

United News™

News of the UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association

United Church of God
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NOVEMBER 2000

16,903 Celebrate Feast With United

At 44 UCG sites around the world, nearly 17,000 brethren celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles this year, a 3 percent increase over last year. In addition, Doug Horchak traveled to Ghana and spoke to nearly 1,000 people attending the Remnant Church of God's three sites (see page 16).

For the four fall Holy Days in the United States "attendance was up between 2½ and 3 percent. The offerings were great at a 9 percent increase over a year ago," said Les McCullough. "Thanks are due to all of you who gave so generously."

Plans are already underway for next year's Feast. All U.S. sites except Louisville, Kentucky, are scheduled again for next year. The



Scenes from Panama City Beach, Florida, a new site this year (photos by Ken Treybig)



replacement for

Louisville is Gatlinburg, Tennessee, at the foot of the Smoky Mountains. Information on all the sites will be announced in the March issue. See

reports of this year's Feast starting on page 9. UN

United Explores Building Own Office

"We are nearly out of space to carry on the work that needs to be done," said President Les McCullough, describing the increasing work being handled in the home office.

Mr. McCullough and Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick made a presentation about long-term facility planning at the Council of Elders meeting in September. Increasing requests for literature, for example, require more staff and warehouse space, preferably with a loading dock to handle pallets of literature.

At no cost to the Church, a contracting firm has presented possibilities for the construction of a Church-owned facility in the

Milford, Ohio, area (site of the current leased office space). The current lease expires on June 30, 2003.

Mr. McCullough shared their report with the Council, and asked: Do we want to continue to rent, or consider buying property? Dr. Kirkpatrick presented a hypothetical construction proposal, showing a down payment from reserves and estimated costs for a 15-year mortgage (a relatively small increase over our present lease).

Council members had divergent views on the specific proposal, but agreed in general that we should be considering purchasing property for the Church's long-term needs. Research will continue. UN

Meetings With CGCF Continue November 19

Members of United's task force met with three ministers representing the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship, (CGCF) in August, and reported to the Council of Elders in September. The Council authorized further meetings between the task forces, and the next one has been scheduled for November 19 to 21 in Sacramento, California.

Both task forces recognized that the need to address personal offenses and doctrinal concerns took up the bulk of the initial meetings. They concluded that essentially the groups hold common doctrinal positions. (See "Task Forces Conduct Positive Meetings," September 2000 *United News*, page 1.)

Roy Holladay, chairman of United's task force, told the

Holladay Chosen as Chairman

At the Council of Elders meeting September 13, Roy Holladay was selected as the new chairman. Secretary Gerald Seelig handled the blind ballot required to select a new chairman by a two thirds majority. Mr. Holladay was chosen on the second ballot.

Robert Dick expressed his appreciation for being able to serve as chairman since December 1995, and warmly welcomed Mr. Holladay to his new responsibility. Mr. Holladay then expressed appreciation to Mr. Dick for his four and a half years of leadership and service to the Council and the Church, especially considering the chal-



Roy Holladay, new chairman of the Council (photo by Victor Kubik)

lenges of the formative stages of the Church. For more on the Council meetings and a biography of Mr. Holladay, see page 4.

Doug Johnson



Task forces meet in Memphis, Tennessee, August 16; from left, Clyde Kilough, Dennis Luker, George Meeker, Norbert Link, Roy Holladay, Warren Zehrung (photo by Ray Epperson)

Council, "The task forces agreed that overcoming these relationship problems presents the greatest stumbling block to harmony, but that 'striving for the unity of the faith' means that Christians must work hard to overcome such challenges." He added that this will

require a great deal of humility and forgiveness.

Clyde Kilough and Dennis Luker helped with the presentation and in answering questions from the Council.

See page 20 for a related article by Clyde Kilough. UN

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Pastoral Development Discussed at Regional Pastors Conference

by Richard Pinelli

The overall purpose of the Regional Pastors Conference, held September 10 to 12 at the home office in Cincinnati, Ohio, was working toward the personal development of the ministry.

After reports from the president and operations managers, Ministerial Services outlined the three-year program of church and pastoral develop-

ment from the Ministerial Workload and Remuneration Task Force report.

Steve McNeely, who is a CPA and a business consultant, facilitated a workshop and discussion with the Ministerial Services (MS) team and regional pastors on the value of working with employees and developing their talents.

Performance Appraisals

The subject of annual per-

formance appraisals was a central part of the presentation and discussion—showing the immense value and positive tool for growth and personal development that it can be when used properly by both the Church and the employees themselves.

Overall, the presentation and ensuing discussions were considered very helpful in our efforts to develop an appropriate and meaningful assessment tool within UCGIA—and we

hope this information can be presented in some form to the U.S. pastors this winter.

Mr. McNeely reminded the group that the word *appraisal* meant "value"—in this case, measuring the value of our individual ministers to our organization. The entire process is based upon a "Self-Assessment" form that the full-time ministers have received. We hope this document will be an effective

(See "PASTORS," page 19)

Did God Give a Calendar?

If you reject the Hebrew calendar, what have you got? Does the Bible give enough information to construct a calendar?

by Leon Walker

There are those who advocate that the Bible provides us with all of the specific elements of the calendar that God wants us to use to keep His Holy Days.

These individuals reject the Hebrew calendar, some claiming that it has its origin in Babylon and that it is a calendar of men. Several of these individuals have created their own calendars, each one claiming that his calendar is the one that is revealed in the Scriptures. However, these calendars differ from one another in certain respects. They are not identical, even though they all claim to come from the Bible.

The rules of postponement, which are an essential element in the Hebrew calendar, come under special attack since these individuals assume that they are merely the rules of men and are in opposition to the will of God. The Hebrew calendar, these individuals claim, should only be used as long as it conforms to the calendar given by God in the Bible. The elements of the Hebrew calendar that are not in the Bible, including the rules of postponement, must be rejected.

If God indeed has provided us with a calendar, then we should be able to see clearly from the Bible alone the specific definitions and elements needed. The fundamental question, then, is: Does the Bible provide us with the specific elements needed for a calendar? Let us

look at the elements that are required and see if we can find them in the Bible.

Genesis 1:14 states: "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.'"

However, these elements are not specific enough for a calendar. This scripture does not tell us when a month begins (new moon, full moon, etc.); in which season a year begins (spring, summer, etc.); how many days there are in a week, month or year; nor even at which point the day is divided from the night (sunset, darkness, etc.).

It is important that we understand the fundamental characteristics and elements of a calendar. A calendar is made up of days, weeks, months and years. Does the Bible give us a calendar with these elements specifically defined?

A day is defined in the Bible (Genesis 1:5; Leviticus 23:32). It is from sunset to sunset (Hebrew: *ereb*, even, evening, sunset). A week is also defined as a period of seven days, by the Sabbath being the seventh day of the week (Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 34:21).

However, sunset is not a very specific point in time as long as it is dependent upon observation. (We must remember that the modern scientific methods of astronomical calculations were not available for most of man's history.) Individuals in the same area will see sunset at different times, based on their different perspective of the precise moment the sun sets.

However, this variation will not be great—perhaps only minutes of difference between the individuals. This small difference in time would not be significant even for the keeping of the Sabbath, as adjustments could be made to allow for a lack of precision in determining

sunset based on observation. Of course, we today can be more precise because of the availability of sunset tables.

Does the Bible define a month? The Hebrew word for month is *chodesh*, which is translated as "month" 254 times in the Old Testament and 20 times as "new moon," the difference being determined by context (Genesis 7:11; 1 Samuel 20:5, etc.). Therefore, we can conclude that the month begins with the new moon. But does the Bible define when the new moon begins? No, it does not.

When Does a New Month Begin?

Does the new moon begin with the last faint crescent of the old moon? Does it begin with the precise point of total obscurity of the moon? Or, does it begin with the first faint crescent of the new moon?

Those who seek to create a calendar differ in their opinions regarding the precise moment when a new moon begins. Those who reject the Hebrew calendar and insist that the Bible gives us the calendar are left to their own human reasoning in determining precisely when a month begins. No scripture can be cited to define when a new moon begins.

Of course, the determination of when a new moon begins is important because the Holy Days occur on certain specific days of the month. Those who reject the Hebrew calendar and create their own calendars based on their own opinions as to when the month begins can vary by as much as two or three days in calculating the first day of the month. This is further compounded by the fact that the actual moment of the occurrence of a new moon can take place at any time of the day or night. This means that

(See "CALENDAR," page 3)

Q&A: Counting Pentecost in 2001

Q. Why is Pentecost on May 27 in 2001, instead of on June 3? The latter date appears to be seven weeks from the Days of Unleavened Bread, and the May date seems to be a week too early.

A. The instruction for counting Pentecost is found in Leviticus 23:15-16. It tells us to count 50 days from the day after the Sabbath that falls during the festival of Unleavened Bread.

Normally, the task of counting is straightforward. However, when the Days of Unleavened Bread begin on the first day of the week and end on the weekly Sabbath, the Sabbath and the day after it do not both fall during the festival. There are conceivably two ways to count

Pentecost in this circumstance—begin counting from the first Holy Day, or, begin counting from the day after the last Holy Day.

Which way is correct? Thankfully, there is a scriptural example that answers this question. In the year described in Joshua 5, the Unleavened Bread festival began on the first day of the week, just as it does in 2001. In verses 11 and 12, we find that the Israelites ate of the spring harvest on the day after the Passover, something they could not do until the wave sheaf offering had been made (Leviticus 23:9-14). The wave sheaf, an offering taken from the spring crop before harvesting began, was offered on the same day

from which Pentecost was to be counted (Leviticus 23:15).

The only way for the scene described in Joshua 5:11-12 to take place was that the wave sheaf was offered on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, allowing the Israelites to begin eating the spring crop immediately. It also meant that Pentecost fell seven weeks from that day.

This example shows us how to calculate Pentecost in a year when the festival of Unleavened Bread begins on the first day of the week and ends on the weekly Sabbath, as it does in 2001. That is why we know that Pentecost falls on May 27 in 2001.

Cecil E. Maranville

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“CALENDAR,” (Continued from page 2)

determination of a new moon by observation (as was the case in most of man’s history) would not only depend on the individual’s definition of when a new moon occurred, but also on the time of day that observation determined that it occurred. This also could cause a variation of another day or more in the determination of which day is the new moon.

Does the Bible tell us which precise spot on the earth should be used for the determination of the new moon? No, it does not. Of course, some site has to be selected since the precise moment of the new moon will occur in one area before another. This can make a difference of as much as a day in determining the new moon and, hence, the Holy Days that occur in that month.

Does the Bible tell us that we should use Jerusalem? No, it does not. Jerusalem was of no importance until the time of David. Yet the Holy Days were being kept before his time. Also, a calendar existed and the Holy Days began to be revealed to Moses while he was still in Egypt.

Which point on earth was used for the precise moment of the new moon while Israel was in Egypt? Which point did Israel use prior to the establishment of Jerusalem as capital of Israel? Which point should the Church use today? Does the Bible answer any of these questions for us? No, it does not. Therefore, those who reject the Hebrew calendar have no biblical authority for the site they select for the occurrence of the new moon. They must rely only on their own authority for choosing whatever site they believe is correct.

There is another problem in determining which day is the new month. A new moon does not occur precisely 30 days after the previous new moon. A new moon occurs in intervals of about 29 1/2 days, or to be more precise 29.53059 days. Of course, a month cannot contain partial days. Alternating the months with 29 and 30 days generally solves this problem. However, what if the precise moment of the new moon occurs just before the end of the day? Is the first day of the month the one in which the new moon actually occurs even if only seconds are left in that day? Or, since the vast majority of the day has gone by, should the next day be considered as the first of the month? Does the Bible give us the answer to these questions? No, it does not.

Those who reject the Hebrew calendar differ in their opinions regarding this problem and are left to their own authority since there is no biblical statement. Of course, this problem is further compounded by needing a definition of when the new moon begins and by the determination by observation of when the new moon occurs, as mentioned above. If it occurs shortly before the end of the day,

will all observers be in agreement regarding on which day the new moon occurred? Undoubtedly not.

When Does the Year Begin?

We now ask the question, when does the year begin? Does the Bible define for us the precise moment when the new year begins? No, it does not. We know that the year begins in the spring season of the year (Exodus 12:2; 23:15), for those who live in the northern hemisphere, but the Bible does not tell us precisely when in the spring. For example, does the first month of the new year always begin with the first new moon after the spring equinox? Or does the new year begin with the new moon closest to the spring equinox, which would mean sometimes before the equinox and sometimes after? Does the Passover always have to be after the spring equinox or can it sometimes occur before the equinox? Does the Bible give an answer to these questions? No, it does not.

Those who reject the Hebrew calendar disagree among themselves regarding the relationship of the new moon to the spring equinox. Since the Bible does not specifically deal with this issue, these individuals must rely upon their own authority in determining when the new year begins.

There are some who argue that the new year cannot occur before the spring equinox since that would mean that the new year begins in winter. Some argue that the Feast of Tabernacles cannot occur before the autumn equinox since that would mean that it would be kept in summer and not in autumn.

Those who reject the Hebrew calendar are compelled to use either the spring equinox or the autumn equinox as the beginning point for calculating their calendars. They have no other choice since once the Hebrew calendar is rejected, some other reference must be used as a starting point. However, does the Bible even mention an equinox? No, it does not. Therefore, those who reject the Hebrew calendar must rely on their own opinion regarding the point in time when a new year begins.

There are some who believe that Exodus 34:22 does refer to the equinox. However, a careful reading of this scripture and the other places where the Hebrew word *tekufah* appears makes it clear that the word had a much broader and general meaning in biblical times than it had in post-biblical times. (Those who are interested in a full explanation of Exodus 34:22 should ask their pastor for a chance to read the paper, “Exodus 34:22 and the Calendar.”)

The context of Exodus 34:22 is that of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles (ingathering) at a certain time of the year. It does not even mention “after,” as those who associate this verse with the equinox

insist, since they believe the Feast of Tabernacles can only occur “after” the autumn equinox. The reference is to a general season of the year, not to a specific day.

How Specific Is the Bible About the Beginning of Seasons?

It should also be understood that seasons of the year are general. That is, they do not start with a specific day and end with a specific day. The four reference points we use in our modern world for spring, summer, autumn and winter are only the official beginning days for those seasons, based on the two equinoxes (spring and autumn) and the two solstices (summer and winter). The winter season often does extend beyond the spring equinox and spring can often arrive early, before the spring equinox. Seasons are related to weather and they are not dependent upon a specific day when the earth is in a certain position relative to the sun.

Since God did not reveal in the Bible the essential elements for a calendar, those who reject the Hebrew calendar must rely solely on their own opinions regarding how to create a calendar. However, they cannot legitimately claim that their opinions are based on God’s instructions...

Those who reject the Hebrew calendar and insist that their calendar is the true one, based on their opinion of when a new year begins in relationship with the equinox, will state that the Hebrew calendar will permit the new year to begin in winter because the Hebrew new year can occur before the spring equinox. However, they are only speaking about the Hebrew new year occurring before what is now considered the official first day of spring—the equinox. As far as weather is concerned, spring could actually occur even before the first day of the Hebrew new year. In the same way, winter could still be around even after the spring equinox and after the first day of the new year as set by those who create their own calendars.

It should be noted that the spring equinox in the northern hemisphere always occurs during the first month of the Hebrew calendar. Therefore, the first month is always the “month of spring”

even though the first day of the year may be prior to the equinox.

Those who reject the Hebrew calendar claim that the Bible gives the essential elements needed for a calendar. But if the Hebrew calendar is rejected and if the Bible does not give the specific elements needed for a calendar, then it is impossible to have a calendar based on any authority other than that of the individual who created it.

As we have demonstrated, God did not reveal in His Word the required definitions and elements for a calendar. The Bible does not define a new moon. The Bible does not give us the specific point on earth that should be used to sight the new moon. The Bible does not explain what should be done when the new moon occurs late in the day. The Bible does not explain how we should deal with the fraction of a day that occurs in a lunar cycle. The Bible does not define precisely when the new year begins. The Bible does not define for us the relationship, if any, between the new year and the spring equinox. Nor does the Bible define other elements such as the number of days in the monthly cycles or intercalary adjustments needed to keep the years in their proper seasons.

Therefore, since God did not reveal in the Bible the essential elements for a calendar, those who reject the Hebrew calendar must rely solely on their own opinions regarding how to create a calendar. However, they cannot legitimately claim that their opinions are based on God’s instructions, for He did not outline the elements these individuals must use in their calendars. Therefore, we have two options: either we accept the Hebrew calendar in its entirety or we choose one of the calendars created by one of the several who have created their own calendars in recent years. The latter is not a logical choice.

We must then ask the question, What is the origin of the Hebrew calendar? The simple answer is, we do not know. Could God have given to Moses a calendar with all of its essential elements defined? Of course, He could. Could God have used a calendar that was already in existence at that time? Of course, He could.

While we do not know the history of the Hebrew calendar, we do know that God used the Jewish people to preserve His Word. Isn’t it also logical to conclude that He used the same Jewish people to preserve a calendar that will enable us to keep His Holy Days at the correct time? If we do not accept the logic of that conclusion, then we have no other alternative than to accept one of the calendars created in recent times by men with no other authority than their own. These individuals do not have any biblical basis or history to prove that their calendar is the correct one. *UN*

Leon Walker is chairman of the Doctrine Committee of the Council of Elders.

Council of Elders Completes Jam-Packed September Meetings

by Doug Johnson

The Council of Elders met in Cincinnati September 13 to 18 with a full docket of business for its fall session. The Council chose Roy Holladay as its new chairman, heard a report from its task force members on their meeting with representatives of the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship (CGCF) and heard from the president and treasurer on long-range facility planning in their reports to the Council (see articles on page 1).

President Les McCullough also updated the Council on developments in the work. These included:

- The print run of *The Good News* stood at 302,000; 55 percent of this number goes out as individual subscriptions, 45 percent to waiting rooms.

- Baptisms in 2000 had already surpassed the total for 1999.

- Three new employees have recently been hired in the home office: one in the reception area, one in Information Services and one in the mail processing area.

Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick presented the results of the latest audit of the Church's operations. It is the auditors' opinion that the Church's statements fairly represent the financial position of the United Church of God (see article, page 18). The Church's net assets at June 30, 2000 stood at approximately \$3.9 million. It is Dr. Kirkpatrick's projection, based on present trends, that the budget approved by the General Conference of Elders will be met very closely.

Ministerial Services

September 14 Ministerial Services manager Richard Pinelli addressed the Council. Basing suggestions on the Ministerial Workload and Remuneration Task Force report from January of this year, Mr. Pinelli outlined the specific plans Ministerial Services has to implement most of the task force's proposals. This involved spelling out goals in each of the next three fiscal years. Details covered such diverse areas as maximizing use of existing man-

power, ministerial assessment and review, a ministerial candidate program, educational programs for the ministry and their wives, consideration of regional boundaries, continuing regional conferences and honing Festival site assignments by carefully analyzing Church demographics.

Dave Evans brought to the Council a revision of the proposed policy setting the criteria for the selection of Feast sites. After minor adjustments, the Council unanimously approved the policy.

The Council also discussed the Church's policy on Church-owned meeting halls. Mr. Pinelli gave an overview history since the inception of United, up to and including the building of the meeting hall in Houston. All agreed that Houston was an exception to the usual pattern in our congregations—namely, that renting facilities is far more cost-effective in meeting our needs, including the mission of the Church to preach the gospel.

Media Updates and Philosophy

Media and Communications Services manager Peter Eddington brought the Council details on numerous projects underway in the media area and answered questions (see "Q&A About Media," page 5).

One interesting development has been the response to the new booklet on heaven and hell. It appears that some readers don't like having their beliefs in a traditional after-life challenged so directly! There have been some who have somewhat heatedly asked to have their names removed from the mailing list, while others have been intrigued, asking for more information. Several Council members expressed satisfaction at seeing readers "connecting" in this way with the gospel, noting that it's material like this that tends to bring people along in truly understanding what God's Word says.

Media and Communications Committee chairman Victor Kubik moderated a discussion about the responsibility of the Council in establishing the Church's media direction. Many ideas were discussed about how our publications can help motivate and challenge

people to further involvement. This is difficult today, as Richard Thompson pointed out. "Back when I came in [to the Church], there were two things. There was a sense of urgency, and also a sense of community. Both of those things have been lost. What we're trying to do, and what we're talking about, is not just an article that really stimulates somebody to think and ask questions. How do you get them to respond and become a part of what we're doing?"

Gary Antion stated, "I think the work [of the Church] is giving people... a reason to be enthusiastic. There are very bright things happening."

India

Matthew Fenchel brought some communication from a group in India who have contacted the United Church of God recently. In a similar manner to the initial contact from the Remnant Church of God in Ghana, we have been approached by elders representing numerous members of Sabbath-keeping groups who wish closer ties with us.

After discussion, and upon reviewing input from church pastor Dave Baker (who has extensive service experience in Asia), the Council decided to ask Mr. Fenchel to pursue further contact, with an eye to an information-gathering trip (perhaps by Mr. Fenchel and Mr. Baker) as soon as is practical.

Education Committee

Don Ward updated the Council on the Education Committee. The committee reviewed a report from Mr. Pinelli, outlining the numerous projects underway under the auspices of Ministerial Services, including projects in the fields of general, member, ministerial and focused education.

Dr. Ward then moved the discussion to the Ambassador Bible Center. Requests have been made for taped copies of the classes. While this isn't practical on a wide-scale basis (there are well over 800 hours of instruction involved!), the concept of taping one course per year has merit. These courses could be sent to church libraries, and over time, much of the ABC curriculum could be made available. Other ABC related discussion centered on "marrying" ministerial candidate instruction into the program, occasionally bringing field ministers in for a Sabbatical-type program for an academic year, and endorsement of the "ABC sampler" avenues being explored this year.

Mr. Antion conveyed the most recent information on the contact with an accredited college. This small (3,000 students on two campuses) private college is considering working with ABC in providing college credit through their program of studies for 18 semester hours of instruction selected by the ABC faculty. If this were approved, for a fee

Council Committees Reorganized

Following the change in Council membership and responsibility in the wake of the May General Conference and Roy Holladay's appointment as chairman, the committees of the Council were reconstituted. Here are the Council committees (an asterisk indicates committee chairman):

Executive: Aaron Dean, Roy Holladay*, Burk McNair, Leon Walker, Don Ward
Strategic Planning/Finance: Aaron Dean*, Les McCullough, Mario Seiglie, Richard Thompson, Leon Walker

Doctrine: Robert Dick, John Jewell, Burk McNair, Mario Seiglie, Leon Walker*, Don Ward
Media and Communications: Robert Dick, John Jewell, Victor Kubik*, Les McCullough, Don Ward

Education: Gary Antion, Victor Kubik, Mario Seiglie, Richard Thompson, Don Ward*
Ethical Review/Roles and Process: Gary Antion*, Aaron Dean, Robert Dick, John Jewell, Burk McNair, Richard Thompson

The final committee is a combining of two previous committees into one in a revised structure.

A Brief Biography of the New Chairman

Roy Holladay was born in Glasgow, Kentucky, in 1940. He has two sisters (one is his twin) and two brothers. He grew up in Kentucky and Tennessee before attending Ambassador College from 1959 to 1963. It was at AC that he met his future wife, Norma Cowan, of Memphis, Tennessee. They were married on June 3, 1963, and now have five children: Arthur, David, Ted, Craig and Mark. The Holladays' three oldest sons attended Ambassador College in Pasadena.

Mr. Holladay

went on a nationwide baptizing tour in 1962 with Arthur Craig and Hal Baird. In 1963 Mr. and Mrs. Holladay were sent to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Akron, Ohio, where he served as associate pastor. He was ordained a local elder on Pentecost 1964, and was raised in rank to preaching elder at the Feast of Tabernacles 1964. He was ordained a pastor in 1988.

The first full pastorate that Mr. and Mrs. Holladay had was Wheeling and Charleston, West Virginia. They have since pastored in San Antonio, Corpus Christi,

Austin and Uvalde, Texas; Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia; Chicago West, Northwest and North, Illinois; Mount Pocono, Wilkes-Barre and Bethlehem A.M. and P.M., Pennsylvania; and St. Petersburg, New Port



Norma and Roy Holladay

Richey and Fort Myers, Florida. They currently serve in Big Sandy and Texarkana, Texas.

Mr. Holladay has served as a senior pastor, regional pastor and festival coordinator for 12 years. He has served on the Council of Elders since the beginning of United. He has

chaired the Strategic Planning and the Home Office Relocation committees.

As far as interests and hobbies go, he notes, "I like to fish, hunt, participate in sports of all kinds, and work in the garden. Norma is a voracious reader and is great at counted cross stitching. We both like to travel and to take long walks together.

"I feel that we truly are a team. Norma has added so much to our ministry by her love, insight, compassion and service to God's people. We look forward to continuing to serve God's people."

Q&A About Media

of \$50 per unit students would be able to receive accredited status from this college for the designated coursework taken at ABC.

The proposed three-day regional conferences for the ministry were also discussed.

Treasurer's Q&A

September 18 Dr. Kirkpatrick answered questions submitted by the Council. One dealt with a recommendation to develop a strategy to deal with future financial crises that will distribute any necessary salary reductions among all employees in a fair and equitable manner on a graduated scale. Dr. Kirkpatrick stressed, as he does often, that we are totally dependent on God for His provision of financial resources and other blessings. He expressed his belief that following five principles of sound financial management in the Church would minimize the likelihood of having to respond to some future financial crisis in a way that would lead to personnel cuts. Following them will allow the Church to "manage" temporary downturns.

Those five principles are (1) adopting conservative income budgets, (2) adhering to expense budgets, once adopted, (3) identifying expenses other than payroll costs that are variable and discretionary in the short run, (4) maintenance of sufficient operating reserves, and (5) being vigilant not to succumb to the historical tendency in the Church to overstaff.

He also pointed out the current administration's practice of closely monitoring financial conditions so that we have enough "lead time" to deal with crises as they develop. If something such as a general economic downturn occurs, negatively affecting the income of the Church, he believes our first step (until God were to reverse the trend, which of course He could do at any time of His choosing) should be to cut down on non-payroll discretionary spending, such as travel or some promotional expenses. If additional actions become warranted, personnel/payroll costs would need to be looked at, since they are such a significant portion of our total budget. It is at this point, he stated, that he believes the Council would have to become involved, as it has in the past.

If that action became necessary, the options that would present themselves would be, not necessarily in order of priority, (1) across-the-board cuts for all employees; (2) scaled reductions (highest paid employees having their salaries cut the most); (3) reductions in the work force.

Dr. Kirkpatrick concluded by asking Council members if they wished at this time to publish a detailed plan of action to take in such a case. Mr. Thompson, as chairman of the Task Force, commented that he was completely satisfied with the treasurer's answer as given in this general form. He stated that he thought it unwise to give specifics ahead of time, as it could limit flexibility that might be needed in any crisis.

For full Council reports, see www.ucg.org/a/council/council.htm. The next Council meetings will be in Tyler, Texas, starting December 6. UN

The following questions were submitted by Council members and were answered by Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services operation manager on September 15.

Q. What percentage of our circulation is for waiting room programs and what percentage goes to actual households?

A. For the September/October issue we printed 135,959 business editions (waiting rooms). This represents 45 percent of our print run. However it was 49 percent last January/February, 48 percent for May/June and 47 percent for July/August. As you can see, since curtailing aggressive new additions onto the waiting room program, our percentage has consistently decreased.

We currently have 49 percent of our circulation going to individual homes.

It is our goal to continue to increase individual subscriptions, therefore lowering the overall percentage of waiting rooms. This has already begun with the introduction of our first direct-mail program, in it's initial test phase, and other mass media advertising similar to *Reader's Digest* (RD), etc.

It should be pointed out that we receive 1,000 or more subscriptions a month from waiting room copies (sometimes as many as 1,300), and these of themselves are the results of "waiting room" advertising. So, some fruit is being born in this regard.

Q. Do we have any way of determining how many of the households are members or former members of the WCG? In other words, how many new people are being reached by *The Good News*?

A. That's a tough question. Obviously, we don't really know.

It would be my estimate that the majority of our subscriptions gained through *Reader's Digest*, waiting rooms, Web sites and other miscellaneous advertising are

from completely new people. Our survey on our Web site Literature Request Form seems to show that we are primarily dealing with new people. This would mean that we probably have over 100,000, and perhaps as high as 125,000, completely new people on our file. I think that only 5,000 to 7,000 subscribers would be ex- or current WCG people (not counting our membership).

Q. How is our *Good News* renewal plan going? I know that we did not hit the target with the *Reader's Digest*. What will we do to meet our renewal goals and how much will that cost? Is this above what we projected that it would cost?

A. Our *Good News* renewal plan is going fine, although the level of response is a bit lower than hoped for. We are averaging around a 28 percent response at present (we'd like to achieve over 30 percent). Some of the reasons for this could include:

- Some readers who responded to the earlier *Reader's Digest* ads are dropping off the subscription list since it wasn't the kind of magazine they had expected from their view of the early RD ads.

- The busy schedule and other distractions of people in society today.

As far as not hitting the target with our most recent RD ad, there are several ways to look at it:

- This latest ad was overtly religious, and most respondents would have a much better idea of what to expect than from the earlier ad designs.

- The response was still quite good on a CPR basis—not quite as good as some earlier ads, but very close (see chart below).

Considering that we've had fewer cancellation requests this time, we may actually be in better shape, even though the CPR is higher! Also, \$6.42 CPR is in line with our other advertising efforts, and better than many of them.

Despite lower than hoped for responses to the latest RD ad, we are still currently

on target to meet our renewal and circulation goals for fiscal year 2000-2001. We passed another major milestone with the September/October issue of *The Good News*. Our print run for that issue topped 300,000 for the first time, with a total requested quantity of 302,751. For the 2000-2001 fiscal year we plan to average a print run of 325,000, so we're well on our way toward that goal.

This print run is up more than 18,000 over last issue and almost 89,000 higher than a year ago. This represents a 6 percent increase over the last issue and 41 percent over last year. These increases have come in spite of the fact that, over the last two issues, some 20,000 subscribers chose not to renew.

Meeting our circulation goals for the year should be able to be done within budget. While the renewal effort may not be returning as many subscriptions as hoped for, our advertising funds should still keep us on target. One new test was direct mail. The direct mail test program gave us the following results, with subscriptions still coming in:

As you know, we did two separate mailings—a traditional direct mail package sent to 223,167 households as well as a sample GN issue (GN Special Edition) sent to 50,000 households.

(A) Traditional direct mail package: The total number of responses so far is 6,688—a 2.99 percent response. This gives us a current overall cost per response of \$10.89.

(B) Direct mailing of 50,000 sample GNs: The total number of responses so far is 993—a 1.98 percent response. This gives us a current overall cost per response of \$27.19.

As you can see, the more cost effective way to add subscriptions is (A). However, those who had an actual copy of the magazine are more likely to renew their subscriptions.

Reader's Digest Advertising Analysis and Cost Per Response

Date	Region	Circulation	Responses	Percent Response	Cost Per Response
September 1996	Great Lakes, North Central, Chicago	3,655,000	21,774	0.6 percent	\$6.93
March 1997	Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Los Angeles, Mid-Atlantic	1,141,200	8,540	0.75 percent	\$10.23
September 1997	Pacific, Southern	3,870,000	19,186	0.5 percent	\$6.08
March 1998	Southwest	1,070,000	6,891	0.64 percent	\$7.04
June 2000	National	12,500,000	24,781*	0.2 percent	\$7.77
Total		22,236,200	81,214*	0.37 percent	\$7.34

*As of October 31, 2000. Note that this latest advertising effort is still producing hundreds of responses per month. It is expected to total out at around 27,000 to 30,000 responses eventually, giving a cost per response of \$7.13 to \$6.42.

International News...

Australia Holds First General Conference of Elders in 5 Years

August was a very special month for the United Church of God in Australia. The president of UCGIA, Les McCullough, and his wife, Marion, visited Australia and attended the first General Conference of Elders held here in five years. Not only did the elders from all over Australia have an opportunity to fellowship and discuss matters concerning the Church, they also had a chance to spend time with and seek the advice and counsel of the president.

While in Australia Mr. and Mrs. McCullough also visited the congregations on the East Coast of Australia and traveled to Tasmania to visit the brethren there.

Gold Coast Sabbath

Most of those attending the conference arrived at the Gold Coast in time to be present at the Sabbath service on the afternoon of August 26. Australian National Council Chairman Bill Eddington welcomed 141 members to the service. He acknowledged the debt owed to the United Church of God, an *International Association*, which contributed greatly to paying for the cost of the conference. Mr. Eddington, in asking for prayers from the congregation for the success of the conference said, "You will see the benefit of such prayers."

After special music, a delightful rendition of "Eye Has Not Seen" by a children's choral group, Mr. Eddington welcomed Mr. and Mrs. McCullough to Australia, and introduced Mr. McCullough for the main message of the day.

Before delivering his sermon, Mr. McCullough commented on the progress of the work, and on the inaugural year of the Ambassador Bible Center, remarking that Barry and Sue Kenavan from Queensland were among the pioneer students. Mr. McCullough also gave updates on some media tests that were in progress including an advertisement in *The Telegraph*, a major British newspaper, and a shortwave broadcast, entitled *The World Tomorrow*, reaching South American and European audiences.

People are springing up all over the place, continued Mr. McCullough as he began his sermon. He was referring to groups and individuals wanting contact with and teaching from the United Church of God. He then went on to focus on the myriad insoluble conflicts, disasters and tragedies which continue to grow on a worldwide scale.

From the loss of modern-day Israel's sea gates to soaring immorality and crime, the entire planet is beset by problems. The world is in great trouble and doesn't even know it, said Mr. McCullough. He added that although the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel have been enjoying vast blessings and unbelievable riches, they have no appreciation of, or gratitude towards the God who

gave this to them. We are not going to see a national repentance, he said, but this doesn't excuse us from teaching and preaching the



Australian General Conference of Elders attendees

Word of God to any who will listen.

Where are we now? asked Mr. McCullough towards the end of his message. Many of our Church members have been around for a long time, thinking our race was a quarter-mile, instead of a super marathon. It's very easy to get discouraged, but as long as you are drawing breath, you haven't crossed the finishing line. And you have a share in the most wonderful thing that can exist, the Body of Christ.

At the conclusion of the service, Mr. and

Mrs. McCullough cut an attractively decorated mud cake on which was iced the message, "Welcome to Australia." Afternoon tea was then served, with ministry and members enjoying fellowship together.



The conference started on Saturday evening, with attendees divided into two separate groups to discuss such topics as improving communication, further educational opportunities for elders and building a Church family, locally and nationally.

"Looking to the Future, Learning From the Past"

The activities next day commenced at

8:30 a.m., with Bill Eddington welcoming all those present and suggesting that the conference adopt as its theme, "Looking to the future, learning from the past." Observing that the Church in Australia has had five years of history upon which to build, he noted that the ordained members of the Church can serve by having the right attitude towards God, and the example that they set.

The day's proceedings got underway with an update on the congregations from the pastors. "The Year Ahead" comprised reports on Media and Publishing, Finance, the National Office and Strategic Planning. Mark Robertson, outgoing chairman of the Media and Publishing Committee, said that the *Good News* circulation for Australia currently stands at 6,000, and it is hoped that this financial year will end with an increase to 8,500. He said that over 600 non-Church members are currently receiving the *Bible Study Course*.

Treasurer Don Goodger then presented the financial report, after which Reg Wright gave the background and history of the establishment of the Australian National Office. After a small beginning in a spare bedroom in the Wrights' home in 1995, new premises were purchased in August 1996 and these premises are now fully owned by the Church.

Australia Plans to Increase Circulation 40+ Percent

The Media and Publishing efforts for the financial year of 2000/2001 have gotten off to a prompt start with the placement of a full-color, half-page advertisement in *That's Life* magazine. This ad offers the *Making Life Work* booklet and a subscription to *The Good News*.

Over the past two and a half years we have been testing advertising in various Australian magazines. The best consistent performers have been *That's Life* and *Take 5*. We were initially concerned the quality of subscriber from such magazines might not be as good as say *Reader's Digest*, but analysis of the development of the *That's Life* responses shows a very similar rate for requesting booklets and the *Bible Study Course* as those who responded through the *Reader's Digest*.

We have set a target circulation of 8,500 subscriptions to *The Good News* by June 30, 2001. This means we have to add approximately 2,500 new subscribers (more than 40 percent) to our list, which will be the largest number we have ever added in one year. The cost of supporting a gradually increasing *Good News* mailing list at this level is estimated to be at least \$50,000 (Australian dollars) for this financial year. (This figure for postage does not include the mailing of *World News and Prophecy*, *United News* or mailings of literature to the membership.)

The Media and Publishing Committee has a meeting scheduled in November to plan the advertising campaign for the rest of the year and plans are already under way to significantly expand the Waiting Room Program. We have set ourselves the goal of increasing circulation to the medical waiting rooms throughout Australia by 1,200 subscriptions. Judging from the way things are going at the moment, it looks like the committee may be able to adjust this target upwards.

Through the efforts of a handful of diligent ladies who call the medical waiting rooms, with God's blessing we are producing solid growth through this program. We have already covered all the medical waiting rooms in Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland. We are now targeting New South Wales and are planning to move on to South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. After we have called all the medical waiting rooms we will be contacting the dental waiting rooms.

Because of the high cost of maintaining the *Good News* mailing list, it is imperative that we renew the list regularly to make sure all those receiving the magazine really want it. We must also incorporate into our planning some subscriber development strategies to encourage subscribers to

move on to the expanded edition of *The Good News* and the *Bible Study Course*. These strategies are always planned in conjunction with the National Office and this year a comprehensive program for subscriber development has been approved by the National Council.

The expanded version of *The Good News* and the new booklets *Does God Exist?* and *Creation or Evolution?* will be offered to all subscribers who have received six issues of the magazine. Subscribers will also be offered the option of canceling their subscription if they are no longer interested. In addition, all subscribers already receiving the expanded version of the magazine will be offered the *Bible Study Course*. All those receiving the course will be offered *World News and Prophecy*.

With only two office employees and three employed pastors, our main expense in Australia is the cost of maintaining *The Good News* mailing list and God has begun to bless us with a small number of donors and coworkers from this list, in addition to the faithful financial support of the Church members. As in most of the areas of the world, the laborers are few in Australia but the potential harvest is great!

Ruth Root, on behalf of the Media and Publishing Committee

Apart from two full-time employees (Reg Wright and Ruth Root), extra help is supplied by a team of volunteers, who help with preparation of literature and tapes for mailing. These items are sent throughout Australia and to Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

After Mr. Eddington reported on the Strategic Plan, which is still a work in progress, Mr. McCullough was invited to address those present. He emphasized that it is God who calls people into the ministry. He also remarked that everywhere you turn, there's a need. He said we should be willing to offer help where we can, but that we must proceed with caution and prudence, as good stewards of the resources God has made available.

He then answered questions on topics including scholarships to ABC; special responsiveness to God's message in Africa; preliminary results of meetings between UCG and the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship; the work in the United Kingdom; and progress on the Church's upcoming publication on the identity of Britain and America in prophecy.

The conference then welcomed Jeff and Lisa Caudle, recently arrived in New Zealand to serve the brethren there. He remarked that he appreciated the moral and spiritual support provided by links with Australia and reported that the *Good News* readership list in New Zealand is 2,300, with a growing number enrolled in the *Bible Study Course*. To conclude the morning session, Graemme Marshall and Bruce Dean presented a summary of the previous evening's sessions.

During luncheon, Barry Kenavan gave a most informative talk on the very positive experience he and his wife had had as students attending at the Ambassador Bible Center. "It is worth any sacrifice for those of any age to have the ABC experience," concluded Barry.

We Can Do a Lot From Our Knees

The afternoon session opened with Mr. Eddington's comment that we can do a lot from our knees in asking God to move His work forward in Australia. We need God to open a few doors for us so we are able to grow and develop.

Under the heading Youth 2001, Don Goodger, newly appointed chairman of the Youth Committee, gave a brief presentation on the proposed program for the Church's youth. He said that the emphasis will be on turning our youth towards God, by offsetting the teachings of the world. He said that we must ensure we have adequate resources to fight the battle and that the youth should grow up in the Church feeling loved by God, and developing a Christian perspective towards life. The session continued with a report and handout by Bruce Dean on the

plans for this year's summer camp. Mr. Dean also commented on the history of Church camps, and how the structure has changed over the years as we have grown and learned from accumulated experience.

Allan Hambleton then gave a presentation on a proposed manpower development survey, designed to ensure that God's flock have the pastoral care to which they are entitled both now and in the years to come.

Breakout sessions and subsequent reports followed this on "Identifying and Develop-



Above, Bill Eddington. Left, Les and Marion McCullough with welcome cake; right, at Australian National Office



ing Leadership in the Congregations." The essential quality for a Church leader is, first and foremost, dedication to God. This bears the fruit of conversion, character and commitment. The desirable qualities are the abilities to inspire by exam-

ple, to encourage and motivate, and to sustain a creative approach to service.

The conference ended with a short question and answer session. In his closing remarks, Bill Eddington paid special tribute to the work done by the National Office in organizing and arranging the conference. Further information and pictures from the Australian General Conference can be found at www.ucg.org.au.

Comments afterward were positive. "It was good to meet face to face, and talk about issues informally," said Dawn Goodger, an elder's wife from Melbourne. "The conference was open and honest, and no one shirked the tricky bits."

Elizabeth Barber, on behalf of the Australian National Council

NZ Plans for November *Reader's Digest* Ad, Enjoys President's Visit

by Jeff Caudle

In late August my wife, Lisa, and I attended the Australian ministerial conference. It was a good chance to meet the Australian ministry and wives who themselves had not been together for such a conference in nearly five years. Both Australia and New Zealand have met many challenges over recent years. So it was very good to connect with them for a few days.

Les McCullough, president of UCGIA, and his wife, Marion, visited New Zealand after attending the Australian conference and speaking to several Australian congregations. They were in Auckland September 4 to 7. Mr. McCullough presented a one and a half hour update on the Church worldwide at an evening get-together on September 5. He also answered questions from the audience of 42 people before everyone moved on to tea, coffee and refreshments. An audio tape of his entire presentation is being distributed to outlying brethren. It was the first time the McCulloughs had been in New Zealand for just over 20 years. We really appreciate their extra efforts to make this visit "down under."

Two renewal letters have now been sent to some 1,500 New Zealand *Good News* subscribers. We've had a 30 percent renewal response so far. A third and final letter is going out with the September/October issue. Though the response may initially appear low, it is actually quite good. The historical standard, according to the home office, runs about 25 percent after three renewal letters. We're presenting, of course, a non-mainstream religious perspective to a typically non-religious Kiwi audience. So we're very pleased with this early response level.

Our front cover-flap advertisement in the *Reader's Digest* has been confirmed for the November New Zealand edition. This will reach about 125,000 subscribers. We're offering the *What Is Your Destiny?* booklet

and *The Good News*. *Reader's Digest* has been a good advertising vehicle for New Zealand. We haven't actively advertised for more than a year now, but we receive an average of 3 to 5 requests per week from previous *RD* ads.

A constant flow of literature requests keeps us busy, with an average of 5 to 10 responses per week from the Internet alone. The *Bible Study Course* subscriber list is nearly 100 people now. Some students are right up to Lesson 8. We very much appreciate the continual fulfilment of these literature requests by Colin and Fay Ogles from their home. They also send out home office-supplied audio and video sermon tapes to outlying New Zealand brethren on a weekly basis.

The New Zealand Board had a positive, constructive meeting with UCGNZ's solicitor (attorney) the day after the June Board meeting. Bruce Dean and Leon Walker were present for this meeting. The Board had been studying UCGNZ's structure and documents for months prior to this meeting and had requested recommendations from our solicitor. He is well-acquainted with our legal documents having been our solicitor since 1996.

A proposal to downsize UCGNZ's legal structure by retaining the existing Charitable Trust entity and removing the Limited Liability Company, as recommended by our solicitors, was considered favorably. The Board has continued the liaison with the solicitor to clarify any matters that were in question. A letter with details of this proposal was sent to all brethren, together with a request for input. The Board is very thankful for the positive responses from the overwhelming majority of the brethren.

In accordance with our legal advice, the Board sought the involvement of the Council of Elders in the appointment of trustees as well as asking them for a closer relationship with them. The Board is pleased to be able to report that the Council of Elders accepted these responsibilities at their meetings in Cincinnati in September.

Three non-voting advisory committees are being set up in the Auckland congregation. They include a Congregational Care Committee, a Media Committee and a Management Committee. Advisory committees were initially recommended by our solicitor. We felt this was a positive avenue for member participation, much like UCG congregations in other parts of the world.

At the September 10 New Zealand Board meeting it was announced that Dick and Rose Marr of Nadi, Fiji, would not be able to leave Fiji for the Feast this year due to economic and political disruption there. I hope to visit Fiji and Tonga in late November or December. One Tongan and at least five Kiwi young people plan to attend the Australian summer camp in late December.

This material originally appeared in United News New Zealand, September 2000.

President Reviews Trip

We began our trip by spending the Sabbath, August 19, with the small group in Honolulu, Hawaii. Including those on a telephone hook-up, we had 28 for services. They see few guests, so a new face showing up is welcome.

In Australia we arrived first in Sydney where everything was in a rush preparing for the Olympics. It had been more than 20 years since our last visit, so things have changed greatly.

We flew to the Gold Coast for services August 26 and had a chance to spend time with all the brethren before the two days of meetings with the ministry. Their manpower is quite limited, so we discussed thoughts on how to provide a couple of men for the Feast each year. A Feast in Australia would be a wonderful experience for any who can possibly

make the trip. The cost of the flight is the main thing. I would encourage anyone looking to visit overseas to consider Australia or New Zealand next year. I guarantee you will enjoy it.

We flew to Melbourne for services September 2 and on Sunday we flew to Launceston, Tasmania, for a meeting with brethren there. Tasmania reminded me of Ireland with all the greenery.

On Monday it was on to Auckland, New Zealand. I had the chance to meet Art Verschoor, who is the chairman of the New Zealand Board. Jeff and Lisa Caudle are settling in very well in New Zealand. They have found a nice home to rent and are very comfortable. Jeff is doing a great job according to the brethren.

From Les McCullough's September 20 "President's Letter."

Youth Camps...

British Youth Share Memorable Summer Camp Experiences

The evening of August 26 will long remain in the memories of the 13 teenagers and young people who took part in summer camp in Britain. They—along with a similar number of adults—had just concluded the camp's final evening with a formal dinner, skits, musical performances and a sing-along, and now it was time for some to depart for home.

The evening's arrangements had been delegated to the young adults, and they had been preparing all week—planning, negotiating, persuading and even cajoling both the teenagers and the adult staff alike so that all would contribute something to the meal, the dining room decorations or the entertainment. Everyone agreed it had been a spectacular success—even a passing thunderstorm had failed to dim the excitement.

By the early hours of Sunday morning everything had been cleared away and almost everyone was outside waving good-bye to a carload of young people leaving to travel home through the night. After they left we lingered a while in the cool night air, reflecting on a great camp. We gazed up at the stars, awed with both them and the sound of silence in rural England.

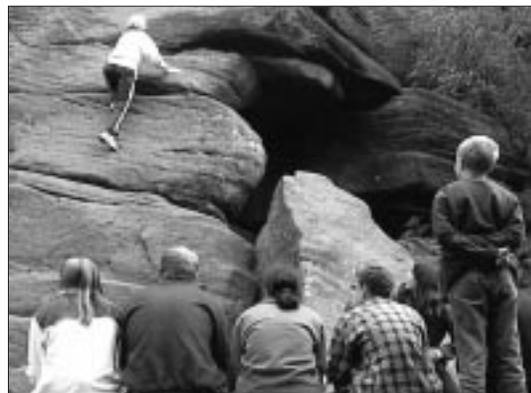
Camp had started on the evening of Friday, August 18, at a site new to us this year—West End Outdoor Centre near Harrogate, Yorkshire. The Outdoor Centre is a converted chapel remodeled for bunkbed accommodation. Besides bedrooms, it

provided us with kitchen, dining room, lounge areas and a pool table. The dining room proved particularly flexible. We



used it for table tennis, leather working, Sabbath services, and it provided a place for just sitting and chatting over a cup of tea.

There were ongoing pool, table tennis and volleyball tournaments. Almost everyone joined in the friendly rivalry and the tournament rules became a topic for seemingly endless dis-



Clockwise from top: Leanne Barnes climbing up the rock face; guitarists Paul Spenser and David Payne lead the sing-along; Debi Crook and Hannah Ellams help prepare final dinner; Matthew Karas and David Evans take aim

cussion and debate! A hands-on archery demon-

stration was held under the watchful eye of a semi-professional coach.

Applications Being Accepted Until December 1 for Winter Camp

Campers and staff, we're reserving a spot just for you at Winter Camp 2000! Make your plans now for a great winter break with others your age in a wonderful environment.

The increasingly popular youth Winter Camp will be held again this year from December 26 to December 31 in southern Wisconsin. This year camp will be five days instead of four. Winter Camp attracts youth and volunteers from all over the country.

This year there will no conflict with the Cincinnati family weekend, so you can attend both if you like.

Activities include snow flag football, broom hockey, an elevated toboggan run (new this year!), capture the flag, volleyball, basketball, Christian Living class, dance class, cross-country skiing (if conditions permit) and learning how to create Web pages in the computer lab. A special class on astronomy using a telescope is under consideration (ever wanted to see the rings around Saturn?). Camp offers a good mix between outdoor and indoor activities.

A special Friday night interactive study called "Teen Top Ten" will ask for your top

questions about the future. Sabbath messages will be tailored just for campers and staff.

Campers sleep four or five to a room in a dormitory with lounges available for snacks, fellowship and games. The nearby dining hall serves delicious hot meals. Other buildings house the gym, modern meeting rooms and an ultra-modern computer lab. Evening activities include the popular game night, campfire with snacks and a dance and variety show the last night of camp.

Winter Camp is about making new friends and saying hello to old ones. You will learn God's way of life in a positive and enjoyable environment. Camp will help you see your part in the plan of God and how much God cares for you. You, as a camper or staff, will be challenged, encouraged and educated while you enjoy plenty of activities.

Camper applications are found in the special *United Youth Camps 2000* magazine. Campers and staff can request an application by using the e-mail or mailing addresses below. Campers may also visit the UCG Web page for a camper application at: www.ucg.org/youthcamp/. The application

deadline has been extended to December 1.

Tuition is \$185 per camper, which includes lodging, food and activities (\$92.50 for high school workers; adult workers and counselors no charge). Campers should be between 10 and 18; high school staff must be 16 or older. There is an extra charge if arriving early.

Please send your application request to: Steve Nutzman, 520 Wexford Road, Janesville, WI 53546; phone: (608) 758-9228; fax: (608) 758-8885; e-mail: steve_nutzman@ucg.org

Free transportation will be provided to and from Winter Camp and the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, airport on December 25 and December 31. Contact Gary and Gale Black for any transportation needs at (815) 963-2336 or e-mail them at gblack@acrux.net.

Camper check-in is Tuesday morning, December 26, and checkout is Sunday, December 31. Staff orientation begins mid-afternoon on December 25.

For more information and photos of Winter Camp, see www.wintercamp.org.

Steve Nutzman, Winter Camp Director

The weather was almost perfect with warm sunny days, cool evenings and some quite beautiful sunsets. Even the occasional wet spells were short-lived and we were amazed to hear news reports of a freak snow and hailstorm that had passed not far to the southeast.

Away from camp, activities included rock climbing and trips out to local places of interest, including a shopping expedition to Skipton with its open-air market.

Each day followed the same routine: after breakfast was the forum, led at first by adult staff members but towards the end of camp our young adults were showing sufficient leadership and commitment to take this responsibility themselves. At the end of each day we closed with a hymn and a prayer of thanks. Staying up into the early hours talking proved popular with the teenagers (and others!)

In the final forums, our teens and young people expressed a commitment to God and His church and a desire for further get-togethers as a group. To this end a winter activity is being planned and, yes, we will definitely be back in Yorkshire next summer.

David and Barbara Fenney

Feast of Tabernacles 2000 Reports...

Australia

Hobart, Tasmania

Hobart is a seaport nestled at the foot of picturesque Mt. Wellington and is the capital city of the island state of Tasmania. A 20-minute drive from Hobart brings us to the Feast site: The Pines Resort at Seven Mile Beach, on the shores of Frederick Henry Bay.

This year 84 were in attendance, with visitors from all the eastern states of Australia, as well as some from the United States and Canada.

Many remarked on the friendliness of those attending, and that the atmosphere and the messages of the Feast were reminiscent of earlier years. Messages revolved around the basics of our Christianity, and the need to have a clear vision of God's plan of salvation for mankind, especially the prophetic meaning of God's Holy Days.

There were many opportunities for interaction and fellowship, many of which included the sharing of meals together. There was a BBQ, trivia and games night and a picnic. One of the highlights was a dinner/harbor cruise, with entertainment supplied by some of the younger members of the Church, culminating in a sing-along around a piano.

Most of the days were cool but sunny. Those from warmer climates were hoping to experience snow, and they were not disappointed, as there was a covering on the mountain in the early part of the Feast.

The Tasmanian members really appreciated having people from other areas come in and share the Feast with them.

Barry Williams

Merimbula, New South Wales

At Merimbula, located on the Sapphire Coast of southern New South Wales, 156 very enthusiastic people kept the Feast.

The sermons were very special, emphasizing the coming Kingdom of God on earth, picturing the role of Christ the King, His saints and the nation of Israel. The sermons on the Last Great Day completed the scene emphasizing both the great resurrection to give all people their chance to enter the Kingdom and finally Christ handing over the Kingdom to the Father.

Some highlights were:

- The visit by Council of Elder's member Bob Dick who quickly won the hearts of all the members with both his friendliness and powerful sermons.

- The number of young people attending and their keen participation in all aspects of the Feast and especially in special music and entertainment.

- The special youth day where the youth played and conducted hymns, gave opening and closing prayers, gave announcements and provided the special music. The children were given a special sermonette where they sat up front and were asked questions.

- The seniors' luncheon was held in the beautiful auditorium provided by the Merimbula Lawn Bowling club where again the youth served the seniors, provided the Master of Ceremonies and the entertainment. Mr. Dick followed by addressing first the young people, then the seniors. To the young people he mentioned that once again God's Church required pioneers and that they were the pioneers needed. To the seniors he mentioned that they had been the stabilizing force over the last five years.

Merimbula is a delightful seaside town facing out over the Pacific Ocean and hedged in by very blue mountains. During the Feast numerous whales were making their migratory passage down to the Antarctic Ocean. Being there, one was always reminded of the magnificence of God's creation.

Don Goodger

Noosa Heads, Queensland

It was an outstanding Feast in Noosa Heads, with a high attendance of 297 and one of the largest Last Great Day offerings ever. Clearly many were pleased with the inspiring messages, pleasant weather, outstanding special music by children's and adults' choirs, wholehearted participation in activities and positive encouragement from the UCG video on the progress of United.

A family pool party occupied one afternoon; a teen/young adult river dinner/dancing cruise, one evening; and a formal ball, another night. Two service projects were undertaken: a musical recital for elderly residents of an aged care facility (also later for our own seniors), and the annual food bank collection for Noosa needy. The quantity of food donated by generous members was so great that we were told it would keep welfare needs going for some six to eight weeks!



Noosa Heads: "Nic at Night" musical production (photo by Tom Burchard)

Undoubtedly the highlight of the Feast was a musical staged by a cast of 21 aged 8 through teen to adult called "Nic at Night." It was about Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night with a theme to not be a secret Christian. It was enthusiastically applauded by an audience of 226.

A number of U.S. visitors along with New Zealanders added to the flavor of fellowship while breaching whales offshore exemplified the scenic beauty of the area.

Graemme Marshall

Barbados

The Feast was again held at the all-inclusive resort area of Sam Lord's Castle in the parish of St. Philip. The weather was outstanding with sunshine every day, which was a blessing considering we were in the midst of the rainy season. The tropical environment



Barbados: Special music by Stephen Mapes and his daughters, Jessica Johns and Elizabeth Mapes (photo by Arnold Hampton)

was relaxing and millennial. Individuals talked freely with other guests at the hotel.

Our high attendance was 136, which included visitors from other organizations. We had timely messages on prophecy, the priesthood and enduring to the end. Special music was special this year since we did not have a pianist. However with a guitar, flute and steel pan we joyfully lifted our voices in praise to God.

Activities included a family day beach outing, an island tour and trip into town for sightseeing and duty-free shopping.

The highlight this year was a baptism on the last day of the Feast.

This was a relaxing and problem-free Feast. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to fellowship with each other and with our great and loving God.

Arnold J. Hampton

Bolivia

This year the Feast was kept in Achocalla, on the outskirts of La Paz. The number of people attending was 31, including brethren from Chile, along with Chilean minister Jaime Gallardo and his family.

During the Feast we enjoyed informal dances, bonfires and karaoke, in which the young members participated (both the Bolivians and the visitors), much to everyone's delight. For the first four days of the Feast we had low temperatures, after which it warmed up, until the sun came out unexpectedly. The spirit of the Feast wasn't affected

by the cold temperatures, and we didn't have to modify the program of activities.

Although the country had experienced social instability some weeks before the Feast, the situation was gradually improving. Once the Feast got under way, the Chilean

Feast of Tabernacles 2000 Attendance Figures

Australia

Hobart, Tasmania84
Merimbula, New South Wales ..156
Noosa Heads, Queensland297

Barbados136

Bolivia31

Brazil48

British Isles216

Cameroon56

Canada

Kelowna, British Columbia508
Mont Sainte Anne, Quebec353

Chile480

Colombia88

El Salvador143

Estonia50

France124

Germany157

Guatemala599

Italy365

Jamaica268

Jordan57

Kenya41

Mexico331

New Zealand75

Nigeria54

Peru173

Philippines

Davao City178

Iloilo City98

South Africa181

Tanzania160

Togo15

Tonga31

United States

Bend, Oregon1,242

Branson, Missouri1,406

Corpus Christi, Texas747

Escondido, California1,081

Estes Park, Colorado626

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania662

Jekyll Island, Georgia1,151

Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii396

Louisville, Kentucky825

Panama City Beach, Florida ..1,714

Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin ...906

Zambia93

Zimbabwe21

Shut-ins who received Feast sermon

tapes from home office480

TOTAL16,903

Feast Cybercast (est.)210

Note: Highest daily attendance figures. Actual registration at most sites was higher due to daily absenteeism. Cybercast listeners include some shut-ins counted above, so are not added into the total.

brethren were able to participate in guided tours to Tiahuanacu to enjoy its culture and beauty, as well as to Lake Titikaka.

We also had a very amusing talent show, with the involvement of many of the people. The show ended in a very animated dance, in which everyone participated and had fun.

Of course the spiritual food was the top priority, and all the messages related to the Feast. For the people attending the Feast for the first time, it was a unique experience. They commented that they had come to better understand God's master plan of salvation through the sermonettes and sermons.

Raul Machicao

Brazil

For the first time the Feast was kept in Brazil where brethren were fed with spiritual food by God's ministers through tapes.

It was encouraging to hear from the chief of the Amerindian affairs, Senhor Jaie Ushua, that he is delighted to know about the establishment of the United Church of God in Muscou, which he said will be of great benefit to the community because of the principles and moral values we teach. He even visited us briefly during the Last Great Day and shared a vegetable drink with us. The captain of the village also welcomed the Church.

The brethren in Muscou were very happy to welcome their spiritual family from Guyana. Some of them had to travel about 250 miles to reach the Feast site, but it was very rewarding. We had an average attendance of 46, with 48 as the highest.

Geraldo Robert and Clyde Chinian

British Isles

A strong sense of unity, togetherness, commitment and purpose highlighted the Feast in York, as over 200 people came together for fellowship and worship during the eight day period. The highest attendance was 216. Combined Holy Day offerings were up 42 percent over last year!

Present were members from the British Isles, the United States, Canada, Sweden and Singapore. Sermons focused on the reality of the upcoming millennial reign of Jesus Christ on this earth and all that this will entail— from preparation to education and care.

Social highlights included a get-together and dance at York's Merchant Adventurers' Hall, one of the best-preserved medieval guildhalls in Europe. In addition, there were activities for our teenagers and young people, a children's party and visits to the Jorvik Viking Centre, the Yorkshire Dales (Herriot country) and the magnificent Castle Howard!

Roy Holladay, chairman of the Council of Elders, presented a question-and-answer session, which included a short presentation by Tom Kirkpatrick, UCGIA treasurer, on ABC.

There was a strong theme of hope running through the Feast and also excitement with the current growth of the Church's outreach both here in the British Isles and in international areas.

David Fenney and Dave McDermott

Cameroon

This year 56 people attended the Feast in Makak, Cameroon, in Central Africa. The village of Makak is located in the tropical jungle between the economic capital of the country, Douala, and the political capital, Yaoundé. Members attending came from many different regions of Cameroon. Our only international visitor was our pastor Joel Meeker who stayed with us through the first four days of the Feast. The sermons he gave, as well as his translation of the Festival video, were great spiritual resources. Following his departure we had sermons on cassette tapes.

All meals were prepared by devoted volunteers on the kitchen team. Their days started at 4:30 a.m. in order to prepare the meals.

On the fourth day of the Feast, five people were baptized in a small jungle stream near the site.

During an open-house day, local government authorities and people from Makak were invited to watch last year's Festival video about the work of the United Church of God. Mr. Meeker translated the video into French, and afterward answered questions about the Church. As a result of this open house, several people asked if they could begin attending our services. We shall see if



Cameroon: Baptized at the Feast, Matthias Mbella, Sophie Ngo Etobe, Emmanuel Bayem, Irene Ngo Um and Mrs. Bayem (photo by Joel Meeker)

God is calling some from among them.

During the talent show evening, members performed different traditional dances and made other entertaining cultural presentations. Though the electricity and running water were often interrupted, there were no serious problems to hinder the celebration of the festival this year. God granted us peace and deep joy during His Feast of Tabernacles.

Moïse Mabout

Canada

Kelowna, British Columbia

Blue skies and balmy autumn weather greeted 508 enthusiastic Feastgoers converging into the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. Burk McNair's opening night message encouraged brethren weary from a world gone mad, as he emphasized the importance of keeping the Feast and keeping our eyes focused on heavenly things.

Following were eight days of thought-provoking messages, exceptional special music and action-packed activities geared for both the young and the young at heart.



Kelowna, British Columbia (photos by Jean Jantzen); below, Mont Sainte Anne, Quebec (photos by Kent Spiry)



Children looked forward to specially prepared festival lessons that exemplified the plan of God. Many teens took this opportunity to serve as big brother or sister to younger children in these fun-filled activities. Artwork by the youngsters picturing the world tomorrow was later displayed for all to enjoy.

Twenty-one young adults took part in an interactive seminar entitled "Making Wise Decisions" presented by Jon Pinelli. Later they enjoyed an evening of goofy bowling.

Family day was held at Scandia Golf and Games where several hundred children and their parents came together to spend a leisurely afternoon playing miniature golf and an exciting array of arcade, table and pool games. Or brethren just relaxed, ate pizza, fellowshiped and watched as a band of life-size electronic monkeys performed.

There were 103 at the seniors' luncheon, hosted by Dennis Luker. His heartfelt message referred to seniors' roles as the fathers and mothers of the Church who are much appreciated and esteemed by God.

Young and old kicked up their heels at the family dance featuring the entertaining Shakedown Annie—professional DJs who delighted the large crowd.

For six days brethren celebrated in Kelowna and then all had the opportunity to drive the spectacular serpentine scenic route to Vernon, 25 miles north, where we continued to praise God for the last two days.

Jean Jantzen

Mont Sainte Anne, Quebec

Beautiful fall colors greeted more than 350 brethren to the new site in Quebec. "The colored postcards do not do the area justice," said one person. God answered the prayers for good weather for all the outdoor activities, including the whale watching trip attended by 168 brethren. God also provided whales, including blue whales, the largest animals in the world. The tour operators told our group that we were really lucky since there had only been one other sighting of blue whales this year and that was the day before! The group also saw beluga, minke and fin whales.

The attendance was higher than the 300 originally anticipated, so an overflow room was set up down the hall from the main auditorium. The messages were also piped to 17 brethren in Newfoundland who were not able to make the long trip to Quebec.

Messages clearly portrayed the contrast between today's evil world and the vision of the true happiness of the world tomorrow. Speakers focused on the hope God provides through His law, His plan, His Kingdom and what He is constructing in us. Fred Kellers invited audience participation before and during his sermon on favorite world tomorrow verses. Other interactive events included a young adults seminar and a teen Bible study.

Almost 10 percent of the congregation served in the choir, which was part of an excellent special music program. Musical talent was also displayed during the two-hour variety night, along with large doses of fun, from French lessons with "dancing elephants" to a rendition of "Celebrate."

Family day included 10 booths developed by brethren from the New England congregations as well as races and activities such as the seemingly impossible human knot.

The children had youth lessons two days. At the end of services on family day, each child was given a stuffed animal to "adopt."

Other activities included a family dance, a seniors' brunch, a teen excursion to a spectacular waterfall viewed from suspension bridges and a young adults gondola ride to the top of Mont Ste. Anne. Many Feastgoers ran into each other while touring historic Quebec City and other sites.

A first-time Feast attendee said the Feast was "the most enjoyable and spiritually filled time of my life. What did I do all my life before this? Thank God for calling us!"

Anthony Wasilkoff

Chile

Maitencillo, on the Pacific coast, was the site once again for the Feast in Chile. Among the 480 attendees were representatives of 10 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Great Britain, Guatemala, Peru, the United States and Venezuela. Services were in Spanish, with a simultaneous translation provided for the English-speaking visitors.

Family-style meals and activities provided for a warm and friendly Feast, where cultural and linguistic barriers were surmounted by brethren eager to fellowship and learn about the lives of others of the same faith from different parts of the world.

Activities included several dances, a games afternoon on the beach, a senior citizens' tea, a trip to Viña del Mar and Valparaíso for the visitors, an *esquinazo* (a show of folk music and dance) and a talent show. There was also a Ladies' Night meeting of the combined Spokesman and Graduate speaking clubs. In addition to the services, an interactive Bible study and a question-and-answer session for the young adults provided an opportunity for interaction around biblical themes.



Chile (photo contributed by Jaime Guíñez)

Five new members were baptized in the cold waters of the Pacific Ocean, and Abraham Hermosilla and Paola Muñoz were married on the second day of the Feast. Messages were brought by Ralph Levy, an ABC instructor visiting from Cincinnati, and Fermín Naín, an elder serving in Chile, as well as several other members and deacons from Chile and Argentina.

Ralph Levy

Colombia

This year 88 people from Colombia and Venezuela gathered together in El Rodadero, Santa Marta, to worship God according to His commandments. In spite of the dangerous situation in this country, everyone came to the Feast site and together had a very inspiring Feast time. God's protection was very evident, as many of our brethren had to travel between 16 to 20 hours by bus through one of the most dangerous regions plagued by different guerrilla groups, and no one had any kind of disturbance going to the Feast or returning to their homes.

The main activities during the Feast were the spiritual ones. After services all had

enough time to invite each other to their rented apartments and share the blessings God had given them. The Caribbean Sea was very clear and every day we had the wonderful opportunity to go there and talk, swim, dive, play and admire God's creation. We also went to a beautiful beach called "Crystal Beach," and spent the afternoon there.

One of the highlights of the Feast was the baptism of three people. One is a lady who is the mother of a faithful, long-time Church member. The other two are young people who live with their parents (who are also members) along the Atlantic Coast.

On the Last Great Day, one new lady came to services. She lives near the hotel in which we were meeting. She was asking God to guide her to the right place because she wanted to walk with Him, to live according to His will. Someone told her that a Christian church was having services in the hotel. So she went to services next morning. Before services she was talking with members and she was very open, friendly and very kind with everyone. After services she told me she was very impressed—she liked the messages, the people and the ambience. She asked for booklets, especially in reference to the Sabbath and the Holy Days.

We are very grateful to God because He made possible this marvelous Feast.

Eduardo Hernandez

El Salvador

With great enthusiasm and dedication, 143 people kept the Feast in the city of San Salvador, El Salvador. We were taught about the plan of God concerning the world tomorrow, when the government of God will finally be a reality on the earth, and the blessings that will come along with obedience to that government. The unity of the Church was also emphasized. That unity was evident in everyone's participation in the activities, facilitating oneness and harmony as part of the family of God.

In the spiritual area, we set aside more time for prayer, Bible study and reflection about the world tomorrow, making this a calmer Feast, and one full of meaning, without losing the beauty and joy of the festival.

Because of all the physical and spiritual blessings poured out on the Church at this Feast, we are very grateful to God our Father, who, in spite of some of the difficulties we faced, "gives us richly all things to enjoy." We're also grateful to our ministers and deacons, who worked so hard to maintain the spirit of the Feast, and contribute to the happiness of everyone attending.

As a congregation we are determined to look toward the challenge of the future, and toward the keeping of the festivals of 2001.

Gloria de Alvarez and Noe Efrain Martinez

Estonia

For the fourth straight year we held the Feast in Tartu. We had a high attendance of 50 on opening night and during one of the

public lectures. We were happy to have brethren come from Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and 30 transfers from the United States. We had one baptism—Natasha Gromova from Belarus. She had traveled two full days and nights to come to Tartu.

Our theme for the Feast was "Prepare for the Kingdom," as all messages touched on this subject. Bob Fahey gave three sermons and two public Bible lectures. We had a total of eight new people become acquainted with the Church from the Tartu area.

On Monday evening Bob Fahey and Victor Kubik were interviewed for one hour by one of the four religious radio stations in Estonia. We talked about the fact we had held the Feast there for four years, explained why we keep the Feast and mentioned that we had worked with Emajõe Kool (school for the blind and visually impaired).



Estonia: Students from school for the blind and visually impaired sing for Feastgoers (photo by Victor Kubik)

After services on Tuesday, children from the school performed for the Feastgoers. After the concert we took about 30 children from the school out to a farm where we had a picnic and the children rode horses. Through the fundraising efforts of Gail and Karen Allwine a much needed cash gift of \$1,200 was made to the school, and Joe and Roma Camerata brought nearly 2,000 soft toys from Phoenix, Arizona. Also, each Festival attendee from the U.S. was asked to donate a developmental toy or classical music CD.

All services were translated simultaneously from English into Estonian by Mariina Viia, from English to Russian by Darlene Reddaway and two Russian sermonettes into English by Victor Kubik.

Victor Kubik

France

This year, 124 brethren from Australia, Belgium, France, Martinique, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States gathered at le Domaine de l'Oliveaie, near Gilette, France, to keep what many agreed was their best Feast ever.

Situated in a beautiful mountain setting north of Nice, Gilette provided a wonderfully intimate gathering place for services, fellowship and dining along with the perfect jumpoff point for numerous guided-tour excursions around the French Riviera including: the magnificent Villa Ephrussi of the Rothschild's in the hills above the city of Villefranche; a high tea at Nice's famed

Négresco Hotel located on the fashionable Promenade des Anglais; a day trip to the colorful, artistic village of St. Paul de Vante; shopping in the cliff-hugging village of Gilette; and sightseeing visits to Monaco, Cannes, Vallauris and Biot.

Services alternated between French and English with translation available by FM radios and headsets that brethren brought to the site. Messages were meaty, relevant and offered inspiring and practical insights for all in their Christian walk.

A family dance, a talent-laden fun show, a game night featuring some friendly competition between the French- and English-speaking brethren, and superb French cuisine and service from the friendly staff at le Domaine de l'Oliveaie's restaurant were among the other highlights at Gilette.

Dan Taylor

Germany

More than 160 brethren celebrated the Feast in Schluchsee, Germany, located in Germany's beautiful Black Forest. The weather was good throughout the week, with striking fall colors. The Feast was full of inspirational messages, uplifting fellowship and hope for the future. Services were in German with simultaneous translation into English. The messages included topics such as: vision of the Kingdom of God, becoming teachers, Christ's service approach and the Kingdom of God, how to be an overcomer, the Sermon on the Mount as the basis for a new society, and judgment beginning at the house of God. The Feast film was also shown one day. Children's Bible classes were held three times during the Feast. Kids ages 3 to 12 learned more about God's plan through His Feast days. We also enjoyed a wonderful variety of special music including several pieces from the children's and festival choirs.

A highlight during the Feast was the



Germany (photo by Lisa Fenchel)

ordination of two elders: Hermann Goehring and Kurt Schmitz.

Feast activities provided great opportunities for fellowship. The traditional "welcome evening" allowed people to renew old friendships and meet new people. Two bus tours were held. One trip took brethren to France where they visited the medieval town of Riquewihr and a castle. Another trip took participants through the Black Forest.

The youth once again showed off their athletic abilities on the go-cart course and during the volleyball activity. Children enjoyed a special party full of games and

crafts. Brethren, young and old, shared their talents in the annual talent show. The family dance took place on Tuesday evening with lively German music provided by Alois and Franz, the Black Forest duo. The Feast concluded with a farewell evening, with brethren looking forward to coming back in 2001.

Lisa Fenchel

Guatemala

The beautiful city of Antigua, Guatemala, was the place where 599 brethren gathered together this year to celebrate the Feast. People from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, the United States and Peru came to enjoy eight days of very exciting activities.

On opening night Saul Langarica—the local pastor in Guatemala—spoke about worshiping God in spirit and truth. Mr. Langarica mentioned that some of the Guatemalan brethren had to make very hard decisions in



Guatemala: Children display welcome signs in their languages (photo by Kyle & Meta Hendershot)

order to attend the Feast this year. He said that one young lady had to resign her job in order to go to the Feast since her boss would not let her have the time off. In spite of all the hardships, God has blessed His people in Guatemala, and most of our brethren were able to attend the Feast this year.

We were inspired by the messages given during services. Most of the messages dealt mainly with the meaning of the Feast. Other messages included Church government, caring for the elderly and the Feast in the New Testament. The special music prepared by the Guatemalan brethren was also very inspiring. God has certainly called several talented people into His Church in Guatemala. The warmth and friendliness of the brethren made all visitors feel welcome.

There were also several other exciting activities planned. The members of the speaking club planned a Ladies' Night—a very special dinner and dance dedicated to the invited ladies. During table topics several ladies were invited to comment about how to make the Sabbath more special. Later three club members gave speeches.

A few days into the Feast Leon Walker and his wife, Reba, came to Antigua after spending the first part of the Feast in Mexico. Mr. Walker is the regional director for the Spanish-speaking areas. Mr. Walker delivered a message about how to prepare oneself now to be a king and priest in the Kingdom. He said that by learning how to live with our families now, we are learning how to govern in the world tomorrow. He also gave a sermon on the meaning of the Last Great Day.

During the Feast there were four baptisms and two ordinations. Luis Eliseo Mundo Tello was ordained as an elder and Lilian Perez was ordained as a deaconess.

Pedro Reinoso

Italy

The Feast in Italy had an attendance of 365 participants from various countries: United States, United Kingdom, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and, of course, Italy. We were a small but enthusiastic group of God's people enjoying heartfelt sermons, good food and a special fellowship with one another. We were living proof that language need not be a barrier to getting to know and love one another in Christ.

During the Feast, the brethren had the opportunity to hear very inspiring and powerful messages about God's love and plan for the salvation of humanity.

John Jewell, a member of the Council of Elders, was with us for the first half of the Feast, as he had planned to celebrate the remaining portion with our brethren in York. Mr. Jewell and his wife, Tina, were able to come to one of our National Council meetings. Our talks helped strengthen our international unity.

During the eight days of the Feast, the weather was wonderful, nice and warm. We participated in cultural tours to famous historical places like Pompeii, the Roman Coliseum, Imperial Forum, the Vatican museums and other places and monuments. We also had memorable social activities like the talent show and the dance.

On the seventh day of the Feast, God added two more members to His little flock in Italy, as Giovanni Troisi and his mother, Breatrice Masullo, from the area south of Naples, were baptized in the sea, especially calm for the occasion.

Carmelo Anastasi

Jamaica

Feastgoers from South America, the Caribbean, Canada and the United States met in Ocho Rios for eight days of fellowship, inspirational messages, entertainment and relaxation. With a high attendance of 268 on the first day, members received messages from Randy Schreiber, Aaron Dean, Leonard Martin, William Miller, Chuck Smith and Kingsley Mather.

Recreational highlights included family fun day on the beach, where various races and contests were held. The Ocho Rios highlight tour treated Feastgoers to attractions such as Fern Gully, Botanical Gardens and Dunn's River Falls.

Children enjoyed a class during services and gave lovely special music.

Members of United bonded with those attending the Church of God, a Christian Fellowship (CGCF), who held the Feast at a nearby hotel. Members from both churches met for the fun day, and CGCF held their talent night in UCG's hall, inviting members of both groups to the event, which was a delight.

We had a number of visitors from two other Church of God groups meeting in Ocho Rios. A member of another group enjoyed the Feast video and asked to borrow it to show other members of that group.

During the Feast Harry Grant was ordained a deacon.

Janice Lynn Mather

Jordan

Despite unrest in neighboring Israel, 57 kept the Feast

in Jordan in peace. They were able to visit all the planned sites—Jerash, Petra, Kerak, the Dead Sea and Amman. The brethren commented on how the Bible had taken new meaning by actually visiting these sites.

Opening night, the festival group was greeted by the Minister of Tourism who assured the brethren of Jordan's safety and peace. At the end of the Feast, all highly recommended this trip. Most mentioned the highlights of the tour had been visiting Petra and receiving meaty sermons.

The only drawback of the trip was that about a third of the group had planned to continue with an extended tour of Israel, but due to the unrest there, half decided to return home and be reimbursed, while the other half accepted the option of going to Egypt.

Mario Seigle and William Stetter

Kenya

The 18 foreign visitors at the Feast in Kenya stayed at the Kentmere Club Hotel. Nine kilometers away, 23 Kenyan brethren stayed at the Benedictine monastery where services were held. To be able to spend as much time together as possible, the foreign brethren brought everything that was needed for the day with them to services. We all enjoyed a Kenyan-style lunch at the monastery before embarking as a group for the afternoon activities.

One activity we all enjoyed together was a family day on the grounds of the monastery. The next day we visited the Nairobi National Museum, Snake Farm and a traditional Kikuyu homestead, which was like one that one of the members grew up in. We also visited the Nairobi National Park, Karen Blixen Farm, Giraffe Center and Hell's Gate National Park.

Throughout our travels we could see the results of the lack of seasonal rains in the last three years. Several of the members are farmers, and the lack of rain has made life very difficult and, without the grace of God, it would have been impossible.

Scheduled power and water shortages are a daily event. Unemployment is very high. Even if you have the education and qualifications for a good job, you cannot get one.

There are many problems only the return of Christ can fix. In the meantime, the Kenyan brethren are doing a superb job



The group in Kenya (photo by Gayle Hoefker)

of "letting their light shine" in this corner of the world.

The spiritual messages we heard every day were the highlight of the Feast. With an encouragement at the beginning of the Feast "to help, to listen and to learn," we all worked together to do that. With everyone doing his or her part to serve, to fellowship and to learn about each other's culture, we bonded into a tight-knit group. Many of the brethren are only able to attend services at the Feast so the messages and fellowship were very important to sustain them for another year.

After the Last Great Day message, we all had tea together. The Kenyans gave the Americans an impromptu serenade of Kenyan farewell songs and dance. We all said tearful good-byes with promises to "keep the faith" and to "stay in touch."

Gayle Hoefker

Mexico

Great spiritual and physical fellowship and rejoicing! That summarizes the Feast in Acapulco, Mexico, for 331 brethren. The days were sunny and warm, sometimes a little hot, but it just added to the warmth of the Feast environment.

There was excellent spiritual food during the Feast. The sermonettes given served as excellent and inspiring introductions to the sermons. Leon Walker, member of the Council of Elders, was the visiting minister. He gave two sermons, one on the meaning of the Feast, and the other on how we are preparing to rule under Christ in the Millennium with justice, equity and education. Lauro Roybal, Feast coordinator, spoke on the importance of the Feast with regard to our living in tabernacles, and on entering into the family of God at the last trumpet.

Other ministers spoke on the urgency of the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth and the urgent need of a change of mind and heart; on marriage as a type of Christ's marriage with the Church; on why God established His Feasts as a means of helping man develop God's character; and on the great lessons that we can learn from the activities that Jesus Christ performed during His last observance of the Last Great Day.

The Feast video was of particular interest since it included a segment on the summer camp attended by a group of 17 young peo-

ple from Mexico. They were delighted to see some of them being interviewed.

There were many activities for people of all ages. For the children there was a party with lots of gifts and a professional clown and his team of helpers dressed up in animal costumes. There were several dances for the young people and a family day in Cici Park, a popular recreation center with swimming pools and a dolphin show. There was a special dinner in honor of the elderly people with professional singers singing famous songs of the past. But the highlight of the physical activities was the Mexican Night with an abundance of Mexican food delicacies and folkloric dances by a group of children from the San Luis Potosi congregation.

The spiritual highlight was the baptism of seven new members of the Church of God.

Pablo Dimakis

New Zealand

Seventy-five joyful brethren from New Zealand, Australia and the United States joined together at the Lake Taupo site, located in the center of the North Island. A spirit of peace and unity permeated the group and grew throughout the eight days. Many New Zealand brethren do not have access to regular Church services throughout the rest of the year, so the Feast is especially meaningful for them and their children. And we very much appreciate the international brethren who come over to New Zealand each year.

Robert Dick, Council of Elders member, and his wife, Dyanne, joined us for the Day of Atonement and the first five days of the Feast. As the international guest speaker, Mr. Dick's messages led us through many aspects of the coming Millennium and emphasized our preparation for teaching and leadership roles in the Kingdom.

A buffet dinner for the entire Church group was a highlight early in the Feast. One afternoon, 15 young people had an outdoor adventure including wilderness problem solving, orienteering and abseiling (rappelling) off a 30-meter (100-foot) cliff. A few brethren made the trip up to the snow fields of the volcanic mountain Mt. Ruapehu, just south of Taupo. Though they didn't ski, they did enjoy a good-natured snowball "fight."

Other brethren enjoyed the world-famous rainbow trout fishing on Lake Taupo. Others experienced Maori culture, geysers, mud pools and an outdoor theme park in Rotorua, 50 minutes northeast of Taupo. Though we are considering alternative sites for next year, Lake Taupo continues to be a favorite site—rich with activities, affordable accommodation and great natural beauty.

Jeff Caudle

Nigeria

The Feast in Nigeria went very well with a high attendance of 54 on a single day, however, a total of 71 attended during the Feast. We were expecting a total of 49, so excitement was in the air when 71 showed up.

It was a very busy Feast speaking-wise.

I spoke 21 times, including sermons, sermonettes, Bible studies, classes and seminars.

On the way to the Feast site, we were hijacked to the tune of N10,000 [about \$100], and (I believe) by a miracle were spared from harm. The rest of our stay was safe.

There was no running water all Feast, and the electricity would go off two to three times per day, but that did not dampen anyone's spirit of joy and gratitude. The food and fellowship were great, and everyone seemed to leave the Feast on a spiritual high.

Just before the Feast officials told us that the Church is fully approved as a nonprofit, and so is not required to pay import, local, state or federal taxes.

After the Feast a new congregation was formed in Benin City and will have 17 to 21 in attendance with good growth potential.

The Nigerian brethren are deeply appreciative for all the home office and brethren in America, and elsewhere, have done for them.

Dale Schurter

Peru

The Feast in Peru was held on the shores of the Pacific Ocean at the tranquil beach resort of Huanchaco. It is a peaceful village near Trujillo. A high attendance of 173 people included 10 from the United States and nine from Ecuador.

The Peruvian brethren made everyone feel more than welcome and offered a fun-filled variety of entertainment. Activities included: games, dances, a talent show and a bonfire on the beach where everyone had the opportunity to participate by singing, dancing and telling jokes. A trip to Chan Chan, the nearby ruined capital of the Chimru Empire, was interesting and we learned that it is the largest pre-Columbian city in the Americas and the largest mud city in the world. A children's party (*fiesta de los niños*) was enjoyable for young and old alike and all of the children received gifts donated by brethren from the United States.

An afternoon of competitive games was completely sponsored by the Peruvian youth in which all participants had their skills tested on a variety of athletic contests and were rewarded with shirts, donated by the German brethren. The theme of this activity was: "he that endures to the end will receive the crown," which fit in well with the messages that also concentrated on our future roles as kings and priests, teachers and servants.

Fred Nance

Philippines

Davao City

Filipino brethren and four foreign guests, for a total of 178, shared meals and fellowship for eight days in the peaceful setting of the GSP Camp in Davao City. Other highlights during the Feast included four baptisms and two deacon ordinations.

Baptized were Antonia Ablin, Cheryl Lynn Macaraeg, Paul Cebrian, Jr. and Pamela

Baylon. Ordained as deacons were Paul Cebrian, Sr. from Butuan City and Reynato Balugo from Davao City.

David Treybig (a U.S. pastor and UCG writer) was guest speaker for the two sites in the Philippines. He was accompanied by his wife, Teddi, who also sang and accompanied hymns. With them was Teddi's mother, Audrey Goodrich. Among the things they brought were festival coloring books for chil-

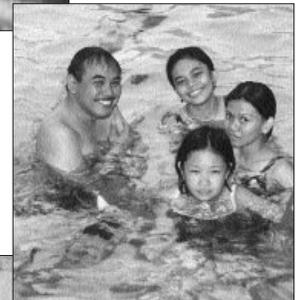
Messages were relevant, timely and interesting. Members enjoyed the festival so much that many commented that it was near perfect. With proper timing of rain, sumptuous meals, wholesome activities and free use of the resort swimming pools, we all agreed that God's hand was there. The Feast was also enriched by one baptism.

Many positive comments were heard from the management and staff of the resort

about how presentable the members were during meetings and about the Church's well-organized way of doing things. There were also curious questions about how to join the Church, etc. This was the first time the staff had catered to a convention that included children.



Davao City, Philippines (photos by Charles Macaraeg); right and below, Iloilo City, Philippines (photos by Virgilio Belga Jr.)



dren, crayons and toys, Christian books and music pieces.

The messages were inspiring, as was the Feast video. For brethren who could not understand English well, a simultaneous translation was made.

Sunny weather and a refreshing sea breeze favored most of the day activities, which included a family sports day, seniors' activity, city tour and a special tour to Eden Nature Park. A beach outing activity combined with a "tropical fruit festival" was also enjoyed by everyone.

Evening activities included brethren bonding together in lively games, a teen and singles discussion evening, a Bible study and forum, and a variety show and dance.

It was wonderful to see the love, joy and unity they all had with and for each other for the whole duration of the Feast. We were all just like little embers glowing just a little bit brighter because we were together. Indeed, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

Edmond Macaraeg

Iloilo City

Just less than an hour by plane from Manila, Punta Villa Resort in Iloilo City was the venue for the Feast for northern and central Philippine brethren. The highest attendance was 98. David Treybig was the guest minister. There were a number of foreign guests from the U.S. and one from Europe.



Since all of the Feastgoers stayed at the resort, the fellowship was magnificent. Surely, God blesses His people who love Him and keep His laws!

Florante Siopan

South Africa

Rainy and windy conditions cleared just before the Feast of Tabernacles started in Uvongo, about 140 kilometers (90 miles) south of Durban. From then on, God provided suitable weather for each day, during a very changeable weather season.

Top attendance was 181 during the festival, and included visiting members from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Zambia and several South Africans currently living in England. Families stayed in a variety of accommodations relatively close to the municipal hall where we met for services. One coordinator for a block of holiday flats remarked on how well-behaved the guests and their children were. They usually have to send security guards around to stop noisy partying and protect property from wild youngsters. When she found out we were associated with Herbert Armstrong's work, she was very happy to receive a copy of *The Good News*.

We enjoyed having with us Darris and Debbie McNeely from Indianapolis, Indiana.



South Africa (photos by Jorge de Campos)



Mr. McNeely, who is managing editor of *World News and Prophecy*, gave the majority of sermons plus a youth Bible study and a PowerPoint presentation "Discerning the Times." Mrs. McNeely spoke to the preteens during the Youth Day. Prior to their arrival in Uvongo, Mr. and Mrs. McNeely spent time with brethren in Harare, Zimbabwe, and Johannesburg, South Africa.

Positive messages helped us to understand the meaning of the Feast, the doctrine of the Millennium and how it was changed, how to handle life's "curve balls," our calling to be priests and kings, among others. We were also excited by the announcement of the engagement of Claire Hawkins to Gareth Gordon.

There was a boat trip and Bible study for the youth, followed by a *braai* (barbecue) where all parents were welcome. At the family day, the Durban congregation soccer team took on the rest of the world, resulting in a 3-3 draw after extra time. The senior citizens' lunch was enjoyed by 34.

During the Feast, the United Church of God, Southern Africa council members provided a report on progress during the previous year. We are very grateful to the Eternal for a substantially better than expected financial position, and a *Good News* mailing list that could top 6,000 in the next couple of months. The positive trends continued during the Feast with the offering for the first day being 50 percent higher than had been considered in the budget.

We plan to have an expanded report on a Web site soon for those considering coming to this beautiful part of the world next Feast.

Peter Hawkins

Tanzania

One hundred sixty people celebrated the Feast in Tarime, Tanzania, on the edge of the Serengeti plain, marking the first time United has had a site in this East African country. This group of people, formerly associated with the United Church of God, recently expressed the desire to return to UCG, and requested our help to be able to keep the Feast. Due to the last-minute nature of the request, the unbudgeted needs for festival assistance and the logistical problems of having a minister present, the group was only able to meet together for the last three days of the Feast.

Attendees came from the Lake Victoria region of Kenya and Tanzania. Services were held in English, translated into both Luo, the

local tribal language, and Kiswahili, the official language of Tanzania. United elder Joel Meeker, his wife, Marjolaine, and their daughters, Fiona and Tatiana, were present to serve the members attending. Fiona and Tatiana distributed toys and coloring

books donated by members in the United States.

Lodging and meals were provided at the CMG Motel in Tarime. Occasional power and water outages did not dampen the enthusiasm at the Feast. Most of the people who attended had come to the truth through the examples of other Church members. Those



Tanzania (photo by Joel Meeker)

who speak English translate *Good News* articles and Church booklets into Luo or Kiswahili in order to help those who don't understand English. Many members are subsistence farmers, hard hit by the continuing drought in East Africa. Nevertheless, enthusiastic fellowship and excitement about the meaning of God's Feasts were very evident.

Since many attending the Feast were fairly new to the truth, sermons covered very fundamental topics: the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles, the purpose and mission of the Church, the importance of putting aside the festival tithe and the meaning of the Last Great Day. A main topic of conversation as people left for home was preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles 2001!

Joel Meeker

Togo

Kpalimé, Togo, was the destination for 15 Feastgoers in West Africa. The site was the country home of Kossi Fiaboé, a deacon in the United Church of God. The members in Togo were joined by other members from neighboring Benin. The ladies prepared all the meals for those attending. French-language sermons were provided via audio cassette. Festival activities included nature walks and football (soccer) games for the young and young at heart.

Joel Meeker

Tonga

Greetings from the Kingdom of Tonga! This Feast of Tabernacles was the best Feast we have ever had. The weather was fine throughout the eight days. There were 27 brethren on the opening night, and the high-

est attendance during the Feast was 31.

It was a blessing for us to have visitors from abroad. They were from Australia and the United States. We also had inspiring sermons during the Feast. There were some special activities, but the best of all was the farewell BBQ with the visitors from abroad.

The spirit of the Feast was very warm, which created bonds between the brethren not only spiritually but also physically.

Heamasi Ta'ufu'ou

United States

Bend, Oregon

Feastgoers enjoyed beautiful fall scenery and mild weather in the millennial setting of Central Oregon. The High Desert Museum, a 38-mile dinner train ride and a family chuck wagon dinner show were among the most popular attractions. Other activities included a family dance and family day, featuring children's carnival games. Several guided tours of scenic attractions were also available.

Attendance was over 1,100 every day, peaking at 1,242 on Sunday, exceeding last year's figures. We also had attendees from other groups, members who do not currently attend with any organization and a few people from the community. Fellowship was warm and friendly.

Sermons and sermonettes stressed themes of healing and reconciliation in addition to millennial conditions.

The "Principles of Bible Study" presentation attracted 282. The teen and young adult Bible studies were also well attended. Twenty young people came to the ABC meeting; four took applications.



Bend, Oregon: Tyler Foster carefully feeding a horse at the Sun River Stables; right, the cybercast and sound crew (photos by Allan Anderson)



Holy Day offerings were generous. Cash donations totaling over \$2,700 and several boxes of food items were collected for the local food bank. Leftover food at the end of the Feast was distributed to needy members.

The spiritual atmosphere was outstanding—happy, relaxed and positive. The level of energy and enthusiasm remained constant throughout the Feast.

Larry J. Walker

Branson, Missouri

Near perfect weather and the autumn beauty of the Ozarks greeted over 1,400 people who gathered in Branson for the Feast. The 1,500+ seat Baldknobbers Theater was packed for the first service with 1,406 people and was full for the entire week as the attendance averaged 1,345 for all 10 services.

The theme of the Feast messages this year seemed to be the restoration of all things and our part in it as well as preparing for it. Those present were treated to an excellent spiritual banquet in all the sermons and sermonettes, with many commenting that the messages were the best in a long while. Les and Marion McCullough were here for the last half of the Feast, and Gary and Barbara Antion were with us for the whole Feast. They each gave two sermons and really inspired the members regarding the Kingdom.

Once again we had many visitors from other Sabbath fellowships (at least seven) attending with us this year. This seems to be a regular occurrence at Branson.

Probably one highlight of the Feast was the responsiveness of God's people. They were extremely cooperative, encouraging and seemed to be there to truly rejoice before God. The attendance was remarkably consistent, staying within 100 people of the maximum for all but two services (and one of these was only 108 less).

Many area businesspeople commented about the niceness and cooperativeness of our members. A couple of the locals even came to services and picked up several of our booklets, with one having read three during the Feast and beginning to ask questions.

Our light truly does shine, and have an effect at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Mike Blackwell

Corpus Christi, Texas

The Feast in Corpus Christi, Texas, could not have gone better. It was wonderful! Evidence of God's inspiration and blessings were everywhere. The sermons were uplifting and on target. Every message explained an aspect of God's plan of salvation in its own unique way. Jacque Roesler, long-time member and elder's wife who has attended the Feast since 1952, said this year's sermons in Corpus Christi were the best that she had ever heard at the Feast.

There were 747 in attendance on the first Holy Day. Our attendance remained high on all the days, exceeding our expectations by 150 people. Senior citizens attended a coffee klatch before services. They also enjoyed hearing the Tony Bosserman family entertain them at the seniors' reception.

The weather was beautiful, highs each day in the 70s and 80s. Approximately a third of our attendees stay at Port Royal Ocean Resort on Mustang Island. The resort is beautiful with four huge pools, hot tubs, palm trees and sandy beach. The kids, teens and

families love it there because it is almost like their own mini-Feast.

We continue to enjoy an excellent relationship with the local community. Each year our members contribute needed food items to the local food bank. One restaurant owner, who changes her German restaurant menu to accommodate our dietary needs, commented how polite, patient and courteous our members are. It is always good to hear such positive comments.

Britton Taylor

Escondido (San Diego), California

Nearly 1,100 brethren enjoyed inspiring sermons, typically warm and sunny weather, well-attended activities and one another's fellowship all week in Escondido, California. Our high attendance was on the Last Great Day with 1,081 present.

Several of the elders who spoke used the California Center for the Arts Auditorium's state-of-the-art video capability for presentations during their sermons. This added to the effectiveness of the already inspiring messages. The theme in Escondido this year was preparing now to be the Bride of the Lamb during the coming Millennium.

The special music was equally outstanding from all our volunteer singers and musicians in this wonderful performance venue. The music presentations were very inspiring!

On Youth Day members brought stuffed animals to exhibit on stage and then give to the children after the sermon. The menagerie of stuffed animals filled the stage! After each child received at least one stuffed toy, we had three large bags left over to give to charities.

Activities at this year's Feast included a family day at Felecita Park with over 500 attending. We enjoyed face-painting and organized games for the children, live entertainment and a talent show. We also had several special events for our young adults/singles and our teens.

Many members and families also enjoyed a formal dinner and night at the classical theater, a Hawaiian luau, a golf tournament, a seniors' luncheon and a dinner/dance cruise on the San Diego Harbor.

A couple of the hotel managers were so impressed with the example of our members and families that they have requested literature to find out more about the Church. God's people surely let their lights shine in Escondido this year!

Dave Register

Estes Park, Colorado

The gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park hosted 626 Festival goers this year. The convention center at the Holiday Inn was well-suited to our group (other than the oft-encountered problem of balancing the temperature!).

Council member Don Ward got us off to a good start on opening night by asking "Why are we here?" He explained that it is to learn the more excellent way. Comments from the brethren indicated they really appreciated the spiritual food and felt the quality of the messages was excellent throughout.

Special music was outstanding, with Dan Salcedo doing his usual excellent job of directing the choir and scheduling solos.

The weather was classic Colorado



Elk were almost everywhere at Estes Park, Colorado; above, young adults Bible study conducted by Steve Moody (photos by Bill Jahns)



Rocky Mountain fall weather. It was truly gorgeous almost throughout the entire Feast. We were informed early in the Feast that Trail Ridge Road was closed for the season. This turned out to be untrue, and quite a number of brethren were able to drive to the alpine tundra, reaching an elevation of over 12,000 feet on the highest through paved road in the United States. Just about everyone saw herds of elk all over the Estes Park area.

The family dance, a teen bowling party and preteen pizza and swim party were among the more popular events hosted by the Church. There was a very warm, cooperative and supportive spirit evidenced. All in all, the Festival was a very uplifting experience.

Larry Neff

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

The beautiful hills of south central Pennsylvania provided a millennial setting for the brethren in Gettysburg where our high attendance was 662. Another estimated 100 joined us through cyberspace—the technology enabling shut-ins at home to listen to services live on their computer over the Internet.

Tours of the area surrounding Gettysburg, site of the bloodiest battle of the American Civil War, cemented in our minds the futility of man's way of war and helped us to further yearn for the peace of the Kingdom of God. Our opening night theme of "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve," set the pace for the week of education through inspiring sermons and enjoyable activities. We were all encouraged to grasp the vision of the coming reality of the rule of Christ and the saints on the earth.

Over 100 enjoyed bus tours to the U.S. capitol, Washington, D.C. Sites seen included Smithsonian Museum, the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, and visits to the Vietnam, Korean and Roosevelt memorials. Another 100 enjoyed a trip to the Baltimore Inner Harbor and dinner on a paddle wheeler.

God blessed us with beautiful, mild weather (only one day of rain) and bountiful, generous offerings. Most importantly, He also blessed us with solid spiritual food. We

look forward to putting the sermons into practice during the coming year.

Dave Myers

Jekyll Island, Georgia

Jekyll Island, Georgia, has been a popular site for almost 40 years. This year was no exception with 1,151 brethren sharing the peaceful surroundings of this historic island. Excellent weather with daytime temperatures around 80 degrees and clear to partly cloudy skies provided a pleasant and inspiring setting.

Many commented on the helpful and inspiring messages, which concentrated on the importance of preparing ourselves spiritually at this time. Against the backdrop of the Kingdom of God, the speakers emphasized the importance of growing spiritually now in preparation for service in God's family. Donald Ward's Bible study, titled "Are the Leaves on the Prophetic Fig Tree?," drew special attention from 596 attendees.

Activities were planned for everyone. The senior citizens' luncheon drew 247 seniors, guests, ministers and wives. Many commented on the quality of the delicious meal. Live entertainment included a classical guitarist, violinist and vocal soloist.

Singles spent an afternoon and evening in historic Savanna, Georgia. They enjoyed a guided tour by trolley of old Savanna and a dinner together on the riverfront at Kevin Barry's Irish Pub.

Teens and families enjoyed the Atlantic beach under clear skies and warm weather. Activities included specialty relays, volleyball and sand sculpting. Awards were presented for the sculpture that best represented the theme of "the World Tomorrow."

At the family dance, 450 adults, teens and children filled the dance floor and enjoyed fellowship along with snacks.

Other activities included Festival Youth Instruction classes, a video presentation to the young adults, teen and singles' hospitality rooms and a teen Bible study. One of the joys during the Feast was the special presentation by the children's choir.

God's blessings were apparent this year in Jekyll Island. The fellowship was warm and relaxed, the messages were inspiring and the weather was delightful. As a leading convention center employee commented, "Everyone seemed happy."

Don Waterhouse

Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii

A foretaste of Paradise greeted 396 brethren on the beautiful Garden Isle of Kauai in Hawaii. The weather was a tropical balmy delight. The speakers for the Hawaii Feast site were five salaried and seven non-salaried elders led by Richard Pinelli, operation manager for Ministerial Services. Members attending were treated to a very rich spiritual diet of instruction and teaching—fit for kings and leaders of the soon coming Kingdom of God.

Special music under the direction of Mark Roth featured a choir led by John Fox, a daily ensemble accompanying song services, many talented vocalists and musicians, a teen choir and a children's choir.

Sixty-four teens and chaperones under the oversight of Dave Marcum and Mark Roth started off the Feast with a kayaking trip up the Wailua River on Sunday afternoon. Thirty young adults attended the Bible study seminar conducted by Clyde and Dee Kilough Monday night. Thirty-seven teens and 12 adults attended the teen dance Tuesday night.

Thirty-two preteens were treated to the Festival Youth Instruction coordinated by Joe and Jackie Horchak. Jim Haeffele, pastor of Greensboro, Hickory and Ashville, North Carolina, congregations led 31 teens and parents in a teen Bible study Friday night. A very special highlight of the Feast was the senior citizens' dinner attended by 27 seniors and elders.

Earl Roemer

Louisville, Kentucky

In its fourth and final year, 825 joyous Feastgoers attended the site in Louisville. Over half of those attending transferred into the area from far away places all over the United States. All who attended seemed to bring warm hearts and genuine smiles.

The spiritual diet was the topic of discussion throughout the eight days as each speaking opportunity seemed to build on what was given earlier. It all began with Mike Hanisko kicking things off on opening night, and the messages were encouraging and enlightening all the way through to the last sermon by Bill Winner. And, as always, the special music was both special and appreciated by those in the audience.

We enjoyed sunny weather in the 80s. As a result, the many activities were well attended. Several commented that it was "a Feast filled with family activities." Others commented that they felt this Feast was one that bonded us more completely as family.

Some of the more popular activities were two tours, one to the historic area of Bardstown, where distilleries and rich Kentucky heritage is found, and another to Ft. Knox and a glass blowing shop. The Derby Dinner theater was attended by about 200 people taking in the play "Arsenic and Old Lace."

The teen activity and family day were both mentioned as favorites by some, as was the dance on Thursday evening. The seniors'



Jekyll Island, Georgia (photo by Solomon Downing)

luncheon was also a favorite for many. Probably the most talked about activity was the luncheon cruise aboard the *Star of Louisville*, attended by 320. The ship was "ours" for the day and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.

It was such a joy to share this precious time with so many of God's family. The atmosphere was positive and forward looking in anticipation of what the days mean for all of mankind. A solid feeling of togetherness and what family is supposed to be were what most everyone took home with them.

Mark Winner

Panama City Beach, Florida

The Feast of Tabernacles at Panama City Beach, Florida, proved to be a delightful experience for the brethren attending this new site. The messages and Bible studies were truly inspiring and spiritually encouraging. The offerings were very generous. Our highest attendance was 1,714.

The Convention Center staff said we were the best group of people they have ever hosted, and commented on how happy our people were to see one another. Hugs and kisses were plentiful, as friends embraced. It was obvious to anyone that joy and excitement permeated the Feast.

One of the area restaurants allowed our seniors exclusive use of their facility for the seniors' luncheon. It was buffet style with eight entrees to either choose from or try



Panama City Beach, Florida (photos by Don Daugherty)

some of everything. Comments were plentiful about how successful this activity was.

The singles enjoyed a fish fry at St. Andrews State Park, and the teens had a beach party and cookout at the same location. The sugar white sands and the emerald green waters looked more like the Bahamas than Florida, and the weather was picture perfect with temperatures in the high 70s and low 80s with no rain during the entire Feast. One local weather person stated on television that they could not understand why some rain we were supposed to have had was delayed for a few more days.

The Festival Youth Instruction classes were very much appreciated. The children were delighted with the costumes and props that were used. It was obvious the teachers put a lot of effort into making this important part of the Feast successful.

The Feast in Panama City Beach was an uplifting experience, with several suggestions offered to make it even better.

Harold Rhodes



Wisconsin Dells (photos by Steve Nutzman)



Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

Spectacular fall foliage greeted 906 attendees from at least 20 states and three Canadian provinces as they attended the Feast of Tabernacles at Wisconsin Dells.

Uplifting messages on our hope, growing in our first love, what it means to fear God and improving our relationship with God and one another were given by the ministry. Outstanding special music by the teen choir, children's choir, Festival choir and Festival orchestra added to each service.

The weather could not

have been better with temperatures reaching into the mid 70s with clear skies prevailing most of the Feast. A local newspaper carried a positive article about the United Church of God observing the Feast in the Dells.

Live music was provided by a number of talented brethren at the family dance. Two hundred senior citizens enjoyed a light luncheon and entertainment. A special singles luncheon, Bible study and discussion was held early in the Feast.

The family day activities included boat rides on the Wisconsin River, go-carts, indoor water park activities and roller-coaster rides. In addition, children from level K through the fifth grade were offered Festival Youth Instruction classes several days during the Feast. An evening concert performed by

the Myers brothers was well attended. A special teen Bible study and a Bible study for young adults were given one evening.

A spirit of cooperation, joy, wonder-

ful fellowship and unity prevailed.

Steve Nutzman

Zambia

Members and their families from many parts of Zambia converged on Nalubanda in the district of Mumbwa to rejoice at God's Feast. Highest attendance was 93, and it was especially encouraging that all the members (except two who attended in Zimbabwe) were present. Most members stayed in what can be aptly described as tabernacles. These temporary dwelling places were constructed from branches of trees and African thatch grass, which helped everyone understand more fully that we are pilgrims and sojourners in this present society.

Sermons were given by Festival elder Kambani Banda and visiting minister André van Belkum, while audiotapes from our home office were used for the rest of the time. One busy person was the translator, Apren Momba, who translated from English into the local dialect. The Zambians enjoy singing, and so special music was a treat and a delight, with various groups participating.

There was plenty of opportunity to fellowship and enjoy each other's company. There was seldom a time when talking, laughter and singing were not heard in and around the camp.

Two baptisms were conducted, that of Conard Mafola and Nice Shacongo. A portable plastic pool was erected close to a well where the local community members collect water. It was placed under a huge wild fig tree, and filled with water from the well. Members gathered around as the two were baptized, and, after the laying on of hands, they burst into spontaneous singing in honor of the new additions to the Church.

Two other ceremonies were also per-

formed. During one service 10 couples came forward to have their infants blessed. Then two couples who had undergone a traditional non-religious marriage ceremony requested that their relationships be blessed with the laying on of hands by the ministry.

Meals were occasions to rejoice. The food was prepared and cooked in pots over open fires, and the menu offered a variety of dishes. The meats included lechwe, duiker, bushbuck (all three are wild antelope found in the area), goat and chicken, supplemented by rice, maize meal and various vegetables.

A number of activities were arranged, including a family sports day, a dance and a talent show (plenty of laughter and fun). This was truly a spiritually rewarding and enjoyable Feast for our Zambian brethren.

André van Belkum

Zimbabwe

Families from Malawi and Zambia joined those in Zimbabwe to celebrate the Feast, held in Zimbabwe's capital city, Harare. Despite the ongoing political and social unrest within the country, the 21 who attended met in peace and harmony. Due to shortages at petrol (gas) filling stations, some of our members had to wait in line four hours for fuel. These conditions did not subdue the spirit of unity and excitement that prevailed.

Videotaped sermons sent by the home office provided a spiritual Feast, and members remarked on the outstanding quality of the sermon material presented. André van Belkum and his wife, Elize, from South Africa visited for three days during the Feast.

It was encouraging to see the active participation on the part of the young people. Mark Chonde, 24, took on the responsibilities of song leader, while Tinashe Mukarati, 15, accompanied on the keyboard. The group also provided special music. One afternoon they arranged an excursion to a local recreational area, where they visited a crocodile enclosure and a snake park. Some even handled a giant African python.

Since most of the members are scattered and seldom see each other, fellowshiping formed an important and vital part of the Feast. Fortunately most stayed close to each other, and so there were many opportunities to get together and socialize.

André van Belkum

UCG Assists With Feast in Ghana

This year marked the first year that United Church of God ministry met in conjunction with the Remnant Church of God at the Feast of Tabernacles. This year, there were three locations in Ghana where the Feast was kept—in Kumasi (492 attendance), on the coast in Takoradi (245 attendance) and in the capital city of Accra (250 attendance). My wife and I attended all three sites and I spoke twice at each site with services translated into their local dialect of the Twi language.

While services were held most days in all sites, members and families enjoyed activities such as swimming in the Atlantic Ocean, playing soccer or attending the local zoo or park. Gracious offerings from members in the United States enabled all of the families to enjoy a fine group meal on the Holy Days at all three sites.

While people of the West African nation of Ghana and surrounding countries struggle with human leadership and political elections, the membership seemed genuinely inspired and uplifted by the messages of hope and the vision of the world tomorrow.

Doug Horchak

After Fighting the Fires, Planting the Seeds of Peace

by Clyde Kilough

When I was returning to California in mid-August from the first meeting with the task forces of the United Church of God (UCG) and the Church of God, Christian Fellowship (CGCF), the flight path took us over some of the many forest fires burning in the western states. The summer of 2000 was dubbed the worst season of wildfires in the last 50 years, perhaps even the last century. Looking down on the pillars of smoke, the thought came to mind that the decade of the '90s was also the worst time of "spiritual wildfires" in the Church's last century.

The analogy does not end there. Most of the summer's forest fires were ignited by circumstances beyond anyone's control—lightning strikes in particular, or freak accidents such as sparks from machinery. Many of the Church's "fires" were also started by circumstances beyond our control, particularly the lightning strikes of doctrinal changes.

However, some of the most tragic forest fires occurred due to human error. They were particularly distressing because the catastrophic losses could have been avoided. A couple of the deadliest fires of this type were called "controlled burns"—fires deliberately set by forest service workers with the intent to clean hazardous materials and actually make the woods safer. Mistakes in judgment about other forces at work, usually the weather conditions, led to these small fires leaping destructively out of control. Similarly, we can sometimes look back and see situations in the Church where no one intended that anyone suffer loss, but errors in judgment nevertheless led to "controlled burn" situations erupting into raging blazes.

The forest fire analogy is not new. In the first century the apostle James wrote, "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell" (James 3:5-6).

To our chagrin, no one is exempt from culpability for starting some of these fires, or fanning the flames. As James observed in verse 2, "For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." Undoubtedly, the vast majority of interpersonal hurts we have experienced—times when we have been "burned," as we say—have sprung from sparks off the tongue.

On the positive side, though, in the long run burned forests can grow again and return to an even healthier condition. This rebirth is

accelerated when people work together to work the soil, replant the trees and nurture their growth. Reforestation is hard work, however, requiring difficult, back-bending effort. But it is worth the labor to see seeds take root and the land begin to recover. And in the long run, through the same kind of spiritual reforestation, the Church can grow back as well.

We have all grown weary in the last decade of having to fight fires within the Church. That is why it was especially enjoyable and positive to be able to come together in Memphis, Tennessee, as brethren of two groups to begin a small, but positive, constructive effort of "reforestation" rather than fighting fires.

The efforts will continue when the task



forces meet for the second time in Sacramento, California, November 19-21. These talks will pick up where they left off, primarily focusing on specific ways the two groups can work together

more effectively and implement the proposals approved by the respective councils. Continuing education on the biblical principles and dynamics of reconciliation is a priority, as well as how to promote awareness about the doctrines, administrations and practices of each group.

The initial discussions in August laid a solid foundation upon which we believe a positive relationship can continue to be built. Of greatest significance at that time was the conclusion that the two churches are virtually identical in doctrinal understanding, and very similar in organizational structure and administration. Without doctrinal agreement there would be little basis for continuing any work toward unity. But also of great importance were the frank discussions about various perceptions and concerns each group has held about the other. In that arena began a healing of some of the emotional and subjective breaches that have divided us, but much work lies yet ahead.

Doctrinal Agreement

Reaching the first conclusion about doctrinal agreement came through a painstaking process of thoroughly answering many questions submitted before the meetings by members of both groups. Although specific questions were directed to each group, the ensuing discussions invariably led to mutual explanations of each church's position on the matter.

It is not the purpose of this article, nor does space permit a full report on the answers to everything discussed—we have entire booklets and study papers

devoted to explaining some of the questions! However, here is a list of some of the issues that were covered to illustrate the breadth and scope of the dialogue.

We discussed our teachings on the modern identity of the house of Israel; mankind's ultimate destiny; tithing; the nature of God and the Holy Spirit, specifically, beliefs about the Trinity; the date to observe the Passover; the doctrine of "born again"; wearing crosses; military service and war; clean and unclean meats; and repentance.

We talked about the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God as a witness to all nations, including perceptions about what is "the work" of God today and future goals for preaching the gospel.

We looked at Church government, including ministerial ranks and offices; congregational versus hierarchical structure; congregational involvement in local church matters, ranging from financial management to determining ordinations.

We discussed what the "Body of Christ" is, and respective positions as to whether either group believes it is the "only Church of God."

It became very clear during the talks that the greatest challenge for unifying God's people lies in our ability to address and resolve past personal problems and hurts, and to replace suspicion with trust.

Remember, these (and many others) were questions submitted by members from both groups all over the world. Not everyone, or even the majority, has the same question. Oftentimes, what is an important issue to one person may mean little to another. Nevertheless, the task forces respectfully addressed every question submitted because they considered it extremely important that every person's concerns be answered, if possible. Because of the period of doctrinal disintegration the Church experienced, many people are zealously on guard to insure doctrinal integrity.

Healing the Hurts

As one of the representatives from CGCF analyzed it, the two major categories where people seem to have concerns are personal hurts and doctrinal fears. The doctrinal fears are more easily addressed, in that each organization has its published set of official beliefs. Not so easily addressed are an individual's personal hurts and fears. In these personal areas lie the greater difficulties, due to

the complexities that make up the relationships among humans.

Issues such as betraying and regaining trust, judging and/or labeling others, and dealing with past hurts (which may involve confrontation, acknowledgment, repentance and forgiveness) are always difficult to work through. It became very clear during the talks that the greatest challenge for unifying God's people lies in our ability to address and resolve past personal problems and hurts, and to replace suspicion with trust.

What are some of the areas of hurt and suspicion? Here are a few that are relative to the history of these two particular groups.

A general perception of many members and ministers in CGCF is that many ministers in UCG were "soft" on standing up for the truth when the doctrinal changes came in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in the early 1990s. Conversely, a common perception in the UCG is that many ministers in CGCF (or, in earlier days, the Global Church of God) left too early and abandoned their flocks instead of trying to resolve the doctrinal differences internally.

Whether true or not, one's perception becomes his reality. An immediate problem arises, though, in that generalizations and perceptions are often incomplete, and sometimes just plain wrong. It follows that any judgments based on generalizations and perceptions about what "the other guy" did, or should have done, are also often wrong. Another problem is that people often change, but other people's perceptions about them don't. Peace in the Body of Christ will depend greatly on our capacity for seeking the truth and changing perceptions when needed.

We found ourselves shifting perceptions at the task force meeting as we listened to each one tell his story about why he left WCG when he did, and why he went to either Global or United. We found ourselves increasing in understanding, and decreasing in judging another's actions too harshly. We found that each of us had differences in our knowledge, background, experiences, responsibilities, congregations, personal lives and relationships with other people. All these elements formed perceptions, and we all made judgments based on what we perceived to be God's will in our lives at the time. Yet, no one looked back and felt every decision he made was perfect. What we found as we related our experiences is likely true for most of God's people. Would not every one of us, if we had the chance to do it all again, do some things differently in our "fire-fighting" experiences in the last decade?

What about the cases where some (anyone, but especially ministers) may have been soft, or unclear, about where they stood on the doctrinal changes, especially if they supported wrong doctrines as they were introduced? It is understandable that some members may still wonder whether

(See "PEACE," page 20)

United Church of God, an International Association
Schedule of Functional Expenses
15 Months Ended June 30, 2000

	Program Services		Management and General				
	Full Fiscal	International	Public Proclamation	Council of Elders/ Home Office/ Awareness & Benefit Plans	General Conferences	Tablets	
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 5,659,640	469,779	-	589,784	1,168,842	-	7,888,045
Contracted services and fees	5,060	15,717	-	159,428	153,143	1,296	334,644
Media and advertising	16,594	-	-	987,004	18,704	-	1,023,652
Postage and shipping	-	7,982	-	407,833	68,064	6,650	529,273
Building and equipment lease/rental	-	120,368	-	5,634	156,107	-	282,309
Telephone and utilities	89,074	3,997	-	3,546	61,970	12,776	171,363
Supplies	140,517	68,253	-	34,836	125,340	5,135	374,081
Travel, lodging, meals, and lodging	840,720	55,558	-	8,739	219,897	38,371	1,163,485
Depreciation and amortization	-	-	-	-	146,473	-	146,473
Grants and charitable support:							
International support	-	45,450	1,638,432	357,203	-	7,879	2,058,964
Domestic support:							
Assistance to the needy	807,078	-	-	4,227	-	-	811,305
Festive assistance	-	101,130	-	-	-	-	101,130
Allocations to local congregations	1,315,123	-	-	-	-	-	1,315,122
Insurance and health care	-	-	-	-	1,197,894	-	1,197,894
Other	15,228	2,222	12,880	16,108	42,992	-	89,630
Total expenses	\$ 8,926,305	890,656	1,651,312	2,584,544	3,383,338	72,307	12,478,282

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

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United Church of God, an International Association
Schedule of Functional Expenses
Year Ended March 31, 1999

	Program Services		Management and General				
	Full Fiscal	International	Public Proclamation	Council of Elders/ Home Office/ Awareness & Benefit Plans	General Conferences	Tablets	
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 4,432,669	1,916	-	313,378	929,724	-	5,675,887
Contracted services and fees	12,006	7,237	-	109,230	122,901	8,822	260,246
Broadcast media and advertising	-	-	-	31,250	-	-	33,250
Print media and advertising	569	15,689	-	477,019	-	-	493,277
Postage and shipping	17,330	7,980	-	146,997	105,018	-	3,977
Building and equipment lease/rental	7,319	122,497	-	4,557	89,751	418	224,542
Telephone and utilities	99,405	3,624	-	25,542	79,018	3,805	208,994
Supplies	37,417	26,748	-	85,745	49,497	-	212,105
Travel, lodging, meals, and lodging	454,591	435,312	-	21,179	177,236	23,791	1,114,909
Depreciation and amortization	11,058	-	-	54,060	57,746	-	122,864
Grants and charitable support:							
International support	923	1,000	1,422,178	170,468	3,747	9,372	1,607,688
Domestic support:							
Assistance to the needy	718,235	-	1,000	-	-	-	719,235
Festive assistance	-	59,881	-	-	-	-	93,881
Allocations to local congregations	799,220	6,875	-	163	-	-	806,300
Insurance and health care	-	-	-	-	789,124	-	789,124
Other	6,064	-	-	6,316	24,938	643	37,961
Total expenses	\$ 6,619,096	722,759	1,423,178	1,448,006	2,425,710	65,266	12,700,825

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

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“PASTORS,” (Continued from page 1)

tive tool for ministers’ personal use as well as the foundation for our pastoral appraisal process.

This same self-assessment will also be used as the basis for a performance appraisal of the regional pastors conducted by the MS team shortly after the Feast.

Other topics discussed included the need for improved communications, staffing from strength, recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance and improving relationships.

Our discussions also explored various programs we could offer for promoting and encouraging ministerial development. Ideas included developing speaking and teaching skills and promoting biblical research and study skills, with emphasis on specialized counseling skills such as baptismal, premarital and marriage and divorce counseling.

Committees Established

We have established two major committees to gather information from the field ministry on how we can increase job satisfaction and staff motivation. One committee will look at achievement, recognition for accomplishment, challenging work, increased responsibility and growth and development. A second committee will look at ministers’ wives and expectations. Ministers should receive these questionnaires soon after the Feast.

Regional Conferences Planned

Preliminary plans were drawn up for three-day regional conferences to be held for the entire U.S. ministry. Many ministers have expressed the desire to have a longer and more detailed conference. Half the regions will meet under this fiscal year’s budget and the others after the new budget year begins July 1, 2001. UN

A Framework for Reconciliation

by David Sandland

Over in Matthew 18:15 we can read what seems to be one of the most useless scriptures in the entire Bible. After all, have you ever tried that advice? Have you, in a state of agitation and upset, ever tried to approach someone who is equally upset and ready to have your entrails for lunch?

I often conjure up in my imagination two brethren squaring off against each other, like a prize fight. “In this corner” we have Joe Member, with a record of two grievances, one insult and one heresy. “In the other corner” we have Tom the Truculent with one grievance, one avoidance and one snubbing. What a match up!

I speak with massive tongue in cheek. But I trust you see my point. Why does verse 15 of Matthew 18—the age-old advice to confront our brother—why does that advice not seem to work? At least not always.

Part of a Process

The answer is painfully simple. That advice is only a part of a process—part of what I would like to call the framework for reconciliation. Actually, verse 15 is the fourth step in a seven-step process. Without the other steps, verse 15, of and by itself, often turns out to be frustratingly futile.

The entire process is spelled out here in chapter 18 of Matthew. The entire context spans from verse 3 to verse 35. If we take the entire context into consideration, if we apply all seven steps, we can achieve true reconciliation with an aggrieved brother. Only then can verse 15 become dynamic, achievable and worthwhile spiritual advice.

Let us, then, take a close look at the process of reconciliation.

First notice verses 3 through 5. We are admonished to be in a certain frame of mind when approaching a brother or sister. That frame of mind is to be that “of a child”—

specifically in the sense of *humble* and not bearing grudges. Verse 4 spells out that step: “Therefore whoever humbles himself.” This is not an easy step, especially when tempers are fraying. But none of the steps are easy without the motivation of God’s Spirit.

Comparative scriptures on this overriding need for humility are found in Matthew 5:3 and 5 plus Galatians 6:1-4. Also Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 12:3, 10, 16; and Ephesians. 4:2-3. Look them up and see how they establish the need for humility, if we are to be a true peacemaker.

Turning back to Matthew 18, let us look at the second stage in the process of reconciliation covered in verses 6 through 9. That stage is the determination *not to give offense*. Christ even equates the giving of offense to sin! Strong words indeed. We should never approach an opportunity to achieve reconciliation as a chance to get revenge—“I’ll show him”—nor a chance to exert our supposed spiritual superiority. Instead we must see it as an opportunity to, in true Christian humility, achieve peace without offending.

Now notice verses 10 through 14. The third stage is to *show respect*, to avoid despising and putting down our aggrieved brother. To avoid one-upmanship. This provides a terrific opportunity to put into practice 1 Corinthians 13:4 through 7. It’s a chance to approach a fellow child of the Great God, a “brother” as mentioned in verse 15.

Then we come to verse 15 itself, the fourth step. And that step is, simply, *privacy*; to approach our brother in private. Humanly we want to gather forces of support and sympathy behind us. We want everyone to know how unfairly we have been treated and how much Joe Member deserves correction. But Christ admonishes us to go in privacy—in humility, respect and true brotherhood. If we do that, then verse 15 can work!

After all, wouldn’t we want someone to approach us in that spirit and manner?

If the problem isn’t resolved, next comes step five, covered in verses 16 and 17. Sometimes we need to *seek help*—the assistance of those who then become “witnesses” to what is said and achieved. More often than not, just the presence of others settles everything down and allows reconciliation. And seeking the help and counsel of the ministry can help resolve the problem, or even help us see our situation in a new light. We want to be sure we don’t blow it out of proportion.

Step six is covered in verses 18 through 20. We need to appreciate that *God will back up this process and His government*. Compare Proverbs 3:3-6 and 16:7. In these two scriptures God promises to “direct our paths” and even make our enemies to be at peace with us. God can soften attitudes and allow an environment to exist where reconciliation can be achieved, if we follow the advice of His Son in these powerful scriptures in Matthew 18.

Be Forgiving

The final stage is covered in verses 21 through 35. That stage is, quite simply, for us to be *compassionate and forgiving*. Compare Ephesians 4:32 and Matthew 6:14 and 15. What a magic stage to set when we approach a brother who may have “sinned against us.” It is critical to be forgiving, just as Christ has forgiven both parties involved.

Reconciliation is possible if we approach each other in humility, determined not to give offense, in respect, in privacy, if need be with the help of others, with God’s backing, in compassion and in a forgiving attitude.

Who could resist such an approach?

Verse 15 of Matthew 18, then, becomes not one of the most useless scriptures in the Bible, but one of the most powerful and effective, just as God intended! UN

David Sandland is a member in the Sydney, Australia, congregation.

“PEACE,” (Continued from page 17)

they are now on solid ground. That was a legitimate breach of trust, and it is logical and fair to question, “where are they now?” But it is also logical and fair to find out for sure. As we explained, that is one of the primary reasons we have a ministerial credentialing process in UCG. The only way to find out is through communication—directly, through personal contact, or indirectly, through the affirmation of someone else who knows for sure.

In that time of doctrinal confusion, some did stumble in certain areas as they wrestled with new ideas being introduced. Many have since expressed, publicly and/or privately, their regret and repentance over this, but perhaps not everyone has heard it. God honors repentance, and true repentance makes a person stronger. If anyone harbors concern, suspicion or hurt over the way doctrine was mishandled, the only way and the godly way to have that alleviated and a trusting relationship restored is to talk with one another as brothers and sisters. Continuing to live with suspicion and distrust is unhealthy for all concerned. It is a stumblingblock to godly unity and, if it is unjustified in the sight of God, it is indefensible.

Matters of another person’s conscience are spiritually perilous for humans to judge, yet that has happened all too frequently and has fanned the flames of division. For example, many of those who left WCG as early as the late 1980s through 1994 believed they saw where the church was inevitably heading in doctrine, and they could not in good conscience abide in it any longer. Others waited until 1995 and beyond because they could not in good conscience leave it without resisting the changes until being forced to leave; they clung to the hope that an internal solution would be found, as had always happened before.

Most likely, the motives of some in either camp were sometimes not entirely pure, but we must exercise extreme caution when venturing into that area of judgment. God remains the only truly accurate judge of the heart. Just as likely is the fact that many people made different decisions, yet out of pure and honest motivation to do what they felt to be the right thing.

However, these differences often led to another common “thorn in the side”—the careless use of the tongue in labeling people. Many brethren and ministers later tagged one another with hurtful clichés such as *liberal, heretic, Laodicean, enemies, too slow to come out, tainted*, etc. The list is long. Labeling people can be very hurtful to the recipient, and subtly destructive to the one doing the labeling. It often springs from (or, can easily lead to) a judgmental and condemning attitude.

When tempted to paste a descriptive label on someone we need to first pass it through this mental filter: Can I be guaranteed that God would approve of my saying this of someone? And even if the label is accurate, what is the benefit in applying it?

Will this hurt or heal? Is this edifying the Body of Christ in any way?

Yet another example of hurts came from neglect, or what some saw as hypocrisy. For example, in a number of instances, members who left the church in the early ’90s were disfellowshipped by their pastor, only to see that pastor himself leave the church a few years later over similar issues. While the “ex-members” were glad to see the pastor leave for the truth, it hurt some, or at least seemed hypocritical, that he never apologized for disfellowshipping them. For some, being officially disfellowshipped meant little, nothing more than a nuisance formality required by organizational policy, but for others it was very gravely important, perhaps even humiliating and embarrassing. It scarred the relationship then and the nerves remain sensitive today.

The path to peace is not a journey taken only by task forces, committees or church administrations. Every single member must join the process.

Most ministers were in the heat of their own spiritual battles at the time and it probably never crossed their minds to contact past disfellowshipped members and retract their disfellowshipments. Furthermore, no one is a mind reader and ministers would likely not even know whether a former member was hurt over this matter.

So, can anything be done now to heal such silent scars? A willingness to go to your brother about your hurt, and a willingness to hear and acknowledge that hurt, is the beginning. If a loving desire to “gain our brother” (Matthew 18:15) is present with everyone, both appropriate explanations and apologies will be extended, and the stumblingblocks can be removed. Even if one is not hurting as badly now as at a previous time, if this presents a barrier to a right relationship, we must still seek godly reconciliation. Many times we say, “that doesn’t really bother me anymore,” when deep down inside it really does! Why? Because it is easier to sweep things under the carpet than to deal with the person and strive to restore relationships.

These are only a few examples, but they are sufficient to sense an emerging pattern. No matter what the offense may be, godly solutions are available, and need to be applied. The principle of Matthew 18:15, for example, not only demands going to your brother when there has been a trespass, but it emphasizes we must do it with the purpose of rebuilding the proper relationship—to “gain your brother.” The principle of Matthew 5:23–24 tells us, on the other hand, to be aware of our relationships with others; when we remember a brother has something against us, we need to be

reconciled first before we bring our gifts before God.

“Seek Peace, Pursue It Earnestly”

Such principles confirm the words of one of our old hymns, sung so often we know it by heart and can sing without thinking. However, we must take it to heart. Lifted from Psalm 34:14, the song powerfully emphasizes the fact that peace does not come easily or naturally to humans. “Depart from evil, do what is good; seek peace, pursue it earnestly.” Each little phrase of that verse is worthy of our deep contemplation.

Indianapolis Cultivates Good News Subscribers

by Rick Shabi and Andy McClain

After several years of planting seeds to encourage the growth of the *Good News* mailing list in the Indianapolis area, more than 2,000 people were receiving the magazine. Our pastor, Darris McNeely, thought we should be reaching out to the readers in some way to let them know of the local church.

A seven-member Media Team was developed, consisting of the pastor and six other local members who either participated in the Waiting Room Program or who had marketing or Web design experience. The team met regularly to discuss various approaches to reach out to the subscribers. After discussion, we decided to offer a series of audiocassette tapes of actual sermons from Sabbath services. The theme for the first year’s mailings was “Making Life Work” and sermon topics offered in our first three mailings were “Finding Your Way to the Future,” “When Life Throws You a Curve” and “The Gift of the Sabbath.”

After culling the subscriber list of current and former members, each of our mailings was sent to an audience of 1,950. Each mailing contained a professionally printed letter from our pastor that discussed the sermon topic, relating it to today’s world. A postage-paid reply card was enclosed for convenience, but readers were also invited to respond through fax or our local Web site.

A number of members helped with the program. Sermon tapes were copied and mailed by Mark and Kris Vincen. Andy McClain maintained statistics and produced mailing labels. Les Booth coordinated the printing of the letters and envelopes.

Response Better Than Expected

Response to our offers was better than expected, with about a 10 percent request rate for the first and second topics. Response to the third topic was a little less, but in all about 400 different people, who were not previously associated (to our knowledge) with the Church, requested and received tapes.

Our fourth and final mailing of the initial year of this program invited readers to an “Invitational Sabbath” at our local church hall. We enclosed a map and format for services with a letter that described the sermon that would be presented that day. While the

The path to peace is not a journey taken only by task forces, committees or church administrations. Every single member must join the process. The task forces are only the point of the effort, working to cut a path of understanding and peace.

“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3) takes hard work, but it is worth every ounce of effort we can put into it. It is part of the spiritual “reforestation”—sowing the seeds of reconciliation so that the burned and scarred areas of God’s Church may recover and be healthier than ever. UN

results of that mailing resulted in only two new people coming to services, our spirits are not dampened.

Future Plans

We view our “Subscriber Development Program” as a three-year effort to cultivate the readership of the *Good News* magazine in our area. While people may not show up for church services, they do seem to appreciate the anonymity afforded with requesting a sermon tape. And we feel we are doing our part in “teaching all nations” (Matthew 28:19) and “being found so doing” as Christ instructed in Matthew 24:46.

As we enter our second year, we plan to continue to offer three sermon tapes a year, while introducing an electronic newsletter to those who provide their e-mail addresses. Our newsletter will contain three relevant topics of Christianity each month and contain links for more information to other UCGIA literature and the main UCG Web site.

The electronic newsletter will be written as a collaborative effort of the Media Team, with Mr. McNeely being the content director. We are fortunate to have several people with Web site and technical experience who will provide their services free. We plan to mail the first newsletter in hard copy form to all our subscriber list, with an invitation to subscribe by providing us e-mail addresses. After the first mailing, all future newsletters will be by e-mail. The cost (besides time and effort) will be virtually nothing.

Should any congregation be interested in undertaking a similar program, we will be happy to share information about our costs, letter formats and other methods of implementing and accomplishing the program.

Where the Readers Came From

Several major efforts in Central Indiana were largely responsible for the list of more than 2,000 readers, starting with a *Reader’s Digest* ad in 1996. In 1997, the home office and our local congregation sponsored a TV advertising campaign that generated over 1,100 subscription requests. During 1998 and 1999, the local *Good News* Waiting Room Program mailed out over 5,000 sample magazines to physician and dentist offices, libraries, oil change centers and other establishments with waiting rooms. UN

Local Church Updates...

Akron Sponsors Teen Speech Club

The Akron, Ohio, congregation has sponsored a Teen Speech Club for the past five years. The club holds its meeting on the second Sabbath of each month.

Club has a similar format as the former



Ambassador Spokesman and Women's Clubs. Our meetings start with an opening prayer, followed by the business session conducted by the president. After the business session comes table topics and then a short 15-minute break. After the break, four speeches are given, each followed by an evaluation by a club member. Director Dave Myers then wraps it up with his comments on the speeches and a lecture/discussion on a topic that relates to teen Christians.

After every meeting the club has an activity. Activities this year included basketball, roller skating, bowling, miniature golf, ice skating, a swimming party and a lock-in.

Members of the club serve as officers, and the officers are changed at the beginning of every season. The 1999-2000 main officers were: Daniel Miller, president; Elizabeth Edwards, vice president; Melissa Myers, secretary; and Nathan Ekama, treasurer.

This year we enjoyed speeches that ranged from "How to Make Slime" to "America's Loss of the Panama Canal," from a stir-to-action on "Learn a Foreign Language" to a get-the-facts on "The Origin of Band-Aids." We have much speaking talent in the club and are looking forward to the new teen speakers entering with the start of the new club season.

At the end of each club season, we have a banquet where parents are invited to eat a great dinner and watch a regular club meeting. This year's banquet was held at the North Canton Community Center on Sunday, August 27, 2000. We had a great meal prepared by Brian and

Sara Hawk and a host of other volunteers.

The meal was followed by the club meeting. Mary Ann Miller conducted the topics session, while speeches were given by Daniel Miller ("How the Web Will Change the Way We Shop"), Phil Myers ("The Benefit of Being Lethargic"), Elizabeth Cannon ("And the Beat Goes On—Get Involved in Music") and Nathan Ekama (an impromptu speech on "The Importance of Friends"). Everyone had a good time and was ready for the kickoff of the 2000-2001 season.

For more information about the Northeast Ohio Teen Speech Club, please visit the Web page at www.speechclub.20m.com.

Erik Jones

Williamsburg Hosts 20th Campout

The Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation, in keeping with a 20-year tradition, had their annual campout June 22 to 25 at Buggs Island, Virginia. They were joined by brethren from the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation and from North Carolina.

All were in agreement that it was a big "4 F" time: food, fellowship, fishing and fun. With eagles soaring overhead, the order of the day was relaxation. There was no end to the food—the grill had turkey legs, corn on the cob, beef barbecue and hot dogs.

Sabbath services were held with a breeze blowing through the shelter. On Sabbath evening a cookout was held at the home of Richard and Donis Woodall near the campgrounds. All left looking forward to the 21st campout.

W.C. Pryke

New Hampshire Congregation Celebrates With 90 Year Old

On the Sabbath of September 9, the brethren who attend the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, congregation put on a potluck and small celebration for Ethel McMullen who on that date reached her 90th birthday. The morning sermon, by pastor Paul Suckling, revolved around the topic of memories, how valuable these are to us and how Mrs. McMullen has a huge bank of them spreading back over the 90 years. Our memories now should be built upon the good things that God has called us to and the opportunities that are ahead in His family. Today we are working towards those memories that are for all eternity. Our experiences today help us build our memory banks as Christians.



Ethel McMullen on her 90th birthday

Mrs. McMullen has been a member of God's Church for many years and is a much loved member of the congregation and our oldest senior. The first time my wife and I visited Mrs. McMullen she had just come in from fixing the roof...not bad for a young 88 year old, we said.

After the potluck we toasted her with a sparkling drink and she cut a cake for us all to share. Everyone joined in wishing her a very happy start to the next decade of her life.

Paul Suckling

Fort Worth Honors Grads

On May 27 the Fort Worth, Texas, congregation honored high school graduates Krystal Kirkendoll and Cheryl Gilchrist. During services they each received an engraved New King James leather Bible and afterward the whole congregation celebrated with cake and punch.



Krystal Kirkendoll and Cheryl Gilchrist

Krystal is now a freshman at Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana. To date she has received 11 scholarships totaling \$15,100. Both girls were very active in their local congregation and participated in several teen service projects.

Michelle Quant

ABC Mini-Sampler Serves Phoenix

Phoenix was the site for the first ABC mini-sampler on September 9 to 11. Gary and Barbara Antion and Ralph Levy flew to this largest Arizona city to conduct the classes, a sample of the lectures given at ABC.

The two presenters gave split sermons at

services attended by 280 brethren. Mr. Antion spoke about fulfilling the mission of the Church as given by Jesus Christ. He showed what United is doing to preach the gospel and to prepare a people for Jesus Christ. Dr. Levy spoke on whom he would choose for president. He said "his Man" wouldn't be accepted at this time, but would eventually be the leader of the world tomorrow! He showed the "platform" Christ would endorse.

After a potluck dinner, 160 eager brethren attended the first class. Mr. Antion did the first of three sections on the book of Jonah. Dr. Levy followed with the first of his six sessions on "The Law in the Covenants." The evening concluded with the first session of the class on Acts by Mr. Antion.

On Sunday, 108 brethren attended six hours of lectures. A luncheon was served at the facility and most sat and fellowshiped during the break. The final three classes were taught on Monday evening.

Certificates were given for 12 hours in Biblical Studies. The audience was enthusiastic, with several asking when another mini-sampler might be held in their area.



ABC mini-sampler in Phoenix, Arizona

Ray and Cindy Messer of Camp Verde, Arizona, noted that this seminar was like a "mini-Feast of Tabernacles," setting the stage for the Holy Day season. Carol Morgan of the Phoenix East congregation observed, "their ability to put things in a way that was interesting made the presentations very enjoyable and kept everyone's attention."

The presenters gave special thanks to the ministry and all the brethren who helped with the arrangements, set up, clerical needs and translations for the hard of hearing.

Gary Antion and Terry Kay Hoffman

Milwaukee Goes Hawaiian

On September 10 the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, congregation held its first luau social. The hosts were Ray and Francine Fabry. The food consisted of an array of Hawaiian dishes with lamb roasted over an open pit (no pork here!). Decorations followed the theme.

Entertainment consisted of singing along to Hawaiian songs and a show performed by a local dance company. The performers encouraged brethren to dance with them.

The highlight of the evening was when our pastor, Mike Hanisko, won the adult dance contest. His reward was a solo dance in costume accompanied by the Polynesian dancers.

Daniel Premetz

Six Members Contribute to Sydney Olympic Success

Six members who attend the Sydney congregation in New South Wales were part of the team that contributed to the success of the Olympic Games for the year 2000. Leading up to the games there were several areas of concern for the organizing committee. But people from all levels of the community and every area of government made a conscious decision to contribute whatever they could to make the Sydney Games one of the best ever. Overall there were 48,000 volunteers who offered their services during the Games.

Kel McFadden works as a bus driver in Newcastle, but during the Games he spent

two weeks bunked down at a Christian Youth Camp. He and his fellow bus drivers slept on beds made for youths but burly adults. They worked in shifts doing route runs, taking entertainers to dress rehearsals for the opening and closing ceremonies and with the crowd shuttle services transporting spectators to Homebush Olympic Stadium.

Two of our members who volunteer their time with the State Emergency Service were able to use their skills with OVIP (Olympic Volunteer in Policing). Wayne Wellman and Trevor Christie were part of the road team for the marathons, triathlon and road cycling events. They also did security duty at venues for volleyball, football, fencing and equestrian events.

Ross Smith is a computer expert whose

position was IT support for Olympic merchandising. He was very impressed with many of the staff members he met. One in particular never allowed the difficulties that arose to get her down. Her attitude was simply, "Well, let's fix it."

Ray Urquhart spent his time working for the Olympic Road and Traffic Authority. His responsibility was to direct spectators when they arrived or departed from the venues. Crowds of hundreds of thousands were always greeted by smiling staff eager to help



them reach their destinations.

Another interesting area of service was the IOC Relations and Protocol Department. I was a protocol attendant at the Darling Harbour venues. It was

very interesting to be able to show members of several of the European royal families to their seats. I was also privileged to have a conversation with Russian swimmer Alexander Popov.

Jeanette Dean

Announcements...

Births

Jim and Laura (Rex) Moody, along with big sister, Karina, and Drew, the family beagle, are thrilled to announce the birth of Kyleigh



Kyleigh Danae Eirene Moody

Danae Eirene Moody. She was born July 6, 2000, weighing in at 7 pounds 1 ounce, and was 20½ inches long. Proud grandparents are Sue Rex and Joe Rex of Bonaparte, Iowa, and Jack and Pat Moody of Colville, Washington.

Jeff and Stacie (Hollis) Yost of Portland, Oregon, are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Madison Dale Yost. Madison was born April 7, 2000, weighing 8



Madison Dale Yost

pounds 15 ounces, and was 21 inches long. Madison is their first child. Grandparents are Ronald and Roxanna Yost of Joplin, Missouri, and Maynard and Cynthia Allen of Creston, Iowa, and the late Clyde Dale Hollis.



Caleb Stephen Tomes

Keith and Christine (Novak) Tomes are proud to announce the birth of Caleb Stephen on May 31, 2000. He weighed 9 pounds and was 22½ inches long. Christopher (age 7), Kyle (5) and Stephanie (3) are thrilled with their new little brother. Caleb's grandparents are Frank and Alvetta Tomes of Huff, Kentucky, and Steve and Svatava Novak of Eatonville, Washington.

Philip and Tammy (Johns)



Nathan Philip Charles

Charles of the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, congregation are pleased to announce their first child, Nathan Philip. He was born July 1, 2000. He weighed 9 pounds 5 ounces and was 21 inches long. Proud grandparents are Daniel and Jeanette Charles and Jim and Sue Johns, also of the Harrisburg congregation.

Engagements



Lynn Marie McCullough and Matthew Ronald Gus

Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Leroy McCullough are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Lynn Marie, to Matthew Ronald Gus. A February wedding is planned in Dallas, Texas.



Gareth Gordon and Claire Hawkins

Peter and Sonja Hawkins of Cape Town, South Africa, are very happy to announce the engagement of their daughter, Claire, to Gareth Gordon, son of John and Debbie

Gordon. Gareth and Claire are working in London, England, but became engaged at the Uvongo, South Africa Feast site. The wedding is planned for mid-2001 in Cape Town.

Anniversary

Andy and Tricia Luck, of Burns, Tennessee, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary July 19, 2000. Mr. and Mrs. Luck and their daughters Hannah, 16, and Caroline, 13, attend the Nashville, Tennessee, congregation.

Obituaries

Rosetta (Rose) Harris Washington, 50, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, died of heart failure August 24 as she was being taken to another of a series of surgeries on her leg. She had been in the hospital for over a week because of a problem with her leg healing that was complicated by mild diabetes.

She and her husband, Clarence, met in school and married December 25, 1967, and have been members of the Church for the majority of their married life. They have one daughter, Lisa Green, and two sons, Tyrome and Timothy. The family was hit hard because she had not experienced any problems with the prior surgeries, which made her death so very unexpected. The funeral was conducted by Ken Treybig in Baton Rouge August 27.

Mae "Pearl" Hill, 90, of Salem, Oregon, died July 9, 2000. Mae was a well-loved, longtime member of God's Church. She was born in Jay, Oklahoma, January 1, 1910. Mae worked in defense plants during World War II. She married Sam Higgins in 1925 and moved to

California in 1937. In 1965 they moved to Lebanon, Oregon. Sam died in 1973. Mae was remarried in 1974 to George Hill, and he died in 1976. Mae enjoyed sewing, crocheting, and visiting with friends.

Survivors include her son, John Penrod, of Lebanon, Oregon; stepsons, Robert Hill of Portland, Oregon, and Ron Hill of Tucson, Arizona; three grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and seven great-great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were July 13 with Richard Duncan officiating.

Virginia Meseck, 85, died September 2, 2000, at the hospice facility of the Timber Ridge Nursing Center in Ocala, Florida. She was a faithful member of God's Church for 36 years. She originally attended in New Jersey, before moving to Florida, where she attended the Lakeland, St. Petersburg and then the Geneva, Alabama, congregations. After her husband died in 1980 she returned to central Florida, attending in New Port Richey and Tampa before moving to Ocala because of a severe diabetic condition.

Mrs. Meseck is survived by two children, Ruth Ann and Joseph Lee; a brother and a sister; and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A memorial service was conducted by Don Waterhouse on September 9.

Denpha Douglas, 69, died September 28, 1999, five days before his 51st wedding anniversary. He had been in failing health off and on for about 10 years, and he was cared for faithfully by his wife, Lillie Belle (Teague) Douglas. They had been married October 3, 1948. He is also survived by a son, Roger Anthony Teague, and a granddaughter.

Letters...

Please Don't Smoke...

Just a few lines to tell you that I appreciated Don Hooser's article on smoking [September]. Thankfully my husband and I quit upon being called into the Church in 1965. Otherwise, I seriously doubt if I'd still be alive. Also, I believe there is a scripture pertaining to smoking—check out Isaiah 50:11.

All the publications are so informative and interesting that I don't often know which to read first. Many thanks.

New Albany, Ohio

Miraculous Healings

I was very glad to see the recent article in *United News* on a miraculous healing as well as a couple other letters recently telling of a miracle that God has done. I have heard people say that God isn't healing people that much now or performing miracles as much and I strongly disagree with that. I am a walking miracle board and have several miracles that God has performed for me. I strongly suspect that I am not the only one that God has done this for. I just suspect that people aren't: 1) good about recognizing when God does something for them; 2) as diligent about telling others about what God has done for them as they are when asking others to pray for them; and 3) remembering what God has done for them or for others.

We see the long lists of prayer requests, but one minister had a perfect idea. In one of his bulletins he had nothing but prayer requests that God had answered or was in the process of answering. I feel that equal

emphasis should be placed on announcing the miracles that God has done with asking God to pray for someone. Both are needed.

For example, I take care of my granddaughters and help my grown children. I am glad to do so. However, if all they do is ask me to help them and take care of their children while merely taking me for granted and not thanking me, then I admit that my enthusiasm wears thin. A thank you is all it takes.

I suspect that this is true for God also. If all we do is ask Him for things, taking for granted that He will answer without our being grateful, then I think He would be a bit less excited about helping us. We need to be as persistent about thanking God after He answers our prayers as we are when we are praying about something! Sending a letter to *United News* about a miracle God has done for us is a good place to start!

This would even be helpful on the various message boards springing up on the Web that I have seen. Message boards are the perfect place for people to post miracles that God has done for them, comments about the upcoming Feast etc. instead of complaining about all the artificial barriers among people.

Houston, Texas

Want to Promote the Gospel?

I want to express my joy over John W. Foster's article in the July issue of the *United News* entitled, "So, You Want to Promote the Gospel? Here's How!" I have long thought that we the members of God's Church ARE the living gospel by our example. It is all well and good, so to speak, to send magazines,

etc., all over the world, but in the final analysis it is our individual growth and example that really counts.

Garden Grove, California

Good News Radio on the Internet

Thank you for placing the *Good News* radio program on the Internet (www.ucg.org/radio). It is greatly comforting to hear this message in audio format. Gary Petty is an excellent choice for presenting the message. He has a very clear, sincere and warm voice. I heard the message from the Internet without any buffering or hesitation by DSL. Looking forward to hearing more.

Pasadena, California

Interested in Attending

I am an avid young reader of your publication *The Good News*, and I am interested in, for the first time, attending one of your weekly Sabbath services. I live in Toronto. The city is relatively new to me as I have been here for just under a year. I would greatly appreciate your help in locating the nearest congregation to me.

Toronto, Ontario

Have Been Searching

Thank you for your letter and answering many of my questions. I am happy and relieved to know that Herbert W. Armstrong's many years of hard and dedicated work was not all in vain.

Since the early '90s my husband and I have been searching for something that resembled what we had with Mr. Armstrong.

We listened to countless sermons, checked preachers on TBN and could not support even one.

When I sent for "What Is Your Destiny?" I had no idea this was what I was looking for. I thank God for leading me in this direction.

Would there be a congregation close to our area and also a radio station?

Albany, Georgia

Found Good News at the Barber Shop

I picked up your magazine at the barber shop and read it all the way through. I was very impressed and it felt good to hear the gospel again. The magazine referred to a book called *Heaven & Hell*. How would I obtain this publication? Thanks.

Internet

Editor's Note: Clarification

Shortly after the September *United News* went to press with the article "Christ in Us—Our Hope of Glory" we learned of a statement from the Vatican that seems to contradict the quote from Pope John Paul II in that article. The September 5, 2000, statement was included in the September/October *World News and Prophecy* (page 9) that went to press a few days later. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Comments and suggestions to improve *United News* welcome. Mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or e-mail mike_bennett@ucg.org.

News at a Glance...

Conversion Booklet Printed

Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion was printed in September. This booklet is the 23rd published since the United Church of God began. It's the fifth new booklet this year.

We also reprinted 30,000 copies of *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* after exhausting our initial printing of 50,000 copies from last year. So far we've printed or reprinted 416,000 booklets this year and more than 1.1 million in total.

Scott Ashley

Coworkers Updated

A coworker update letter was mailed in September to over 800 *Good News* readers who contribute to the Church on a fairly regular basis. The letter thanks our regular donors for their help in teaching God's way to thousands of people around the world. It includes positive letters from many of our excited *Good News* readers. It gives a brief

update on the graduation of the first class at ABC, and also updates our readers on our United Youth Camp Program. These updates are scheduled to be sent four times a year.

As of October 31 we had 958 coworkers on file, a net increase of 21 over September, and 2,407 donors on file, a net increase of 63 over September. These are all in addition to our regular member contributors.

Peter Eddington

Members Needed to Spread GN Brochures

Tests of the Brochure Display Program show it to be a cost effective means to reach new people with *The Good News*. Response was an excellent 5.1 percent with a very low cost of just \$1.75 for each new subscription.

The program has now expanded to more than 40 congregations and to 25 individual brethren. Even if you find there is no organized program in your area, you still can be involved!

How does the program work? You will be sent a supply of brochures and small,

attractive, clear acrylic display units. All you need to do is locate stores and shops in your area willing to display the units on counter tops, vending machines or other locations as a free customer service. Once a display is

placed, just return to the store periodically to restock. That's all there is to it! You can order additional supplies anytime. If you're interested, just use the coupon below.

John LaBissoniere

I Want to Be Part of the Brochure Display Program!

After two successful tests, the Brochure Display Program is being expanded throughout the United States. Even if your church area does not have enough interest to support a congregational program with a program manager, you can be involved individually. Just mail this coupon, E-mail pglass@usit.net or call John LaBissoniere toll free in the U.S. at (888) 369-9940 Sunday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern time.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Church Area _____

Phone (____) _____

E-mail _____

Number of Displays (4 max.) _____

Number of Brochures (200 max.) _____



Return to:
GN Brochure Program
c/o John LaBissoniere
198 McDeerman Road
Jacksboro, TN 37757

News at a Glance...

What's New on the Web?

- Listen to Real Audio files of the *Good News* radio program, posted each week. Also available is the broadcast-ready .rm file you may save on your local congregational page. Programs include: "Making Life Work," "What Happens After Death?," "Are We Living in the Time of the End?," "A Journey to Hell," "Can the Family Survive?" and "The Road to Eternal Life."

<http://www.ucg.org/radio>

- The latest booklet, *Transforming Your Life: the Process of Conversion*, is available in PDF (312K) and HTML formats.

<http://www.ucg.org/articles/booklets/index.html>

- The November/December edition of *The Good News* is online in both PDF (1.9MB) and HTML formats.

<http://www.ucg.org/articles/gn/index.html>

- The November *Virtual Christian Magazine* is available.

<http://vcmagazine.org>

- The November/December edition of *Las Buenas Noticias*, the Spanish version of the *Good News* magazine, is available in PDF (932KB) format.

http://www.ucg.org/html/espa_ol.shtml

- Check out the local multimedia efforts by United congregations: *Tomorrow* television by Portland, Oregon; *Good News* television by Beloit, Wisconsin; *World News and Prophecy* radio by Donald Ward; and *The World Tomorrow* on MANX radio on the Isle of Man.

<http://www.ucg.org/a/local/multimedia.htm>

- Regular updates from the president and home office staff, plus news of the work United is doing, are posted on our news page.

<http://www.ucg.org/a/news/news.htm>

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

ABC Seminar Set for Florida December 23-25

The last Ambassador Bible Center mini-sampler for this year will be held December 23 to 25 in the Tampa/St. Petersburg, Florida, area.

Instructors will be Houston pastor and ABC adjunct faculty member Jim Franks, and ABC instructor Ralph Levy.

Mr. Franks will be teaching an introduction to doctrine and the development and history of the fundamental beliefs of the United Church of God; focusing on the fundamental belief of the Sabbath and the history of the Sabbatarians in New England; and covering the book of James and its role in the development of the New Testament Church. Dr. Levy will be teaching topics in Jeremiah. Visual presentations, and some class interaction, will be featured in these classes, and it is recommended that students study the books of Jeremiah and James prior to the seminar.

Classes will be held Saturday night, December 23, from 6 to 9 p.m., and Sunday and Monday, December 24 and 25, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. The location will be Weightman Middle School, 30649 Wells Road, Wesley Chapel, Florida, 33544. Sabbath services are scheduled for 2 to 4 p.m. in the same location.

The cost is \$10 per person, to defray hall rental and the cost of two meals to be served at the school (finger foods after Sabbath services and Monday buffet lunch). Please send your check, payable to "United Church of God-Tampa" to Holly Hannaway, 6002 Soaring Avenue, Temple Terrace, FL 33617-9301. Early registration would be appreciated to facilitate planning.

Motel reservations may be made at the Sleep Inn, 5703 Oakley Blvd., Wesley Chapel, FL 33544, at a rate of \$39.99 plus tax, for 1 to 4 persons. Call the motel at 813-973-1665, and ask for "ABC Seminars," to make your reservation.

Ralph Levy

New Elders Announced

Three men were ordained as elders during the Feast this year. In Germany, Hermann Goehring, who serves the Stuttgart congregation, and Kurt Schmitz, who serves the Dusseldorf congregation, were ordained. In Guatemala, Luis Mundo was ordained and serves the Quetzaltenango congregation.

On the Feast of Trumpets there were two ordinations: Mark Rorem, who serves in Oakland, California, and Rick Shabi, who serves in Indianapolis, Indiana.

In June, Jaime Gallardo, of Valdivia, Chile, and Melvin Parks, of Asheboro, North Carolina, were ordained as elders. Two elders were also credentialed at the September Council meetings: Brian Drawbaugh of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Edward Koehnemann of St. Louis, Missouri.

Personal Correspondence Answers Questions

In the last three months, more than 300 personal answers have been sent in reply to readers' questions. "They run the gamut of doctrinal questions, Bible questions, general inquiries about UCG, Christian living and personal counseling," said Cecil Maranville, an elder who handles the questions that come in through the mail.

As people are challenged by the biblical teachings they see in United's literature, questions come to their minds, and the ministers handling Personal Correspondence provide a bridge to help them come to greater understanding. In addition to Mr. Maranville, four church pastors handle the questions that come in through info@ucg.org on a rotating basis: Mike Hanisko, Bob Fahey, Noel Homor and Tom Clark.

New Radio Stations Being Tested

Over the past 13 weeks (through November 5), calls from listeners to the *Good News* radio program have totaled 314. The numbers have been showing an increase over the last four weekends, with our average number of calls being 36 each time. The weekend of October 29 gave us our best response so far, with 47 calls. Our overall average is 25 calls per program. Many callers have been enthusiastic about the program,

and some have asked if we ever had any contact with Herbert Armstrong, since the message sounds the same to them. The truth is the truth and can be recognized!

We're very pleased with the increase in response over the last few weeks. It does take a little time to build up a radio audience and from the response increases over the past few weeks we may be seeing a trend in increased audience. The most popular format in our tests so far seems to be the two-person discussion, with the top two response weekends coming from that style.

We are in the process of dropping the lowest response radio stations from our schedule, replacing them with new cities. In this test phase we are fine-tuning our airtime schedule to maximize our responses and still keep within our budget. Beginning November 11 we will be adding four new stations, all in larger markets than our existing stations. They include Dallas, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Albany, New York; and Chicago, Illinois. The Chicago station is an FM station, giving us two FM stations in our line-up. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is the other FM station and is our best station for responses, followed by Akron, Ohio, an AM station.

A copy of the schedule for November 11 through February 4, 2001, is shown below. Our net number of stations has decreased from 16 to 9, but the number of people reached will be about the same because the four new stations are in larger markets.

Peter Eddington

Arbitron Market	State	Call Letters	Station Frequency	Power (watts)	Scheduled Airtime
Akron	OH	WAKR	1590 AM	5,000	Sundays 6:30 a.m. EST
Albany	NY	WGY	810 AM	50,000	Sundays 10 p.m. EST
Chicago	IL	WJMK	104.3 FM	4,100	Mondays 12 a.m. CST
Dallas	TX	KRLD	1080 AM	50,000	Saturdays 9 p.m. CST
Las Vegas	NV	KDWN	720 AM	50,000	Sundays 8:30 a.m. MST
Memphis	TN	WREC	600 AM	5,000	Sundays 9 a.m. CST
Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood	FL	WAXY	790 AM	25,000	Sundays 7 a.m. EST
Milwaukee-Racine	WI	WLTQ	97.3 FM	15,500	Sundays 6:30 a.m. CST
New Orleans	LA	WWL	870 AM	50,000	Saturdays 9:30 p.m. CST

United News

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