

Teleconference Prepares for President Interviews

The Council of Elders met by teleconference Nov. 14 to continue the process of choosing a president, and to discuss recommendations for the ABC program as brought forward by the Education Committee.

Choosing a President

The procedure for selecting a president is moving along as planned. The Council announced in its Nov. 1 letter the names of nine nominees put forward by members of the General Conference of Elders. The Council has now pared that list to five—Roy Holladay, Clyde Kilough, Dennis Luker, Les McCullough and Richard Pinelli.

Part of the process involves soliciting the input of the home office staff—those who work most directly with the president.

While some Council members spoke of the advantages of a live interview of the office staff, in the end the Council unanimously opted for a written questionnaire because of the advantage of anonymity.

Mr. Holladay asked Gary Antion, as chairman of the Ethical Review/Roles and Process Committee, to put the committee to work drawing up the questionnaire.

Next step—who will contact the references given by each nominee on his résumé? The Council decided to submit a standardized written request to each of the per-

sons listed as a reference for any of the five final nominees. If any Council member desires further information he will be free to personally contact the references.

Finally, the Council turned its attention to refining the questions to ask of each nominee at the interviews to take place at the next face-to-face meetings in Florida, Dec. 5 to 12. (See page 3 of the November issue for proposed agenda items for the December meetings.)

One potential difficulty was resolved when Mr. Antion suggested taping the interviews with the three nominees who are Council members, so that these men will not hear any of the responses from the other nominees until after their own interviews have taken place.

The last item was a presentation by the Education Committee about ABC. For information on the modifications being made, see "ABC Preparing for an Exciting Third Year" on page 2.

Doug Johnson



Jim Franks works with Richard Duah preparing paperwork to assist in the unification of the former Remnant Church of God into United. Above right, Mr. Franks feeding mona monkeys in Ghanaian rain forest. Right, Doug Horchak with Samuel Nani and his son



Pastoral Seminar Held in Ghana

by Joel Meeker

Jim Franks, Doug Horchak and I held a ministerial seminar for pastors of the Remnant Church of God in Ghana from Oct. 29 through Nov. 1. We arrived in Accra on Thursday night, Oct. 25. On Friday evening I held an interactive Bible study with the Takoradi congrega-

tion, while Mr. Franks and Mr. Horchak held a similar study with the Agona congregation.

The interactive Bible studies gave us the opportunity to answer questions from the members as well as ask them some discussion questions. In Takoradi local pastor Joseph Baah, pastor Azariah Coffie (who translated for those who did-

n't understand English) and I took questions about how to calculate God's tithe and the festival tithe we put aside to use at the Feast of Tabernacles. Since these brethren in Ghana have been keeping God's Feasts for about three years now, the festival tithe is still a relatively new practice. One question that (See "GHANA," page 6)

U.S. Regional Pastors Have Productive Meetings

The nine U.S. regional pastors met with the Ministerial Services (MS) staff in Cincinnati Nov. 11 to 13. Topics included pastoral evaluations; manpower needs, health situations and relocations; Feast of Tabernacles speaking schedules, Bible study topics and speakers; and progress and development of the leadership-training program. Most of the wives also attended.

Richard Pinelli, operation manager of MS in the United States, began the conference by speaking about the importance of "Finishing the Race," quoting a story about an Olympic athlete who was very seriously injured, yet completed his race. When asked why he hadn't quit, since there wasn't any possibility of winning, the athlete said, "My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me to finish the race."

Mr. Pinelli stressed the importance of remembering that older ministers need to continue to be on guard in the never-ending spiritual battle aimed at controlling minds. "Several examples are given throughout the Bible of vanity and pride consuming men who started serving God in their younger years, yet lost their humility much later in life," Mr. Pinelli said. "It was important to focus on this for my own benefit and that of the regional pastors. The battle with Satan and human nature itself isn't over until the end of the race."

President Les McCullough gave an update of the work, and also spoke on the importance of humility and endurance. Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick gave an update of the financial status of the Church, and also discussed budgeting for the upcoming fiscal year.

Larry Greider, regional pastor

of the Central region and also overall director of the United Youth Camps, provided information on the success of the camp program this past summer. He mentioned how encouraging it is to see the minds of young people in the Church so eager to deal with the important aspects of life, not only attending camps for the recreational activities.

The regional pastors then provided updates on their regions, and brought up manpower needs, health issues and retirement needs, and possible transfers. The regional pastors are: Denny Luker (Northwest region), David Register (Southwest), Larry Neff (Mountain), Jim Servidio (North Central), Larry Greider (Central), Ken Giese (South Central), Lyle Welty (Great Lakes), Paul Suckling (Northeast) and Harold Rhodes (Southeast).

Also attending the conference

were MS Team members Doug Horchak and Jim Franks, and David Evans, MS administrator and assistant to Richard Pinelli.

Jim Franks gave a presentation titled "Leadership Programs: Developing Servants for the Church." In it he discussed the three-part program that was presented to the Council of Elders in the summer of 2000, including a local leadership training program, ministerial candidate program and Ambassador College-type training and associate pastoring. He then reviewed biblical teachings regarding leadership, changes in society and in the Church over the years in relation to leaders, expectations of leaders and closing the leadership gap.

Many comments were made by regional pastors and wives throughout the presentation deal- (See "REGIONAL," page 7)

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Next issue: Jan. 7, 2002

ABC Preparing for an Exciting Third Year

Exciting changes are planned for the third year of the Ambassador Bible Center program, which begins with orientation Jan. 6. We are making some adjustments partly from graduate input concerning the intensity of the program. The seven-month course of instruction is the equivalent in class time of 66 credits or nearly four semesters of college classes, so we are trying to find ways to give the students more free time without taking away from the classes.

More Free Time; New Instructors

Ralph Levy proposed giving the students a free morning whenever we do not have module instructors in that slot. That will amount to a two-hour block of free time on 25 mornings first semester and 22 in the second semester.

In addition, every three weeks the students will be given the afternoon off. There are usually three classes in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday afternoon schedule. Two classes will not be taught every third Friday, and lunchtime will be used to conduct the remaining class. This will allow students to catch up on any needed personal chores on that preparation day for the Sabbath.

Two instructors have been added. Matthew Fenchel will be teaching Former Prophets in the first semester and Acts of

the Apostles in the second semester. He will work part-time at ABC while maintaining his regular responsibilities at the home office. Melvin Rhodes has agreed to teach a morning module on Daniel and Revelation. Mr. Rhodes' insights into history and prophecy should make this an interesting class.

By sharing these classes with Mr. Fenchel and Mr. Rhodes, the full-time instructors will have a balanced teaching load. Gary Antion and Dr. Levy will teach three classes each semester. (Dr. Levy's Major Prophets class will be expanded using the time previously filled by Revelation.) Les McCullough will continue to teach Epistles of Paul in addition to his other duties.

Applications and Internationals

The number of applicants has increased to nearly 90! We have accepted 54 students with 10 more applications still to be reviewed.

International students may not be able to attend unless they can obtain a visa themselves. Currently ABC students are not eligible for student visas. Our lawyer is working on obtaining that status, but we will not likely have that until future years. Dec. 10 is the deadline for receiving applications for the 2002 program.

Pittsburgh Mini-Sampler

The ABC mini-sampler held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was an overwhelming success. There were around 250 for services. More than 17 congregations were represented in the attendance. The mini-sampler conducted by Dr. Levy and Mr. Antion was well attended, with some 180 and 160 in attendance for the Saturday evening and Sunday presentations.

Dr. Levy presented six lectures of topics in Genesis. Mr. Antion presented two lectures on friendship, three on understanding Islam and one on Obadiah.

Members gave their written evaluations of the mini-sampler afterward. There were 99 percent positive, the most common suggestion being "have more of these in the area." The instructors expressed their appreciation to Don Henson and all the brethren who provided all the support services for an outstanding ABC mini-sampler.

The final mini-sampler for this year will be in the Los Angeles, California, area on Dec. 22 to 23. We look forward to presenting information to the brethren on the West Coast during that time.

We appreciate your prayers for a third successful ABC year.

Gary Antion/Ralph Levy

United News

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Internet access on your computer:

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

Reports From the Field

Good News Caught Attention Even Before It Was Printed

In early November I was talking with the person at the Donnelley plant who handles the films for our printing jobs. Out of the blue she mentioned that she had been reading some of the articles in this latest issue of *The Good News* (about the Sept. 11 attacks) and found them very interesting.

She had noticed the ads for *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* and got a copy (presumably out of their files, since it was printed there) and had been reading it. She said it was really fascinating and she couldn't wait to finish it. She didn't say this, but I got the distinct impression she had been reading it when I called her.

She's worked with our publications for about three or four years, and it appears that this issue of the *GN* really caught her attention. She's never commented on our content before.

Scott Ashley



Religion Professor Requests 100 Copies of Latest Good News for His Students

I received a call Nov. 16 from Robert Oldham, a professor of world religion studies who teaches at two colleges (Baptist and Methodist) in central Kentucky. He said he has been teaching for 30 years at various locations throughout the United States including the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

He obtained a copy of the November/December 2001 *Good News* and thought it was so well written that he wanted all 100 of his students to read it in light of the Sept. 11 terrorist incidents. He said he has many foreign students in his classes, including Chinese, Japanese, Brazilian, etc. I had 100 copies of that issue sent to him.

John LaBissoniere

Feast Cybercast Has Unexpected Benefits

Unexpected benefits were observed following the cybercasting of Feast services from Bend, Oregon, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. One man, who has been a part of another Sabbath-keeping organization, was not able to attend any Feast site, but did watch the cybercasts from both sites. He was moved by the clarity of purpose of the messages, and after the Feast called the local United pastor to ask if he could begin attending Sabbath services there.

His wife, who has never been a part of the Church of God, was so intrigued by what she heard on the cybercasts that she has expressed some interest in coming with him to Church services to find out a little more about United! He was quite surprised.

International News...

Canadian Staff Moves to New Office

by Kevin Ford

Nothing in this world lasts forever, certainly not a commercial office lease, as the Canadian National Office knew well when they moved into their office suite on Toronto's Islington Avenue in November 1996.

With the dramatic growth in the *Good News* mailing list during the following years,

necessitating the moving of large amounts of literature, the sixth floor suite was becoming an increasingly unsatisfactory location. As the end of the five-year lease drew close, a move appeared to be the best option.

By summer, however, no obvious alternative had been found, so the Canadian Council decided to appoint Eric Livermore, a member from the Ottawa area, as a "task force" to find new premises. Eric, whose wife, Carol, is a member of the Canadian Council, soon found a firm with its own buildings located in a semi-rural location in Halton Hills, to the northwest of Toronto. The firm, Fishburn Building Sciences Group Inc., had 2,400 square feet of surplus office space which had just become vacant, and was being offered for less than half the rent currently being paid in Toronto.

After extensive reviews by Mr. Livermore, Canadian Operation Manager Anthony Wasilkoff, the office staff and several Canadian Council members, the decision was made to go ahead with a three-year lease, beginning Oct. 15, 2001.

It was a hectic experience for the office staff, who also had to cope with the extra work involved with the Feast of Tabernacles, but all hurdles were overcome and the relocation took place during the final week of October.

The new suite is actually in two separate sections. The main floor area houses reception and two offices, and the larger basement area is where the mailing and related operations and other offices are located.

The main floor is shared with the landlord's staff, but they have proved

themselves very friendly and cooperative, and the arrangement has so far worked reasonably well.

Some office functions, such as mail pickup and delivery and banking had to be reorganized due to our out-of-town location, but the staff have the compensation of walking through landscaped grounds (complete with miniature lake) to our new front entrance, and even a

that most of the traffic is heading in.

We believe that God has blessed



Left, Kevin Ford and Linda Wasilkoff at work in the new Canadian office. Above, the new office in Halton Hills northwest of Toronto. Above right, Anthony Wasilkoff, Canadian operation manager (photos by Ed van Pelt)

daily commute along the infamous Highway 401 is not so arduous, as we are driving out of Toronto at the time

our efforts to find a suitable location for the conduct of His work in Canada in these end times. We look forward to continuing the challenge of preaching

the gospel of God's soon-coming Kingdom to the second largest (in terms of total land area) country in the world! UN

Additional Pastor Named to Serve Sub-Saharan Africa

UCGIA President Les McCullough has recently approved the addition of David Baker to the ministerial team working in Africa. Mr. Baker, in addition to his pastoral responsibilities in the Buffalo, Syracuse and Elmira, New York, congregations, will now



David Baker with Moses Nyaira from Mgori, Kenya, on the shore of Lake Victoria

make periodic visits to Kenya and Tanzania to serve our brethren there.

There are now three men assigned to serve in different areas of sub-Saharan Africa. Joel Meeker acts as regional pastor for the central band of the African continent. He also serves as pastor for the

French-speaking members in Africa, including our brethren living in Benin, Cameroon and Togo. Fred Kellers, pastor of the Nashville and Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and Bowling Green, Kentucky, congregations also serves as pastor for our brethren in Nigeria.

Another pastor based in the United States will soon be named to act as liaison between the home office and the soon-to-

be-formed United Church of God-Ghana.

Other countries in the southern part of the African continent and in the Indian Ocean are served by ministers living in South Africa. André van Belkum, Neil Becker and Peter Hawkins, in addition to serving the congregations in South Africa, serve our brethren and interested people in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Mauritius. UN

Interest in UCG Growing in Philippines

Interest in the United Church of God in Leyte, Philippines, continues to grow. The Sabbath service and Bible study we held in Conalum, Inopacan, Leyte on Nov. 17 showed an increase in attendance due to the presence of nine visitors from other groups. A pastor and a member from a group from Agusan del Sur came to observe and to ask questions regarding United Church of God.

Two Seventh-Day Adventist members were present, as well as two who are members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Reformed Church. Three more from the Jerusalem Church of God attended for the first time. Our attendance was 40 includ-

ing the daughter of a pastor from the Jerusalem Church.

We are anticipating another increase at the next meeting based on information from members of UCG that there are more who are planning to attend.

During the Bible study Raul Villacote, a member from Tacloban, Leyte, asked that we discuss the subject of God's annual feasts, why we keep these festivals and their significance to mankind's salvation.

Overall we had a very fruitful and successful Sabbath.

Florante Siopan, elder, Bacolod and Leyte congregations

Growth in the Australian GN List Highlights Media Efforts

In early May the Australian Media and Publishing Committee passed its goal of 8,500 subscribers for the last financial year with a total distribution for the May/June *Good News* of 9,271 copies. This achievement was as a result of the excellent response to our February *Reader's Digest* ad, the diligent efforts of members in regard to the letterbox drop program, the establishment of newsstands and the waiting room program.

Having attained a larger circulation than planned, the Committee, in conjunction with the National Office, embarked on a renewal of the least active subscribers on the Australian list to ensure that those receiving the magazine really want it. All Asian subscribers were also renewed.

In July, 1,426 *Good News* subscribers were renewed in Australia and 447 in Asia. We felt that a 25 percent response to the renewal would be a good figure, since those subscribers targeted had not shown an interest in ordering additional literature. We were very pleased therefore to finally receive a 30 percent response.

The goal in the Operational Plan for Media and Publishing is to reach a total distribution of 12,000 *Good News* subscribers by June 30, 2002. With the mailing of the September/October *Good News* circulation had climbed back to 9,538 after falling back to just under 8,500 as a result of the renew-

al, placing us well on our way to achieving our aim.

Large Discount for February *Reader's Digest* Ad

The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy will be offered to the Australian public in the February edition of the *Reader's Digest*. A large advertisement has been booked. We will have a reply-paid, tear-out card offering the booklet as well as a full-page four-color ad offering the same booklet. The full-page ad as well as the card will ensure that, if someone responds by tearing out the card and mailing it, there will be sufficient information left on the page, with our free call number, a coupon and an e-mail address, to enable others to respond.

The Australian Media and Publishing Committee feels we were blessed by being able to negotiate a very good price for this ad ensuring that we are making the best use of the money available to us to preach the gospel. Normally a reply-paid tear-out card would cost \$20,330 (figures in Australian dollars) and a full-page, four-color ad is listed at a rate of \$12,950. We were able to secure the tear-out card for \$15,000 and the full-page ad for \$7,000. The Media and Publishing Committee is in the process of designing this ad and would appreciate your prayers for guidance and inspiration.



GN mailing outgrows the Australian office. Karen and Carol Vaughan, Joan Wright, Jackie Mihalec and David Sandland with last mailing from the office. The next issue went from a mailing house

The recent testing of an ad offering the *Why Does God Allow Suffering?* booklet did not bring in the responses we had hoped for, with fewer than 100 responses so far. Since the vehicle used to advertise the subject—*That's Life* magazine—has been successful before we feel that the public was not sufficiently interested in the subject and it did not strike a chord. This test ad ran just before the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York. With the advent of the terrorist attacks the ad may have more

appeal now, but the Committee and advisors feel that *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* is a more timely booklet to advertise in view of current events.

New Program for Bible Study Course Graduates

An exciting new program for graduates of the *Bible Study Course* is being introduced in Australia. Six sermon audiotapes are offered to these graduates, one tape being mailed to them in the alternate month to the mailing of *The Good News* magazine. As the *Bible Study Course* students complete lesson 12 they will automatically receive an offer of the audio-sermon tapes. The initial offer of tapes was sent to 551 graduates. The final acceptance rate of 39.8 percent was more than expected and very encouraging.

The tapes feature elders and pastors from United Church of God congregations here in Australia and were specially recorded for our *Bible Study Course* graduates. The series consists of a set of 12 40-minute messages (two messages per audiotape) which explore topics vital for Christian growth such as: "Walking With God," "The Christian Calling," "What Is Faith?" and "Repentance and the Holy Spirit." Other tapes explain the Christian approach to marriage and family and how to live as a Christian in the 21st century.

Other Activities

Members in Victoria and New South Wales are involved in establishing and running personal newsstands. Sofie Banham reported in early October that since the destruction of the World Trade Center the number of booklets and magazines being taken from her stand has doubled. The small congregation of Newcastle is planning to test a poster in a local train station in the area and there are new developments planned for the Youth Page on the Australian Web site.

Bill Eddington

Ruth Root

Australian National Council Meets in Sydney

The Australian National Council met in Sydney on Aug. 18 and 19. The pastor, Bruce Dean, arranged a morning Sabbath service at the St. George Rowing Club in Arncliffe so that the Council and members could fellowship over lunch. Members from Wollongong and Newcastle, and as far away as Wauchope and Wodonga, attended the service and stayed on for the luncheon.

Since UCGIA Council of Elders representative Leon Walker and his wife, Reba, were scheduled to visit New Zealand to meet with UCG-NZ trustees around this time, the Australian National Council invited Mr. Walker to attend the August meeting. His attendance was very much appreciated and Mr. Walker was able to add an international perspective to the meeting.

He took time to discuss the process of doctrinal change, pointing out that just because a doctrine or belief had not been codified did not mean it was not in effect. In fact, the introduction to the *Fundamental Beliefs of UCGIA* points out that the booklet is not a comprehensive statement of the beliefs of the Church. Mr. Walker also touched on the distinction between doctrine, understanding and interpretation, stressing doctrine required substantial scriptural support. His comments in this regard were very informative.

During the Australian National Council meetings Bill Eddington was reelected chairman, Don Goodger was reelected as deputy chairman and Barry Williams was elected chairman of the Pastoral Committee replacing Graemme Marshall.

Since Graemme and Lynn Marshall were scheduled to move to Canada in October, the Council also decided the Perth, Western Australia, congregation would be more effectively pastored from Melbourne. Barry Williams, as pastor, will be supported by the four other elders in Victoria and Tasmania in serving this congregation.

As part of the youth program, the Australian National Council has approved funding a scholarship to assist a worthy applicant to attend the Ambassador Bible Center program in Cincinnati. Selection criteria and an application form will be finalized at the November meeting after which applications will be accepted.

Encouraging Financial Stability

It is pleasing to see the positive trend in income and the firm control being exercised over expenses in all areas. The steady increase in donors and coworkers reflects that subscribers to *The Good News* appreci-

ate the material provided and are becoming more committed. Treasurer Drew Efimov was able to recommend a reallocation of funds for the 2001/2002 financial year increasing the amount being spent on media and publishing activities by more than \$20,000 (Australian). This reallocation was made possible in part by lower than expected costs for the relocation of the Marshalls to Canada and Bill and Jenny Bradford to Australia.

Streamlining Administration

Two software changes have immensely improved our ability to more efficiently handle administrative tasks in the Australian office. The first was changing the financial accounting system from the one installed some years ago to a new, Windows-based system, which will significantly cut processing time and streamline the preparation of financial reports for the Australian National Council.

The second change was moving our *Good News* subscription lists from an old system to one designed by Richard Kennebeck at the home office in the United States. Mailing procedures are also now more efficient and have greater flexibility.

Australian Youth Leadership Camp Promotes Service in a Self-Serving World

The first Australian Youth Leadership weekend was held from Friday, June 30, to Sunday, July 1, at the Scout Centre in Heathcote, south of Sydney. The camp was attended by 34 young adults between the ages of 19 and 30ish, as well as Barry Williams and Don Goodger from Melbourne, and Bruce Dean and Doug Gray from Sydney.

The meetings kicked off on Friday night, with Mr. Dean dispelling any ideas about this being weekend getaway by explaining the timetable of grueling back-to-back seminars to follow. Then it

began with the first vignette (short presentation) by Felicia Stokes.

Characteristics of a True Servant-Leader

Mr. Dean followed with a message that sought to establish the link between service and leadership, showing some characteristics of a true servant-leader and what it means to be greatest in a biblical sense (with Jesus Christ the ultimate example), and setting it against a backdrop of a self-serving world. This message set the tone for the weekend.

The messages that followed specifi-



Campers at the first Australian Youth Leadership weekend listen to Bruce Dean giving his final presentation

cally focused on personal leadership, godly leadership roles within marriage, as well as within the Church community, structure and other team situations. Introductory vignettes were given by Marty Kusz, Peter Forster, Karen Vaughan and most of the married couples who attended. These were particularly rewarding, as couples were able to offer the insiders' perspective to the rest of the group on how marriage is probably the most consistently challenging area in which to apply principles of give-and-take, which are essential to godly service, and therefore leadership.

Message on Marital Commitment

Mr. Goodger was able to build on this further, delivering a frank account of the ongoing commitment that maintains a happy marriage as part of his

message on marital commitment. On Saturday the young adults were split up into gender groups for messages concerning masculine and feminine leadership roles. Mr. Dean's no-holds-barred discussion with the men was particularly rewarding.

During Saturday evening, workshops on effective team structures and personality types were given by Renee Dean and Mr. Gray respectively. Renee, with her workplace experience, was able to shed light through a survey on what team roles best fit with individuals. Mr. Gray's survey of personality types offered insight into positive and negative traits of four broad groupings of personalities.

These messages went towards better understanding of how to empathize and function in a practical way with others.

Daniel Collette

Getting to Know the Isolated Brethren of New South Wales

In New South Wales, as in all states in Australia, there are brethren who live far from regular church services and nearby fellowship. Holy Days are usually the only times they can get together with those who regularly attend services. Those who are not too distant—only three or four hours' drive away—try to attend the nearest congregation as often as possible and as finances and circumstances allow. If there is somewhere to stay overnight, the journey is less fatiguing and there is more fellowship to enjoy.

Being isolated isn't all negative. These members keep the Sabbath at home, studying God's Word, singing psalms and listening to tapes supplied by Inge Afiouni featuring Sydney services, and those from the Australian National Office, which include speakers from the United States. One isolated member mentioned that the advantage of tapes is that you can listen to three sermons on the Sabbath if you wish! Or you can listen to a particularly inspiring message more than once.

A big bonus is Bruce Dean's regular letters to the scattered brethren. These letters from their pastor keep them informed about many things in both the local and the wider areas of the Church. Like the sermon tapes and *United News—Australia*, they bring them into the general fellowship. One woman commented, "Often we learn things before those who have to wait for announcements on Sabbath."

The scattered brethren are not prevented from involvement in church activities and many have contributed despite their isolation. Many have been involved in the Waiting Room Program and letterbox drops. All pray for the needs of

the Church and the individuals in it.

An example of such an isolated member is Peter King. He lives in Canberra, where there is no United Church of God congregation. Peter really appreciates the sermon tapes sent by Inge Afiouni. He also appreciates the way the Church focuses on doing the best we can do with the resources available to us. For example, the help we're given through the booklets and the *Good News* magazine, which enhances Bible studies and makes keeping the Sabbath when alone a special and spiritually profitable time. "These things really help make us part of the organization," he said.

Mr. King manages a national training team and has other middle management responsibilities in Canberra. He is highly qualified in accounting and tax law and he uses these skills on the Australian National Finance Committee. Mr. King says, "I am very aware, as an isolated member, of the need to depend totally on God and Christ, and to use the Holy Spirit."

Isolated brethren live all over the state of New South Wales, whether in the countryside or in towns. Ted and Pam Hayward, Dick and Val Reeve, Warren and June Everson and Reg Brookhouse live in the north. The Sasse family welcomes visitors to Goulburn. Others, like Miva Barker, are isolated due to age or infirmity, but all are remembered and cherished as vital parts of the Body of Christ. Bruce and Jeanette Dean plan trips to the country areas to visit new contacts and to see old friends. And, as God gives growth, the isolation will be turned to opportunities for fellowship.

Mavis Stucci

New Australian Congregation Begins at Bacchus Marsh

For members living to the west of Melbourne, Sabbath Aug. 4 was a new beginning, with services being held for the first time in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria. This new location offers members who formerly attended in Melbourne West and in Ballarat the opportunity to meet together centrally.

Approximately 50 members attended in the Senior Citizens' Hall in Bennett Street, with ages ranging from 18-month-old Chloe Vaughan to visiting senior member Noel Webster. Song leader Paul Vaughan introduced elder Bill Eddington who gave a sermonette on "Freedom of Religion," followed by pastor Barry Williams who spoke on "Godly Character."

The opening prayer was given by Howard Pope. He and his wife, Jan, said that the first service was held in a very

warm and positive environment. The closing prayer was given by Bill Taylor. He and his wife, Joan, remarked that it was nice to be meeting in a relaxed atmosphere of a country town. Hymns were played by Kevin Bate, with his wife, Jan, commenting that it was a very positive and friendly group. She said, "It was great to see we had some visitors from other areas, and we all enjoyed an excellent afternoon tea!"

Roy Hickford, who attended with Melbourne East members Ros Symonds, Wayne and Chris Matthews, Noel Webster and Pat Barclay, said, "It is always interesting to attend the first service anywhere. The Bible is full of new beginnings—baptism, resurrection, Millennium, Kingdom of God. In a small way, a new beginning for a congregation always reminds me of those things."

Ruth Root

United Kingdom's National Council Meets

by John Jewell

Following the Annual General Meeting of the United Church of God—British Isles at the Feast of Tabernacles, the British national council met at Worcester on Sunday, Nov. 11.

At a ministerial meeting held in the morning before the national council met, a ministerial member of the council was appointed. This was Frank Jarvis of the Gloucester congregation. As the ministerial meeting was scheduled to begin at 11 a.m., and as this was Remembrance Day, being the 11th day of the 11th month (Veteran's Day in the United States), the meeting stood for two minutes silence with the rest of the United Kingdom as a radio broadcast the time from Big Ben in London. Then at the end of the two minutes a bugler played the Last Post. Once again we were reminded of the dreadful suffering that man has inflicted on man—so many families have suffered. Once again we were reminded of the futility of war and how much we need the return of Jesus Christ.

Frank Jarvis Chosen as Chairman

John Jewell, the CEO for the Church in the British Isles, acted as chairman for the national council meeting since appointing a new chairman was part of the business of the day. Early in the agenda he welcomed four new council members who had been appointed at the Annual General Meeting. These were executive members, Bryan Ellams and David Payne, and non-executive members, Brian Greaves and David McDermott.

During the national council meeting Mr. Jarvis was appointed chairman of the national council, with the appointment to run through to the 2003 Annual General Meeting.

Mr. Jewell on behalf of the council thanked David Fenney very much for the



Frank Jarvis was appointed as chairman of the United Church of God—British Isles national council (file photo)

tremendous amount of work he had done while holding the office of chairman for the past two years. Mr. Fenney is not only pastor of the Preston congregation, but has been very involved in assisting the treasurer in bringing accounting systems together. He has also been Feast coordinator for the past three years and has run the youth summer camps. His term as chairman ended at the recent general meeting.

New Grange-over-Sands Feast Site

The council dealt with many subjects in the four and a half hours available. Among

these was a discussion regarding the Feast of Tabernacles. Tina Jewell had spent a considerable amount of time researching possible Feast sites and she made a presentation to the council concerning these. She pointed out the advantages of thinking a lot further ahead. Many attractive sites were not available to us as they had already been booked by others two and more years earlier.

After discussion the council made the decision that the 2002 Feast of Tabernacles in the United Kingdom will be held at Grange-over-Sands in the South Lakelands area of northwest England. This is an area of the country of outstanding beauty. It is the country of the poet Wordsworth, author Beatrix Potter and other writers and artists who have, like Wordsworth, been very inspired by the beauty and the amazing light of the area.

Grange-over-Sands is a charming Victorian resort easily reached by road, rail or by air as it has a direct train service to and from Manchester airport. Feast of Tabernacles information packs will not, however, be available until the end of January, so please don't write to us yet!

The council then asked Mrs. Jewell to go ahead and make a presentation at the next council meeting of possible sites for the four years after 2002.

A youth summer camp was discussed and Mr. Fenney was asked to reserve the facilities we have used before in Yorkshire. The camp will be July 26 to Aug. 4 at an outdoor center which has permanent facilities.

Various administrative and operations



reports were presented

to update the council members and give them the opportunity to discuss the issues and to ask questions of those responsible for the different areas. Jan Schroeder, circulation manager, reported that the responses to the renewal were coming in very well and we should have a healthy and active mailing list when most of those responses have been received.

Mr. Jewell, as senior minister, reported that the new congregation to the south of London at Tonbridge in Kent had got off to a very good start. It is meeting twice a month until the end of the year and then in January will go weekly with all Holy Days and the Passover being held in the area. Other areas for possible meeting places are being examined.

There are now seven areas in the British Isles where United Church of God services are held. In alphabetical order they are Birmingham, Bricket Wood (London North), Gloucester, Isle of Man, Preston, Scotland and the new congregation at Tonbridge (London South).

It was a good meeting. A lot was done, but everyone left with the realization that there is a lot more to be done! And that to do it, we have to be looking very much to our Heavenly Father to make possible what for us is not possible. UN

"GHANA," (Continued from page 1)

concerned them was how people who hardly have any money could take two tithes from what little they do have. We read together the scriptures giving instructions and promises about tithing, including Malachi 3:7-12, and other scriptures about faith in God's promises, including Matthew 6:25-34, Hebrews 11 and Hebrews 13:5. These brethren seemed eager to put these promises to the test by faithfully putting aside their festival tithe.

Following that I launched a discussion of the difference between the letter and the spirit of the law. The discussion was very animated with very good participation from the congregation. I was very favorably impressed with their knowledge of the Scriptures and their desire to understand and accomplish God's will in their lives. Mr. Franks and Mr. Horchak told me they were also favorably impressed by the interaction they had with the Agona congregation, pastored by Benjamin Agyapong.

On the Sabbath several congregations combined in Elmina for services. Mr. Franks and Mr. Horchak gave much appreciated split sermons on topics concerning marriage and family life. Following that I had been asked to conduct the religious wedding ceremony for the last bachelor pastor of the Remnant Church of God, Adonijah Blay-Miezah (the

state-required civil ceremony had already occurred). It was a very colorful and joyful occasion. We expressed our best wishes for a wonderful marriage.

Sunday morning we briefly visited the Kakum national park before traveling to Kumasi for the seminar that we held with the Remnant pastors from Monday to Thursday. Subjects covered included pastoral planning throughout the year, budgeting in order to make the best use of funds, principles for understanding prophecy, expository preaching, as well as question-and-answer periods.

We also had several long interactive sessions to prepare the constitution and bylaws for the soon-to-be-formed United Church of God—Ghana. In addition we prepared information and documents to be presented to our UCG Council of Elders for its approval so that these Remnant pastors can become recognized elders of the United Church of God.

On Friday Mr. Horchak left for a long trip north. He accompanied Reuel Dima Appiah back to his pastorate in Yeji on the shores of Lake Volta. Richard Duah, another pastor, went along to translate. Mr. Horchak held a Bible study Friday night in Yeji. On Sabbath morning the elders and Yeji members took the ferry across the lake to have services with the Makongo congregation.

Mr. Franks, Mr. Coffie and I spent part

of Friday visiting the village of Fiema in the Ghanaian rain forest. Monkeys there have lost their fear of humans. Small mona monkeys will actually come down out of the trees and take fruit from the hands of visitors.

On the Sabbath Mr. Franks and Mr. Coffie left at 3:30 a.m. for the long drive west to the congregation of Sefi Esaase. They traveled with the Sefi pastor, Frank Arthur.

This congregation is the most remote of all those in Ghana, and can be extremely difficult to reach. This small congregation began and grew as the result of a man who became an elder. He had learned the truth in the congregation in Kumasi, and then returned to his home in Sefi. As a result of his example, villagers began asking questions, and the small congregation eventually came into existence.

Mr. Franks was the first Westerner to visit the village in a very long time, so his arrival caused quite a stir. After services with the brethren he was introduced to the village chief, who told him next time he came he would need to stay five days according to the local custom so that he could be properly welcomed and meet all the dignitaries.

I spent the Sabbath with one of the two Kumasi congregations, and was asked to give both the sermonette and the sermon. The Remnant congregations are adopting our UCG church service format,

and the sermonette is relatively new to them, so they wanted a live example of how they should be.

It was exciting to see the congregation use the UCG hymnal for most of its hymns. These brethren have obviously been working hard to learn many of our hymns. They are also in the process of adapting to a shorter church service. Several pastors explained during the seminar that some members are concerned that our two-hour format is much too short. We discussed how they could have a Bible study before the actual church service, as our congregations sometimes do in other areas. A fair number of the brethren in some places cannot read, so collective Bible study is even more important to them than it would otherwise be.

On Sunday we had lunch with some of the area deacons and elders and also had a question-and-answer session with them. They were all very excited at the prospect of the Remnant Church of God dissolving in order to become part of UCG. Following this we made the five-hour drive back to Accra for our flight.

If all goes as planned, our next visit should be in January, when it is possible that the melding of these congregations into UCG may officially take place. UN

Each Feast seems to bring its own unique lesson. Sometimes it is one sermon that speaks directly to you. Mental curtains lift and intellectual light bulbs go on, culminating in a sort of spiritual "Aha!" Sometimes the lesson comes through the events of the Feast themselves, as circumstances work together to create an illuminating picture. Sometimes, however, the lesson comes in the form of another person.

My family and I attended the Feast in Corpus Christi, Texas. As usual, we staked out our seating on the first day and rarely deviated from it. About the third day, an elderly woman seated herself behind us. We exchanged pleasantries, and over the next few days a very encouraging story emerged that touched me in profound ways.

The woman was lively and alert and thoroughly charming. She spoke with frankness and strength. We eventually learned that she was 91 years old. God had called her into His Church at the age of 76; encouraging proof that He has a time and a plan for each of us. For 25 years prior to that, she had been a charter member of a Presbyterian church. She'd been very active in that congregation, not only playing the piano, but teaching the adult Sunday School class as well.

Defending Her Faith

She told us that as a requirement for leaving the Presbyterian faith, she'd had to stand before the congregation, friends of some 25 years, and give her reasons. She'd been required to defend her faith and her choices in a public arena. The courage of such an act, and at such an age, was deeply moving.

Her husband hadn't shared her new beliefs. Nevertheless he'd stood with her as she faced their congregation. It was evident in her voice that this had brought her enormous comfort. The commitment of a husband to his wife was tremendously inspiring. He'd stood with her to face possible condemnation, sharing in her burden, but not her choice or her conviction. It was a reminder of the commitment that Christ has to us, individual members of His Church, collectively His intended bride. He took the burden of our sins upon Himself; sin brought about by our choices, not His. Yet He did not leave us to stand alone.

In her final statement to them, she'd

What's the Deal Breaker?

Don't let anything limit your commitment to God. Consider the inspiring example of an elderly woman who said, "It's not too hard for me."

by Janna Thomas

reduced her reasons for leaving to one simple fact. She told them that she could no longer go on pretending that the Bible doesn't say what it says. That she could no longer ignore plain scriptural evidence contradicting doctrine she was expected not only to accept herself, but to teach to others. She could not do it, and she would not do it any longer.

Too Hard?

Before this she'd had a conversation with her minister, in which she asked him why they were keeping Sunday, despite a clear biblical directive to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. His answer surprised her. He said that he knew Saturday was the biblical Sabbath, but getting everyone to change would just be *too hard*. Her simple reply was a sterling example of faith. "Well, it's not too hard for me," she'd told him.

Something about this minister saying that he knew what was right, but felt it was too hard to accomplish, struck a bone-chilling chord. I had a vivid mental picture of standing before Christ our Creator, at the day of judgment, and saying to Him, "Yes, I knew what You required of me...but it was just too hard."

There is a well-known story in the Bible that amplifies this lesson. It is the story of Jesus and the rich man, and God deemed it important enough to be included in three of the Gospel accounts. It contains one of the most often quoted verses in the Bible: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matthew 19:24). The story is normally used to illustrate the danger of riches. And perhaps that is the paramount lesson. But the story has much more to tell us.

In Matthew 19:16, a rich man asked this question of Christ: "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Christ replied that if he wanted eternal life, he should keep the com-

mandments. The man asked Him which commandments, although he undoubtedly knew, because when Christ elaborated by naming specific commandments from the ten, he acknowledged that he had been keeping them from his youth. Obviously he'd wanted no misunderstanding, but sought a clear mandate as to what was required of him.

The man then asked Christ what he yet lacked. What still stood between him and eternal life? Christ told him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor. According to Matthew 19:22, "When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

The Deal Breaker

He understood what was required of him, he knew what was at stake, but still he walked away, sorrowful, because it was more than he was willing to give. It was too hard. He had found the deal breaker.

As tempting as it is to disdain this man and his choice, we really can't afford to. Because the lesson is too sobering. This was not a hardened and rebellious man. He kept the commandments of God, and had from his youth. Assuming he was truthful in that claim, and bearing in mind Psalm 119:172, which says, "All Your commandments are righteousness," he must then have been a righteous man. Flawed perhaps, but striving to obey God's law. Much like most of us? He was a righteous man with limits as to the commitment he was willing to make.

Would an honest search of our hearts find limitations there? Things too hard to do? This is a deadly serious question for God's people at any time, and especially at a time such as this. More troubled times are coming. A time is coming that will challenge all of our previous conceptions of hard. At what point would we walk away from the challenge sorrowful? What would constitute a deal breaker? The death

of the American dream? Our children's safety? Persecution? We had better know.

Endurance Without Limitation

Christ Himself said, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." He made this statement not once but twice, in Matthew 10:22 and Matthew 24:13. Both times He uses it in the context of persecution, from the world, for His name's sake. The dictionary defines "endure" as "to suffer without yielding." It's a stark statement when read this way: "He who suffers without yielding shall be saved." Christ warns us that we will have suffering, but if we want eternal life, we must not yield.

We must predetermine that nothing God requires of us will be too hard. To do that we must remove all limitations. There are courageous people of the Bible who set us this example. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego did not allow a fiery furnace to become a deal breaker (Daniel 3). Job offered up everything, saying "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15). And Esther did not fail in God's will for her, instead saying, "I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4:16). All of them prevailed because they determined within their hearts *beforehand* that they would do what was required of them, without limitations, regardless of the consequences.

If we desire the Kingdom we can do no less. In Romans 8:18 Paul said, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Hard things will be required of us in the future. Hard things are being required of some of us now. Our local prayer lists make that sorrowfully clear.

But there is good news, although the rich man left without hearing it. The disciples expressed doubt that anyone would be capable of being saved. Jesus assured them that "with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

When hard things are required we can remember this. We can recall that Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). We can remember Job and Esther and three Hebrew men who would not bow. We can remember an elderly woman who said, "It's not too hard for me." Because if we seek eternal life, there must be no deal breakers. *UN*

"REGIONAL," (Continued from page 1)
ing with what has been and is being accomplished, as well as the next steps to be taken. A task force will be developed by MS to more intently focus on the ministerial candidate program.

Doug Horchak discussed the evaluation process of pastors in the United States (see the May 2001 *United News*, page 3). Over the past few months, regional pastors have been meeting with pastors to conduct

formal reviews of the pastors' self-assessments. Despite the newness and slight apprehension of the review program by those involved, the reviews were well-accepted and encouraging to all.

Two videotapes were produced as part of the Ministerial Education program during this conference. Paul Suckling gave a seminar on baptism counseling and Lyle Welty gave one on premarital counseling. These seminars will provide useful

instruction for those in the ministry who have never received formal training, and will provide review and supplemental information for those who have.

Other topics included planning for the Feast of Tabernacles, surveys recently conducted of the salaried elders and ministers' wives, and overall goals of MS and the regional pastors.

On Monday and Tuesday, those attending the conference had "homemade"

lunches with the home office staff, giving them the opportunity to get to know those they hadn't worked with and to enjoy the company of those they already knew.

The three-day conference turned out to be very productive in dealing with issues of immediate and long-term importance in planning for the ministry and the Church. Many attendees commented on the warmth and exhilaration of the time spent together. *UN*

Aiming for the Mark

Thinking about archery can help us understand more about overcoming sin.

by David Sandland

Many years ago I had the opportunity to handle a professional bow and to learn just how hard the *sport of archery* is for a beginner. We were enjoying an afternoon of recreation during the Feast of Tabernacles at Mt. Pocono and my brother-in-law, Roy, had brought along his archery equipment. It all looked so easy—just place the arrow on the bow string, pull back and fire.

Easy? Just holding the bow steady was the first challenge. It was far heavier than I had ever expected. And pulling back the bowstring...that was like trying to bend a piece of metal!

After much muddling around I eventually managed to make some kind of impression on the rigid string. Fire. Or should I say plop...as the arrow meekly fell to the ground in front of me. I soon learned that archery was not going to be my sport of the future and my appreciation soared as Roy and others were able to actually hit the target.

Over the years I have often meditated on the many analogies between archery and our Christian lives. You might be surprised just how relevant archery, in type, is to our spiritual life and future.

Missing the Mark

The majority of times the word *sin* appears in our English translations of the Bible, it comes from the Hebrew words *chattaah* or *chata*. Those words carry the connotation of “to miss.” Literally to miss the mark, to miss the target or objective in front of us, just as an archer can miss the target he or she is aiming for.

When we sin, we miss a mark or target before us...a mark that we are expected to hit. If an archer never hits the target before him, then he could not rightly expect to even be called an archer.

God's Master Archery Team

God Himself is often referred to as an archer—a perfect archer, who does not miss (Psalms 18:14; 21:12; 38:2; 45:5; 64:7; and 144:5-6).

In a figurative sense, God has called us to His *master archery team*. He wants us to learn how to hit the targets He sets before us, specifically His laws, statutes and commandments. To miss those targets is, simply, to sin.

But when God calls us to His “team,” we are just like I described myself. Absolutely useless at even projecting an arrow forward, let alone hitting any target.

Raw Beginners

Notice how Paul describes this amateur condition. “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...while we were still sinners [still missing the mark], Christ died for us” (Romans 5:6-10). God calls us as beginners and sets before us the challenge of perfecting the Christian calling, just as an archer, when he starts out, needs to work long and hard to perfect the art of archery.

In 1 Timothy 1:15, Paul acknowledged how bad an archer/Christian he was when God called him onto His “team.”

Psalm 103:14 says, “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.” God knows just how lacking in ability, in strength, in endurance we are when He calls us, just as an archery coach appreciates, understands and accepts the fact that his new recruits leave a lot to be desired.

How, then, does an archer, especially a spiritual archer, become proficient?

Learn About the Target

For one thing, we need to *learn where and what the target is*. There is no point in blindly shooting into the distance, hoping to somehow miraculously hit some hidden target. There is also no point in even learning how to shoot an arrow, if we don't first consider the target to aim at.

God, as our Coach, shows us the target of His law, revealed by His Spirit. Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-16. God “has revealed” the target to us, “yes, the deep things of God.” Through that Spirit we can know what targets to aim at, as fully explained in Psalm 119.

“You have commanded us to keep Your precepts diligently,” King David wrote. “Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes” (Psalm 119:4, 33).

Paul reconfirmed the vital importance of law throughout his writings, such as Romans 3:31, “We establish the law.” To break that law is to dishonor God, just as an archer dishonors his coach by failing to hit the target. Romans 2:23 says, “You dishonor God through breaking the law.”

If we take away those laws and commandments, we symbolically remove the target set before us. That is just as illogical as removing the target before an archer and telling him to take aim, shoot and hit the target. What target? Where? No, God ensures His target—His law—is clearly seen and discerned, through His Spirit, before the eyes of a Christian.

In Philippians 3:17-19 we are then encouraged to make sure *nothing* gets in our way of aiming for and hitting that spiritual target. To miss that target is to sin.

An Archer Needs Strength

We are encouraged to strengthen ourselves by looking to God's law (Psalm 119:27-28 and 40). “Strengthen me according to Your word,” just as an archer, to

achieve perfection in his sport, must also strengthen his arms. Upper arm strength is essential in order to hold the bow steady as aim is taken and the arrow fired. Inner spiritual strength is also essential for the Christian to hit the spiritual targets ahead.

Good Eyesight

As an archer also needs *good eyesight*, so we need to develop good spiritual eyesight (discernment), to be able to understand and accept the targets God has for us in our lives. Notice 2 Timothy 2:15: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God [our coach], a worker [an archer] who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

In Romans 1:18-22 Paul explains that God has not hidden His target behind an obstacle to obscure our vision of that target. “His invisible attributes are clearly seen...so that they are without excuse.”

Your Personal Best

An essential principle that applies to all sports—including archery—is the need for a sportsman or woman to always be *striving for their personal best*. Likewise, as Christians, we must be striving for our spiritual personal best, always striving to do better and hit the target more regularly and more precisely. Not drinking as much, being a better driver, a better parent and spouse, avoiding temptations and conquering bad habits. Aiming to hit the target more and more regularly. Achieving our personal best each and every day.

Endurance

In any sport, *endurance* is a vital element in achieving success. Endurance is especially important for us as Christians. Many of us, after decades in the Church, have been working on our spiritual archery skills for many years. But we always have another personal best to aim for—especially the example of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes a sportsman is tempted to “take time out,” to sit back and relax. But when he returns to his sport, the road is just as difficult. Training must never stop—skills can easily be lost and desire can wane.

Endurance is part and parcel of the Christian life, as explained in: Romans 12:11-12; James 1:2-4 and 12, 5:7-11; Acts 14:21-22; and 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5. These are just a few scriptures that encourage us to

be “patient in well doing,” just as archers must be patient through their training, practice and competition.

Along the way we always need to keep in mind that God, as our Coach, *wants* us to succeed. He wants us to hit the target. Time and time again. Notice Philippians 1:6: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Our Coach will do all in His power to ensure we succeed. Of that we can be confident.

Sure, there will be bad days along the way. At times our eyes will be sore, we will not be able to clearly see the target. At other times we will simply be sloppy and not all that focused. Our arms may ache from holding the bow. At such times we have to take in a deep breath and resolutely determine to go on, to keep on training, to keep on perfecting our skills.

Our Coach understands.

Missing Intentionally

Unless. Unless we start to miss the target intentionally.

Imagine an Olympic archery contestant, in the major event of his life, deliberately turning his shoulders ever so slightly and aiming away from the target. Maybe he has taken a bribe to lose. Maybe he is bitter against his coach or teammates. And he misses intentionally.

How would you expect his coach to react? He would no doubt be thrown off the team and asked to leave the Olympic Village.

Likewise, if we miss our spiritual target intentionally—after years of coaching, persistence and practice—what should be our fate? Hebrews 10:26-29 makes that fate quite clear. “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” There would no longer remain any room for us on the team.

A seasoned, experienced archer is expected to hit the target, just as a seasoned Christian is expected to be avoiding sin...avoiding “missing the mark.”

And, in conclusion, we should consider what is the *bull's eye* of the target of our Christian calling. Paul explains exactly what that bull's eye is, in 1 Corinthians 13:13, “...but the greatest of these is love.” Pure, undefiled love is the dead center of the target God has placed before each of us.

Why? John gives the answer in 1 John 4:8. “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” Without love we are not even on the team. Without love we have not even seen where the target is, let alone begun to master the challenge ahead of us.

So let us be constantly taking aim at that ultimate target God—as our perfect Coach—has placed before us, the target of becoming like God, who *is* love. Emulating the example of the apostle Paul who tells us, in Philippians 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Along the way we will be perfecting *the art of spiritual archery*. UN



How much effort and time would it take to begin to make needed changes in our lives? Why is it that some people seem to be able to grow, while others do not? The differences between these groups may be less than most have thought.

At the recent round of regional conferences, Richard Pinelli, Ministerial Services operation manager, read the following from *The Sharp Edge of Success*, a book about success in business: "I was just a little better than the other fellow. It's the principle of the slight edge. The differences that separate humans are far smaller than what is ordinarily supposed. In its simplest form, the principle of a slight edge is: we don't have to be a lot better to succeed over others. It is self-feeding. Like the atomic reactor, once you have a little, it multiplies. You often find that successful people have achieved by many small steps. It gives you a realistic goal. Keep your next goal realistically close to your present position."

Let's restate this principle from the point of view of Christian overcoming and growth: We don't have to be a lot better to begin to overcome and grow.

A Parable About Overcoming

Likely, all of our readers are familiar with the parable of the talents, recorded in Matthew 25. "Talents" as used there isn't meaningful in our everyday language, but read a selected portion of the parable from *The Living Bible* (TLB).

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going into another country, who called together his servants and loaned them money to invest for him while he was gone. He gave \$5,000 to one, \$2,000 to another, and \$1,000 to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities—and then left on his trip.

"The man who received the \$5,000 began immediately to buy and sell with it and soon earned another \$5,000. The man with \$2,000 went right to work, too, and earned another \$2,000. But the man who received the \$1,000 dug a hole in the ground and hid the money for safekeeping.

"After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to him to account for his money. The man to whom he had entrusted the \$5,000 brought him \$10,000. His master praised him for good work. 'You have been faithful in handling this small amount,' he told him, 'so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Begin the joyous tasks I have assigned to you.' Next came the man who had received the \$2,000, with the report, 'Sir, you gave me \$2,000 to use, and I have doubled it.' 'Good work,' his master said. 'You are a good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over this small amount, so now I will give you much more.'

"Then the man with the \$1,000 came and said, 'Sir, I knew you were a hard man, and I was afraid you would rob me of what I earned, so I hid your money in the earth and here it is!' But his master replied, 'Wicked man! Lazy slave! Since you knew I would

The Principle of the Slight Edge

The inability to perceive that we're making progress in overcoming can be profoundly discouraging to Christians. One reason for failure is that we may be trying to do too much at once. Read this encouraging article about a simple principle on how to succeed in overcoming.

by Cecil E. Maranville

demand your profit, you should at least have put my money into the bank so I could have some interest. Take the money from this man and give it to the man with the \$10,000. For the man who uses well what he is given shall be given more, and he shall have abundance. But from the man who is unfaithful, even what little responsibility he has shall be taken from him. And throw the useless servant out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth'" (Matthew 25:14-30).

The Parable Is for Us

Clearly, the characters in the parable were to overcome and grow. I believe that the symbolism of the currency is twofold, representing the knowledge of God and His Holy Spirit. When we read what Christ said in the parable of the sower and the seed, it's clear that the parable of Matthew 25 and its companion in Luke 19 apply to us as Christians—members and children of members.

We should stop to ask why Christ presented the information in these parables with such passion, warning of dire consequences for failing to grow. Paul's comments in Romans 12:1-2 help us to understand. Through growth, we're able to discern God's will for our lives—"be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Conversely, we might well lose touch with what is acceptable to God, if growth and overcoming aren't ongoing.

The Christian responsibility to overcome sin and human nature and to grow in the divine nature is a repeated biblical theme.

Another "growth parable" adds to the picture: "Now here is the explanation of the story I told about the farmer planting grain: The hard path where some of the seeds fell represents the heart of a person who hears the Good News about the Kingdom and doesn't understand it; then Satan comes and snatches away the seeds from his heart.

"The shallow, rocky soil represents the heart of a man who hears the message and receives it with real joy, but he doesn't have much depth in his life, and the seeds don't root very deeply, and after a while when trouble comes, or persecution begins because of his beliefs, his enthusiasm fades, and he drops out.

"The ground covered with thistles represents a man who hears the message, but the cares of this life and his longing for money choke out God's Word, and he does less and less for God" (Matthew 13:18-22, TLB).

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and under-

stands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matthew 13:23, NKJV). The ultimate harvest may be a hundredfold, but it all starts with the growth of the smallest of roots.

Christians Must Grow

The first six verses of Proverbs 2 buttress the concept that all Christians must grow. Let's relate these instructions to some modern analogies. If a message or a song is being broadcast that you want to hear, you will turn up the sound. If an item is being marketed that you would dearly like to have, you will invest whatever time and money you need to obtain it. "Cry out," the Proverb says. Be as assertive as a baby crying when it needs to be fed. Search like you would for hidden treasure, the Proverb says. Know that God will respond to such determination.

The context of Peter's familiar charge to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" implies that the human mind and spirit are always learning, either in negative or positive ways (2 Peter 3:16-18).

Christians need to grow, just as babies need to grow (Hebrews 5:12-14). Christians need constant spiritual nutrition and to exercise all of our senses in applying it to life. Implied here again is the combination of the knowledge of God with His Holy Spirit.

Members of God's Church and their maturing children should not settle into "a comfort zone," like a turtle in its shell, but rather should always be growing. Jesus "set the bar" for us at our Father's divine nature and character (Matthew 5:48).

Because we understand Christ's intent that we overcome and grow, the UCGA has been emphasizing education in four categories: ministerial, member, youth and "focused." The information that Mr. Pinelli gave obviously addresses the ministerial category, but also affects members and youth.

Success Is a Direction

Often, we're easily discouraged by a lack of growth in ourselves, and our discouragement causes us to pull back even further. Let's bring in the principle of the slight edge—we don't have to be a lot better to begin to overcome and grow. As expressed in *The Sharp Edge of Success*, "success is a direction, not a destination."

As we consider that, bring in the information found in the last part of Ephesians 4. Notice again the concept that Christians who aren't growing in a positive manner are "growing" in a negative one (verses 22-23).

As with the human body, the healthiest growth occurs when every part of the body contributes what is needed (verse 16).

Through Christ, the ministry must grow in feeding the saints (verses 11-15). Members and the children of members are being equipped with the godly knowledge and spiritual power that enables everyone to grow in service to the entire Church, unity, immunity to doctrinal corruption, a godly motivation for declaring the gospel and the capacity to interact lovingly with each other.

Understand, we are succeeding when we have begun to move in this direction, for we will not be perfect until our change at the onset of the Kingdom. The principle of the slight edge is: We don't have to be a lot better to begin to overcome and grow.

As Christ taught us through the brief illustration of Matthew 13:31, 33, Christians are to have the same effect on whatever group they find themselves in that leaven has on a lump of dough. We're to see ourselves as the tiny seed of the mustard plant, ever conscious of the fact that we're to grow to serve and benefit many others.

God's people are doing well, but we can always do a little better. Remember to keep your next goal realistically close to your present position.

What If?

To drive the principle of the slight edge home, here are several practical suggestions. Any number could be inserted into these suggestions, but I selected the small number of five to illustrate the point.

What if you were to spend five additional minutes in prayer and five additional minutes in Bible study every day? What if you were to fast five additional days in the year?

How helpful would it be to the Church family and to you for you to entertain people in your home five more times in a year? What difference would it make to the Church and to you for you to arrive at services five minutes earlier and stay five minutes later? And greet five additional people at every service?

For some, a goal of attending services five more times a year would be implementing the principle of the slight edge, because circumstances have damaged their trust and commitment. These can be reconstructed.

What difference would it make to the Church and to you for you to forgive people five more times this month?

What difference would it make in financing the work for everyone to add \$5 to the Holy Day offerings this year?

What difference would it make to your health if you were to lose five pounds? What if you were to exercise five minutes more three times every week?

What difference would it make to your family if you were to play games or do activities that require conversation five more times every month? What difference would it make to your marriage if you were to go on a special date five more times every year?

Practice the principle of the slight edge: We don't have to be a lot better to begin to overcome and grow. *UN*

Message to Ephesus: Recapture Your First Love

Let's examine the universal spiritual advice Jesus Christ gave for Christians of all time in his message to the church in Ephesus.

by David Treybig

Many people today think of Jesus Christ's messages to the churches in the book of Revelation as simply historical warnings to the specific congregations addressed. While it is true that these were warnings to specific congregations, there is also a much broader application. The messages to each congregation are relevant today to all the people of God. This timeless instruction is strikingly applicable to events Christians continue to face.

Christ's admonition: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" is repeated within the message to each congregation (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). This warning tells us that we need to carefully consider and heed *all* of the messages. Let's examine the universal spiritual advice given by Jesus for Christians of all time. To better understand what Christ is telling us today through these messages, it is helpful to examine the history of a specific congregation and then consider Christ's instruction as we make the spiritual application for today. Let's take a close look at the message to Ephesus.

Ephesus was a large and important city on the west coast of Asia Minor. According to *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, "A number of factors contributed to the prominence which Ephesus enjoyed.

"The first factor was economics. Situated at the mouth of the river Cayster, Ephesus was the most favorable seaport in the province of Asia and the most important trade center west of Tarsus. Today, because of silting from the river, the ruins of the city lie in a swamp 8 to 11 kilometers (5 to 7 miles) inland.

"Another factor was size. Although Pergamum was the capital of the province of Asia in Roman times, Ephesus was the largest city in the province, having a population of perhaps 300,000 people.

"A third factor was culture. Ephesus contained a theater that seated an estimated 25,000 people. A main thoroughfare, some 35 meters (105 feet) wide, ran from the theater to the harbor, at each end of which stood an impressive gate. The thoroughfare was flanked on each side by rows of columns 15 meters (50 feet) deep. Behind these columns were baths, gymnasiums, and impressive buildings.

"The fourth, and perhaps most significant, reason for the prominence of Ephesus was religion. The Temple of Artemis (or Diana, according to her Roman name) at Ephesus ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. As the twin sister of Apollo and the daughter of Zeus, Artemis was known variously as the moon goddess, the goddess of hunting and the patroness of young girls. The temple at Ephesus housed the multi-breasted image of Artemis which was reputed to have come directly from Zeus (Acts 19:35).

"The temple of Artemis in Paul's day was supported by 127 columns, each of them 60 meters (197 feet) high. The Ephesians took great pride in this grand edifice. During the Roman period, they promoted the worship of Artemis by minting coins with the inscription, 'Diana of Ephesus'" (electronic database, article "Ephesus").

Earliest Beginnings

The Church of God at Ephesus likely began through the efforts of Paul and the husband-wife team of Aquila and Priscilla in A.D. 50. The Scriptures indicate that these three worked together in Corinth as tent-makers (Acts 18:1-3) while Paul also preached and taught in the local synagogue. After some time in Corinth, the three sailed to Ephesus. Upon arrival, Paul preached in the synagogue and then left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus while he returned to Jerusalem to observe one of God's Holy Days. Paul promised to return if God so willed (verses 18-21).

While Paul continued his travels to Jerusalem, then on to Galatia and Phrygia (verses 21 and 23), a zealous and gifted speaker named Apollos came to Ephesus. Though he had a good knowledge of the Scriptures, he understood only the baptism of John (verse 25). Priscilla and Aquila then took him aside and explained to him "the way of God more accurately" (verse 26). This combination of Apollos' speaking and Priscilla and Aquila's instruction began to bear fruit.

When the apostle Paul returned to Ephesus, he found a number of disciples, including about a dozen men (Acts 19:1, 7). Paul then began an extensive ministry in Ephesus by baptizing these disciples and laying his hands on them for the receiving of the Holy Spirit (verses 5-6). From this exciting beginning, Paul spent three months teaching in the synagogue and then two years in "the school of Tyrannus." This was one of the apostle Paul's longer stays and the results were impressive—"all who dwell in Asia heard

the word of the Lord Jesus" (verses 8-10). It also appears that Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians from Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8).

Noteworthy Events

During Paul's ministry in Ephesus several other noteworthy events took place. Here, it is recorded that "God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them" (verses 11-12). When seven sons of Sceva unsuccessfully tried to follow Paul's example of exorcising evil spirits, they ended up fleeing the house "naked and wounded" (verse 16). The result? "This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus;

and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (verse 17).

In the wake of these events, many in Ephesus turned from their practice of magic and burned their books pertaining to that craft. It is recorded that the value of these books amounted to "fifty thousand pieces of silver" and "the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed" (verses 19-20).

The truth of God made such an impact in the area that local craftsmen who made replicas of shrines to Diana soon became fearful that this teaching would put them out of business (verses 23-41). After this "great commotion" (verse 23) died down, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia (Acts 20:1). Paul's teaching in Ephesus had monumental success. It was also the most probable foundation for the establishment of other congregations in Asia Minor.

When Paul left the area, Timothy remained to care for the congregation at Ephesus. Paul's pressing advice for Timothy was to warn the brethren to beware of false doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 4:3). In a brief, final trip back through the region, Paul also met with the Ephesian elders, telling them, "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31).

Christ's Message to Ephesus

A number of traditions hold that the

apostle John lived in Ephesus toward the end of the first century (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers, article "Ephesus"). When Jesus appeared to John and gave him the vision recorded for us in the last book of the Bible, John was on the island of Patmos off the coast of Asia Minor. As the vision unfolded, John must have been surprised as Jesus vividly and accurately described the challenges facing the congregation where it is likely he most often attended.

Christ began by telling them, "I know your works, your labor" (Revelation 2:2). Jesus knew how powerfully the gospel had been preached in Asia Minor. He was well aware of the impact of the truth upon the entire city of Ephesus. He also knew how the whole congregation was involved. He commended them saying, "you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake" (verse 3).

Jesus also praised them for rejecting false teachers saying, "you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars" (verse 2). They had obviously heeded Paul and Timothy's advice to beware of such teachers. They had successfully faced this challenge and had not become weary through this taxing process (verse 3).

Now we come to an important admonition. Even though Ephesus was greatly commended, Jesus also said, "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent" (verses 4-5). They had lost their initial excitement and zeal for doing God's work. Over the years their enthusiasm had waned. Jesus warned them to return to their "first love" so they wouldn't lose their place as part of the Church of God.

Next, Jesus again praised them for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans (verse 6). Who were these Nicolaitans? According to the *Expositor's Bible Commentary of the New Testament*, "The close association of the name with the Balaamites in 2:14-15 may suggest either identity with this group or similarity to their teachings." As we will later see, those who follow Balaam's example are ones who compromise God's instructions. The Ephesians didn't accept this insidious way of thinking.

Finally, Jesus concludes His message to Ephesus saying, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (verse 7). Just how can we apply Jesus' command



to adhere to this instruction originally given to the church at Ephesus? What is the modern application?

Modern Application

Like our spiritual brethren in Ephesus at the close of the first century, God's people today must reject modern false teachers and their mistaken ideas masquerading as Christianity. The United Church of God today strives to continue in the path followed by the Body of Christ throughout the centuries. It is our spiritual conviction to hold fast to the true doctrines of Christ and reject those who attempt to annul and alter His teachings.

Now we come to what is perhaps the most important consideration for God's people today in the message to Ephesus—the warning to return to our “first love.” This term, “first love,” refers to love for and among our spiritual brethren and for our enthusiasm in doing the work of God. It does not mean one doesn't have any love. It simply means he or she doesn't have the same amount or degree as before.

When we face trials and difficulties, apathy is a common result. We become too tired to expend the same energy as before. We can tell ourselves that it is no longer necessary to preach the gospel—we can just hold fast until Christ returns. Yet Christ tells us to “repent [regret our recent actions and change] and do the first works” (Revelation 2:5). This is done by returning to our initial love of our brethren, of God and of doing His work. To better grasp the magnitude of Christ's directive, let's consider the characteristics of a Christian in his or her first love.

The Meaning of “First Love”

Just continuing to go through the correct motions of loving and obeying God is insufficient. Jesus expects His followers to zealously conduct their lives in light of the inspiring reward He has in store for them. John wrote, “And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). How does one purify himself or herself? Just what are the characteristics of a Christian in his or her first love?

One of the first characteristics of Christians in their “first love” of God's truth is their excitement. They equate their calling to this way of life as their pearl of great price (Matthew 13:44-46). Do we view God's truth the same way today? Do we thank God in our prayers today the same way we did when we were first called? Or have you lost your enthusiasm?

Another characteristic of “first love” is a humble, teachable spirit. When God first begins to open our minds to His teachings, we may spend hours reading, studying and asking teachers to explain basic concepts. Christ illustrated this principle when He set a child in the middle of His disciples and told them, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no

means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3-4).

But humans are not always teachable. Too often we would rather do things our own way than be taught. In our modern society, it is quite common for people to devise their own doctrinal ideas and practices instead of finding an instructional source where God's Word is taught. When God's people have successfully rejected heresy or been faithful for many years, it is also easy for us to think of ourselves as self-sufficient and no longer in need of being humble or teachable. The apostle Paul provides us an inspiring example of humility and willingness to be critiqued by others.

After 14 years of preaching, Paul went to Jerusalem to have his ministry reviewed by his peers to see if he was doing something wrong. As Paul

explained, “Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem...and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but [I did so] in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain” (Galatians 2:1-2, *New American Standard*). Are you still willing to be taught by human leaders God has placed within the Church for that purpose (Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 20:28)?

Another characteristic of people in their “first love” is their eagerness to participate in everything related to the Church. In many cases, members faithfully drove long distances to attend services, mid-week Bible studies, clubs and even socials. Sadly, that level of commitment seems to have disappeared. In some cases, health or other equally valid situations don't permit people to attend and such circumstances are understandable. But it's sad when members, who are capable of

attending, choose other options that preclude being with their spiritual family.

Being in one's “first love” is also associated with regular prayer and Bible study. As God began opening our minds, we freely talked with God and it seemed as if those new things jumped off the pages of our Bibles. If we grew up in a Christian home, our conversion may have reflected a deeper appreciation and joy from our biblical studies. Whatever our situation, we took pleasure in our relationship with God through prayer and study.

Our initial relationship with God likely included simple, trusting faith. We committed our problems and wishes to God and expected answers. Does this pure faith remain?

Still another characteristic of those newly called is their love of the brethren. In John 13:34-35 Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

From the beginning, it seems we loved everyone and gave everyone the benefit of the doubt. Yet the longer we remain in the Church, the more opportunities we have for anger, grudges and cynicism. Some today seem to be carrying a lot of baggage in these areas. Some distrust organizations, ministers or anyone who tries to approach them with religion. Some blame human mistakes on God instead of realizing all humans will make mistakes. The honorable, godly quest is for humans to strive to do better. We must learn to forgive and be forgiven. Church is a place for people who are striving to continually change and grow into the perfect spiritual family of God.

Still another characteristic of those in their “first love” is their willingness to serve others. From the outset we counted it an honor and privilege to be asked to help. Whether it was passing out songbooks, ushering, parking cars, hall setup, arranging flowers or taking care of a mother's room, we were happy and pleased to be involved. We learned that service is important—service to God and service to our fellow man.

The major admonition of this message to Ephesus is to hold on to our first love. If we have lost it, Jesus tells us to repent and recapture it. This passage also carries the inspiring message that this can be done. Christ would not ask us to do something that is impossible. In order to apply this message, we need to examine ourselves to see if we are maintaining the same excitement, participation, prayer, Bible study, humility, teachable spirit, service and love of our brethren as we had when we were first called. Jesus says, “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7). We can do what Adam and Eve failed to do. We can eat from the tree of life. UN

The Descriptions of Jesus Christ in Revelation 2 and 3

The messages to the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 offer an interesting collection of names for Jesus Christ. Each message begins with an explanation of who the message is from and in each case different terminology is used. Their commonality is that they all refer to Jesus Christ.

- In Revelation 2:1 to Ephesus, Jesus describes Himself as “He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.” This is a reference back to the Revelation 1:10-20 where Jesus, the Son of Man, reveals Himself to John in His glorified state.

- In Revelation 2:8 to Smyrna, Jesus describes Himself as “the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life.” These descriptions refer to His death and resurrection. For additional scriptures on these events see Revelation 1:18; Ephesians 1:19-20; 4:8-10; Colossians 1:18, 21-22; 2:12.

- In Revelation 2:12 to Pergamos, Jesus reminds us that He “has the sharp two-edged sword.” This description mirrors His initial revelation to John in Revelation 1:16. Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12 liken the Word of God to a sword. Revelation 19:15 and 21 describe how Christ will use His sword—God's Word will be the basis for judgment and destruction of those who disobey God's law. Revelation 19:13 reveals another closely associated name for Jesus: “The Word of God.”

- In Revelation 2:18 to Thyatira, Christ describes Himself as “the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.” Here is another reference back to His initial description in Revelation 1:14-15, but now He adds that He is “the Son of God.” Revelation 19:12 gives a similar description of His eyes and adds that there is still another name for Jesus to be disclosed at His return.

- In Revelation 3:1 to Sardis, Jesus says He “has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.” Once again, this refers back to Revelation 1:20 which says, “The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.” This reminds us that Jesus is the head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18) and that He controls the angels that represent each Church.

- Revelation 3:7 records Jesus' description of Himself to Philadelphia: “He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.” This not only represents Jesus' absolute power and control of events, it also reveals that He is part of David's ancestry. Jesus is called “the Son of David” numerous times throughout the Bible. As a partial list, see Matthew 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9, 15; 22:42. In Revelation 5:5 He is described as the “Root of David” and in Revelation 22:16 as “the Offspring of David.”

- In Revelation 3:14 to Laodicea, Jesus is called “the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.” This passage tells us that Jesus has faithfully carried out His Father's business (Luke 2:49). Jesus did the will of His Father in submitting to His crucifixion (Matthew 26:39, 42; John 5:30). We must also do the Father's will if we want to be in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 7:21). Because Jesus was the Creator and the first to be resurrected (Colossians 1:15, 18), He is called “the Beginning of the creation of God.” He is the firstborn of “many brethren” (Romans 8:29) and His Church is called the “church of the firstborn” (Hebrews 12:23). UN

Local Church Updates...

The Ko Family's Road Led From Burma to Raleigh

How'd you like to pack your bags and move to a faraway land, leaving behind your family members, your culture and language, everything familiar—knowing you probably would never return in this lifetime? Meet Thomas and Esther Ko and their five children, who attend the Raleigh, North Carolina, congregation.

Thomas and Esther were born in the early 1950s in Burma (now named Myanmar). Burma had just gained its independence from Great Britain in 1948. Soon afterward, friction developed between the Burmese government and the minority ethnic groups, the largest of which was the Karens. Eventually sizable numbers of the Karens fled to the Burma-Thailand border. Thomas, a Karen medic, fled to the border in 1973, and helped the injured in this political struggle.

It was at the border that Thomas and Esther met in 1975, and they were married in January 1979. A little later that same year, they met three people at the border who were members of the Church. They soon began to read many of Herbert W. Armstrong's books, booklets and articles. Both Thomas and Esther had grown up in families that were Baptist, one of the minority Christian denominations in Burma. The majority of Burmese are Buddhists.

After proving the Sabbath, Holy Days, clean and unclean meats and other basic doctrines, Thomas and Esther were baptized by Herman Hoeh in January 1981. They kept the Sabbath and the annual Holy Days with three other families. In 1986 Ambassador Foundation purchased 12 acres of land inside Thailand near the border and helped them to build a small house. For several years their circumstances were a little better, and they were even able to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with 300 to 350 others.

Thomas and Esther lived at the border for more than 20 years. All of their five children were born during this time. Living at the border was actually very dangerous, with varying aspects of the political struggle nearby. The Ko family lived in constant fear of being apprehended and killed. They were not safe

and could not sleep well at night.

In 1995 unrest developed in their area, and in 1996 Thomas, Esther and their five children moved to Bangkok. Between 1996 and 1999, they were cared for by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), where Thomas worked as a volunteer Myanmar interpreter/translator.

It was at this time that Thomas and Esther began noticing the doctrinal changes in the church. Though they did not accept these changes, they did lose contact with the church for a couple of years. They didn't know what to do. But in 1998 they met with Aaron Dean, whom they had known since 1986, who was visiting in Thailand. They inquired about the teachings of United Church of God and how to become members.

During these three years in Bangkok, Thomas was seeking a way to bring his family to the United States through UNHCR. Eventually, between March and August of 1999, the family was taken into a holding camp, which was badly overcrowded, hot, with impure water and lots of mosquitoes. By August it was arranged that a group in Chapel Hill, North



The Ko family's story is an intriguing one! From left, Michelle, Melissa, Eric, Thomas, Esther, Josiah and Magnolia

Carolina, would serve as their sponsor; and the Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program loaned them \$3,507 for their airfare. The Ko family was on its way to the United States!

They arrived in Raleigh on Aug. 20, 1999. Soon after arriving in North Carolina, the Ko family began to do something they had never been able to do—attend Sabbath services regularly every week. It required two vehicles each week to provide transportation for this family of seven, and several of the local members helped to make it happen. The local congregation also assisted and supplemented their sponsor, as the Ko family became settled in their new country.

By May 2000 Thomas had a state driver's license and was driving a used van. After a few job changes, Thomas has settled into a good job as operating room assistant for the University of North Carolina hospitals, and Esther works with housekeeping on the UNC campus. They have been totally self-sufficient since June 2000. And in October 2000, the Ko family attended the Feast of Tabernacles in Jekyll Island, Georgia, their first Feast since 1995. This year they attended in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

Thomas and Esther are delighted to be here, though it's been challenging for them and their children.

At first English was a foreign language at school, but now the children have become quite proficient in English. Thomas says they feel much safer here—they can sleep at night. He and Esther like their jobs. And they appreciate the tolerance and opportunities here in America.

It's an intriguing story of how the Ko family of Myanmar and Thailand came to be a part of the Raleigh congregation! Truly God is calling people from all nations to be in His Church, as the gospel is taken "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Raleigh congregation is delighted to add the Kos to the local Church family. It now seems very natural to see this family sitting there each Sabbath, on the front two rows, right hand side. Maybe you'll get to meet this warm and friendly family at a future Feast of Tabernacles—or if sometime you're able to visit the Raleigh congregation.

David Mills

Melbourne East Brethren Enjoy Echuca Getaway

A weekend winter getaway took 13 Melbourne East brethren through the Australian state of Victoria's northern wheat lands to Echuca on the Murray. It also began the process of bringing together a group of diverse people. A Sabbath Bible study and subsequent discussion with Don Goodger around a cozy open fire was most informative. Leisurely walks through the red gum forest and along the river gave time for valuable one-on-one conversations and a chance to take in the abundant bird life and the historic atmosphere of this inland port.

Then came the usual tourist things—visiting the famous wharf and its well preserved precinct of old hotels, bond stores and shops followed by a river cruise aboard the paddle steamer *M.S. Alexander Arbuthnot* with its wood-fired steam engine. The ladies chatted and enjoyed the distinctive winter scenery while the men



The Melbourne East adventurers who traveled to Echuca: (from left) Dawn Goodger, Harold and Barbara Ingham, Geoff Kevill, Norm Stringer, Muriel Kevill, Don Goodger, Betty McQueen, Maria Broekstra, Wendy and John Leggo and Sophie and Rod Banham

found a common interest in examining the fascinating old engine.

Our stay in the century-old hostel provided a window into life as it was lived a century or so ago and proved that the enterprising spirit of the early pioneers, the river men and the bush rangers is still alive and thriving along the Murray.

Everyone pulled their weight and blended well, forming the basis of firmer friendships and a host of happy memories.

Dawn Goodger

Queensland Members Form Tenpin Bowling League

Australian brethren from Brisbane and the Gold Coast formed the inaugural United Church of God SE Queensland Tenpin Bowling League. We had participants aged from 5 to 70 in the competition, which was held over a four-month period from April to July this year.

The nights were organized in a social format with a potluck meal after church services for everyone, followed by the tenpin bowling league for those participating. We had an average attendance of 44 players for each of the three nights, two of which were held on the Gold Coast and one in Brisbane. All were encouraged to come along and enjoy the fun and fellowship, especially those who had not bowled before.

We concluded the league in August with a sausage sizzle at which we presented trophies and awards. We plan to hold this activity again in 2002.

David Barton

Basketball Is Her Second Goal... Her Religion Is Number One

Sports have been a big part of life for Jenny Stewart.

So have her religious beliefs.

When she entered high school it was pretty much expected that Jenny would play for her school basketball team. Always in the back of her mind was the cloud of conflict that games would inevitably be scheduled on the Sabbath.

That time came when she entered her sophomore year at Clark County High School, located about 45 miles from Lexington, Kentucky, the home of the University of Kentucky Wildcats. Some say that is the heart of basketball country. Jenny was a rising star in a sport that made her name a household word in her community. But the dreaded conflict reached Jenny and she made a decision she believed was irrevocable. She quit the sport she loved. She decided faith and family were more important than basketball, even in Kentucky.

When her junior year began, the coach asked her to return to the team. He was willing to work around her religious beliefs. He would not bench her for missing Friday night games. Miraculously, Jenny was again able to play the game she loved through her junior and senior years. The local newspa-

Monday night, her patented stop-and-pop-pers, her leaning, floating one-handed jumpers in the lane, her graceful layups on fast breaks.

"The Lady Cardinals could have used Stewart's services Friday, but it was no problem. They knew it was something Jenny had to do, and they respected that."

After the game Clark coach Larry Allison said, "It's never been a problem. It's an understood fact. As a coach I've always told my players that basketball and athletics are great parallels in life. And as a coach there are two things that come before basketball and that's faith and family. I know how much Jenny loves the game of basketball. She knows she's missing a game for a reason. She is doing what she thinks is right. And I don't know if coaching her has made me a better coach, but it sure has made me a better person."



Jenny Stewart

per *The Winchester Sun* wrote glowingly of her achievements:

"Stewart missed Friday night's game because of her faith. The religion she practices observes the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday and it proscribes such activities during that time as basketball...."

"Very few people in Norton Gym Monday night would have known that Stewart's 23-point performance against the Montgomery County High School Lady Indians in the opening round of the district tournament would be the last time she ever played on her home floor in a Lady Cardinal uniform.

"And it was vintage Jenny Stewart

You hear a lot about talented athletes. Their stories and pictures appear with regularity in the local newspaper and on the evening news. Sometimes you hear about people with character. But when talent and character come together in one person, a leader emerges. Jenny didn't go to school to change anyone else. She just wanted to obey God and play basketball. When a conflict arose, she chose obedience to God. And then the coach learned something about life from the student.

It's been a year filled with honors for Jenny. She was nominated for the Wendy's High School Heisman Award, as well as several state and county honors. In April she sat at a table in the school lobby surrounded by family, coaches and her high school principal. As cameras clicked, she signed a letter-of-intent to play basketball for Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky. They know she won't play on the Sabbath!

Jim O'Brien

This article previously appeared in the October 2001 issue of Us Teens (www.ucgincy.com/USTeens/).

"Granny" Nix Featured in Newspaper

Irene "Granny" Nix, 89, a member of the Ocala, Florida, congregation, was featured in the September 2001 issue of *Senior Living* newspaper. The article, titled "'Granny' Nix: Local Woman Acts as Surrogate Grandmother," includes quotes from Mrs. Nix, the now-grown kids of her neighborhood she helped raise and their parents. The author, Nancy Kennedy, interviewed them during a "Granny Nix" reunion.

Mrs. Nix and her late husband, Frank, never had children of their own. "I've taken care of children all my life," Mrs. Nix says. "My family just drew kids. We lived out on the farm and the city kids—when school was out—they'd come out to the farm. I played with them when I was little; their mamas would leave them with me when I wasn't very big either."

When they moved to Ocala, she and her husband cared for babies while their mothers worked and older children before and after school. The article says, "They taught them how to cook and how to get along. They talked openly about matters of faith and morality.... They were true grandparents in every sense, except biologically. But love is greater than biology."

One of the mothers, Susan Clements, said, "Here I was, a single mother. If Granny hadn't helped me with my two girls, I'd have never made it."

One of the fathers, Luther Willis, said, "We knew what kind of values Ms. Nix had and that we didn't have to worry about any bad influences. We knew our kids were going to be protected here."

The article ends with, "The children are mostly grown now, but they still stop by to visit Granny Nix. She's since stopped caring for children in her home—she says she can't hardly take care of herself—but

she'll always care for them in her heart.... 'I sure do love 'em all,' she says. 'Black and white, yellow and green. Kids just come and get up in my lap. We never did have much money, but, boy, we had fun.'"

Dallas Young Adults Sponsor Texas Hospitality for Presidents' Weekend

The Dallas, Texas, United Church of God young adults invite you to the first annual Texas Hospitality weekend on Presidents' Day weekend, Feb. 15 to 18, 2002.

Please see our Web site that has been recently updated with full details—<http://youngadults.topcities.com>.

The Web site contains information on all events, links to the hotel and ranch, costs for all events and housing, and an online or printable registration form.

Events include a welcoming reception Friday evening, Sabbath buffet breakfast, two Bible study sessions, Sabbath services, Saturday evening get-together, Sunday brunch with guest speaker Mike Moore followed by breakout sessions on the theme "Moving Beyond the Status Quo." Sunday afternoon there will be a Texas ranch BBQ and dance at Canyon Lake Ranch, including horseback riding, hayrides and a bonfire. For those who wish to stay Monday, a tour of Dallas is being planned.

The United Church of God Dallas congregation has over 70 young adults who range in age from 18 to 35. With the young adults from Ft. Worth, there are well over 100 young adults in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. We would like to extend an invitation for all young adults to join us for a great weekend of fellowship, learning and fun.

Questions? Send an e-mail to philip_dick@hotmail.com.

Doug Horchak



Several members of the ABC class of 2000, along with faculty member Don Ward, enjoyed a mini-reunion at the Feast this year in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. "In addition to gaining more spiritual knowledge at the Feast, we classmates were able to fellowship with each other once again," said Myrna Miller. "It was a most enjoyable time." From the left, Greg McCloud, Vince Thompson, Belinda McCloud, Dr. Ward, Phyllis O'Bryan, Ken O'Bryan, Myrna Miller and Bill Miller (photo by Laura Thompson)

Announcements...

Births

Our best Feast gift ever! Mark and Heather (Carman) Wine, of Dallas, Texas, are delighted to announce the arrival of their first child, Anna Kate. She was born Sept. 24, 2001, and measured 7



Anna Kate Wine

pounds 8 ounces and 19 inches. Happy grandparents are Joe and Loretta Shuster of Winchester, Virginia, and Stan and Janet Carman of Dallas.

William and Jacqueline (Pachinger) Stetter, along with big sister Jordanne, are thrilled to announce the birth of Camryn Grace Stetter. A last-minute Father's Day gift, Camryn was born on June 17,



Camryn Grace Stetter

2001, at 11:48 p.m. She weighed 8 pounds 5 ounces and was 20½ inches long. Grandparents are Alan and Pauline Pachinger of Cleveland, Ohio, and Ray and Shelby Stetter of San Antonio, Texas.

Joel and Jodi (Anderson) Cox of the Phoenix, Arizona, East congregation, are pleased to announce the birth of their son Joshua David. He was born July 9, 2001, weighing 9 pounds 11 ounces and measuring 21 inches long. Big sister Jayde couldn't be happier about the addition. Grandparents Robert and Ruth Cox of Wrenshall, Minnesota, and



Joshua David Cox

Dan and Barbara Anderson of Phoenix are all proud to have their first grandson.

Engagements

Charles and Linda O'Grady of Nashville, Tennessee, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Elizabeth to Basil Kopey of Laurel, Maryland, son of Vera

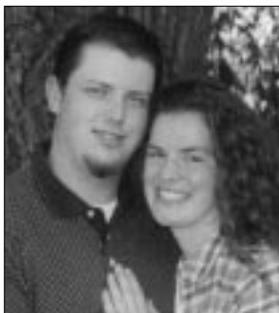


Elizabeth O'Grady and Basil Kopey

Kopey and the late Alexander Kopey.

The wedding is to take place on the evening of May 25, 2002, in Nashville.

K. Chad Tate from Harrison, Arkansas, and JoLyn Hirschler from Springfield, Missouri, invite everyone to their wedding. The wedding will take place in Branson, Missouri,



Chad Tate and JoLyn Hirschler

on Sunday, Jan. 6, 2002, at 2 p.m. The location will be the Guesthouse Inn Convention Center on Tanger Blvd. Chad's parents are Ken and Janice Tate from Harrison. His grandparents, Harold and Inez Barnes, also attend in Harrison. JoLyn's mom, Kathryn Hirschler, attends in Springfield. Mike Blackwell will perform the ceremony.

Weddings

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Saldivar of San Antonio, Texas, and Mr. and Mrs. Jay Holmes of Dallas, Texas, would like to announce the wedding of their children Daniel Saldivar Jr. and Rita J. Reyes. The wedding took place on June 16, 2001, and was per-



Rita and Daniel Saldivar

formed by Gary Petty. The couple resides in San Antonio.

Thomas Bulharowski and Tracy Thornton were united in marriage on Aug. 19, 2001, at the Eagle Rock Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Los Angeles, California. The matron of honor was Tracy's best friend, Michelle Carlen. The bride's other attendants were Julie



Thomas and Tracy Bulharowski

Nelson and Jenny Ngo. The best man was Tom's brother and best friend, Paul Bulharowski. The groom's other attendants were Jack Bulharowski and Emery Kujiraoka. Peter Eddington, of Cincinnati, Ohio, performed the ceremony.

Anniversaries

After services on Aug. 8, 2001, the Portsmouth, Ohio congregation enjoyed a cook-out. As part of the



Christine and Lee Evans

activities, the congregation honored two couples who have completed 55 years of marriage. Lee and Christine



Ralph and Mid Smith

Evans were married on Aug. 9, 1946 and Ralph and Mid Smith were married on Aug. 11, 1946. Special gifts were presented to them during services and a cake honoring their anniversaries was part of the dessert.

Obituaries

Joyce Seelig, 71, a member of the San Antonio, Texas, congregation, died of pneumonia, brought on by cancer, in her home Oct. 26, 2001. Mrs. Seelig was a member of the Church of God for over 48 years. She viewed her impending death as God's way of taking her to a place of safety. Mrs. Seelig lived the admonition to esteem others better than self through her service and dedication



Joyce Seelig

to the needs of others, both in the Church and in the community. Her tireless efforts will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her. Mrs. Seelig was preceded in death by her husband, Bill, and two sons. She is survived by four sons, three daughters-in-law and eight grandchildren.

It is with great sadness that the Bricket Wood, England, congregation announces that Robert Douglas Harper, 51, died unexpectedly on Oct. 23, 2001. Bob was taken ill at the Feast of Tabernacles on the Isle of Wight. On his return home he was admitted to the hospital. In spite of the efforts of the medical team, he died there two weeks later.

Bob began to attend Church in 1967 as a teenager, and subsequently attended Ambassador College, first in England and then in Pasadena, California. His work as a computer analyst gave him the opportunity to travel all over the world, making many friends in many countries. He began attending the Bricket Wood congregation in 1996 and made a substantial contribution with his sermonettes and song leading, as well as his cheerfulness and sense of humor. Bob will be sadly missed.

On Sept. 23, 2001, Gladys Esther Lehmann of Perth, Western Australia, passed away peacefully. Born in 1914 in Coff's Harbour, New South Wales, she was only three weeks short of her 87th birthday. She would be the first to agree that she had received from God a very full life, the last 60 of those years having been shared with her husband, Ray. They celebrated their diamond anniversary in June.

It was in 1962 that Mrs. Lehmann, along with her three older children, Raya, Valya and Rex, first heard Mr. Armstrong's radio program. Rex attended Ambassador College in Bricket Wood in 1965 and was later followed there by younger brother, Bruce. Mrs. Lehmann's youngest daughter, Naline, and her husband also joined the Church of God later in the '60s. Mr. and Mrs. Lehmann lived in Melbourne until their move to Perth in 1986, to join Naline and Valya.

Independently active until she started to become ill in July, she was admitted to the hospital on the Monday before she died. Gladys is survived by her husband, now 90, five children, 14 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

News at a Glance...

Report From the Treasurer

The income received at the home office of the Church remains steady. Through Tuesday, Nov. 27, the category one income of the Church (consisting of regular tithes, offerings, contributions to the assistance fund and miscellaneous income) is approximately 9 percent above what it was at the same time in the last fiscal year. This is slightly ahead of what we had budgeted for this year, but the expenses are also running slightly ahead.

Category two income (the Holy Day offerings) is right on budget. The four fall Holy Day offerings just about exactly equaled our budget, and represented a growth of about 4 percent above last year. Category three income (festival fund, ABC tuition, interest income, camp income) is running about 2 percent below budget. We continue to encourage all employees of the Church to do what they can to keep costs under control and not exceed the budgets for expenses. We are grateful for the widespread cooperation we see in that effort.

If these trends continue for the rest of the fiscal year, it is likely that we will end the year at just about break even.

Overall, this is a good picture, given the somewhat shaky nature of the U.S. economy. At the end of November the National Bureau of Economic Research officially described the U.S. economy as in a recession, confirming what many observers have believed for months.

In the midst of all this, we thank God for His continual provision, and the brethren and other supporters of the work of the Church for their faithfulness. The work before us remains undiminished in its enormity, as does our need to look to God in faith and fervency to provide the resources we need to do His work.

Tom Kirkpatrick

Camp Dates Announced

Dates for United Youth Camps for the next year have been announced.

Williams Bay, Wisconsin (Winter Camp): Dec. 23-27, 2001.

Pinecrest, Missouri: June 13-20, 2002.
Oakhurst, California: June 23-30.
Woodmen, Alabama: June 30-July 7.
Teton Challenger, Wyoming: to be announced.

Carter, Texas: July 21-28.

Davidson, Oregon: Aug. 4-11.

Heritage, Pennsylvania: Aug. 11-18.

Williams Bay, Wisconsin: Dec. 22-26.

A camp magazine will again be mailed in March 2002. For more information, see www.ucg.org/youthcamp/.

New Internet Advertising Brings in 13,000 Subscribers in November

In November, 13,000 *GN* subscribers were added using new Internet advertising services such as myfree.com and iwon.com. They are being added at a cost of only \$1 to \$1.40 each. The 2001-2002 budget will be about \$17,300 for this method of advertising. Please see the graphic below for one of our actual offers.

Good News advertisement on iwon.com is bringing in thousands of new subscriptions

We are also currently advertising through pay-per-click services on the following Web sites: Overture, America Online, Lycos, AltaVista, Netscape, Hotbot, Cnet, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Ask Jeeves,

Compuserve, Earthlink and many more. Our overall average using this method for the last three years is about \$1.75 to \$2 per new *GN* subscriber—among the cheapest cost per response of any of our advertising programs. Our 2001-2002 budget will be about \$12,000 for this method of advertising.

In addition, we do receive thousands of new *GN* subscribers each year at no cost. These are people who sign up for the *GN* after finding our Web site through various search engines, from TV ads, radio ads, etc.

The overall Internet portion of our budget this year is around \$95,000, which is about 3.5 percent of the media budget.

Peter Eddington

GN Plans Updated

In the wake of recent events, we've been going through the content originally planned for the *GN* for the next few issues. The November/December issue was completely revamped, and we've had very positive mail from it. After what has taken place recently, some of the issue themes no longer

should be a real attention-grabber among readers.

For the following issue, March/April, we have a lot of good material relating to Passover and Christ's sacrifice, plus a pair of good articles on archaeology relating to the Exodus. These lend themselves to a cover theme of "Is the Bible True?" We'll no doubt have some more current-events articles.

For the May/June issue, we plan to use most of the content on the theme of the impact of media that was originally planned (and mostly laid out) for the November/December issue.

Beyond these three issues, our tentative themes are as follows:

- July/August 2002: "What Happens After Death?"
- September/October 2002: "Peace: An Impossible Dream?"
- November/December 2002: "Crime: Who's Really in Prison?"

Of course, all of these are subject to change to keep up with current events.

Scott Ashley

Congregation Saturation Mailing Tested

Since August, 18 U.S. congregations have been involved in a test of "saturation mailing" of *Good News* brochures. Each congregation was shipped 10,000 newly designed tri-fold brochures to mail to households they selected in their church areas. Many brethren have been involved in work parties to label the brochures and add postage.

Brochures have been designed as self-mailers, which means they do not need to be placed in envelopes. Each brochure is simply stamped "postal customer" for rural locations, and for some urban areas a "simplified city-style" address (address required, but no name) is used. Postage costs have been as low as 6 cents per brochure.

So far, in the early stages of this test, 1,042 *Good News* subscriptions have been received at the home office. We will keep you updated on further results of this newest member participation test program.

John LaBissoniere

Letters...

Front Page Photo

Just received our shipment of the latest *United News* [November]...and I must comment on the photo on the front page. The smiling couple singing at the New Zealand Feast of Tabernacles site are Doug and Eve Gray. Eve has been fighting cancer these past couple of months...just a week or two ago underwent serious surgery. They are a lovely

couple...and I could not imagine a better surprise, for any better people, than to see their smiling faces on the *UN*. We'd appreciate the prayers of all of God's people for her speedy and complete recovery.

Australia

Discovering United Church of God

Thank you so much for all your good

work! I am so excited about discovering United Church—I contacted a minister in my area and will attend a meeting. Your statement of beliefs is the only statement of beliefs that I have ever read that actually reflects Scripture—on every count! I have other friends frustrated with mainstream churches and will tell them of you! Thank you again—God bless and I will be

praying that this good work will grow and prosper!

Internet

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...

Update on U.S. Feast Sites for 2002

To help members plan for next year's Feast and to keep members updated, here is the current status for U.S. Feast sites.

The following sites will remain for 2002: Bend-Redmond, Oregon; Branson, Missouri; Escondido, California (we are considering other options for 2003); Gatlinburg, Tennessee (we will not be returning to Gatlinburg for 2003); Jekyll Island, Georgia; Panama City Beach, Florida; and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

It is definite that Keystone, Colorado, will replace Breckenridge, Colorado.

Corpus Christi most likely will remain as a site, but we are considering moving to another building.

Gettysburg will probably be replaced. A new location is being researched and we are awaiting final proposals to be submitted.

There is a small possibility we will move the Hawaii site to Maui from Kauai.

Negotiations for a site in Alaska fell through, and alternate hotels were not available this year.

Comments are always welcome by sending an e-mail to USFestival@ucg.org or calling (970) 484-5878.

Charles Melear

Six More Radio Programs Recorded

Gary Petty was in Cincinnati Nov. 5 to 8 to record six new radio programs to air in late December and early January:

- Why Does God Allow Suffering? (includes an interview with Scott Ashley).
- Why Evil? (includes an interview with Mr. Ashley).
- America's Values War.
- Islam and the West (includes an interview with Darris McNeely).
- God's Message to America (includes an interview with Mr. McNeely).
- Origins of the Arabs.

Additional news material is also provided from time to time by David Palmer and Galen Morrison. It is cut into some of our programs to add interest.

Also, three new stations have been added to our line-up bringing us to 11 stations overall: Birmingham, Alabama; San Bernardino, California; and a shortwave station out of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Two stations have been discontinued: Akron, Ohio, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

We have added 2,390 new *GN* subscribers so far this year. Our best response weekend was on Sept. 23, with 122 callers inquiring about *What Happens After Death?* (This particular program was also our previous high weekend when it aired!)

You can listen to all of our programs at www.ucg.org/radio.

Peter Eddington

Largest GN Direct Mail Campaign Launched

Our third and most ambitious direct mail campaign is now underway. On Wednesday, Nov. 21, letters and reply cards were mailed to 386,670 U.S. households. The number mailed is 42 percent larger in volume than our first effort in July 2000 and 102 percent larger than our second campaign in February 2001.

For this latest effort, we are mailing to lists that responded well in our second test and to several "lifestyle" or "religious interest" ones. We rented 31 lists of current and former subscribers to various magazines such as *Coastal Living*, *Countryside*, *Ideals*, *Mother Earth News* and *World* and various mailing lists such as Christian Book Distributors, Current Product Buyers, Home School Family Database, Nightingale-Conant and Parsons Technology.

Our last direct mail effort produced a 5.5 percent response at a cost per response of \$5.49. We hope to improve on those results in this current campaign. Your prayers for God's blessings would be greatly appreciated.

Peter Eddington/John LaBissoniere

What's New on the Web?

On www.ucg.org

• Check out the new home page layout, with new menu bar and navigation tools, updated search engine capability, revised forms and rotating news stories and literature advertisements. <http://www.ucg.org>



• View the video presentation on "Eating Disorders" presented by Rachel Quast, now available on the ABC class lecture page. <http://www.ucg.org/abc/classes.html>

• Visit our Live Cybercast Information page to see a directory of live Sabbath services of UCG congregations. <http://www.ucg.org/RealAud/cybercast.html>

• See the German page for the November-December 2001 issue of *Gute Nachrichten* available in PDF (964K) format. <http://www.ucg.org/html/deutsch.shtml>

On vcmagazine.org

• The December *Virtual Christian Magazine* has articles on: "Four Thousand Years of Christmas," "The World Has Changed Forever," "A Little Help in a Big Storm," "What Cancer Cannot Do," "Son, You Never Quit" and "Real Men Don't Cry."

<http://vcmagazine.org>



Other Helpful Links

<http://www.ucg.org/radio> (*Good News* radio program site. Listen to Real Audio files of the program and see the radio log.)

<http://ucgyouth.org> (Youth and young adult site)

<http://youthmagazine.org> (*Youth United* e-magazine site)

<http://gnmagazine.org> (*Good News* Web site. Sign up for e-mail notification!)

<http://www.ucg.org/a/locale/multimedia.htm> (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/news/news.htm> (News page with Council of Elders meeting reports, President's Letters, Home Office Updates, etc.)

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

The Good News Radio Log

Arbitron Market	State	Call Letters	Station Frequency	Power (watts)	Scheduled Airtime
Birmingham	AL	WERC	960 AM	5,000	Sundays 7:30 a.m. EST
Chicago	IL	WJMK	104.3 FM	4,100	Sundays 11 p.m. CST
Cincinnati	OH	WKRC	550 AM	5,000	Sundays 6:30 a.m. EST
Dallas	TX	KRLD	1080 AM	50,000	Saturdays 9 p.m. CST
Harrisburg (shortwave)	PA	WINB	13570 KHz	50,000	Saturdays 10 a.m. EST Wednesdays 8 a.m. EST
Indianapolis	IN	WIBC	1070 AM	50,000	Sundays 7 a.m. EST
Memphis	TN	WREC	600 AM	5,000	Sundays 9 a.m. CST
Nashville	TN	WLAC	1510 AM	50,000	Saturdays 9 p.m. CST
New Orleans	LA	WWL	870 AM	50,000	Saturdays 9:30 p.m. CST
Riverside/San Bernardino	CA	KEWS	1350 AM	5,000	Sundays 8 a.m. PST
Tulsa	OK	KHJM	100.3 FM	6,000	Sundays 1:30 p.m. CST

United News

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