

# UNITED NEWS



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## The Good News to Be Retitled Beyond Today

by Media Staff

The Council of Elders passed a resolution at its December meeting to rename the Church's publication, *The Good News*, to *Beyond Today*. This decision follows six years of discussion and study on ways to increase public awareness of the gospel outreach efforts.

The Church's operation manager for Media and Communications Services, Peter Eddington, emphasized: "In presenting God's message, we can do more with all of our efforts working together with the same name instead of various identities working separately. By consolidating and simplifying our media identity in this manner we expect to increase awareness of the benefits of God's way, the gospel message, and the Church—and increase the reach of the limited financial resources available to us." Mr. Eddington added that we want to "simplify the pathway for people to access the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and magnify the impact of what we are sharing with those whom God is calling to His truth."

In 2008, as part of the Strategic Plan, the Council tasked the administration with finding ways to more effectively raise awareness of the gospel message. Since then the administration has consulted with Church media employees as well as members who are professionals in related fields to move forward on this directive. Many of those consulted pointed to the need to cut through the clutter in today's extremely crowded and fragmented media landscape. People often must hear a message several times before it makes a deep enough impression for them to remember it and seek further information. The goal is for every message the Church proclaims to be more readily identified with the Church and the gospel message.

The administration found that *The Good News*, *Beyond Today*, and the Church's print and Internet literature can be perceived as three isolated institutions. This creates obstacles for those learning what the Church believes because people prefer to stick with organizations they trust rather than explore new ones with unfamiliar names. It also spreads the Church's promotional budget thinner in supporting these parallel efforts.

On the other hand, the sooner a person knows what the Church is, the easier it is for them to focus on the content of its message. By uniting the proclamation efforts under one large banner that publishes magazines, television programs, booklets, articles, blogs, short Internet videos and seminars, the Church can provide a more straightforward path for those God is calling to understand the

complete gospel of the Kingdom, and give them fewer stepping stones to finding out about the truth.

Furthermore, it means money spent on any one of the Church's efforts becomes a link to all of its efforts, allowing people to encounter parts of the gospel message on the Web, in print, or on TV in a way that invites them to connect the dots.

### Why "Beyond Today"?

When the Church combined the cable access programs *Good News TV* and *Tomorrow Television* into a single program in 2005, various names were considered, including *Good News Television*. The phrase "good news," however, is a generic term that cannot be trademarked directly. This is why the Church's trademark for its magazine was very specific: *The Good News: A Magazine of Understanding*.

When considering the television market, there are already nearly 10 religious television shows with the name *Good News* in their title; if the Church pursued changing the title of its television production *Beyond Today* to some variation of *Good News*, it would automatically be entering a crowded market, fighting to stand out in a viewer's memory as a religious television show unique from others with the same or similar name. Thus, several of the existing trademarked derivatives of "Good News" present obstacles to expanding the Church's use of that name beyond the magazine or cable access TV into broadcast television.

There are also dozens of other *Good News* magazines with various individual titles published by all kinds of religious organizations—many in opposition to the Church's biblical beliefs. The Church regularly receives phone calls, letters, subscription requests and communications from people mistaking it as the publishers of one of the other *Good News* magazines.

By contrast, there are no other religious magazines with trademarked names similar to *Beyond Today* (nor are there any other religious television shows with the name). *Beyond Today* is a name that's been building an audience for the Church in television and online for 9 years.

The name *The Good News* has deep historical ties within the Church. For those who were lost, confused, and searching for the truth in the late 1990s, the Church was blessed to be able to use it as a beacon of that truth. Now there is a massive store of valuable *Good News* articles available on the the Church's website—almost 19 years

worth—that will continue to reconnect people to the Church through that name, as long as those people are out there looking for it.

Speaking of the Church, where does all this leave the Church in the media strategy? The Church will continue to be advertised as the organization producing all forms of media content. The message the Church proclaims in *Beyond Today* magazine—as well as online and on television—will remain the same—the three areas of focus being doctrine, prophecy and Christian living.

### The Story Behind the Name "Beyond Today"

Where did the title *Beyond Today* come from, and what does it mean? The title was suggested in 2005 for the television program in development at the time by UCG's Internet manager Aaron Booth. The title is meant to be a jumping off point for content that speaks of life's challenges, and urges the reader or viewer to *think* beyond today.

Everybody has been through situations where they've made bad decisions and woken up to the consequences at some point down the road. Those experiences usually lead someone to wish they had looked beyond the moment they made that decision to see the ramifications. The intent of the Church's message is to instruct its readers and viewers on how to harness that realization into a thought process that looks *beyond today*, starting now—or better yet, before they make a bad decision. In addition, it makes for a natural transition from thinking beyond the present in the context of this life to talking about life in the age to come.

After considering all the names put forth, the Council of Elders approved the name in 2005.

There are several logistical and practical considerations in this identity consolidation, which are being planned diligently. Such considerations include the timeline for the transition of the magazine, and the need for a new, flexible, usable and attractive visual system of logos and design.

With one name—*Beyond Today*—on its proclamation efforts (print, Internet, television), the Church will present a more focused, complete and memorable message of good news to a world that sorely needs it.

In a 22-minute interview with associate media producer Darris McNeely, Church president Victor Kubik discussed these and other facets of the name change. The interview is available online: [www.ucg.org/blog/inside-united-podcast-episode-041](http://www.ucg.org/blog/inside-united-podcast-episode-041). **UN**



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#### BY THE NUMBERS

# 6,455,484

Visitors to UCG.org in 2014,  
a 9 percent increase over 2013

Winter Camp just finished up on Dec. 31, and what a great week it was!

Winter Camp is located at the Camp Timber-lee facility in East Troy, Wisconsin: a beautiful facility located in the kettle moraines of south-central Wisconsin. This year we had 55 campers and 27 staff at Winter Camp, and it couldn't have been a better example of God's way of life in action!

Our activity schedule included an all-camp Amazing Race on the first day of camp, as well as activities like team building, animal encounter, dance class (with two camp dances), winter field sports, game room, open science center, flag football, capture-the-flag, and leather craft. This year we added snowboarding with beautiful equipment purchased through the generosity of many supporters of winter camp! A winter camp tradition is an overnight campout for those brave enough to face the weather, and this year we had a dozen or so campers and staff participate in this arctic survival

overnight campout with temperatures in the single digits.

The UYC theme this year was "Leaders: People of Character" and it was a focus of the morning Compass Checks, the Christian living and other biblical instruction. Aspects of this theme were also reinforced at many of the activities and other conversations throughout the day. It is always encouraging to see the minds of our youth engaged in God's Word.

Held concurrently this year with winter camp was our second Winter Leadership Camp. This year we had seven young adults participating in this camp, serving alongside activity staff and counselors. They also enjoyed activities as a group and attended additional Bible classes, seminars and Q&As, which focused on leading—in the camp setting, in their local congregations and in life in general. They had many opportunities to lead and serve, including giving speeches and sermonettes, planning and hosting the camp dance, serving snacks daily to the



campers, and being dining hall monitors. They also were able to have extended conversation with the ministry about many different aspects of life. What an amazing group of young adults who participated in this camp-within-a-camp.

Winter camp offers a unique camp experience unlike any of our summer camps. Come be with us in 2015 and see for yourself!

Dan Dowd



## Another Successful Winter Family Weekend!

by Gary Antion

This year's Cincinnati Winter Family Weekend (WFW) began with an opening family dance on Tuesday evening, Dec. 23. The welcome theme provided a friendly atmosphere with balloons and neon sticks. DJ Prisca Myers job did a great job for around 650 attendees, who made it to the dance after checking in at the Great Wolf Lodge, with its beautiful convention center and water park. Delicious refreshments were enjoyed throughout the evening. Roy and Barb Fouch, Aaron and Dawn Booth and family, and Eileen Sharkey did most of the set up for the dance. Peter Eddington and his staff brought their technical skills for sound and webcasting throughout the five-day event.

Activities began in earnest at 8 a.m. on Wednesday. Volleyball, basketball, pre-teen activities, field games, little children's pool play date and prom dress exchange dominated the day. ABC faculty and other presenters delivered seminars for those attendees desiring an educational experience. Most of these activities would flow through Thursday and Friday. The main differences were the evening events.

On Wednesday, Jelly was on stage live, to the delight of the children who attended. Visual arts were on display throughout the weekend, and performing arts featured brethren with various musical skills as well as dance. Karaoke and a jam session concluded the evening's activities. Amy Stephens and her aides did a great job with the arts. The popular board game and corn bag toss room was available on both Wednesday and Thursday evening with John and Peggy McClain and helpers organizing that event.

Thursday saw the All-Ambassador Reunion with 100 ambassadors enjoying fellowship time and refreshments. Kathy de Campos used her decorating skills to add class to the event. The teen dance was organized by Jan Cook and featured three DJs: Samantha Cook, Lauren Pate and Stephanie Tomes brought an 80s blast from the past. Amy Stephens spearheaded the adult dance with



DJ Rudy Rangel playing the dance tunes at the Snowflake Ball.

Friday brought the final round of ball games. Mike Cook and Duane Phelps (with Matt Fenchel assisting him) did a lot to make sure games were played on schedule and teams had their share of playing time. Both sports facilities are in the same area, so pre-teen activities and field games are next to the venue for volleyball and basketball games. Mike Phelps and Rudy Rangel did commendable jobs with those activities. The playoff tournament for basketball was once again won by Chattanooga with Alan Dance as player coach. Retaining their crown as volleyball champs was the Smith-Hand team in a three-game thriller.

With a theme of "Remember the Sabbath," most activities ended at 3 p.m. on Friday, to allow adequate preparation time. Roy Waterhouse brought the Bible study on Friday evening, titled "The Joy of Working." Sabbath morning had 10 seminars with several on the Sabbath theme. The children enjoyed being instructed by able teachers arranged by Duane and Lisa Phelps. Sabbath Services brought the WFW to a conclusion as several musical performances were enjoyed followed by the sermon titled "Remember the Sabbath Day," by Gary Antion. Mr. Antion also introduced Frank Dunkle, who will be directing the event in future years.

After the prayer concluding services, Troy Phelps, assistant event coordinator, presented plaques and gave



Clockwise from top left: Gary and Barb Antion stand by Victor and Beverly Kubik with the bouquet of flowers presented them as a thank-you for their years of work in planning the Winter Family Weekend; the All-Ambassador Reunion was a good place to catch up with old friends and meet new; volleyball and basketball tournaments were big draws for many attendees; a game room was available for families to enjoy during most of the weekend. Photos courtesy Janet Treadway and Tricia Merring.

appreciation to the Antions for their four years as event coordinators. Beautifully decorated cakes were cut and served as brethren left the hall. Nearly 900 were in attendance on Sabbath with several more having come for a portion of the WFW.

We will now turn our eyes and thoughts to preparing for WFW 2015! **UN**



**ROY HOLLADAY**  
Ministerial and Member  
Services Operations  
Manager

Hebrews 11 is called the faith chapter. It lists men and women of faith who believed and trusted God. There is one thing to note when you read the examples of Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and many others who are recorded: None of them had the Bible to read on a daily basis. It had not been written as yet. We have the Scriptures to read on a daily basis concerning the promises of God and the fulfillment of those promises.

Hebrews 11:6 explains that faith has two parts: 1—We must believe God exists, and 2—That He rewards those who diligently seek Him. The expression “diligently seek” means to search out. Many people profess belief in a God or a supreme power. But does that belief lead to seeking out God’s will in our lives? Notice how James clarifies this topic: “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without

works is dead?” (James 2:19-20, emphasis added). Faith is more than just belief; it is trust and it leads to obedience.

Let me further clarify by citing an illustration. What if a tightrope walker pushed a wheelbarrow every day across a tightrope strung between two canyons? For 10 years he did this and never once slipped off the rope. You personally had observed him do this hundreds of times. You believe that he can do this. Trust is getting in the wheelbarrow and letting him push you to the other side. The Greek word for faith, *pistis*, implies the character of one who can be relied upon. We can rely upon God’s character because He does not lie, and there is no power in the universe that can prevent God from accomplishing His plan.

Dead faith doesn’t affect behavior or develop trust in God. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. God will do what He says even though we can’t see the reality yet. God told Noah that there was going to be a flood, and he was moved with fear to obey God by building an ark and preaching righteousness to a godless world. His obedience preceded the fulfillment of God’s promise. Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac because he knew that God could resurrect him. God has given us

*God will do what  
He says even though  
we can't see the  
reality yet.*

the promise of the resurrection and eternal life. We haven’t experienced it yet, but we believe God, obey Him and trust in His promises.

We walk by faith, not by sight or by what we can see. Faith could be likened to a seeing-eye dog that guides us. A blind person has confidence in his dog to lead and direct him in the right path. God gives us faith to help lead us in the path of righteousness. Faith is seeing our reward in the future and obeying now. Notice how Hebrews 11:13 explains this principle: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Do we believe God? Do we trust Him? Are we willing to get into the wheelbarrow? **UN**

## From The COUNCIL



by Donald Ward

Are you a truth seeker? What does the word truth mean to you? Do you understand how precious truth is? The greatest truths of the ages center on the answers to the questions of: Who is God? What is God? and What is His purpose? And the corollary to those questions are the same ones as they relate to humanity: Who is man? What is man? and What is his purpose? Could you provide a convincing answer to each of these questions?

The libraries and the Internet abound with information, and knowledge is being rapidly increased. Yet the truth that will

## Are You A Truth Seeker?

truly set a person free from fear, ignorance, superstition and the dogmas of man is more and more difficult to discover. The apostle Paul prophesied that humanity would ever be learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7).

I believe that most people would say that they are truth seekers. But there is a great paradox that is operant in our society when it comes to seeking the truth. People want to know the truth about individuals, they want to know the truth about the people they do business with, they want to know the truth about politicians and celebrities; but this obsession has no transcendental purpose. When so-called juicy bits of gossip are aired, do those revelations raise our sights to become more noble and honorable people?

Does digging up the dirt and throwing it in the faces of others produce behavioral change? Or is this just another form of voyeurism in which people are entertained by viewing the dirty laundry of their fellow humans? And in some cases, living their lives vicariously through others.

All of the social barometers cry out loud and clear that our society continues to slide and slouch toward Sodom and Gomorrah. One of the discussion panel

news programs closes with each panel member articulating the “outrage” of the week. But it seems that people are no longer outraged to the point of action about anything. And if they do raise their voices, it is usually through violent protests that serve to further exacerbate the tensions that caused the problems in the first place.

We have been desensitized and dumbed down to the point that almost no one dares to take a stand about anything. So once again, are you a truth seeker, and would you have the courage to embrace the truth and act on it?

We need what I call “3C” people: people of conviction, commitment and courage. Conviction comes from knowing within your heart and mind that a certain principle is right, just and good. Commitment has to do with realizing that the things you have been taught and convicted of are to be held in sacred trust and defended with all your being. And courage is really a product of conviction and commitment, to the degree that you are convicted and committed, you will respond courageously.

It is ironic and paradoxical that Americans will spend billions of dollars digging up dirt, printing gossip and broadcasting it, while the greater issues of life go un-

Please see page 8

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## Southeast Regional Formal, March 14

The Nashville and Murfreesboro congregations cordially invite all teens and young adults to the United Church of God Southeast Regional Formal!

This year's event will be held at the Baird Chapel of Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee, on March 14, with a catered dinner starting at 6 p.m. and dance from 7:30 p.m.-midnight.



### Registration

The deadline to register is Feb. 21, 2015. The fee is \$18 per person, which includes the catered dinner and dance with snacks and drinks. Please pay in advance, as we will not be able to accept payment at the door. All attendees must pay by the deadline. Be sure to mail your registration form with your check.

This form as well as every other form is made available through the Facebook group under the files tab: [www.facebook.com/groups/501814639841015](http://www.facebook.com/groups/501814639841015).

Please make checks out to United

Church of God Tennessee. You can mail your payment to Regina Horvath:

2600 Cloversprings Ln  
Franklin, TN 37067.

For questions about registration, please e-mail [UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com](mailto:UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com) or call Mandy Kellers at (615) 415-5774.

### Sabbath Services

Sabbath services will be held at Cumberland University in the Baird Chapel (same location as the formal) at a time to be announced.

If you are interested in performing

special music at services, please contact [UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com](mailto:UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com) or Mandy Kellers.

### Senior Bios

2015 seniors, please submit this year's senior bio form along with your registration form. All of the seniors and their accomplishments will be recognized at the formal.

### Formal Photos

We will have opportunities for formal and casual photos to be taken at this year's formal free of charge. All photos will be uploaded to the UCG Southeast Formal Facebook group.

### Location

Baird Chapel  
Cumberland University  
1 Cumberland Square  
Lebanon, TN 37087

*Mandy Kellers*

## Wisconsin Education Seminar, June 20-21

The Milwaukee, Wisconsin, congregation will be hosting its third Focused Education Seminar Weekend June 20-21, 2015. The intent is to fulfill the second goal of the Mission Statement of UCG's Focused Education Program, which states: "...to conduct seminars for ministers and members regarding various aspects of focused education."

The topic in focus will be homosexuality, and the presenter will be well known author and speaker Joe Dallas. He will provide insights on the origins of same-sex attraction, answers to pro-homosexual claims and how we as individuals and as the Body can help those struggling to overcome, both now and in the future. The event is open to all members as well as any family and or friends who would benefit, who are in agreement with the basic biblical instruction on the subject (Leviticus 18:22, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 11). Although there will be no offensive or graphic material discussed, it is generally advised that children under 16 years old may not comprehend the concepts involved.

Some lodging with brethren is available, a nearby hotel will have 10 rooms reserved, or you can make your own lodging plans. Let us know if you prefer one of the first two options. We will provide potluck food service on the Sabbath.

If you plan to attend please let us know ASAP with your total count of guests. We look forward to sharing this unique opportunity of service with you. If you have any questions, you can contact Tony Kuczynski by phone at (262) 363-4260 or [tonykuc@centurylink.net](mailto:tonykuc@centurylink.net).

*Tony Kuczynski*

## 2015 Colorado Women's Enrichment Weekend, June 12-14

The Colorado Front Range churches are hosting their third Women's Enrichment Weekend beginning Friday evening, June 12, until early to mid-afternoon Sunday, June 14. Come and enjoy our "Garden Tea Party" in the beautiful Colorado Rockies. The location will be in a lodge retreat near beautiful Allenspark, just 15 miles south of Estes Park, Colorado. The view of Mt. Meeker behind the lodge is spectacular.

Cost of lodging and six meals, beginning with Friday night's dinner, will be \$140 per person. Inspiring speakers, a campfire on Friday night to open our weekend, a charity project and other fun activities are planned!

Transportation from the airport to lodge will be available for those flying in.

Look for more information and the registration forms to be posted on <http://denver.ucg.org> in the near future. Or you can call Beth Bradford at (303) 805-0089, or send her an e-mail at [beth.bradford@comcast.net](mailto:beth.bradford@comcast.net).

*Beth Bradford*



## United Youth Corps Project in Santiago, Chile, July 12-26

United Youth Corps will be sponsoring a project in Santiago, Chile, from July 12-26, 2015.

We are seeking two individuals who are passionate about teaching and are willing to stretch outside of their comfort zone. The project will consist of teaching English, leadership, and speech. The classes will be hosted by the local congregation and will be opened to community members. Certifications in teaching, English, or speech are preferred, though not required. Those selected must have a positive recommen-



*Dmitry Avdeev/Wikimedia Commons*

dation from their pastor.

Once selected, applicants will be involved with planning activities for the project. Team members should be able to maintain a positive attitude and be able to adapt to a changing schedule. Proficiency in the Spanish language is preferred, but not a requirement.

### Cost

Room, board and ground transportation will be provided by Good Works. Participants are expected to provide half their airfare costs and any extracurricular activities (costs will vary depending on location of origin). Scholarships may be made available based on need.

Please see the fact sheet and apply at [www.ucgyouthcorps.org](http://www.ucgyouthcorps.org).

For further information please contact Lena VanAusdle at [lena\\_vanausdle@ucg.org](mailto:lena_vanausdle@ucg.org).

The deadline for applications is March 2, 2015.

# Announcements



**Judah Robert Fahey**

Born May 8, 2014

## Births

**Judah Robert Fahey** was born May 8, 2014. He weighed 9 lbs., 9 oz., and measured 22 in. long. Parents Jennifer and Bob, and their boys, are doing well. Judah is the seventh grandchild for Robert and Evelyn Fahey, and the 17th for Bonnie Griswold.

## Anniversaries

**Trevin and Sherene White** celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with their family and Church family members at the Feast of Tabernacles on Oct. 13 in Kalutara, Sri Lanka.

The couple met in 1983 during their school years and dated for four years. They were married Oct. 13, 1989, in Rajagiriya, Sri Lanka. They have five children: Stephanie, Christine, Melani, Kevin and Sabrina. Their oldest daughter Stephanie is married to Rohan De Silva, and they have a little boy, Nehemiah, who is the Whites' first grandchild.

The White family attended their first Church of God church service in 2002 and attended their first Feast of Tabernacles in 2003. The family is active in the local United Church of God congregation in Colombo and is very talented in cooking, singing and dancing.



**Trevin and Sherene White**

25 years



**Jim and Betty Scudder-Cookman**

50 years

### Jim and Betty Scudder-Cookman

I was sitting in my office one May afternoon in Delaware, Ohio, when the phone rang. The voice asked if I was Vernon Hargrove. After confirming that I was, and the usual amenities, the voice asked if I would be willing to perform a 50-year anniversary ceremony for her parents... in Arizona. I was the pastor that tied the original knot. The daughter calling was relieved to find the pastor alive.

After 50 years of marriage it was a challenge to come up with a meaningful gift for Mom and Dad, so it was decided, by the couple's four children, Trina, Tonya, Tobin, and Teresa, to surprise their parents by having their 1964 officiating minister fly to Arizona and be a part of the gold event.

The plan was for my wife and I to surprise Jim and Betty at the local IHOP on Friday morning. Shell-shocked is a fitting description of the looks we received when they walked in.

Here was the consummate married couple. Her a homemaker, wife, mother, grandmother etc., and he a dad, grandpa, and retiree from a company he had successfully spent nearly 40 years with. They, a Christian couple, convinced of their growth toward oneness, and that two are better than one (Ecclesiastes 4:9), took very seriously the original vows, and now 50 years later were celebrating, with family, the success of the journey. Children, grandchildren, and even four-legged family members, gathered in Payson,

Arizona, for three days at the Christopher Creek Lodge. The location was chosen because it held many memories for the family. This event was a labor of love on the part of the children, both the young and not so young anymore. We remembered the not so young when they were just sprouts.

The ceremony was planned for Saturday evening. The outside sanctuary, located on the bank of a stream, was decorated by children and grandchildren with ribbons and flowers. The couple dressed in their best and reaffirmed their commitment to each other. The final gestures of the ceremony were a 50-year anniversary ring presented to the glowing, if not blushing, bride with a loving kiss.

Jim and Betty were able to celebrate a lifetime of building home and family.

What a blessing to be a part of a 50-year ceremony celebrating the success of a couple who chose to live the vows they had said yes to a half century prior.

**Neil and Eleanor Lacasse**, of the Lansing, Michigan, congregation, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 5, 2014. The happy couple were presented with a cake after church services on Nov. 29.

Neil and Eleanor are longtime members in God's Church. They have served in the area of special music for many years both locally and at Feast sites around the world. Neil and Eleanor have three children and 10 grandchildren.



**Neil and Eleanor Lacasse**

50 years



**Ken and Phillis O'Bryan**

60 years

**Ken and Phillis O'Bryan** of Cincinnati, Ohio, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Jan. 15, 2015. They first met while sitting next to each other in grade school. Ken and Phillis also had the privilege of being part of the very first Ambassador Bible College class of 2000, where once again they sat next to each other during class. They also attend the ABC continuing education classes held each year.

They came into the Church in 1971 and are still faithful members of the Cincinnati East congregation. Several months out of the year, the O'Bryans pack up and head to sunny Tampa, Florida, to escape the cold Cincinnati weather.

Phillis and Ken have seven children, 19 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Please see page 8

## Local Church UPDATES

## Little Rock Fun Show

On Dec. 13, the Little Rock, Arkansas, congregation enjoyed its annual fun show. Following Sabbath services we shared a potluck meal and fellowship. After sundown, we gathered to be entertained by those brave enough to participate in the show.

The entertainment varied from instrument performances to singing and a skit. Josh Farnsworth entertained with vocal solos of several of his favorite songs. Barry Howdeshell and Fredena Richardson performed with his trumpet and her trombone. Liz

Harris and Lidia Nance performed vocal solos, and Jim and Shannon Simkins performed a duet from Fiddler on the Roof. Bill Farnsworth ended the performances with a vocal solo. All of this was brought together by our excellent MC, Lonnie Blankenship. The evening was enjoyed by all!

Jean Howdeshell

Photo at Right: Liz Harris sings with help from Lamb Chop at the Little Rock fun show.





# A Beautiful Wilderness

by Jacob Mammen

I don't know about you, but in my life I hope for the godly desires of my heart to become reality. Notice I said "godly" desires. We can all agree that some of the desires that come out of our hearts can leave us and others all messed up. When I read Psalm 37:4: "Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart," I take that as a promise from our Creator! It's like He's saying that no matter who you think you are, where you are, and what you have done, if you were to follow Him and truly delight in obeying and trusting in Him, the good things that you and I want He will truly provide. The question we might ask is, "Well, I honestly feel like I delight in You Lord and strive to follow You, so when are you going to give me the desires of my heart?" The sooner the better! Well, to be honest here, I've had these thoughts run through my mind a time or 100. It wasn't until earlier this week I stumbled on something on the Internet that gave me a lot to think about.

As I was scrolling through my Instagram feed, I came across a post from a guy that started to get the wheels turning in my head. He posted a picture that said: "We always want the promise, but don't want to go through the wilderness to get to the promise!"

That's when I said to myself, "That is so true!" We have to realize that sometimes to follow God we must be willing to walk through a wilderness. God's desire is for all of us to be blessed and to have the good things we so fervently desire, but unless we are ready for it, ready to appreciate it, ready to take care of it, ready to use it in a holy and God-glorifying manner, we might have to stay journeying through the wilderness until we are. What some estimate should have been an 11-day journey for ancient Israel turned into 40 years, simply because they were not ready! God then used the time in the wilderness to break down high places and to turn the hearts of their children from themselves and their evil ways on to Him. That same process needs to be done in our spiritual lives before we can receive the promise, before we can receive the desires of our hearts.

We have to realize that sometimes to follow God we must be willing to walk through a wilderness.

As we peak the mountain and look out upon the entire beauty of the wilderness, we might then begin to see the journey from God's point of view and not our own!

I wonder, like how we see the beauty of the wilderness areas throughout the world, if that's not how God sees the wilderness we might be in? We might look at the journey through our spiritual wilderness as traveling through desolate wastelands, like Frodo and Sam going through the land of Mordor in *The Lord of the Rings*, but if we were to start looking at it the way God might look at it, we might see that we might actually be going through a beautiful wilderness! As seeds of pretty wildflowers are planted, start to grow, and bloom, so we might start seeing



Danny Froese/Unsplash

our spiritual growth through the wilderness. As we go through the wilderness and start to get thirsty, we might stop at a small stream to be filled with the Spirit and Word of God. As we look around we see mighty trees with roots that go deep, hopefully starting to notice the strong relationships God has planted in our lives to support us along our journey through the wilderness. Carrying on down the trail we could stop at a still and peaceful lake at sunrise

and embracing that the amazing journey through the beautiful wilderness was to prepare us for the promise and blessings He has in store for us and to give us all the good desires of our heart! If we could only realize the plans God has for us. They're plans for good and not evil, to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). I also find it very interesting that in Matthew 4, Jesus Himself was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the enemy, and there He fasted 40 days and 40 nights! To Jesus, this was a necessary journey before He started His ministry to the people. Think on that for a moment.

As we take each step up higher and higher into elevation the things in our spiritual journey through the wilderness begin to look smaller and smaller as our God-view begins to broaden and our perspective starts to change.

I realize that you could very well be at the beginning or in the middle of huge journey, a huge trial, and this metaphor of a beautiful wilderness might not be acceptable at this time. I pray that the God of all comfort will comfort you during your time of difficulty (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). I'm not sure who God is speaking to right now, but I believe there are so many of us wandering in a spiritual wilderness that God has purposefully and masterfully allowed us to explore. We can mature to the fullness and complete standard of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). If you are going through a spiritual wilderness, try to stop looking at it like Mordor or a dry desert land. If you can, look at it more like a beautiful hike through a pristine land with great and wonderful promises and spiritual treasures to be had during and at the end. As crazy as this may seem, enjoy the beauty of your wilderness journey! **UN**

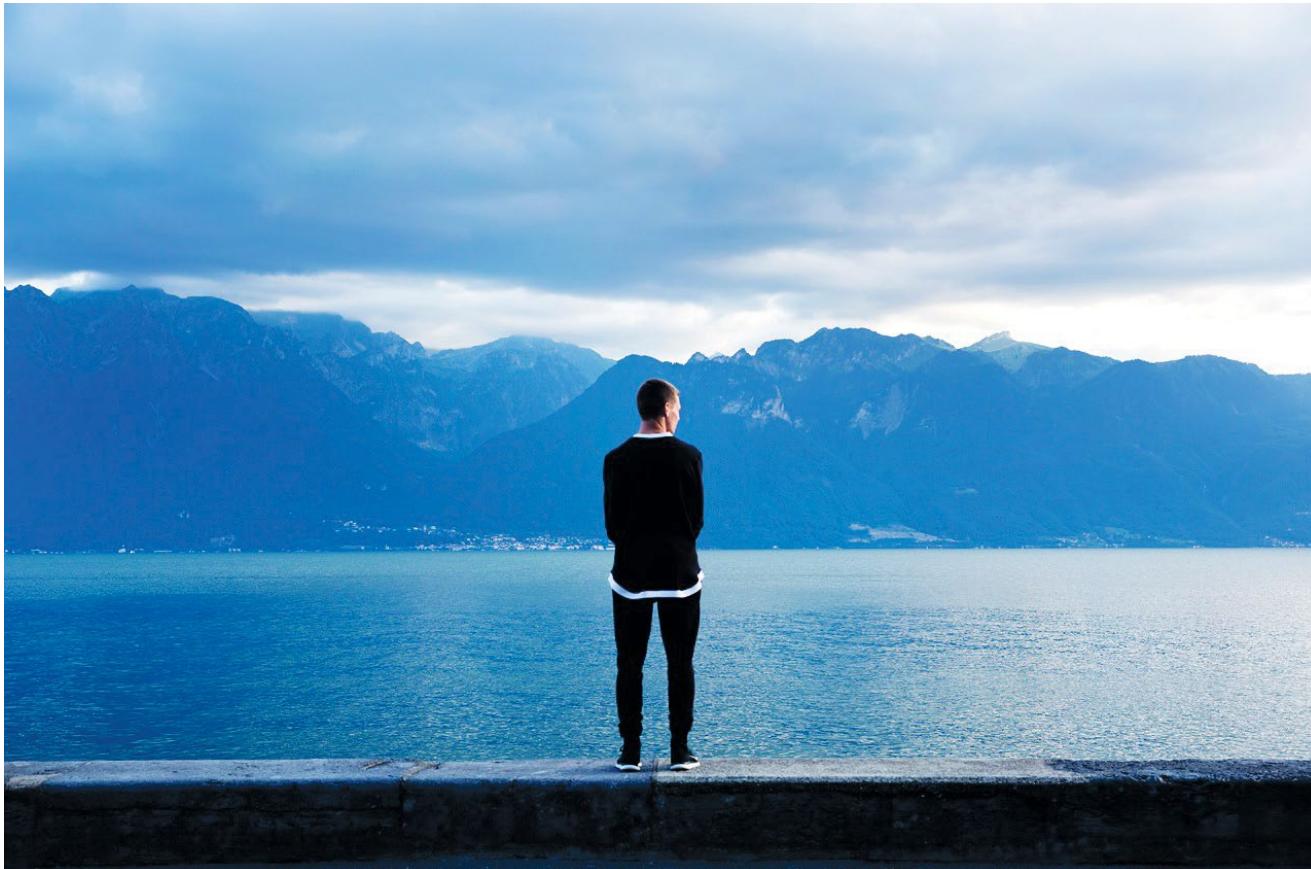
*Jacob Mammen is a member who attends the Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregation.*

*We have to realize  
that sometimes  
to follow God  
we must be willing  
to walk through a  
wilderness.*

and look into it and see the reflection of our Lord and Savior being formed in us as the light of our King shines down on us.

We see that all things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28). We start seeing

# Are You Filled With Regret? Take Heart!



by Mitchell Moss

My wife and I are going through this marriage book called *His Needs, Her Needs*. It's a classic book—probably old news for a lot of people. We've been married for five years, but in a lot of ways we both feel like this past year has been our first real year of marriage.

For my part, I've come to realize that I've had these selfish, ongoing tendencies that haven't built up our relationship or edified my wife but instead have torn at our marriage, little pieces at a time, here and there. The book discusses how different ways that we behave toward our spouse can either build them up—and therefore our marriage—or tear them down. It uses an analogy of a love bank, with debits and credits.

As I've come to realize these different behaviors of mine, I've come to regret a lot of stuff, and I hate it.

Who wants to be full of regrets?

Nobody. Yet everybody is.

“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Joshua Earle/Unsplash

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin” (Romans 7:14-24).

Here's the apostle Paul—who's an incredible example of faith and courage in doing God's will—and he struggled with the same things we struggle with! He wanted to do good, but often found his actions at odds with those desires. It goes to show that even those we'd all look to as examples of greatness in God's way struggle with our mistakes and our regrets just the same as you and me.

## Self Doubt ► Regret ► Anxiety

This question of self-doubt and regrets can easily lead to anxiety.

Am I worthy?

If I died today would I be in the resurrection?

That anxiety can often be crippling. It can often lead us to inaction, to a state of hopelessness or despair; or worse, possibly, to apathy in doing good. When we shine the light of Scripture on ourselves, we focus on those mistakes and regrets, and it hurts.

But we can take heart.

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7-8).

That's not usually a passage we turn to for encouragement, I realize. But I think there is hope in this analogy, if we stop and think for a bit.

Typically when I think of reaping a crop in a field, I think of what most modern American farmers grow—hundreds of acres of just corn; or just wheat; or just soybeans.

But if you have a garden at home, that's not what you do. You plant many different plants. My mother-in-law and her husband have a garden, and they grow all kinds of stuff: sweet peppers, banana peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, etc.

And when you think of it like that, this analogy more accurately describes what kind of lives we lead. We all sow different types of seeds every single day. Everything we do is sowing a seed—every interaction we have with people, every thought we entertain, every e-mail we send—those are all seeds. As time goes on, each of those things adds up, and we will eventually reap a harvest from them.

And those harvests are continual and infinite in scope. The way I treat a person who I might see only once every couple months will shape the relationship I have with that person on an ongoing basis. The thoughts I entertain in the privacy of my brain form a pattern of thinking, and I will reap from that pattern of thought in how I express myself, what kind of people I hang out with, what kind of entertainment I seek, and the ways I reap that go on and on.

And on an overall scale, the macro sum of all the continuous, infinite harvests we reap all the time, every day, tell the overall picture of who we are.

And I think that's why we can take heart.

Because our period of judgment is not a single moment. It doesn't strike the moment I make a mistake and sin. God isn't looking at us and waiting to trap us in the moment we break down and give into that same sin we've been battling for years.

Our period of judgment is our lifetime.

We are a work in progress.

And that progress is overcoming. Every day, trying our best to overcome those behaviors we aren't proud of. Practicing righteousness instead of sin, in as many ways as we possibly can.

When we make a mistake, when we sow the wrong seed—whether it be in the way we treat somebody, or by becoming so angry with somebody that we hate them and withhold forgiveness, or by developing a habit of cursing or gossiping or lying or watching pornography or breaking the Sabbath—if it's our goal to overcome those things and we repent and strive to give our whole lives over to God, then we can take heart. We may be unable to forget, but God can, and He does, just as He forgives us.

When God sought out someone to replace King Saul, He looked for one who had a heart after His own. And He found and chose David. Then over the course of David's life, the overall harvest that he reaped was of fulfilling that quality, and God confirmed it at the end of his life. Yet we know the major mistakes he made in between! He sowed all kinds of bad seed over the course of his lifetime; yet when he became aware of his sin, he always came back to God and sought to practice righteousness.

So take heart! God looks at the macro harvest of your life. Do you desire to please God? Are you striving to serve Him and sow a crop of righteousness as much as possible? Are you practicing righteousness? If so, then don't allow your regrets to consume you; use them to make positive changes and move on. **UN**

# Announcements

## Obituaries

**Dolores Firari** died peacefully in her sleep on Nov. 6, 2014, at the age of 84. She will be greatly missed. She first heard Herbert Armstrong in the late 1970s, completed the *Correspondence Course* and watched the television program. She began attending church services in May of 1989 in Beloit, Wisconsin, and was baptized in January of 1991.

Dolores was born in Atwater, Wisconsin. The home she was born in had its indoor plumbing outdoors! Her father was a cheesemaker, and she worked in the business until she was 18. A few years later she married Edward Firari. They were married for 35 years when he then died from lung cancer. She was always active and loved to travel. She was a fan (in the truest sense) of the Milwaukee Brewers and would attend the ballgames whenever she could and would watch games on TV as well (even recording and re-watching the games!).

Dolores was famous for her handmade candy and chocolates, her warm smile and infectious laugh, and for always having a positive outlook. She served many years at the information table during the Feast of Tabernacles in Wisconsin Dells, as well as always sending a card to those who were struggling quietly.

She is survived by two children, seven grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren—as well as numerous other family and friends. We look forward to seeing her again at the resurrection!

**Harlan Dale Spieker**, age 82, of Watertown, South Dakota, died at home Oct. 8, 2014, as a result of pancreatic cancer.

He was born on a farm northeast of Willow Lake on May 9, 1932, and was the middle child of five children of Fred and Bertha (Symens) Spieker. During Harlan's younger years, the family moved frequently as his father found farming work. Harlan and his younger brother were very close and have many fond childhood memories together. Together they would trap skunks for their fur, mow lawns for 25 cents, have water fights, bike all over the country to go fishing, help their dad sweep the school each day, as well as working in the Erwin grocery store stocking shelves. In 1947, his



**Dolores Firari**

1930-2014

father purchased a farm southwest of Willow Lake. Harlan graduated as valedictorian of his class in 1950. Harlan met Janice while in high school, taking special notice of her at summer Bible school. He served in the U.S. Army in Europe from the fall of 1952 until the fall of 1954. Their courtship by mail continued while he was in the Army.

On Nov. 26, 1954, he was united in marriage to Janice Joan Edleman, whose family had long been friends of the Spiekers. After living in Willow Lake that first winter, they moved in March 1955 into their home, which Harlan and his dad had remodeled from the Rosedale School. Harlan spent the majority of his life on the farm southwest of Willow Lake working with his father, brothers, sons, and grandsons. He greatly enjoyed working the land, planting and harvesting many good crops throughout the years with his family by his side to share in the prosperity of his labor.

Harlan came to know God's truth by listening to *The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast. From 1957 to 1961, studying the Bible, reading *The Plain Truth* and listening to the radio broadcast made him more aware of his own religious teachings and how they compared to the Bible. From 1961 to 1964, he continued to write to Pasadena asking for the *Bible Correspondence Course*, booklets and a ministerial visit. On July 7, 1964, he finally kept a vow he had made to himself and decided that from then on he would keep the Sabbath and continue to study God's Word. By December he was released from his elder and treasurer duties in the Presbyterian

in a sinful body and then challenge you to "save your soul?"

These are just of the few great questions of life. But no one really pays much attention to these questions. Even the people who claim to believe in God have to a large degree made God over in their image to conform to their lifestyle and to their notions about what is acceptable to God and what is not. As a result, that which is good is called evil, and that which is evil is called good.



**Harlan Dale Spieker**

1932-2014

Church.

In 1965 there was enough interest in South Dakota that Bible studies started being held on Sundays in Sioux Falls, a two-hour drive away. Most Sundays Harlan and Janice would fight over who got the car to attend church versus Bible study. Much pressure was put on Harlan from the small-town community to give up his beliefs. His father Fred pulled out of the farming business because father and son could not agree on which weekend day to labor on. Without the farming help of his father, Harlan started a dairy business with 30 cows.

Harlan and Janice were baptized together in 1968. The first Holy Day they attended together was the First Day of Unleavened Bread. In July 1968, regular Sabbath services began in Sioux Falls, where he also made weekly trips on Sunday for Bible studies, and Thursdays for Spokesman's Club. Harlan was ordained a deacon, and then later an elder on the Feast of Trumpets in 1976.

Harlan was a devoted and loving husband and served the Worldwide Church of God and United Church of God for many years, alongside his devoted wife. He mentored through his meaningful and heartfelt sermons. He was a compassionate father, a hard-working engineering farmer, and a committed Christian.

He was preceded in death by his wife Janice Edleman Spieker (in 2010 of brain cancer), youngest son Mark (in 1991), parents and older brother.

On Sept. 2, 2012, he married Claudia Harris Brunick of Watertown.



**Sandra Puerner**

1943-2014

**Sandra Puerner** of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, congregation ended her race on the Sabbath of Nov. 8, 2014. Sandy was 71 years old, and had been a member of God's Church for close to 50 years. She was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, but grew up in Milwaukee. On Oct. 28, 1961, she married Dale Puerner, and they enjoyed 53 years together.

Sandy was baptized in God's Church in June of 1966 and was a faithful member of the United Church of God, serving as a deaconess for 21 years. She and Dale participated in many summer ABC seminars, enjoying not only the classes but also all of the brethren they met. They traveled extensively for the Feast of Tabernacles to sites such as Greece and Egypt, Hawaii, Italy, Germany and Jamaica.

Sandy is survived by her husband Dale, her son Brian, daughter-in-law Kelly and granddaughter Brittney, as well as the many, many members whose lives she touched.

We look forward to seeing Sandy again in God's Kingdom!

### Announcements:

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

## Truth Seeker

Continued from page 3

answered. What happens to us after we die? Do good people literally go to a place called heaven that is filled with eternal bliss? Do bad people literally go to a place called hell where they are tormented in hell fire forever and ever? Do you have an immortal soul? And if so, where did it come from? Did God create a good, pure and righteous immortal soul and place it

### The Desire for Social Acceptance

Talk shows abound with everybody under the sun giving their opinion on whatever the talking point of the day is. But who or what is their authority? In turn, talk show hosts will then editorialize and give his/her point of view. But little is done to really challenge the foundational understanding of why we are on this earth.

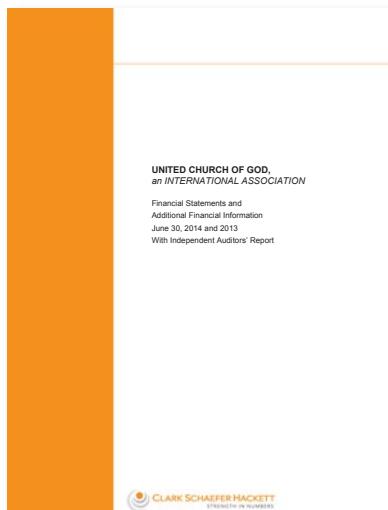
Even when a guest might bring up certain principles that are backed by the

Bible, the quick response by the hosts is to state that there are many interpretations of the Bible and he/she doesn't necessarily see it that way. So even the plain words of the Bible are dismissed as just another opinion. Thus in effect agnosticism reigns supreme. No one knows anything absolutely; it is all reduced to a matter of personal opinion.

People are somewhat comforted by

Please see page 11

# Independent Auditors Give Financial Statements Clean Bill Of Health



by Rick Shabi

Included on the next two pages are the audited financial statements of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, for the fiscal year ending June 30,

2014, along with the auditors' report.

The Cincinnati-based audit firm of Clark, Schaefer, Hackett and Co. once again performed the audit, and issued an "unqualified" opinion, noting that the financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of [the Church] as of June 30, 2014 and 2013, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

These statements reflect another year of operations during which the Church has been blessed with stable income and sound operational control of expenditures.

Looking at the financial statements and a few annual statistics, God's blessing on the Church is evident:

- Due to the continued generosity and faith of Church members, coworkers, and other donors, cash balances have increased over the prior year. The eight-week cash reserve policy established by the Council of Elders was able to be achieved during this fiscal year, and net assets of the Church increased by over \$800,000;
- Public proclamation efforts of the Church continued and were productive, with 29 percent of revenue expended in that area, while 41 percent of revenue was spent in the area of congregational care;
- More than 48,000 responses to the *Beyond Today* TV program were received during the fiscal year, the highest number of responses to date; and
- At the end of the fiscal year, the Church

had on file 7,777 donors and coworkers (which represent contributors who are not members or associates of the Church) on file.

We are grateful to God the Father and the Head of the Church (Jesus Christ), giver of all good gifts, for providing these increases and results. We look to Him to provide continual guidance and direction to His Church, that we may seek His will, and do His will. "As long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper" (2 Chronicles 26:5).

Our gratitude and appreciation of course also extends to the faithful members of the Church and others who support its work through their faithfulness in giving tithes and offerings. We solicit the prayers of all who support the Church, that God would give wisdom in the management of its financial and other affairs. **UN**

**CLARK SCHAEFER HACKETT**  
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT**

Council of Elders  
United Church of God, *an International Association*:

**Report on the Financial Statements**

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of United Church of God, an International Association (a not-for-profit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of June 30, 2014 and 2013, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

**Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

**Auditors' Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

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**CLARK SCHAEFER HACKETT**  
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

**Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of United Church of God, an International Association as of June 30, 2014 and 2013, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

**Other Matter**

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The Schedules of Functional Expenses on pages 11 and 12 are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the Schedules of Functional Expenses are fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

*Clark, Schaefer, Hackett & Co.*

Cincinnati, Ohio  
November 13, 2014

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Statements of Financial Position  
June 30, 2014 and 2013

	2014	2013
<b>Assets:</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 4,119,009	3,330,108
Prepaid expenses	309,876	169,050
Property and equipment, net	5,347,292	5,344,457
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>9,776,177</b>	<b>8,843,615</b>
<b>Liabilities and net assets:</b>		
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Accounts payable	152,895	205,730
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	378,717	338,777
Accrued insurance obligations	63,527	38,106
Accrued other	14,300	-
Mortgage payable	324,323	276,448
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>933,762</b>	<b>859,061</b>
<b>Net assets:</b>		
Unrestricted	8,765,192	7,968,250
Temporarily restricted	77,223	16,304
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>8,842,415</b>	<b>7,984,554</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$ 9,776,177</b>	<b>8,843,615</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.  
3

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Statements of Activities  
Years Ended June 30, 2014 and 2013

	2014	2013
<b>Unrestricted net assets:</b>		
Revenues, gains and other support:		
Contributions - individuals	\$ 11,922,785	12,083,433
Contributions - local congregations	327,998	712,741
Holy day offerings and festival fund contributions	4,495,043	4,330,526
Estate/personal property donations	186,337	380,980
Dividend and interest income	2,852	69
Other income	183,223	148,513
Net assets released from restrictions:		
Satisfaction of restrictions	16,304	12,276
<b>Total revenues, gains and other support</b>	<b>17,134,542</b>	<b>17,668,538</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Program services:		
Field Ministry / Local Congregations	7,036,956	6,799,663
Festivals	471,236	806,490
International	1,427,721	1,335,242
Public Proclamation	5,025,222	5,797,535
Total program services	13,961,135	14,738,930
Management and general:		
Council of Elders / Home Office / Insurance & Benefit Plans	2,200,521	2,779,044
General Conference	30,944	27,041
Executive Reserve	145,000	-
<b>Total management and general</b>	<b>2,376,465</b>	<b>2,806,085</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>16,337,600</b>	<b>17,545,015</b>
<b>Increase in unrestricted net assets</b>	<b>796,942</b>	<b>123,523</b>
<b>Temporarily restricted net assets:</b>		
Contributions	77,223	16,304
Net assets released from restrictions:		
Satisfaction of restrictions	(16,304)	(12,276)
<b>Increase in temporarily restricted net assets</b>	<b>60,919</b>	<b>4,028</b>
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>857,861</b>	<b>127,551</b>
Net assets at the beginning of period	7,984,554	7,857,003
<b>Net assets at the end of period</b>	<b>\$ 8,842,415</b>	<b>7,984,554</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.  
4

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Statements of Cash Flows  
Years Ended June 30, 2014 and 2013

	2014	2013
<b>Cash flows from operating activities:</b>		
Change in net assets	\$ 857,861	127,551
Adjustment to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	151,814	161,716
<b>Effect of change in operating assets and liabilities:</b>		
Prepaid expenses	(140,826)	49,540
Accounts payable	(52,835)	1,147
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	39,940	19,603
Accrued insurance obligations	25,421	(37,919)
Accrued other	14,300	-
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>895,675</b>	<b>321,638</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>		
Purchases of property and equipment	(154,649)	(26,441)
<b>Cash flows from financing activities:</b>		
Proceeds from mortgage payable	325,000	-
Principal payments on mortgage payable	(277,125)	(17,962)
<b>Net cash provided (used) by financing activities</b>	<b>47,875</b>	<b>(17,962)</b>
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>788,901</b>	<b>277,235</b>
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	3,330,108	3,052,873
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 4,119,009</b>	<b>3,330,108</b>
<b>Supplemental Cash Flow Disclosures:</b>		
Interest paid	\$ 17,575	18,994

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.  
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**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Notes to the Financial Statements  
June 30, 2014 and 2013

**1. CHURCH AND ACTIVITIES:**

The United Church of God, *an International Association*, (herein referred as the "Church") is a worldwide religious association. In the United States of America, the Church is a California Nonprofit Religious Corporation (Incorporated on May 10, 1995). Affairs of the Church are coordinated through the Home Office located in Milford, Ohio, where the state of Ohio has the Church officially registered.

The Church is not affiliated with other religious churches, nor does it publicly appeal for funds or involve itself in politics. The mission of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, 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.

The Church is overseen by a General Conference of Elders, which, in turn, appoints a 12-member Council of Elders to function as a board of directors that establishes operations policies for the Church. The officers and employees of the Church are responsible for operation of the Church in conformance with Council policies.

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:**

**Basis of presentation**

The accompanying financial statements include only the activity of the Home Office for the Church.

The Church has associated organizations, operating in other countries, which have resources that are principally derived and expended locally. The Church provides grants-in-aid and other services to some of these organizations. The accounts of these organizations are not included in the accompanying financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis in accordance with the AICPA Audit and Accounting Guide, "Not-for-Profit Organizations." The significant accounting policies followed are described below.

**Revenue recognition**

Unrestricted net assets represent those resources of the Church that are not subject to donor-imposed stipulations. Unrestricted net assets may be designated for specific purposes by actions of the Council of Elders or may otherwise be limited by contractual agreements with outside parties.

Temporarily restricted net assets represent contributions that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions that can be fulfilled by actions of the Church pursuant to those stipulations or that expire by the passage of time. Temporarily restricted contributions received and expended in the same fiscal year are recorded as unrestricted revenues.

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.  
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### Church support

Members of the Church practice tithing (which is the donation of ten percent of one's "net" income for the Church's unrestricted use). The majority of Church support and revenue consist of such unrestricted donations, whether from individuals directly to the Home Office or from monies received by local congregations and subsequently given to the Home Office.

Members also save an additional ten percent of their annual "net" income for personal use in attending biblically mandated festivals or holy days. This is commonly referred to as the second tithe. Members also contribute to the Church a portion of the second tithe that they save for use at the annual festivals. These contributions, known as the "Festival Fund," are used to pay for expenses involved in festival operations and to assist needy members and their families so they can attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Funds are also sent internationally to assist members.

Those members who are financially able contribute to the "Assistance Fund." Monies contributed to the fund are used to assist the needy.

Members may designate that their contributions be used to support the Church internationally. This fund is known as the "International Fund."

### Use of estimates

The financial statements are prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles which require management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts of assets and liabilities, the disclosure of contingent liabilities as of the financial statement date, and the amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

### Income taxes

The Church is exempt from Federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donations to the Church are, therefore, tax-deductible under IRC Section 170(b)(1)(A). However, income from certain activities not directly related to the Church's tax-exempt purpose would be subject to taxation as unrelated business income. The Church has been granted tax-exempt status in the states in which it operates that provide exemptions from taxes.

The Church follows Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) guidance related to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes. Those provisions clarify the accounting and recognition for income tax positions taken or expected to be taken in the Church's income tax returns. The Church is not required to file an annual information return due to its religious origins but would be subject to tax on any unrelated business income. The Church believes it has not earned any unrelated business income and has estimated no tax is due based on current facts and circumstances. Thus, the Church has determined that an accrual for taxes is not needed for the year ended June 30, 2014.

### Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash and investments with initial maturities of three months or less.

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### Concentration of credit risk

The Church maintains its cash and certificates of deposit at several commercial and savings banks which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. The Church has not experienced any losses in such accounts and believes it is not exposed to any significant credit risk.

### Property and equipment

Purchased property and equipment are recorded at cost. Donations of property and equipment are recorded as support at their estimated fair value on the date of donation. Such donations are reported as unrestricted support unless the donor has restricted the donated asset to be used for a specific purpose. Major improvements to real property are capitalized and normal repair and maintenance costs are expensed as incurred.

Property and equipment owned by the Church are depreciated using the straight-line method over their estimated useful life as follows:

Computer/Information Systems	3 years
Office Equipment	5 years
Office Furniture and Fixtures	7 years
Land Improvements	10 years
Buildings	40 years

### Components of programs and supporting services

**Field Ministry/Local Congregations:** This function includes expenses pertaining to the field ministry, local congregations and youth camps.

**International:** This function includes expenses pertaining to the support of international congregations and offices.

**Public Proclamation:** This area contains all media related expenses.

**Festivals:** This function includes costs that are directly involved in the fall Festival of Tabernacles and the other annual festivals.

**Home Office:** This function includes administrative and other expenses for the Home Office.

**Council of Elders:** The expenses in this function are those that pertain to the Council of Elders, including phone and face-to-face conferences.

**General Conference:** Expenses in this function include any expenses relating to the Cincinnati, Ohio, General Conference held in May.

**Executive Reserve:** This function includes funds set aside for special projects, capital expenditures, employee benefits, or other expenditures that may occur during the year.

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### Subsequent events

The Church evaluates events and transactions occurring subsequent to the date of the financial statements for matters requiring recognition or disclosure in the financial statements. The accompanying financial statements consider events through November 13, 2014, the date on which the financial statements were available to be issued.

### 3. PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:

Property and equipment consisted of the following at June 30:

	2014	2013
Buildings	\$ 4,288,142	4,207,459
Land	402,936	402,936
Land held for resale	1,600,457	1,600,457
Land improvements	396,551	363,076
Furniture and fixtures	16,125	16,125
Office equipment	553,225	514,541
Vehicles	28,438	52,373
Total property and equipment	7,285,874	7,176,967
Less: accumulated depreciation	1,938,582	1,832,510
	<u>\$ 5,347,292</u>	<u>5,344,457</u>

In 2009, the Church identified \$1,600,457 in land it no longer needed for operations and began pursuing options to list the property for sale.

### 4. OBLIGATIONS UNDER OPERATING LEASES:

The Church leases automobiles pursuant to operating lease agreements. The Church's future minimum lease payments for all non-cancelable operating leases are as follows:

Years Ending June 30,	
2015	\$ 193,157
2016	80,506
2017	21,390
2018	<u>16,136</u>
Total future minimum lease payments	<u>\$ 311,189</u>

Rent and lease expenses for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013 were \$477,142 and \$501,876, respectively.

### 5. DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN:

Effective April 1, 1999 the Church established a 403(b) thrift plan for all full time employees. In February 2011, the Church elected to suspend contributions to the plan for the year ended June 30, 2012 and will reexamine the financial feasibility of its reinstatement in subsequent periods. There were no contributions to this plan for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013.

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### 6. MORTGAGE PAYABLE:

In November 2008, the Church signed a \$350,000 mortgage with Prosperity Bank, secured by a church building. The mortgage was to be repaid in monthly installments over fifteen years, with an interest rate at 6.526%. In June 2014, the note with Prosperity Bank was refinanced and a new mortgage was issued through a member of the church. The new note has a principal amount of \$260,000 and will be repaid in monthly installments over 8 years, with an interest rate of 3.00%. The balance at June 30, 2014 was \$260,000.

In June 2014, the Church signed a \$65,000 mortgage with Church of Christ, secured by a church building. The mortgage will be repaid in monthly installments over 8 years, with an interest rate of 0.00%. The balance at June 30, 2014 was \$64,323.

The future minimum payments on the mortgage payables are as follows:

Years Ending June 30,	
2015	\$ 36,643
2016	38,209
2017	39,124
2018	40,066
2019	41,038
Thereafter	<u>129,243</u>
Total	<u>\$ 324,323</u>

### 7. COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES:

The Church is currently making discretionary payments to certain individuals. The payments totaled approximately \$776,000 and \$666,000 for the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2013, respectively. These discretionary payments are provided, in part, based upon the individual's needs and, accordingly, could be discontinued in the future. No amounts have been accrued in the accompanying financial statements for future payments relating to these arrangements.

The Church is self-insured for medical, dental and vision insurance and maintains a stop-loss coverage policy covering individual claims in excess of predetermined amounts. Aggregate annual claims are also capped at a fixed rate. Self-insurance costs are accrued based upon the aggregate of the liability for reported claims and an estimated liability for claims incurred but not reported.

### 8. TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS:

Net assets of \$16,304 and \$12,276 were released during 2014 and 2013, respectively, from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes specified by the donors within the Good Works Program.

At June 30, 2014 and 2013, the Church had temporarily restricted net assets of \$77,223 and \$16,304 respectively, for the Good Works Program.

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### UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association Schedule of Functional Expenses Year Ended June 30, 2014

	Program Services				Management and General				Totals
	Ministerial Services/Field Ministry/Local Congregations	Festivals	International	Public Proclamation	Council of Elders/Home Office/Insurance & Benefit Plans	Executive Reserve	General Conference		
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 4,099,885	91,626	-	1,425,148	721,593	145,000	-	6,483,252	
Contracted services and fees	33,059	67	232	226,223	151,211	-	5,963	416,755	
Broadcast media and advertising	-	-	-	1,317,106	-	-	-	1,317,106	
Print media and advertising	5,358	12,968	-	721,466	7,379	-	1,838	749,009	
Postage and shipping	12,903	9,582	-	788,340	7,013	-	2,338	820,176	
Building and equipment lease/rental	18,775	104,997	-	2,276	14,164	-	-	200,212	
Telephone and utilities	38,849	844	986	2,142	88,420	-	-	131,241	
Supplies	38,146	12,049	-	27,024	59,843	-	2,407	139,469	
Travel, mileage, meals, and lodging	786,259	30,020	88,710	7,087	80,376	-	18,382	1,010,834	
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	151,814	-	-	151,814	
Grants and charitable support:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
International support:	-	4,030	1,337,463	487,648	493	-	-	1,829,634	
Domestic support:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Assistance to the needy	569,174	141,139	-	-	49,909	-	-	760,222	
Allocations to local congregations	1,406,181	-	-	280	-	-	-	1,406,461	
Insurance and health care	-	-	-	-	827,571	-	-	827,571	
Other	28,367	3,914	330	20,482	40,735	-	16	93,844	
Total expenses	\$ 7,036,956	471,236	1,427,721	5,025,222	2,200,521	145,000	30,944	16,337,600	

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### UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association Schedule of Functional Expenses Year Ended June 30, 2013

	Program Services				Management and General				Totals
	Ministerial Services/Field Ministry/Local Congregations	Festivals	International	Public Proclamation	Council of Elders/Home Office/Insurance & Benefit Plans	Executive Reserve	General Conference		
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 3,926,941	339,754	-	1,369,970	857,324	-	-	6,493,989	
Contracted services and fees	18,121	619	-	183,168	149,229	-	6,602	357,739	
Broadcast media and advertising	-	-	-	1,454,643	-	-	-	1,454,643	
Print media and advertising	4,400	7,455	-	778,539	8,697	-	1,457	800,548	
Postage and shipping	16,219	5,432	-	782,766	41,581	-	1,817	847,815	
Building and equipment lease/rental	28,396	197,454	-	2,880	16,642	-	511	245,883	
Telephone and utilities	38,439	800	-	1,926	95,039	-	-	136,974	
Supplies	41,871	56,635	-	16,956	43,164	-	-	159,604	
Travel, mileage, meals, and lodging	707,212	9,426	9,915	5,874	66,925	-	14,978	814,330	
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	161,716	-	-	161,716	
Grants and charitable support:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
International support:	9,131	35,063	1,325,327	1,182,404	3,032	-	393	2,555,350	
Domestic support:	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Assistance to the needy	559,589	125,342	-	-	2,600	-	-	687,531	
Allocations to local congregations	1,408,668	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,408,668	
Insurance and health care	-	-	-	-	1,294,174	-	-	1,294,174	
Other	40,676	28,710	-	8,409	38,951	-	405	117,151	
Total expenses	\$ 6,799,663	806,490	1,335,242	5,797,535	2,779,044	27,041	27,041	17,545,015	

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# The Seven Elements of the Zone

## Success

**A**t camp we provide an environment that breeds success. All of our campers will experience many opportunities to succeed in a variety of ways as each activity has its own challenges and rewards. Many of the activities are team sports and campers must work together effectively in order to attain the best results. Since put-downs are not allowed start-to-finish at camp, the campers learn to support each other more fully. As a result of that encouragement and teamwork, each camper shares in the successes of their dorm, as well as in their own individual achievements.



team success, helps build the right kind of esteem in each of our campers. Humility is also emphasized, and our teens are taught the value of building up others with genuinely kind words and expressions of appreciation.

“The Zone” is an environment and an atmosphere where all staff and campers are exhorted to encourage one another on a continual basis. As a result, this emphasis on encouragement and edification naturally creates in our campers a more positive frame of mind.

This positive frame of mind naturally lends itself to generating creative, solution-oriented thinking that leads to greater success and better results throughout the camp experience.

Each of our dorms has a mixture of younger and older teens, creating a fam-

ily dynamic that also results in greater teamwork and more success for our younger campers than they would normally experience. This family dynamic creates team effort by teaching that one cannot succeed in some things without others lending a helping hand. This family dynamic in our dorms helps to tear down any fears that one might bring to camp, and fosters a healthy environment that helps bolster one's courage and confidence.

Some campers come to camp having experienced very little success in many aspects of their lives. To them the camp experience is invaluable. They look forward to each summer as camp draws near and they are reunited with friends and staff members who genuinely love them and are happy to see them once again. Success in life is very important, and camp provides many opportunities for our campers to succeed and develop teamwork and skills that will lead to further success in their lives. **UN**



### Success...

- builds right kind of self-esteem
- creates a positive frame of mind
- makes one want to do more
- breeds success
- tears down fears
- creates an encouraging atmosphere
- generates creative, solution-oriented thinking
- creates team effort by teaching one cannot succeed in some things without others



### Truth Seeker

*Caleb George/Unsplash*

Continued from page 8

this, apparently believing that their position is justified. We are left with the erroneous position that one opinion is just as true as another. This kind of sloppy reasoning leads to people creating God in their own image—as a result they delve into more and more aberrant ways of expressing their so-called individuality and spirituality.

The greatest fear of humankind is social ostracism. People will do almost anything to remain a part of whatever social structure they are in. From the jet set to the corporate set to the political set to the media set to the man on the street to main street America to the gangs in the ghetto, the emphasis is on pleasing those

who make the images.

If you don't fit the image, if you are not politically correct, if you don't do as they do, then you are out. There is indeed a tyranny of the peer group at every level of our society.

As a 3C person you can break the chains that bind you and be set free.

Humankind has been deceived and enslaved through fear, ignorance, superstition and the dogmas of man. The world is currently being enslaved more and more in the name of freedom, but that freedom is in fact just another form of slavery. There is only one path to true freedom, which Jesus Christ proclaimed: “You shall know the truth

and the truth shall set you free” (John 6:32). These are the truths that will determine your future and the future of your children.

The truth is: You were born for a great transcendental purpose. You were born to become a member of the family of God. The truth is: God exists and earnestly desires to have a relationship with you. The truth is: Man does not have an immortal soul. We must receive eternal life from our Creator. The truth is: Humans have no consciousness after death. The truth is: You do not go to heaven when you die. The truth is: God is going to resurrect the faithful at the sound of the seventh trumpet when Jesus comes again. The truth is: You will rule on the earth with God and Christ as kings and priests. The truth is: Sinners will not burn forever and ever in hell fire. They will be burned up

and become ashes under the feet of the righteous.

The truth is: Jesus was not born in December, and nowhere do the Scriptures even suggest that we observe His birthday at any time during the year. The truth is: Jesus was not crucified on Good Friday, and He not did rise from the grave on Sunday. The truth is: There will not be a rapture of the Church before the great tribulation. These are just a few of the truths that you can and should know.

Satan and his agents would have you believe the very opposite of these precious truths. Satan is the master of deceit and is deceiving the whole world. You must come to love the truth as much as you love your life. So now is the time to take to heart the words of the apostle Paul in his epistle to young Timothy: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul further admonishes the ministry to preach the word, for the time will come when people will turn from the truth and be turned to fables (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

And above all, develop a deep abiding love of the truth so you will not be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine and be deceived. “And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

So ask yourself: Am I a truth seeker? Do I love the truth?

It is a matter of life and death. **UN**

What's New In MEDIA?

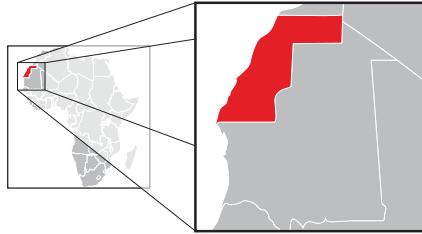
# 6,455,484

Unique visitors to UCG.org in 2014

compared to **5,921,969** Unique visitors in 2013 that's a **9.01% increase** Year over year

**Where did they visit from?**

Every nation on earth, except Western Sahara\*



**+39%** Web traffic from mobile phones  
**+39%** Web traffic from tablets  
**-12%** Web traffic from traditional PCs

\*Yes, we even got a few visits from North Korea

## UNITED CHURCH OF GOD NEWS

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

## BEYOND TODAY

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FUTURE®

### Airing Schedule



### WHO ARE THE TWO WITNESSES?



Title	Host	Airing Period
<i>God's Plan for the Middle East</i>	Darris McNeely	Jan. 9-15
<i>Who Are the Two Witnesses?</i>	Steve Myers	Jan. 16-22
<i>Is the Sabbath Relevant for Christians?</i>	Gary Petty	Jan. 23-29
<i>Is the Bible True?</i>	Darris McNeely	Feb. 6-12
<i>What Is the Time of the End?</i>	Steve Myers	Feb. 13-19
<i>What Is a Saint?</i>	Gary Petty	Feb. 20-26
<i>The Bible's Prophetic Puzzle</i>	Gary Petty	Feb. 27-March 5

iPhone, iPad vector images at left: Zee Que / Designbolts.com. iMac vector: belial90 / Vecteezy.com. Compass vector: BSGStudio.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan. 17-18:** Salt Lake City Ski Weekend
- Feb. 8:** 2015 UCG Atlanta Ski Trip
- Feb. 20-22:** Portland Women's Enrichment Weekend
- Feb. 27-28:** Cincinnati Family Dance Weekend
- Feb. 22-March 2:** Ambassador College Pasadena Reunion
- March 7:** Columbia, Maryland, Congregation 50th Anniversary Celebration
- March 29-April 8:** Spring Education Tour, Turkey



presents

### Jelly Learns the Feast Days (sing-a-long)

After spending two weeks with family, Jelly's cousin Chips is heading home to London—but not before a little song and dance! Join Jelly and his friends as they learn about God's Feast Days.



### Jelly Learns the Feast Days