men went" (Joshua 2:4-5). Joshua spared her and all her household "because she hid the messengers whom [he] sent to spy out Jericho" (verse 25). God miraculously kept her walls as the only ones that didn't come tumbling down! She became part of the genealogy of David and Jesus Christ! (Matthew 1:5). Doesn't all this praise her and reward her for lying?

Hebrews 11, the faith chapter, gives the true foun-

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Is it Ever Okay to Lie?
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dational reason: “By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who do not believe, when she had received the spies with peace” (verse 31). Rahab spoke her belief: “I know that the LORD has given you the land . . . for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath” (Joshua 2:9, 11). She recognized that God was displaying His mighty power on behalf of Israel, and she wanted to be a part of it! When God saw her acting on her developing faith by protecting the spies and then boldly asking for protection, He gave Rahab peace in her stressful situation (Philippians 4:7, 9).

United Church of God’s Bible Commentary puts it so clearly: “Some view the Bible’s praise of Rahab as an endorsement of her lying . . . Based on this, they argue that it is okay to lie when it is ‘for a good cause.’ However, that is simply not the case—ever . . . *The Nelson Study Bible*, in laying out the possible explanations with regard to Rahab’s lying, ends with the one it clearly favors: ‘A lie is a lie, and . . . Rahab’s action was wrong . . . Rahab sinned no matter how noble her intentions . . . The Bible praises Rahab because of her faith in God, not because of her lying. That is, her actions would have been more noble had she protected the spies in some other fashion . . .’ (“In Depth: Lying”).

“Of course, over time, with the help of God’s laws and His Spirit, Rahab surely came to repudiate her former lifestyle. Indeed, she must have to have married a prominent Israelite. [Thus], ‘it is likely that she herself came to view her lie as wrong—and repented of it, as we all must of our own sins’” (ucg.org/learn/bible-commentary/beyond-today-bible-commentary-joshua/joshua-2).

Jeremiah answered as he was commanded by King Zedekiah. After Jeremiah delivered God’s stern warning to King Zedekiah of Judah, the king ordered him not to mention the main purpose of their meeting, “Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die” (Jeremiah 38:24). The king told him to answer the princes, who would threaten Jeremiah with death if he didn’t tell them, that he had presented his request to not be returned to prison to die. Talk about a deadly dilemma for Jeremiah from both parties! When the princes came, Jeremiah “told them according to all these words that the king had commanded” (verses 26-27).

So did Jeremiah, a righteous prophet, lie by omission? NO! The words he chose to speak were true. Jeremiah had asked the king not to return him to the prison to die (37:20). Jeremiah carefully watched his words as he “followed the king’s instructions, and they left without finding out the truth” (Jeremiah 38:27, NLT). This doesn’t mean he used deception. He just didn’t tell the princes everything he knew.

A modern example

Suppose a Nazi barges into your home demanding “Are you hiding Jews?” Many argue that surely the mature loving thing to do would be to save a life by lying. This has always been a favorite table topic in Spokesman Clubs, sure to elicit varying opinions. But Corrie Ten Boom writes about the time she actually faced this dilemma with real lives on the line, including hers. She answered the guard by sarcastically answering as they passed the dining room table, “Sure,



Honesty, besides being the godly choice, comes with many health benefits.

they’re hiding under the table!” Actually they were under the table . . . under the floor!

Saying nothing would probably make a guard assume guilt, especially if accompanied by uneasiness which would be hard to suppress. My best thought ahead of time would be to calmly and pleasantly say only, “Come on in!” But surely this would be a good time to apply the principle of Matthew 10:19-20: “But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak; for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” Silently ask God for what to say truthfully and calmly and ask that He direct the guard’s response.

Does God use deception?

The LORD told a lying spirit to go deceive King Ahab through his prophets. UCG’s Bible Commentary explains: “Remarkably, we get a glimpse . . . of how God actually sometimes uses even demons to fulfill His purposes . . . He simply asked who would do it and told the volunteer to go do what he was inclined to do anyway [“You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.” Micaiah stated, “Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours” (1 Kings 22:22-23).] The fact that Micaiah’s true prophecies were always at odds with those of Ahab’s prophets [1 Kings 22:8] would seem to imply that a ‘lying spirit’ was commonly behind the words of Ahab’s prophets.”

The Bible Reader’s Companion explains: “Did God Himself lie to Ahab? Not at all. He did permit Ahab’s prophets to lie . . . [But] God in fact clearly revealed to Ahab the source of his prophets’ predictions, and the truth about what would happen to him in the coming battle” (ucg.org/learn/bible-commentary/beyond-today-bible-commentary-1-kings/1-kings-221-28-and-related).

“Our God . . . does whatever He pleases” (Psalm 115:3). “He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” (Daniel 4:35).

Of the Ninth Commandment about “not bear false witness,” the Berean Study Bible says, “The Hebrew word for ‘bear’ is ‘anah’ (עָנָה), which can mean to answer, respond, or testify. ‘False witness’ is derived from ‘sheqer’ (שֶׁקֶר), meaning deception or lie. This phrase specifically addresses the act of giving false testimony, particularly in a legal context.”

Your Brain Is Wired For Honesty¹

A 2010 study from Columbia University Graduate School of Business “demonstrated that brief periods of dishonesty can spike cortisol levels, the body’s primary stress hormone. Cortisol prepares the body to fight or flee from perceived threats, meaning that when a person lies, their body reacts as though it is bracing for confrontation or escape. The research highlights how lying triggers a measurable physiological stress response, underscoring the body’s innate sensitivity to dishonesty. Honesty decreases stress . . . Over time, stress hormones can tax the cardiovascular system, increase inflammation, and potentially cause migraines.”

In a landmark study published in the journal *Neuroimage* in 2002, scientists measured participants’ brain activity while asking them to tell the truth or lie. “When the subjects lied, they registered the same brain activity as when telling the truth. However, they also displayed activity in two key regions involved in self-control. People think of the truth first, but in lying, that truth is inhibited. This suggests that being truthful is the baseline cognitive state. Lying requires additional cognitive resources, leading to increased mental strain and potential health implications.”

Networks in the brain, connected to our dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), control our critical thinking and behavior. Our DLPFC resources are limited, and if we expend energy trying to be deceitful, there may be less fuel for problem-solving and creative thinking.”

A 2003 study published in *Cerebral Cortex* studied how various forms of lying and deception affect neural mechanisms. “The more significant the lie, the greater the toll on your mind and body. Lying demands that you remember the lie’s context, implications, end goal, whom you said it to, and when.” Made-up scenarios significantly activate the DLPFC.

Honesty is always the best choice.

Sadly, the Cross River Therapy survey found that of all liars, 70% claim to be willing to do it again!

Those of us who want to have the mind of Christ and become perfect like our Father—both Gods who cannot lie—must overcome our human nature, influenced by Satan, that desires to lie and deceive. The devil “has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44, NLT).

As we examine ourselves for Passover, we must aim for nothing less than to never lie—never speak a lie and never live one. When resurrected at Christ’s return, “Whoever has been born of God does not sin . . . and he cannot sin” (1 John 3:9)! **GN**

References

¹ “Your Brain Is Wired For Honesty—and Lying Taxes You,” Robert Backer Ph.D., Makai Allbert, Yuhong Dong M.D., Ph.D., Nov. 1, 2024, updated Dec. 8, 2024, *The Epoch Times*

Gerald Knochel

Nancy Peyton



Gerald Arthur Knochel, 95, of Normal, Illinois died peacefully on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025. He was an elder serving the Central Illinois congregation.

Gerald was born on Jan. 27, 1930 in South Bend, Indiana. He married Phyllis (Troup) Knochel on Dec. 11, 1955.

Gerald and Phyllis became baptized members of the Worldwide Church of God in 1960. Gerald was ordained a deacon in 1964 and an elder in 1968. He and his wife attended Sabbath services with the Worldwide Church of God and the United Church of God for 65 years. His commitment to following God was evident in his enduring service to the local brethren.

The full obituary can be read at dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/bloomington-il/gerald-knochel-12234400.

It is with deep sadness we announce the death of Nancy Peyton, beloved wife of the late elder George Peyton, and member of the congregation in San Antonio, Texas. She died on Monday, Feb. 10, 2025 at around 5:30 a.m. She was a cherished member of our Church, respected and loved by nearly everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.

Mrs. Peyton was a source of wisdom, strength and encouragement to many. Her kind heart, thoughtful advice and unwavering support touched countless lives, leaving a lasting impact on all who crossed her path.

While we grieve her loss, we also celebrate a life well-lived—a life marked by friendship, compassion and faith. She will be deeply missed but fondly remembered. We all look forward to our reunion in God's Kingdom.

We are encouraged: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Counting to Pentecost

In 2025, some critics argue that the United Church of God will observe Pentecost a week too early. This controversy arises because Pentecost is the only Feast day without a fixed date, and its timing must be determined by counting.

The biblical instructions

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is mentioned as one of the "feasts to the Lord" in Leviticus 23. During this Feast, the Israelites were instructed to offer a Wave Sheaf, the first-fruits of their harvest (Leviticus 23:10-11). This offering is a key moment from which the count to Pentecost begins.

The count to Pentecost should always begin the day after the weekly Sabbath, as instructed in Leviticus 23:15-16: "And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be completed." This count lasts for seven Sabbaths, and the 50th day marks Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks).

The correct way to count

The correct method to count Pentecost is straightforward. The counting always begins with the day after the weekly Sabbath from the Sunday within the Days of Unleavened Bread, rather than starting with the weekly Sabbath within the festival, as some argue. This approach ensures that the count always begins during the festival and never after it. If the count started after the weekly Sabbath within the festival, the count would usually begin during the festival but occasionally it would not, which would create inconsistency. This method confirms that the count follows the proper biblical sequence.

A proof of counting

When we consider Joshua 5:10-12, we gain further insight into the correct method of counting to Pentecost. The Israelites were camped at Gilgal, just after crossing the Jordan

River, and on the 14th day of the first month, they observed the Passover. In that year, Unleavened Bread began on the first day of the week, just as it does in 2025.

The following day, the 15th, was the first day of Unleavened Bread. On that Holy Day, the Israelites ate the produce of the land, which also marked the beginning of the new harvest. The only way this could take place is if the wave sheaf had been offered on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, allowing the Israelites to begin eating the spring crop immediately. This action fulfilled the command in Leviticus 23:14 and meant that Pentecost would fall seven weeks from that day.

The text highlights the importance of this day as the key starting point for counting. It reinforces the correct understanding that the count to Pentecost should begin from the day after the Sabbath, even if that day is the First Day of Un-

leavened Bread. This example shows how to calculate Pentecost in a year when the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the first day of the week and ends on the weekly Sabbath, as it does in 2025. This is why we know that this year Pentecost falls on Sunday, June 1, 2025.

It's important to note that this is not a new teaching, but rather a continuation of the teachings upheld by the Church of God for the past 50 years. It was reconfirmed by the Council of Elders in the doctrinal study paper "Pentecost and Its Observance" found at ucgweb.s3.amazonaws.com/files/papers/UCG-papers-Pentecost-and-Its-Observance.pdf.

More detailed information can be found in the article "Counting Pentecost When the First Day of Unleavened Bread Falls on Sunday" at ucg.org/members/united-news/united-news-january-2005/counting-pentecost-when-first-day-unleavened-bread.

The biblical foundation

The correct method for counting to Pentecost in 2025 is firmly rooted in God-given instructions that have been upheld by the Church of God for decades. Leviticus 23 provides clear biblical evidence that the count to Pentecost must always begin on the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, ensuring that Pentecost is celebrated on the 50th day, which is always on a Sunday.

Joshua 5 further confirms the pattern, demonstrating that even in years when Passover falls on the Sabbath, the count must begin the next day—Sunday, the First day of Unleavened Bread—just as it will in 2025. By adhering to biblical guidance, we can confidently celebrate Pentecost on the correct day, ensuring alignment with the proper timing prescribed by God.

Steve Myers,
Operation Manager,
Ministerial and Member Services

Paz Arando/Unsplash





Susanna Michael Blaes

Dec. 21, 2024

Births

Susanna Michael Blaes

Nathan and Hannah Blaes are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Susanna Michael Blaes. Susanna was born on Dec. 21, 2024. She is a blessing to her whole family, including her older brother Elijah, and her grandparents Mike and Sandy Messer.

Weddings

Jonathan Api and Ashley Holden

Announcing the marriage union of Jonathan Api and Ashley Holden! The bee-and-butterfly themed wedding took place on Feb. 2, 2025 in the UCG home office.

Jonathan and Ashley met at a mutual friend's house, played Settlers of Catan, had a glass of port and talked the night away.

Jesse and Linda Api and Maryanne Holden, parents of the groom and bride respectively, were overjoyed to see their eldest children so in love. Jonathan and Ashley Api are now living in an apartment in Amelia, Ohio with their 15-year-old toy poodle, Brees.



Jonathan Api and Ashley Holden

Feb. 2, 2025

Levi Miller and Rory Washburn

On Dec. 29, 2024, Levi Miller (son of Corey and Heidi Miller) and Rory Washburn (daughter of Bill and Kate Washburn) were married. The ceremony was held in the UCG Indianapolis, Indiana church hall.

The couple met while Levi was attending ABC for the 2018-2019 school year. Levi and Rory were friends for many years before they began dating in 2022 at the Montana Feast site. The couple now resides in Versailles, Missouri.

Anniversaries

Noel and Becky Hornor

Noel and Becky Hornor celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 2, 2025. They first met when Becky, a senior in high school, requested a visit with the local pastor to ask about attending church for the first time. Noel was a ministerial trainee working under Rowland Tucker for the Sacramento, California congregation and attended that meeting. They got to know each other at a young adults' dance, when they discovered that they both were avid snow skiers and began dating. They



Levi Miller and Rory Washburn

Dec. 29, 2024

married in 1975 and chose Lake Tahoe for their honeymoon destination where they took advantage of the skiing opportunities.

After serving as the assistant pastor in Sacramento, Noel, Becky and newborn daughter Heather were asked to move to Modesto, California to pastor the Modesto and Stockton churches. While in Modesto, they enjoyed the skiing and hiking near Yosemite National Park and added their son Ryan to their family. They have been privileged to serve the St. Paul, Minnesota and Eau Claire, Wisconsin as well as the Portland and Hood River, Oregon congregations (more hiking and skiing!). Noel and Becky are both retired and now live in Vancouver, Washington. They have four grandchildren: Avery, Libby, Maren and Matthew. Noel enjoys visiting with the members during the week and Becky loves knitting, coffee with friends and hiking.

Shannon and Naomi Lucas

The East Texas congregation honored Shannon and Naomi Lucas on Sabbath, Nov. 30, 2024 after the church service with a reception to celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary.

Shannon and Naomi were both born in East Texas. They met when he was 15 and she



Noel and Becky Hornor

50th anniversary

was 14. They married 7 1/2 years later on Dec. 1, 1954 at her parents' home.

Shannon has been employed as a biologist and cardiovascular perfusionist. He was involved with medical and scientific research where he developed new procedures. Shannon also trained medical and surgical professionals. Naomi was employed in daycare and has concentrated on being a keeper of the home.

The Lucases have been blessed with three children, Schellata and twins Bardet and Shaneen. They have nine grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Shannon first heard The World Tomorrow broadcast back in 1967. They started receiving the *Plain Truth* in 1969 and began attending church services in 1971. They were baptized in 1972 and Shannon was ordained as a deacon in 1977 and an elder in 1982.

Both feel that commitment is the main ingredient to a successful marriage. Naomi adds that each mate must take the marriage vows seriously. Always put God first. Also, having open communication and not being set in your ways are important factors.

Shannon and Naomi have a reputation for providing warm hospitality and service to the brethren. Shannon says his goal is to know each individual in the congregation, including each child.

Obituaries

Lois Ruth Baughman

Lois Ruth Baughman died peacefully on Dec. 16, 2024, at the age of 93. She was born on July 28, 1931, in Wray, Colorado to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lott. Lois



Shannon and Naomi Lucas

70th anniversary

and her older sister, Phyllis, lived in Colorado until Lois was two years old, when the family moved to Oregon in search of work in the throes of the Great Depression. Mr. and Mrs. Lott settled in the fertile Willamette Valley of Oregon, near the town of Lebanon.

Lois graduated from Lebanon High School, and worked for Kirkpatrick Motor Company and Western Veneer, where she met her husband, Lee Baughman. They were married in January of 1951, and they purchased a 20-acre parcel of farmland, where Lois resided for almost 75 years.

Lee and Lois had two daughters, Lavonne (Daniels) and Lora (Murray), two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Lois became acquainted with the Worldwide Church of God through her older sister, Phyllis, who was a member. She was baptized on Nov. 27, 1960, by Mr. Les McCole. She and her sister traveled to many Feast sites around the world, meeting and building lasting friendships with people from Oregon to Canada, Europe, South Africa and the Philippines.

Lois was ordained a deaconess on Oct. 14, 1986, and was a servant to her core. She was a Tabitha to all of us in the Salem congregation, always helping and serving others. She was an encourager, and her example shone brightly. Even at 93, she attended every Sabbath service, Bible study, congregational activity and service project. She regularly visited the brethren in the Salem and Albany area, frequently calling to check in on people and making sure their needs were met. She regularly corresponded with brethren from the Philippines and South Africa spreading her words of encouragement around the globe.

Feast of Tabernacles 2025 Germany

This year's Feast of Tabernacles will again be held in the picturesque town of Titisee in southern Germany.

Transfer guests can make their own reservations; lodging information is available via the Black Forest tourism website (hochschwarzwald.de/en). The hall where services will be held is within walking dis-

tance of most lodging units within the main village area.

Visitors wishing to attend should register on the UCG-Germany website at vkg.org/fot.php. Registration is required and an email address is needed for registration. Transfer capacity is limited to 50 guests this year. For more information, visit feast.ucg.org.



Lois Ruth Baughman

July 28, 1931-Dec. 16, 2024

We will miss Lois terribly, but take heart in the promises of God, knowing that she has finished her race and awaits the resurrection. We all look forward to seeing her again, God willing, soon.

Reginald A. Jenkins

Reginald (Reggie) Jenkins, a lifelong resident of Durham, North Carolina, died on Nov. 2, 2024.

Reggie excelled highly academically from K-12 grade and graduated at the top of his class. He also excelled highly in college.

Reggie worked for the City of Durham for 42 years. He started as a draftsman/engineer and retired as a computer programmer.

He served as a deacon and was highly active in the church—serving in sound, sending tapes and CDs to shut-ins, giving sermonettes, leading songs and performing special music (singing) as well as many other duties.

He is survived by his wife, brother, sister, two sisters-in-law, a brother-in-law and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

We look forward to the time when Revelation 21:4 will become a reality—God will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All of these things are gone forever. God speed that day!

Wesley C. Miller

Wesley C. Miller, born on Feb. 28, 1949, in Corvallis, Oregon, died on Dec. 21, 2024, after a brief battle with cancer. Born and raised in Corvallis, Wes was the eldest son of Clair and Edith Miller.

Introduced to farming at a young age, Wes grew up in the heart of the Willamette Valley, learning about the industry alongside his father, mother and family friends. Upon grad-



Reginald A. Jenkins

Nov. 2, 2024

uating from Corvallis High School in 1967, Wes headed to the University of British Columbia where he met his wife, Terry. They were married in February 1971 in Sydney, British Columbia. Graduating with a Bachelor of Applied Sciences in 1972, he and Terry returned to Oregon to begin farming and start a family.

The next 10 years encompassed several milestones and achievements. Wes joined the Oregon Farm Bureau in 1974 and was awarded the Outstanding Young Farmer and Rancher in the mid-late '70s at the National Farm Bureau Convention. He and Terry adopted their eldest child, Mary, in 1980, he received a Diploma in Biblical Scholarship from Ambassador College in 1981 and welcomed the adoption of their son James in 1984.

When Wes wasn't out on a tractor or listening intently to the radio to see if the winds were just right for field burning, he could be found on one of his sailboats: the Assiduous, the Serendipity or the Moon Shadow. Wes was an active adventurer and enjoyed hunting, fishing, hiking and canoeing. Yes, believe it or not, the canoe, often seen on the top of his vehicles, did on occasion make it into the water! He loved to travel and visited every state in the United States and every province in Canada, as well as Europe and Mexico. Sunday evenings at home in the '80s, Wes could be heard on his ham radio where he would chat for hours with fellow operators under the call sign WA7PWZ handle W.E.S which stood for Whiskey Every Sunday.

In 2010 Wes went back to school and earned his master's in biological and ecological engineering from Oregon State University, proving the point, you are never too old to keep learning and educating yourself.



Wesley C. Miller

Feb. 28, 1949-Dec. 21, 2024

Wes's devotion to his family, neighbors and the farming community was unwavering and led him to be elected as the Oregon Farm Bureau President for Benton County not once, but twice. The first in 1977 and again in 2013 where he held the office until passing the torch in the winter of 2024. He was honored with being inducted into the Oregon Farm Bureau Hall of Fame a few weeks before his passing.

Wes is survived by his wife Terry of 53 years, or 646 months as they made a point to celebrate monthly, his daughter Mary Beyer (Mike), son James Miller (Chrissy), six grandchildren Hayden (19), Brooklyn (16), William (8), Teagan (6), Alayna (6) and Cara (6), and brothers Gale (Diane) and Mark (Tina).

Terry Monaghan

Former Olympian speed skater Terry Monaghan, 91, died on Sabbath morning, Feb. 1, 2025 in his home in Portland, Oregon. "Crossing the finish line" is a fitting epitaph for him. Terry was born in Bournemouth, England and began ice skating at an early age. He told his family that he was going to compete in the Olympics someday. After years of regular workouts he competed in the 1960 Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley, California representing England. During the time trials Terry set a new world record in the 8,000 meters, but only came in fourth on the race day. After the Olympic games were over, Terry was recruited to train the U.S. speed skating team and remained in California.

On the ship over from England Terry had listened to Mr. Armstrong on short wave radio and became interested in learning God's truth. He continued to learn over the next few years and was baptized. Since sporting events are often on Satur-



Terry Monaghan

Feb. 1, 2025

day, Terry had to walk away from a career of coaching and competition in order to follow God's call. Never looking back, Terry learned and served with the same drive and determination that had once been evident in his work to be a skater. Terry was known for meaningful statements. One was "I always pray to God that I will never be deceived." He was also heard quoting his favorite scripture, Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

Terry is survived by his second wife, Sylvia, daughter Sara and step-son David. Terry has crossed the finish line and is now waiting to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Barbara Ann Prather

Barbara Ann Prather, 84, formerly of Bonners Ferry, Idaho and three-year resident of Charleston, South Carolina near her daughter, died on Friday, Jan. 24, 2025, after a brief illness.

Barbara was born in Livingston, Montana on April 12, 1940, to Kester and Blanche Counts. She moved to Pasadena, California at the age of 18 and attended Ambassador College from 1957-1959 until she married Dennis Prather, and they moved to Vancouver, B.C., for him to work with the Canadian Office of the Worldwide Church of God. She spent her years raising her family, raising collie pups and passionately pursuing alternative health and wellness. She found



Barbara Ann Prather

April 12, 1940-Jan. 24, 2025

her new home in Idaho in 2009, as it was reminiscent of the mountains and clean air that she loved so much in Montana, but not quite as cold!

Barbara loved God and her Church family very much and was faithful to her beliefs until the end. It brought her a great amount of peace to listen to church services over the phone each week, for years after she was unable to attend in person. And she so appreciated the cards, letters, visits, calls and personal gifts she received from her friends in the Church family when she was a shut-in.

Barbara was preceded in death by her husband of 40+ years, Dennis Prather. Even though they had divorced, they looked after each other in Bonners Ferry until his death in 2016.

Barbara is survived by her two daughters, Lynn (Cliff) Willey, formerly Lynn Rudolph, of Charleston, and Vivienne Prather of Castlegar B.C. She leaves behind six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her sister Jean (Leroy, deceased) Cole of Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her sister Sharon (Merle) Boyes of Merritt, B.C.

No flowers or donations please. If you knew her and feel inclined to send condolences or a note, please send to lynnprather62@gmail.com or c/o Lynn Willey, 3651 Barton Street, Johns Island, SC 29455. They will be shared with the family. **UN**

Announcements for *United News* can be sent by email (preferred) to un@ucg.org, or by mail to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. Please include a color photo; if mailing in, please indicate if you would like the photo returned. Announcements should not exceed 500 words, and may be lightly edited for length and/or clarity by *United News* staff.

Teens

Have you ever thought of yourself as ugly? Or have you felt that no one loves you? Maybe that you're stupid or that you don't matter? Learn how God see you.



Young Adults

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by major decisions with no clear answers. This seven-step process can help you find direction.



Singles

The Bible offers a very encouraging perspective for those who are single, whether previously or never-before married.



Men

Society has drilled into our heads that "real men" don't show emotions. Is that really what the Creator intended?



Women

Our society is obsessed with being beautiful! But is there more to beauty than what meets the eye? Discover what God has to say about women's appearance.



Couples

It's a rare marriage that couldn't use a little work. Here are some practical tips that can help you revitalize your marriage and strengthen the bonds of love.



CHILDREN'S CORNER

10 Plagues in Egypt

Moses warned Pharaoh of the many plagues that would come to Egypt if he did not let God's people go free. Pharaoh refused.

Directions: Read Exodus chapters 7 and 8 to discover all the plagues God sent to Egypt. Using the word bank below put the plagues in the correct order. There is one missing. Can you find the missing plague?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.



- Locusts

Darkness

Waters turned to blood
- Flies

Lice

Hail
- Death of the firstborn

Boils

Diseased livestock

Students

With all the demands and expectations placed on a college student today, how is it possible to fit in time for God? A simple illustration teaches a valuable lesson.



Entering the Workforce

If we are able, God expects us to work so we can provide for our own needs. Read more about what the Bible says on the topic of employment.



Retirees

Growing old can, and should, be a positive experience. Here's how you can make the golden years truly golden.



Overcoming Food Addiction

by Lena VanAusdle

Addiction is a chronic, relapsing brain disorder characterized by compulsive engagement in rewarding stimuli despite harmful consequences (National Institute on Drug Abuse, nida.nih.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/drug-misuse-addiction). On a physiological basis, addiction alters brain structure and function, particularly in areas related to reward and decision-making (dopamine system) (Yale Medicine—yalemedicine.org/news/how-an-addicted-brain-works).

There are different types of addiction, including behavioral addictions, such as gambling, pornography or food.

What is Food Addiction?

Food addiction can be particularly challenging because it involves something that is necessary for life, but when we have a dysfunctional relationship with food it can lead to other problems, including food addiction. Food addiction can lead to obesity and metabolic issues, including an increased risk of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and insulin resistance.

Psychologically, it can lead to feelings of guilt, anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Spiritually, it can separate us from God. Proverbs 23:2 warns us, “put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite.”

There is a difference between binge eating and food addiction. Binge eating is recurring episodes of eating large quantities of food in a short period of time where the type of food is irrelevant; the speed and amount of food is the focus. Whereas food addiction is a compulsive urge to eat a specific food or food type over a long period of time. Food addiction is associated with dopamine rushes and cravings, whereas binge eating is associated specifically with stress and emotional imbalance. Both can be used as a coping mechanism, but they function differently (rightchoicerecoverynj.com/addiction/behavioral/food/).

Steps Towards Recovery

If you are struggling with a food addiction, there are steps you can take towards recovery.

First, acknowledge the problem.

Second, implement spiritual practices:

- **Prayer and Meditation:** Engage in regular prayer to ask for God’s strength and guidance.
- **Accountability:** Find someone you trust (a mentor, pastor, or counselor) to hold you accountable. And be open and honest with them about your struggles. Let them ask the tough questions without becoming defensive or offended. Recognize that they want to help you, not hurt you.

Third, limit triggers: This means being intentional with the food that you bring into your home. If you are prone to impulse buying food, maybe do grocery pick-up so that you don’t see your trigger foods and are tempted to buy them. But don’t deprive yourself completely of foods that you enjoy; it’s not sustainable in the long run and may lead to binge eating.

Fourth, implement healthy substitutes: Replace addictive behaviors with positive activities: exercise (hiking or swimming, or working out), reading, painting, coloring, putting together puzzles, writing, whatever you enjoy doing to fill your time in a healthy way.

Fifth, be mindful: This means consciously considering how you are feeling and why you may be feeling the way that you do. For food addiction, practice mindful eating to recognize true hunger cues and avoid emo-

tional eating. Are you hungry, or are you bored or sad?

Sixth and finally, seek therapeutic help. Find a counselor and/or find a recovery group that can provide mutual support.

Summary

God has entrusted us with these limited human lives, and expects us to mold ourselves to become like Him. “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, New International Version). If we struggle with food addiction, change is possible and we can learn to honor God with our bodies as the temple for His Spirit.

If there is sufficient interest, Light of Hope will be offering help for individuals struggling with compulsive eating patterns such as overeating. This support group is not for those with more serious eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia. To join the group, contact Light of Hope by emailing us at hope@ucg.org. If you suffer from more serious issues, the Light of Hope team can assist you in finding appropriate treatment resources in your community. Call the helpline number: (888) 241-6211 or email us at hope@ucg.org.



If you are struggling with a food addiction, there are steps you can take towards recovery.

Feast of Tabernacles 2025 France

Your French brothers and sisters in Christ are pleased to welcome you back to Club Miléade La Gaillarde for the Feast of Tabernacles in 2025. The Feast will be held on the beautiful French Riviera near the well-known tourist destinations of Saint-Tropez and Saint-Raphaël. We have enjoyed the Feast in this region of France for many years, and this will be our fourth time celebrating the Feast at this seaside location.

Located an hour south of the Nice airport, Club Miléade La Gaillarde is situated just across the street from the beautiful Mediterranean Sea with 180-degree ocean views and an underpass walkway to the well-known beach of La Gaillarde. The outdoor heated pool and children’s play area overlook the water and the hotel’s main building has

a restaurant and bar, playroom for children and a spa where visitors can schedule a massage, enjoy a sauna or relax in the indoor jacuzzi overlooking the sea. The auditorium for church services is located next to the main building and the hotel accommodations, many with ocean views, are a short walk from the main complex. This site’s room and board package provides the opportunity to experience full-course buffet-style French meals while enjoying fellowship with other brethren from around the world. We plan to offer three afternoon excursions to nearby points of interest.

Keep an eye out for announcements with further details on ucg.org/members/feast-of-tabernacles and the 2025 UCG Feast of Tabernacles Locations Facebook page.



BEYOND TODAY

- March 9-15

You Become What You Think
Presented by Gary Petty
Literature offered: *Tools for Spiritual Growth*
- March 16-22

Great Conspiracy
Presented by Steve Myers
Literature offered: *Who Is the Antichrist?*
- March 23-29

Questions God Asks You
Presented by Gary Petty
Literature offered: *Why Does God Allow Suffering?*
- March 30-April 5

Are You Saved?
Presented by Steve Myers
Literature offered: *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*
- April 6-12

5 Steps to Real Change, Part 3: Repentance and Baptism
Presented by Darris McNeely
Literature offered: *What You Need to Know About Baptism*
- April 13-19

Easter, Idols and God
Presented by Darris McNeely
Literature offered: *Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Observe?*
- April 20-26

Headline Prophets
Presented by Gary Petty
Literature offered: *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*
- April 27-May 3

The Trinity Vs. The Bible
Presented by Steve Myers
Literature offered: *Is God a Trinity?*



United News
NEWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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BY THE NUMBERS

1.39K

subscribers to the Magnified YouTube channel

Find Jelly and Friends on Spotify!



Exciting news! Jelly has brand-new music available now on Spotify! These Bible-based songs help kids learn about God in an engaging and memorable way.

Jelly's music is designed to inspire faith, bring joy and teach important biblical lessons through catchy tunes and uplifting messages. Whether at home or on the go, these songs are the perfect way to help kids grow in their love for God. Stream now and let the fun begin! (Album 2 is also available on Amazon and Apple Music.)

To view all 16 episodes, visit: ucg.org/jelly.

Northwest Regional Teen Formal



Join us May 23-25 for a three-day teen event, full of spiritual learning, fellowship and fun.

Friday night will begin with a meet and greet. On the Sabbath day, we will hold seminars and have a group meal before Sabbath services. Join us for a post-Sabbath activity (details to be announced).

On Sunday, we will share some additional activities, culminating in a formal dinner and dance in the evening.

Register using the QR code:

For more information, visit:

sites.google.com/view/ucgnwregionalteenformal/home



Mammoth Cave Campout

The Bowling Green congregation is excited to announce the annual camping weekend to be held at Mammoth Cave May 8-11, 2025.

The weekend starts with fellowship on Friday evening, Bible study and hymn sing-a-long. We will have Sabbath services by the campfire at 2 p.m. On Saturday night we will have a huge potluck.

To participate, please call or text Sheri at (615) 512-5533 or email spalding1221@gmail.com.

